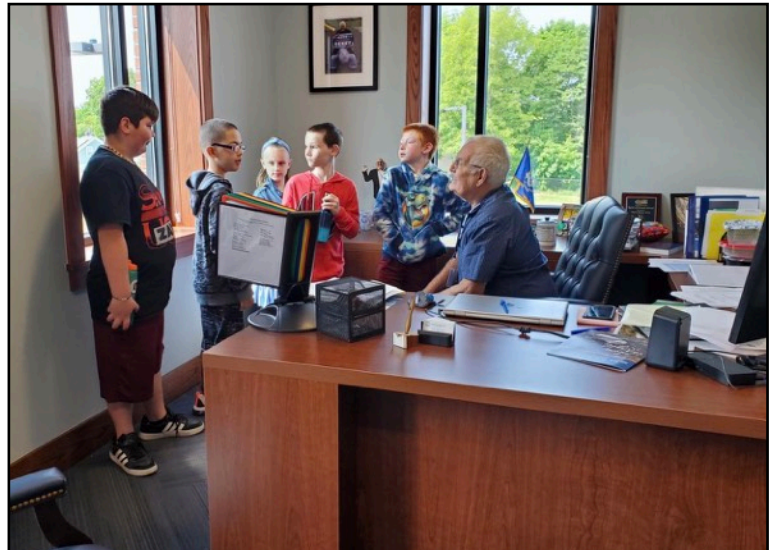


ASPINOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER



Kids Help To Celebrate Aspinock History Month

On May 23rd & 25th the about 90 third graders from Putnam Elementary school took a field trip to Putnam's Municipal Building. The trip included a tour of the new public library, the Aspinock Historical Society Museum and a chance to visit Putnam mayor Barney Seney in his office. The students also spent time at the Gertrude C. Warner Boxcar Museum. While at the Aspinock Museum the kids had a chance to try out some real "antique" devices such as a typewriter and a rotary dial telephone, now virtually extinct and unknown to them. At the end of the tour each child received a new Boxcar Children's book, "The Lighthouse Mystery," presented by Jewett City Savings Bank.



Some Takeaways from the Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Aspinock Historical took place on May 24 with 30 members attending. Putnam mayor Barney Seney addressed the group and spoke of the beginnings of the Municipal Complex and Aspinock's "beautiful facilities" and the importance of preserving local history. Pat Hedenberg reported that from its opening in 2004 to 2018, and reopening in 2022, 7,715 visitors from 44 states, 3 Canadian provinces and 31 countries have stopped by the Boxcar Museum and shared stories of their love of Gertrude Warner's Boxcar Children books. Thanks to the efforts of Mike Bogdanski, chairperson of public relations and also Aspinock media specialist, our online presence has greatly increased. Our Facebook page is updated often as is our Instagram page. Elaine Turner spoke about the restoration of two rare old maps, one of Windham County dated 1856 (left above), and an 1879 map of downtown Putnam. Aspinock member Maureen Herrera presented an informative program, "Rufus Malbone and His Horse Dolly." Rufus Malbone was an African American farmer and trader in Putnam who owned extensive property along the present Rt. 44 from the top of hospital hill to the Pomfret town line. Both he and his horse are buried on Maureen's property. She has undertaken, as a labor of love, the study of his family genealogy, with the assistance of Killingly Municipal Historian Margaret Weaver. You can find a video of her presentation on the Aspinock Youtube page.



On Saturday, June 3, Aspinock Historical Society had a display of the Italian immigrants outside the Centreville Bank in Putnam. Bill Pearsall and Jeannie Benoit, along with Joy Lizotte, talked about the Italian immigrants in Putnam. The boxcar museum was open and hosted a bocce ball game for people to play. This was part of Downtown Putnam's Italian Day celebration.

New Members Joining the Aspinock Historical Society

Linda Lemmon of Putnam, CT

Michael and Nanette Viens of Putnam, CT

What's In A Name?



In June the Connecticut Historical Society changed its name to the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History. Visit them at 1 Elizabeth St. in Hartford CT, or at their website:

<http://connecticutmuseum.org>



~ NEW FEATURE ~ Collector's Corner

As we look forward to the opening of Cady Copp Cottage our brochure needs to be updated. We are looking for recipes to add to all the information that will be contained in these booklets.

Look in your attic or your grandfather's barn for all your grandmother's old recipes from her grandmother or her great grandmother, or great, great, etc grandmother's recipe box. Way back in the days when cooks used lard instead of shortening, and all the other different ingredients that they used to cook for their families.

Send or bring them to the Aspinock Historical Society Center in the Putnam Municipal Complex, 200 School Street.

Email:

historicalsocietyaspinock@gmail.com



The Putnam Area Foundation donated the funds for the Gertrude C. Warner Boxcar Museum to get a new heating/cooling unit. This will mitigate the extremes in temperature during the months the museum is open, which have bothered volunteers and visitors alike. Front, from left: Jeannie Benoit, Sandra Ames, Pat Hedenberg and foundation president Tom Borner. Back, from left: Putnam Municipal Historian Bill Pearsall, Terri Pearsall, Aspinock Society President John Miller, and foundation member Dick Loomis. In foreground is Watch the dog. Photo by Linda Lemmon

In Other News

After a brief pause, construction continues on the parking area and access driveway to the Cady-Copp Cottage on Putnam Heights, according to Putnam Municipal Historian Bill Pearsall. Stay tuned for more details.

Beginning in September the Aspinock Society Museum at 200 School Street will be open on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month in addition to its regular weekday hours.

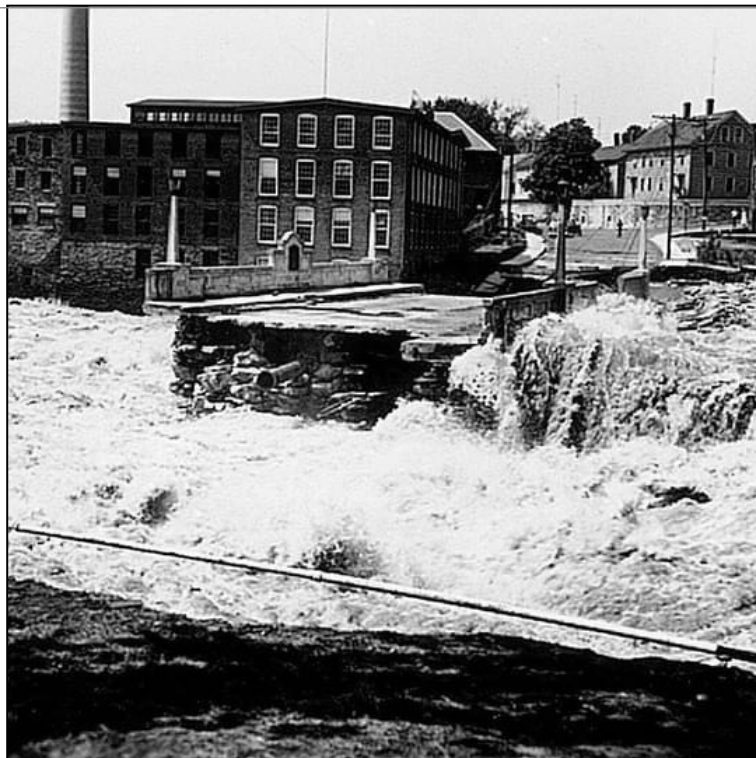
The WIFI password for the Aspinock Historical Society is: **B0xcarChildr3n!** Note the character after the B is a Zero

Check out the new HVAC unit at the Boxcar Museum. This has enabled visitors and docents a much more comfortable time when the museum is open. See the photo on the next page.

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 Renee at 860-974-0325.

AUGUST ANNIVERSARY



August 19 marked the 68th anniversary of the catastrophic 1955 Flood. Back to back hurricanes dumped upwards of 19 inches of rain, causing rivers to rise and dams to fail to the north of Putnam. Torrents of water tore through downtown destroying business and houses alike. The 1955 Flood hastened the end of Putnam as a textile manufacturing center. A number of lasting legacies are a result of this disaster. A redevelopment plan was set in motion which changed the downtown and river banks. A series of large flood control dams were built upstream designed to prevent large scale flooding in the future. In addition the prompt, hands-on efforts of then mayor John Dempsey helped to catapult him into the governor's office.

Be sure to check out the floods and other disasters display at the Aspinock Museum and Research Center. Also watch the 1955 Flood video found on the Aspinock Facebook page.



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 the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month 10 AM To Noon. 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 or leave material for me at the Aspinock Historical Society facility at 200 School St., Putnam.