

History of the Sheriff of Putnam County, Ohio

In 1787, the Greenville Treaty set aside much of the local area to the Indians. This area, now known as Putnam County, was set aside for the Ottawa Indians at Tawa Run. The area of Tawa Run is now known as Ottawa, the current county seat of Putnam County. Putnam County is named for an officer who served in the American Revolution, General Israel Putnam. The county was formed on April 1, 1820 but remained attached to Williams County for judicial purposes until 1825.

In 1834, the Ohio governor named three men as associate judges to organize Putnam County. These men, William Cochran, Henry Morris, and Silas McClish, met on May 5, 1834, at the Kalida area residence of Abraham Sarber to appoint a clerk of courts, prosecuting attorney, and county commissioners. They also ordered an election be held at the Sarber residence on May 31st of that year to elect a sheriff and a coroner. On August 18, 1834, these men met again and when it appeared that no election had taken place they appointed William Cochran as sheriff and William Turner as coroner.

On October 15, 1835, the first county election was held. At the time elected officials could only be elected to two, 2 year terms. The population of Putnam County at this time was 230 people. And of those 230 residents, 163 votes were cast.

The Following Men Held the Office of Sheriff

1835-1838 William Cochran Jr.	First man appointed as Sheriff of Putnam County.
1838-1842 David S. Gibbs	Politics unknown.
1842-1846 Thomas McClure	McClure moved to Putnam County in 1840 and held many public offices. Notably he served as Sheriff and later county Treasurer. His son Nathaniel served as a deputy under a later Sheriff. Politics unknown.
1846-1848 James H. Vail	Vail was born in Coshocton County and settled in Putnam County in 1841. He was married and father of two children. He was the first to serve as Sheriff for more than one term. Also a farmer, Vail served 3 terms as Sheriff and two years as the Kalida Postmaster. Politics unknown.
1848-1852 R. Douglas	Politics unknown.
1852-1856 John B. Fruchey	Politics unknown
1856-1860 James H. Vail	Vail was elected to his second and third terms.

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1860-1862 William Craybill	Politics unknown.
1862-1866 John Cunningham	Politics unknown.
1866-1870 William W. Cartwright	Many residents wanted the county seat, which was located in Kalida at this time, moved to the center of the county. State legislature authorized an election on the matter and the county seat was moved to Ottawa. The first courthouse in Ottawa was built in 1867 with the county jail and Sheriff's residence located behind it.
1870-1874 Louis W. Albright	Politics unknown.
1874-1878 Henry C. Sherrard	The most famous jail delivery the courts has ever known occurred during his administration. John Goodman, charged with murder, and several other prisoners tried to escape. Sheriff Sherrard was struck with a brick-bat in a stocking by one of the prisoners and the desperate criminals seized his keys and made a dash for freedom. Fortunately, nearly all were captured within a short time. Goodman was eventually hung on December 30, 1884 at the site of the old jail. 5,000 were in attendance for the execution, but only a few were able to witness. Sheriff Sherrard reported the cost of the execution was \$95.35.
1878-1882 Josiah Markley	Markley was born in Putnam County and the father of nine children. Politics unknown.
1882-1886 Frank Rothman	Politics unknown.
1886-1890 Peter Wannemacher	Politics unknown.
1890-1892 David C. Williamson	The jail was built in 1890.
1892-1894 Frank Treece	1st term, politics unknown.
1894-1898 B.F. Burgess	Born 1846 in Mercer County, Pennsylvania. He was reared a Burgess farmer in Pleasant Township Putnam County, Ohio. In 1846, he enlisted in company D, 21st regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry After service, he returned to family farm until his marriage in 1866. Sheriff Burgess created a record on service in that office. During the hard times of 1894-1899, it precipitated the foreclosures of several mortgages in Putnam County, entailing upon the Sheriff a most

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	disagreeable duty. It was during this period the Sheriff was compelled to act in more foreclosure actions than had been brought the whole term of the sixteen preceding Sheriffs. It also fell to his lot to take three of Putnam County's convicted officials to the state prison at Columbus He was also a member of the Ottawa City council for 6 years, in which his Latten duties had much to do with public improvements of Ottawa. His daughter's husband served as Deputy Sheriff during incumbency.
1898-1902 Nicholas Miller	Democrat. 1st term
1902-1906 Frank E. Treece	2nd term
1906-1911 Joseph Zink	Born in 1859, on a farm in palmer township. His father, William Zink, was murdered and robbed at a point between Ottawa and Glandorf, while on his way to Lima to make a payment on his farm. The murderer was captured but later escaped from jail in Kalida and was never seen again. His mother died the next year leaving 7 children to neighbors to raise. Joseph was raised by William Kohl near Fort Jennings. Zink was nominated Sheriff in 1905 on a democrat ticket. He was so popular that his election was assured from the beginning of the race. At the end of his second term, by reason of an amendment to the law relating tenure, an extra year was added. He proved to be one of the most popular Sheriffs the County had to date. Zink remained in the Sheriff office for 2 more years serving as Deputy under Sheriff Miller, who had been his Deputy during tenure.
1911-1915 Nicholas Miller	2nd term, present courthouse was built 1912. Bell in the Belfry of old courthouse was taken to the fairgrounds and remains there today.
1915-1919 A.L. Tate	Sheriff Tate and his deputy were new to the job and the experienced criminals they held in jail attempted a jail break, and for the first time in years an escape was attempted. The prisoners having access to the corridors outside the cages. One of them, engineered the job of digging a hole through the back wall, but by accident knocked out a brick that led to the discovery. The Sheriff promptly confined the prisoners to their cages. Democrat.
1919-1923 Wesley J. Lammers	A well know bootlegger of Putnam County. While he was Sheriff his son, Charles, was arrested and sent to the pen for one year, for bootlegging. Democrat.

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1923-1927 Roy N. McCullough	1st republican to hold the office of Sheriff. It was found to be that all previous Sheriff's were elected by the Democrat party.
1927-1931 Clinton Felkey	Democrat. After being Sheriff, moved to Lima, Ohio
1931-1937 Wilson Crawfis	Democrat. In 1936, Legislature passed a law that all county officials could run for 4 year terms, unlimited number of terms.
1937-1961 Arnold Potts	Democrat. 1st Sheriff to hold office after the new law. Held office longer than any other Sheriff to date with 24 years.
1961-1973 James Ruhe	Democrat. Served as a deputy under the Potts administration for 14 years. He became Sheriff and held office for 12 years.
1973-1984 Robert Beutler	Democrat. Served as a Special Deputy under the Potts Administration for 1 year under Ruhe for 2 years. He became a full time Deputy in December 1962 and served 10 years. Many new community oriented policing programs were started as the office made significant changes and increases in staff. In 1977, Beutler and his family moved out of Jail to allow for office expansion. Crime Prevention Unit, Detective Division, and a juvenile office was added. One of the first underwater search and rescue teams in N.W. Ohio was developed. A Multi-Co. Investigative unit was started. Later to be reformed as the M.A.N. Unit under Diemer Administration.
1984-2000 Ronald E. Diemer	The 2nd Republican in county history to be elected Sheriff. Sheriff Diemer was Chief of Police of the Village of Leipsic prior to being elected Sheriff. He was born and raised in Putnam County. He is also engaged in farming. In August 1992, a union was formed with the Fraternal Order of Police. The Sheriff's Office was 1st computerized in 1998 and 911 implemented. In 1996, Diemer ran unopposed for his 4th term in office
2001-2012 James R. Beutler	Democrat. Worked as a Deputy for 23 Yrs. under the Beutler and Diemer Administrations and was elected as the 32nd Sheriff of Putnam County and the 1st second generation Sheriff. The construction of a new 76 bed jail and Sheriff's office commenced during 2001 and in operation in the year 2002, located in the new Industrial Park, Ottawa, Ohio. Many new community oriented policing programs has been initiated in addition to all the programs available from the previous two administrations. Bike Patrol, brought back Dive Team, Court Security, expanded Crime Prevention and Community Policing Programs, toll free phone listing, website, large change in technology. Including computers, radios, and telephone systems. Current staff of 53 full time employees 18 Part Time, and 23 Auxiliary.

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<p>2013-1/27/2016 Michael C. Chandler</p>	<p>Republican. 3rd Republican to be Elected Sheriff in Putnam County. Worked as a Deputy, Sgt. And Detective for the 3 previous Sheriffs. 33rd Sheriff of Putnam County. Current staff of 51 Full time employees 20 part time, and 10 Auxiliary Deputies. Sheriff Chandler began his 4th year in his 1st term and unexpectedly passed away at age 56 from complications from surgery on January 27, 2016.</p>
<p>1/27/16-2/24/2016 David E. Roney</p>	<p>Democrat. Appointed as Interim Sheriff following the passing of Sheriff Chandler. Began with the Putnam County Sheriff's Office on April 12, 1975. During that time he worked in the Road Patrol Division as a Deputy, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Detective and Captain. Roney retired in April 2000. He Rehired in December of 2002 in the Corrections Division as a Corrections Sgt. Eventually promoted to Lieutenant and then Jail Administrator. After the appointment from the Republican Central Committee of a successor to finish Sheriff Chandler's term, ending December 2016, Dave Roney returned to the Jail Administrator position.</p>
<p>2/24/16-12/31/2016 Timothy I. Meyer</p>	<p>Republican. 4th Republican to hold office of Sheriff in Putnam County. Meyer was appointed by the Republican Central Committee to complete Sheriff Chandler's Term, ending on December 31, 2016. During Meyer's tenure at the Sheriff's Office prior to being appointed Sheriff, he worked as a Road Patrol Deputy, Sgt., and eventually promoted to Lieutenant. He retired in 2012.</p>