

Minutes of the July 22, 2008 Meeting of the Berlin Historical Society

The monthly meeting of the Berlin Historical Society opened at 7:05 PM at the Berlin Town Office Building. Those in attendance were: Norbert Rhinerson, Lynn McManus, Lewis & Maudean Neil, Walt & Mary Wells, Elene Sartell, Kathy Brimblecomb, Junetta & Stanley Fitts, Cheryl Poor and Richard Turner.

The minutes of the June meeting that had previously been sent to members were approved. The Treasurers report showing our total assets to be \$45,254.08 was read by Mary Wells and approved as read. Mary has previously suggested that we have a second person authorized to sign checks for our Society in her absence. Tom Williams has offered to take on this responsibility and was so authorized.

Norb recapped our participation in Vermont History Expo at the Tunbridge fair grounds and thanked all those who worked on the project. Our exhibit, entitled "Mary Greene Nye, Berlin , Vermont – Author, Editor and Historian" was well received by the fair goers and we have good reason to be proud of our efforts. We have returned the artifacts that we borrowed from the state archives and have declined their offer to keep them indefinitely on a loan basis because we have no place to store and/or display them. Next years History Expo will be held on June 27 & 28 and will be the tenth since the first year that it was held in the individual towns of central Vermont. The theme will be Waterways & Byways.

Norb attended a workshop at the Vermont Historical Society on the Vermont Connecting to Collections Project. Questionnaires are to be filled out to help them determine the needs of collecting institutions around the state.

A staff writer for the Hartford (Connecticut) Courier contacted us to find out how we pronounced our town name. He plans to write a follow up to an article that he had previously written on the pronunciation of Berlin, Connecticut. It seems they put the emphasis on the first syllable (**Ber**-lin) the same as we do but don't know how or when it was determined. They are to send us a copy of the article when it is published.

Norb is preparing Power Point presentations on the following subjects: Mary Greene Nye, Benjamin Falls, Berlin's old Schools and Berlin Cemeteries. We will be able to project our pictures of these subjects onto a screen or wall with our new projector when he is finished. The Power Point program will enhance presentations using the many pictures in our archives.

Brian Lindner is looking for the birthplace of Dr. Julius Yemans Dewey, the founder of National Life Insurance Co. According to a Times-Argus article dated in September 1960 it was still standing in Berlin where it was built in 1794 by Julius' father, Simeon Dewey. Lynn McManis said it is the house labeled "Mrs. Dewey" on the Dog River Road on the 1873 Beers map of Berlin. This needs to be verified before getting back to Brian.

Sylvia Parker, who lives on Crosstown Road near where Fannie Erhardt's cottage once stood, has written a great story about the history of the cottage, its owners, guests and related information about the area near the top of Erhardt Hill. She gave us a draft to read and comment on. She hopes to have it published in the Vermont Historical Societies "History Journal". Norb suggested to her that Vermont Life might be interested.

The scanning project of our collection of photographs was completed on June 23 and 24. Paul Bierman, a professor from UVM, was in charge of the project and supervised his assistant and four interns over the two days. They ended up with over 500 scans and have supplied us

with a copy on four DVD's. Many of them will eventually be viewable on the internet at www.uvm.edu/landscape ..



**Paul Bierman with interns scanning our collection of photographs
[with me “supervising :<)]**

We still haven't come up with the text to put on plaques for the teacher's desk and bell that are at the Berlin Elementary School. Norb has suggested “This was the teacher's desk from the Berlin Corner School which was in operation from 1845 to 1951” and “This bell was in the bell tower of the Berlin Corner School from 1853 to about 1964”. The old school was built in 1845 and a smaller bell was installed a few years later. The smaller bell was removed in 1853 and the larger one installed. The building was expanded about 1904 and was continuously used as a school until 1951 when the larger two room school was built on land donated by Clarence Pike across Paine Turnpike North from the present elementary school. The teacher's desk was used throughout the 1900's and probably dates well before then.

A new flag has been raised on the flagpole at the Veteran's Memorial at Berlin Corner courtesy of the Berlin Fire Dept. Thanks go out to Bryan Nykiel and Chief Miles Silk who brought the ladder truck over to do the job.

The next meeting will be August 26.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Turner, Secretary