



## Colusa County Sheriff's Office



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### History of the Colusa County Sheriff's Office

Over one hundred and fifty years ago, the first gathering of the California Legislature divided the state into 27 counties. The first session of the California Legislature was held from December 15, 1849, to April 22, 1850. On February 18, 1850 the first 27 counties were named. The official name of Colusi County went on record and in 1856, the spelling was changed to Colusa.

The town site laid out around the Monroe House, called Monroeville. Monroeville at that time was located in Glenn County. (Colusi and Glenn County were both part of Tehama County territory.) The Monroe House became the first county seat upon the organization of Colusi County. In addition to serving as the center of county government, it also served as saloon, store, hotel, and post office. The first structure of any kind owned by the county was the gallows erected at Monroeville for a hanging. In November of 1853, the county seat was moved to the town of Colusi.

The history of law enforcement in Colusa County dates back to the Monroe House and John F. Willis, the first appointed Sheriff for Colusi County on February 18, 1851. During this time, the county had its first legal execution, (a hanging from the gallows) on April 24, 1852 at the Monroe House.

In 1854 the first official jail and courtroom was built on Market Street in Colusa. It was a 20 by 30-foot, two story, wooden structure, built near our current Hall of Records and Superior Courthouse, (constructed in 1861).

This jail was replaced in 1878, when a new two story jail building was constructed about 20 feet westerly of the courthouse. Prisoners could be escorted from the jail to the courthouse on a cat-walk connecting the two buildings. Prisoners called it the "Bridge of Sighs". The jail served the community from 1878 through 1962. It was partly destroyed by fire, and the 84-year old building needed to be replaced.

In 1962, a new Sheriff's Office and Jail was constructed at its current location on Bridge Street. During the past 20 years, renovations have been completed three times in order to keep up with changing times.

The days of the "Sheriff" and his "Deputy" in a two story wooden structure has grown into a 26,000 square foot concrete building that employs 75 staff members, 93 volunteer members, and a maximum security jail facility, that can house 92 prisoners.

