

## Berlin Historical Society Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2011

The October meeting of the Berlin Historical Society commenced at 7:07 PM at the town office building. The following were present: Maudean & Lewis Neill, Cheryl Poor, Richard Turner, Norb Rhinerson, Vern Turner, Mary & Manny Garcia and Anita Flanagan.

The minutes of the September meeting had been sent out to members and there were no additions or corrections. There was no treasurer at the meeting and thus no treasurer's report.

I reported that I had received a copy of the airport book back from the printer and was now in the process of going over it in detail in order to send it back to them with necessary corrections. They will send it back to me once more for a final check and then it will be ready to print.

While going over some of our unfiled paperwork at the office I came across an interesting document dated in 1816. It was written by Aaron Strong and was the sale of ½ of his ownership of a distillery to William Woodbury. Aaron Strong owned the land where the Central Vermont Hospital is now located in Berlin but that is not necessarily the location of the distillery. He was only the ½ owner so it could have been located on the other owner's property or it could even have been at another location. The document was with other Woodbury papers which Harold Woodbury left for us but we don't know if Harold was a direct descendent of William.

I have received a reply from Mary Jane Bosworth which sounds hopeful that she will be willing to part with some of her glass plate negatives. Her concern is that they will not be used for private profit by anyone but she doesn't have a problem with our society using them to make money. I will get in touch with her again and maybe we will be able to reach an agreement and own some of the Berlin ones. We made prints of about 130 back in 2001 but we really didn't spend enough time going over them to make sure we had found all the ones taken in Berlin.

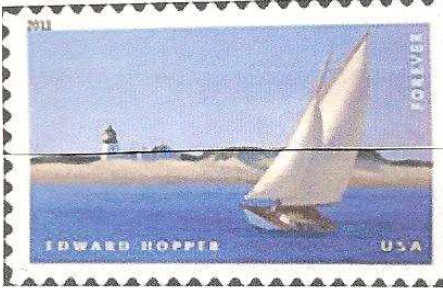
Norb has been looking for information on the West Berlin/Riverton Post Office. He hopes to find the names of all postmasters, where they lived and their terms of office so he can compile a display similar to the one he did on the Berlin Corner Post Office. We interviewed Elizabeth Richardson who was the "Officer in Charge" of the Riverton Post Office beginning on August 10, 1984. She took over for Elizabeth A. Bevins when she died. Barbara Felch took over a short time later and was there until it closed on February 19, 1988. Elizabeth Richardson gave us names of two previous postmasters and the location of the post offices. Mrs. Lillian Croteau lived in a house on the corner of Rte. 12 and School St. and Mrs. Ellinore Coonrod lived in a house that burned but we have a picture showing its location.

We received an inquiry from a Bonnie Clause who is researching work of an artist by the name of Edward Hopper who painted during the early to mid 1900's. Mr. Hopper was a painter of some renown and was honored with a United States postage stamp with one of his pictures on it just last August 24<sup>th</sup>.



**Norb's postcard of the old Three Mile Bridge -  
This old covered bridge was taken out in the flood of 1927**

### **Edward Hopper Stamp**

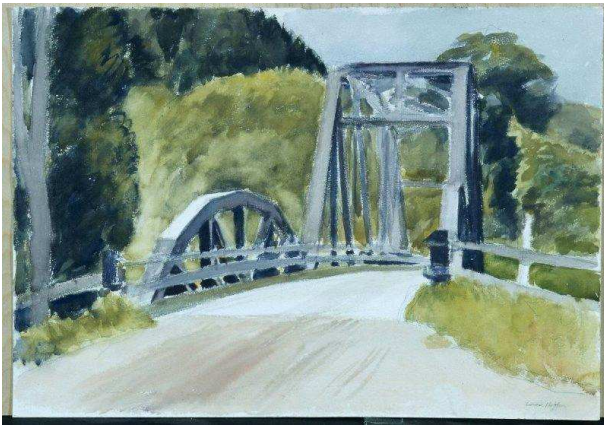


Mr. (or Ms.) Clause sent a picture of a painting that was thought to be the Three Mile Bridge across the Winooski River between Berlin and Middlesex. He wanted to know what kind of bridge was there before the 1927 flood that took it out. The steel structure that was built after the flood was in two spans with a pony truss as the short span. The pony truss span was removed in 1992 shortening the length of the bridge by about 60 feet. Within a week or two after the inquiry Norb found and purchased a post card of the old bridge dated either in 1900 or 1906.



**Three Mile Bridge as Built after the 27 Flood Bridge**

**Norb's Photo of the Three Mile  
as it Looks Today**



**Painting by Edward Hopper  
thought to be of the  
Three Mile Bridge**

Maudean was able to locate information on Olive Bone the ggg aunt of the inquirer,

Carol Greener. The information she found, though unsubstantiated, was that she was the daughter of Diadema Anny McCumber who was born in Berlin in about 1809. This appears to be the only connection this family had to Berlin. Olive A. Bone was 3 years old and living in Pownal at the time of the 1850 census. She was later listed as Olive Annette Lee which could have meant that her mother married a second time and she was adopted by and took on the name of her mother's second husband.

Manny Garcia provided the entertainment for the meeting by presenting his very interesting talk on *Transportation in Central Vermont*. With the aid of many pictures he showed the way transportation progressed throughout our history. The first vehicles used for travel were canoes before the white man arrived. Then ox carts were used to transport the first settler's goods on paths through the woods later to become the primitive early roads. One of these was the Paine Turnpike that extended from Brookfield through Williamstown, Northfield, and Berlin to Montpelier. The Turnpike was built by Elijah Paine who had settled in Williamstown near the present Northfield-Williamstown I-89 interchange. It was completed in 1802 and lasted until about 1820. Elijah then convinced the legislature to let him turn it over to the towns that it travelled through as the tolls didn't provide enough revenue to pay for its upkeep.

Horses and wagons travelled these early roads and railroads appeared in the 1840's. Elijah's son, Charles, who lived in Northfield and was the Governor of Vermont during the 1840s was instrumental in bringing the Central Vermont Railroad through the Dog River Valley instead of going through Barre and south through Williamstown. The first Central Vermont train arrived in Montpelier in 1849. CVRR was headquartered in Northfield until it was controlled by the Smith family whereupon the headquarters were moved to St. Albans. The Montpelier-Wells River RR was completed in 1873 with headquarters in Montpelier. The Barre and Montpelier Traction and Power Co. started trolley service between Montpelier and Barre in 1898 and continued until the flood of 1927. The Burlington Rapid Transit Bus Line was established in 1929. They bought out the trolley line in Burlington and the Yellow Bus Line which ran from Burlington to Barre. They became the Vermont Transit Company in the 1930's. Finally came the airlines which got their start in the early 1930's.

The meeting adjourned about 9:00.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Richard Turner, Secretary