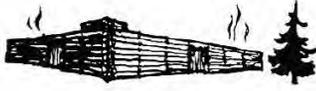




Putney Historical Society

Fall 2017



putneyhistory.us
putneyhistory@gmail.com
802-387-4411

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THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL

Reconstruction of the Putney General Store

by Lyssa Papazian

AFTER TWO FIRES, 3½ years, over 350 local donors, and the support of many businesses, foundations and agencies the Putney General Store was reconstructed by the Putney Historical Society. The goal was to achieve the total development costs of \$1.3 million with only \$230,000 in long-term debt. Keeping the debt sustainable through grants ensures that the property will continue to serve the community as a successful store and gathering place. Open since December of 2011, the store has had two tenant/proprietors whose offerings included a pharmacy upstairs and a Chinese take out downstairs — all the while a vibrant store and café. The current iteration is a general store — grocery, deli, bakery, café, wine and beer — run and owned by the Putney Historical Society. With its anchor business and historic look restored, and with the transformation of the closed former United Church of Putney into the Next Stage Performing Arts Center (also a Putney Historical Society project) the center of the village is once again intact and thriving. With only a short interruption the Putney General Store is still the oldest operating general store in Vermont, since 1796. ■

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c.1890



2006



May 3, 2008 electrical fire



May 4, 2008



Oct. 2009 after stabilization & repair





RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PUTNEY GENERAL STORE *continued*



November 1, 2009 — arson



"We Are the General Store" fence December 2009



Senator & Mrs. Leahy visit — February 17, 2010



December 2010



May 2011



Ted Brady at opening day — December 10, 2011



Opening Celebration



Spring 2013



June 2015 — with pharmacy



Double Rainbow in 2017 upon the most recent grand re-opening in May



2017 — Putney General Store
Open 7 to 7, 7 days a week



Today





AROUND TOWN

A Glimpse Through the Mists of Time

by Laurel Ellis

AS WE FREQUENT PLACES that are familiar and constant in our daily lives, we are usually totally unaware of those whose footsteps preceded ours and what activities happened on the very spot where we are standing.

Next time you visit the Putney Post Office, let your imagination wander back nearly 250 years to a large newly-constructed family home occupied by a middle-aged pioneering couple with 10 children. Chickens are roaming in the dooryard, an enormous vegetable garden lies to the north, and a barn for carriages and livestock sits on the opposite side of the dusty dirt road.

On Putney's nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places Inventory done in 1985 the house is described as "a large, c. 1795, 5 x 4 bay, 2-story, clapboard, Georgian Plan house with slightly projecting gables — a rare feature." In this description it is stated that the house was "known as the 'Campbell House'" but it was actually built by Charles Kathan well before 1795 and probably in the early 1780s. Various records in the Town vault indicate that Charles Kathan was born in 1743 in Worcester, Mass. and came to Putney and Dummerston at a very young age with his father, Captain John Kathan, whose homestead was [probably] between the Putney Inn and the West Hill Shop.

Records indicate that Charles built the first sawmill and gristmill on Sacketts Brook in 1765, that he was the original owner of the four 50-acre lots that the current Putney Village is now located within, and that his original



Historic: The late 18th-century Kathan/Campbell/Noyes House that once stood on the site of the current post office.



Recent: The current Putney Post Office, built in 1963.

house was located on the site of the current 101 Main Street — the 2nd house down from the Post Office.

Records also indicate that Charles was of Roxbury, Mass. in November 1771, September 1772 and again in March of 1779. In April of 1773 and May of 1776 he was "of Putney." He earned the title of "Colonel" in the Revolutionary War. In 1782 and 1783 he served as a Putney Selectman with James Haile and Samuel Minot. He was Town Treasurer in 1785 and did his part in the building of our town with duties such as the laying out of roads. He died in 1793 and is buried in the historic Kathan Cemetery off Old Depot Road.

Most of Charles' estate was bought up piece by piece from Charles' widow and children by Dr. Alexander Campbell who operated the farm from 1797 until 1839 when he sold it to John Noyes (father of John Humphrey Noyes, leader of the Perfectionist Community in Putney).

The farm remained one of the 3 principal Perfectionist communal homes until the group fled Putney and resettled in Oneida, New York. Their story is a long and fascinating one for another time!

The house was sold by representatives of the Community in 1857 to once again become a single-family home. It "later became the parish hall for Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church," and was torn down in preparation for the new Post Office which opened in 1963. ■

¹ Elisha Andrews' 1825 sermon refers to property "now occupied by Eunice McClellan" as being the site of Charles Kathan's original dwelling. Deed research indicates that Eunice McClellan purchased what is now 101 Main Street in 1822 (PLR Book 6 page 19).

² *National Register of Historic Places Inventory* — Nomination Form, page 60 [Putney]





AROUND TOWN

Find Your House

by Tim Ragle

THIS VIEW OF PUTNEY from 1899 (taken by Adelbert Corser) shows structures that we are familiar with, such as Next Stage (former United Church of Putney), the Town Hall and Community Center. Putney has a long history and many of the houses still standing in town date from the late 18th or the 19th century. Look at the 1869 Beers map of Putney and the 2006 town map of the village center. What similarities do you see? What has changed? Are there more houses? Fewer?

You will notice that Route 5 doesn't show up on the 1869 map. It didn't exist until the 1920s. Bellow's Falls Road or Rt. 5 was known as Factory Street in 1869. Sand Hill Road was known as Pine Street, and Kimball Hill was known as High Street.

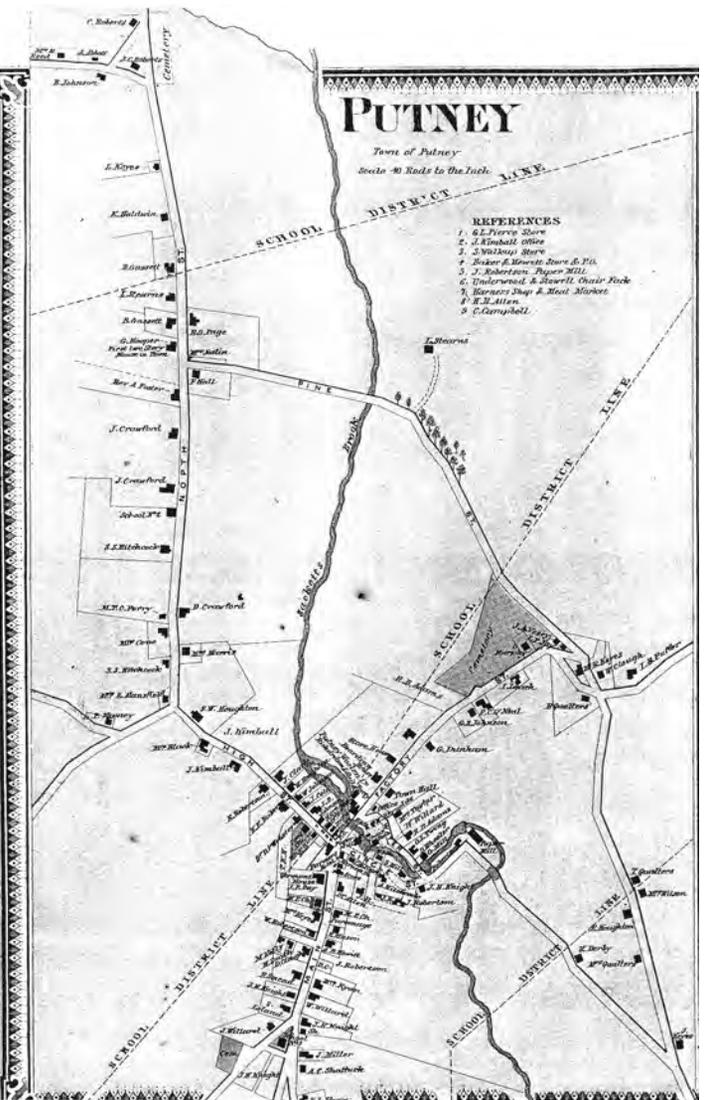


View of Putney from the Landmark College vicinity, taken in 1899 by Corser. Notice the wide open landscape.

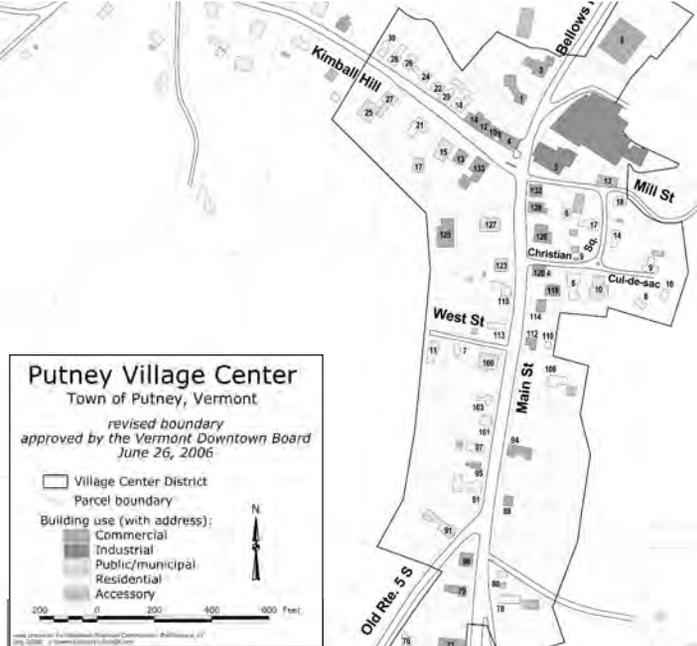
Many of the older houses in the village are still standing, although some have burned, and while a few such as the Putney Diner and Putney Pizza survived fires, their roof-lines are different from their original look.

We have a lot to offer at the Putney Historical Society. Come research your house, look at old photos and maps, share your knowledge, stories and wisdom.

When you've exhausted our materials, go to the Town Hall and follow the deeds backwards to when your house was built. Learn about houses in the historic district. Maybe your house is one of them. If you are truly dedicated, go to the probate court in Bellows Falls and search for the old probate records. The journey will lead you to many places and what you learn might surprise you. ■



Beers Map from 1869 of Putney Village



Putney Village Center Map from 2006



Collaborations

THE PHS HAS BEEN COLLABORATING with the Vermont Historical Society on Digital Vermont, a VHS project to share historic images from towns across Vermont. The PHS has submitted 15 photographs from the Fairchild collection of glass plate negatives taken by Adelbert Corser and Mary Corser Thwing between the late 19th century and the early 20th century. The plates submitted to this project have focused on work in Putney ranging from a crew filling a sprayer tank to spray a potato field to the switchboard operator holding a dog on her lap to mill workers at two different paper mills. The VHS has cataloged the photographs to put on the website, adding information on the people and activities depicted in the images. The website with the Putney photos and some from other towns can be seen at <http://www.digitalvermont.org/collections/show/11>. ■



Items For Sale

PHS has copies of several publications for sale:

- The History of Putney Vermont 1753–1953* — \$15
- Putney: World's Best Known Small Town* — \$25
- Gravestone Inscriptions of Putney*, by Ken Stevens — \$15
- Putney Vital Records*, by Ken Stevens — \$30
- 1800 Map of Putney by Cory and Carpender — \$15
- Map of Putney Countryside by Dodd — \$15
- Post cards of Putney — 75¢

These items are available at the Historical Society office and at Town Hall.

Last chance for historic pews available by donation to the Next Stage Capital Campaign! They are 8 feet long and come with new cushions, as is. Contact Barry Stockwell if you are interested: 802-387-5772 or stobro@svcable.net ■

In the News

Putney General Store:

<http://www.reformer.com/stories/putney-general-store-an-example-of-resilience,505833>

http://www.sentinelsource.com/elf/pickin_and_pokin/putney-general-store-reopens-for-community/article_754e27bc-3bf2-11e7-87dc-ff74853952e6.html

<http://www.happyvermont.com/2017/07/23/putney-general-store-starts-new-chapter/>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/country-stores-a-new-england-institution-are-going-dark-1500491249> ■



VISIT!

Office Hours

THE PHS is maintaining office hours at 15 Kimball Hill from 10am to 1pm every Saturday. Please stop by and visit, ask questions about Putney History or search for photographs of your house. There is a lot of information available that we can try to direct you to.

Photographs: PHS has several historic photograph collections from the late 19th century to the middle 20th century. The Fairchild collection is the work of A. M. Corser, former owner of the general store, and Mary Corser Thwing, who both documented town events, places and people for many years. Several years ago the Brattleboro Historical Society donated a collection of negatives taken by the Brattleboro Reformer from 1949 to 1976, although most date to the 1950s. They include a wide range of community events over those years. In addition to these fairly coherent collections, we have a variety of additional photographs dating to the 19th and 20th centuries that have been donated and collected over the years.

Many of the photographs in the PHS collections are of known locations and people, often with associated names and dates. However, a large number are of unknown people and places. We would love to have help in identifying these photographs. Please stop by the PHS office to see if you can recognize any people or places in the photos or to look for views of your house! ■



COLLECTIONS STORAGE

PHS New Storage

PHS HAS BEEN WORKING to set up our new storage space on the third floor at Next Stage. We were able to use some of the metal shelving from the General Store and set it up in the space. Some of the shelves have been equipped with wheels so that they can be moved together to save space and moved apart to access materials. The next step is to prepare the collections for moving to the new space. That process will include examining the collections to see if anything should be deaccessioned and to see if materials can be consolidated within the containers to save space. We will update the catalog of the collection to improve the ability to search for items. Once completed the materials can be moved into the space.

The move and organization will help to make the collections more accessible to visitors and researchers interested in the history of Putney. ■



The new wire shelving will allow for storage of much of the PHS collections at Next Stage where they will be more accessible to people interested in seeing particular items or researching a class of items.



Most of the PHS collections are currently stored in bins in the Town Hall. Once the collections have been reviewed for possible deaccessioning and condition, they will be transferred to the new storage area.





Annual Meeting

PUTNEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING will be held on August 27th at 2pm at Next Stage.

After a short business meeting, Next Stage Arts Project Executive Director Maria Basescu will lead a discussion about **LegacyPutney**. Leah Toffolon will talk about the Putney Central School/VT Folklife Center Discovering Community projects and will show an encore sampling of the student interview films from the project.

Next Stage Arts Project has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, one of 89 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town projects

selected nationwide out of 274 eligible applications. The grant is designated to support a collaborative project between Next Stage and the Town of Putney entitled *LegacyPutney; A Collaborative Celebration of Putney's Arts, History and Culture*. Key partners include the Putney Historical Society, the Putney Library and area schools.

The project has also received a \$40,000 grant from the Fresh Sound Foundation. Next Stage will seek an additional \$10,000 in matching funds from the community. **LegacyPutney** will encompass a yearlong engagement process of eliciting, crafting and harnessing stories from Putney area residents and presenting them in a range of performance genres that are a hallmark of Next Stage; literary, film, music, theater, movement, and visual. Presentations will be shared throughout the year, culminating in a 2-week festival in May of 2018, that will feature Putney stories, and works by and about cultural figures and groups in our local and state history through the present, that have shaped the Putney of today.

Come with questions about the **LegacyPutney** project and learn how you can participate. ■



Join the Putney Historical Society for our Annual Meeting on August 27th at 2pm.

The Putney Historical Society needs you onboard.

Please join us or renew your membership.

Membership and donation are now available online at <http://putneyhistory.us>

Make checks payable to: Treasurer, Putney Historical Society
PO Box 260, Putney Vermont 05346

- \$5 Senior (basic) \$15 Individual (basic) \$25 Family
- \$50 Sustaining \$100 Benefactor \$250 Patron \$_____ Other

Thank you! PHS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. All donations beyond basic membership are tax deductible.

NAME _____

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Putney Historical Society

15 Kimball Hill
PO Box 260
Putney, VT 05346

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**Annual Meeting
on August 27th at 2pm**

OUR MISSION
is to bring together those persons interested in history, especially in the history of the Town of Putney; to discover and collect materials... pertinent to the history of Putney; to acquire property or rights in interest in property in order to preserve historic resources.

Postal Customer


*Printed with assistance by
C&S Wholesale Grocers, in support of our community.*

Mystery Photo from the Fairchild collection at PHS

L A B E L E D C. E. Glidden House, dated 1899. Does anyone know where this house is or was located?

