

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 30 1978
DATE ENTERED MAY 8 1979

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

Main Building at the Male Camp, State Prison Farm at Milledgeville

AND/OR COMMON

Old State Prison Building

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Georgia Highway 22,
approximately 3 miles west of Milledgeville

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Milledgeville

__ VICINITY OF

8th - Billy Evans

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Georgia

CODE

13

COUNTY

Baldwin

CODE

009 ✓

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Warehouse

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

J. P. Stevens Company

STREET & NUMBER

Georgia Highway 22

CITY, TOWN

Milledgeville

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Baldwin County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Milledgeville

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Baldwin County by W. G. Moffat

DATE

1976

__ FEDERAL STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Section

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The main building at the State Prison Farm in Milledgeville is a two-story ferro-concrete structure, faced with brick. Two rear projecting wings, used for cells, make the building a "U" shape. The principal facade faces south.

A projecting, two-story portico, with brick columns on each story is placed on the center line of the south facade. The south elevation itself is divided into three visual parts by a slightly projecting center portion. The main entrance is on the second story, approached by concrete steps. The porch floor is concrete, the porch roof is wood and terminates at the eave line in arches supported by the brick columns. The first story windows are squareheaded, but three windows on either side of the entrance are arched, further defining the projecting center portion. The front door is enframed in an arched transom and sidelights. The glass areas of this entrance way are divided into very small square panes.

The annual report of the prison commissioners for 1924 states that new porch and steps were placed on the main building, but the report does not state whether these were entirely new or merely repairs to an existing unit.

The original use of the interior rooms was printed in the Milledgeville Union Recorder on January 31, 1911, and was as follows: "The first or ground floor will be used for a dining room and kitchen, boiler room and guard room. The dining room will be 42' x 200', well lighted and ventilated and large enough to seat 200 prisoners. The kitchen will be large, well arranged, with a back oven, pantry and store room, and a small track in the floor so that meals can be served on roller trays.

"The second or main floor will be used for the offices and guards, with ample hospital space for white and colored prisoners, separate. The lodging hall is 42' x 200' and is so arranged that it will comfortably accomodate 250 prisoners and will be fitted with the latest improved bunks. The front of the building will be 137' x 56' with the long dormitory extending 310' x 62'."

Concrete and brick are used throughout as materials. The walls are plastered and there are remnants of frescos in the former cells painted by inmates. Among those remaining are a whale, cartoon figures, scenics, houses, and crucifixion and other religious scenes. These paintings are rapidly deteriorating in the damp atmosphere. Today there is evidence that there were cells in both wings, upstairs and down, at one time. They appear extremely small, 10' x 14', perhaps speaking to the overcrowded conditions mentioned in later reports. All partitions and fixtures have been removed today and the building is crudely reinforced by steel "I" beams and it is now used as a warehouse by the J. P. Stevens Company, a worsted manufacturer.

After the legislature declared electrocution legal in Georgia, part of the basement was converted to death chambers. The room where, presumably, these electrocutions took place (first story) bears a window with dates carved in the frame, 1925, 1928, etc. and there are over 50 notches on the frame, a macabre tally of the effectiveness of the chair.

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input 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 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			Penal Institutions

SPECIFIC DATES 1911

BUILDER/ARCHITECT A. C. Bruce

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The main building at the Male Camp of the State Prison Farm at Milledgeville is important historically for its role in the famous Mary Phagan murder case, and that it housed the first electric chair in Georgia.

In 1911, the State Prison Commission erected a new prison building to replace a burned structure at the State Farm near Milledgeville. Plans were drawn by architect A. C. Bruce of Atlanta. Work began in March of 1911. The contractor for the building was a Mr. Bryce. An article in the Milledgeville Union Recorder dated March 7, 1911, stated that the building was expected to meet the needs of the state for the next 100 years. It barely did for 30.

Leo M. Frank was superintendent of a pencil factory in Atlanta. On April 27, 1913, Mary Phagan, a young girl employed in the factory, was found dead in the basement of the plant. Frank was accused of the crime, arrested and convicted; but many were of the opinion that the evidence was insufficient to support the conviction. While the case dragged on, twenty-five armed men, only two wearing masks, entered the State Penitentiary at Milledgeville and abducted Leo Frank. He was hanged by this mob near Marietta. This action of mob violence focused national attention on Georgia at the time. After the investigation, Governor Harris reported, "The Penitentiary was not built to keep people out, but to keep them in when put there."

Electric Chair: The 1924 Annual Report of the Superintendent of the State Prison Farm states:

"The adoption by the Legislature of electrocution as a legal method of inflicting the death penalty in Georgia resulted in the installation of the electric chair here (1924). It was necessary to remodel the basement of this camp to establish a death chamber and a room containing two death cells constructed of saw-proof steel. The actual chair was constructed by inmates. There has been one execution during the year, that of a Negro, and it went forward with a minimum of confusion and delay."

By 1932, 85 inmates had died in the electric chair. No one was more affected by these deaths than the Chaplain of the institution, who wrote in 1930 that "163 services have been held in the gloom of the 'Death Cells' with condemned men, sent here to be electrocuted." In 1923, the State Farm Religious Association had been established and was "A company of men and women banded together to study the word of God, pray together, and help each other work out their salvation" (Chaplain's Report). The conversions reported each year in the Chaplain's annual reports are

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Annual Reports of the Prison Commission of Georgia, 1919-1942, various publishers,
 Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.
 Savannah Morning News, April 4, 1917.
 Milledgeville Union Recorder: January 31, 1911, March 7, 1911, March 28, 1911,
 July 25, 1911.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 3 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Browns Crossing

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 287640 3663860

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

L

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary shall be formed by a line that connects points determined to be 50 feet from any and all exterior walls of the structure.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Beth Lattimore Reiter, Historic Preservation Planner, Savannah, Georgia
Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historical Researcher, Historic Preservation Section

ORGANIZATION Historic Preservation Section

DATE December 1976

STREET & NUMBER 270 Washington Street, S. W.

TELEPHONE (404) 656-2840

CITY OR TOWN Atlanta

STATE Georgia 30334

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE X 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

Elizabeth A. Lyon
 Elizabeth A. Lyon

TITLE Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 5/16/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Charles A. Starnes
 CHARLES A. STARNES
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

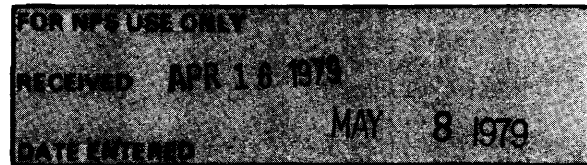
DATE 5-8-79

ATTEST: *Bill LeBranch*
 BILL LEBRANCH
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE May 3, 1979

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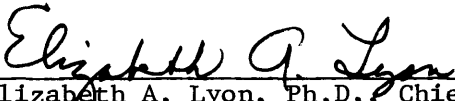
U. S. Bureau of Prisons, Handbook of Correctional Institution Design and Construction, 1949.

Walden, Mary P., "History of the Georgia Penitentiary at Milledgeville, 1817-1868"
Thesis, Georgia State University, 1974.

Prepared By:

Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian
Richard Cloues, Architectural Historian
Steve Hensen, Researcher
Historic Preservation Section
Department of Natural Resources
270 Washington Street, S. W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

April 5, 1979

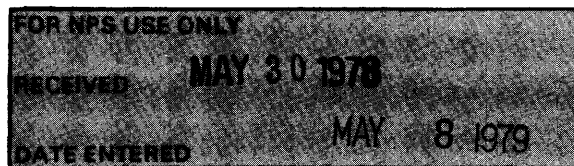


Elizabeth A. Lyon, Ph.D., Chief
Historic Preservation Section
Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

4/4/79
Date

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

colorfully evident in the flaking paint of frescos painted by inmates along the cell walls - crucifixion and other religious scenes are mingled with remnants of more secular subjects.

By 1935, the prison was overcrowded with over two-thirds of its inmates disabled and unable to work on the farm. There were not sufficient provisions to meet the needs of the great number of inmates. Soon, Reidsville Prison was opened and the old State Prison Farm was gradually abandoned. Today, the main building stands as a grim reminder of an era of lynchings, racial hatred, chain gangs, and its electric chair - a crude, wire affair, hand-made by the inmates.

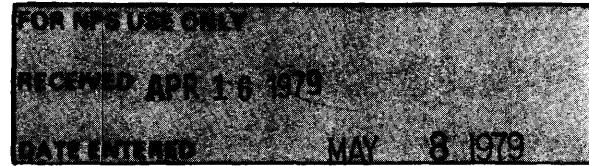
Alexander C. Bruce (Sketch taken from Atlanta Architecture, The Victorian Heritage, 1837-1918. Dr. Elizabeth A. Lyon, Atlanta Historical Society, 1976.)

The architect for the State Prison Farm, Alexander C. Bruce (1835-1927) was Atlanta's first member of the American Institute of Architects. "Born in Fredericksburg, Virginia, Bruce trained in the Nashville, Tennessee office of an English architect, H. M. Akeroid. In 1864 he began his own practice in Knoxville and in 1873 was elected to associate membership in the AIA. He came to Atlanta in 1879 to form a partnership with W. H. Parkins, and the two participated in designing many public buildings in Georgia. In later partnership with T. H. Morgan, he was responsible for business buildings in High Victorian Gothic, Renaissance, Romanesque, and other revival styles, as well as buildings in the more utilitarian 'Commercial Style'."

Among the buildings by Bruce and Morgan in Atlanta are: Concordia Hall (1893), Prudential Building (1898), Empire Building (1901), All Saints Episcopal Church (1903); In Savannah: National Bank Building (1903).

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

AMENDMENT

OLD STATE PRISON BUILDING
MILLEDGEVILLE, BALDWIN COUNTY, GEORGIA

Significance:

The Old State Prison Building/Main Building at the Male Camp, State Prison Farm (whose building history has been covered in the Significance section of the original nomination) was one of a series of state-owned and operated penal institutions of the Georgia Prison System and the last one built in the Milledgeville, Georgia area. The building is significant in architecture and history, in the latter especially as the site where the electric chair was introduced in Georgia.

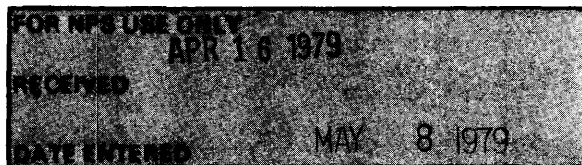
The Georgia prison system began in 1816 when the first state-owned and operated prison building was built in Milledgeville, then the state capitol. This site where the state prison was located from 1816 through the early 1870's is now a part of the Georgia College main campus.

When the first prisoners arrived in 1817, it marked a change in Georgia's penal history. Prior to this time, the county sheriffs controlled all prisoners. In 1831, the original facility was burned and the state penitentiary system was temporarily in abeyance due to a brief repeal of the law of 1816. After the system was reinstated, a new fireproof facility was built employing the Baltimore pattern of confinement, also known as the Auburn System of Discipline. This meant that the prisoners worked during the day in silence and were kept in solitary confinement at night. Another fire in 1843 destroyed the wooden buildings, but the fireproof ones remained and were expanded. These were being used for war efforts at the time of another fire, November 23, 1864, as the Federal troops of General W. T. Sherman were arriving. However, it is felt the prisoners, not the Federal troops, set the fire. There was always a continuing political battle against a state penal system and after the fires of 1831 and 1864 there was a great deal of opposition to rebuilding the prison. The opposition desired to return to the county jail system.

The prison in Milledgeville was repaired during 1866-68 after a long debate in the State Legislature. Other means of dealing with prisoners were devised. The county chain gang and the convict lease systems were authorized in 1866. The contract lease system was implemented during Reconstruction under the military governor of 1868. The penitentiary itself was leased in 1869 for two years to a private firm which had contracted for the prisoners under the lease system.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Amendment ITEM NUMBER PAGE 2

In 1870, a state committee investigated the building's condition and management. There were only a few convicts left and, in 1874, the state housing and maintenance of prisoners was ended by the new civilian-run legislature when they eliminated all state prison officials except the keeper and provided for all convicts to be hired by private citizens under the convict lease system.

After this, the building began to be destroyed piecemeal, as bricks were used in various local projects including the state mental hospital and bridges. At some time, the remains were removed and between 1889-1891 the Georgia Normal and Industrial College (later Georgia State College for Women, now Georgia College) was built on the site in central Milledgeville.

It was not until 1897 that the state once again returned to maintaining a state prison when a prison farm was established two miles from Milledgeville. The State Prison Commission was created at this time to manage the prison farm and the leased convicts. After the convict lease system ended in 1908, the prisoners were once again centrally incarcerated in a state facility. This return to centralization necessitated the building of the present, nominated structure in 1911 to house the overflow of prisoners who had been under contract but were then returned to state control and to replace a temporary structure that had burned.

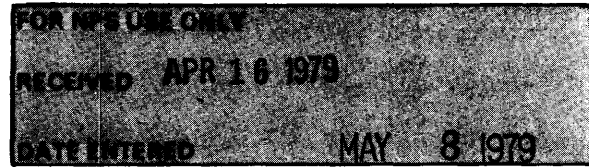
In 1924, the electric chair was installed for capital crimes and thus all executions (which until then had been conducted at the local level, regardless of whether the prisoner was in the state prison or not) were conducted at this facility.

This facility (the nominated property) served until 1937 when the state took possession of the new, federal-built state prison at Reidsville, Georgia. After being abandoned as a prison, this facility was used as a warehouse by later owners, including the present ones, the J. P. Stevens Company.

The Old State Prison Building is thus the only remaining state-built prison facility in Georgia, the current state prison having been built by the federal government. All other state-built penal institutions from the nineteenth century have been demolished. In the history of Georgia's penal system, this building was the site of the installation and first use of the electric chair, the first state-wide execution system in Georgia. It served as the state's execution site for approximately 25 years.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Amendment ITEM NUMBER PAGE 3

The building is a transitional landmark between the old, nineteenth century prison system characterized by poor facilities and harsh conditions with no goals or ideals toward rehabilitation, and the current prison system with its ideals of rehabilitation and better conditions.

The Old State Prison Building at Milledgeville has significance in the history of architecture and planning because it represents (1) the persistence into the twentieth century of nineteenth century ideas about prison planning and (2) the combination of these traditional planning principles with more modern construction practices and more up-to-date styling. The plan of the Old State Prison Building is essentially U-shaped, with an administration section in front and projecting wings which contain individual incarceration cells in the rear. This plan derives from the early nineteenth century "Auburn-Sing Sing" prison plan. The New York State prisons at Auburn (1816-1825) and Mount Pleasant (Sing Sing) (1825-1828) were the prototypes for prison planning in the United States during the next hundred years, and few major prisons built between the 1820's and the 1920's deviated in any significant respects from them. The Old State Prison Building at Milledgeville is evidence of the persistence of this early nineteenth century prison plan into the first decades of the twentieth century. In terms of its engineering, however, the Old State Prison Building is more modern. The building features a reinforced concrete structural system largely sheathed with brick laid in American bond. Although not radically modern, such construction is an advance upon the nineteenth century load-bearing masonry wall and reflects prevailing practices in industrial architecture. Architecturally, the Old State Prison Building is also up-to-date. Its front facade especially, with its multiple-paned round-arched windows, its contrasting keystones, its central portico (now altered from the original), and its red brick with white trim, speaks of the Georgian Revival style so popular in early twentieth century architecture. The sides and rear of the building are essentially utilitarian.

Bibliographical References:

Bonner, James C., "The Georgia Penitentiary at Milledgeville 1817-1874" The Georgia Historical Quarterly, LV(3) Fall, 1971, pp. 303-328.

McKelvey, Blake, American Prisons: A History of Good Intentions, 1977.