



The Friends & Neighbors of Putnam Memorial State Park



March 2006 NewsLetter

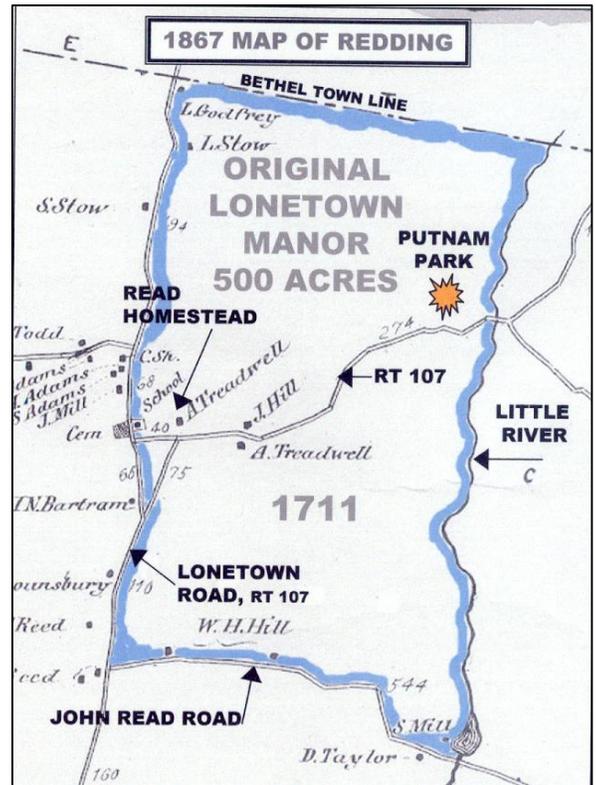
Lonetown Manor- John Read, Gentleman

Bethel/Redding CT

If you drive 0.7 miles west of the main entrance to Putnam Park, down Rt. 107 toward Redding Center, you will come to Honorable John Read's home site, Lonetown Manor.

John Read was born in Fairfield in 1679. He graduated from Harvard with a divinity degree in 1697. He preached at several congregations in Connecticut before ending up in Stratford. It was there that he switched careers and studied for the bar. After becoming a lawyer, he progressed rapidly through the ranks to become Queens Attorney for the Colony of Connecticut. During this period he was purchasing land (some of which he lost because of poorly written deeds and bad Indian titles). In 1711 he purchased 500 acres of land in the "oblong" of upper Fairfield. It was north of the Fairfield Long Lots. This was kind of a 'no man's land' between Danbury, Ridgefield, Newtown and Fairfield.

Consummating this deal more carefully, he purchased these separate deeds from men in Fairfield which totaled 500 acres. He then covered his bases in 1714 and negotiated a purchase for the same land from a local Indian sagem, named Chicken Warrups. Read named his estate Lonetown Manor. Chicken Warrups was a Mohawk that led a small tribe of Indians which lived on a hillside next to Read's new homestead. The others were a concoction of native Americans from other Connecticut tribes which were broken up or had moved west and away from the white man's encroachment. Chicken and his offspring lived and worked for the Reads on and off until his death. The other Indians eventually moved up with the Schaghticoke tribe in Kent. Read settled his family into Lonetown around 1714. In 1719 he was appointed a commissioner to settle the boundary dispute between New York and Connecticut.



An 1867 map of Redding showing the original 500 acre Lonetown Manor, the seat of Hon. John Read – founder Of Redding. His descendants help build the town, as well as the Read holdings.



The Redding's Connecticut Tercentenary Committee had this cut-stone wall Steps, and hitching posts erected in 1935. The commemorative sign to the town's founder gives some historic background of Hon. John Read.



The town name was originally Reading in colonial days, but was changed to Redding in the later part of the 1700's. military records of the Revolutionary War spelled it Reading.

John Read left Lonetown Manor in 1722 to move to Boston where he was elected as Massachusetts Attorney General in 1723. Read had a distinguished legal career. He turned over the management of his Lonetown Manor and other Reading holdings to his son John Read 2nd. The elder Read died in 1749 and was buried in the crypt beneath King's Chapel in Boston.

Colonel John Read at Lonetown Manor

John Read 2nd, born in 1701, was the founder Read's eldest son. The younger Read would spearhead the growth and prosperity of both Lonetown Manor, additional Read holdings, and the town itself. In 1723 John and John 2nd were among petitioners to establish a parish in Reading. It wasn't until 1729, however, that permission was given; and then they had to wait until 1733 to secure the first pastor. It was one of John Reads daughters that married the first Congregational minister several years later.

John Read 2nd started one of the first lime kilns (Limekiln Road near Rt.53) in Connecticut at an early date. These kilns would remain in the Read family, or the Hill family (blood relatives) for years to come. He was responsible for creating Reading's first militia unit. He received subsequent promotions over the years by the General Assembly, ending in the rank of colonel. This designation would be attached to his name in all the written and oral history forever after. Col. Read granted land for and helped establish several schools in town. The foundation stones can still be seen of the school on Lonetown Manor property at the intersection of Putnam Park Rd. (Rt. 107) and Lonetown Road. He was an active leader in the church and the community. When the town was incorporated in 1767, Col. Read was its first selectman. He was given turnpike rights for one of the first east-west highways that went from his land (Putnam Park Rd. and Pocahontas Rd.) and connected to the colonial north-south road which ran from Danbury to Fairfield. This latter road is Sunset Hill Road today.



The Revolutionary War touches Lonetown Manor. The NH 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Regiments, and the Congress' Own Canadian Regiment set up their winter camp on Lonetown Manor in late November of 1778. The camp commandant stayed with the Reads that winter.

After many good years of building his personal estates and businesses, and creating a large family (Col. Read had two wives), dark clouds gathered over Lonetown. The great rebellion against Britain began in the mid 1770's. Col. Read was 74 years of age in 1775. He resigned his military commission, but was put in charge of war time duties in the Reading and the surrounding towns. Four years into the conflict is when the Continental Army came to Reading.

Major General Israel Putnam brought his division of three brigades to set up winter encampments in Reading in late November of 1778. There is no doubt that Putnam and other officers had visited Reading earlier to lay plans for the three camps. One brigade composed of Connecticut regiments was under Brig. Gen Huntington, located near the West Redding station. A second brigade was under Brig. Gen. Parsons, located between Limekiln Rd. and Gallows Hill Rd. And the third brigade was made of the New Hampshire regiments and the Canadian Regiment under Col. Moses Hazen. This brigade was led by Brig. Gen. Enoch Poor of NH.

The third brigade was encamped on Col. John Reads property, Lonetown Manor. He had obviously negotiated terms and conditions of the encampment with the Putnam and the army quartermasters. The New Hampshire brigade was quickly pared down of senior officers. Gen. Poor and his colonels left camp and returned home for the winter, presumably to recruit new troops. By process of elimination, Col. Moses Hazen of the Canadian Regiment became commander in charge of the entire brigade. It was quite common for senior field grade officers not to live with the troops in the winter camps - but rather at a local home. The account ledgers of Col. John Read were found just in the last few years. This records reveal that Col. Hazen and his wife were quartered at the home of Col. John Read, at Lonetown Manor. No surprise. The records also show sales of Lonetown products (butter, lard, beef etc) to persons at the encampment. Maybe officers? There are no specific names with the purchases. But Col. Hazen was charged additional for his servant and horses. Col. Read obviously visited the camp periodically, as well entertained Old Put himself.

The story of the winter camps is fodder for other newsletters. We do know that Col. Hazen and his Canadians left camp two or three weeks before the New Hampshire troops left in the spring. This left a vacancy of the camp commandant slot. We now know that New Hampshire's Lt. Colonel Henry Dearborn (namesake of Dearborn MI) assumed the task of camp commandant. We know from entries in his own diary that Henry immediately scooted down the road to Lonetown Manor where he stayed at the Read's home for two weeks. Rank has its privileges.

We are still researching the relationship that Col. Read had with the army. A new theory that has been uncovered by documentation is that he would get to keep all the logs and lumber from the many huts and structures in the camp. Lumber was a highly desired commodity back then, and Col. Read had his saw mill further downstream on the Little River. Col. Read passed away in October 1786, just eight years after the army shared his land.

Lonetown Manor was then passed on to John Read, Jr. who owned it until 1804. John Read, Jr. sold Lonetown in 1804 to John Reac Hill. John Hill was Col. John Read's grandson. John Read Hill owned Lonetown until his death in 1851. The manor then went into the hands of Morris and Joseph Hill who ended up selling it to Aaron Treadwell in 1857. This was the first time that the historic property went outside of the Read or extended Read family.

Aaron Treadwell and Putnam Park



The main entrance to the park with its block houses and cannon guarding the gateway. The memorial monument sits atop the knoll inside the park. The two stone plaques can be seen on the foundations.

When you pull into the main entrance of Putnam Park, three main things are in the line of sight: the two block houses and their cannons guarding the gate, and the memorial monument atop the knoll straight ahead. The monument was the very first thing build in 1888. On the front face of each blockhouse base is a stone plaque. The first lists the names of those major land donors who made the park feasible. The second plaque lists the first Committee on Grounds for the new park, appointed by then Connecticut Governor Lounsbury in 1888.

Each plaque contains the name of Aaron Treadwell, the first non-Read to own Lonetown Manor. While Treadwell did indeed own the acreage around the entrance and the monument area and firebacks along the southern portion of the park, it is surprising to see just how many other people owned parcels of the area that used to be part of Lonetown Manor. A dozen plus land donations and purchases were made to encompass the entire army encampment. Today, only 15 acres around the homesite exist.



The plaque listing the major land donors. Treadwell started the southern end of the park.



The plaque listing the first "Grounds Committee". Treadwell heads this list.

Two main individuals probably spearheaded the creation of the park. Aaron Treadwell who owned the majority of the old Lonetown Manor wanted to see the camp be brought back into the public spotlight. The other key supporter was obviously Charles Burr Todd, the Redding town historian and writer. There is a separate bronze plaque honoring Todd on the side of the stone wall which overlooks the lake, in front of the park museum.

The early park commissioners took the park creation around the army surface remains very seriously. The actual working parties and laborers sometimes went too far in sculpting out the park.

The Continental Army camped in Reading 227 years ago. The park was started 118 years ago. Lonetown Manor was kept relatively intact long enough to save the site from other land use development. Aaron Treadwell died in in 1896. A succession of other owners have lived at the Read homesite until this day; each time with a little bit less of the original estate.

Ken Broas Retires From Putnam Park



Ken Broas at the helm in the park museum showing off the oil painting of General Putnam. He was always ready with an answer to a question about the park.

Ken Broas, one of the Putnam Park museum guides since the park reopened back in 1998, has retired effective with the close of the last park season.

Ken served at Squantz Pond State Park for about 10 years prior to coming to Putnam Park working at the gates and boat ramps. Ken who has always loved wildlife and the outdoors obviously liked duty at the Putnam Park Museum. When he wasn't swamped with a huge pack of school kids or telling the park's history to visitors he had nature all around him. He watched the lake below the overlook and kept track of the herons, foxes and deer. We hear that Ken has a similar scene in his own back yard with bird feeders and wildlife.

Enjoy a well deserved retirement, Ken. We'll miss you at the park. *Your friends at FANs*



Ken probably has seen about a million school kids come through the museum. Whether it was the Living History School Days programs each year, or individual classes coming through to learn about the American Revolution.

March FAN's Meeting

The March meeting of the Friends group was held on Tuesday March 14th at the Putnam Park visitor center. The group met on the lower level.



Discussions held included:

1. Rosemary Payne covered the current Treasurer's Report
2. Nancy Cowles was on vacation – but all systems are GO for the May *Living History School Days* program to be held on May 15th – 19th. We will planning last minute details at the next meeting. Rosemary Payne will proceed to buy more supplies for sale at this year's events.
3. Jeanine Herman led a discussion on the special state wide park event to be held in June. A separate meeting is scheduled for April 4th to discuss how FANs can assist the DEP in coordinating the event. What our participation will be, etc.
4. Jeanine Herman updated the group on the progress to-date on this fall's Living History Weekend for the public.
5. Nathan Hale gave an update of the projects at the park:
 - Most of the museum furniture and display pieces have been moved down to the Visitor Center, to make room for construction in the walls and ceilings for the new heating and A/C ducts and vents.
 - The installation crew has not yet started the museum work project
 - The park crew are putting on the final touches to the new gates for the main entrance.
6. Harry Gibson will contact a consultant regarding museum/visitor center layouts, functions, AV shows and interpretive programs.



Special Note: The information for the Lonetown Manor write-ups came from several different sources: Charley Couch's article in the Redding Pilot –May 1997. Dr. Stuart Reeve's Archaeological Assessments Of Lonetown Manor – May 1997, April 1998 and December 1998. Charles Burr Todd –1906. And last but Certainly not least from the copious files of Margaret Wixted, housed at the Mark Twain Library.

Chicken Warrups



Chicken Warrups and his band of Indians, lived on the hill on the west side of Lonetown Rd and it's intersection of Putnam Park Road.

Chief Chicken Warrups and his band of disaffected members of the Potatucks of Newtown and the Paugussetts of Milford, with a few stragglers from the Mohawks on the west, are, even today, somewhat of a mystery. Thought to be a Mohawk he at some point moved into the "oblong" area of upper Fairfield and apparently established legal claims on fairly large parcels of land. Hon. John Read purchased the Lonetown Manor parcel from Chicken. Chicken Warrups was involved with many other land sales, some of which conflicted with other deeds giving Chicken a bad reputation. The CT General Assembly finally ordered Chicken and his band to the Schaghticoke reservation in Kent. Chicken and direct descendants returned on and off to Lonetown sometimes for employment with the Reads. Chicken's grandson Tom Warrups joined the army and was a scout working for Gen. Putnam for a period of time. Chicken died at Lonetown Manor and is thought to be buried on the property. You can still view part of Chicken Warrups legacy by visiting **WARRUPS FARM** on John Read Road, just off of Lonetown Road. The farm is run by the Hill family who are descendants of the Read Family. Their huge farm was once part of Lonetown Manor, and is pretty much intact the way it looked a couple of hundred years ago. Maple syrup is made right there in their sugarhouse.

Next Meeting

The next FAN's Meeting will be on **Tuesday Evening April 11th** at the new **Visitor Center** at Putnam Park.

The meeting will start at **7:00pm**. The monthly meetings are now on the **2nd Tuesday** of each month at the park.

