

**Ralph W. Putnam (1876-1970)**  
**Papers, 1932-1941, n.d.**  
**MSA 516**

**Introduction**

This collection contains notes and historical speeches of Ralph W. Putnam, written and compiled in the late 1930s and 1940s. The collection was found in the collections of the Vermont Historical Society in the early 2000s. It is stored in one archival flip top box and consumes .25 linear feet of shelf space.

**Biographical Note**

Ralph Wright Putnam was born in Putnamville (a settlement named for his family in the town of Middlesex, Vermont) on March 24, 1876, the son of Christopher Columbus Putnam, Jr. and Jennie E Putnam. The Putnams were early settlers along the North Branch River. Ralph Putnam's grandfather, C.C. Putnam, Sr., along with his cousin Jacob Putnam, Jr., erected a sawmill there in 1854. Ralph Putnam and his father eventually sold their mills to the Vermont Lumber company in 1912. Ralph Putnam was also related to another earlier settler of the area, Medad Wright, founder of the Old West Church in Calais.

Ralph Putnam graduated from Montpelier High School in 1895. He was the postmaster in Putnamville from 1899 to 1909 and was treasurer and general manager of the Cooley-Wright Manufacturing Company, a lumbering and manufacturing company in Waterbury, Vermont. He was elected to serve in the Vermont House of Representatives in 1915, 1933 and 1945, and in the Vermont Senate in 1941 and 1943. He was also a trustee of the Vermont Historical Society from 1959-1962.

Ralph Putnam and his wife, Mary Templeton Putnam, had a son, Ralph Putnam (1900-1982), who settled with his wife Evelyn and their family in Sheldon, Vermont. Ralph Putnam, Sr. died in Waterbury, Vermont, on July 23, 1970, at age 94.

**Scope and Content Note**

This collection contains notes and speeches about historical topics focused on Montpelier, Waterbury, and Worcester, Vermont by Ralph W. Putnam. Mr. Putnam's work was probably done in the late 1930s and 1940s. Putnam was particularly interested in industrial and business history. The collection also includes a few printed items such as *Vermont Register of Manufactures, Wholesalers and Distributors*, 1934; *Vermont: Its Industries and Opportunities*, and newspaper clippings (Folder 5). Some of Putnam's writings are hand-written, some are typed, and some are bound in little booklets.

The miscellaneous folder (Folder 8) includes two items from Mr. Putnam's business, Cooley-Wright Manufacturing: a flyer for "Wright American Andirons" and a booklet entitled "The 'Wright' Ring" (September 1950). The content of the booklet appears to be generic, but the front cover indicates that the company sold mill supplies and gray iron castings, and did machine

shop work. The miscellaneous folder also includes a typewritten article on “Utilization of Granite Waste” and a copy of the sesquicentennial issue of *The Waterbury Record* (1941).

### **Inventory**

- MSA 516:01 Waterbury history, 1941, n.d
- 02 Waterbury history notes, n.d.
- 03 Little River, n.d.
- 04 Political speech, ca. 1932
- 05 Montpelier history speech, 1936?
- 06 Worcester history speech, 1941
- 07 General Vermont history
- 08 Miscellaneous

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PutnamRalph.docx.