

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received JUN 9 1983  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Old Hamilton County Jail

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 501 N.E. 1st Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Jasper N/A vicinity of

state Florida code 12 county Hamilton code 047

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Hamilton County

street & number Hamilton County Courthouse, 207 N.E. 1st Street

city, town Jasper N/A vicinity of state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hamilton County Courthouse

street & number 207 N.E. 1st Street

city, town Jasper state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hamilton County Jail is a two-story building of brick bearing wall construction. The floor and roof systems are wood. The exterior plan of the jail is irregular, although it was originally a T-shape. Before additions were erected on the north, south, and west the long axis of the jail was west to east. A three-story tower with a pyramidal roof dominates the west facade of the jail. The main entrance to the building is located at the base of the tower. A hip roof covers the main block of the building which is immediately behind the tower. This section has its long axis oriented north-south, and the ridge of its roof is visibly higher than the shallow-pitched gable roof of the rear wing which extends east from the front section of the jail.

Before the additions were constructed, the dimensions of the jail at its base were approximately 36' x 50'. The new portions changed the overall dimensions to 77' x 55'. A poured porch 21' wide by 10' deep was added to the west facade in 1917. The door to the main entrance is a simple paneled wood and glass door with a fixed rectangular transom sash. The porch was provided with an asbestos shingle shed roof supported by three narrow metal posts. In 1931, a one-story, approximately 16' x 25' wing on the north was constructed to provide improved living quarters for the jailer and his family. A 19' x 16' juvenile detention wing was built onto the south elevation of the jail in 1971. Like the north wing, this section is one story and has a flat roof, but whereas the exterior walls of the south wing are all of brick construction, the rear (east) wall of the north wing is horizontal weatherboard.

The original windows of the jail prior to alteration all had segmental arch heads and were fitted with 1/1 and 2/2 double hung sashes. The windows to the cells also had exterior metal bars. Today the original windows remain in the tower and a portion of the west section of the building. All of the windows in the rear section and two of those on the east and north elevations of the west section have been replaced with awning windows. A window in the second story of the same section has been enclosed with masonry, and the one below it in the ground story was lost when the north wing was constructed. The windows in the north wing are 4/4 double hung sash.

Decorative features on the exterior are the handsome corbeling found along the eaves and around the chimneys of the 1890 building.

On the interior, the primary decorative feature is the two story stairway which is located in the tower and which provides access to the second floor. The first floor of the original building was used as office and processing space while the second floor and rooms east of the front rooms were used as detention spaces and cells.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1893      **Builder/Architect** P.J. Pauly Jail Building and Manufacturing Co. (St. Louis, Missouri)

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Hamilton County Jail in Jasper, Florida, is significant as the oldest functioning jail building in the State of Florida, and the only extant county owned facility in Hamilton County dating from the nineteenth century. It is further significant because of its association with the P.J. Pauly & Brother Jail Company which specialized in constructing and renovating detention facilities in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, the Hamilton County Jail is perhaps most significant for its importance to the residents of this rural, north Florida county. Representing one of the few tangible links to the county's historic past, the "Old Jail" has been embraced by the local populace as a building of enormous historic, folkloric, and political significance.

Hamilton County was established in 1827, and named for Alexander Hamilton, first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. The county is located in the north of the state, bordering the State of Georgia. Its major products are timber, phosphate, and livestock. The county is eighty percent timberland. Jasper, the county seat, is the county's largest city with a population of 2,066.

The first jail in Hamilton County was constructed in Jasper in 1846, twenty years after the county was formed. It was a 12' x 12', two-story, wood frame building with the jail on the first floor and living quarters for the jailer on the second floor. A second jail was built in 1859. This structure burned ten years later and was replaced by still another wood frame jail on the same site.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1892 the Hamilton County Commissioners advertised for sealed bids for the construction of a brick or stone fireproof jail. Bids were received from the Manly Jail Works & Builders for \$7,490.00 and from the P.J. Pauly & Brother Jail Company for \$7,995.00. Although the Manly firm had offered the lower bid and was located in Dalton, Georgia, the county awarded the commission to the P.J. Pauly Company from St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>2</sup> County records indicate that the bids were carefully considered, and the contract was awarded to the Pauly Company in consideration of their superior construction techniques.<sup>3</sup>

On February 14, 1893, the county selected a half acre site for the jail on the east side of Frink Street (now N.E. 1st Avenue) owned by Frank Adams, a citizen of the town of Jasper. The lot had a 210' fronting on Frink Street and a depth of 105'. The jail was not built next to the courthouse but several blocks to the north of it. The contract for building the jail called for the facility to be completed on or before May 1893. In June 1893, the County Commissioners inspected the building and found the work satisfactory.<sup>4</sup> The Hamilton County Jail was opened at this time to house prisoners and serve as living quarters for the jailer and his family. The building has been continuously in use for these same purposes since 1893, making it the oldest extant jail building in Florida to be in continuous use as a jail.<sup>5</sup> It was in use from June 1893 until April 1983.

(See Continuation Sheet)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Jasper

Quadrangle scale 1: 24000

### UTM References

A 

1	7	3	1	3	2	6	1	0	3	3	7	7	9	5	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing										

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing										

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing										

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing										

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing										

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing										

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing										

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing										

**Verbal boundary description and justification**—Boundary includes significant features of property.

—Begin on the east side of N.E. 1st Avenue at the intersection of N.E. 1st Avenue and an unnamed alley 200 feet north of N.E. 3rd Street; then run east 100 feet, then run north 130 feet, then run west 100 feet, then run south 130 feet to the point of beginning.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peggy Bulger/Larry Paarlberg, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Florida Division of Archives, History & Records Management date May 16, 1983

street & number Dept. of State, The Capitol telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature  (See enclosure letter)

title L. Ross Morrell, State Historic Preservation Officer date 5-24-83

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 Entered in the National Register date 7/7/83  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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The P.J. Pauly and Brother Jail Building and Manufacturing Company was founded in St. Louis, Missouri in 1885 by Peter Joseph Pauly and his brother John, both natives of Germany. Peter J. Pauly and his brother arrived in St. Louis about 1856, and founded the P.J. Pauly and Brother Steamboat Blacksmith Company. This firm manufactured and repaired hardware for the paddlewheel steamboats then operating on the Missouri River. In 1870, due to a decline in steamboat traffic at St. Louis, the brothers turned to jail and prison construction, and obtained patents for their steel clad cells and fire proof cells. The company was incorporated in 1885 as the P.J. Pauly and Brother Jail Building and Manufacturing Company. The company did business in the United States -- particularly in the southwest and midwest -- and in Canada and Mexico. The firm designed and executed new buildings and renovated old jails.<sup>6</sup> By the turn of the century the Paulys had broadened their interests, and had established an independent company called the St. Louis Art Metal Company. This firm manufactured wall safes and safe deposit boxes and other receptacles for securing valuables and documents. Both companies ceased operations in 1964.<sup>7</sup>

Architecturally, the Hamilton County Jail reflects the influence of the Romanesque Revival style through its broad expanses of monochromatic brick exterior walls, the use of segmental arches above window openings, corbeling along the eaves, and a square, three-story tower with a pyramidal roof in the center of the main facade. Although additions have been added to the original building that may detract from its original appearance architecturally, the original structure is in good physical condition, and exists as the only public building of similar historic and architectural value in the county.

Interviews with prominent citizens and long-time residents of Hamilton County quickly illustrate the significance of this building for local people as a symbol of permanence, law and order, and history. They point out that the Hamilton County Jail, at the time of its completion, existed as one of the best facilities in the entire north Florida region to house prisoners. This fact is corroborated through county records, for in 1895, Sheriff Polhill was also caring for prisoners from Columbia County.<sup>8</sup>

Aside from recalling the official governmental functions of a house of detention, people remember the "Old Jail" in association with the human lives that were to become a part of the area's oral history. Numerous stories about the jail and its occupants continue to circulate, and are a vital part of Hamilton County's folklore and cultural identity. The building has assumed historical significance not so much for its architectural features, but for the intangible cultural heritage it embodies. In essence, the building has become more than the bricks and mortar from which it was created, and has acquired stature from the associations which it now carries.

Oral histories and traditional stories are part of the folk culture that provides cohesiveness to a community. In Hamilton County, stories of hangings and ghosts are told about the tower of the jail building, locally-known as the "hanging tower." However, it is uncertain if an execution was actually ever carried out within its walls. The only two hangings documented by written county records occurred in 1895 (J.B. Norton) and 1916 (Walter Durham), requiring the construction of gallows in the jailyard each time.<sup>9</sup> Vivid stories of Walter Durham's execution still circulate in Hamilton County, fixing the jail as a symbol of justice. Ex-Sheriff George Royals recalled attending the outdoor hanging in 1916, the last public execution to be performed in the county. Durham was perhaps the victim of harsh justice because his crime was murdering Deputy Sheriff Rafe Royals. Royals was a favorite among the county residents and a swift hanging resulted to satisfy the local outcry.<sup>10</sup> Personal accounts of historic events, such as this execution,

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offer Hamilton County residents a sense of place that is often lacking in "official" histories.

Events at the county jail involving prominent Florida citizens are remembered, since the jail served as the jailer's residence as well as a detention facility. For instance, while Sheriff Eddie McGhin and his family occupied the premises (1937-49), Circuit Judge Hal Adams, a major figure in north Florida politics, was a frequent dinner guest.<sup>11</sup> Deputy Sheriff Ches Leving and his wife became the parents of two sons born in the jail. It is a local anecdote that the Sheriff and his two sons were all born on July 11th, becoming an auspicious day in the jail's history. Both sons, Frank and Albert, were to become well-to-do, prominent citizens of the area. Albert owned commercial businesses in Lake City until his death in 1976. Frank, who lived in Venezuela for 22 years, owns extensive land holdings in Hamilton and Columbia counties, runs a successful pulp-wood business and smaller business ventures in Lake City.<sup>12</sup>

Infamous characters, as well as famous ones, figure significantly in the folklore and oral history of the Hamilton County Jail. In 1925, expenditures for the county jail included \$7.95 for "One month's milk for Mrs. Jackson's baby."<sup>13</sup> Although it happened more than fifty years ago, this incident in the history of the jail is remembered in detail by Hamilton County residents and has been passed down to the present generation. As told locally, a certain Mrs. Jackson had a boyfriend who gave her strychnine to poison her husband. She attempted the murder by putting the poison in his buttermilk, claiming that the resulting bitter taste was from bitter wood in the crock. However, Mr. Jackson did not die, but only had stomach cramps. When Mrs. Jackson wrote the news to her paramour, the letter was found by a third party who passed the information on to the victimized husband. Mr. Jackson had his wife arrested, although she had just given birth to their second child. The County Commissioners were reluctant to assume responsibility for the health and well-being of an infant, nevertheless, the mother and infant remained in the jail for two months. She was ultimately released through the efforts of Colonel Avriot, a local lawyer and "champion of the common folk in Hamilton County." Mrs. Jackson subsequently divorced her husband, married the boyfriend, moved to Alabama and presumably lived happily ever after.<sup>14</sup>

The preceding accounts represent only a few of the stories in oral circulation that breathe life into Hamilton County's oldest county-owned public building and Florida's oldest functioning jail. The historic significance of this structure is demonstrated on the local level by its symbolic stature, on the state level by its status as the oldest occupied jail in the State of Florida, and on the national level by its association with the P.J. Pauly Company.

In her MA thesis for the University of Florida's Urban and Regional Planning Department, Melanie Barr presented a "Preservation Plan for Jasper, Florida." Ms. Barr concluded that the jail building should be preserved and restored as ... "it is the only building left in Jasper that demonstrates the relatively long history of Jasper and Hamilton County as corporate entities . . . The old jail fulfills Jasper's need for a tangible symbol of its early history and also has the best architectural design of any governmental building in the county."<sup>15</sup>

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FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Hamilton County, Records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Minutes of the Meetings of the County Commissioners, Book 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 167-183.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>5</sup>Mary Roberts, Inspections Clerk, Florida Department of Corrections, Tallahassee, Florida, telephone interview to Peggy A. Bulger, December, 1982. Ms. Roberts stated the the next oldest functioning jail would be Fairfield House in Duval County, completed in 1919.

<sup>6</sup>Elizabeth Wilson, Librarian, Missouri Historical Society Library, St. Louis, Missouri, telephone account of the biographies of Peter Joseph Pauly and John Pauly to W. Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist, Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Hamilton County, Records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Minutes of the Meetings of the County Commissioners, Book.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>George Royals, retired Sheriff, Hamilton County, interview to Mrs. Cora Hinton, October 1982.

<sup>11</sup>Mrs. Chester (Frankie Mae) Leving, wife of former Hamilton County Sheriff and Jailer, interview to Mrs. Cora Hinton, October 1982.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Hamilton County, Records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Minutes of the Meetings of the County Commissioners, Book 1.

<sup>14</sup>Mrs. Chester Leving, interview to Mrs. Cora Hinton, October 1982.

<sup>15</sup>Melanie Barr, A Preservation Plan for Jasper, Florida, Masters Thesis, University of Florida, Urban and Regional Planning, 1979.

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Hamilton County. Records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Minutes of the Meetings of the County Commissioners, Book 1.

Southern Business Guide 1879-1880. New York: United States Central Publishing Company.

Wilson, Elizabeth. Librarian, Missouri Historical Library, St. Louis, Missouri, telephone account of the biographies of Peter Joseph Pauly and John Pauly to W. Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist, Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management.

Barr, Melanie. A Preservation Plan for Jasper, Florida, Masters Thesis, University of Florida, Urban and Regional Planning, 1979.



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Commence on the outside of the concrete curbing at the intersection of Russ Street with Lafayette Street, and run thence northwardly along the street curb on the west side of Russ Street for a distance of 260 feet, to an iron stake, as a point of beginning of the lot here described, and from such beginning point, run westwardly across the lawn in front of the J.W. Russ residence in a straight line to Lafayette Street, a distance of 200 feet to the East curb on Lafayette Street to an iron stob, which line strikes Lafayette Street curb 258 feet from the aforementioned intersection point on Russ and Lafayette Street, thence run along the curb on the East side of Lafayette a distance of 85 feet, to an iron stob, thence Easterly in a straight line so as to clear the residence of J.W. Russ on the northwest side, a distance of 100 feet, to a stake or stob, thence easterly (clearing the J.W. Russ residence) a distance of 63 feet to an iron stob (which stob is 105 feet north of the first line of the lot here described, run at right angle), thence from said last mentioned stob in a straight eastwardly a distance of 103 feet to an iron stob on the edge of the curb on Russ Street, which last mentioned stob is 75 feet north from the beginning point of the lot here described; then southerly, along the west side of Russ Street 75 feet to the point of beginning. All in the city of Marianna, Jackson County, State of Florida.

This boundary includes all of the significant features of this property.