



l-r Alina Taylor, Ken Putnam, Ellen Putnam, Lynn McDaniel

The North Reading Historical and Antiquarian Society welcomed several direct descendants of Rev. Daniel Putnam (1696-1759) to the “Putnam Homestead” on July 2.

The Putnam House was built in 1720 by the founding settlers of the North Parish, (now North Reading) for Rev. Daniel Putnam. Rev. Putnam was the first permanent pastor of the North Parish Congregational Church. The home was passed down to a Putnam descendant for many generations. The house is now in the care of the North Reading Historical and Antiquarian Society.

Lynn Putnam McDaniel (daughter of Richard Whitfield Putnam) had contacted the society hoping to schedule a visit and perhaps a tour of the house sometime during the July 4 week. Lynn arrived from San Diego with son Dylan, her mother Ellen Putnam, her sister, Alina Putnam Taylor and her husband, Hezekiah “Peter” Taylor, and their two sons, Micah Peter Taylor and Miles Lamar Taylor.

Arriving at the same time as Lynn and her family was Kenneth J. Putnam, visiting the area from his home in Idaho. He had no prior knowledge of Lynn’s family’s planned visit to North Reading — it’s as if Rev. Daniel Putnam might have divined this most serendipitous family reunion.

Thomas Parker, the society’s curator, met the family and shared his knowledge of the house and pertinent information about the town of North Reading and the role that Rev. Putnam played in its beginnings.



The family brought a copy of the Putnam genealogical research they have gathered over the years and Lynn talked about the family history leading up to Rev. Daniel Putnam's time in North Reading. The newly acquainted relatives pored over the records to find exactly how they are connected. Copies of the files were made and presented to the Society. The thorough research on the Putnam family will allow the Society to present a much more complete story about Reverend Daniel Putnam.

Director Billy Post and his father, Bill Sr., and Uncle Ritchie Post were on hand to add first-hand information about Bill and Ritchie's time growing up on property with their family and Raymond "Putt" Putnam, Sr. The last years the property was operated as a farm were in the 1940s and 1950s.

Rich Stanton from the North Reading Minit and Militia also gave the visitors a tour of other buildings on the homestead, and an overview of the preservation work they've done in recent years. Included in the tour was The First Meeting House (1713). It would have been in the meetinghouse that Rev. Daniel Putnam delivered sermons to North Reading's early settlers 300 years ago. Seeing the accurately rendered reconstruction of the building, which utilized some of the beams rescued from the original structure, was quite moving for these direct descendants of Rev. Putnam.

Prior to the visitors' arrival, local author Nancy Miller had donated 40 copies of her book *Of Minitmen & Molly's* to benefit the Society through sales in its gift shop. Her book is a collection of biographical and historical sketches of many of North Reading's citizens, events, and locales. Miller insisted that each of the visitors be given a copy to take home and enjoy.

Society Board member Gloria Mastro, who dressed in period attire for the occasion and provided refreshments, inscribed each of the books with an appropriate message on behalf of the Board marking the Putnam descendants' visit. Society member Nancy Fenton was also on hand to photograph this momentous visit. Phil Healy, public access coordinator from NORCAM, video recorded much of the conversation.

There are Putnam family ties to Reading and Salem and the family members planned to visit those towns and sites during their stay. All in all, the families thoroughly enjoyed their visit and hope to return again soon. The Society would like to see some sort of Putnam Family Reunion next year as part of the 300th anniversary events it is planning for 2020.