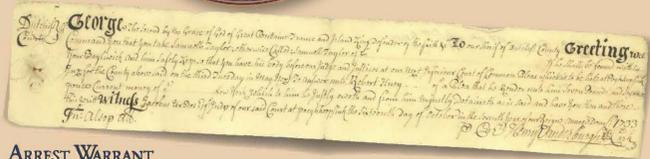




Dutchess County Sheriff's Office | Corrections Division



ARREST WARRANT
Courtesy of the Dutchess County Clerk

On October 16, 1733, Judge Jacobus Terbos swore out this writ ordering Sheriff James Squire to arrest Samuel Taylor and confine him in the county jail. Taylor had failed to pay off a debt he owed to a Robert Huey who sued him in court - a reminder that in the eighteenth century, a resident could go to jail for not paying their bills. This is the oldest arrest warrant in the Dutchess County Archives.

Since the completion of the first jail in 1721, the Dutchess County Sheriff has provided staff to process and supervise inmates. Conditions have improved over time, with increasing emphasis on rehabilitation instead of long-term detention. The varieties of offenses for which residents can be jailed has decreased over time, while successive new buildings have strengthened corrections services. This process of professionalization led to the creation of the Corrections Division in 1979.

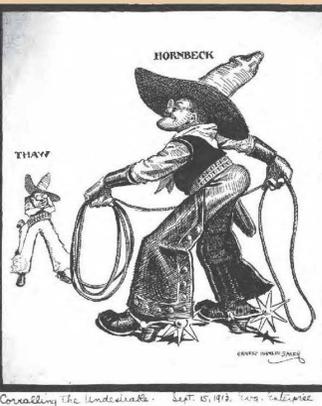


THE FOURTH COUNTY JAIL AND COURTHOUSE
Courtesy of the Dutchess County Historical Society

For most of the past 300 years, the county jail was an integral part of the courthouse, taking up the bottommost floor. For the first four courthouses, built between 1720 and 1809, jail cells were relatively dismal places. The specific cell seen in this 1901 image (above) was part of the fourth county courthouse (left), which sat at the corner of Market and Main Streets in Poughkeepsie from 1809 until being replaced in 1902 by the structure that stands there today. For 92 years, all county inmates would have seen these sights.

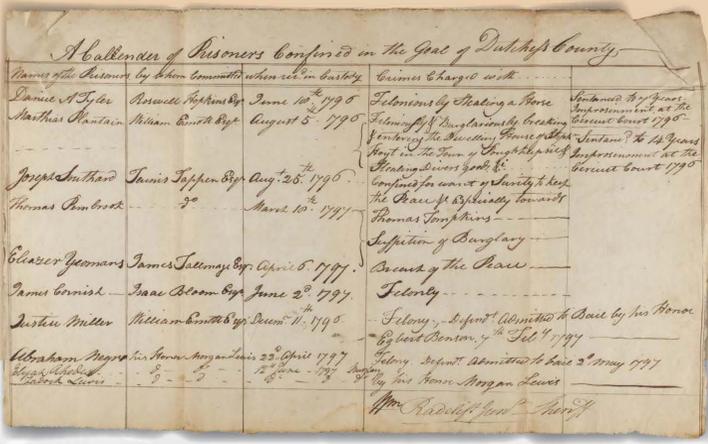
IN HOT PURSUIT
Courtesy of the Dutchess County Sheriff

In 1913, Harry Kendall Thaw, who had murdered the famous architect Stanford White, escaped from Matteawan State Hospital in Fishkill and sought refuge in Canada. Dutchess County Sheriff Fred Hornbeck immediately pursued Thaw across the border, nearly causing an international incident. American authorities formally extradited Thaw to New Hampshire, where he subsequently surrendered to Sheriff Hornbeck. The sheriff brought Thaw back to Fishkill in January 1915, leaving a trail of cartoons like this one (right) in his wake.



CALENDAR OF PRISONERS
Courtesy of the Dutchess County Clerk

This list of inmates held in the Dutchess County Jail from June 1796 to June 1797 provides a snapshot of contemporary crime. The general varieties of offenses—including theft, breaking and entering, “breach of the peace,” and failure to make bail—continue to be issues today. Stealing horses, for which a court sentenced Daniel A. Tyler to serve seven years, is no longer as prevalent an offense, reflecting change over time.



MURDER IN MILAN, 1950
Courtesy of the Dutchess County Sheriff

In January 1951, deputy sheriffs arrested Alfred Kurt Von Wolfersdorf for his involvement in the slaying of 14-year-old Poughkeepsie school student Robert Leonard in October 1950. A member of the self-proclaimed “Civil and Political Corrective Service,” Von Wolfersdorf had compelled Joseph Paonessa of Poughkeepsie to kidnap Leonard and bring him to a farm shack in Milan. Once there, Paonessa shot and killed the student. Von Wolfersdorf ordered the boy's death on suspicion that Leonard had stolen from him. Psychiatrists pronounced Von Wolfersdorf incapable of standing trial by reason of insanity.



SHERIFF CLOSE AND DEPUTIES, 1951
Courtesy of the Dutchess County Sheriff

Corrections officers, identified by their pants instead of “putts and breeches,” stand in the front row of this photo (left). Sheriff C. Fred Close stands in the center, in a civilian suit. Close was a World War I veteran, served one term in the New York State Assembly, and was sheriff from 1925-1927 and 1939-1960. The tall officer to the left of him is Lawrence “Larry” Quinlan, a World War II Marine Corps veteran who served as sheriff from 1961-1979.

DUTCHESS COUNTY JAIL, 1970s
Courtesy of the Dutchess County Sheriff

This interior shot of the jail (below right) records the view that awaited inmates during the 1970s, a marked contrast from the cells of 1901. This new jail building was complete and in operation by 1932, breaking with the tradition of housing inmates in the county courthouse basement. The photo at left records corrections officers moving inmates through the facility.

