

Welcome to the official website of the...



# Muscogee County Sheriff's Office



The Chattahoochee Riverwalk

## TIMELINE OF THE MUSCOGEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (1825 - PRESENT)



The Stockade



1939 Jail



1984 Complex



2002 Detention Facility

Date(s)	Event
1825	Houston County Sheriff was the only Law Enforcer for the Territory that would later become Muscogee County.
December 1826	General Assembly passed the Law establishing Muscogee County, laid out north of the old Early County line.
May 1827	Election held; Governor Troup issued commissions to first county officers.
December 1828	City of Columbus is incorporated.
March 10, 1832	Bids taken to repair county jail. No listing of the Stockade.
January 2, 1836	Crime on the upswing, governing officials contracted for the building of a guard house.
October 1837	The notorious hostile Indian Chief, Jim Henry was lodged in the Muscogee County Jail to stand trial for crimes against the State of Georgia; Listed Attorneys: John and James Bethune.
April 1838	Muscogee County Grand Jury deems county jail "entirely unfit for the incarceration of human beings. We look upon it as a nuisance which should be removed as soon as possible."
October 1838	First Courthouse burned down.
November 28, 1838	Newspaper Listing: "Proposals will be received at the Clerk's Office of the Inferior Court of Muscogee County for building and completing a jail for said county. N. McLester, Clerk"
January 1840	One of the promises made on the eve of the fall elections: A bill to grant a lot on the east common on which to build a jail.
January 1849	Council Minutes: "Alderman Brooks announced that a house of ill fame had been operating in the old theater building on Crawford Street under the auspices and management of Mr. Jones. It is a great annoyance of families in the neighborhood. A committee was appointed to investigate. Later at a meeting, the committee reported that after a careful and laborious investigation, they were satisfied that there was something 'decidedly rotten in Denmark,' but because the manner in which the implicated party has conducted themselves, no action could be taken."
February 27, 1854	Deputy Sheriff Alex M. Robinson was killed in the line of duty while trying to arrest David Wright Jr. and Jack Boyd for disorderly conduct. The men fled, pursued by the city watch and citizens in a running gunfight. They were apprehended and jailed and both convicted. Wright escaped after appealing the death penalty but finally was caught in Florida, where he set fire to his cell and died of suffocation. Boyd eventually was pardoned.
December 29, 1859	Date on metal door inside Stockade. It does not appear that anyone knows for certain when the Stockade was built or what it was first used for. No proper documentation can be found. Jail address: Mercer (6th Ave.) between Thomas (9th St.) and Crawford (10th St.).
March 19, 1860	The jail of Muscogee County caught fire from a chimney and was destroyed. Several prisoners were inside, but none were hurt.
April 3, 1860	Newspaper Report: "Order that a premium of \$100.00 be offered for such as plans and specifications as may be adopted by the Justices of the Inferior Court for a new jail for this county. A. P. Jones, Clerk."

June 19, 1860	Grand Jury Report: "We find the county without a jail, and the basement of the Courthouse used for such. The prison rooms are in uncleanly conditions. This is an insecure place to keep prisoners. The use of the basement for this purpose adds much to the risk of fire. The records of the county might be destroyed. We would earnestly ask the Interior Court to build a substantial jail and with all the modern improvements needed for health and comfort. We recommend that it be built on the courthouse square. Pleasant J. Phillips, Foreman"
January 1874	Haddock's Directory: "The jail, a large handsome brick structure, is situated on the East Common. It was completed with all modern improvements about the time of the breaking out of the late war (Civil War, 1861). The cells are of iron and are well ventilated. It is considered entirely safe."
1888	City Directory states that the county jail was at the corner of 10th Street and 7th Avenue (Present site of the Stockade).
April 5, 1905	The Sheriff shot and killed a reputed bootlegger on a downtown street in Columbus. He was arrested for murder but later acquitted.
May 29, 1925	The last legal execution by hanging in Georgia occurred in Columbus, Georgia.
November 10, 1927	" <b>Columbus Stockade Blues</b> " written by Thomas P. Darby and Johnny J. (Jimmy) Tarleton, propelling Columbus to nationwide fame.
1931	Columbus City Stockade address listed as 939 7th Avenue.
August 2, 1934	Newspaper Report: "County plans to Relieve Crowded Jail. The present jail was built for a city population of around 28,000, while it is now required to serve a population of twice that number and plans have been under consideration by the board for sometime to enlarge it."
October 21, 1938	"Blast Wrecks County Jail; New Prison to be Built. Twelve persons hurt when wall falls after detonation. The forty-five year old jail was wrecked by a destructive explosion that rendered the old structure unsafe. The structure has long been regarded as too small and inadequate for present day use. The entire interior was damaged. The present structure had some historic experiences and housed some noted criminals. The final outcome of the investigation was that those in charge were of the opinion that the explosion was from an accumulation of gas in the basement from a failure of the safety valve after the burner pilot went out or a leaky main.
November 1, 1938	New and Modern Jail Will Rise From Ruble. County's share of the cost will be around \$73,000.00.
1940	New Jail was completed at a cost of \$140,000.
March 1, 1961	Newspaper Reports: "Muscogee Grand Jury Reported: The Stockade is in terrible condition and a fire hazard. The building has long since served its purpose and should be maintained in better condition. Grand Jury calls the stockade a disgrace to our city and should be torn down."
January 1, 1971	New Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia; reorganization of law enforcement agencies, the former county government placed its police force under the Muscogee County Sheriff, who was not affected by consolidation. The Sheriff's Office still retains a criminal investigative unit that is totally separate from the Columbus Police Department.
December 18, 1978	The Stockade has been recommended for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The Stockade deserves to be saved, perhaps as a museum or art gallery.

September 3, 1980	Newspaper Report: "Where's the Money, the City is Ready to Build Jail. At a cost of \$6.47 million, the proposed Columbus Justice Complex will provide two court-rooms for Recorder's Court and additional cell space for city/county prisoners. The project is designed to allow additional expansion for the city's jail needs until the year 2000."
April 1, 1984	New Jail Tower opens. Address of jail changed from 930 6th Avenue to 700 10th Street.
October 1, 1998	Newspaper Reports: "Grand Jury's Investigation of the Jail. According to state standards, the occupancy is 575 prisoners, but on March 3, 1998, the occupancy was 902 prisoners. This facility is inadequate to handle the volume of prisoners. With guards outnumbered 150 to 1 on any floor bulging with inmates being held on charges ranging from DUI to multiple murders, the role as a jailer at the Muscogee County Jail can be a potentially deadly situation. Jail Overcrowding and Understaffed."
January 1, 2008	The Muscogee County Sheriff's Office organizational structure is changed. Changing over from a five-division structure to a three-bureau structure. The three bureaus of the the Sheriff's Office are the Detention Bureau, the Administrative Bureau and the Operations Bureau.