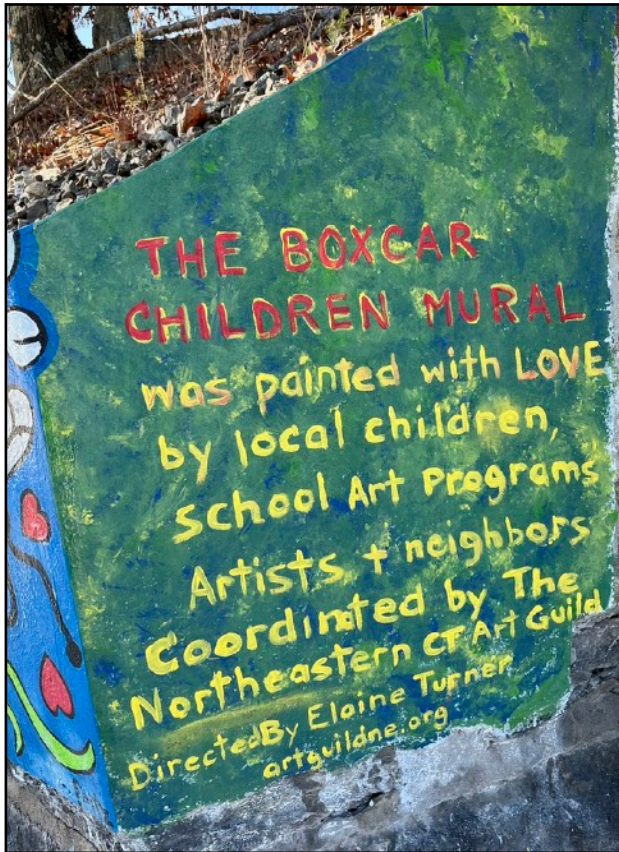


# ASPINOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER



### A Labor of Love Is Realized on a Wall

Downtown Putnam's burgeoning outdoor public art venue just got a whole lot bigger with the completion of The Boxcar Mural. Stretching almost 300 feet along South Main Street, the mural begins near the rail crossing parking lot, continues along the sidewalk below the Boxcar Museum, and ends just before the underpass at Front Street. There will be a formal ribbon cutting and dedication on December 4 at 4:40 PM.

Pictured on the mural are the covers of the 19 Boxcar Children books written by Putnam author Gertrude Chandler Warner, as well as additional covers of later books in the series written by other authors in the style of Warner.

According to project director and lead artist Elaine Turner the mural was a real community project involving many individuals from toddlers to 80 year olds. Students offering their artistic talents represented Putnam, Woodstock, Thompson, Pomfret, Killingly and Brooklyn, public and private schools.

Money for the project came from fund-raising. Sponsors for a

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### Book Talk - And A Best Seller

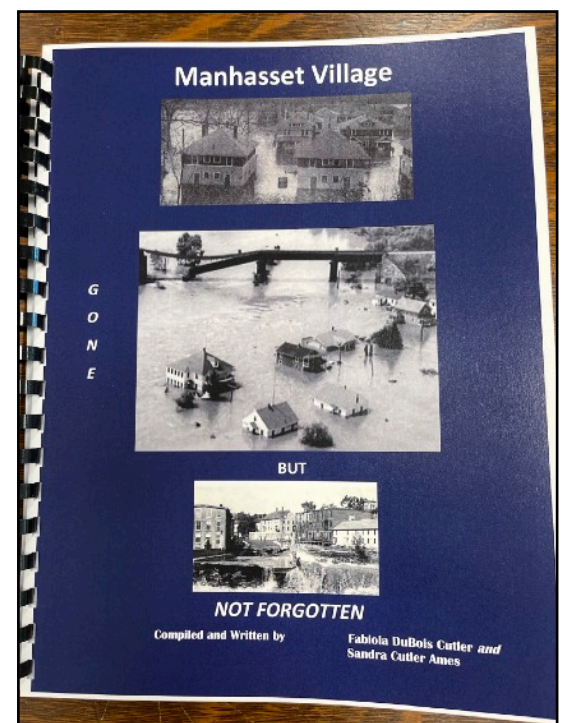
The Aspinock Historical Society is please to announce the release of its latest book, "Manhasset Village, Gone But Not Forgotten." Researched and written by society members Fabiola Cutler and Sandra Ames, the book chronicles the stories of more than 100 families whose lives were forever impacted by the catastrophic 1955 flood which swept through the Manhasset Village section of Putnam.

The book details the residents, streets and businesses of a once thriving neighborhood which suddenly ceased to exist. Following the flood all of the houses and small businesses were demolished. The book includes many family histories, along with numerous photographs.

This must-read book became an instant best seller with the first printing sold out by mid-November. A second printing is in the works. The book retails for \$30.00 plus tax and is available at the Aspinock Historical Society Museum at 200 Providence Street, Putnam.

"Manhasset Village, Gone But Not Forgotten" is a testament to the strength of a community in the face of adversity.

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Joy Lizotte, left and Terri Pearsall, right, from the Aspinock Historical Society were happy to accept a model boxcar for display from Putnam Public Library Director Priscilla Colwell. The East Granby, CT Public Library was giving it up and we were able to "win" it for Putnam. The library already has one.

## BOXCAR STATS 2023

Compiled by

Renee Boutin-Tsanjournes (Hatwoman)

Docent 2012-2023

This past year, from May to mid-October, 1,061 people visited the museum, making the grand total of 9,887 people visiting the museum since it opened in 2004.

11 new Connecticut towns sent people to the museum, making a total of 151 of 169 towns in our state.

Three new states were added, for a total of 47 state visitors, leaving only Idaho, New Mexico and North Dakota to send visitors.

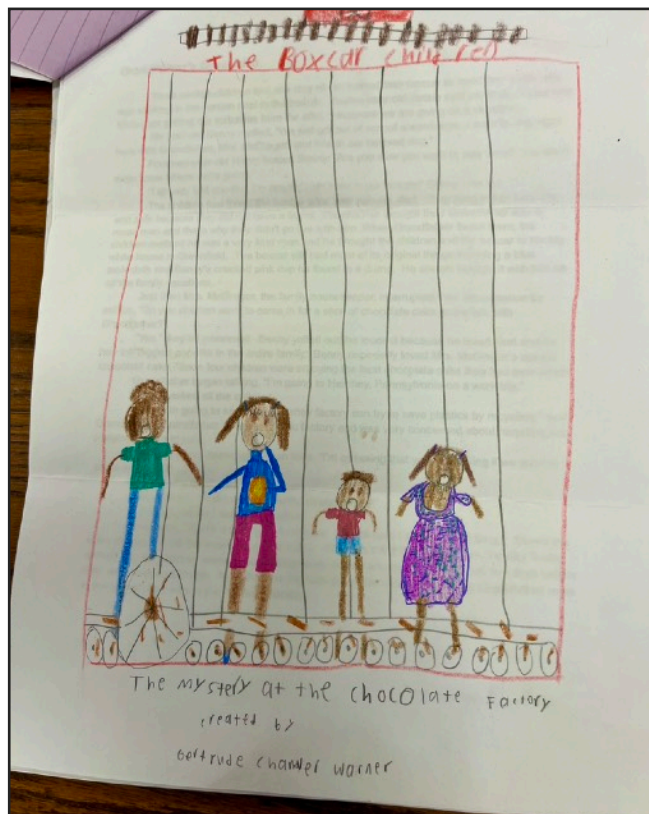
During the May to October 2023 season we had visitors from 29 states and the District of Columbia.

The total of visitors from four Canadian Provinces remains the same.

Seven new countries joined the previous count for a total of 37 world countries and territories. This year we welcomed international visitors from Lithuania, Mexico, Albania, Finland, Germany, Kenya and South Africa.

### New Members Joining the Aspinock Historical Society

Glenn Fisk of Putnam, CT



One young visitor to the Boxcar Museum with her family was so inspired by the experience that she wrote her own book about the Boxcar Children, and sent a copy to the Aspinock Historical Society. The title is "The Mystery at the Chocolate Factory." The author is only eight years old! It's wonderful that the books of Gertrude Warner continue to resonate with children from all over today.

## VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR OUR 2024 SEASON

Can you spare 2 1/2 hours once a month from May to October? The Gertrude Warner Boxcar Museum is looking for people to volunteer one shift per month from 11 AM to 1:30 PM or 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM on Saturday or Sunday. It's easy and training will be provided. Call the Aspinock Historical Society at 860-963-6800 if interested.



### -Book Talk Continued from page 1-

Another book of local interest is a memoir, "Remembering John Noel Dempsey: A Man Who Did Good," written by his son Father Ed Dempsey.

Born in Ireland in 1915, Dempsey and his family moved to Putnam, CT in 1925. He worked in the textile mills and later began a political career, which took him through six terms as Putnam's mayor, state representative, lieutenant governor and ultimately governor of Connecticut. His hands-on work following the flood of 1955 and redevelopment is legendary.

Just to paraphrase from the publisher's release of the book, "At a time when so many Americans are cynical and disgusted about the entire political process...it may come as a comfort to read about a politician who has been dubbed the genuine article...a man who believed that life was about giving and not about getting."

The book is available in paperback at M's Boutique in Putnam and Pourings and Passages Bookstore in Danielson.

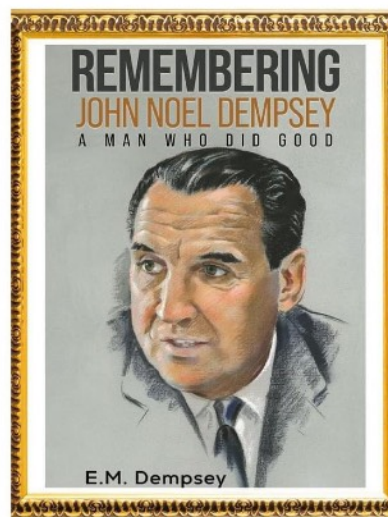
### -Labor of Love Continued from page 1-

cover panel paid \$300.00. Other people and businesses donated funds; no tax dollars were used, Turner said. The book covers are interspersed with other Boxcar related artwork, including a portrait of Miss Warner.



Top row left: Gertrude C. Warner portrait, and right: Dog Watch gets a bandage, scenes from the Boxcar Wall Mural. Bottom left: artist and project assistant Jen Atwood attaches a pre-painted book cover panel to the wall. Bottom right: artist and project director Elaine Turner applies finishing touches to the mural (WINY Radio photo).

## MEET THE AUTHOR OPEN HOUSE



**A VISIT WITH ED DEMPSEY**  
DECEMBER 9, 2023  
NOON - 2:00PM



The Aspinock Historical Society will be open to visitors beforehand.

## In Other News

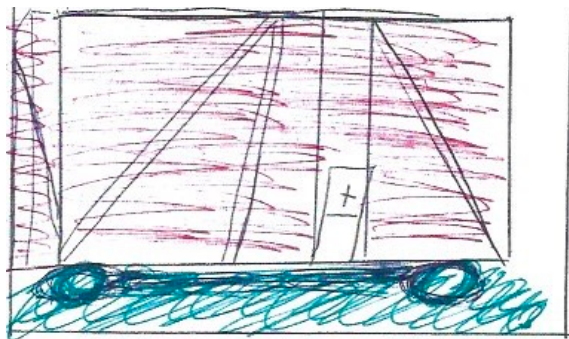
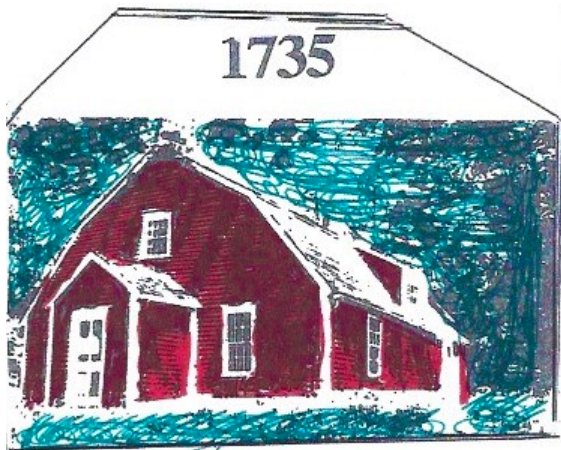
An ad hoc committee consisting of Jeanne Benoit, Elaine Turner, John Miller and Ken Evans has been formed to research and portray through art the life and legacy of former Putnam town historian Robert Miller. The finished work will be displayed on two panels in the newly refurbished Robert J. Miller Memorial Park at the head of Putnam's River Trail.

Construction has wrapped up on the parking area and access driveway to the Cady-Copp Cottage on Putnam Heights, according to Putnam Municipal Historian Bill Pearsall. There is much to consider going forward regarding period furnishings, museum status, visitor access, etc. Stay tuned for more details.

**Revised Hours:** The Aspinock Society Museum at 200 School Street is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 AM until 2 PM; Saturdays by appointment only.

**GIFT SOME PUTNAM HISTORY SALE EXTENDED!**  
**One Day Only! - Saturday, Dec. 9 - 10:30 AM-Noon**  
Historical Putnam Books, Mugs, Maps, Postcards,  
Gertrude Warner Boxcar Books & More!



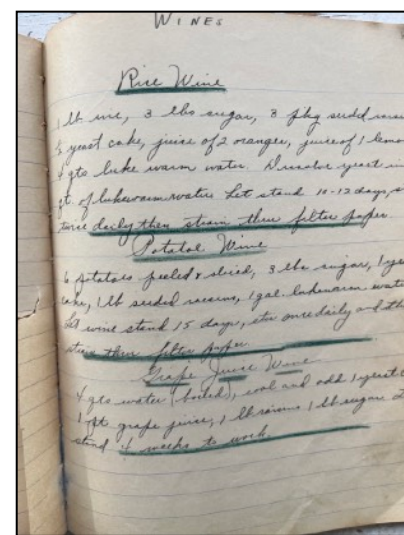
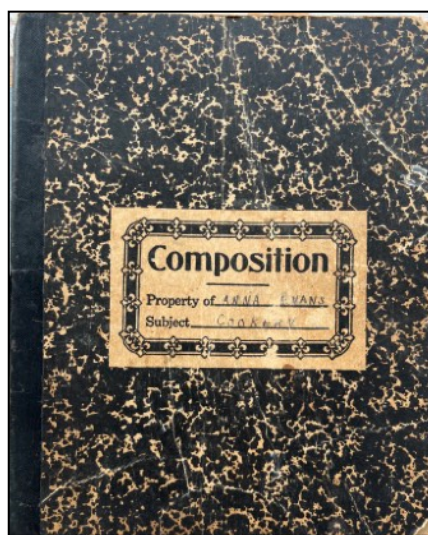


## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

**CHAIR RAIL SITTERS** - I had never heard the term chair rail sitters before and could not find a definition online. As best as I can describe they are small wooden replicas in the shape of, and painted with an image, such as a building, etc. They would "sit" on a chair rail or shelf.

We are looking for woodworkers and/or painters to make chair rail sitters for the Cady Copp Cottage and the Boxcar Museum. These wooden replicas will be sold next year.

Bring in your samples with name, your information and approximate cost to the Aspinock Historical Society, 200 School Street, Putnam, CT.



## Old Recipes

In the Summer Newsletter we asked readers for recipes reaching back generations, even to colonial times. We received only one reply, and this one hits close to home. It is from my sister, Deborah Guido, who resides in Florida and New Jersey. Debbie has a notebook with handwritten recipes by our grandmother, Anna Evans, (Mercier). Nana was born in Quebec, Canada, and emigrated to the United States in the early 1900s, eventually settling in Putnam and raising a family. Her recipes for several kinds of wine pictured here were probably written a century ago.

While these recipes do not date to colonial days, they use simple ingredients and are interesting to read. If anyone has old recipes, colonial or more recent, please feel free to submit them to the Aspinock Newsletter and we will publish them from time to time. I'm sure our readers will find them interesting and may even want to try some.

## Follow us on Facebook and Instagram

<https://www.facebook.com/AspinockHistoricalSociety>

<https://www.instagram.com/aspinockhistorical>



## Come Visit Us

The **Aspinock Historical Society Museum and Research Center** is located on the 2nd floor of the Putnam Municipal Complex at 200 School St., Putnam, CT. It is open Tue, Wed, Thur, 10 AM to 2 PM; and Saturdays by appointment. The **Gertrude Warner Boxcar Museum** is located on South Main St., Putnam, across the tracks from Union Square. It is open Saturdays and Sundays, May thru mid-October.

**Both museums are handicap accessible.**

Visit us to learn about Putnam's history through our displays and archives.

## Submitting News - Ken A. Evans, Newsletter Editor

I encourage Aspinock Historical Society members to submit news and information to be included in our quarterly newsletter. You can email me at [kaevans1969@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kaevans1969@sbcglobal.net) or leave material for me at the Aspinock Historical Society facility at 200 School St., Putnam.