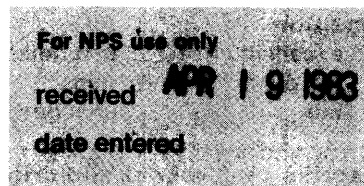


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



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

## 1. Name

historic Clatsop County Jail (Old)

and/or common N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 732 Duane Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Astoria

vicinity of First Congressional District

state Oregon

code 41

county Clatsop

code 007

## 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	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<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 type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Clatsop County

street & number 749 Commercial Street

city, town Astoria

vicinity of

state Oregon 97103

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clatsop County Courthouse

street & number 749 Commercial Street

city, town Astoria

state Oregon 97103

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Salem

state Oregon 97310

## 7. Description

Condition \_\_\_\_\_ excellent \_\_\_\_\_ deteriorated \_\_\_\_\_ Check one  unaltered \_\_\_\_\_ Check one  original site  
 good \_\_\_\_\_ ruins \_\_\_\_\_ altered \_\_\_\_\_ moved date N/A  
 fair \_\_\_\_\_ unexposed

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

The Old Clatsop County Jail housed prisoners in Clatsop County from the time of its completion in 1914 to 1976. Designed in the Classical style, it was constructed by local contractors Palmberg and Mattson. The source of the design is undocumented. Steel fittings were supplied by the Stewart Jail Works Company of Cincinnati. Since it was vacated as a detention facility, the jail has been used as storage space by the Clatsop County Sheriff's Department and the Clatsop County Grounds Department. While maintenance has suffered as a result, the building is structurally sound. It is situated on the southwest corner of the block occupied by the Clatsop County Courthouse and is surrounded by historic public buildings and residences as well as newer commercial properties and the Clatsop County Justice Center which superseded the old jail in 1979. The immediate neighborhood is zoned C-4 Commercial, which offers the potential for adaptive commercial use of the jail if necessary.

A two-story building on masonry foundation and partial basement, the Old Clatsop County Jail is constructed of reinforced concrete with exterior finish of stucco. Rectangular in plan, and measuring 35x51 feet, the building is oriented with its main axis east to west. Its flat, built-up roof is in poor condition. The building has a total of 29 double-hung windows in which wood sash have six over six lights. Each is protected by steel bars, and a little over half of them are additionally covered with metal mesh screens. The east, or front elevation is formally organized into three bays, the center bay being the entrance bay. The central entrance is raised slightly above grade and is reached by concrete steps. Fenestration is regular, and there are five bays in either side elevation, two in the rear. Door and window openings have unarticulated framements except that the windows have lugsills.

With its facade and corner pilasters, which have block-like capitals with tapered pendants, and with its full Roman Doric entablature, which includes a false pediment over the entrance bay, the jail is like a diminutive classical temple. The entablature is correctly proportioned, but its frieze is undecorated. Above the cornice embellished with a dentil course is a parapet which is stepped on the front elevation to provide a backing for the false pediment.

The interior is organized on a double side hall plan on the ground story. Administrative areas in the front are separated from cell blocks in the rear two thirds of the building. Opening onto corridors at north and south outside walls, the cell blocks contain three cells each measuring 6x7 feet and 7 feet in height. Each of the cells is equipped with wall-mounted, fold-down metal bunks, four to a cell. At the west end of the cell blocks is an open shower and toilet. The gate to the north cell block is missing.

The second story contains four detention areas, each with original steel doors. One of these areas is equipped with sink and tub, and in the center of the layout is a lavatory with sink and toilet. Stud walls erected as storage partitions in one of the second story office spaces are not original and can be removed readily.

The jail was heated by a oil-fueled boiler which supplied steam heat to radiators. The boiler room, which also houses the main electrical service panel, is located below grade in a partial basement story at the northeast corner of the building. It is entered by a stairwell and door at the north end of the front elevation.

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The Clatsop County Jail was built shortly after Astoria's centennial was celebrated in 1911. It was a period during which the city's fisheries, sawmills, canneries, flouring mills and varied business enterprises flourished. Astoria's brisk growth was cut short by a disastrous fire which broke out along the waterfront in 1922. While the Courthouse and Jail were spared, the fire spread to destroy acres of industrial buildings and wipe out 8 blocks of the business district lying to the east of the nominated property. Following reconstruction of its businesses and manufactories, Astoria regained its rank in Oregon commerce, with fishing, lumbering, dairying and general agriculture continuing as the stable industries.

The old Clatsop County Jail is locally significant as the County's historic prison facility from 1914 to 1976. An implement of law and order, it has witnessed every social, political and economic change in Astoria and Clatsop County since the period of the Astoria centennial. In both function and architectural style, it complements the civic group created by the Renaissance-inspired Clatsop County Courthouse (1908) and the modern Classical United States Post Office (1933). Buildings in Astoria's downtown core generally postdate the fire of 1922, and non-residential buildings in the traditional styles, such as the old Clatsop County Jail are therefore rare.

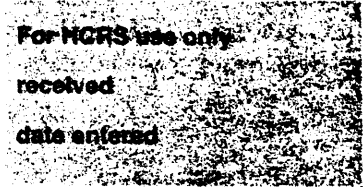
It is believed that the old Clatsop County Jail is the longest operating free-standing jail-house in Oregon. Upon consultation with county museums, historical societies and law enforcement agencies throughout the state, including those in Douglas, Jackson, Linn, Marion, Union, and Washington Counties, the old Clatsop County Jail surpassed other jails in years of service. During its 62 years of operation, the Clatsop County Jail was used exclusively for detention purposes, a factor which accounts for the general lack of structural alteration.

The precise date of completion of the Clatsop County Jail is undocumented. However, the construction contract for \$8,825 was let on May 17, 1913 to the local firm of Palmberg & Mattson. Also on that date, the Stewart Jail Works Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, was awarded the steel contract for \$5,200. Specifications show that the date of completion was to be sixty days after the arrival of the steel for the bars and cells and would indicate a completion date early in 1914. Nevertheless, a thorough, day-by-day search of the micro-film record of the city's leading newspaper at that time, the Astoria Daily Budget, through mid-1915, failed to pinpoint a completion date or dedication ceremony for the new building. The old Clatsop County Jail was used continuously from the date of its completion to 1976. In the latter year, the facilities were declared inadequate for housing prisoners by the State of Oregon. For the past six years, sections of the old jail have been used for storage of courtroom evidence by the Clatsop County Sheriff's Department, and as office space by Clatsop County grounds maintenance crews.

Charles G. Palmberg, principal of the contracting firm of Palmberg and Mattson, was a prominent figure in Astoria and Clatsop County in the early years of the century. He constructed a wide range of buildings, justifying his motto, "I will build anything from a wood box to a house." His documented work prior to the jailhouse project included several residences in central Astoria; two local schoolhouses, one in Svensen and the other in Skamokawa, 1902; an engine house on the Clatsop County Courthouse square, 1899; Fisher's Opera House, 1906; Astoria High School, 1908; Scow Bay Creamery, 1899; the Flavel Hotel, 1896;

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and the Weinhard-Astoria Hotel, 1909. Many of these landmarks were destroyed in the Astoria fire of 1922.

Palmborg emigrated from Sweden in 1886 after serving four years apprenticeship as a cabinet maker. He arrived in Astoria in 1890, and went to work as a journeyman carpenter. In 1893, he went into business for himself. An astute businessman, Palmborg incorporated several local companies, including Seaside Door & Lumber Co., Copperhead Mining Co., and the Astoria Clay Product brick plant, thus broadening his construction activities through the varied interests of his later career. He was elected president of the Scandanavian-American Savings Bank, and, in 1920, when that bank merged with the Astoria National Bank, he became vice president of the latter. He also was president of the Columbia Trust and Savings Bank, an affiliate of the Astoria National Bank.

In 1914, following completion of the Clatsop County Jail, Palmborg and Mattson were awarded the contract for construction of the United States Post Office in Pocatello, Idaho. The firm's Idaho project was completed in 1916, and the partnership was dissolved shortly thereafter.

Responsibility for the design of the old Clatsop County Jail is as yet unattributed.

## 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 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 type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1913-1914

**Builder/Architect** Palmberg and Mattson, contractors

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

The Clatsop County Jail at 7th and Duane Streets in Astoria, Oregon was constructed by local contractors Palmberg and Mattson and opened for use in 1914. Steel fittings were supplied by the Stewart Jail Works Company of Cincinnati. Constructed of reinforced concrete with a stucco exterior, the old jail is detailed in the Classical style with a Roman Doric entablature with undecorated frieze, a false pediment and pilasters marking the divisions of the three-bay principal facade. A rectangular volume of comparatively small scale, the two-story building has a ground plan measuring 35x51 feet. It occupies the southwest corner of the County Courthouse block and is overshadowed by Astoria's second Clatsop County Courthouse, immediately to the north. The latter is a brick masonry building of 1908 designed by Edgar Lazarus in the tradition of the American Renaissance. Though its surface is stuccoed and less elaborately detailed, the jail was clearly intended to be in harmony with the County's main administrative building. The two buildings are related by function and general stylistic characteristics, but the County Board of Commissioners has authorized nomination of the jail exclusively to date. The jail has been unused except for storage since 1976. A new detention facility was constructed by the County with Economic Development Administration assistance in 1979. The new Clatsop County Justice Center, as it is called, is located on the block to the west of the Courthouse.

The old Clatsop County Jail meets National Register criterion "a" as one of the longest operating county jails now standing in Oregon. It is significant also under criterion "c" as a rare, intact example of a freestanding jailhouse in western Oregon and as an example of the early use of reinforced concrete in local building construction. The jail is a minor, but nonetheless contributing component of what might be called Astoria's historic civic group, including the County Historical Society headquarters in the Captain George Flavel House of 1884, a National Register property which occupies the full block to the south; the County Courthouse of 1908, and the United States Courthouse and Post Office of 1933, which occupies the full block to the north.

Astoria is a coastal city which legitimately lays claim to many firsts. Situated on the south bank of the Columbia River, 12 miles inland from the mouth, Astoria was the site of first permanent settlement by Euro-Americans in the Oregon Country. It was established as a fur post in 1811 by men of John Jacob Astor's New York-based Pacific Fur Company. The post subsequently was sold to British-Canadian fur companies, but continued to be operated as a fur collecting station to 1839. The first overland immigrants arrived in 1844 and 1845, and trading vessels arrived at the mouth of the Columbia in increasing numbers, bound for inland settlements. On March 9, 1847, John W. Shively opened the first post office in the Pacific Northwest at Astoria. The region's first customs collector, General John Adair, arrived in 1849. In 1864 the first successful salmon cannery on the Columbia was opened in Astoria, and the community grew and prospered with the development of the West Coast fishing industry. Astoria enjoyed a period of brisk growth beginning in the 1880s and became a prime settlement area for Scandinavian immigrants attracted by the fishing and logging industries.

(continued)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, Proceedings.  
Palmborg, Herbert and Walter, "Charles G. Palmborg, Sunset Empire Builder,"  
Cumtax, Fall 1982, pages 2-9. Cumtax is the quarterly publication of the Clatsop County  
Historical Society.  
The Daily Astorian, November 5, 1982, editorial concerning the Palmborg family.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Astoria, Oregon-Washington

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 110 41315 61210 51715 71510  
Zone Easting Northing

B                           
Zone Easting Northing

C                         

D                         

E                         

F                         

G                         

H                         

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The Old Clatsop County Jail is located in Section 8, Township 9N, Range 9W, W.M., and occupies a 50x100-foot parcel (portions of Lots 7 and 8) at the southwest corner of Block 28, McClure's Addition to Astoria, Clatsop County, Oregon. Thus, the nominated area is limited to the jail and the 50x100-foot parcel it occupies. (cont'd)

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

state N/A code      county N/A code     

state N/A code      county N/A code     

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan M. Scully, Chairman

organization City of Astoria Historic Buildings & Sites Commission date May 11, 1982

street & number City Hall, 1095 Duane Street telephone (503) 325-5821

city or town Astoria state Oregon 97103

## 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 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date April 12, 1983

For NPS use only

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

  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 5/19/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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In due time, the Clatsop County Courthouse, which occupies the remainder of Block 28, may be nominated separately. The area herein proposed for nomination contains 5,000 square feet, or approximately 0.11 acres.