

November 26, 1985

The existing historic Talbot County Jail building is located within the Nationally Registered Historic District of Easton, which was included in the National Register of Historic Places on September 17, 1980. The Jail is also listed in the Trust's Inventory of Historic Sites as Item #T-548. Constructed of rough-cut granite blocks with decorative bands of brick, the two-story structure was built in 1881. In style it is a Queen Anne - influenced building. There are modified Romanesque - styled arches over the windows, constructed of brick, there are window sills constructed of granite, a slate hipped roof, and a plain stepped watertable encircling the structure. A building of similar construction materials, originally a jailer's residence with Queen Anne - styled frame one-story porch, is attached to one side of the Jail. As such, the existing building is a well - preserved example of a late 19th century jail. This is one of few government buildings designed in the Queen Anne style on the Eastern Shore and one of very few granite structures in Talbot County - the others being churches and a rectory. Its design is very similar to the Dorchester County Jail, which was designed by Charles L. Carson, an architect from Baltimore. It has been a symbol of law and government in Talbot County since its construction in the late 19th century and, therefore, is a significant structure worthy of preservation and rehabilitation. Because of its architectural and historical significance, when the laws of 1984 allocated funds for the planning of a jail, a perpetual preservation easement on the jail structure was made a requirement.

Catherine Adams Masek

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic TALBOT COUNTY JAIL

and/or common Talbot County Detention Center

2. Location

street & number Courthouse Square not for publication

city, town Easton vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Talbot

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Talbot County Council

street & number Talbot County Courthouse telephone no.:

city, town Easton state and zip code MD 21601

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Talbot County Clerk of Court liber

street & number Talbot County Courthouse folio

city, town Easton state MD 21601

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland Historic Sites Inventory

date federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis state MD 21401

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Talbot County Jail stands on the southeast corner of the intersection of Federal and West streets on the courthouse square in the heart of Easton, Talbot County, Maryland. The two-and-a-half story, rough-cut granite jail faces east with the principal gable roof oriented on a north/south axis.

Built in 1881 after the designs of the Baltimore architectural firm of Dixon and Kennedy, the two-and-a-half story, four-bay, semi-coursed granite jail rests on a fully excavated granite foundation. The 1881 structure is divided into two principal parts; the front section, which houses the sheriff's offices, kitchen, as well as a few cells, and the rear section which is devoted to a bi-level cell block. The front part of the jail building, following a center hall, single-pile plan, is covered by a steeply pitched cross-gable roof, while the rear portion is topped by a modified hip roof, also sheathed in slate. Extending from the south end of the front section is a single-story, flat-roofed addition attached around 1950. More recently a screened in basketball court surrounded by a stockade wall was fitted along the south side of the rear cell block.

The east (main) facade of the granite jail is an uneven four-bay elevation with a center double-door entrance sheltered by a turned post, hipped roof porch. Providing access to the porch is a set of concrete steps which probably replaced the former wooden steps. The original double-leaf paneled doors are flanked to the south by a small two-over-two sash window sheltered by the porch roof as well. To each side of the porch are paired four-over-four sash windows accented with brick segmental arches and granite sills. At ground level are segmental arched cellar window openings.

The second floor of the jail is marked by an evenly spaced series of four four-over-four sash windows featuring pointed, raised brick arches tied together by a continuous beltcourse that extends around the gable ends at the window lintel level. Another beltcourse, two bricks wide, encircles the front section at the window sill level. The windows also feature granite sills. Set between the center two second floor windows is a datestone inscribed "1881." Piercing the face of the cross-gable are paired six-over-six sash windows. A rectangular panel of brickwork laid in the basketweave pattern marks the wall below the cross-gable window. The base of the roof is finished with a corbelled brick cornice.

The north gable end of the front section follows a symmetrical fenestration. A pair of segmental arched cellar window openings marks the basement level where spade-tipped iron bars are fixed in the side walls. The first and second floors are pierced by two evenly spaced four-over-four sash windows accented with plain segmental arches on the first floor and raised brick

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Talbot County Jail Description (continued)

arches on the second floor. The brick beltcourses continue around to each gable end. Piercing the gable end is a pair of six-over-six sash windows surrounded by a wall of slate. A side door that provides access to the cellar kitchen is located on this side as well, fitted into the corner between the front section and the rear cell block wall.

The south gable end, on the other hand, has been partially covered by the 1950s single-story, flat-roofed brick addition. A doorway on the second floor of the jail building has been cut through for access to the roof of the brick addition. The upper section of the gable end repeats the same finishes described for the north end.

The west side of the front section is largely covered by the bi-level granite wall cell block. Along the west wall a rectangular chimney rises through the roof of the front section and is finished with a corbelled cap. A slightly larger stack rises through the cell block to serve the boiler.

The cell block is marked by five bays across the Federal Street elevation and two bays on West Street. The long window openings, filled with metal hopper-style windows, are accented by brick trim in the same manner as the front section, and the base of the modified hip roof is defined by a corbelled cornice. The west side of the cell block is marked by two long window openings as well as a small granite wall enclosure. Located behind the jail and forming part of the complex is a single story concrete block outbuilding covered with a low pitched asphalt shingle roof. The south side of the cell block is largely obscured by a modern basketball court surrounded by a stockade fence that encloses a metal fence.

The interior of the jail has been modified somewhat to accommodate the modern functions of the building, but several original features remain. The ground floor or cellar of the front section houses the kitchen and laundry, squarish rooms on either side of a center hall. Remaining in the hall is the original stair which rises through the jail to the finished third floor. A heavy chamfered edge newel post with a pyramidal head anchors the beaded board wainscoting that serves as the railing. The beaded board railing is topped by a molded handrail. A small pantry is located under the ground floor stair.

The kitchen, on the north side of the hall, has been fitted with modern equipment. Surviving behind the sink on the west wall is a blocked fireplace which retains a plain plank mantel shelf. On the south side of the hallway is the laundry, a slightly smaller room which provides access to the boiler. The boiler room door, a large metal door hung on long strap hinges, is of undetermined age. Fixed on the south wall is a beaded board door that opens into a small closet. Next to the beaded board door is a squarish metal door that opens into a storage space beneath the 1950s addition.

The first floor follows the same center hall/single-pile plan with a few modifications. Alterations have been made to the stair as it is now boxed in with modern materials. A small hallway room, now housing a bathroom, is entered through a doorway at the west end of the stair hall. The original function of the room is unclear, but it survives with a built-in beaded board door cupboard and sections of ogee-molded baseboard. When it was converted to a bathroom the space was made smaller to allow a niche in the front wall for a closet. Breaks in the baseboard moldings and later wall materials point to the later alterations. Original to the hallway wall that forms this room is the rounded corner fitted with a curved baseboard molding.

The doorway opening into the office on the north side of the hall is framed by an original surround, although the Victorian door has been removed. In conversion to modern offices, the walls have been covered with modern sheet paneling and the ceiling has been lowered. A closet has been added in the southwest corner.

The room south of the hall has been stripped of any discernable late nineteenth century materials in its adaption to a holding room with a screened cell along the west wall. A modern door in the south wall permits access to the 1950s addition and cell block beyond.

The second floor is partitioned in a different manner from the first and ground floors. The center stair hall is joined by a back hall that runs along the west wall to provide access to three rooms on the north side of the main stair hall. A single room flanks the main hall to the south. Interior modifications have been made to each room, but baseboard moldings as well as some door and window surrounds remain intact.

The third floor contains an intact section of the staircase with chamfered edge newel posts and beaded board wainscoting serving as the stair railing. Original door surrounds frame new doors to the single rooms to each side of the hall. At the far end of each room is a boxed in window seat that encloses the top edge of the gable end granite walls. The original floors, aside from a few patches, remain in place.

The interior of the cell block is divided into two principal levels, and metal stairs and catwalks allow movement between floors and around the center core of cells on the upper level. The cell block appointments appear to have been installed during the early to mid twentieth century, probably in an effort to modernize the late nineteenth century arrangement.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1881 **Builder/Architect** Dixon and Kennedy

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
 and/or
 Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G
 Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Talbot County Jail, located on Easton's courthouse square, is architecturally and historically important. Built in 1881, this two-and-a-half story, rough-cut granite jail was designed by the Baltimore architectural firm of Dixon and Kennedy. Thomas Dixon (1819-1886) was one of the most prominent Baltimore architects during the mid nineteenth century. He was a founder of the Baltimore chapter of the A.I.A. (American Institute of Architects). His partner at the time, Thomas C. Kennedy, of lesser renown, was active during the years 1881 through 1914.

The two-and-a-half story, cross-gabled front of the Talbot County jail appears to point to a significant interest of the architects, or perhaps the county commissioners at the time; to create a public building that looked more like a dwelling than a jail. Occupying a prominent corner on courthouse square, the new jail, sited on the same site as the former jail, was in clear view of the public avenues of Washington and Federal streets. Only in time, as the courthouse was enlarged during the twentieth century, was the direct view across the square obscured. The east (main) elevation is highlighted by a fancy turned post porch which sheltered an elaborate double-leaf front door, and paired four-over-four sash windows are highlighted by brick arches and granite sills. It appears also that the architects knowingly used a common vernacular house form, the two-and-a-half story, cross-gabled, center hall/single-pile structure, in an effort to use a familiar plan for the domestic spaces of the sheriff and his family. This design approach contrasts with other movements in the construction of late nineteenth century jails when an effort was made to imitate medieval castles and fortifications that outwardly conveyed the impregnable or inescapable nature of the structure. Towers and crenelated walls are not uncommon features in other jail designs. Aside from the small single-story brick addition on the south end, the integrity of Dixon and Kennedy's original design has been preserved.

Aside from the architects' intentions in the original jail design, the rough-cut granite building contributes significantly to Easton's historic district; especially as a contrast to the brick courthouse and eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century brick commercial buildings. Common to

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Talbot County Jail Significance Statement (continued)

the late nineteenth century is the mixed use of materials--granite, brick, slate, and wood--intentionally combined to achieve a richly textured and lively exterior. The brick accents around the windows and in the cornice soften the austere nature of the granite walls. In addition, the two-and-a-half story jail maintains a consistent scale with nearby structures along Federal Street, and at the same time, the jail anchors an important downtown corner.

The Talbot County jail is significant historically as a reflection of the mixed use of the courthouse square during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Not only was the courthouse square the site of county record keeping and judicial proceedings, but it was the site of an array of daily activities in the heart of Easton. The town market was formerly located on the square along with state armory, the old town hall, and the county jail. The historic multi-faceted nature of the courthouse square has been lost as the nature of county and town government has expanded and changed during the last fifty years. The preservation of the jail building, however, will preserve in part the historic context in which the courthouse square has been used by past generations.

1871 LAKE CHARLES AND SILVER SPRING

PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS.

CELL, Publisher of "Easton Gayly" paper of large and increasing circulation.

ROBSON, Editor of "Easton Star." Democratic, Circulation large, Subscription

LUMBER AND COAL.

IXON, Wholesale and Retail Dealer of Lumber, Building Materials, Hair, &c., Anthracite and Cumberland Fertilizers. Office on Dover Street, and at Easton Point.

INGDALE, Dealer in Lumber and Washington and Cabinet Streets.

STABLES.

T. Proprietor of Livery, Sale, and Feed near Brick Hotel.

ANNAHAN, Jr., Proprietor of Exchange Stables. Horses fed by the month. Horses and Carriages for hire sent to any part of the County or Omnibus for the Brick Hotel and Steamboats.

MILLINERY.

HIGGING, Dealer in Fashionable Dress Trimmings, Embroideries, Notions, and M. E. Church.

HUBBARD, Dealer in Millinery Goods, Dress Trimmings, Embroideries, Street.

PHYSICIANS AND DENTIST.

ANDERSON, Physician and Surgeon.

WEBER, Homeopathist. Office Hours, 11 to 3, and 6 to 8 P. M.

WEBER, Physician and Surgeon.

Dentist.

PAINTERS.

WCELL, House Painter and Paper Hanger on R. R. Avenue.

SS, House Painter and Paper Hanger, in town and country, by day or contract.

LARRIMORE, Painter.

MERCHANT TAILORS.

N & STRAUGHN, (J. A. Shaughn), Merchant Tailors and Dealers in Finishing Goods, Hats, Caps, and Umbrellas.

ANTHICUM, Tailor and Dealer in Finishing Goods.

W, Fashionable Tailor. Next door to

STEAM SAW MILLS.

FARNEK, Farmer and Proprietor of Mill, located near School No. 2.

BRO, Proprietors of Steam Saw Mill, situated on New Road, and Dealers in Sawing done to order.

BR, Farmer and Proprietor of Steam Saw Mill, located on Miles North East of Easton on Miles

IS & BRO, Proprietors of Oakland Mills, Manufacturers and Dealers in Building Lumber, White Oak Ship with Gang Saws. Also prime heart pine lengths and sizes cut to order at short notice and Wagon Felloes on hand and cut

MISCELLANEOUS.

ULT, General Agent and Collector.

SMITH, Civil and Mining Engineer.

ICK, Dealer in Books, Stationery, Paucals, Fancy Articles, &c.

INS & SON, Dealers in Carriages, Buggy Tops, Horse Covers, &c.

LE, Dealer in Horses and Mules.

RD & BRO, Proprietors of Farmers' Packet Line, plying between Easton and

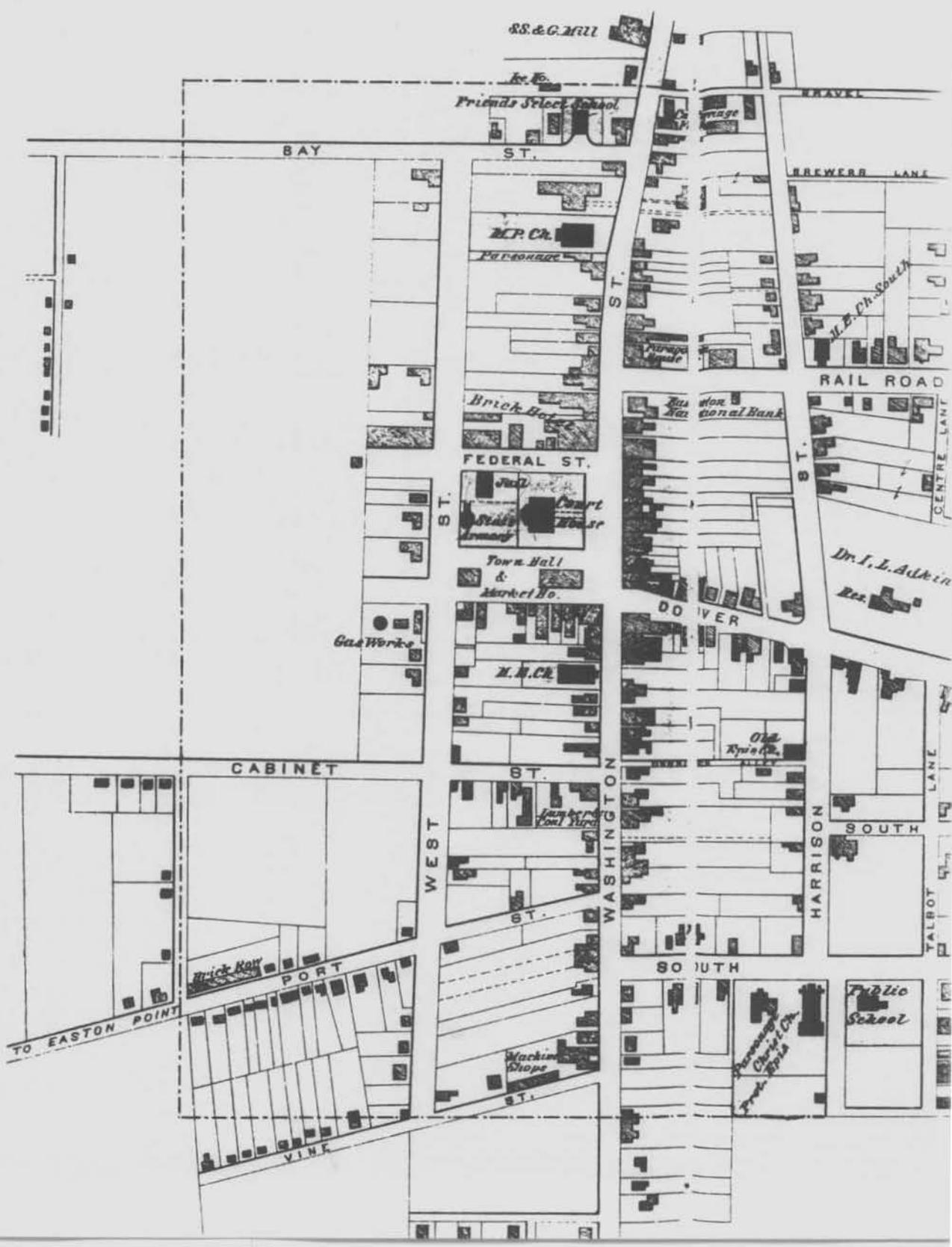
WHITE, Manufacturer of Brick and

Yard and Factory near Easton Point, Easton.

VERY, Manufacturers and Dealers in Harness, Tinware, Stoves, Engines, Machinery, &c. Proprietors of the Easton

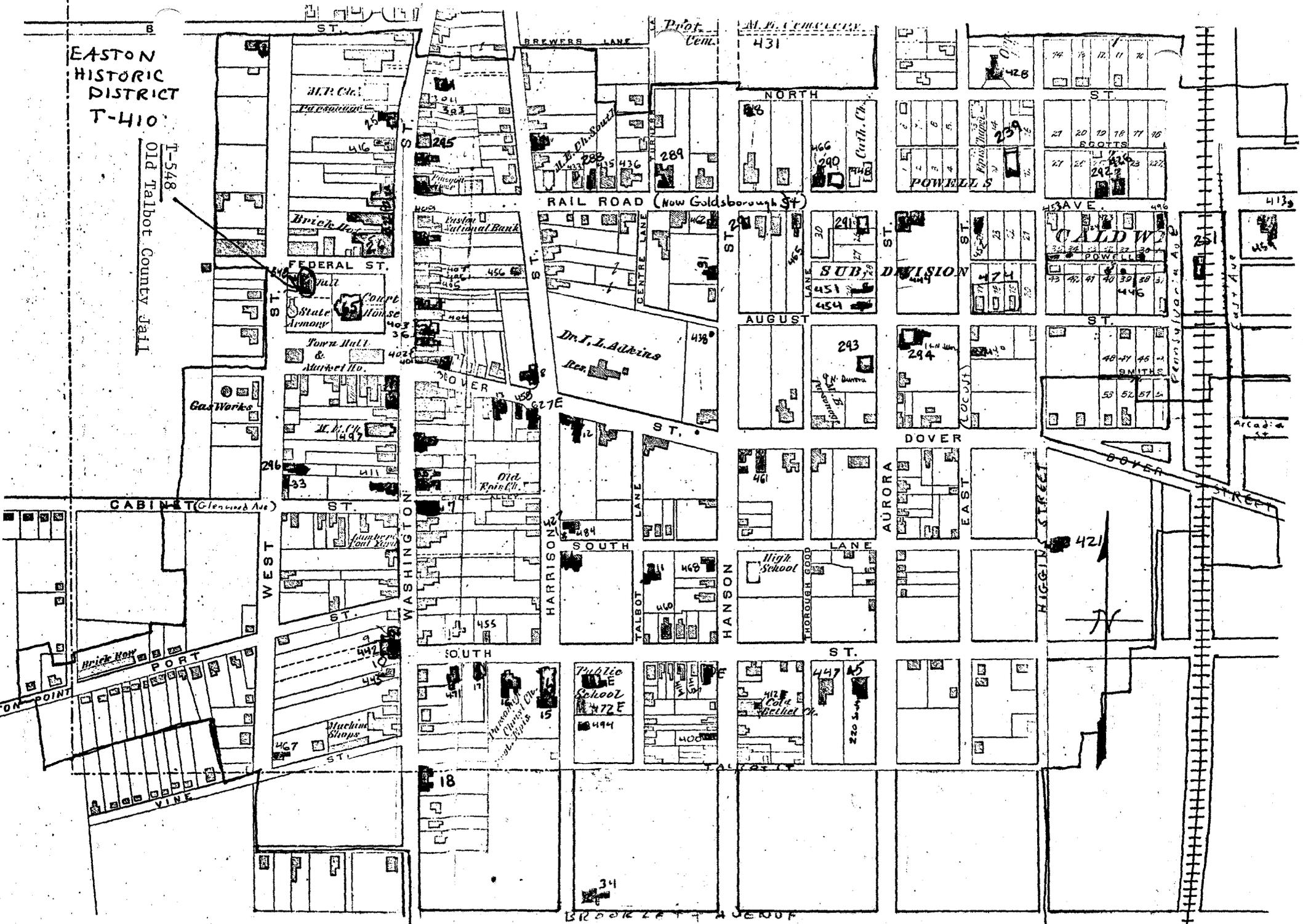
PINN, Florist and Proprietor of

Greenhouse, Dealer in Flowers and Plants



EASTON HISTORIC DISTRICT T-410

T-548
Old Talbot County Jail



BROOK LANE

(H.D. T-410) EASTON - TALBOT CO.

Scale - 15 Rods to an inch

T-548

AIRPORT

T-548

T-548
Old Talbot County Jail
Easton Quad, 1942, PR 1974

St Aubins Heights

PENN
CENTRAL

GRADE

Fork
Tanyard

Spring Hill Cem

EASTON
(BM 38)

North

Easton Point

Papermill Pond

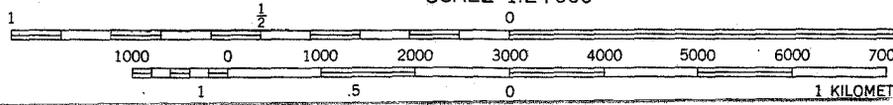
RIVER

EDMUNDSON NECK

STUMPTOWN 1.8 MI.
TRAPPE 6.7 MI.

(TRAPPE)
5761 II NE

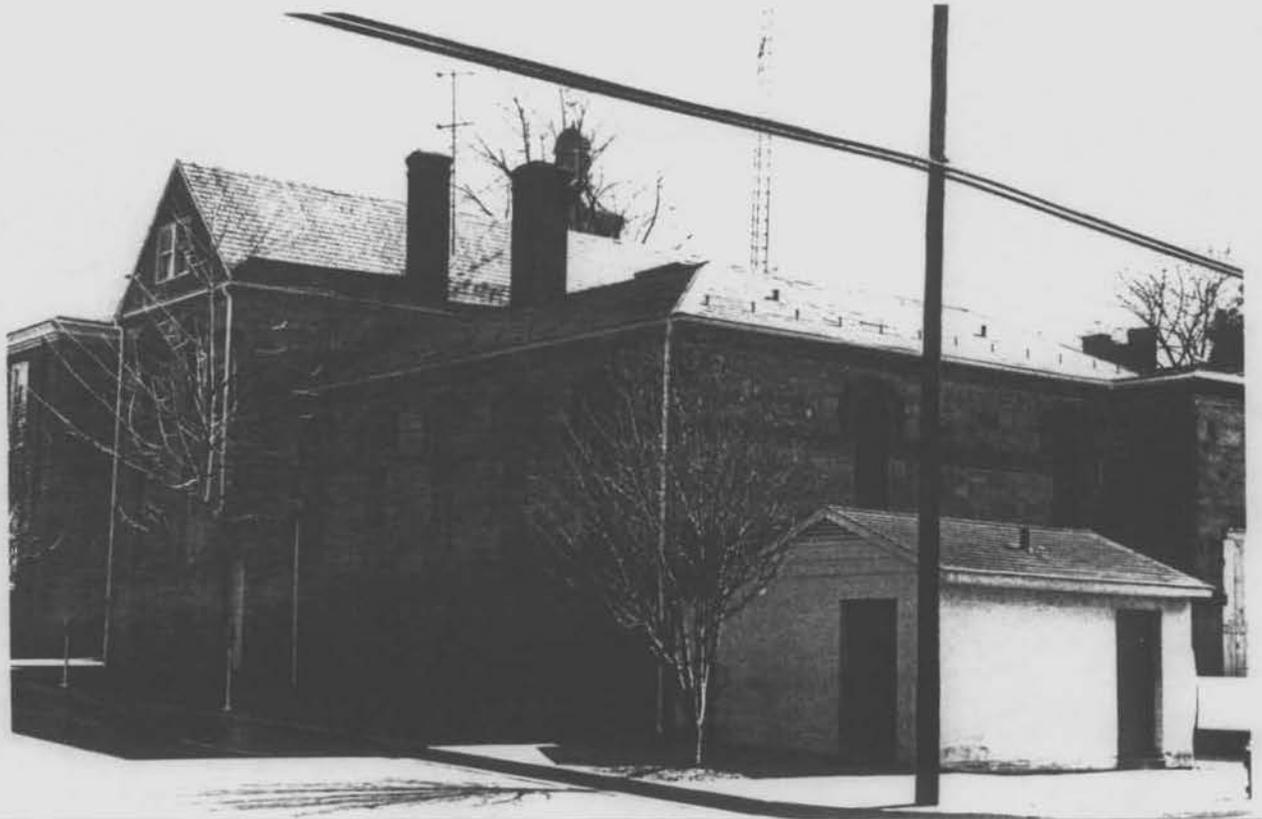
SCALE 1:24 000

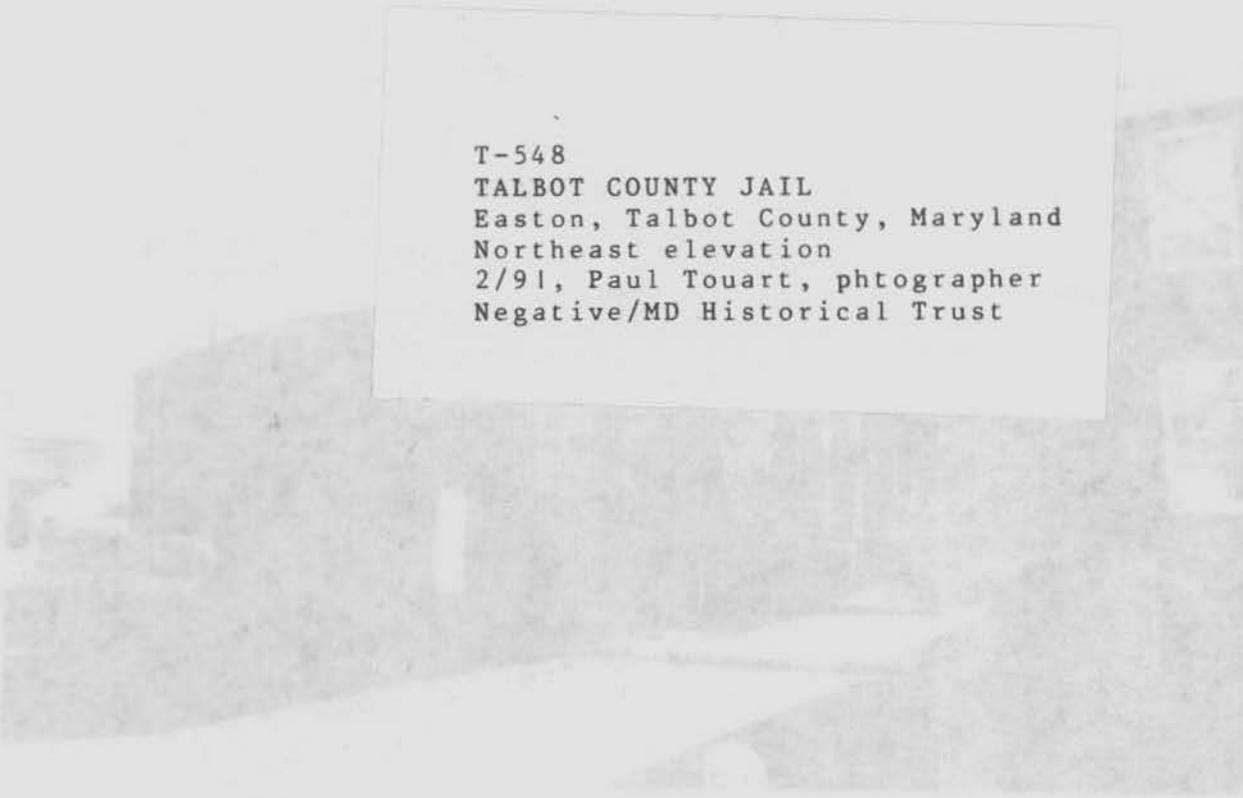


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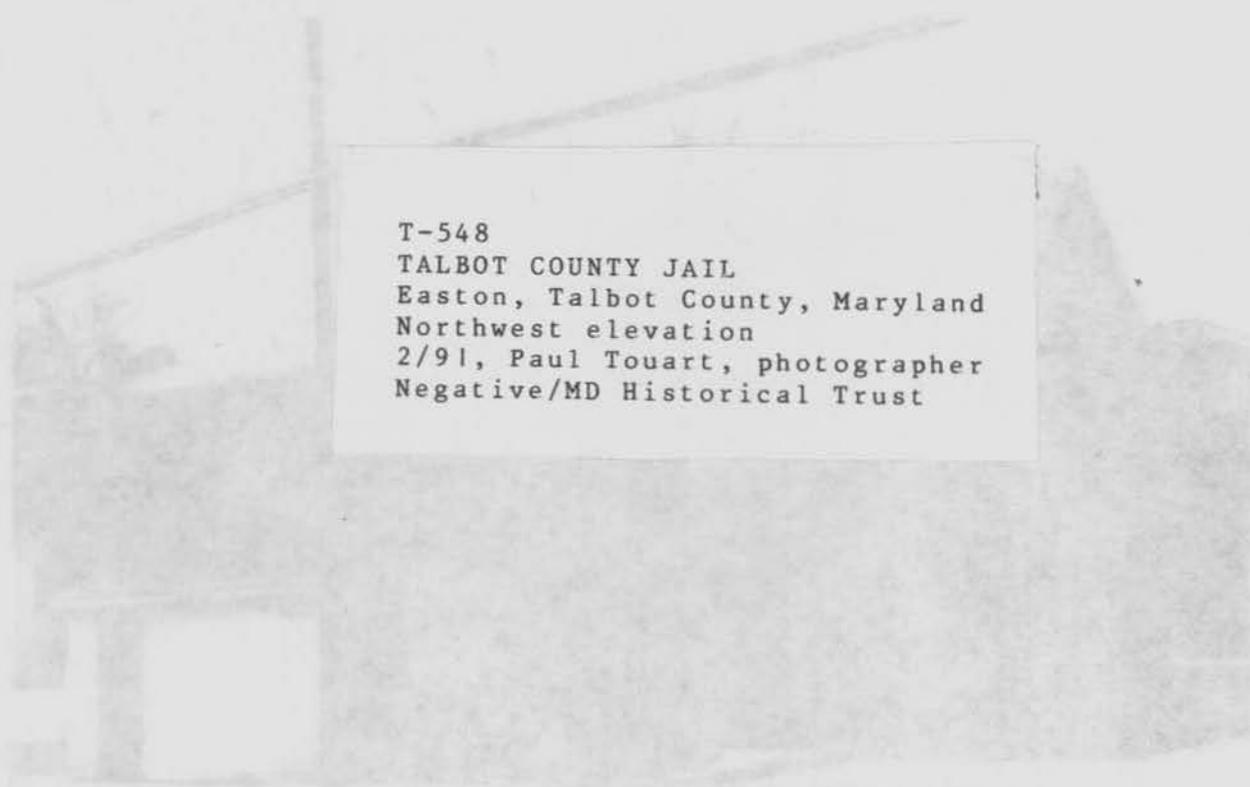
metric methods

T-548



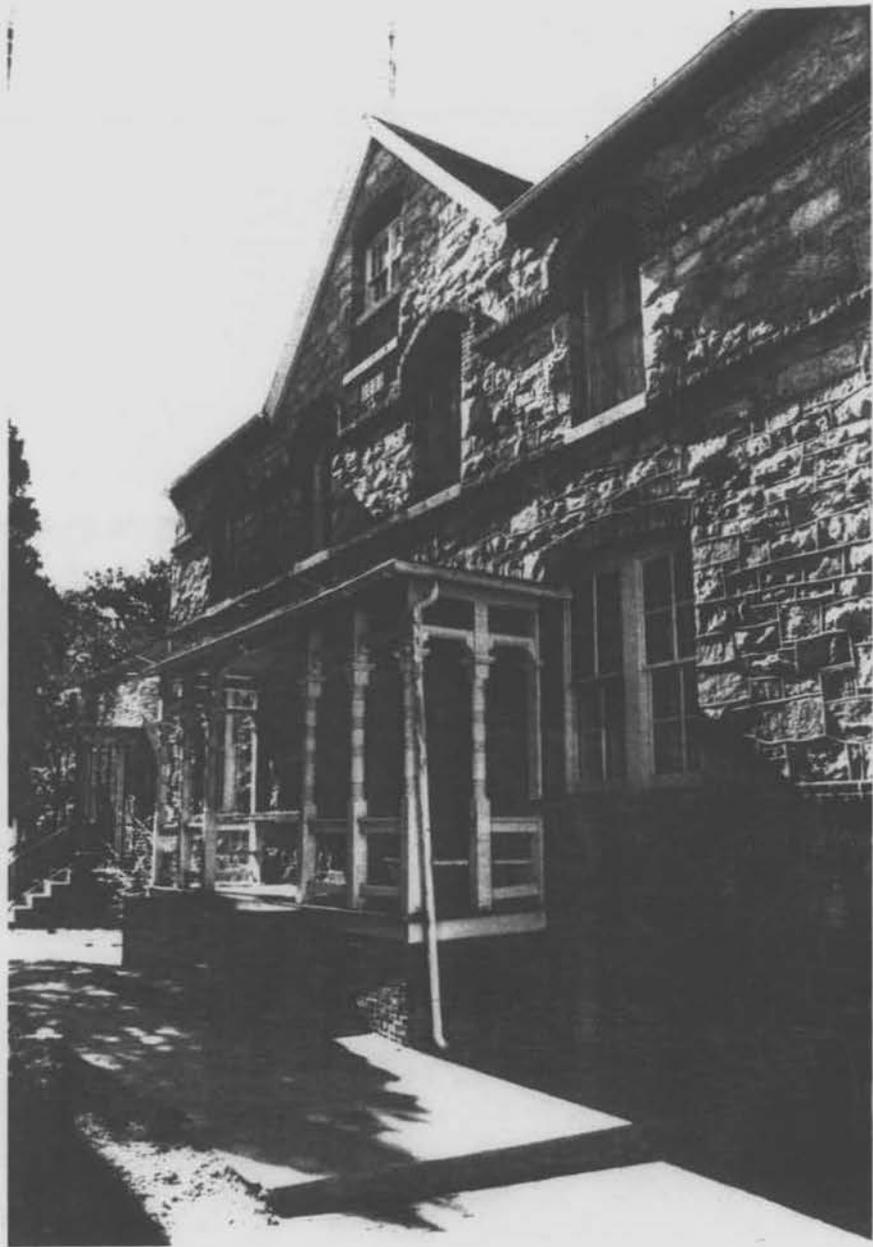


T-548
TALBOT COUNTY JAIL
Easton, Talbot County, Maryland
Northeast elevation
2/91, Paul Touart, phtographer
Negative/MD Historical Trust



T-548
TALBOT COUNTY JAIL
Easton, Talbot County, Maryland
Northwest elevation
2/91, Paul Touart, photographer
Negative/MD Historical Trust

T-548



T-548
TALBOT COUNTY JAIL
Easton, Talbot County, Maryland
East elevation
2/91, Paul Touart, photographer
Negative/MD Historical Trust



T-548



T-548
TALBOT COUNTY JAIL
Easton, Talbot County, Maryland
East elevation, porch detail
2/91, Paul Touart, photographer
Negative/MD Historical Trust