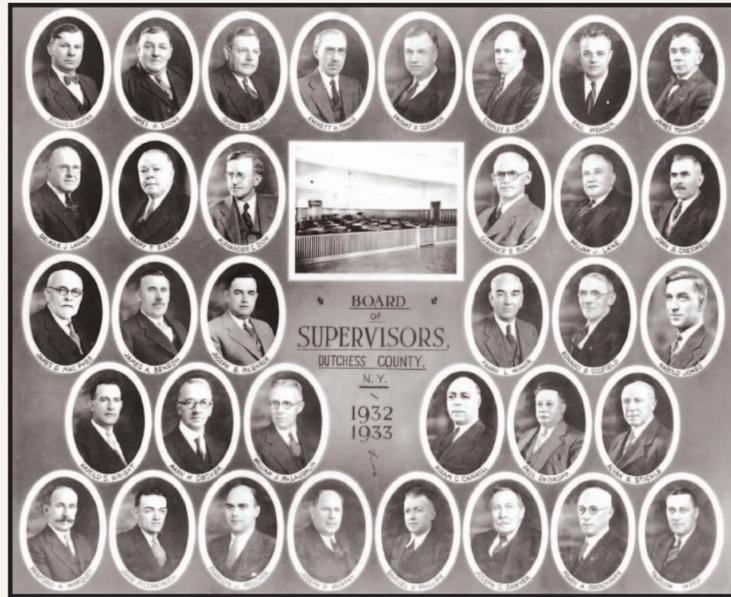




Serving a Growing County | The Board of Supervisors



THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, 1932-33

Courtesy of the Dutchess County Historian

In the years leading up to the Second World War, new challenges appeared for the board. Over the course of the 1932-33 term, the supervisors pictured above addressed growing demands for new highways thanks to the Automobile Revolution. Advances in medicine enabled the board to use county resources to combat health problems, such as eradicating bovine tuberculosis.

THE DUTCHESS TURNPIKE

Courtesy of the Dutchess County Clerk

One of the key concerns of the growing county was expanding the road network. By 1804, the new Dutchess Turnpike connected the eastern and western halves of Dutchess to Connecticut and the Albany Post Road. This page from the turnpike map illustrates the importance of road projects for linking the county's communities and serves as a reminder of construction challenges that continue today.



THE 1905 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETING

Courtesy of the Museum of Rhinebeck History

This earliest-known photograph of the board of supervisors in session captured county government during a new height of activity. This session began with a special inquiry into unpaid accounts from the previous year and continued with business ranging from reports from all county officers to debates over bridge and road construction, a dog tax, and allowances for the burial of soldiers and sailors. The board's workload continued to grow as the years passed by.

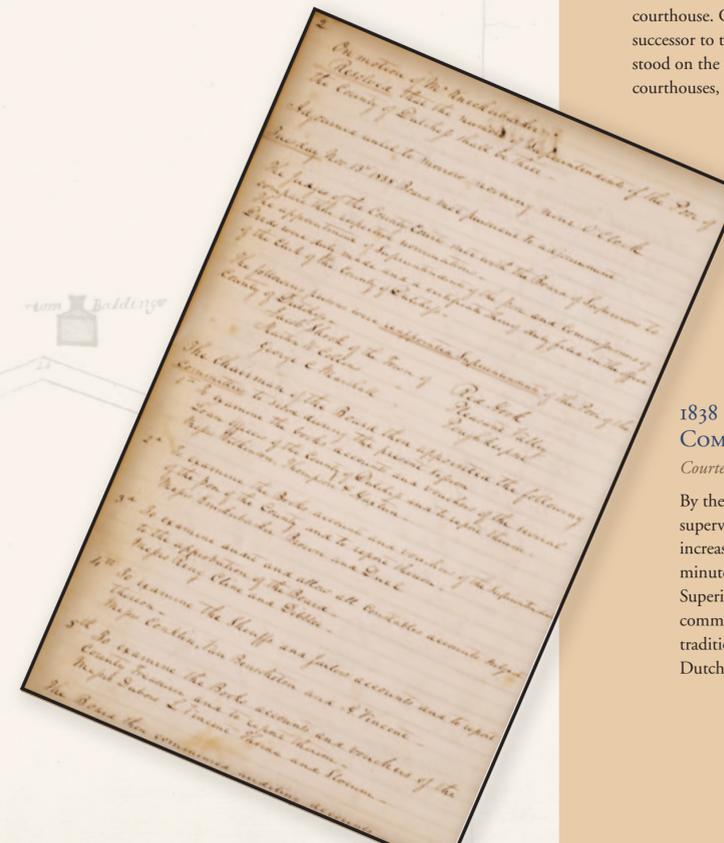


THE DUTCHESS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND THE CONSTITUTION RATIFICATION CENTENNIAL

Courtesy of the Dutchess County Clerk

In 1888, Dutchess County celebrated the centennial of New York's ratification of the United States Constitution by decorating the county courthouse. Completed in 1809, the courthouse seen here was the successor to the building in which the debates took place, which stood on the same spot. The supervisors met in the five successive courthouses, until the county office building's completion in 1965.

The steady expansion of Dutchess County's population from the late eighteenth century fueled changes in the board of supervisors. As new towns sprang up across the county, additional supervisors joined the annual meetings in Poughkeepsie. The board began meeting multiple times per year by the 1790s, including two meetings chaired by judges from the Court of Common Pleas to review county loans. By 1803, the supervisors were choosing a chairman to lead their meetings. The supervisors elected Ebenezer Carey to serve as chairman that year. The board's workload grew in concert with the increasing strains on county infrastructure. First roads, then train lines, and finally public services of all kinds occupied the supervisors' time. Meetings featured increasing amounts of committee work to manage the county's needs alongside hearings to resolve a variety of disputes. The need for a dedicated county-level legislative body became apparent as the twentieth century progressed.



1838 SUPERVISORS' MEETING AND COMMITTEE WORK

Courtesy of the Dutchess County Clerk

By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the board of supervisors regularly divided into committees to handle their increasing workload. As this page from the 1838 meeting minutes shows, the Board confirmed the appointments of the Superintendents of the Poor together then divided into committees to audit the various department expenses. This tradition of committee work remains a mainstay of the Dutchess County Legislature today.