

Berlin Historical Society

Notice

The January meeting of the Berlin Historical Society will be held on Wednesday, January 18, 2012 at 7:00 PM at the town office building.

Subjects to be discussed:

- Update on Norbs West Berlin Post Office Project
- Mary Garcia and Cheryl Poors Berlin Cemetery index project
- Inquiry into the 1948 Christmas eve fire in Berlin in which three children perished
- Donation made to the BHS
- Donation of Berlin Town Reports
- Update on the Airport Book project

Below is a copy of our 2011 annual report which will be published in the Berlin Town Report and the minutes of our December meeting.

Richard Turner
Secretary

Berlin Historical Society – 2011 Annual Report

Our Societies activities this year mostly centered around our monthly meetings. Our featured speaker for our annual dinner meeting in May was Sylvia Parker who told us the history of the “Cottage on Erhardt Hill” with help from Jim Sumner. The cottage was built by Justus and Fannie Doane Erhardt in about 1904 at the top of the steep portion of Erhardt Hill on the south side of what is now Crosstown Road. Sylvia’s presentation included many pictures of the house and guests including Bela Bartok the famous Hungarian composer who summered there in 1941.



**The Cottage on
Erhardt Hill**

The cottage fell into complete disrepair during mid-century and the remains were finally burned by the Berlin Fire Dept. in the mid 1960’s. Erhardt Hill got its name from the Erhardts

who owned and summered at the cottage. There is no connection to Amelia Earhart (note spelling) although the rumor persists.

We participated in the Washington County History Fair held at the Pavilion Building in Montpelier on July 16. Maudean Neill exhibited an updated version of her 1860 Agricultural Census display that she put together for last year's Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge, Norb Rhinerson showed his Berlin Corner Post Office exhibit as well as a slide show of historical Berlin photos and Manny Garcia put on a slide show of photos of the area of Berlin that was annexed by Montpelier in 1899.

At our September meeting we learned about the Perrin family, one of Berlin's earliest settled families, from David Perrin, a descendant. In October, Manny Garcia brought us through the evolution of transportation in central Vermont from the earliest canoe and foot travel to the various modern modes we all now enjoy.

Norb has been working on a West Berlin post office display similar to the one he created on the Berlin Corner post office. It will consist of the names of the various "Officers in Charge", dates of office, and location of each office which used to be in their respective homes. We are also updating our old cemetery information with pictures of each monument and its location within the cemetery.

To learn more about the above mentioned subjects or any other Berlin related history you are invited to visit our office in the Berlin Municipal Building. We do not have regular hours when we are open but will accommodate anyone who wishes an appointment. Call Norb Rhinerson at 802-223-1203 or e-mail him at norbert925@myfairpoint.net. Contact Norb also if you are interested in joining our society or want to be included in our e-mail notification of meetings. The public is welcome to attend any and all meetings.

Berlin Historical Society Meeting Minutes for December 13, 2011

Present were Mary Wells, Lynn McManus, Cheryl Poor, Maudean and Lewis Neill. Manny and Mary Garcia and Norbert Rhinerson

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

Minutes of October 19, 2011 had been distributed with the meeting notice so were not read.

Mary Wells presented the Treasurers Report. Our deposits at the Vermont State Employees Credit Union total as of November 20 totaled \$49,719.05, Disbursement were \$175.03 in October and \$118 in November

Richard has sent what he thinks is the final set of changes/corrections for the airport book to the printer and is waiting for their corrected copy to come back. When he gets that, he just needs to make sure all the corrections are ok and then can give them the go ahead to print.

Over the past few years the Cemetery Commission has been mapping our historical cemeteries and at the same time we have been taking pictures of the monuments indexing them to the map numbers. Only Cox Brook Cemetery remains unmapped and this will be finished next year.

At the same time we have been taking the index done by members of the historical society in 1985 and renumbering it to conform with the maps. We are also have taken pictures of the monuments in the Corners Cemetery and are in the process of indexing the stones there to the maps we have been given by the Cemetery Association there. We are also working on an update of the 1985 Index to bring it up to date. This will take a long time unless we can enlist someone else to help. We need to convert the 1985 indexes to Microsoft Word so we can edit those file and it now seems that we will have to have it retyped. We have tried to do it by scanning the original but it does not work very well. Because we have a lot of this information including the maps on the Town Web Site we have heard from a Mark Guptil of Montpelier who unknown to us has also been taking pictures of the monuments in our cemeteries, he had done West Berlin, East Road and Dewey-Wright. His indexing is a little different in that he names each picture. He also develops an index which is also a little different than the way we do it. There is a web site at <http://www.findagrave.com> which covers the entire country. Cheryl Poor and Mary Garcia will retype the 1985 Cemetery Index after the holidays. We thank them for volunteering to do that. Norb will type a page to establish a format for their work.

Vermont History Expo 2012 will be on June 15 and 16. Maudean is working on an exhibit related to Berlins participation in the Civil War. Maudean presented her work to date in the form of a Power Point presentation. She has done a lot or research and has more to do. We have submitted our registration and \$50 fee to the Vermont Historical Society and suspect there will be some preliminary meetings this winter.

There is a lot of research still to be done on the West Berlin/Riverton Post Office. We need to find the post office locations for a number of the postmasters because as they changed the post office location changed. We need to find out where the Ayers store which burned in 1899 was located among others. Norb presented the work he had done to date using our projector. .We will keep the 250th Anniversary of Berlins Wentworth Charter on June 13, 2013 this on our list of things to do when the time comes closer. Communities are holding thier observances and we have some ideas about ours

There will be a Civil War theme at our 2012 Potluck/Meeting on Wednesday May 23. Maudean is working on our program and is going to contact a singing group that does Civil War songs. Mary will be checking on the reservation for the Parish Hall.

Inquiries during the month were one on Richardson Road which had to do with an address on that road and Richard responded with a map and some explanation. Another related to Berlins participation in the Civil War. This had to do with a book being written by a Mr. Book of Worchester. He has already written several about particular units. I referred this to Maudean

The Next Meeting will be on January 18, a Wednesday, where we believe the Selectboard room will be free.

Manny Garcia offered to present a program related to the homes displaced when I 89 was built. We will most likely have this program in March or April next year.

We will see if we can get the fencing replaced at the Veterans Memorial this next year. Norb did not ask the Town this fall if they could do the installation for which we are furnishing the material as their crews have had to concentrate on roads that had been damaged by our two

floods this year which was much more important.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:45 at which time we enjoyed cookies flavored with maple syrup baked by Cheryl Poor. Thank you Cheryl, the acting secretary had two.

Respectfully Submitted by interim Secretary, Norbert Rhinerson