New Paltz Community Histories: Put Corners

     Although Put Corners was never a hamlet, it was an active community nestled between the Village of New Paltz and the Hamlet of Ohioville. Put Corners encompasses the area of North and South Put Corners Rd. and the eastern portion of Route 299.

     The area was named by Napoleon Purdy, a transplant from Putnam County (where the name originated). Purdy was the son of a charcoal burner and built a hotel at 1 South Putt Corners Rd. around 1858 (destroyed by a fire in 1874) [1] ’ [2] . The hotel functioned as an entertainment center where lavish parties were held and dancing lessons taught
[3]
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[4]
. Napoleon later built a new hotel on the corner, near the home/blacksmith shop at 270 Main Street (demolished in 1967)
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. Behind the property at 270 Main Street was a hill where cherry trees grew in abundance. These trees produced a wide variety of cherries and were known for their excellent wood for furniture. However blight in the early 20
th

 century killed off most, if not all, of the trees
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. Other businesses in Put Corners included that of Benjamin Meakens, whose gunsmith shop was located at 250 Main Street (demolished) and several farms
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     Across the road and southeast from the location of the hotel lies the Put Corners Cemetery. The earliest grave dates to 1801 and belongs to Maria VanWagenen, wife of Simon Rose1. The cemetery contains over 120 graves and is located behind the property at 7 Terwilliger Ln. Another prominent early citizen of Put Corners was Dr. John Bogardus, who built the home at 275 Main Street around 1812-1815. Dr. Bogardus was one of the first teachers at the first Public School, and later Classical School in New Paltz at 15 North Front Street. He also was one of the original trustees of the New Paltz Academy when it was created in 1833.In addition

to his educational leadership, he served as Town of New Paltz Supervisor from 1829-1832 and again in 1834. Bogardus later died in 1840
[6]
. In 1869, African American Charles Bershear settled in Put Corners after moving from Maryland. He bought the property at 11 South Put Corners Rd. for $400 and ran a fruit stand there until 1905
[7]
. That year he sold the property to his neice Cora L. Washington for $2,500, who continued to run the stand while Mr. Bershear lived in residence
[8]
. The property has since been torn down.

    Major changes came to Put Corners in the 20th century. The coming of the thruway in the 1950s brought with it a need for a commercial center in New Paltz. Put Corners was chosen because it was seen as an ideal place for distribution centers to be linked to the rest of the Northeast Corridor (Friehofers and Frito-Lay took advantage of this). Access to lodging, restaurant and conference facilities were also seen as advantageous to the eastern New Paltz area, comprising of Put Corners and Ohioville, for a business district to develop. As a result, many of the old buildings of Put Corners were removed and/or torn down to make way for the Shop Rite Shopping Center, a Dunkin' Donuts, Super 8 Motel and New Paltz Plaza. Cherry Hill, once known for its lush orchards nearly a century earlier, became "Cherry Hill Rd." and was dotted with housing complexes. The thruway also altered the road pattern of Put Corners, with the Thruway Bridge and road cutting off the Main St. of Put Corners (turning it into Terwilliger Ln). Although the community of Put Corners was not a hamlet, its inhabitants established itself as a vital link in the chain between the village of New Paltz and the outlying hamlet of Ohioville.

[1] Hasbrouck, Kenneth. *Historic New Paltz*. New Paltz, NY: 1959. 25. Print.

[2] *New Paltz Independent*, 7 May 1874, Print

[3] *New Paltz Times*, 10 Jan 1862, Print

[4] *New Paltz Times*, 4 Feb 1869, Print

[5] *New Paltz Independent*, 1 Apr 1943, Print

[6] Oberon, Stephen J. *Historical Architectural Documentation: Bogardus-Deyo-Lent House, Town of New Paltz Ulster County, NY*

[7] *New Paltz Independent*, 23 Sep 1869, Print

[8] *New Paltz Independent*, 24 November 1905, Print