

ASPINOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 2024 NEWSLETTER

The Boxcar Museum Is Back on Track



After being shuttered for much of the spring and summer the Boxcar Museum is finally back on track and is welcoming visitors. The museum was closed earlier this year due to deterioration of the rail ties and bed on which it sits and the need to replace them. The boxcar was moved to a temporary track so work could begin. Various delays prolonged the project during the summer.

Thanks to Rawson Materials for the stone ballast for the rail bed so that the new ties and rails could be laid down. After that, the boxcar was pulled back to its original location and eventually reopened.

One young visitor, Slater from South Carolina, celebrated his seventh birthday at the museum, along with his mother and grandmother, above right and center. He is an avid Gertrude Warner fan and has read all her books twice. (Aspinock Society photos)

Funding for the restoration project got a significant boost from the Spirol International Charitable Foundation, Inc. The Boxcar Museum would also like to thank Hilltop

Plumbing, Tom Thurlow; Putnam Highway Department Travis Sirrine and crew; and the Putnam Recreation Department, Willie Bousquet and crew.

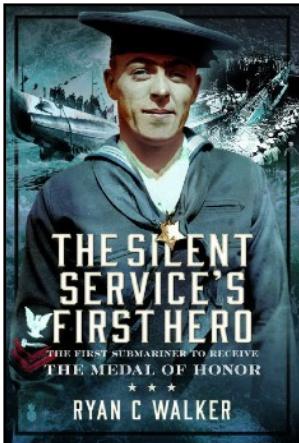


WE NEED YOUR HELP

We are looking for donations of vinyl sheet protectors and 2-inch and 3-inch three-ring binders to be donated to help with archiving. Please leave your donations at the Putnam Public Library and designate them for the Aspinock Historical Society.

We are also looking for volunteers to help staff the Aspinock Historical Museum. Can you spare a few hours each month? If you are interested call the museum at 860-963-6800

~ THANK YOU ~



On September 18 author Ryan C. Walker held a book signing of his recent work "The Silent Service's First Hero." The book is a deep dive into the life of Putnam's Henry Breault, who was awarded the first submariner Medal of Honor. More about Breault's heroism is detailed in the Aspinock Spring Newsletter.

Author Ryan C. Walker signs a copy of his book, "The Silent Service's First Hero," shown at left, for Putnam Mayor Barney Seney at his recent book signing event.

Ryan Walker is spearheading a petition drive on [change.org](https://www.change.org/p/name-a-virginia-class-submarine-after-medal-of-honor-recipient-henry-breault) to have Henry Breault's name attached to a VIRGINIA Class submarine as the USS HENRY BREAULT. There has never been a naval vessel named after Breault and Walker believes strongly it is now time to change that. Find out more about his initiative by checking out the links to the right.

<https://www.change.org/p/name-a-virginia-class-submarine-after-medal-of-honor-recipient-henry-breault>



Share his petition in person or use the QR code for your own material.

[Download QR Code](#)

Did You Know?

Sandra Ames and Fab Cutler are contributing a new segment to the newsletter entitled Did You Know? This regular column will offer interesting tidbits of local history they have researched, or were contributed by others.

Let your imagination take you back a few centuries. Looking out your window, you might find a Native American neighbor digging up some roots in your yard. Why, you might ask? He may be a Healer, gathering supplies for those who are ill in his tribe. The land we are referring to is presently the area between the Quinebaug River in the city of Putnam and the Five Mile ("Assawaga") River in East Putnam. Early Native Americans had agreed that there would be no bloodshed in this area. Medicine Men and Healers from the various tribes in our area could harvest what they needed here without fear of attack. This place was also designated as a safe meeting place where disputes were discussed and decisions agreed upon. This area has been a special place in the past, and remains so today. (Researched by Sandra Cutler Ames, 2024)

Aspinock Driving Force Passes

Frederick (Fred) Hedenberg, 98, civic pillar of Putnam's political past, passed away on Tuesday, July 2, 2024. He was born January 18, 1926. Fred served his country, enlisting (at 17) in the Navy Air Command during WWII, stationed in Key West, Florida.

The ensuing GI Bill helped Fred further his education and brought him to RI as a newspaper "press man." He went on to be a successful editor of the "Wickford Standard" newspaper. His "people" personality led him to a side-line career in radio as a talk show host for many RI stations and finally as host on the WINY Radio Talk Show. In addition, he ran a successful promotional products business in Putnam.

Fred chaired the steering committee that established Hospice of Northeast CT and the CT Governors Volunteer Committee. He also worked with the Red Cross, and received a citation from the town of Putnam for his service during hurricane "Hugo". He served as chair of the Republican Town Committee, board member of the Northeast District Department of Health, Justice of the Peace, actor at the Bradley Theater, Cub Scout leader and girls softball coach. The state of CT presented Fred with a citation for serving twenty years as a Selectman for the town of Putnam.

While serving as president of the Aspinock Historical Society, Fred coordinated efforts for the renovation of the Cady-Copp Cottage and the establishment of the Gertrude C. Warner Boxcar Children's Museum.

Fred is survived by his wife, Patricia, as well as their son Matthew (Lisa) and daughter, Bethany (Jeffrey) Kreyssig. His son, Richard Hedenberg, (Kate) and grandsons, Kyle, Nathan, Ryan and Danny Kreyssig, grand-daughter Amber Bigelow and her mother, Barbara. He was predeceased by his son David and sister Barbara Hedenberg.

A Celebration of Fred's Life was held August 10th in Putnam.

A Look Back at Summer Here 100 Years Ago - 1924

ville and St. Hyacinthe.

VACATION

Be sure to take the blue jar along for sunburn, bites, stings, bruises, sores, cuts, lame muscles, poison ivy, hay fever or summer colds.

VICKS VAPORUB

Over 17 Million Jars Used Yearly

Arnold's Fish Market
— AND —
SEA GRILL
Now open in the new Stoumbelis Block, opposite the Congregational Church
Entrance on Bundy Street
Order Your Clams for July 4th
SEA GRILL
Open every week day from 8 a. m., to 7 p. m.
TRY ONE OF OUR FAMOUS HOME COOKED DINNERS

Big Clam Bake
—AT—
PINE SPRING GROVE
HOPKIN'S FARM (River Road) PUTNAM, CONN.
Sunday, June 29th
FRANK HOPKINS, Caterer
Come and Bring Your Lady Friends
EVERYONE WELCOME
Bake at 1 O'clock Sharp, Standard Time
TICKETS—\$2.00
Rain or Shine Plenty of Room Under Cover

Let's take a look back at summertime in Putnam a century ago as gleaned from the pages of local newspapers "The Putnam Patriot" and "Windham County Observer."

Right away we notice that some activities of summer are no different today than they were in 1924: taking vacations, attending a clam bake, swimming, ordering seafood for a Fourth of July cookout, shopping for that perfect summer outfit.

In the market for a new car? A new 4 door Paige Brougham would have set you back over two grand. This was an extremely expensive ride for the time that only the very wealthy could afford. Compare that to a 1924 Ford Touring Car, which could be had for the much lower sum of \$295.00!

In July, 1924, between 35 and 40 "Fresh Air" children from New York City came to Putnam and stayed in various homes for two weeks. It was thought they would benefit from country living away from the pollution and crime of their urban environment.

In July Miss Katherine Byrne of Putnam was appointed vice-chairperson of Connecticut's Republican State Committee leading up to the November 1924 election, which saw Republican Calvin Coolidge elected to a full term as President, beating out two opponents.

Area residents were shocked by the murder in June of prominent Pomfret resident Edwin T. White, who was shot by his "insane brother" Benjamin, 80. As reported in the local press, Benjamin, whose "mind was unbalanced by brooding over the wedding of his niece," apparently snapped. He fled into the woods and was later tracked down, shot and killed by police and a "citizens posse."

Healy Upholds Swimming Ban, Roseland Trustees Will Fight

ATTORNEY GENERAL, IN OFFICIAL OPINION, SAYS THAT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT ORDER IS JUSTIFIED
BY LAW

PUTNAM, CONN., FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 1924

Bugbee and Wulf
DEPARTMENT STORE

**Get Ready Now
For the Glorious Fourth**

NEW SUMMER SILK DRESSES	Wash Silks	Foulards	Printed Crepes
	\$14.75	\$16.75	\$19.75

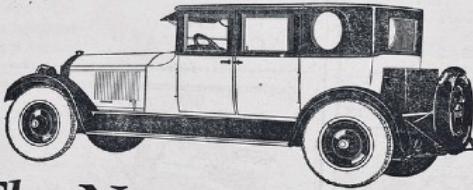
LADIES' SILK CREPE DRESSES		NEW PLEATED SKIRTS
Navy, Blue, Tan, Brown	Greatly Reduced	Roshanara Crepe Black, Navy, Blue, Tan, Gray and White \$8.75

MISSES' COLORED SILK DRESSES		NEW SILK BLOUSES
\$10.00	\$16.75	\$5.50 \$6.75 \$9.75

ALL COATS		NEW COTTON BLOUSES
Further Reduced		Voiles and Dimity \$1.95

SPORT SWEATERS		NEW SWEATERS
\$5.50	\$6.50	\$1.95 \$2.95 \$3.95

NEW PAIGE
[Standard Open Models Now \$1795]



**The New
4-Door Brougham**
\$2175

THINK of an enclosed Paige at \$2175—less than ordinary, smaller enclosed cars cost! And such a Paige—even finer in performance and quality than last year's \$3235 Paige closed car!

The New Paige has all the riding comfort that comes with 131-inch wheelbase, rear springs more than 5 feet long, smooth front rear.

The smooth, silent performance of the big, 70 h. p. Paige motor is a joy. Throttle down to 2 miles an hour in high—gear-shifting is rare.

Call us or come in for a demonstration. See this smartly finished New Paige 4-Door Brougham. Match its value if you can.

Standard Models

5-Passenger Phaeton	\$1795
7-Passenger Phaeton	2175
5-Passenger Brougham	2175

Deluxe Models

5-Passenger Phaeton	\$1995
7-Passenger Phaeton	2275
7-Pass. Suburban Limousine	2375

Prices of Delivery. Tax extra.

DELSILE BROS., AGENTS
WOODSTOCK AVENUE

In Other News

There is now a link on our website where electronic payments for membership dues and donations can be made. The website address is

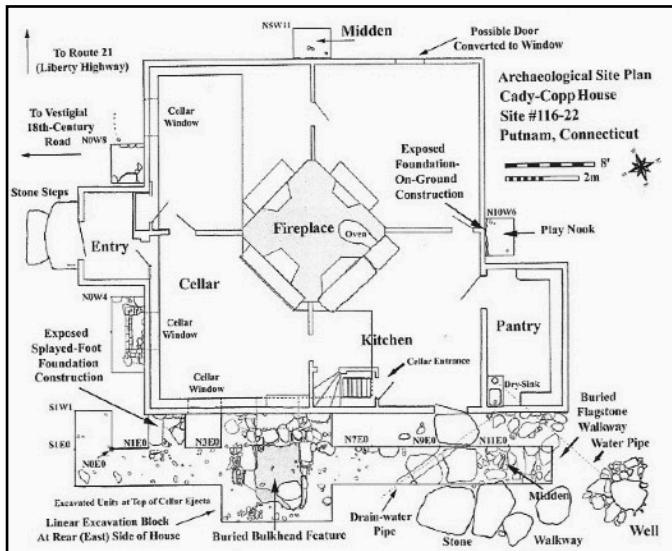
<https://putnamaspinockhistsoc.com/>

Our online presence continues to grow, according to Mike Bogdanski, Public Relations Chairperson and coordinator of social media. Mike reports that in the last year our Facebook account has bumped up from 100 followers to more than 800 and Instagram followers stands at 221. The Aspinock website has about 2,000 views per month. Past issues of this newsletter can be seen on our website. We also have a YouTube account which posts a number of videos for viewing, including Flood of 1955, Medal of Honor program, African-American sailor Thomas Taylor and more.

Curator Terri Pearsall reports that as of early September 238 visitors have stopped by the museum so far this year.

The Deborah Avery Putnam Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution and Putnam town officials recently rededicated a historical marker in the small Washington Park on Rt. 44. The site includes several newly planted maple trees.

The Aspinock Historical Society's annual giving appeal is now underway with a mailing recently sent out to the membership. With our country's 250th anniversary of its independence approaching in 2026, what better way to show what history means than to complete the work on Cady Copp cottage and open it as a museum for America's anniversary. The outside is essentially completed. With your help we will be able to finish the inside of the of the oldest home in Northeast Connecticut.



VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR OUR 2025 SEASON

Can you spare 2 1/2 hours once a month from May thru 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. If you are interested in volunteering as a docent at the Boxcar Museum contact Barbara Scalise at 860-974-1832 or email her at quassett@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram

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

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

<https://youtube.com/@AspinockHistoricalSociety?>



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 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.