

Minutes of the Berlin Historical Society October 28, 2008

The October meeting of the Berlin Historical Society opened at 7:05 PM at the Berlin Town Office Building. Those in attendance were: Norbert Rhinerson, Lewis & Maudean Neill, Mary & Walter Wells, Tom Williams, Nancy Tripp, Richard Turner and guests Larry & Theresa Pettengill.

The minutes of the September 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 October 20th to be \$45,661.64.



**Maudean Neill's Book
Published in 1987**

Maudean Neill gave an excellent talk about the Ku Klux Klan in Vermont based on her previously published book entitled "Fiery Crosses in the Green Mountains". She related the history of the organization from its inception in 1865 in the south as a means of discouraging black equality during reconstruction, through its official disbandment in 1871 by an act of Congress and its continuation outside the law thereafter.

About the time of WW I the Klan was reorganized and was first introduced in Vermont at this time. Membership was officially limited to only white, native-born, protestants and as such there was much prejudice associated with it. Here in Vermont that prejudice was directed against the Catholics, French Canadians and Italians. There were some large rallies held in Vermont. On July 4, 1927 one was held on the Towne farm in Montpelier. There were fireworks and a big parade with an estimated 15 to 20 thousand onlookers. The Chief of Police said he had never seen as many automobiles in Montpelier. Klan gatherings were held in Berlin on the field that now is the site of Weston's Trailer Park.

By 1930 the Klan in Vermont had been disbanded. The main reason was the violence associated with the Klan across the country and the prejudice that was promoted. Vermonters denied being members and tried to forget their participation in this questionable organization.

Richard Henrikson let us borrow his collection of Montpelier photos and post cards. We copied several that were of Berlinside, the portion of Montpelier that was once part of Berlin. These and others of early Montpelier were viewed at the meeting in a slide show.



Goodno's Grocery & Mobil Service Station



Amoco Service Station

Berlinside Pictures @ Corner of Northfield Street & Winooski Avenue

Diane Colgan left us a copy of the Vermont Highway bridge plans from 1933 for the project that replaced the covered bridge across the Dog River in Riverton with the iron truss bridge that is still in place.

Norb and I came across a 1973 letter in our files written by Walter Hubbard the then acting Director of the Vermont Historical Society. In the letter, written to J. Richard Nye, he speaks of setting up a meeting with Richard to video him talking about the history of the Barre-Montpelier Road. Norb contacted Paul Carnahan, VHS Librarian, to see if they had a copy of the video. Paul could not find one although he found about 30 other videos that were made at about the time of Walters tenure at the VHS. Paul also asked if we had a picture of the Knoll Motel on the Barre-Montpelier Road. The motel is in Barre but the property extends into Berlin. We do not have pictures of the motel.



Postcard made from Charles Turner Crandall's Sketch of the Crandall Home South of Berlin Pond

Norb has picked up several more Berlin postcards. These were mostly of Benjamin Falls but the most interesting one was a sketch by Charles Turner Crandall of the Crandall home at the south end of Berlin Pond.

The next meeting will be our Nov/Dec meeting and will be held on December 9. The main topic for this meeting will be "Dan Perry" to be presented by his granddaughter Mary Wells.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Turner, Secretary