

# Putnam Past Times

Vol. 44

Putnam County Historical Society

August 2018

No. 3

## *Ag Museum Open House Sunday August 12*

The Annual Agricultural Museum Open House of the Putnam County Historical Society will be held 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Sunday August 12, 2018 at 501 Old Hwy 26, Hennepin.

Join us to view the changes made to the Ag Museum and the Meeting House with support from the Walter Durley Boyle Charitable Trust. Below you can see the completed lean-to exterior display area on the east side of the Ag Museum and the new steel mill display on the south side of the annex. The permanent displays in the Ag Museum are still agricultural equipment and tools, wildlife, coal mining, early 1900s general store, post office, one-room school, farm kitchen and household items, although the military memorabilia have been moved to the Meeting House.



Again this year the Putnam County FFA Alumni will be holding a tractor drive before the Open House to raise funds for the Bill Biagi Memorial FFA Alumni Scholarship. Registration for the Tractor Drive will begin at 8:30 a.m. at the Ag Museum. The tractors will depart at 9:30 a.m. and return at 12:30 p.m. for lunch. Cost of the drive is \$40.00 per tractor. The event is sponsored by Renk Seed and Keith Gehm. For information on the Tractor Drive contact Brian Biagi at 815-252-0474 or [chachi869@gmail.com](mailto:chachi869@gmail.com).

At 1:00 p.m. we will dedicate the new steel mill display at the annex adjacent to the Ag Museum. Mike Black will reminisce on his time working at the mill.

Everyone is invited to the Open House and admission is free. Pork chop and BBQ lunches will be available for purchase at the Meeting House (these are included in the cost of the tractor drive). The Agricultural Museum and the Meeting House are handicapped accessible.

Pulsifer House (our historic house museum built in 1844) will also be open for tours. Pulsifer House is not handicapped accessible.

For information on the Open House contact Luke Holly at [lholly@yahoo.com](mailto:lholly@yahoo.com) or Sid Whitaker at [sidneywhitaker25@gmail.com](mailto:sidneywhitaker25@gmail.com) or 815-303-5104.

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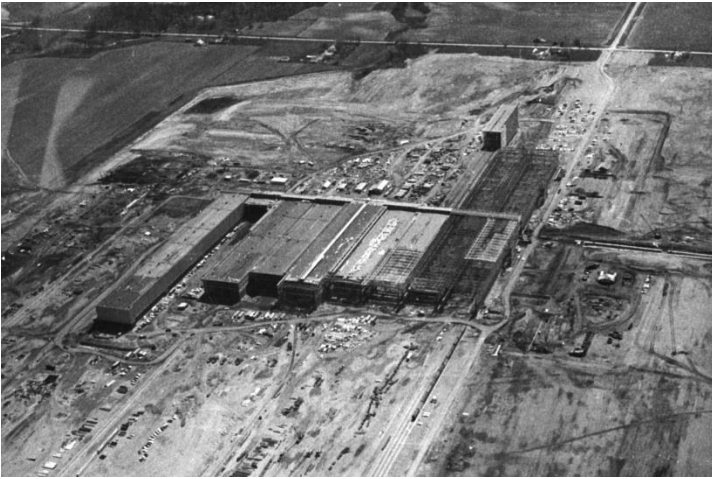
***Putnam County Historical Society***

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# *Work Roll Monument Commemorates Hennepin Steel Mill*

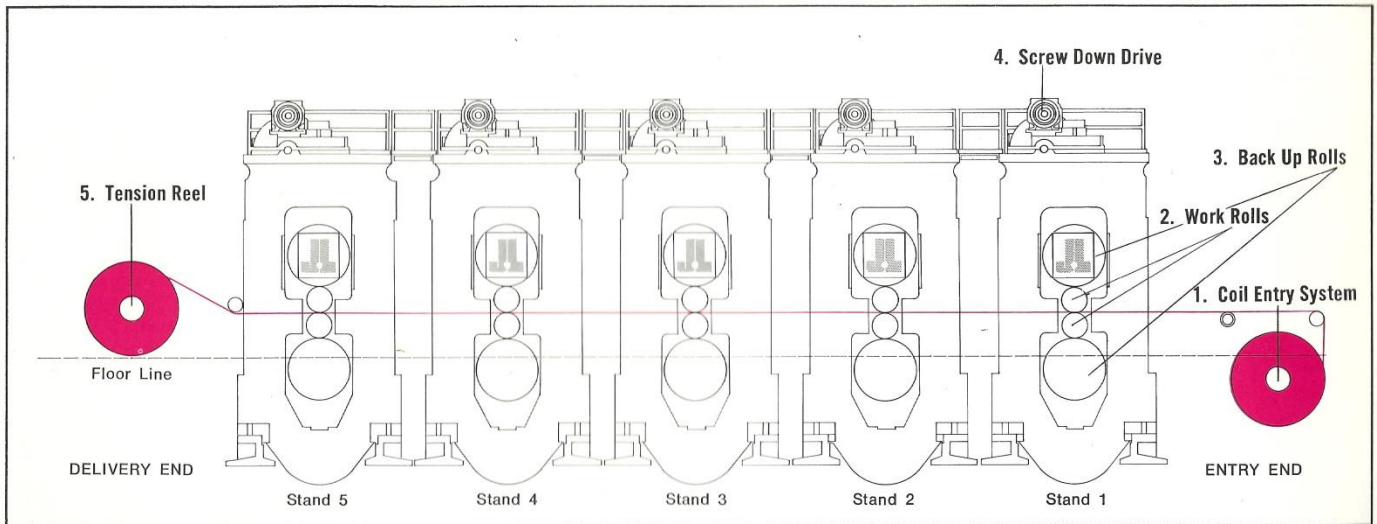
The Hennepin Steel Mill was an important part of Putnam County life from 1965 to 2009. Jones and Laughlin Steel Company bought 6,500 acres of land between Hennepin and the Illinois Power Company generating station. Outside consultants ignored the advice of J&L, the large labor pool in the region and past experience elsewhere, and made lofty predictions of large increases in the population of Putnam County based on the proposed final size of the mill complex and predictions of the addition of many other industrial enterprises adjacent to the mill. Fortunately, the County and Village of Hennepin ignored the consultants.



Construction of the first phase of the mill began in 1966 and operations began in December 1967.

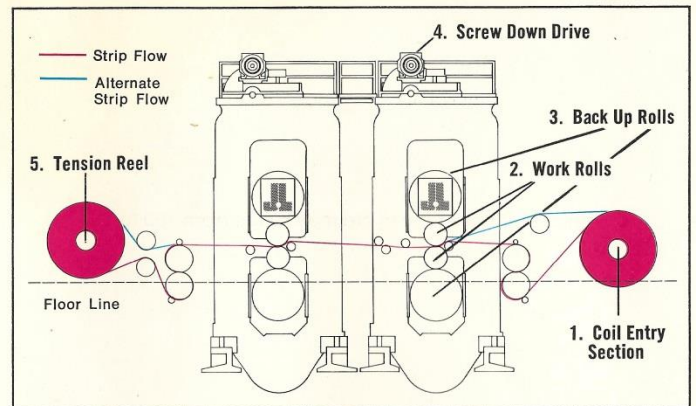
The mill received hot rolled coils of steel and produced cold rolled and galvanized sheets and coils that were shipped out by truck or rail. Steel entering the mill went through a 'pickle line' where scale was removed by physical breakers and a hydrochloric acid bath. The steel then

went through the heart of the mill, the ‘tandem mill’, where five pairs of work rolls reduced the steel to the desired thickness.



Then the steel was annealed to soften it and make it workable. The annealed steel then went through the ‘temper mill’ where two pairs of work rolls provided the specified hardness and surface quality to the steel. The steel would then be finished, mostly as galvanized steel with a zinc coating and a variety of surface finishes. The mill could also corrugate the steel.

The mill had barely gone into production when Ling-Temco-Vaught, Inc. took control of J&L in 1968 and then merged it with Republic Steel to form LTV Steel in 1984. LTV Steel had financial difficulties and the steel mill never expanded past Phase 1. LTV filed for bankruptcy in 2000. Wilbur Ross bought it out of bankruptcy and merged it with Wierton Steel to form International Steel Group in 2002. He then sold ISG to Mittal Steel in 2005. Mittal merged with Arcelor to form ArcelorMittal in 2006 and closed the Hennepin mill in 2009 despite it being a profitable mill.



Our display features a pair of work rolls supporting a plaque commemorating workers with 30 years of service and also a plaque in memory of deceased members of Local 7367.

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## *In Memoriam*

We mourn the loss of the following Putnam County Historical Society members and friends. Over the years all have supported the Society’s goals and programs. All will be sadly missed.

Diane Boekeloo	Irene Downey (Life)	Margaret Kuhn	Reba Read (Life)
Walter Michael Bouxsein	Doris Happold	Aloysius Kunkel	Ola Mae Urnikis
Dorothy Donaldson	Elmer Knapp	Louise McKirgan	Ila Wilt

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## *Memorials & Tributes*

The following Memorials honor the lives of members and friends of the Society:

**Walter Michael Boussein** – Sharon Clausen, Eugene & Linda Litherland.

**David Holly** – Lester & Marian Ballerine, Daniel & Katie Bendlage, Gary & Cynthia Bruch, Henry Bruch, Ron & Sue Bruch, Philip & Sherrie Carlson, Sharon Clausen, Margaret Cofoid, Philip & Mary Edgerley, Jeffrey & Mary Ferrari, Nancy Gallagher, Gene & Vickie Gensini, Elizabeth George, Janet Hahn, Linda Hiltabrand, Arch & Judy Hopkins, Larry & Linda Kline, Merle & Pamela Koehler, Kevin Kunkel, Peter & Mitzi Lemak, George & Sarah Lukach, Nicole Norris, Carol & Jerry Patterson, Paul & Carole Perona, Gary & Lana Peterlin, Putnam County Board, James & Gayle Reno, Greg & Lynn Sheedy, James & Mary Scheetz, Jolene Slingsby, Ron & Kathy Spratt, Sidney Whitaker, Diane Wilson, Daryle Wragge.

**Aloysius Kunkel** – Sidney Whitaker

**Ola Mae Urnikis** – Sidney Whitaker.

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## *Recent Donations*

The Putnam County Historical Society thanks the following donors for recent gifts to the Society:

**Maxine Bassi** – coverlet from Mary Platt Bassi, photos & memorabilia of Ernest Bassi Store, several local pictures & photo postcards, several old newspapers, several antique toys, copy of Church Messenger 1951, copy of Girls From Bureau Junction.

**Gary Boggio** – pair of World War 2 military spats.

**Ron Dean** – map of imaginary development of J&L given to Al Sadler on his retirement.

**Lonna Nauman** – copy of Holmstrom Family Memories.

**Ardene Peterson** – Bonucchi family photo, Albert Bonucchi's hoe and gardening hat.

**Marie Taylor** – Putnam County Belles & Beaus records and memorabilia.

**Joe Tonelli** – copy of January – February 2018 issue of Decoy Magazine, printed map of Princeton Game & Fish Club and Hennepin Shooting Club circa 1890 copied by Donna Tonelli from the original.

**Anna Wink** – pictures of FFA & Hennepin School, 2 antique plates, several books.

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## *Officers Elected for 2018 & Two New Board Members Appointed*

The Putnam County Historical Society officers for 2018 are President: Sidney Whitaker, Vice-president: Karen Bailey, Secretary: Lonna Nauman, and Treasurer: Will Duke.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Lori Balensiefen to replace Teresa Clausen and Ben Day to replace Sheila Haage on the Board of Directors of the Putnam County Historical Society.

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