

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 26 1989

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Aroostook County Courthouse & Jail
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Court Street not for publication
city, town Houlton vicinity
state Maine code ME county Aroostook code 003 zip code 04730

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____

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.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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): _____

Entered in the
National Register

Alfonso Sykes

1/26/90

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Correctional Facility

Government/Courthouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Correctional Facility

Government/Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite

walls Brick

roof Metal/Tin

other Wooden Cupola with

Clock Faces

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Initially constructed in 1858 and subsequently enlarged through two major historic additions, the Aroostook County Courthouse and its connected jail is a large rambling brick complex that occupies a half city block in downtown Houlton. Stylistically, the courthouse building exhibits a blend of its original Italianate form and Colonial Revival features from the turn of the century. The historic brick jail and sheriff's residence, originally a separate building, is of Romanesque Revival design.

As originally built, the courthouse was a rectangular two-story building covered by a bell shaped mansard roof and crowned by a cupola. Its four-bay front (south) elevation featured an entrance porch with an arcade capped by a balustrade. Round arched windows were recessed in brick panels and a cornice with large modillions carried across the elevation. Small corbeled round arches were placed above the central paired windows. This pattern was repeated on the six-bay side elevations and probably at the rear although no known surviving document illustrates this. Trios of chimneys rose through the roof on the sides. The octagonal cupola was mounted atop a broad square base. A granite foundation supported the building.

The first major additions were made to the original building in the 1890s. Sanborn Insurance maps show that by 1894 the cupola had been altered to accept the clock, apparently achieving its present form, and in 1895 a two-story addition was made to the north end. This block is slightly wider than the original, and included a central porch on the north end similar in size to the original. From the exterior, its design and detailing replicate the original. In 1928 a second addition was made that brought the building to its final historic configuration. This eight-bay two-story block, which virtually doubled the size of the building, was added along the north side resulting in an overall L-shape form. The west side of this new block was recessed to the plane of the original. Once again, the original design formed the pattern for the new work. The 1928 building program also involved the addition of gambrel roofed pediments over both sides of the projecting three-bay block built in the 1890s, and the removal of the cupola from its original location to the middle of the 1895 block, thereby placing it in the center of the long elevation. In addition, a flat roofed porch was placed on the west side and a Palladian window was inserted into the tympanum of the pediments. The bell cast mansard was retained throughout and a number of chimneys were added.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1859-1939	1859
Politics/Government		1895
		1928

Cultural Affiliation
 N/A

Significant Person
 N/A

Architect/Builder
 Mansur, Wilfred E.
 Bryant, Gridley J. F.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Aroostook County Courthouse and Jail complex is the primary judicial and governmental center in Maine's vast northeastern county. First built in 1859 and substantially enlarged thereafter, it is one of the County's most significant architectural landmarks. For these reasons the complex meets criteria A and C.

Aroostook County, an area of 6,800 square miles, was incorporated on March 16, 1839. Its territory was initially drawn from portions of Penobscot and Washington counties. Upon enlargement in 1843 it drew from Penobscot, and in 1844 from Piscataquis and Somerset. The first county court and jail were located in the 1813 Black Hawk Putnam Tavern (N.R. 1/30/76), Houlton's first frame building. Later records show that court was held in rooms of the Houlton Academy for the ten years before the courthouse was finished in 1859. County treasury records show that funds were paid for the rent of various offices in the community for the commissioners and probate officers. [The following history of the original building was prepared by Nancy L. Yarborough and is reprinted here in edited form.]

In May of 1858, the county commissioners, then Chairman Benjamin Hawes of Ashland, Moses White of Houlton, and Bellony Violette of Van Buren, had a surplus of \$2,000-\$3,000 in the county treasury and decided to use these funds for a building to house a courthouse and offices for the county officials. On May 11th and July 6th, the Aroostook Times published articles by citizens of the county who objected to being taxed to build county buildings and questioned the excess funds in the treasury and need for a loan.

In the meeting notes of July 1858, the Aroostook County commissioners cited chapter seventy-eight, section six of the revised statutes which "...makes it the duty of the county commissioners to provide for the erection of courthouses and other necessary buildings for the use of the county." Chairman Hawes was asked to consult with "some competent architect" and take

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. New York. Editions of 1894, 1900, 1929, 1945 with update of 1949.

Yarborough, Nancy L. "Gridley J. F. Bryant and the Aroostook County Courthouse." Unpublished paper on file at the Cary Library, Houlton.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2

UTM References

A

1	9
---	---

5	8	9	6	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	1	0	8	3	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Zone Easting Northing

D

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies the Town of Houlton tax map 35, lot 107.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the building and city lot historically associated with this property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk E. Mobney, Architectural Historian
 organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date 10/89
 street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132
 city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

In its existing form the courthouse's original south entrance porch has been replaced by a narrow flat roofed brick addition housing a stairway to the second floor. The principal elevation is now located on the west side where access was established in 1928. The round arched six-over-six double-hung sash windows survive except where they have been replaced by glass block in the southwest eight bays of the second story. Most recently, a long brick addition has been made to the rear (east) of the courthouse for jail facilities. Its low two stories are covered by a flat roof such that the original block remains the taller and architecturally more apparent.

The interior of the courthouse is modestly finished throughout. Central cross axial hallways separate the first story into opposing office spaces of varying sizes. Public stairs are now located in the hall of the original block and vestibule of the 1895 addition. The courtroom and gallery are situated in the south end of the original block's second floor. Although Bryant projected an elaborately decorated space there is no evidence today that it was executed. The molded surrounds employed here are similar to those found throughout the remainder of the original building.

The former brick jail building which stands in the southeast portion of the lot was built in 1895. It consists of a hip roofed central block, the sheriff's residence, with a two-bay pedimented projection on the front adjoining a porch. The porch has two round arches supported on brick posts and covered by a shallow hip roof. To the east in the bay are four windows, with those on the lower story of unequal size. The upper units have two-over-two sash. A pair of round arched windows is located in the tympanum. A single window is positioned above the porch. Paired and single windows are located on the side elevations. Projecting to the rear is the two-story ell that originally housed the jail cells. The building underwent an expansion between 1929 and 1945 with a two-story concrete addition. The new jail building now incorporates most of the original ell and the later addition. Renovations have been made to the former sheriff's residence during its conversion to county office space.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

any steps necessary to start construction of the courthouse. Between July and October of 1858 the architect, Gridley J. F. Bryant, was contacted and asked to submit plans for the courthouse. In a letter to the county commissioners dated September 22, 1858, Bryant writes of his designs, "In all these particulars it is believed that accommodation will be as good as provided for in any of the recently constructed Court Houses of Sister Counties in the State."

Once the liason was made between Bryant and the county commissioners in 1858, plans for the construction of the Aroostook County Courthouse began. Because the rural community had limited funds the commissioners wanted the most efficient and effective courthouse for their money. Bryant sent them two designs along with prospective drawings and plans. Both building plans had the same exterior dimensions but with different exterior decoration and interior arrangement of rooms, stairways and entrances. He writes, "...they shall be in keeping with the best planned of similar structures of the present day with combined judicious economy of construction inside and outside of the building." Each story was to have ample passageways, entrances, hallways, and stairways for the public and county employees.

To save money Bryant recommended the use of square windows instead of arched ones and the substitution of a balustrade in the center of the roof if no cupola was used. Bryant writes, "...the omission of these features will not injure the utility of the building although the exterior effect will be somewhat less imposing and attractive. A cupola however would seem to be an important adjunct...if only to contain a bell." After viewing Bryant's drawings, the county commissioners chose the first design with the cupola instead of the balustrade, opting for other alterations to stay within their budget.

Once the design was chosen, Benjamin L. Staples, clerk of courts, was directed (in the October 9th meeting notes) to communicate with Bryant for the drawings, plans and specifications for the building and to advertise in newspapers inviting proposals for materials and labor costs for constructing the courthouse as soon as the plans were completed. These notes may be a record after the fact for an advertisement for "...sealed proposals for erecting Courthouse at Houlton..." is found in the Aroostook Times July 6, 1858. This early ad requires the proposals to be received at the clerk of courts in Houlton by July 27th. A later ad of December 7th extends the date to December 11th, with the time of building slated to begin in the spring of 1859 and be finished by November 1st of that year. It lists locations in Boston (Bryant's office), Lewiston and Houlton where the plans may be seen.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

Seven proposals are listed in the December 11th meeting notes, they are as follows:

Philip Lord of Bancroft and George A. Boltin of East Orrington, ME	\$19,185.72
Douglass and Spoffard of Bath, ME	17,500.00
Charles Webb of Augusta, ME	17,367.00
Coomb and Couillard of Bath, ME	16,537.00
Gordon and Creassey of Newburyport, CT	16,415.00
William Hogan of Bath, ME	14,925.00
Harrison D. Clement of Lawrence, MA	14,400.00

The extension of the proposal deadline and the origins of the bids suggest that the commissioners found it necessary to advertise out of state for competitive bids for construction. The same meeting notes of December 11th contain a copy of a contract made between the county and Harrison Clement listing strict orders dealing with building specifications, labor and materials, financial terms, any arbitration of problems plus changes, and additions to be made on the design. On December 14th the commissioners interviewed Clement, signed contracts, and procured a bond from Clement for \$4,000.

Bryant's actual design was changed somewhat by alterations listed by the county commissioners:

1 st Dispense with the cellar, but lay the foundation walls of sufficient depth for and as required for a good and permanent wall	\$ 933.00
2 nd Dispense with stone steps and iron railing and use good wood instead	350.00
3 rd Dispense with cement and use good lime mortar for brickwork	150.00
4 th Dispense with the roof ventilating apparatus	190.00
5 th Dispense with double thick glass and use single thick of same quality instead	75.00
6 th Dispense with a portion of the gravel around the walls	60.00
7 th Dispense with copper gutters and use wood of suitable quality instead	300.00
8 th Dispense with windows in cupola and have balustrade instead	25.00
	<u>2,083.00</u>
	\$2,083.00

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 4

The latest development in cement, ventilating apparatus and double paned windows probably seemed like unnecessary frills to the commissioners, for the alterations made above plus the omission of a slate roof (tin was substituted instead) saved the county \$2,083 in materials and labor. The builder was thus directed to make these alterations and deduct them from his bill and ordered to add the cost of purchasing and installing two fireproof safes.

At the January 1859 meeting, a new group of county commissioners took office. They were Moses White, Joel Fop and Oliver R. Siroi. Thomas M. Bradbury, Esq. newly elected county treasurer, was authorized to borrow \$14,000 for the use in constructing a county courthouse (the amount was to be paid in 10 annual payments beginning in 1862), and to issue county bonds at 6% interest per year. Construction of the Aroostook County Courthouse was begun in April of 1859 and was completed by November 1, 1859, as planned.

Expansion of the courthouse facility was undertaken in two stages. The November 15, 1889, edition of the Industrial Journal noted that architect Wilfred E. Mansur of Bangor had developed plans for the courthouse and new jail. However, the project did not begin until 1895. A second major addition was made in 1928 when a long wing was built across the north end and gambrel roofed pediments placed over the 1895 block. A separate jail facility on the property was here as early as 1877 when it was indicated on the Atlas of Aroostook County. It was probably in existence some years before if not originally, and was replaced with the 1895 building.

The courthouse and jail represent the work of two important architects. Gridley J. F. Bryant was one of New England's preeminent nineteenth century designers. From his Boston office Bryant enjoyed a prolific career which, by the 1850s, saw him develop a specialty in public buildings. It is in this area of design that Bryant is most widely represented in Maine. During the 1850s, in addition to the Aroostook facility, he drew the plans for the Androscoggin County Courthouse and Jail (NR 12/29/83), the Kennebec County Jail and the Washington County Jail (NR 4/7/88). Unlike Bryant, Wilfred E. Mansur's commissions were largely confined to Maine, principally Bangor. His work illustrates the gamut of popular architectural styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to the courthouse addition, in which he virtually replicated the Bryant design, Mansur is responsible for a number of brick commercial buildings in the Market Square Historic District (NR 6/22/80).