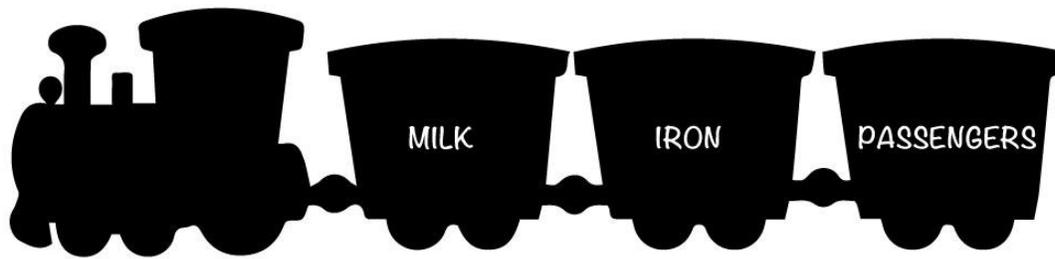


*“The Disappearing Railroad Blues”
in Greenburgh: The Fate of the
Putnam Railroad Line and the old
Putnam Trail*

By: Riley Wentzler & Felicia Barber

“All the towns and people seem to fade into a bad dream and the steel rails still ain’t heard the news. The conductor sings his song again, the passengers will please refrain. This train has got the disappearing railroad blues” - Willie Nelson in “The City of New Orleans” (1984).

While when Steve Goodman wrote these lyrics in 1971 and when Willie Nelson sang them in 1984, they were talking about a southern train called The City of New Orleans, they could just as easily have been talking about New York’s Putnam Railroad Line and the old Putnam Trail. In 1871, The Putnam Railroad connected New York City to Boston and Montreal, Canada via Brewster, Danbury, and Hartford. It carried both passengers and various types of freight including: milk, grain, and iron ore.



On its journey from Riverdale in the Bronx to Brewster, it passed through Greenburgh's villages of: Hastings, Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Irvington, and Elmsford. Unfortunately the Panic of 1873 forced it to shut down until 1881, when the economy finally recovered enough for a new connection to open up across the Harlem River. The railroad continued from then until the 1970s (<http://www.billboeckelman.com/Our-Communities/Ardsley-NY/Brief-History-Of-The-Putnam-Railroad>)

The remains of this venerable railroad are known as the Putnam Trail. History does not stand still however, and like the venerable railroad before it, the trail is slowly disappearing. While the tracks are still visible off the Saw Mill River Parkway in Ardsley, they were removed from the part of the trail that went through: Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, and Irvington to create the bike path known as The South County Trailway, which is enjoyed by many and ranked by the residents of Westchester County as one of the best bike trails in the county (<https://mommypoppins.com/kids/bike-riding-with-kids-best-bike-paths-for-family-cycling-in-westchester>). This action may have destroyed most of the physical remains of the railroad, but the memory of the Putnam Railroad shall live forever.



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About the Authors:

We are both interns at Greenburgh Town Hall and we are engaged to be married and are currently looking for permanent employment.

Riley Wentzler:

I was born and raised in a small rural town in central Pennsylvania. In high school, I took every honors course available including four years of Spanish. I received A's in all of them. I graduated third in my class of 146 students. This brought me to Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Once there, I continued my trend of academic excellence. I graduated summa cum laude in Political Science with a minor in Spanish and a Master's in Communication Studies, with a G.P.A of 3.94. It was also there that I met my lovely fiancée, Felicia Barber. My Master's in Communication has promoted public speaking, teamwork, and customer service. My Political Science degree has developed my research skills using computer-based tools and provided me with experience using the Microsoft Office products. My minor in Spanish has facilitated my bilingual capabilities. During my internship at Greenburgh, I created the petition for the State Roads project using website tools. My diverse education and areas of interest have provided me with a wide range of skills. I look forward to finding a career opportunity in business or government. If you want to learn more about the Putnam Trail, or help me find employment, you can contact me at: rjwentzler413@gmail.com

Felicia Barber:

I was born in New York City and raised in Hartsdale, New York. I graduated from Ardsley High School. I recently earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. It was here that I met my fiancé, Riley Wentzler. As a result of my academic excellence, I won a scholarship every year. I learned and applied many graphic design skills to projects during my summer internships and at school. I am proficient in using Adobe graphic design applications including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. For my Identity/branding course at Edinboro, I created logos to appear on the tee-shirts of Physical Education majors. For a veteran's upcoming event, I used a typeface to focus the reader to the soldier in the poster. For the State Roads Legislative Campaign project, I created the embedded graphic-photo that accompanied the petition I am looking for a job to utilize my skills as a Graphic Designer in an agency, print shop, company or government. If you want learn more about my artwork, or help me find employment, you can contact me at: feliciadbarber@gmail.com

Interview with the Authors:

<https://wcbs880.radio.com/articles/news/stories-main-street-couple-cerebral-palsy-brings-many-talents-town-greenburgh>

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