



Tales & Trails

NEWSLETTER OF THE BERLIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Adm. Carey visits Inspiration Wall
- Visitors to the Museums
- 'Spirit at Clark School 4th of July
- Tidbits & Tales
- 2016 Ghost Walk Theme announced
- Letter about early years of Union Church

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

New additions to our collections	2
2016 Ghost Walk Theme	2
Tidbits & Tales	2
Early Recollections of the Union Church	3
Membership	4

The 3 that inspired the Inspiration Wall



Rear Admiral (Ret) James Carey finally got a chance to see the Inspiration Wall, located at the Berlin High School, this summer during a visit to Berlin. He helped initiate this project, along with Dr. Bob Eisdahl, Berlin School Superintendent. Carey has also financially supported the project. The two men are shown with Bobbie Erdmann, President of the Historical Society who took on turning their idea into a reality in 2013. The new 2015 honorees have been chosen and will be announced by the end of September. All honorees bios can be read on the Historical Society's website.

Visitors to the Museums

WE HAD ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR VISITORS AT OUR MUSEUMS.

THERE WAS A TOTAL OF 162 VISITORS SO FAR THIS YEAR.

BESIDES LOCALS, OUR VISITORS CAME FROM: APPLETON, BLAINE, MINN., CANTON, IL., CHEYENNE, WY, FOND DU LAC, MAZOMANIE, ONTARIO CANADA, PORTAGE, RACINE, RIPON, SPOKANE, WA, WASHINGTON D.C., AND WAUPACA

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO RUTH GIMENEZ AND HER ARMY OF DOCENTS WHO WERE AVAILABLE FOR EACH OF THE OPEN HOUSES. WE COULDN'T DO THIS WITHOUT YOU.

"Spirit" made an appearance at the Clark School during the Mason's 4th of July celebration. He was available for 'rides' and/or pictures.

A number of visitors stopped in at the school during our open house.



NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR COLLECTION

We have added a number of items to our collections thanks to the following people: Tom Nigus; Robin Nicholas; Berlin Middle School music dept.; Barb Ceaman; Lola Arndt; Michelle Bouck; Vince King.

The new additions include: a Wis. Centennial map/Road map from 1948; stenograph in case and two Kodak cameras; glockenspiel, 2 band hats, uniform pants, sheet music folder, older American flag; 3 copies of *The School Quarterly* of June 1937; a mimeo copy of the 'Class of 1937' booklet; a copy of the *Red and Green* from Dec. 1942; a red & green cheerleader's

jacket; a picture of Jessie & Hiram Miracle from 1933; a black rotary dial phone; four 'Berlin' wine glasses; an advertising wall thermometer from Boots Oil Co.; several pieces of women's period clothing; several postcards and other photos; 2 books; and 4 framed 'Schmidt' prints.

We appreciate these citizens thinking of us and encourage folks to consider preserving other items of Berlin's history rather than disposing of it.

To make a donation just contact any of the Berlin Historical Society officers or call 920-361-2460 to make arrangements.

Tidbits Tales

*** The Red and Green Walking Tour brochures are now on our website. They have recently been updated.**

*Ron Harke and Bobbie Erdmann put together some history notes for the Berlin Boat Club's pontoon ride trips. The club had an audio tape made to be played during the trips they offered over the summer.

***Jerry Buttker and Lee Erdmann lowered the electric box in the Bottling Works building, making it easier to turn on the lights.**

* Dan Friemark installed shelving on the second floor of the Bottling Works building, increasing our storage ability. He also cleaned the first room on the 2nd floor.

***A number of new images have been added to our collection over the summer, including several from the quarry never seen before. Don't forget programs are available using these photos.**

* Don Fink, Dave Olson, Lee Erdmann, John Kalupa, Chris Henrickson and his son took down the very unstable shed behind the museum in June. A new shed is being planned to replace it.

* Diane Olson and her grandson cleared out all the weeds by the fence and cleaned up the yard.

* The Berlin Historical Society will have displays at the Berlin Library during the months of October and November. October we will repeat our telephone exhibit from this summer and in November we will build a display featuring Clark School.

*** Bobbie Erdmann and Anni Parsons, Berlin Librarian will be presenting a class on Genealogy at the library on Sat. Oct. 24th from 10 a.m to 3 p.m. Lunch will be included.**

Union Church story continued.....

and supporters. The Sunday never passed that either my parents or their children did not form a part of the choir and the Sunday school—until God took them, the one in 1863, the other in 1865, and we, their children, scattered to other places.

In the fall of 1856 I went away to attend school in Appleton (Lawrence U). From that time until my Father's death in 1863, I know but little of the church except through letters from home. I was a teacher that winter at Waukau. That sad event removed one who had labored and prayed and given incessantly for the church's welfare. I reluctantly recall the fierce struggle and division which soon befell the church, which at that time was Presbyterian in form. It seemed to break the ties which had bound me so long and closely to its communion. My further attendance at the Chicago Seminary from 1864-67 and my mother's death in Jan. of 1865, quite severed my connection with and knowledge of the church. I think that my last chance to worship there was the fall of 1868 as I was about sailing for India. I then gave a farewell address.

Since those days the membership must have completely changed—a whole generation has had time to pass away—but the church of God still lives—still advances.

Now, my dear old friend, I have written as the thoughts came to my mind and at different times. It may not interest you or the church, but it has interested me and if you find anything in it you deem worthy to present on your anniversary occasion I shall be glad.

With best regards, I beg to remain,
Yours respectfully, W.E. DeReimer, Washington D. C.

(the old church was razed and the present Federated Church was built in 1898—the original bell was again installed in the bell tower)

Ghost Walk—2016

The theme for the 2016 Ghost Walk at Oakwood Cemetery held on Saturday, October 17th is: ***Libraries, Laundries and Hearing Voices.***

There will be two tours again at 6:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Tickets will go on sale around the 1st of October. Volunteers are needed for actors, guides, and hosts for the chapel the night of the event.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF THE START OF THE UNION CHURCH

The following is a letter written by W.E. DeRiemer to Miss Letitia Megran in May of 1900 talking about his early recollections of the Union (now Federated) Church. Miss Megran's family were also members of this church. He uses the term 'sister' as a fellow congregante.

The DeRiemer family was one of the early families to settle at Strong's Landing in 1847. The senior Mr. DeReimer was a druggist and had a store on Huron St. They lived on Ceresco St. near S. Adams Ave.

Miss Letitia Megran

Dear friend and sister,

Your welcome letter of April is just at hand, inviting some participation in the memorial services of the church on June 8, 1900.

I cannot express to you how deep my interest is in this matter, nor how grateful I feel for your invitation. Memories of the tender and precious sort associate themselves in my mind in connection with the church. All its early history lies before my mind in panoramic outline. Indeed I cannot help feeling that though I was but a young lad at the time, I was in reality a part of it from the very first.

I well remember the day of its organization in the old Stedman warehouse on the river bank, when my dear mother and father together with the ladies of Mr. Wright's family (Perhaps Mrs. Ayres' daughters were among them. Mrs. Wheeler will know) constituted the choir, and were essential elements of the membership of the new organization. I cannot remember many others except Charles and Mrs. Bartlett, and perhaps Dr. and Alden Merriman with their families. But the music of that choir sounded strangely sweet to me in that unplastered room, and the embryo organization seemed then a veritable offshoot of the Kingdom of Heaven in my childhood's being. It is one of those pictures which I cannot afford to let pass out of my memory.

The Baptist church was an earlier organization, which I think existed in 1847 when my father came to Berlin. At that time, on the north side of the street and almost directly opposite where your present church stands, was an old dilapidated log house, once used for a schoolhouse, standing close to the road, and in Deacon Strong's

cornfield which occupied all that land opposite your church. There, occasionally on Sunday, a Baptist circuit preacher, Elder Manning, used to preach to a small audience.

Later when the three story building, occupied below with Alexander's store, was put up – the Baptists worshiped, until their wooden building was erected, and as I remember, the Congregationalists worshiped alternately until their first pastor, Rev. J. B. Preston, came on from New York and the magnificent(?) old saw-dust church was erected on stilts in the center of the business district, just south of the main street. (note: Park Ave was called Main St. in the early years). How inexpressibly happy the members of the church were to get into that commodious wooden shell of a church, so utterly cheerless and unattractive to every stranger – yet so well filled on Sunday.

I think I never knew so enthusiastic a Sunday School as that which gathered there. The scholars would do any amount of work that was asked of them in the line of Bible study. A wholesome rivalry grew up for committing the Scriptures to memory – and many a time did I and others repeat aloud a whole chapter of the Gospels as a result of a week's home study. I owe more of my familiarity with the language of the New Testament to the training I received in that sawdust church than to any other training. (The present day Sunday School scholar is too easily let off in the matter of memorizing the Bible).

The sawdust church was so named because of its construction. The frame was quite like that of a barn, and its outer sheathing was of unplanned and unmatched boards nailed on vertically and battened with lathes. The inside was not plastered, but boarded up with half-inch boards put on horizontally and battened with lathe strips over the cracks while between the inner and the outer boards the space was filled with sawdust. This made warm walls, but as the building was 2 to 3 feet above ground on stilts, both floor and ceiling were cold. The little bell was in time mounted in the cupola and then we children were proud of our church.

The choir sat on seats arranged on an elevated terrace at the west end between the two entrances. The benches were home-made and the slats across their backs were, O, so tiresome for children. But we were glad to have them and to sit in them too.

If I remember, Rev. Wm Montgomery preached for us before Mr. Preston came. He also taught school during the week for a time in that church. Indeed the old church was used quite often for lectures, concerts, and the like and even for political gatherings. It was a most important factor in the development of the new city of Strong's Landing—later Berlin.

With the coming of Rev. J.B. Preston and family, the church affairs had a decided boom, and the day of its progress was at hand. Seasons of spiritual refreshing were not remarkable for extent but were decisive and remarkably helpful. Accessions were numerous by letter and were particularly helpful. The Sunday School, as I remember, was very large and unusually interesting and the necessity for the new church became apparent.

I do not remember the date of the building. (1858)I only recall the fact that Mr. Wadsworth had the contract and was assisted by Mr. Ayres. I remember too, my youthful pride in a great new church—40 x 60 feet in dimensions, with its belfry in which was finally mounted the little 400 lb. Meneely bell which swung in the cupola of the sawdust church. I had often pulled its rope to announce the services at both places of worship.

I soon began to have a greater fondness for the new church than for the old. Its services were increasingly precious to me for my dear parents were its prominent workers
(continued on page 2)



WE'RE ON THE WEB
BERLINAREAHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM

**NEWSLETTER OF THE
BERLIN AREA
HISTORICAL**

P. O. Box 83
Berlin, WI 54923 or
111 S. Adams Ave.
Berlin WI 54923

Phone: 920-361-2460
E-mail: lerdmann@centurytel.net

Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday during the months of Jan. through May and Sept. through Dec. at 6:30 p.m. at the Berlin Public Library, corner Park Ave and N. Pearl St. Guests are always welcome

The Berlin Area Historical Society is a fully recognized non-profit Educational Institute affiliated with the Wisconsin Historical Society. The Mission of the Society is to preserve and interpret the history of the Berlin Area.

Currently the Society owns and operates four museum buildings. The Museum of Local History, located at 111 S. Adams Ave includes a two-story brick house, the former Kroll Bottling Works and the former Huser Blacksmith Shop. This museum complex is open on the second and fourth Sundays from Memorial Day to Labor Day from 1-4 p.m. and always by appointment.

The one-room school house, Clark School is located at the entrance to Riverside Park on Water St. and is open by appointment.

Call 920-361-2460 for information on these museums or to make an appointment.

The Berlin Area Historical Society is maintained by DONATIONS and membership. All persons interested in history are encouraged to join.

**JOIN THE BERLIN AREA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Name.....
Street.....
City & State.....
Telephone.....
E-Mail.....

Do you have an e-mail address? Or a new address?
Please let Lee Erdmann know so that we can keep our membership lists up to date.
lerdmann
@centurytel.net or
920-361-2460

Individual Dues—\$10.00

Family —\$15.00

Make Checks payable to: Berlin Area Historical Society and mail to

P. O. Box 83, Berlin WI 54923

**We are now on Facebook
Become a "Friend"
Berlin Area Historical Society**