

I. IDENTIFICATION

PROPERTY NAME: Old Union County Jail HISTORIC NAME: Union County Jail
 STREET ADDRESS: Blue Ridge Road CITY: Blairsville
 PRESENT OWNER: Glen Gooch
 Union County Commissioner MAILING ADDRESS: Rt. 5, Box 5001
 CITY: Blairsville STATE: Georgia ZIP CODE: 30512
 CURRENT USE: City Hall/Chamber of Commerce ACREAGE: Less than one acre
 U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE Blairsville U.T.M. REFERENCE: Zone 17 E229450 N3863070
 V.B.D. OR TAX MAP NUMBER: The nominated property is only that portion of the county property
 that is directly associated with the jail and is marked on the
 enclosed tax map B1 as parcel 6 in block 5.

II. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT CONDITION:
 Attachment 1

III. HISTORY

ORIGINAL OWNER: Union County ORIGINAL USE: County Jail
 ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Unknown HISTORIC ACREAGE: City Lot
 DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1934 DATE(S) OF ALTERATIONS: Post World War II
 HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (FROM ORIGINS TO PRESENT):
 Attachment 2

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

N.R. AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Politics/ Government LEVEL: Local
 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL):
 Attachment 3

V. SOURCES

FORM PREPARED BY: Dale Jaeger ORGANIZATION: Georgia Mountains APDC
 Preservation Planner
 ADDRESS: P. O. Box 1720 TELEPHONE NUMBER: 404/536/3431
 Gainesville, GA 30503
 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS: "Historic Structures Field Survey" Georgia Department
 of Natural Resources
 SOURCES OF INFORMATION:
 Attachment 4

Attachment One

DESCRIPTION

The Union County Jail is a two-story rock structure with raised mortar on the front facade. A one-story porch extends across the front facade and is supported by square tapered wood columns set on square rock piers. The roof is hipped with vented eaves and covered with asphalt shingles. Three entrances, containing the original doors and two original screen doors, lead from the porch into the side rooms and into the central hall which contains a staircase. Windows on the first floor are 6/6 with barred windows on the second floor. A one-story frame wing has been added to the rear.

The interior room arrangement is intact. Alterations to the first floor include the addition of the wing, and carpeting and paneling in the side rooms. The central hall contains the original fabric of wood floors, white washed rock walls, and wood steps. The jail works on the second floor are contained by concrete floors, rock walls, and a beamed concrete ceiling. No manufacturer's label was found on the jail hardware.

The structure is sited on a sloping city lot which creates an unfinished basement space at the rear of the original structure and under the frame wing. The lot has been heavily landscaped on the street side and a drive built for parking. The lot is located in the town center of Blairsville, approximately a block west of the historic courthouse. The structure is in good condition.

Attachment Two

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The history of county jails in Union County could not be completely documented due to the unavailability of records. A courthouse fire in 1899 destroyed numerous records, with additional records destroyed by the county in 1979. There are also few historical newspapers which survive. The county only maintains copies beginning in the 1960's and only one paper was microfilmed by the University of Georgia. There were some records available at the Georgia Archives and the Clerk's Office of the county which were consulted for this sketchy history.

Union County was established in 1832 from former Indian lands. Blairsville was made the county seat in 1835 with public buildings constructed at that time. In George White's Statistics of Georgia, 1849, Blairsville was described "as the seat of justice with a courthouse, a jail, and one school." Records at the state archives which begin in 1857 document that a county jail was existing at this time. Whether it was the jail described by White in 1849 is unknown. It was described as being in good condition but little used, in fact no prisoner was housed in the facility during 1861. In 1862 the roof of the structure developed problems which were corrected. The jail required additional repairs in 1876. By 1886, the condition of the jail had worsened to the extent that a fund was established toward its replacement with \$500 raised. The minutes state that \$1,836.84 had been raised by May 1887 and the Ordinary was instructed to let out a contract for the building of the new jail. The jail was apparently built since the minutes from the October 1887 term state that "we trust we will have a jail by next term of court sufficient for all county purposes." Problems with the new jail seem to have occurred soon after construction including the need for more security and inadequate sewage facilities. A notation in 1888 states that students were staying in the lower rooms of the jail and a recommendation was made for the sheriff "to put a responsible jailer in the rooms of jail built for that purpose." In 1903 the jail was described as lacking "light, heat, and ventilation" and a recommendation was made to house the prisoners in a nearby county until conditions could be improved. A description of the jail in 1919 makes it appear that the existing jail contained wooden cells since new steel cages which would allow more light and better ventilation were recommended. This request was apparently not carried out until 1929 when the minutes state that steel cages had been added in one room.

The April, 1934 minutes state that a new jail was finally under construction. The October 1934 minutes state that the new jail was completed. This structure, which is proposed for nomination, served as the Union County Jail from 1934 until the early 1970's when a new jail for joint use by Towns and Union County was built. Today the old jail is used as the Blairsville City Hall and Chamber of Commerce Office.

Attachment Three

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Union County Jail is significant in the areas of Architecture and politics and government. In architecture, the vernacular design and materials express the location of this structure in a mountain community. Although no documentation could be found to associate this structure with a public works program of that period, the design is reminiscent of works program styles, of this time. In politics and government, this structure is significant as the jail for Union County for over 40 years.

ATTACHMENT FOUR

BIBLIOGRAPHY - UNION COUNTY

Collins, C.R. and Jan Devereaux. Sketches of Union County History, Vol. 1.
Blairsville: Union County Historical Society, 1976.

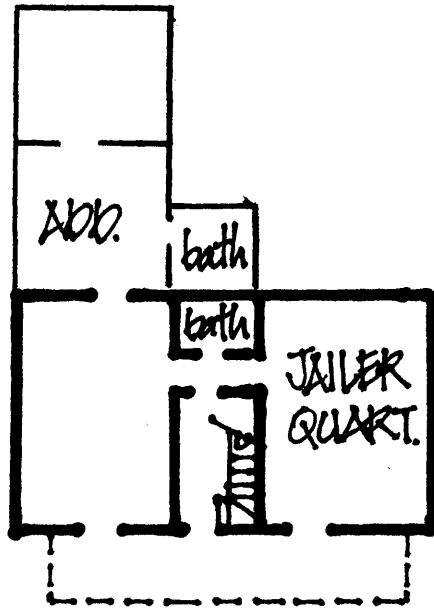
Devereaux, Jan and Bryan Webb. Sketches of Union County History, Vol. 2.
Blairsville: Union County Historical Society, 1978.

Union County, Georgia. Superior Court. Minute Books, 1857-1904, 1917-1922,
1927-1942. "General Presentments of the Grand Jury".

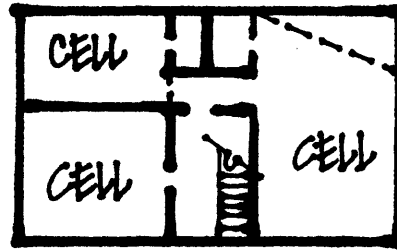
UNION COUNTY JAIL
BLAIRSVILLE, GA.



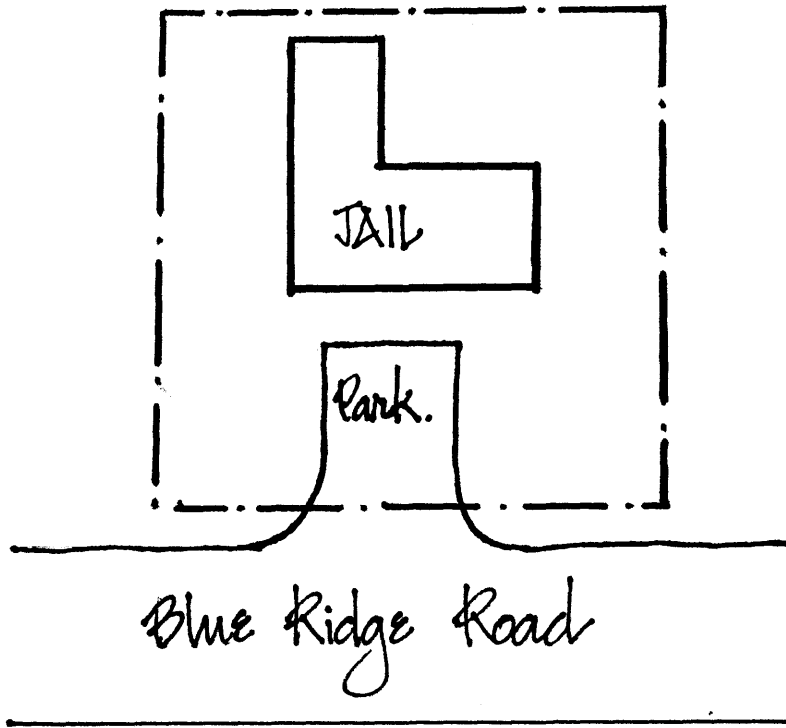
— ORIGINAL WALLS
 = ADDITIONS



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



Floor Plans/Site Plan

Union County Jail
 Blairsville, Union County, Georgia

Scale: not to scale
 Source: Drawn by Dale Jaeger
 Date: 1984
 Key: As shown on the plans

Tax Map

Union County Jail
Blairsville, Union County, Georgia

Scale: 1" = 100'

Source: Union County Tax Assessors Office

Date: current

Key: The nominated property is marked by a heavy black line. It is Parcel 6, Block 5, of Tax Map B-1.

