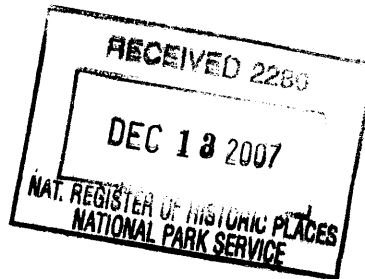


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1445

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Hancock County Jail  
other names/site number Ellsworth Historical Society

2. Location

street & number 40 State Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Ellsworth N/A vicinity  
state Maine code ME county Hancock code 009 zip code 04605

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kurt F. Mohney, DSHPO 12/12/07  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 1.24.08  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Nonw

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Single Dwelling

Government / Correctional Facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture / Museum

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN / Queen Anne

/ Renaissance

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Slate

other Granite (window sills)

Wood (porch)

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

---

## DESCRIPTION

The Hancock County Jail was built during 1885-6 from plans by the prominent Maine Architect Frances Fassett. The brick building, which served both as a domicile and as the county lockup until the early 1970s, is located on State Street, in the Hancock County shire town of Ellsworth. Immediately to the north of the east facing building is the 1934 Hancock County Courthouse, and to the south is the Col. Meltiah Jordan House, (NR: 74000154), now the Ellsworth Public Library. Across the street is the Ellsworth Congregational Church, (NR: 73000108) while one block away is Ellsworth City Hall (NR: 86000073). The commercial district of the city is one block to the south, and the Union River runs behind the library, jail and court house. The Jail is situated on a rectangular plot with a broad grassy lawn on the east, and driveways and paved parking lots surrounding the remainder of the building.

The building is two and on-half stories in height and has a rectangular footprint. The grade rises slightly from south to north, and correspondingly, the foundation is raised on the south, the west and portions of the east elevation. Thick herbaceous hedges obscure the raised foundation on the east. The slate covered compound roof with copper flashing at the eaves and valleys, has pedimented wall dormers on the north, east and south elevations. The building was designed with four chimneys, one each on the north and south exterior walls and two rising through the side roofs on the interior north to south wall that separates the residence from the jail block. The very center of the steep roof is flat, and originally featured a wooden balustrade.

The front façade faces east and is five bays wide. A pedimented wall dormer is positioned over the northern three bays, which as a unit is set just forward of the wall plane of the southern two bays. A wooden two-leaf, three panel door is centered on the balanced façade. Over this entrance is a slate covered hip roof porch, supported on chamfered wooden posts. Seven wooden steps with a balustered railing lead from the porch to the front walkway. To either side of the entry are a pair of arch topped one-over-one sash which share a common granite sill. On the second floor the top of these windows, as well as that of a single window over the entry, intersect the bottom edge of the brick frieze. Above this trim element the brick is corbeled to meet the cornice, which is hidden behind a copper gutter. Within the front dormer is a Palladian window outlined with a brick arch over the center. A tall wooden flag pole is mounted on the granite window sill and rises past the peak of the dormer.

The north elevation is separated into two function components, the residence and the jail. On this side the asphalt parking lot abuts the sidewalls of the building. A decorative water table arches above the tops of five, barely-exposed cellar windows. This elevation is divided into three visual sections. Just to the east of center is a pedimented wall dormer positioned over two windows on the second floor, and a pair of windows and a side door at ground level. A lunette window with granite sill is centered within the dormer. The wood door has a large window, and is surmounted by a low-angle, gable roof supported by braces to the wall. Three cement steps lead from the door to the parking lot. East of this unit the plane of the wall is broken by a window bay situated close to the

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 3

---

northeast corner of the building. West of this window is the one wythe thick, stepped outline of the north chimney. The stack for this chimney was recently removed to the roof. West of the central section irregularly sited window bays provided light into the jail area. Two large windows, obscured by two sets of iron bars and then shielded by metal mesh are located to the east. A third, smaller opening covered with plywood, was originally a door to the cell block. Next to this are two smaller windows, one on each floor. The lower example is covered with bars and mesh; on the upper example the screening has been removed.

The south elevation is similar to that of the north with a few deviations: a second set of windows are positioned north of the (complete) chimney and there is no corresponding door into the cellblock. The side door into the residence has been blocked up and the original brick vestibule, small deck and latticework enclosed staircase have been removed. Due to masonry deterioration, the mesh on the windows has been removed, and a protective framework of wood strapping and heavy gauge plastic has been erected to protect the crumbling cell block wall. Also, due to the lower grade on this side of the building a pair of two-over-two windows and a two-leaf access door are positioned under the center three bays. The west exterior wall displays the same corbeling and water table as the remainder of the building but has no fenestration.

The jailers former residence occupies the eastern half of the building. On each floor four primary rooms open to either side of a central hallway. The straight-run staircase features an ornately turned newel post and turned balusters. The formal front parlor, on the north, and the dining room on the south both contain black slate fireplace surrounds inlaid with geometrical and floral patterns in contrasting marble mosaic. Both of these rooms feature molded six-panel doors, molded baseboard and door and window trim with bulls-eye corner blocks. The floors are laid with maple and the ceilings and papered walls are plaster. On the second floor the two front rooms have painted hardwood floors and walls and trim features similar to those found on the first floor. The Federal-style wooden fireplace surround is extant in the southeast bedroom, but the northeast room shows no evidence for a hearth or surround. (Any stovepipe opening has been papered over.)

The southwest corner room on the first floor was the family's kitchen. A wood cook stove (not the original unit) and slate sink are positioned against the west wall and a small pantry closet is located against the east wall. Plaster walls and ceilings, molded trim, wallpaper and southern yellow pine floors complete the finishes in this room. The northwest corner room was utilized as the Sheriff's Office. In this room the plaster walls were replaced with drywall and an indoor/outdoor carpet covers the plywood floors. (The date of these changes is unknown.) The room is furnished with desks and filing cabinets; built-in shelves line the east wall and a heavy metal door leads through the west wall into the cellblock. On the far side of this door a semi-hemispherical gate constructed of heavy iron bars provide an additional barrier between the two sections of the building. A one-way mirror is set in the heavy door that separates the office from the front hall.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 4

---

Across the western half of the second floor are two former bedrooms and a bathroom. The walls of the northwest bedroom are covered with pine paneling, and the floors of these rooms are clad in carpet. With the exception of the northeast bedroom, the plaster ceilings of the second floor rooms have been covered with acoustic tile.

The kitchen, Sheriff's Office and southwest bedroom each feature small openings in the western brick wall that separates the residence from the jail. Known as "wickets", the openings in the bedroom and office are small, round holes covered with a hinged metal plate. On the cell side of the office wicket the thick wall surrounding the opening features a concave indent centered on the opening. The features measures close to four feet in diameter and allowed sound from the cells to be more easily heard in the office while at the same time amplified any communication from the jail keepers. (Because the second floor of the jail is inaccessible it is not known if a similar feature is found on the backside of the bedroom wicket.) In the kitchen a slot in the wall above the sink, measuring approximately twelve inches long by four inches high, allowed for food to be passed into the cell block. It is possible that a fourth wicket existed in the northwest bedroom, but any remaining evidence has been obscured by the paneling and lack of access to the upper level of the cell block.

There are three additional bedrooms in the attic, each positioned within one of the dormers, and finished with plain trim, plaster walls and ceilings and random-width painted pine floors. Under the family's quarters the basement contains one roughly finished store room in the southeast corner and a small toilet and unfinished storage space located under the parlor. The space under the westernmost rooms is unfinished, but has a direct access to the exterior through the south wall door. Two additional doors lead through the brick partition walls to the space below the first floor cells.

The portion of the building formerly used as the Hancock County Jail contains fourteen cells on two levels. The cells are grouped as a central mass and are defined by thick granite walls. This granite block extends to the basement (in a solid mass). Granite slabs stretch from the mass to the foundation walls (fieldstone below the brick) to provide thick granite floors for the jail. On the first floor a corridor surrounds the south, east, and north sides of the block. Three cells face onto the north and south corridors. A brick partition wall spans the width of the jail and two larger cells (with all brick walls) are accessed from the west ends of the corridor. Previously, a set of stairs set against the east end of the granite block led to a second floor wooden catwalk which in turn, accessed the six upper cells. After a fire in one of these units the stairs were removed, however, the cells and catwalk remain. Metal wire mesh is strung from the edges of the catwalk to the outer walls of the building to prevent objects from being thrown out of the cells and onto the first floor level.

Each cell measures six by ten feet with eight foot ceilings, and contains a low voltage electric light. The granite walls are more than one foot thick. Some units contain porcelain toilets, and a few retain iron beds, rudimentary bureaus or graffiti on the white painted walls. The northwest corner room has a drain in the floor, and was used as a bathroom. Several of the rooms received humorous nicknames, as evidenced by signs painted over the bars: "Twilight Motel", "Holiday Inn", "The Brookside" and "The Potty".

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics / Government

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1885/6 - 1957

**Significant Dates**

1885/6

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Fasset, Francis (1823-1908), architect

Philbrook, J & J, contractors

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
    - Federal agency
    - Local government
    - University
    - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

---

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hancock County Jail is a structure built in 1886 that functioned as an incarceration facility for the County, and a residence for the Sheriff or jail keeper's family. The Queen Anne style building with Renaissance Revival details was designed by the Portland architect Francis H. Fassett, and was used to house inmates through the mid-1970s. The front half of the facility is a comfortable residence, featuring period detailing, while the back half contains fourteen small granite cells on two levels. Small openings in the dividing wall between the two sections allowed the jailer to monitor the prisoners or pass provisions from the kitchen to the inmates. This property is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C, as a good example of a building designed to serve both domestic and penal functions, and under Criterion A, for its long association with the governmental functions of Hancock County.

The County of Hancock, in the District of Maine, was set off from Lincoln County by the State of Massachusetts in 1798. The town of Castine served as the first shire town until 1838 when the county seat was moved inland to Ellsworth. In 1837 the County obtained the former Ellsworth Town House (1834) for its use and the next year constructed the adjacent annex which served as the Registry of Deeds. Together these buildings represented the first County buildings in Ellsworth. ("Old Hancock County Buildings", NR: 77000161). According to the Ellsworth historian Albert H. Davis, writing in 1927:

*...a jail was erected about fifty rods north in Pleasant Street. It has since been renovated into a double-tenement house and is now occupied by Mr. Milton Rogers and Charles Foss...For forty-eight years the buildings answered well the needs of the County, but as a growing child outgrows its clothes so did the demands of the County outgrow them. The county commissioners got busy and in 1886 completed a courthouse and jail on the Andrew Peters Estate, second to none in the state. (Page 88-89).*

The above cited passage references the first Hancock County jail, but provides little information on its design, or that of the 1886 jail that is the subject of this nomination. In contrast to modern penal institutions (jails, lock-ups or prisons), which are highly regulated, staffed by professionals and usually contain health facilities and programs focusing on education and reform, nineteenth century jails were 'catch all' institutions focusing simply on incarceration. In general, 'jail' is a term used to designate county or municipal facilities holding prisoners either before trial or while serving short (less than one year) sentences. Those convicted of a felony or serving longer sentences were placed in a state controlled prison. Other than this basic division, the nineteenth-century jail facilities seldom provided different care or accommodation between men and women, hardened criminals or common drunkards. Although by mid-century efforts at reforming American prisons had gathered momentum, the efforts did not trickle down to the local level. In 1872 Rev. J. K. Mason was the delegate from Maine to the International Penitentiary

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

---

Congress in London. Upon his return he gave the following account of the conference. "In answer to a call...it devolved on your delegate to explain in considerable detail the system and operation of our Prison [at Thomaston]; note points of success and of failure, and to his great mortification to speak of the *want of system* and other evils in our county jails." (Mason, p. 7-8, emphasis in the original). As alluded to, each county throughout the state oversaw its own jail system, and there was little consistency in the administration of the facilities. And although each county elected a sheriff, who was technically placed in charge of the jails, the sheriff could then designate a jail keeper (or jailer) to actually run the facility, often with little oversight. As a result of this de-centralized system in some jails prisoners were expected to provide for their board well into the nineteenth-century, while others were allowed to work off their expenses. Jailers might have been paid by the county, or they may have made their living selling provisions to, and/or extorting, the inmates.

The County Commissioners engaged Portland architect Francis H. Fassett to draw up plans for the building starting in 1885; the construction contract was awarded to J. & J. Philbrook of Lewiston later that year; and the building opened in April of 1886. With a career that spanned more than five decades and resulted in hundreds of commissions, the cumulative effect of Frances H. Fassett's legacy has yet to be thoroughly evaluated. However, there is no doubt that his talents and contributions were widely acknowledged during his lifetime. The following biography of Fassett was prepared by Richard Herndon in 1897:

His early education was acquired in the common schools of his native city. He left school, however, at the age of fourteen, and for the next four years was a clerk in the store of a general trader in Bath. He then was apprenticed to the carpenter's trade, and subsequently studied architecture in the offices of architects in Boston and New York. In 1850 he began the practice of his profession in Bath; his operations gradually extending up the Kennebec River to Augusta, where, after the great fire of 1862, he practically rebuilt the city. In 1864 he removed to Portland, where he has continued in the active business of his profession to the present time. During his career Mr. Fassett has designed many of the public and business buildings and dwellings erected in Maine and neighboring states. Among the more noteworthy monuments to his taste and skill throughout the state are the Maine General Hospital, the new Congress Square Hotel, the Baxter Building (the largest business block in Maine), the Portland Public Library, the Payson Memorial Church, also the Jackson, McLellan, Butler and High school buildings, all in Portland; several of the buildings of the Maine Insane Asylum, Augusta; the Hancock County Court House, Ellsworth; and St. Mary's School in Biddeford. He also rebuilt the City Building of Portland after the great fire of 1866, and is engaged in building the new Church of the Sacred Heart in that city. (Herndon, p. 342).

After the fire of 1866, Fassett was greatly responsible for the rebuilding of Portland's public landscape, and he earned the moniker "Maine's undisputed architect for all seasons." (Shettleworth, p. 186). However, his post-fire oeuvre concentrated on a 'personal version of High Victorian Gothic architecture.' (Shettleworth, p. 187). Not until after Fassett entered into a partnership with John



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 4

---

Calvin Stevens in 1880 did his designs come to incorporate Queen Anne and Shingle Style elements, a trend that continued to be developed in conjunction with later partners. The Hancock County Jail reflects Steven's influence on Fassett.

It is unclear if Fassett had access to any printed resources outlining the best practices in jail design, or even what guidance he was given by the County. Yet his design did reference several precedents in the state, both traditional and more recent. As early as 1729, Gaolers quarters were added to the Old Gaol in York, the county seat, which had been constructed ten years earlier. In this facility lodged the sheriff's family, who cooked for and cared for the inmates. It is interesting to note that in York the accused and convicted had to be lead through the family's quarters to reach the cells – there was no separate access to the jail. In Wiscasset, the two-story, stone Lincoln County Jail was built between 1809 and 1811 and in that latter year a timber frame residence was built off the south end of the jail. When this structure burned circa 1840 it was replaced by a brick house. In this example a hallway with direct access to the jail yard separated the cell blocks from the family spaces.

One of the next County jails to be built in Maine was designed by the Boston architect Gridley J. F. Bryant. This now destroyed building was built in Augusta in 1857, for Kennebec County, and

*Bryant's design utilized a plan that...was heralded in an 1867 study on reformatories and prisons as "the best yet submitted to the inspection of the public." (Dwight and Wines, p. 108-109). This called for a tri-partite division of the interior into jailor's quarters in the front, a guard room with projecting bays in the middle and the cell block at the rear. Additional new innovations included the use of speaking tubes, a bell system, self-locking doors, and an improved ventilation system.<sup>1</sup>*

Bryant went on to use this plan as the basis for the design of the Androscoggin County Courthouse and Jail, 1857 (NR: 83003633), the Washington County Jail in Machias, 1858, and the Penobscot County Jail in Bangor in 1869 (NR: 88000393).

While the Fassett design did not include a guard's room it did provide for clearly defined spaces for both the jailor and inmates within one facility. As originally built, the jail in Ellsworth featured direct access from the outside, as well as the option to bring prisoners in through the office in the northeast corner of the house. Access points between the family and the cells were limited, but convenient, and in contrast to the stark cells, the residential section of the building was designed and finished in the latest style. Nonetheless, no accommodations were specifically provided in which the incarcerated could work or exercise.

---

<sup>1</sup> The description of the Kennebec County Jail has been excerpted from the National Register of Historic Places nomination/inventory form for the Washington County Jail (NR: 88000393).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetHANCOCK COUNTY JAILHANCOCK COUNTY, MAINESection number 8 Page 5

At least three additional jails with attached residences were erected in Maine after the Ellsworth example. Wilfred E. Mansur started planning for the Aroostook County Jail in 1889 (NR: 89002340). Although now considerably altered, when this structure opened in 1895 it had a hip-roofed residence in the front and a two story rear ell that housed the cells. In Oxford County, George M. Coombs designed the 1893-96 jail and courthouse. The floor plans for this jail bear a remarkable similarity to Fassett's earlier work - the two floors of cells (twelve in South Paris verses fourteen in Ellsworth) were also grouped in a block at the center of an external shell, and the residential portion featured a center hall, four-room per floor plan with access to the cells through the northeast corner room, as well as several 'pass-throughs' or wickets. And while neither the architect nor design is known for the Romanesque Revival 1892 Knox County Jail (Rockland Residential Historic District, NR: 86003513) it is interesting to note that at least a portion of the contract for the construction and outfitting of this property was awarded to a specialized firm, the Pauley Jail Company of Cleveland, Ohio.

As part of the project Fassett also designed the neighboring Hancock County Courthouse. When this building substantially burned in 1933 many of the county records, including presumably those of the jail and Sheriff were lost. As such, little is known about the day-to-day activities of the inmates and families. The following passage, from the Hancock County Commissioner's Records of 1896, provide one of the few glimpses of the furnishings and provisions provided to the inmates.

*...it is hereby ordered that in the future the following supplies only will be furnished by the County for use at the Jail and Jail House, viz: Fuel, Electric Lights for both Jail and Jail House, Kerosene Oil for use in the Jail, Stove and Cooking utensils, and dishes for the Jail; Soap and toilet paper for the Jail, Beds, Bedding, Clothing and Towels for Prisoners. Said supplies to be furnished only on order of the County Commissioners. It is also ordered that the prisoners be required to do their own washing and that no bills for washing will be allowed to the Jailer by the Commissioners. It is further ordered that notice of the foregoing order be given by the Clerk to the present jailer, and to the incoming Jailer. (Volume 15, p. 16. 1896.)*

From the records of prisoner intakes and discharges that do exist, from 1946 through the 1960s, it is clear that the jail housed both short-term 'guests' and inmates serving year long sentences. Some spent only hours at the jail while awaiting transfer by Federal Marshalls to the Thomaston prison, others were held only until their court date if they could not make bail. There are several names that reappear with startling consistency, such as that of one man, who between January 1960 and October of 1962 was checked into the facility, on charges of intoxication, eight times, and spent at least 13 ½ months in the jail during that period. According to local tradition, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when social services were scarcer, one woman made annual visits to the jail. As related by members of the Ellsworth Historical Society, "[She] was a local resident, who apparently had no permanent home. When the weather got cold each year, she would get 'roaring drunk' in order to get arrested....there were no facilities to house women, and it was a kinder and gentler time then. So [she] was given a third-floor room, which previously had been a child's bedroom, for the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 5

---

winter. In turn, she helped with the cooking and cleaning around the house and jail. And in the spring, she went her way again." (Hewitt, p. 6).

Between 1886 and when the jail was closed in the late 1970s, twenty men served as the Sheriff for Hancock County. It is not known how many of them lived in the house, or how many designated this responsibility to a jailer. The last Sheriff, Robert F. Williams, did not use the house as a residence, and either during his term or shortly before the northeast chamber was paneled and converted into an evidence room. After a fire in 1973 the second floor of the cellblocks were shut down, and a few years later the entire facility was abandoned. The property is now owned by the Ellsworth Historical Society, which both interprets the house and jail based on their historic function, and uses the building to store and display the Society's collections.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alexander, Nancy P. "The Ellsworth Historical Society: From Collection in Shoeboxes to Public Tours in Fifteen Years", in *Preview!* July 2-11, 1993. Page 5. Copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.

Bennett, Randall. Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture. (Bethel: Oxford County Historic Resource Survey), 1984.

Burns, Henry, Jr. Origin and Development of Jails in America. Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency, and Corrections. (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University). N.D.

Hancock County Sheriff's Calendars: 1945 to 1962. Volumes located in the Hancock County Sheriff's Office, Hancock County Courthouse, Ellsworth, Maine.

Herndon, Richard and Philip W. McIntyre and William F. Blanding, eds. Men of Progress: Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Leaders in Business and Professional Life in and of the State of Maine. (Boston: New England Magazine), 1897.

Hewitt, Rich. "The Old County Jail No Longer Holds Inmates; It Houses the Ellsworth Historical Society" in *Out & About in Downeast Maine*. (July 1997). Pages 5-6. Copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.

Lukacher, Joanne Martin. Historic Properties Survey: Knox County Jail. Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 1986. Copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.

Mason, J. K. Report of Rev. J. K. Mason, Commissioner from Maine to the International Penitentiary Congress: met in London, England. (Augusta, Maine: Sprague, Owen & Nash), 1873.

Mohney, Kirk F. "Washington County Jail." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. (NR: 88000393). January 1988.

Morris, Norval and David J. Rothman, eds. The Oxford History of the Prison. (New York: Oxford University Press), 1995

Moynahan, J. M. and Earle K. Stewart. The American Jail: Its Development and Growth. (Chicago: Nelson - Hall), 1980.

Oxford County Courthouse and Jail. Research and survey file of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine. 1995.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 3

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY, continued

Records of the Hancock County Commissioners. Volumes examined include Reference Volumes 11, 15, 22, and 28. Hancock County Commissioners' Office, Hancock County Courthouse, Ellsworth, Maine.

Shettleworth, Earle G., Jr. "Part 2 Turn-of-the-Century Architecture: from about 1880 to 1920" in Maine Forms of American Architecture, Deborah Thompson, ed. (Camden, Maine: Downeast Magazine), 1976. Pages 185-211.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 10 Page 2

---

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the nominated is depicted on the City of Ellsworth tax map number 136, lot 61.001, and is more fully described in the Quitclaim Deed with Covenant, recorded in the Hancock County Registry of Deeds, book 2790 page 31 and dated 8 September 1998.

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The most recent deed for the Hancock County Jail limits the legal boundaries of the property to the footprint of the structure itself; the surrounding land is owned by the County. Although the boundaries of this nomination reflect this arrangement, it must be noted that the historic setting of the property (i.e. the lawn, setback from the road, spatial relationship to neighboring properties) has been maintained for the most part, and does contribute to the overall integrity of the resource.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANCOCK COUNTY JAIL

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

---

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 4  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
29 August 2007  
East facade; facing west.

Photograph 2 of 4  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
29 August 2007  
North elevation of cell block; facing southwest.

Photograph 3 of 4  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
29 August 2007  
Interior, north aisle of first floor cell block; facing west.

Photograph 4 of 4  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
29 August 2007  
Interior, former Sheriff's office and jail entrance; facing northwest.