

KENT COUNTY JAIL
Chestertown, Maryland
(19th)

The old Kent County Jail is a large two-and-one-half story brick structure located directly north of the original Kent Courthouse. In conjunction with Emanuel Episcopal Church it forms a kind of side courtyard to the Courthouse. Northeast of the Jail partially obscured by later additions, is the stable built to serve the county complex.

The old Jail building is significant because it is a dated example of a public building of the late 19th century. In addition, its siting shows a deliberate effort on the part of the County Government and the designer to create a well defined and attractive governmental square. The selection of building form, material and detailing by the architect, J.C. Neilson, shows a careful and thoughtful attempt to relate this building to its neighbor , the County Courthouse, while at the same time expressing architectural ideas derived from the Queen Anne Style which was popular at that time.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC KENT COUNTY JAIL

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Court House Square

1st

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Kent

STATE

Maryland 21620

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Commissioners of Kent County

Telephone #: 778-4600, ext. 34

STREET & NUMBER

Court House

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

___ VICINITY OF

Maryland STATE, zip code
21620

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Liber #:

Folio #:

None

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

K-440

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The old Kent County Jail is a large two-and-one-half story brick structure located directly north of the original Kent Courthouse. In conjunction with Emanuel Episcopal Church it forms a kind of side courtyard to the Courthouse. Northeast of the Jail partially obscured by later additions, is the stable built to serve the county complex.

The Jail building is an assymetrical T in plan with the "tail" of the T running parallel to Cross Street. The "head" of the T is three bays long and three bays deep. The "tail" of the T is two bays long and one bay deep. Two and a half stories in height overall, the portion of the building which makes up the "tail" of the T-plan is slightly taller. The slate roof of the building is a steep hip with a built-in gutter which breaks the slope of the roof just above the eave-line.

The architect of the Jail selected bricks which closely resemble the bricks of the 1860 Courthouse. Dark orange in color and regular in shape, they are laid in common bond with well-defined white mortar joints. The cornice of the Jail exactly duplicates the cornice of the Courthouse with the use of one-stretcher wide, three-step corbels with alternate corbels recessed along the entire cornice. Although the Courthouse cornice is enriched with wooden brackets, the cornice of the Jail is left plain. Another brick feature which resembles the older building is the water table; that of the Jail is molded while the Courthouse water table is plain.

The building is entered via wooden porches located in the interior corners. The porches have shallow hipped or shed roofs covered with raised-seam roofing, bold turned wooden posts, pierced work balustrades and exposed roof joists. The main entrance has a pair of flush beaded double doors with a transom light.

Windows are evenly spaced throughout the building although several of the window bays on the first floor are left blank. The central windows of the projecting

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

K-440

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES *1884 (on datestone)* BUILDER/ARCHITECT *J.C. Neilson; H.M. Stuart, Builder*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The old Jail building is significant because it is a dated example of a public building of the late 19th century. In addition, its siting shows a deliberate effort on the part of the County Government and the designer to create a well defined and attractive governmental square. The selection of building form, material and detailing by the architect, J.C. Neilson, shows a careful and ~~thoughtful attempt~~ to relate this building to its neighbor, the County Courthouse, while at the same time expressing architectural ideas derived from the Queen Anne Style which was popular at that time.

The future of the old Jail and its companion carriage house is uncertain. In 1969 when preservation of historic buildings was less popular and less feasible -- economically -- than today, an extension of the old Kent Court House was constructed with an enormous Georgian Revival portico a few feet behind the rear wall of the Jail. The idea was to replace the Jail with a new, more liveable structure, and destroy the old building. Since that time, however, the fate of the Jail building has become a matter of public debate, and recently the possibility of moving the structure to a site nearby has been suggested.

Because its style, scale, and materials make it compatible with the public buildings of Chestertown and because of its sound structural condition, the building appears to be an excellent candidate for adaptive reuse, possibly for public or private offices. By careful siting -- if moved -- and by equally careful redesign of the interior, it could continue to be an asset to the governmental center of Kent County

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

K-440

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE *Marsha L. Fritz, Survey Consultant*

ORGANIZATION *Kent County Planning Commission* DATE *778-4600 ext 67*

STREET & NUMBER *Court House* TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN *Chestertown, Maryland 21620* STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

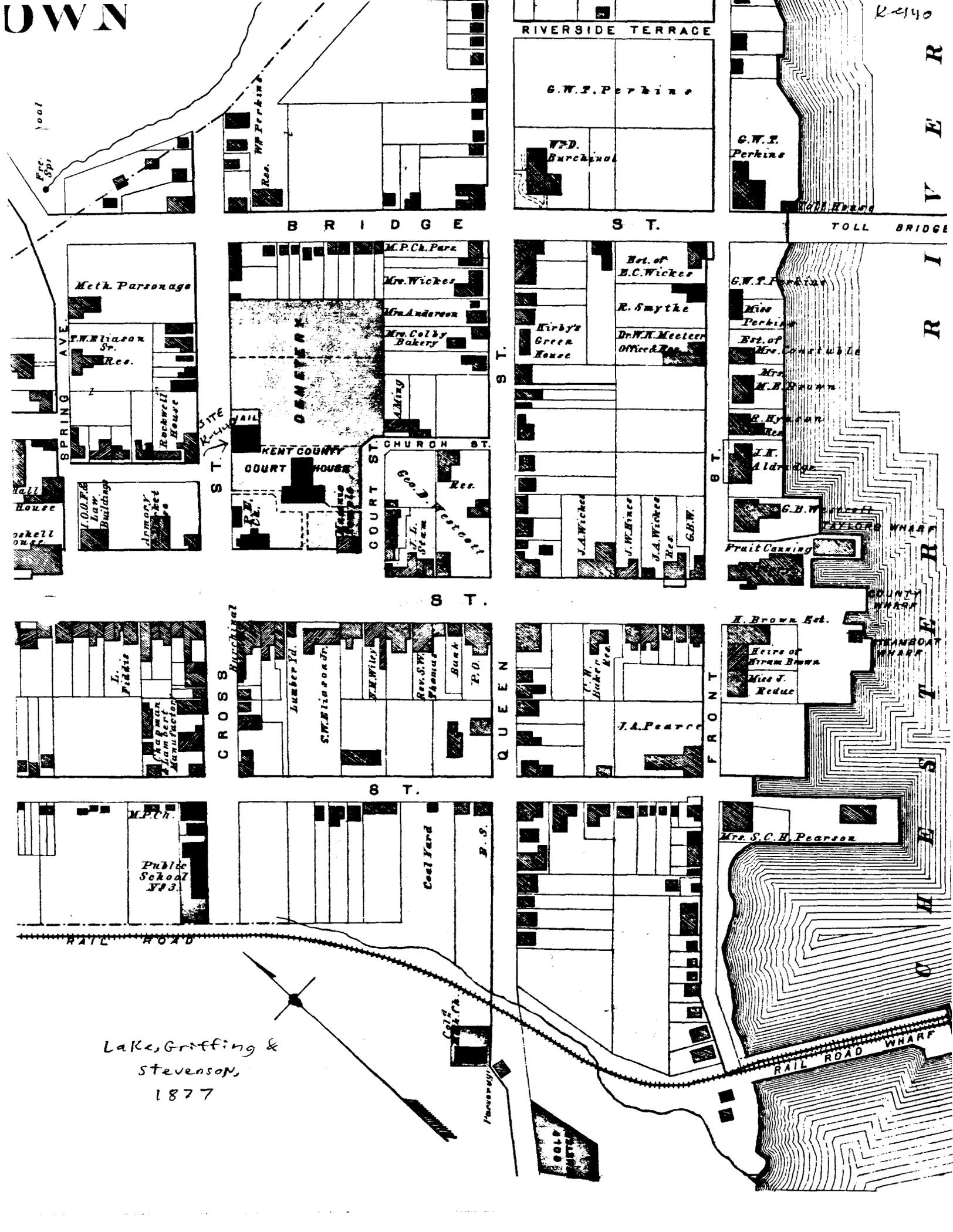
pavillions are emphasized by a corbelled projection. Six over six and nine over nine sash, 1" bead-frames, and projecting stone sills are used throughout. It is interesting to note the close correspondence between the windows of the Courthouse; both buildings have segmentally arched heads and windows of similiar proportions.

Two kinds of dormers light the upper story. In the narrow tail of the "T" the 12 over 12 sash windows of the dormers are set so that they cut into the cornice line, and, as a result, the eaves of the dormer roofs rest **on** the building roof. The space above the windows **is** covered with imbricated slate shingles. The dormers in the rest of the building have 8 over 8 sash windows and shallow pitched roofs; they are set between the window bays but above the cornice lines.

As reflected in the plan, the interior spaces are zoned into two parts; the head of the T contains cells for prisoners while public rooms, offices, and the Sheriff's quarters are located in the tail.

Interior doors in public areas have beaded surrounds with an ogee backband. The doors themselves either have 6 flush, beaded panels or are thick board doors. The mantles that remain are simple boards supported by cast iron bracketts. In the major rooms are reeded chair rails, about 5" wide. The cells on the first floor are located in a row of brick barrel vaults that provide security and structural support for the steel-plated cells on the second floor. Still in place on the first floor are the cast iron rings, imbedded into the walls of the cells, that were used to restrain unruly inmates; and the slots in the kitchen walls for passing food into the cell block also remain. In contrast to the dungeon-like first floor cells, the quarters on the second floor are larger and have large (though barred) windows.

Behind the Jail is the stable building, a 1½ story brick structure erected about 1880 to serve the county government. This small building which now houses the State Police has lost most of its interior detail, but retains a pair of wooden loft doors in a front gable on its south east facade. The southern side of the building has been extended by a catslide addition. This structure is one of the last stables remaining in downtown Chestertown.



1007
Frc. Spi.
W.P. Perkins
Res.

RIVERSIDE TERRACE
G.W.T. Perkins
W.D. Burchinal

G.W.T. Perkins
TOLL BRIDGE

SPRING AVE.
Meth. Parsonage
T.W. Eliason Sr.
Rec.
Rockwell House
I.O.O.F. Law Buildings
Armory
Hall House
Croskell House

BRIDGE ST.
M.P. Ch. Para.
Mrs. Wickes
Mrs. Anderson
Mrs. Colby Bakery
A. Ming
KENT COUNTY COURT HOUSE
Geo. D. Westcott
Res.
W. L. Strem

ST.
Est. of B.C. Wickes
R. Smythe
Kirby's Green House
J.A. Wickes
J.W. France
J.A. Wickes
Res.
G.P.W.

ST.
G.W.T. Perkins
Miss Perkins
Est. of Mrs. Constable
Mrs. M.A. Johnson
P. Hyman
Res.
J.K. Aldridge
G.B. Westcott
Fruit Canning
TAYLOR'S WHARF

CROSS ST.
L. Piddie
Chapman & Lambert
Manufacturer

ST.
Lumber Yd.
S.M. Eliason Jr.
J.N. Wiley
Rev. S.W. Thomas
Black
P.O.

QUEEN ST.
J.A. Pearce

FRONT ST.
H. Brown Est.
Heirs of Hiram Brown
Miss J. Reduc
COUNTY WHARF
TRAMWAY WHARF

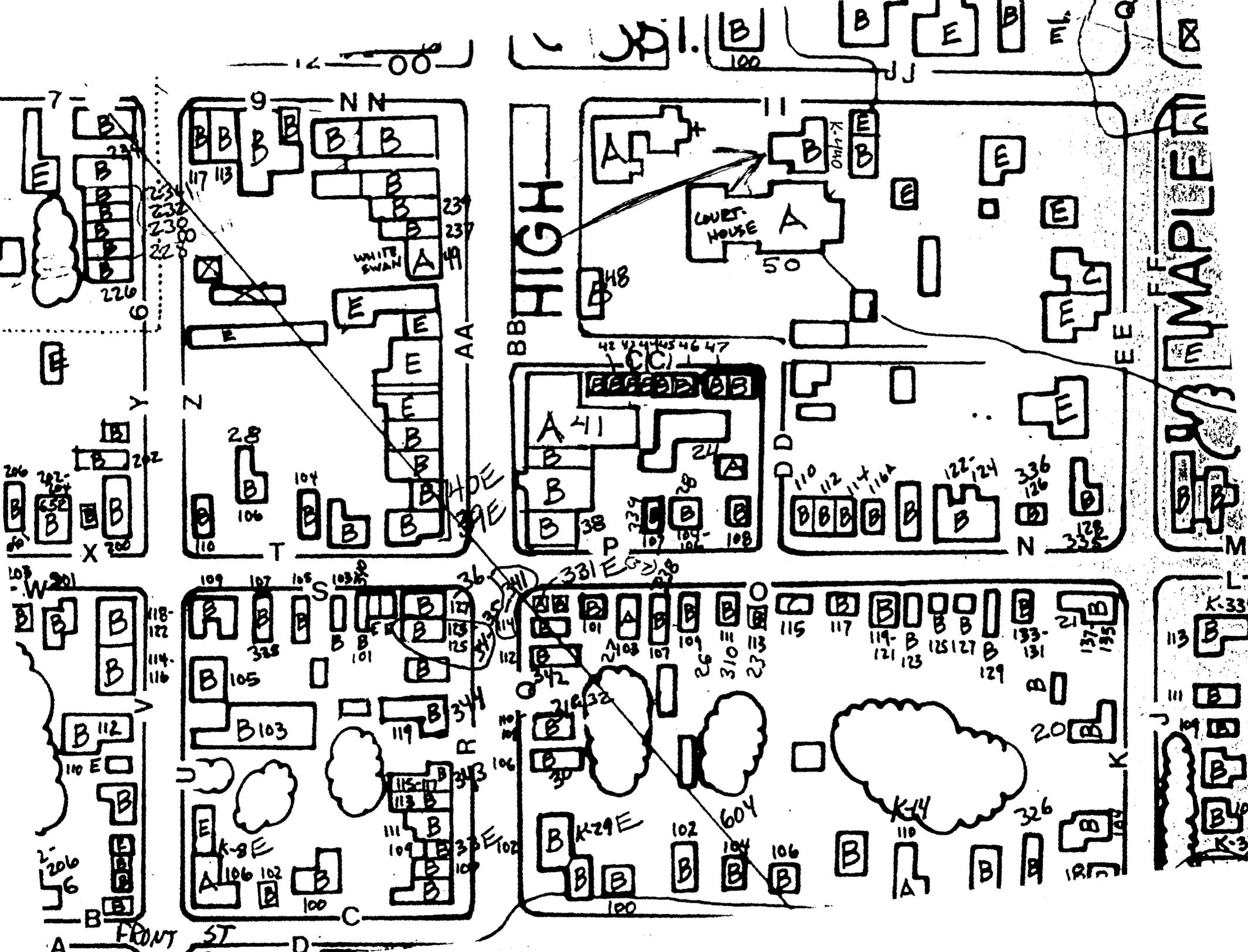
M.P. Ch.
Public School 183.

ST.
Cool Yard
P.S.

ST.
CAMP

ST.
Mrs. S.C.H. Pearson
RAIL ROAD WHARF

Lake, Griffing & Stevenson,
1877





K-440

Kent Co. Jail
View to NE

C'town

Sept 1980

M.L. Fritz (Jed)

PRINTED BY
J. Tyler Campbell
CHESTERTOWN, MARYLAND

SEP 25 1980



K-440

Kent County Jail and Sherriff's House
Chestertown

Photo courtesy of James Wollon
no additional information available

MAR 95

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Kent County Jail and Sherriff's House
Chestertown

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no additional information available

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