

HUDSON HIGHLANDS

PUTNAM

HISTORY

MUSEUM

WEST POINT FOUNDRY

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2024

The mission of the Putnam History Museum is to collect, preserve, interpret, and present the history of Putnam County, Philipstown, the West Point Foundry, and the Hudson Highlands. Through exhibitions, programs, and events, the museum uses its collection to engage the community with the vibrant history of our region--and to foster greater understanding of the role it has played in the growth of our nation.



2024 SUMMARY

For over 119 years, the Putnam History Museum (PHM) has served residents, visitors, and historical researchers of Putnam County. Putnam County's generous funding, along with the support of our members, friends, and visitors, has enabled the PHM to establish a world-class special collections library and archive, to preserve the West Point Foundry schoolhouse as the museum headquarters, and to create hundreds of public programs, exhibitions, and publications.

In 2024, we achieved significant milestones with the help of both public and private support:

- Opened the exhibition "Revolutionary Visions: Women in the Hudson Highlands during the American Revolution" which featured the work of five local artists interpreting historical women.
- Engaged the community with educational programs on key themes such as: Native Americans, the Colonial Period, the American Revolution, Women's History, and more.
- Hosted 11 lectures covering a wide range of subjects to further engage with the community.
- Dedicated more than 400 research hours to over 50 public research requests.
- Hosted, co-hosted, or collaborated on over 45 public programs, enhancing historical curiosity and appreciation within the mid-Hudson region.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to embark on several key projects focused on financial sustainability, infrastructure improvements, program expansion, digitization, and strategic planning.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all our supporters for their continued trust and support. Your contributions significantly impact the Putnam History Museum, enabling us to preserve our shared heritage and inspire future generations.



POPULATION SERVED

The Putnam History Museum serves a socioeconomically diverse audience of students, adults, and seniors. Our primary audience resides in Putnam County and throughout the Mid-Hudson Valley region. Our secondary audience includes weekend visitors from New York City, Westchester, Connecticut, and beyond. Our weekend visitors represent a large urban population.

STAFF

In 2024, the PHM said goodbye to Executive Director Cassie Ward after 5 years of exceptional public history service. Education & Public Programming Manager Kara Mattsen filled the position in the interim until March 31, when new Executive Director Kevin Price joined the team.

Executive Director, Kevin Price (Began March 31, 2025)
Education & Public Programming Manager, Kara Mattsen
Collections Manager, John Duncan
Finance Manager, Cristina Bally
Administrative Assistant, Bernadette Knox
Research Librarian, Arman Safa
Front Desk Associate, Josephine Bach

SOURCES OF REVENUE & CURRENT TRENDS IN COST OF SERVICE

- **Financial Report:**

- 2024 Income: \$196,143.64
- 2024 Expenses: \$282,209.28
- 2024 Investments (end-of-year balance): \$1,174,115.79
- Income and expense figures are tentative and have not been adjusted by our accountant to reflect depreciation and investments. Final figures will be reported on PHM's 2024 form 990 and are available upon request.

- **Major Funding:**

- A cornerstone gift from Marion & Pat Dugan provides sustaining annual support
- Putnam County

- **Additional Funding:**

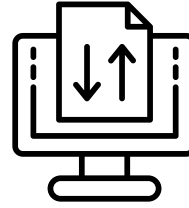
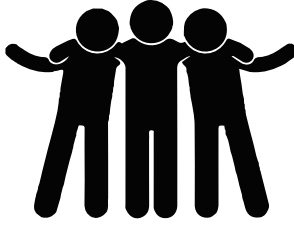
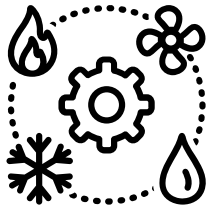
- Town of Philipstown

- **2024 Grants:**

- Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley
- Humanities New York
- New York State Council for the Arts (for 2025)



NEW & UPCOMING PROJECTS



- **Initiatives for the next fiscal year:**

- **Financial Sustainability**

- Develop a robust multi-year financial plan to ensure the museum's financial stability, including fundraising initiatives, grant applications, and exploring potential revenue streams.

- **Sustainability and Infrastructure**

- A major goal is to secure funding to replace the aging furnace and HVAC, IT equipment (two laptops, operating software upgrade), and building maintenance and improvements, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the museum.

- **Digitization and Online Presence**

- Continuing to digitize our historic collection and expanding the museum's online presence.

- **Strategic Planning**

- The museum's current Strategic Plan ran through the end of 2024. With the hiring of the new Executive Director, the PHM Board of Trustees and staff will work to develop a Strategic Plan for 2025-2028. This plan will provide a roadmap for growth and sustainability.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Research

The PHM offers comprehensive research services, catering to a wide range of inquiries related to Putnam County history and culture. Varied inquiries include genealogy, house histories, local landmarks, historical events, and cultural heritage. In 2024, we responded to over 50 public research queries, dedicating more than 400 hours to research activities.

Exhibitions & Collections Management

At the heart of our institution lies a commitment to preserving and showcasing Putnam County's robust history. We maintain an extensive collection of artifacts and documents, spanning hundreds of years of Putnam County and Hudson Highland's history. Our team focuses on collection care and accessibility, both in physical and digital formats.

Additionally, the PHM creates rotating exhibitions, both indoors and outdoors, to provide visitors with an accessible and relevant historical experience. Our permanent Foundry exhibition serves as a gateway to the West Point Foundry and Preserve, a National Historic Landmark. In 2025, the PHM also produced the exhibitions "Healing Hudson" with art by Selva Ozelli, "Scenes from the Hudson River School of Art" outdoor exhibition, and "Revolutionary Visions: Women in the Hudson Highlands during the American Revolution" which featured the work of five local artists interpreting historical women.

Education Outreach

Our educational programs aim to engage and inspire the community about Putnam County's local history and heritage. We organize an array of programs that evolve and expand annually. Key themes for our educational offerings include Native Americans, Colonial Period, American Revolution, Industrial Revolution, Civil War, BIPOC Histories, Women's History, Environmental History, and local history of the 19th and 20th centuries.



SERVICES PROVIDED, CONTINUED.

Lecture Series

Our long-running lecture series covers a wide range of subjects, including subjects such as art, architecture, maritime history, military history, and genealogy. Since 2020, we have adapted the series into various formats, offering virtual, hybrid, and in-person lectures to accommodate diverse audiences. In 2024, we hosted 11 lectures.

Field Trips

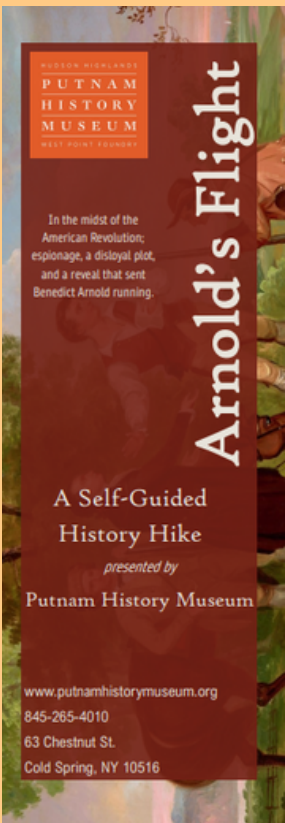
We collaborate with Putnam County schools and homeschool groups to design field trips that align with curricula standards and provide students with engaging experiences. These field trips often involve guided tours of the museum, West Point Foundry and Foundry Cove, and other historic locations in Putnam County. In 2024, we welcomed groups from school districts as close to the museum as Haldane CSD in Cold Spring, and as far away as Manhattan, serving more than 200 students.

History Hikes & Group Tours

We offer tours for groups, which may include curator-led tours of exhibitions or guided tours of historical sites located all throughout Putnam County. These popular hikes started during the pandemic but are now an annual offering at the PHM. This year we developed a new and successful tour of the historic Mountain Avenue and Nelsonville Cemeteries, which sold out three of the four tours.

Other Services & Activities

Beyond our core signature services, the PHM actively engages with the community through special events, collaborations, publications, and social media platforms. Furthermore, we continued to create an array of print publications, many of which are **available digitally**, to further promote the exploration and discovery of local history. These resources cater to diverse interests and age groups, making historical information accessible to all.



RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS & PROGRAMS



2024 Lecture Series:

- "Civil War Songs" (Hybrid- January 2024)
- "American Revolution Trivia Night" (Hybrid - February 2024)
- "Herstory: 20 Remarkable Putnam County Women" (Hybrid - March 2024)
- "Willitt C. Jewell's Putnam County" (Hybrid - April 2024)
- "Taking our Water for the City" (In-person - May 2024)
- Exhibition Opening Talk for "Healing Hudson" (In-person - June 2024)
- Native American Stone Structures of the Lower Hudson Valley Lecture and Hike (June 2024)
- "Hudson River School of Art and its Ice Age Origins" (Hybrid - July 2024)
- "The Cornish Estate" (Hybrid - September 2024)
- "Healing Hudson" and the American Environmental Movement (Hybrid - September 2024)
- Mekeel's Corners Cemetery and Chapel Chat (October 2024)



Guided History Hikes:

- West Point Foundry Hikes (April 2024)
- Denny Mine and Mining History in Putnam County Hike (May 2024)
- Native American Stone Structures of the Lower Hudson Valley Lecture and Hike (June 2024)
- Benedict Arnold's Flight Historical Hike in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County (June & July 2024)
- Foundry Cove History Hike (Part of NAHW, November 2024)
- Mt. Nimham History Hike in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County (Part of NAHW, November 2024)



RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Annual Community Programs:

- "Cold Spring in Bloom," a village-wide event (April 2024)
- Annual 4th of July Celebration at MeKeel's Corners Chapel, organized by PHM
- Plein Air Drawing Class at the Cornish Estate Ruins (September 2024)
- Native American Heritage & History Weekend (NAHW) had its second iteration this year with two hikes and a living history program with historian Drew Shuptar-Rayvis
- Several themed Storytimes for children in collaboration with the Butterfield Library

New projects/programs for 2024:

- American Revolution Trivia Night (March, 2024)
- The PHM History-A-Thon (March 2024)
- The Oh, Freedom! Putnam County Quilting Project (June 2024)
- Kayak Tour with Hudson River Expeditions of World's End (July 2024)
- Kayak Tour with Hudson River Expeditions of Little Stony Point (August 2024)
- Mekeel's Corners Cemetery and Chapel Chat (October 2024)
- Mountain Avenue and Nelsonville Cemetery Tour (October 2024)
- Life in the Eastern Woodlands Living History Program (Part of NAHW, November 2024)
- Indigenous Peoples in Putnam County Travelling Exhibition, Lesson Plan, Replica Collection, and Canoe Storage Project (Year-Long)



RECENT MILESTONES & 2024 POINTS OF PRIDE

- At the 2024 Putnam County Day Awards, the PHM was honored with an Exemplary Public History Award for our work with the Butterfield Library for the Julia Butterfield Bicentennial in 2023. PHM Front Desk Associate, Josephine Bach, was also honored with the Exemplary Public History Programming Award
- Putnam County Community Grants Fund of the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley awarded the PHM a grant that will let us develop travelling materials for our upcoming commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution.
- New York Council for the Arts (NYSCA) awarded us an operations grant for the year 2025.
- With the grant funding generously awarded by Humanities New York, PHM was able to bring to life Indigenous History through the events held as a part of the 2nd Annual Native American Heritage Weekend, the creation of a semi-permanent exhibition, virtual resources and replica artifacts for school groups, and the installation of a moveable platform for safe storage of our Native American-style dugout canoe.

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