

Berlin Historical Society

Meeting Minutes of the December 9, 2008 Meeting

The Nov/Dec meeting of the Berlin Historical Society opened at 7:00 PM at the Berlin Town Office Building. Those in attendance were: Norbert Rhinerson, Lewis & Maudean Neill, Mary & Walter Wells, Tom Williams, Nancy Tripp, Cheryl Poor, David Perrin, Lynn McManus, Marys Aunt, Dulcina Perry, Marys daughter Terry and her husband, Doug Bessette. We thought there was another couple who came in late.

The minutes of the October meeting that had previously been sent to members were approved as written. The treasurer's report as read by Mary Wells and approved by members present showed our total assets as of November 20th to be \$45,846.28

The program for the evening was presented by Mary Wells entitled "Highlights and Tidbits of Daniel Perry" Mary is Daniel Perry's grand daughter. Dan Perry was born in Plainfield on May 11, 1877. He was the son of Courtland and Viola Perry. He grew up in the house across the road from the original Perry homestead that was one of the first in Plainfield in the late 1700's. Dan was town Moderator for several years, from the middle 20's through the 1930's. He served as a School Director and served as town representative in 1919 and went on to be elected Washington County Senator in 1929, 31 and 33. At the same time in 1933 his son, Morris Perry was elected as the representative from Bradford. Later in the century his nephew, Paul Kendall, was the representative from Woodstock. So guess Grampa set a good example. Daniel was one of the founders of Perry Automobile Co. in both Barre and Montpelier. The Perry Auto in Barre was later sold and is now Formula Ford. This all began around 1808. He always had a new car. One summer Grampa, my mother and two small daughters went to Grand Isle to pick cherries, I remember that on the way back he asked me if I wanted to drive, The windows were open, no air conditioning in those days, and the wind blew his hat. I grabbed for it and nearly went off the road as this was the first time I have ever driven with power steering, I learned right away quick to pay more attention. A few years ago a couple of my daughters saw in the Bradford paper there was going to be an auction in Fairlee and one of the items was an advertising cup from the D. A. Perry Real Estate Co. We attended with the intention of bidding on it. Well several of my cousins were there with the same intention. I did end up with the cup but we paid dearly, over \$300 with tax and commission. But it is my pride and joy and sits on my kitchen window sill along with some other memorabilia.

If running the Perry Auto, the Real Estate business and doing auctions wasn't enough, he was active in both the Barre and Montpelier Baptist Churches. His family donated the land for the Barre Church. He had attended the Barre church until he was married then, since his wife belonged to the Montpelier Church he went there where he held several offices and preached on occasion.

Dan also kept a couple of cows in addition to milk for the family they had a small milk route. I remember it was a treat to go with him and pick up the empty bottles with the milk money in

them. Some of the milk was put into set pans to let the cream come to the top. Then my grandmother would take the cream off with one of these skimmers. (Mary had two of them to display) That was when the cream was thick. Once the cream was taken off the milk pan was set on the back of the stove to sour. Once it was clabbered it was put in a cheese cloth to let the whey drain. I believe the whey was then fed to the pigs or chickens.

In later years Dan bought a large sugar orchard on the Barre-Williamstown line. He enjoyed making fancy syrup for some 16 years. If I remember right he was splitting wood for sugaring the day before he passed away. The next year my mother, Betty Sherman, and My Aunt Delly did the sugaring. Mr Lemiere, a nearby farmer did the gathering.

I have a couple of short stories that my Aunt Delly wrote. The first is about growing up in the big white house on the Barre Road, The other is about a Christmas party at the Barre Road School.

Mary showed several pictures, the first being a wedding picture in 1800 when Dan married E. Maud Crossett, who I believe, was born in Berlin in the part that is now in Montpelier. They had nine children, Morris, Beatrice, Grace, Marjorie, my mother, Elizabeth or Betty as she was known, Courtland, Dulcina, Lois and Harold. That resulted in, I think, 29 grandchildren and I've lost track of how many great grandchildren. One picture was of the whole family taken around 1940, another was of them on their 60th wedding anniversary and a third was of the whole family on that same day. There are a few other photos, one of Grampa in his conductors uniform.

Mary will make copies of the material she presented for our files.

This was another great program by one of our members, and there are several more in the works but without particular schedules, David Perrin on the Perrins of Berlin and Elene Sartel on the Brighams of Berlin.

Norb reported that he had met with Mrs. Thow whose home is on the corner of Prospect and School Street in Montpelier, in the area that was Berlin until 1899. She has been researching her property tracing it back as far as she can using land records both in Berlin and in Montpelier. In one picture her house is shown just to the left and back of the large 4 story building that housed "Greens Warranted Syrup of Tar Co. Just back of that building on Prospect Street is the Berlin District 5 school with a barn to the right of it. Another picture was dated 1909-1910. Berlin's Town Hall is just left of the Green Building, on Berlin Street. Page 71 and 72 of the "Place to Pass Through" describes the Town Hall and School and the fact that following the annexation Montpelier purchased both of these buildings. Mrs. Thow also found the deed, dated March 6, 1854, describing the purchase of the land from Carlton Fullerton, who had a farm in the upper left in the picture, for the District 5 School. This was found in Book 11 page 285 of the Berlin Land Records. We don't believe we have seen a picture of that school before. Thanks to Mrs Thow we now have it.

A picture of Prospect Street on the left taken on December 9, 2008 shows that the Thow house , the white house on the left, is the only building remaining that was there in 1910.

President Norb announced that we do not have a speaker scheduled yet for our May potluck dinner meeting and he was looking for suggestions. Tom Williams was to contact Senator Bill Doyle for some suggestions.

The Vermont Historical Society has announced that they are canceling History Expo 2009 due to budgetary problems. Norb suggested we try to have an open house or houses sometime this year to get the community more familiar with what we have and what we are all about.

Richard Turner is working on another scrapbook as he took two of our old ones with him to Florida. There are a number of them left to bring into a standard format that is searchable. He is working on number 5.

Our next meeting on January 27 will be our election meeting. All of our officers and directors are up for re-election. Our president, secretary and treasurer have served quite a few years and we are looking for candidates for those offices.

Maudean Neill presented us with a copy of "The Paine Turnpike" which had been submitted as an essay to the Edmunds Essay Contest in 1976 by her daughter, Sandra. This contest had been sponsored by the Vermont Historical Society. Sandra Neil won first prize for her essay. This will be added to our Paine Turnpike file with our Thanks.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Norbert Rhinerson, Acting Secretary