

Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

Historic Preservation and Museum Division/State Historic Preservation Office

CONNECTICUT STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts to the Connecticut State Register of Historic Places (C.G.S. Chapter 184b, Sec. 10-409(2)). See instructions in *How to Complete the Connecticut State Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Warner, Edgar M. & Jane Carpenter, House

Other names/site number: _____

2. Location

Street & number: 42 South Main StreetCity or town: Putnam☐ vicinityCounty: WindhamZip code: 06260☐ not for publication

3. State Agency Certification

I hereby certify that this nomination ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the documentation standards and criteria for registering properties in the Connecticut Register of Historic Places. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

State Historic Preservation Officer_____
Date

4. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-state
☐ public-federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing

2

buildings

sites

structures

objects

2

Total

Property Owner

name: Joyce and Timothy Boreyaddress: 42 South Main Streetcity: Putnam state code: CTzip code: 06260 phone: _____

Warner House

Name of Property

Putnam

Municipality

5. Historic Preservation Council

Approval date _____

Comments _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling _____

DOMESTIC: secondary structure: garage _____

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling _____

DOMESTIC: secondary structure: garage _____

7. Description

Architectural/Archaeological Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate _____

Shingle Style _____

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: uncoursed ashlar _____

walls WOOD: clapboard, shingle _____

roof ASPHALT _____

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Warner House

Name of Property

Putnam

Municipality

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Connecticut Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for State Register listing.)

☒ **1** That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to our history and lives of persons significant in our past; or

☒ **2** That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

☐ **3** That have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Levels of Significance (local, state)

State: Criterion 1

Local: Criterion 2

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

LITERATURE

ARCHITECTURE

Significant Dates

c. 1860: House original construction

c. 1905: Third floor added in Victorian Shingle style

1890-1928: Home of Gertrude Chandler Warner

Significant Person

Warner, Gertrude Chandler (1890-1979)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion 3 is marked)

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Warner House

Name of Property

Putnam

Municipality

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.19

Municipal Map, Block and Lot Number and UTM Coordinate (If possible)

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	<u>15</u>	<u>136</u>	
	Map	Block	Lot
1	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

☐ See continuation sheet

Latitude, longitude: 41.91336, -71.907333

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

The boundaries of the nominated property are the legal limits of Map 15, Lot 136, per the Town of Putnam Assessor's records.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The boundaries encompass the extent of the historic resources at this location, associated with the writer Gertrude Chandler Warner.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Charlotte Hitchcock, Researcher

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation Date: 12/10/2015

Street & number: 940 Whitney Avenue Telephone: (203) 562-6312

City or town: Hamden State: CT Zip code: 06517

Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

Historic Preservation and Museum Division/State Historic Preservation Office

CONNECTICUT STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM – Continuation Form

Warner House

Name of Property

Putnam

Municipality

Narrative Description

This property is a nineteenth-century residential resource associated with an influential individual, Gertrude Chandler Warner, who was engaged in writing children's literature in Connecticut during the twentieth century. This nomination was prepared as part of the Creative Places – Arts and Letters Project.

The Quinebaug River forms the central feature of Putnam, which thrived from the 1850s until the mid-twentieth century as a mill town with several dams for water power, and a group of mills producing cotton and wool fabrics. The Norwich and Worcester Railroad and the Airline Railroad lines both passed through Putnam along the east bank of the river, and both a new depot and public school were built between 1900 and 1910. Hills rise both east and west of the river, channeling the developed area of the town into a narrow corridor. Two clusters of development occurred in the nineteenth century, one on the west bank toward the north, along today's Providence Street (Route 171) and the other on the east bank further south adjacent to the Falls and the Cargill Falls Mill north and south of today's US Route 44.

South Main Street is in this second area, and runs parallel to and east of the railroad tracks to the south of US 44. Several sites associated with the life of Gertrude Chandler Warner are located nearby in this area.

The 1907 Putnam Railroad Station (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) is on the west side of the tracks while on the east side are a mix of modern commercial developments and a few extant historic houses. One of these is the childhood home of Gertrude Warner, the Edgar M. and Jane Carpenter Warner House at 42 South Main Street (Photo 2, 11). The lot extends through the block to School Street on its east side. Only 500 feet north on School Street is the former Israel Putnam School (1902, National Register-listed) where Warner taught for over 30 years. Later, she lived at several different addresses in the neighborhood. Since 2004 the Gertrude Chandler Warner Boxcar Children Museum has been open in a vintage boxcar located northeast of the railroad station on the east side of the tracks and west of South Main Street. The museum is a project of the Aspinock Historical Society.

Data Table (C – contributing, NC – non-contributing):

House	c. 1860, 1905	C
Garage	early 20 th c.	C

House:

This is a three-story wood-framed Italianate and Shingle Style building with its façade facing west toward South Main Street (Photos 3-7). The building is close to the street behind a narrow garden. The .19-acre property extends through the block to School Street on the east, with the site sloping up slightly toward the east. Originally a single-family house, it has been converted to two apartments. The house was built c. 1860 and expanded and remodeled in 1905.

The main block of the house measures 24' x 24', and is 2 ½ stories with an added gambrel-roofed attic level. Two-story wings extend to the south and east. The façade has three bays. A full-width one-story wrap-around porch has a shallow-pitched hip roof and, though originally open, it has been enclosed with a row of double-hung windows. An entry door in the left (north) bay, now leads into a vestibule under the porch roof, with the original entry and stair as access to the second floor apartment. A second entry door from the south corner of the porch leads into the first floor apartment. The first and second floor windows have double-hung sash, originally two-over-two but now with modern replacements. The windows are trimmed with

simple vernacular scroll-sawn ornamental lintels. The cornice over the second floor has a projecting soffit with Italianate-style paired brackets and dentils; the porch detail is similar.

The third or attic floor level appears to be an addition, due to its Shingle-style design, which contrasts with the Italianate style and massing of the lower floors. The gambrel roof is oriented north-south parallel to the street. The attic gables are battered and appear to have been formerly covered in wood shingles to match the roof. Several pyramidal-hooded dormers project through the roof on the north, west, and south sides. Some of these dormers, on the north side, have their original multi-paned sash with a border of small panes surrounding a larger central pane.

Siding is a mix of composition (possibly asbestos) shingle siding and wood clapboard at the lower level, and staggered wood shingle siding on the second floor. Several other small additions project from the building including a bay window on the north side. The house is currently painted dark green with white trim; the green matches the asphalt roof shingles, helping to simulate the Shingle-style appearance of the early twentieth-century wood shingle siding and roofing.

The exterior has good integrity of materials and trim with the exception of replacement windows at the first and second floors. The house exterior has a hybrid character due to the 1905 remodeling. The interior has been converted to apartments and was not accessible during the documentation project.

Garage:

A one-story, two-bay, wood-frame garage is located east of the house and faces east toward School Street (Photos 8, 9). The garage is an early twentieth-century wood-framed structure on a concrete foundation, with a hip roof, painted wood clapboard siding, and two-over-two double-hung windows. The east side opens to the street grade with two door openings filled with original paneled wood doors in an unusual hinged three-panel folding configuration. The doors have six-light glazed upper sections above two-panel lower portions. A gate at the north corner provides access down a flight of steps to the garden level and the rear of the house. A small gable-roofed shed on a concrete block masonry foundation, attached on the east side of the garage, faces the rear garden of the house.

The garage has excellent integrity, including original windows and doors.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Criterion 1:

This property derives its primary significance from its association with Gertrude Chandler Warner, author of the *Boxcar Children* series of books for young readers. The property was Warner's childhood home and the setting along the railroad line inspired the theme of her books, as she watched the freight trains passing her front windows. She lived here from her birth in 1890 until 1928. During her occupancy, she established her teaching career. She wrote her first published book, *The House of Delight*, 1916, her second, *Star Stories for Little Folks*, 1918, and the *The Boxcar Children*, 1924, which initiated a series of 19 books written by Warner (de Grummond Collection). From this house she walked to her teaching job at the new Israel Putnam School at 67 School Street.

Gertrude Chandler Warner (1890-1979) was born in Putnam, Connecticut, on April 16, 1890, the daughter of Edgar M. and Jane Carpenter Warner. Edgar M. Warner (1850-1928) was a native of Worcester, Massachusetts, and a graduate of Harvard Law School. He served as a Judge of Putnam City Court, and a state representative from Putnam in the 1890s and early 1900s. In 1887 he married Jane Carpenter (1866-1930s), whose family, the Chandlers, were early settlers of Woodstock, Connecticut.

In addition to Gertrude, the family included an older sister, Frances (b. 1888), and a younger brother, John (b. 1893) (Photos 15, 16). Frances later graduated from Mount Holyoke College and she taught there and at Wellesley College. John became an automotive engineer (Boxcar Children Museum archives).

From the age of five, Gertrude dreamed of becoming an author. She wrote stories for her Grandfather Carpenter, and each Christmas she gave him one of these stories as a gift. Gertrude enjoyed trips to visit her grandparents' farm. Along the way, she and Frances would stop to pick wildflowers including Gertrude's favorite violets. The Warner family was musical; they were able to have a family orchestra, and Gertrude played the cello. Due to ill health, Gertrude never finished high school, but studied with a tutor. She also began writing stories, and published her first book, *The House of Delight*, in 1916 while living in this house (Photo 17) (Boxcar Children Museum archives).

In 1918, when many teachers were called to serve in World War I, she was asked to teach first grade. Shortly after becoming a teacher, she began her first version of *The Boxcar Children*. It was inspired by her childhood experiences growing up across the street from the railroad tracks and watching the cabooses with the trainmen living inside. The story, about the orphaned Alden

children who found refuge in an empty boxcar, was first published as a serial in the magazine *Child Life*, and later as a book (Photo 18). Warner also worked summers at Scott Foresman, her publisher (Boxcar Children Museum archives).

She read the story to her classes and rewrote it repeatedly to refine the limited vocabulary, as many of her students were children of French Canadian mill workers and were learning English as a second language. The book was first published in 1924 by the publisher Rand McNally (de Grummond Collection, University of Southern Mississippi) and then re-issued in 1942 by Scott Foresman. Today, Albert Whitman & Company publishes this first story as well as the next eighteen Alden children adventures that were written by Warner. She was at the forefront of modern ideas about education, believing that children should enjoy what they read and that vocabulary needed to be tailored to the reading level of the children so they could read independently (Whitman web site).

Gertrude Chandler Warner retired from teaching in 1950 and continued to write children's literature. She lived in the family home at 42 South Main Street until her father's death in 1928. Then she moved to her grandmother's home at 106 South Main Street, and later to a series of apartments in nearby houses. She died in 1979 at the age of 89 (Boxcar Children Museum archives).

Criterion 2:

The property is significant at the local level as one of only a few surviving examples of the historic homes that formerly lined the area along South Main Street east of the railroad tracks in Putnam. The house, remodeled in about 1905, illustrates the evolution of residential design from the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries.

Putnam's peak of prosperity occurred at the turn of the twentieth century, with industrial production thriving and the population growing. The wood-framed Fifth District School, which Gertrude Warner had attended through the sixth grade, was replaced by a new building in 1907, the Israel Putnam School (National Register, Clouette 1984), in which as an adult she taught for 32 years.

The Warner House appears to have begun as a smaller structure in the decades after the Civil War. The O.W. Gray *Atlas of Windham and Tolland Counties, 1869*, detail map of Putnam, shows a square building belonging to Day Harris (Photo 13). A birds-eye view of Putnam in 1877 shows a two-story house with a hip roof (Photo 14).

Visual inspection of the house that exists today indicates that it may have been initially a two-story Italianate-style structure with period brackets under the overhang of the hip roof (Photo 3). This was later surmounted by a gambrel-roofed Shingle-style third floor. The building was also enlarged with added wings extending east and south (Photos 3-5). A postcard view of South Main Street c. 1906 (Photo 12) shows the house with its tall roof-line and an open wrap-around porch. Sanborn maps of the period confirm the addition of the third floor and porch between 1903 and 1910. Edgar and Jane Warner and their family lived in the house from before 1890 until his death in 1928 (Boxcar Children Museum archives, US Census), so the renovations would have been by the Warners. The construction of the house is attributed to John Carpenter, Gertrude Warner's maternal grandfather (Ellsworth 1997, p. 2) but this may refer to the c. 1905 remodeling.

Putnam, a small city with an economy based on its water-powered mills, experienced a surge of growth after the construction of rail lines connected the area with other cities and markets. The first railroad line, the Norwich and Worcester, was built through Putnam in 1840, and a second, the Airline, in the 1870s. The buildings along the street, then known as Railroad Street, began to shift from residential to commercial uses while the area west of the rail lines became a downtown business district (Clouette 2007, Section 8).

By 1869 the street was already home to several professional offices and commercial businesses. The Warner family remained in this location until 1928, when other areas such as Church Street, where the High Victorian-style high school was built in 1874 (National Register, Clouette 1993), were becoming more desirable for the homes of professionals like Judge Warner. He may have maintained a professional office in the house or nearby (City Directories).

The Warner House was converted to a two-family dwelling in the mid-twentieth century, and its porch was enclosed. Many of the nearby buildings today are commercial, with only a few remaining from the nineteenth century, including a five-bay brick Colonial immediately adjacent to the north at 36 South Main Street.

The Warner House is significant for its age and unusual sequence of construction, which transformed it from an Italianate- to a Shingle-style house. As an extant historic building it is a reminder of previous periods of development in Putnam, both the nineteenth-century period of industrial prosperity and the effect of railroad transportation on subsequent patterns of land use and development in the twentieth century.

9. Bibliographic References

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Photographs and field notes by Charlotte Hitchcock, 5/28/2014.

Interview with Barbara Scalese and Fred Hedenberg, 5/28/2014, by C. Hitchcock, at the site. Background and photographs courtesy of Aspinock Historical Society.

Interview with Nathan Nietering, Shoreline Trolley Museum, East Haven CT, 6/03/2014, via email, about historic rail stock.

Map resources:

City and Town of Putnam Assessor's records: <http://gis.vgsi.com/putnamct/Search.aspx> , Parcel ID: 15-136.

Aerial views from:

<http://maps.google.com/> and <http://www.bing.com/maps/> accessed 6/26/2014.

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1918. *Star Stories for Little Folks*. Boston: The Pilgrim Press. Accessed 12/28/2015 at the Internet Archive

<https://archive.org/details/starstoriesforli00warn>

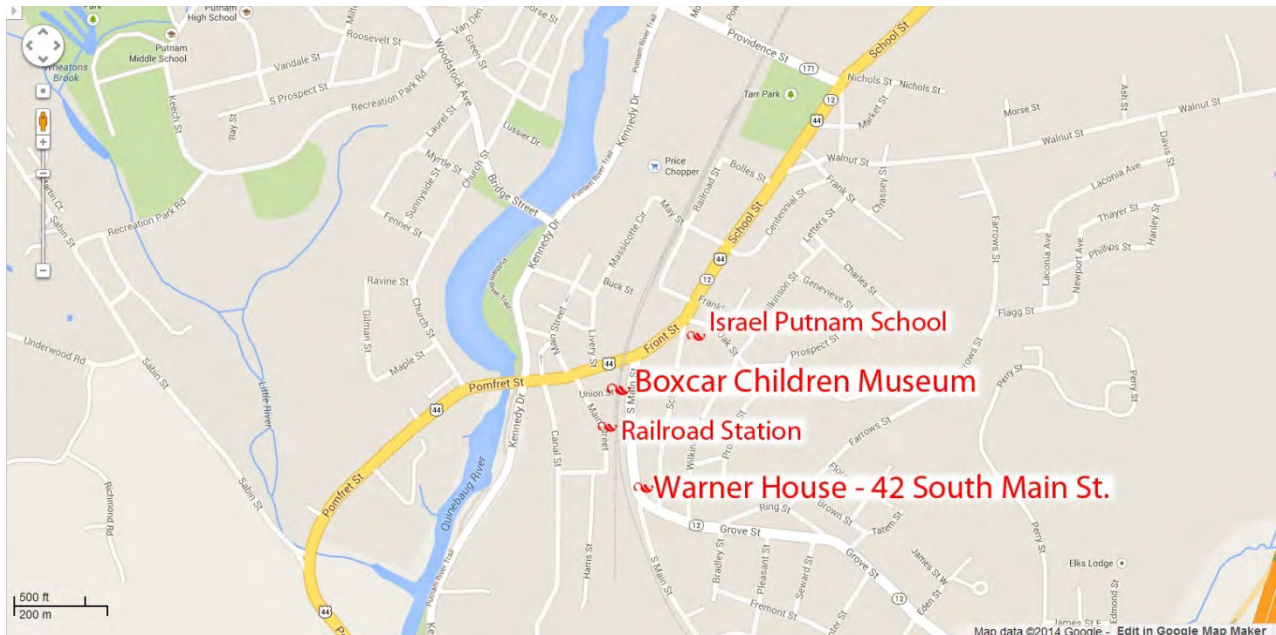
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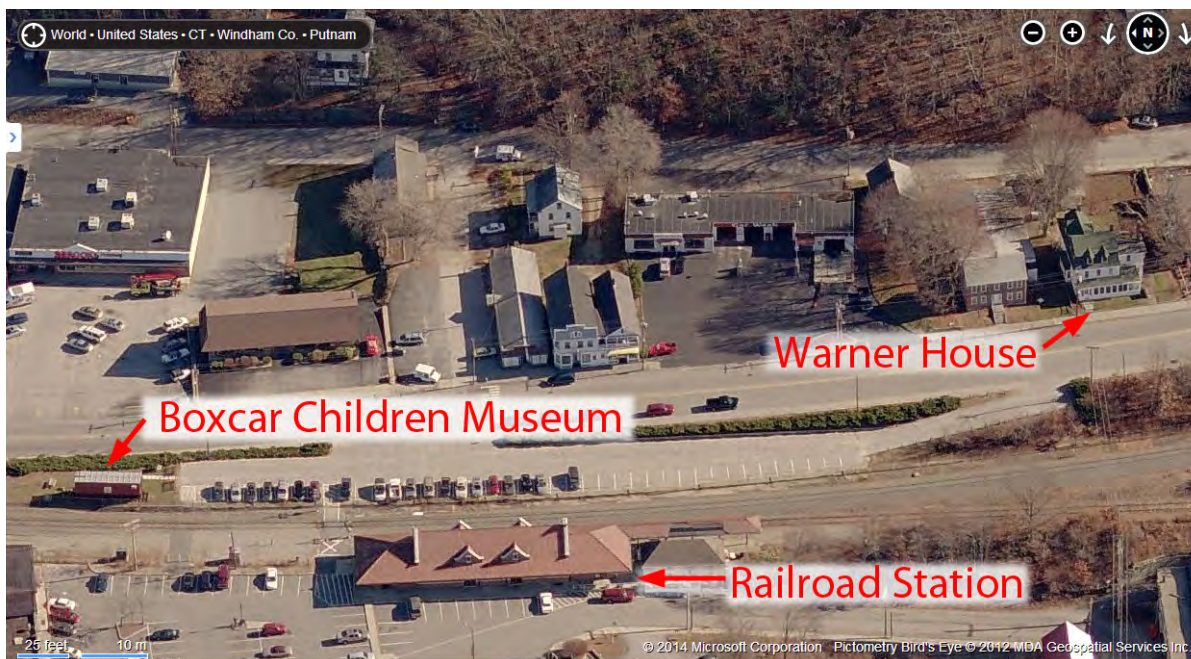
http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/degrum/public_html/html/research/findaids/warner.htm .

Whitman, Albert, & Co. publishers web site. Accessed 6/26/2014 at

<http://www.boxcarchildren.com/content.cfm/about-the-boxcar-children-series> .



1. Location map – Putnam CT – base image from <http://maps.google.com/> accessed 6/26/2014, showing locations of the Boxcar Children Museum, the Warner childhood home at 42 South Main Street, the Railroad Station, and the Israel Putnam School.



2. West view – aerial “bird’s-eye” map of South Main Street, Putnam, CT – <http://www.bing.com/maps> accessed 6/26/2014. Note the Warner House where Gertrude Warner was born and grew up, observing activity along the rail lines and station.



3. Southwest view of house, camera facing northeast. Note the adjacent house to the north, 38 South Main Street, one of the few remaining historic structures along this block of South Main Street.



4. West view of house, camera facing east.



5. Northwest view of house, camera facing southeast. Note the original multi-pane sash in the attic windows of the north gable-end. The staggered shingle siding and hooded dormer windows are also Shingle-style details which contrast with the brackets and dentils under the eaves, more typical of the Italianate style.



6. Detail view of south side exterior, camera facing north. At right is a 2-story wing projecting south. Note the distinctive second floor window head trim on the main block at left.



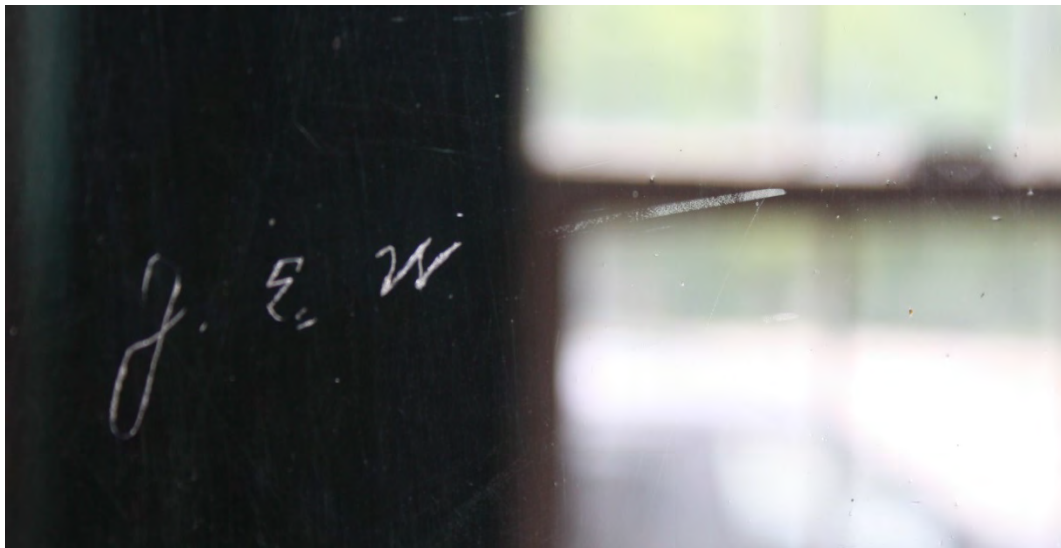
7. East view of house, camera facing west. At right is a three-story wing projecting east from the main block, with two-story and one-story additions.



8. Southeast view of garage from School Street, camera facing northwest.



9. Southwest view of garage from the garden, camera facing northeast, showing the attached garden shed.



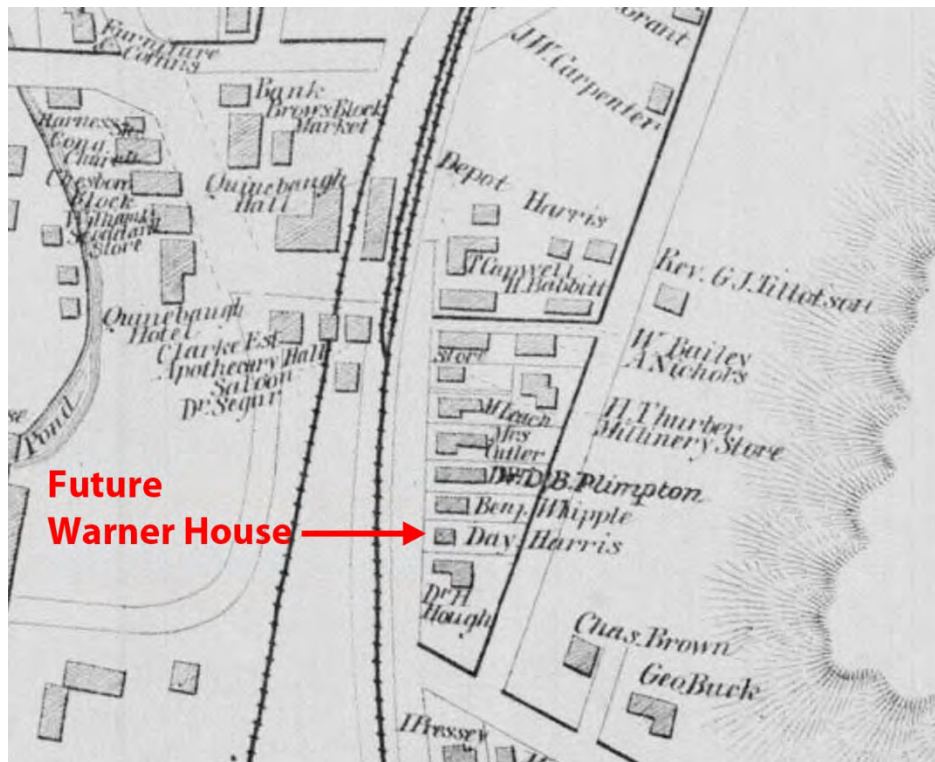
10. Initials inscribed on a pane of one of the front windows, thought to be by one of the Warners, possibly Gertrude's mother Jane or brother John, camera facing west.



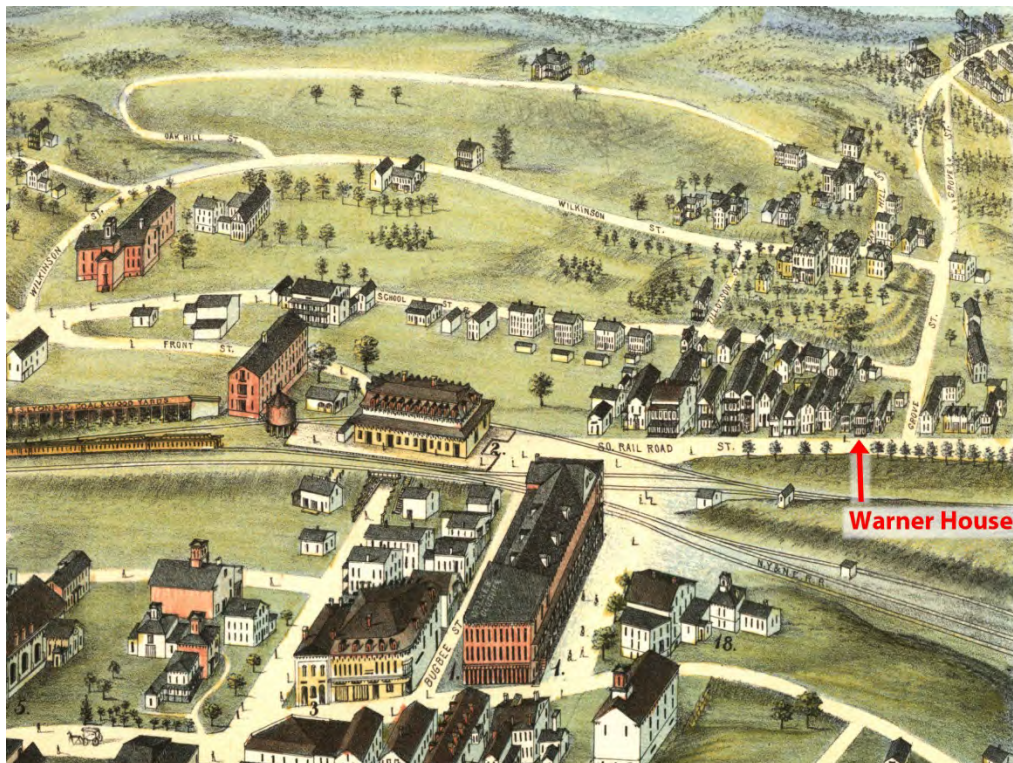
11. View of South Main Street, camera facing north. At left: the Railroad Station, built in 1907 when Gertrude was 17. The previous station was a block further north along the same rail line. The Warner House is at right.



12. Postcard view of South Main Street c. 1906, camera facing north. The Warner House is the second from the right, with its added third floor and open ground floor porch. Collection of Joyce and Timothy Borey.



13. Detail of 1869 Atlas of Windham and Tolland Counties, by O.W. Gray, Danielson, Conn.



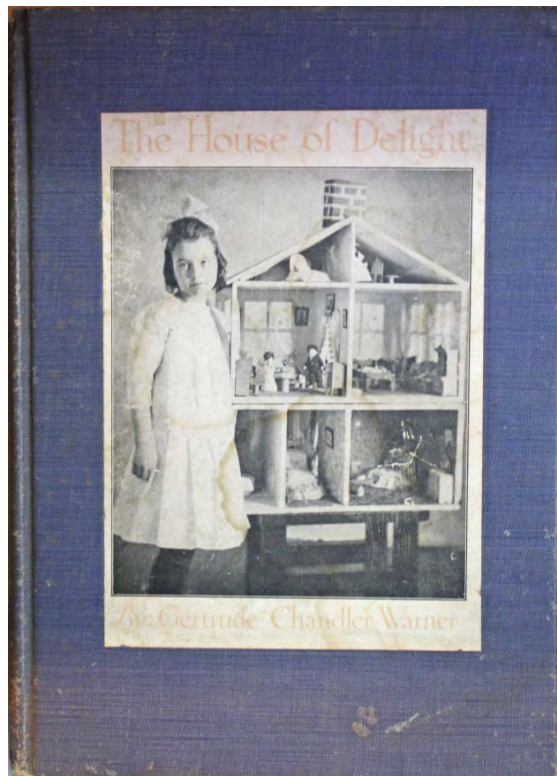
14. Detail of 1877 View of Putnam, Connecticut, published by O.H. Bailey & Co., Boston. The railroad station shown is the predecessor of the “new” station of 1907, and today’s South Main Street was known as Railroad Street. The Warner House is the second building to the left (north) of Grove Street.



15. Family photograph of the Warners c. 1895 – from left Edgar M., John on his father's lap, Frances (standing at rear), Gertrude, and Jane. Historic photograph with permission of Aspinock Historical Society.



16. Photograph of Gertrude (at piano) and her sister Frances. Gertrude also played the organ. Historic photograph with permission of Aspinock Historical Society.



17. The cover of *The House of Delight*, 1916, Gertrude Chandler Warner's first published book, written while she lived in the family home. The book told the story of the occupants of a doll house; the model was a niece, and photography was by Warner's brother John. Image with permission of the Aspinock Historical Society.



18. The cover of *The Box-car Children*, 1942, the first in a series for which Gertrude Chandler Warner is well known. Image with permission of the Aspinock Historical Society.