


Putney HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PUTNEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2000

SUNDAY, JUNE 25

4:00 PM

Steve Anderson

will present a program on

John Humphrey Noyes and the Putney Community.

Putney Cares has invited us to have the program in the Noyes Barn. The Noyes House, which John's parents bought in 1821 when he was 10 years old, will be open at 3:00 PM for those who wish to look around. Refreshments will be served.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF "THE CORNER STORE"

by Laurel Ellis

After 26 years as proprietors of Putney General Store, Robert and Anne Fairchild and family have turned the keys over to Dan Mitnik and Shari Gliedman who have this March become the 17th owners of a business operated continuously on the same site, and possibly in the same building, for over 200 years.

Dan and Shari, their son Zachary (8) and twins Ethan and Lindsay, (6) left their fast-paced life in South Salem, New York to actually live the small town life that fascinated them during frequent visits to Putney over the years. When Shari worked the counter at Putney General in 1978 while attending Windham College, she fell in love with the town but never dreamed she would someday be an owner of the store. The family stopped in for lunch overlooking Sacketts Brook last August, chatted with Robert Fairchild, discovered he planned to sell the store, ran the numbers, and by February had made their decision to become part of the history of the "corner store."

The land on which the store stands was originally part of the two-acre sawmill property when Charles Kathan was said to have erected the first sawmill in Putney circa 1765. Shortly before his death in 1793, Kathan sold the two acres to Samuel Works of Westmoreland who made a profit of six pounds when he sold the parcel to William Sargeant of Dummerston and Jonathan Sargeant of Ware, Massachusetts the same year.

Between 1796 and 1799 William Sargeant and his partner John Griffin built a new store "which stands on the easterly side of the stage road and nearly opposite John Goodwin's dwelling house [the current Putney Tavern]." William and John also built a hattery shop close by which shared a "common door yard." At that time the "county road" leading north crossed Sacketts Brook a few yards west of the store.

As John Griffin had previously operated a store (roughly across from the current Putney Central School) since 1784, it's my guess that Griffin ran the new store while Sargeant ran the sawmill. Griffin doesn't appear to have been a good business man, or perhaps just had a taste for the too expensive, as he suffered several judgments against him at different times. When Sargeant came to his aid for the sum of \$550 in 1798, Griffin gave him title to the following: "one case of drawers(?) valued at \$30; one clock...\$40; 3 beds...\$60; 1 stallion horse...\$100; 1 bay, 2 French horses and one colt coming 2 years old and 2 cows...\$200."

Griffin sold his half-interest in the store and land to Sargeant in March of 1801 for \$280. Four days later Sargeant sold the whole parcel for \$700 to the partnership of (Samuel) Chandler and (Levi) Bigelow. Chandler later removed to Woodstock and Bigelow to Derby leaving their agent Benjamin Smith in charge of their several operations in Putney.

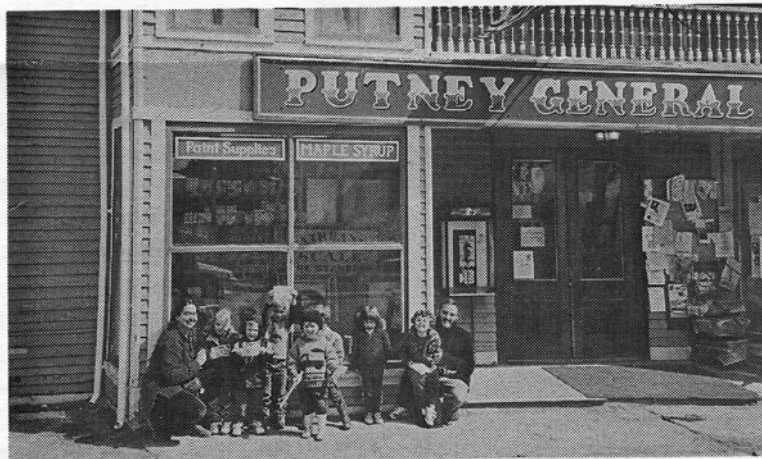
In 1811 Smith mortgaged all of Chandler & Bigelow's Putney holdings for \$5053.53 to Stanton & Spelman of Boston who foreclosed in 1815. By 1819, Smith had reacquired most of the properties in his own name. He then sold the eastern (sawmill)

(continued on page 3)



Two groups of children pose in front of the Putney General Store: Above in 1902 and below in 2000. The three-year-olds on the bottom are from Putney Community Day Care Center and had just finished their first historic tour of the village with their teachers and the Putney Historical Society. Armed with giant blowups of historic photographs from the Historical Society's rich collection, the children tried to pick out all the changes in familiar village landmarks such as the General Store, Town Hall, Community Center (formerly the Baptist Church), the Tavern, Offerings (formerly a meat market), Silver Forest (formerly a hardware store and later the Putney Co-op), and the Putney Village Pizza (formerly the Putney Fruit Co.).

Submitted by Lyssa Papazian



SPEAKING OF COPIES.....A scanner that can be used for negatives and photos is a brand new addition to the photographic equipment of Geordie Heller. Geordie is the one who has cleaned, preserved, and printed over 2000 glass plate negatives owned by the Putney Historical Society. The scanner opens all sorts of possibilities. Some examples are at the Museum. Geordie can be reached at 387-2554.

Does anyone have a photo of the old World War II Memorial that once stood in front of the Town Hall?

WANTED: MEMORIES OF YOUR LIFE AND TIMES IN PUTNEY! Help us to make the next volume of the *History of Putney (1953 - 2003)* something your great grandchildren will enjoy reading. Share your memories and experiences at school, at work or at play in Putney.

Questions? Someone is usually at the Museum from 2 - 4 on Wednesdays (387-5862) Or try Laurel Ellis (387-4489) or Laura Heller (387-4436)

CAN YOU HELP?

We have many old photos that need to be identified. There are old handwritten documents that need to be transcribed and many other ways we could use your help. Do you have an item or inquiry (new or old) for our newsletter? Would you be willing to share some memories of life in Putney for our history?

Please take a moment to join or renew your membership in the Putney Historical Society

Putney Historical Society Membership Form

Please PRINT name and address:

Name _____ Date: _____

Address _____

Individual \$5.00 Sustaining \$25.00 Patron \$100.00

Family \$10.00 Benefactor \$50.00

Additional donations beyond membership are appreciated. Any amount over the membership fee is tax deductible, as are gifts.

Yes, I will volunteer. Please phone me at: _____

Make checks payable to: *Treasurer, Putney Historical Society*. Mail to: Putney Historical Society, C/o Putney Town Hall, P. O. Box 233, Putney, VT 05346, or leave at the Town Hall

("The Corner Store" continued from page 1)

portion of the original 2 acres for the new paper mill but retained the store until 1823. His deed indicated that it was the "same store and shed which I have occupied for many years past"

In 1823, Asa Keyes 2nd, Israel Keyes, and Joel Keyes (all of Putney) and Asa Britton of Chesterfield, New Hampshire bought the store "in trust" for James Keyes and Isaac Grout at a price of \$850. Grout relinquished his interest to Keyes in April of 1826 shortly after purchasing the store to the west (formerly the Putney Co-op, currently the Siver Forest store) from Phineas White. In 1837 James Keyes, who also owned the woolen mill, signed the corner store over to David Chandler and John Smith, "assignees of James Keyes in trust to pay his creditors," for \$1200. At that time it was called "The White Store."

In 1838, Peyton R. Chandler paid \$1200 for the property and within a month deeded it to David Chandler for \$1300. A bond was signed with F. A. Wheeler and John R. Miller in 1839 for the "West end of the P. R. Chandler Store lot." The new store (the former Mellen's Store, now Offerings) was deeded with "all stock in trade, goods and merchandise" to Foster A. Wheeler in 1841.

In 1846 the corner store's title was transferred to Peyton R. Chandler and Rollin W. Keyes, who were operating the store as "Chandler & Keyes," at a price of \$1500. Calvin W. Keyes paid the same price in 1850 and took Haynes E. Baker of Newfane on as a partner via a \$1000

mortgage. "P. R. Chandler & Co. also sold "Baker & Keyes" the Fairbanks Hay Scales.

Alexis B. Hewitt bought the property and one half the business including one half of the Fairbanks Hay Scales in 1857 for \$1200. Hewitt continued a business partnership with Baker and later Austin F. Kelley. In 1882 Hewitt and his wife Abigail sold the "Corner Store" and "one Howes Hay Scale" to Herbert E. Wheat for \$1700.

In 1886, Wheat sold one half interest in the store, horseshed and shop over the horseshed to Adelbert M. Corser for \$962.50. In 1889, Corser and his wife Minnie bought the remaining half for \$950. From this era on there is no shortage of photographs as Corser was an active photographer. Many of his glass plate negatives and photos are now in the possession of Putney Historical Society and available for making prints.

In 1915, the "A. M. Corser Store" became the "S. L. Davis Store" operated by Simon and Nyra Davis, previously of Westminster. The Davis' hold the record for the longest proprietorship of 34 years. In 1949 it became "Cummings Store" run by Oscar and Bessie Cummings. In 1966 it was "Fickett's General Store" owned by Albert and Mary Fickett. In 1974 the Fairchilds, formerly of Brattleboro, began their era on the corner as "Putney General Store." We wish them a happy retirement in the new century.

As always, P.H.S. welcomes additional information or corrections. If you have original documents, we can make copies and return them to you.

Putney Historical Society
C/O Putney Town Hall
P. O. Box 233
Putney, VT 05346

Putney Historical Society very much appreciates the help we have received from B.U.H.S. students **Ann Wheeler** and **Nathan Washburn**, our first volunteers for community service work.

Ann spends an hour each week in the museum working on projects such as sorting photographs, organizing files, making new labels for artifacts in the display cases, and doing research for genealogical inquiries. She is currently working on a map which will indicate old and new road names. Ann says she enjoys her work and finds learning about people and places of the past "very interesting."

Nathan gave up a Saturday morning last fall to cut brush at the Kathan Cemetery.

* * *

Thanks to Tom Ehrenberg who took this great photo of an exposed section of the old brick road which lies under the recently renamed Putney Landing Road when heavy rains of 1999 washed away the dirt surface. Tom says this shot was taken on the northeast side of the road, across from the former brick yard, and just below where Kathan Meadow Road branches off toward Putney Converting. Makes you wonder how much of that old road is still under there!

>>>

