Although established in 1683 as one of New York’s original twelve counties, the history of Dutchess County’s independent government began in 1713. For its first 30 years, the county’s population was so small that the entire area (which included modern Putnam and portions of modern Columbia counties) was administered from Kingston. On October 23, 1713, the colonial assembly granted permission for Dutchess residents to elect their own supervisor, treasurer, two tax assessors, and two tax collectors. During these first years, the single supervisor, whose tenure in office marked the roots of executive government in the county, focused his attention on reviewing the county accounts and building a “County-House and Prison” as required by a July 1715 act of the colonial assembly. This building, the first of five which have rested on the site still occupied today by the county courthouse, would serve as a meeting place for the government and law courts while providing jail cells for prisoners. The four subsequent county courthouses have stood on the same site. Services billed to the county included killing wolves, representing the county at the colonial assembly, caring for travelers who fell ill within the county, laying out roads, confining prisoners, and bringing criminals to trial.