

# An early county jail

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With work currently taking place on the roof of the Orleans County jail, it seems of interest to look back at a former jail structure. The one pictured here from a photo taken in 1899 shows the county jail next to the courthouse.

This Medina Sandstone structure was built in 1838 with a sheriff's residence in front facing East State Street and jail cells in the rear. The wooden addition or wing to the right within a few feet of the courthouse was the sheriff's office, a later addition.

In 1902 the State Commissioner of prisons pronounced the old jail unsanitary and not in compliance with the law. In 1903 this jail was demolished and replaced with a sandstone jail which opened for prisoners in 1904.

By 1968 the State Commissioner of Corrections deemed this inadequate, outdated and unsanitary. Therefore in 1971 it was replaced with the present



jail now under maintenance repair.

The first county jail was in the basement of the original courthouse built in 1827. Within a short time a log jail was built on the side of the present jail which

served until 1838 when the one in our picture was erected.

We notice here a sandstone retaining wall along the Platt Street sidewalk part of which remains today.

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**Bethinking  
of Olde  
Orleans**