

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY #
INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

HISTORIC NAME:	Ocean County Jail	COMMON NAME:	Jail house
LOCATION:	Sheriff Street	BLOCK/LOT:	661/4 less than 1 acre
MUNICIPALITY:	Dover Township	COUNTY:	Ocean
OWNER/ADDRESS:	Ocean County 101 Hooper Avenue, Toms River, N.J.	UTM Reference:	18/568780/4422665
ORIGINAL USE:	Jail and Sheriff residence	PRESENT USE:	County government offices
USGS QUAD:			

DESCRIPTION

Construction Date: 1851

Source of Date: Minute Book I, 1851
Board of Chosen Freeholders

Architect:

Builder:

Style: Vernacular Federal/Greek Revival

Number of Stories: 2½

Foundation: Brick

Form/Plan Type: Rectangular

Structural System:

Exterior Wall Fabric: Brick, common bond painted red.

Fenestration: Main facade - 5 bays wide, 6/6 DHS with louvered shutters, gable roof dormer.

Entrance Location: South, centrally located single door.

Roof/Chimneys: Pitched gable/ 2 interior.

Additional Architectural Description: Originally, the sheriffs residence was located in the front section of the building with the jail cells in the north wing attached to the rear of the house. The first floor contained a central hall with parlor, dining room, and kitchen. On the second floor there were 3 bedrooms.

In the north wing, there were five cells on each floor. The cells were nine feet long and five feet wide with a cot in each.

Today, the interior has been converted into offices and the cell area has been remodeled. A porch on the main facade has since been removed.

PHOTO

MAP (Indicate North) See map 2



(11) Ocean County Jail
Old Village of Toms River
Multiple Resource Nomination
Photographer: Charles Gaertner
Date of photo: Spring 1978
Negative: Ocean County Museum
View: Northwest

(609)292-2023

OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION, 109 WEST STATE STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625

SITING AND RELATED STRUCTURES:

Located directly behind the Courthouse, the county jail is 48 feet long by 37 feet wide. Attached to the northeast section of the house is a brick building, built in the 1920's as a replacement for the old jail.

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Open Space Woodland Scattered Buildings
Suburban Urban Residential Agricultural Industrial
Downtown Commercial Highway Commercial Other Government buildings

The building is located in a courtyard behind the Courthouse. The north (rear) facade faces Sheriff Street with a parking lot located across the street.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Along with the Courthouse, the Ocean County Jail visually reflects the early development of the county government. From 1851 to 1926 this building served as both the jail house and sheriffs residence. While the sherrif was in constant proximity to his prisoners, this arrangement did not prevent escapes. According to an 1869 state report, several criminals made their escape from the jail via the sheriffs residence, "two by loosening the stones in the wall under the window in the night. Another took up a flag stone near the wall, under which he dug his way out with a wash basin."

The report also reveals that between 1852 and 1868 the annual average number of prisoners incarcerated was twelve. Cost to the county averaged around \$1,000.00 yearly.

Prisoners performed no labor but were furnished with books to read. The sheriff was required to feed prisoners from his own table but was paid fifty cents per meal by the county for this service. In 1926 a new jail was built adjacent to the old structure.

PHYSICAL CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Poor
REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes Possible No As part of district
THREATS TO STRUCTURE: Roads Development Zoning Deterioration
No Threat Other
COMMENTS:

Threatened by demolition if new jail facilities are expanded on this site.

REFERENCES:

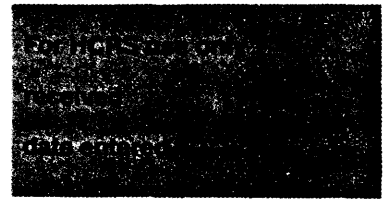
New Jersey Courier, (Toms River), March 17, 1869

Ocean County Courthouse, Minute Book I Board of Chosen Freeholders, Toms River, N.J.

RECORDED BY: Pauline S. Miller and Kevin McGorty
ORGANIZATION: Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission
DATE: Summer 1978

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

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2.

Old Village of Toms River Multiple Resource Nomination

Ocean County Jail

3-2982-1002

Section 7: Description

The Ocean County jail house and sheriff's residence was constructed in 1851. The building is connected to a two story brick jail (1926) by way of a one story enclosed entranceway located at the rear east elevation of the old jail. This entranceway leads into the old jail and to a one story storage area built in the 1950's. Since these additions are located at the back of the old jail house and conform in building materials, their impact is minimal. The larger 1926 jail is slated for demolition as a new \$22 million dollar jail and judicial complex is being built on the north side of Sheriff Street. The new complex will be linked to the present judicial building by a glass enclosed walkway (see enclosed renderings). The old jail house will stand unattached in the courtyard and continue to be used as county offices. Similar to the courthouse, only the old jail house is submitted for National Register designation.

Section 8: Significance

As the oldest surviving jail in Ocean County constructed a year after the county was created, this building is a well preserved example of a mid 19th century rural penal institution. While older county jails exist in a number of New Jersey communities, none has been found that combines both a sheriff's residence and jail cells in one building. For 75 years this building served this dual function. In stark contrast to the new multi-million dollar jail being constructed nearby, the old jail reflects a period when the county was rural in character and its criminal justice needs could be served by this simple building.

Recorded by: Kevin McGorty