

Family Heirloom Is Part of County's History

Family heirlooms come in all shapes and sizes. For Joseph Pauly Poher III, it comes in the shape of an iron-clad room with bars.

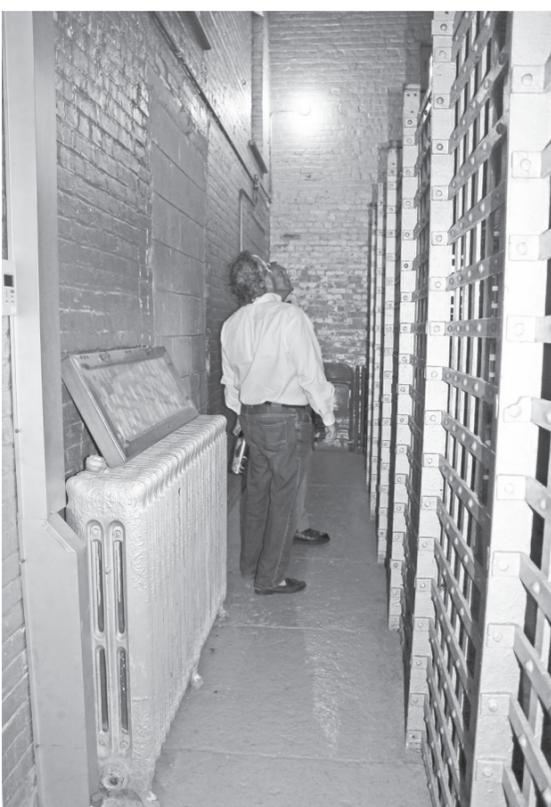
Last Wednesday, Sheriff Brett Clark invited Poher, a fifth-generation member of the Pauly Jail Building Co., established 1856, to visit the jail cells manufactured by his ancestors, in the former Sheriff's residence and jail, built in 1866, now the Hendricks County Historical Museum.

Joseph Pauly Poher (right) describes the history of his family's jail building business.



At left: The Hendricks County Sheriff's residence and jail was constructed in 1866. Before that, a log jail, half-block north or the square on Washington street served to hold prisoners awaiting trial and serving sentences.

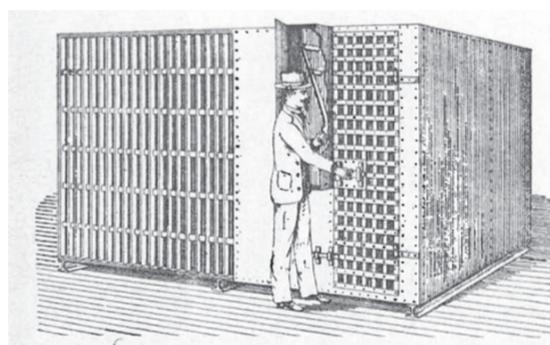
Above: Glen Riggs of the Pauly Jail Building Co. (left) chatted with Sheriff Brett Clark (right) and Chief Deputy Roger Call (center) before going into the Hendricks County Historical Museum to see the jail cells.



Mr. Pauly and Sheriff Clark take a look at the "women's section" of the old jail. This smaller section contains two single cells, compared to four double occupancy cells on the "men's side." Both side feature vaulted iron ceilings to make the structure fireproof.



A cast-iron plaque is bolted to the front of the patented locking mechanism outside the jail cells. A lever outside the cell area could lock and unlock the cells without entering the cell area.



An illustration from one of the Pauly Jail Building Co.'s early catalogs showing a cell unit with patented iron lattice work.



Standing at the entrance to the jail cells with Sheriff Clark, Joseph Pauly Poher told the story of his family's business, started by P.J. Pauly, a German immigrant and blacksmith.

The first jails built by the company were metal cages mounted on wagons. As the company grew, it advertised jail building as "a practical science" and that a good jail should provide security against the escape of prisoners, provide for the safety of the jailer from attack, and provide a healthy, sanitary arrangement. The company also patented a lever-lock system that added to the safety of the jailor.

With the family business still a leader in modern jail design and construction, Mr. Poher travels to confer with sheriffs across the country.

"When I go to look about a new jail," he said, "I usually find they have an old Pauly."

The Tale of County's Jails

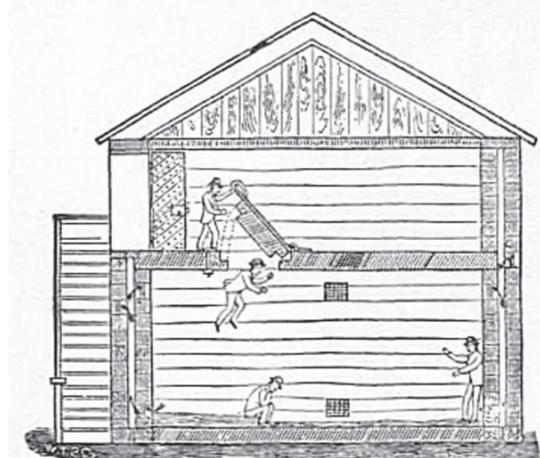


Illustration of an old log jail from an Pauly's catalog that is similar to what Hendricks County's first jail may have appeared. The catalog description reads, "Prisoners were taken to the upper story and then let down through a trap door into the cell below, which is without ventilation, very little light and when occupied is as filthy a dungeon as a man ever contrived - utterly unfit for the lowest brute."

Jail No. 1

The laws of the Northwest Territory, established in 1792, stated: "There shall be erected and established in each and every county, a strong and sufficient common jail or prison for the reception and confinement of debtors and criminals." The law was adopted into the laws of the Indiana Territory in 1800 and the 1816 Indiana Constitution.

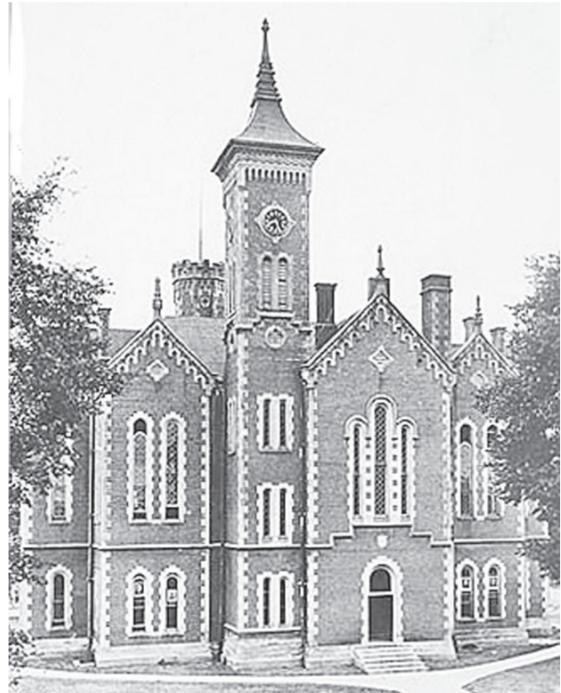
Hendricks County's first jail was constructed sometime between 1830 and 1834. It was located on North Washington Street, north of the first alley, on the west side of the street. Like the first court house, the jail was made of hewn logs.

Jail No. 2

The first jail's construction must have been poor, weak and flimsy, because in September of 1838, the Commissioners called for the old jail to be torn down and in its place a new "good, strong, durable jail" was to be built. The old jail was torn down in July of 1839 and by September the new jail was completed.

The specifications called for a foundation to be at least 3 ft. square, of limestone rock. The walls were to be "two thicknesses of squared timbers of a durable kind, with another hewn timber dropped endwise" between the other timbers, and to be finished off with a suitable roof, window grates, doors, etc."

The jail building had an upper story, reached by an exterior stairs, with a windowless dungeon below. A 12-ft. board fence surrounded the jail building with a wooden platform on the inside, all the way around, for a guard to keep watch. The sheriff lived in two rooms in a separate building. The builders, Cave J. Carter and Rucker J. Carter, received \$846.77 for the materials and labor.



The Hendricks County Court House was used as a temporary jail between the time the old log jail was torn down and the new brick jail was completed. A room in the north toward was used to confine at least one prisoner.

Jail No. 2.5

By 1861, a grand jury inspected the log jail and found it "in a very unhealthy and loathsome condition and wholly unfit to be occupied." They recommended a new prison.

The start of the Civil war put the plans for a new jail on hold. In January 1865, the Commissioners ordered the old jail and fence to be sold at public auction, reserving the iron and stone for use by the county.

This left the county without a jail and when Jacob Huber was convicted of "keeping a disorderly house" and selling liquor, he was ordered to serve his 30-day sentence in Marion County. The case wound up in the Indiana Supreme Court, where it was decided that Huber could not serve sentence in another county.

Until the new jail was completed, The Commissioners ordered that the Sheriff was authorized to use the jury room on the north side of the court house for a county jail until further ordered.

The new brick jail was completed in 1866, but the Commissioners, when made aware of a lapse in official designation, called a special meeting on February 8, 1867 to declare the building erected on lots Four and Five in Block 28, to be "declared the County Jail for said County and that the Sheriff of said county be authorized to use said building as such, till further ordered."

Neither a borrower nor
a lender be...

William Shakespeare

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