



Summer 2021 News

Welcome to our first email newsletter!

Please forward this newsletter to friends who might be interested. We'd love to get your feedback, ideas and suggestions for future issues. – *Tom Jamison, Board President, Putney Historial Society*



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The Blood Farm on Putney's West Hill, 1782-1920

by William B. Darrow

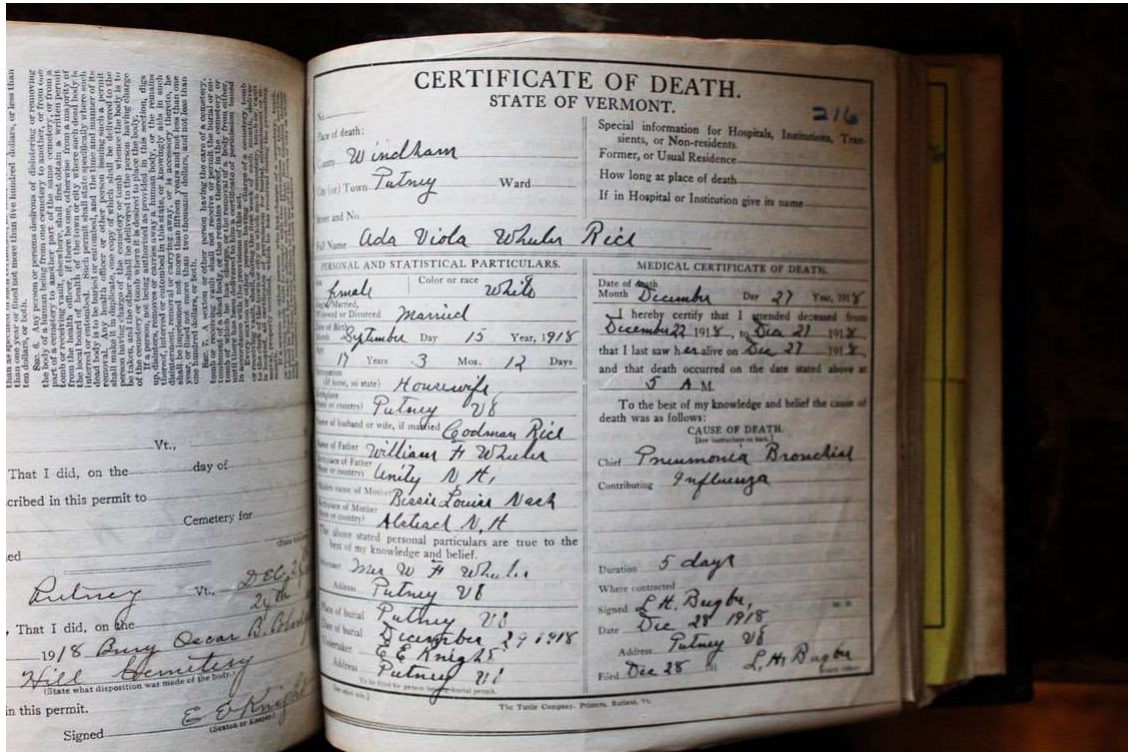
A little over 50 years ago when I was a boy growing up on West Hill in Putney, my father took my brothers and me on walks through the woods along abandoned roads. He pointed out cellar holes, sometimes noting an ancient, gnarled apple tree that stood in what was once a yard. Dad also took us to visit elderly Putney natives that he knew, living in out of the way places around town. He kept old Putney photos in his office, and old maps on his walls. He instilled in me an appreciation -- dormant for many years -- for old Vermont. After retiring last August during the pandemic, I had time to think about those walks on West Hill, and about the ghost population that lived there 200 years ago, in vanished farms and homes and churches. It struck me how little we knew about them.

Putney's present population of around 2700 is a historic high. Remarkably, the last high before 1980 was in 1790 (1848 persons). Between 1790 and 1980 there was a U-shaped population curve: first a dramatic decline, reaching a low of 761 in 1920, then a retrenchment and steady increase. Why did Putney's first population leave West Hill?

This paper was conceived in pondering these subjects. It seeks to open a window into Putney's early community by focusing on a family that settled on West Hill in 1782. That year Robert Blood and Thankful Proctor from Groton MA, moved to West Hill with eight young children. They prospered and during the 1800s the extended Blood family became dominant West Hill farmers. In the late 1800s the family faltered, and by 1920 the main farm was abandoned. Both the houses the Bloods built on West Hill burned down long ago. There's a small family graveyard where the main farm used to be -- it's off the road in the woods. By using the U.S. Census, public records, old maps, newspaper reports, and books, this paper traces the Blood family (and West Hill) history from 1782 to the early 1900s." [Read More>](#)

Putney and the Pandemics

by Tom Jamison



Across the world people have been struggling with the Covid-19 virus, living and dying with it. The age of Covid-19 has raised the question of how Putney has fared during similar crises in the past. Colonial America was rife with disease that carried off many. Although Europeans were often immune from serious symptoms of diseases that Native Americans had little resistance to, all populations suffered from the periodic or chronic outbreaks. [Read More >](#)

Putney: A Snapshot in Time



Among the hundreds of photographs in the Putney Historical Society's collection, taken in the late 19th- and early 20th centuries, are photos of families and friends gathered on the porches and front yards of Putney's homes. These photos are a snapshot in time of residents, some identified and many not, throughout our community.

The Putney Historical Society is hoping to add to this history this summer as we are able to gather once again with family and friends. Still in the planning stages, it is a project to document the residents and homes of our community.

We are interested in enlisting local photographers to volunteer to help bring this project to fruition. Anyone interested in helping, please contact Betsy Maclsaac at crookedfence@gmail.com.

More information will be posted on our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#) as this project evolves.

Can You Identify These Locations?

It has now been nearly 70 years since the Fortnightly Club published a history of Putney for its Bicentennial. In 1953 there was no official way to name a location other than by the name of the property owner. As there are fewer and fewer people around who knew those residents of yore, we hope to identify the places mentioned in 1953 by the current E911 addresses. Any help or hints you can give us are most appreciated. Please email us at putneyhistory@gmail.com or write to us at PO Box 260.

Per the 1953 History

1. Land of George Stockwell
2. Jack Johnson House in Dummerston
3. South of Henry W. Frost (locations of Philip Alexander and Joshua Hyde)

- in 1762)
4. Joseph W. Palan (South of Great Bridge)
 5. George Hamilton farm "on the street"/Westminster West Road (Location of Joshua Parker 1764-5)
 6. Near Henry Tanner "on the street"/Westminster West Road (Location of Henry Walter 1764-5)
 7. Ben Wood (location of Jonas or James Cummings in 1764)
 8. John P. Scott (opposite of location of Noah Sabin in 1768)
 9. Philip B. Chase (opposite location of Amos Haile in 1768)
 10. Meadow of Rev. John Currier (location of Leonard Spaulding in 1764)
 11. John Houghton (111 River Road South?)
 12. West Hill 10 rods southwest of Mrs. Nellie Page's house (location of John Butler in 1768)
 13. Putney School Store & Inn (location of Michael Law in 1768)
 14. In mowing 50 rods east of Mrs. McClure Johnson's house (location of Dennis Locklin in 1768)
 15. Simeon Reed place (present location south of Edwin Gray)
 16. Near Cooper's
 17. Theodore Banning (location of stone pig pen)
 18. Allen house (now owned by Putney School)
 19. The Wheat Tavern on West Hill
 20. Northwest of Garland's house (location of lot 6 in 9th range reserved for first public schoolmaster)
 21. Frost pasture (part of lot 6 in range 11 set off for first settled minister)
 22. Mary Leach (of Bellows Falls) pasture on Putney Mtn.
 23. Reuben Blood (20 acres of lease land of First Congregational Church)
 24. Harold Rhoades (20 acres of lease land of First Congregational Church)
- More mysteries to come next time!

Mystery Photos! Do you know where these photos were taken?



- Photo 892: Unknown House in Putney
- Photo 899: 12 members of the Grand Army of the Republic, May 30, 1916 Memorial Day

Share Your COVID Story!

We have all experienced the Covid-19 pandemic in various ways. PHS would like to create some documentation of experiences that Putney residents have had of the wide and varied effects the pandemic has had on their lives. Please share your experiences with PHS, putneyhistory@gmail.com.

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