

**February 28, 2005**

## **HISTORY OF THE KITSAP COUNTY CORRECTIONS AND DETENTION CENTER**

Kitsap County (first known as Slaughter County) was established on January 16, 1857. At that time, the county seat was located at Port Madison, a thriving mill town on Bainbridge Island. The first jail was built there in 1872 at the reported cost of \$658.00. It was a blockhouse made with planks that were 4 inches thick and 12 inches wide. They were laid flat and bolted together. The only entrance and exit was through a heavy trapdoor that was operated via a hand-winch-and-tackle arrangement. There is no record that anyone ever escaped. In 1873, a convicted murderer was hanged at the jail. This was the one and only “legal” hanging in Kitsap County history.

The people voted in 1892 to move the location of the county seat from Port Madison to the town of Sidney, which later became the City of Port Orchard. The move took place in 1893 to a newly constructed building located at the South end of Division Street on the same site as the present Administration Building. A steel cage was delivered from Seattle to serve as the first “jail” at the new county seat. Capacity: 2.

Later on, a small jail was built which stood until around 1920 at which time the courthouse was remodeled. The jail was on the East side of the courthouse, and the new, larger, U-shaped building was erected and built around the older, smaller one. When construction was completed, the old courthouse was torn down. At this time the jail was located in the basement. A new wing was added across the front of the courthouse in 1949, giving us the courthouse as most people remember it today.

The next major construction was in 1973. The result was a new Sheriff’s Office as well as a new jail. The jail then had a capacity of 63 male prisoners and 14 female prisoners, for a total of 77.

In 1981, the State of Washington advised the Sheriffs and Chiefs who operated jail facilities in the state were told state funds would be made available for upgrading. This resulted in the formation of a jail advisory board for Kitsap County. The board consisted of approximately 20 representatives of the Criminal Justice System in Kitsap County.

After several months of brainstorming and studying the county’s needs, a formal plan was completed and submitted to the State of Washington for funding approval. This plan called for a separate 40-bed work release facility which is now located in the rear of the courthouse complex, and a 110-bed main jail. This jail project, which would take approximately two years, was broken into two phases.

Phase 1 was the construction of the inmate residential area; Phase 2 was the renovation and rebuilding of the existing facility. Phase 1 began July 1, 1985 and was completed in December of 1986.

Completion of Phase 2 and the total project was achieved in July of 1987 at a cost of over \$9 Million.

Part of the main jail design included state-required expansion of at least 20%.

Construction of this expansion began on the expansion in March of 1988 with a cost of approximately \$1 Million. The completion of the expansion brought jail capacity in the main jail to 138. Combined capacity with the work release facility, the Kitsap County Jail Corrections and Detention Center was now up to 180 beds.

Due to the continued need for bed space, the minimum-security units in the main jail were “double-bunked” in 1993. In doing so, 20 beds were added giving the main jail a capacity of 158 beds. The total capacity of the Kitsap County Corrections and Detention Center was now at 200 beds.

By 1997, it became evident that Kitsap County had reached maximum capacity. The Kitsap County Law and Justice Council made the “overcrowded” jail its first priority and decided to put a proposition to a vote of the citizens. The proposition allowed one-tenth-of-one-percent of sales tax collected to fund a jail expansion. The proposition was voted upon and passed in February of 1999.

Today we reach a milestone in the Jail Expansion Project with the completion of the 310-bed inmate-housing unit. The inmate-housing unit was preceded by the completion and occupancy of the Maintenance Building, Jail Kitchen, Sheriff’s Office Evidence/Property Storage, Jail Medical, and Jail Laundry Facilities.

The final stage was the demolition and remodeling of the Booking/Intake area, Warrants and Fugitives Section, and Prisoner Property Storage. The overall project was completed the summer of 2004, with a total cost of under \$30 Million.

With the addition of 310 beds, the Kitsap County Jail has a total capacity of 510 beds. Given this number of beds, the facility is expected to last well into the future!

**Sheriff Steve Boyer, the Kitsap County Sheriff’s Office, and the Kitsap County Law and Justice Council would like to thank the citizens of Kitsap County for their support of this project.**