

County Jail of Berrien
 Berrien and Turner Counties TR

COUNTY: Berrien (code 019)
 GEORGIA ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC PROPERTIES SURVEY-INVENTORY FORM

NO. 2

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">I. IDENTIFICATION</p>	<p>PROPERTY NAME: Berrien Historical Building and Agricultural Museum</p> <p>STREET ADDRESS: North Jefferson Street</p> <p>PRESENT OWNER: Berrien County Commission Ernest Sumner, Chairman</p> <p>CITY: Nashville</p> <p>CURRENT USE: vacant</p> <p>U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE: Nashville East, GA</p> <p>V.B.D. OR TAX MAP NUMBER: Parcel number 43 on the attached tax map. This is all the land that is associated with the jail.</p> <p>HISTORIC NAME: Berrien County Jail</p> <p>CITY: Nashville, Georgia</p> <p>MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 446</p> <p>STATE: Georgia ZIP CODE: 31639</p> <p>ACREAGE: less than 1 acre</p> <p>U.T.M. REFERENCE: Z17/E285730/N3454620</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">II. DESCRIPTION</p>	<p>ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT CONDITION: Early 20th Century Romanesque style county jail, rectangular plan; Two stories on brick pillars and partial basement; low hipped roof with two small gabled dormers, southwest corner square tower topped with metal shingled concave pyramidal roof, brackets under eaves, 4 pilasters on tower walls (original plans included clocks) sheathed with brick-patterned metal siding. Jail constructed of handmade load-bearing unpainted brick laid in common bond. One story portico encircling structure from southwest corner to east side, plain square wood posts and porch, constructed in 1976. (A 1906 photograph shows a porch only around southwest (CONTD))</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">III. HISTORY</p>	<p>ORIGINAL OWNER: Berrien County ORIGINAL USE: county jail</p> <p>ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Pauly Jail Bldg&Mfg. Co. HISTORIC ACREAGE: unknown</p> <p>of St. Louis, MO; J.J. Carr & Co., contractors, Atlanta, GA</p> <p>DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1903 DATE(S) OF ALTERATIONS: 1930 (annex), 1965 (annex removed), 1976 (interior renovate porch replaced)</p> <p>HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (FROM ORIGINS TO PRESENT): The Berrien County Jail was built in 1903 as a replacement for a two-story jail of hand-hewn timber. The lower floor of the old log jail, which was "put together with steel rods," was known as the "dungeon" and housed dangerous prisoners. The Pauly Jail Co. of St. Louis, Missouri submitted a low bid of \$7,997.50 for the construction of a new jail "according to plan No. 714B of the Pauly Jail Co." General conditions of the 1901 contract stated that "clocks shown on elevation are not to be furnished." A bond issue of \$15,995 was passed for the combined city-county jail. According to the deed (CONTD)</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">IV. SIGNIFICANCE</p>	<p>N.R. AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, law, government/ politics LEVEL: local</p> <p>STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL): The Berrien County Jail is architecturally significant as one of Nashville's most impressive buildings. The square corner tower echoes the corner towers of the nearby 1898 Berrien County Courthouse. The "fireproof" construction of the jail is representative of many turn-of-the-century South Georgia jails. The jail is significant in terms of law as a representation of the county's criminal justice system as the county's only jail from 1903 to 1955. In terms of politics/government, the jail represents the considerable strength and power of county governments of the times especially when Berrien County was at the zenith of its size (CONTD)</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">V. SOURCES</p>	<p>FORM PREPARED BY: Haley Blanchard ORGANIZATION: South Georgia Area and Planning Commission</p> <p>ADDRESS: 327 W. Savannah Avenue TELEPHONE NUMBER: 912 247-3494 Valdosta, GA 31601</p> <p>REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS: Historic Structures Field Survey: Berrien County, GA</p> <p>SOURCES OF INFORMATION: Minutes, County Commissioner's Court, 1901-02; "Old Jail" pamphlet, Berrien Co. FFA Chapter, 1976; Interview with S.J. Morris; Remembered Places, Leftover Pieces; Berrien County Jail Book B, 1897.</p>

II. Description...continued

corner). Corbeled cornice, second story sill level string course; segmental arched brick lintels; 2/2 double hung sash first story windows; iron bars at second story windows. Rear (north) elevation shows roof top of 1930 living quarters annex, removed in 1965. Interior was partially remodeled in 1976 with some replastering, addition of sheetrock, and creation of a kitchen. Ceilings of arched corrugated iron, plaster over brick walls. Plaque on cells: "The Pauly Jail Bldg. & Mfg. Co., 2215 DeKalb St., St. Louis, Mo. Pauly's Key--Bar Grating Patented June 22, 1886 and August 9, 1892." The second floor hanging chamber, sealed in 1920, has been preserved. The Berrien County Jail, vacant the last few years, has been vandalized but appears to be in good structural condition. It is located one block north of the Berrien County Courthouse on the edge of Nashville's main downtown business district. A wooden fence (1975) surrounds the jail. There are no outbuildings.

III. History...continued

records, the county purchased the land for the jail from Dr. L.A. Carter on December 27, 1901, for the sum of \$100. H.J. Carr & Co. of Atlanta, contractors, built the jail.

In 1903, Berrien County was quite large, comprised of present day Lanier, Cook, and parts of Tift County. When crimes were committed in outlying areas such as Adel and Tifton, arrested prisoners were locked up in the Berrien County Jail. County Jail Book "B" (1897-1904) describes costs (average 35¢ per day for board of a prisoner), the private work gang system (E. Brown's turpentine operation leased prisoners), and executions. A wooden sheriff's living quarters was added to the rear of the jail around 1930. The Berrien County jail was used to house prisoners until 1955, when a new county jail was built at the public work camp. For the next 20 years, the jail lay abandoned. County jail property also served as a stray animal pound and housed the city mules. Two hundred Berrien Future Farmers of America members rehabilitated the old jail in 1976, as a Bicentennial project. The building and grounds were cleared of rubbish, porches, basement stairway, steps, and window sashes were replaced and a 700 foot long board fence erected. Lumber was donated by local companies. FFA members put up sheetrock, replaced the electrical system, and remodeled rooms into kitchen, sheriff's office, and public meeting room. The project booklet says "this building was to become the first restored historical building in Berrien County."

Since 1976, the jail has once more become neglected, used for a few events such as school Halloween carnivals. Berrien Countians, proud of their recently restored courthouse, are once again looking for a way to preserve and utilize the old jail. The local chamber of commerce has expressed interest in reusing the jail as its headquarters.

IV. Significance...continued

and power. It was a period when prison labor augmented private enterprise - the local lumber barons - and later, county public works.

BERRIEN COUNTY JAIL
Nashville, Berrien County, Georgia

Scale: 1" = 100'

Source: Berrien County Tax Assessors Office

Date: c. 1981

Key: The nominated property is outlined in
a black and white dashed line.

North: ↑

