

Berlin Historical Society

August 25, 2015

The meeting, presided by President Corinne Stridsberg, commenced at 7:00 with the following present: Corinne Stridsberg, Norb Rhinerson, Richard Turner, Robert and Toni Forrend, Lynn McManus, Dave and Lyn Perrin, Vern Turner, Michael Fiske, Mike Stridsberg, Manny and Mary Garcia, and Meredith Dodge.

A motion to accept the minutes of the July meeting that were previously e-mailed to members was made by Manny Garcia and seconded by Bob Forrend. Motion approved.

The Treasurers report showing our total net assets as \$50,831.28 as of this date was given by treasurer Norb Rhinerson. A motion to accept the Treasurers report as presented was made by Richard Turner and seconded by Mary Garcia. Motion approved.

Vern explained the genealogy information that he originally put online on our old computer using a PAF program. When transferring the data to our new computer Vern recommended purchasing the Family Treemaker program by Ancestry.com which costs about \$80. A motion was made by Mike Fiske and seconded by Mike Stridsberg to allow Vern to purchase the program. Motion approved.

Setting a dollar amount for purchases below which no approval by members would be necessary was discussed. A figure of \$200 was mentioned after which it was brought up that we should distinguish a difference between routine office supplies and software items or expensive hardware items. Discussion was tabled by Corinne until she has a chance to compose a motion to present to members covering future purchases.

Norb has been working on establishing a sequence of happenings regarding the stores and RR stations in West Berlin between 1890 +/- and 1920 +/- . More research is necessary to establish when the old white church was purchased by the Davis Bros., moved to a location near where the present fire station is located and became a store. We know when it burned, January 18, 1917, but there was previously another store at this same location that we need to find out more about. Also there is more to be learned about the RR station buildings that used to be next to the railroad mainline at the crossing.



Original West Berlin RR Station



RR Sta., Boxcar & Davis Store that all Burned –
Lower Rt. Cor.

Michael Fiske talked about the diary of Mary Hubbard Nye who came to Berlin with her husband, Elijah, in or about 1797. As I explained in the June minutes, he has transcribed the diary and spent considerable time in researching and interpreting all aspects of the diary's contents. He gave us an expanded account of those contents and offered digital copies of the diary and his research of its content to members present. Michael is preparing a manuscript of his work with the goal of publishing it within a year after which he plans to donate the original diary to the Vermont Historical Society.

There is much to be learned about Berlin's earliest residents and Michael's work sets an excellent example for additional projects on this subject.

Corinne created laminated membership cards for us this year and passed them out to members. The card includes our post office address, 108 Shed Road, Berlin VT, 05602; telephone number, 802-522-8804; e-mail address, <historicalsociety@berlinvt.org> as well as the Berlin, Vermont Memories page, www.facebook.com/groups/BerlinVermontMemories; and the Berlin Historical Society catalogue of books, www.librarything.com/catalog/BerlinVtHistSoc. Listing our books on line is a project in progress. When accessing the list of books please note there is more than one page. Use the "Tag" feature and then "Books Online" to see if the book you want can be found online. Our Society has membership in the Vt. Hist. Soc. so your card will allow you to do research at the VHS at no charge.

We will be asked soon to notify the Vermont Historical Society of our intentions to participate in the Vermont History Expo at Tunbridge next June 18 and 19. The theme is "H2O: the Power of Water in Vermont History". We need to decide on a topic by our September meeting if we plan to participate.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, September 29.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Turner, Secretary

Below is a copy of a recent posting on "Berlin Vermont Memories" by Corinne Stridsberg.

Richard Turner, Secretary

Today 9/1/15 I had the most incredible experience at the Berlin Historical Society. I looked around as I often do, always a little daunted by the number of projects I would like to delve into. I reached out for a binder regarding the postal history of Berlin and thought how I really need to find the time to look more thoroughly through it. Although I've read numerous times the work in progress Norbert Rhinerson has on this topic I am always looking for more details.

As I flipped through the binder, a typed page caught my eye and the name "Staples" in the top line jumped out at me. I was looking at a transcribed letter, the original Norb purchased back in August 1999 from a person with the Vermont Philatelic Society. (www.vermontps.org) The original letter is described as follows: "This is a folded letter which looks like it was sealed by a red wax. This was 'carried' outside the mails, i.e., as a favor by a traveler carrying a note to another person on his journey. In many cases, it was an excuse to stop and get some food or drink."

This letter was written in November of 1816 by my 3rd great granduncle, Joseph Staples, of Berlin, Vermont to my 3rd great grandfather, Peter Schuyler Putnam Staples and his wife, Hannah (Richardson), of Roxbury, Vermont. Peter's second child, Orson (my 2nd great grandfather) had just been born in June of 1816. The letter talks about a trip down to Connecticut that Joseph had just made to see family and friends. I'm very excited to have several names to now help me with my family research endeavors.

As soon as I got home I sent an email to Norb to let him know I found the transcribed letter, the connection, and how much I appreciated that his keen eye had returned this letter to Berlin. Norb has been a stamp collector since he was 10 years old. When he retired here to Berlin he was able to find some old letters and also spent time acquiring postal cancellations during the time periods of our various Berlin postmasters. Norb truly adopted our town when he arrived here in Berlin and has made a difference in many ways over the years in our community. Today had me both excited and in tears that Norb is responsible for my being able to read a letter from my ancestors written 199 years ago. Amazing!! Thank you Norb!