



Tales & Trails

NEWSLETTER OF THE BERLIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Students visited Clark School & the Museum of Local History
- Berlin to host Regional Conference August 8.
- New additions to our collections
- Reminder- Submit nomination for Inspiration Wall
- Why Berlin Brick is the color it is.

Teacher, Mrs. Erdmann greets students to Clark School



One hundred and eighty seven students and twelve teachers and teacher's aides toured Clark School and the Museum of Local History at the end of May.

There were five classes of first graders who walked to the Clark School from Clay Lamberton. Bobbie Erdmann and Diane Olson presented the program to the enthusiastic students.

Dave and Diane Olson, Linda Ottman, Don Fink and Bobbie Erdmann, conducted the tours for the five classes of 3rd graders who visited over two days along with their teachers and teacher's aides. They got to see the new exhibits for 2016 . (see story on exhibits on page 2).

It was fun to have the 3rd graders back after a 1 year hiatus.

Regional Conference to be held in Berlin in August

Berlin will host a 2016 WHS Regional Conference on Monday August 8 at the 1st National Bank Depot building from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Arrangements are being made for museum tours or a walking tour after the meeting. Everyone is invited to attend. Contact Diane Olson, david9604@att.net for more information.

Below is a small sampling of the new hats donated to the Historical Society in recent months. They are on display in the Millinery/Shoe shop room. Thanks to Sheri Kirchoff and the Berlin Public Library for thinking of us and adding to our collection. Please remember the Historical Society when you have Berlin related items to donate.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

New Displays for 2016	2
Berlin Brickyard story continued on pg 2	3
Membership	4

1956 TORNADO REMEMBERED



Berlin's deadly tornado struck the city sixty years ago this year. Our picture display shows a sampling of the photos in our collection of that fateful day along with a brief story of the events and aftermath.

REMINDER: Applications are still being accepted for the 2016 Honorees for the Inspiration Wall. Go to our website to see the current honorees and information how to nominate someone.



Thanks to ThedaCare/CHN for allowing us to take photos of the interior of the old Juliette Manor after all the residents had moved. They join our collection from the former Washington School, West Side garage, and St. Stanislaus Church. It is important to keep the

New Displays for 2016

The 2016 display features the photographers and photography studios that were located in Berlin at one time. Also displayed are some of the cameras from our collection.

Thanks to Diane Olson for sharing her Polaroid cameras to help show the progression of photography.

The other side of the cabinet shows the art of Cris Olson. Mr. Olson was from Oshkosh but his daughter lived in Berlin and several of his pictures are his interpretation of Berlin landmarks. Mr. Olson was a self-taught artist. Thanks to Dan Freimark for creating this display.

Berlin Brick continued.....

boulder clay: actually rock flour ground up by glaciers.

The book defines a brick as a clay block, fired to drive off volatile elements and becoming fused in a hard mass.

Lake clays were laid down in large areas of Winnebago and Waushara counties and actually form a continuous belt around Lake Winnebago. These are mostly cream burning like the Milwaukee brick. Estuarine clays are in the east and southeast parts of the state.

Berlin and other Green Lake County clays are lake (lacustrine) including that worked by Gordon and Morris. The book describes Berlin bricks as having an excellent ring and a high crushing strength. They concluded "the future looks bright for Wisconsin brick." That was in 1906.

When Russell Peck took off the top story of his business establishment (Peck's Hardware – corner Huron and S. Pearl Sts.) he found several bricks inscribed with the word "Berlin" before they were fired. Other businesses we know are Berlin brick include our Berlin Museum on S. Adams Ave. The Masonic Lodge and the group of buildings on Huron St. that include Ladybug Floral.

Below are two more recent donations to the Berlin Area Historical Society. On the left is a cast iron trivet made by the Berlin Chapman company on the occasion of the Nation's Centennial for 1976, it will be added to our Berlin Chapman collection.

On the right is a telephone lineman's work telephone used to check lines, donated by Leroy Moldenhauer. It will be added to our



WHY BERLIN BRICKS ARE THE COLOR THEY ARE

From a story printed in the Sept. 11, 1962 issue of the Oshkosh Northwestern

Answer to Berlin Question Found in Long-Unused Book

Government surveys seem often merely to cost money and end up somewhere in unused permanent files. Not so in the case of the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey of Wisconsin Clays in 1901 and 1906. An answer to a puzzling question was found within its pages. The question is: If Berlin brick is the material of which so many of the old buildings are made, how come some of them are red and some of them are light buff or cream?

Speculations were that the cream colored bricks were shipped in from other places like Spring Lake or Milwaukee, the Cream City.

Answer in the Book

The answer is that clay out of the same Berlin deposit varied in mineral content at different levels.

According to the government geologist, the clay from Berlin brick in the C.S. Morris yards in operation since 1885, was described as from a deposit 16 inches thick, with gravel underneath and the center stratified. The clay from the top layers, evidently containing iron, burned (fired) reddish and the bottom portion burned to a white or buff brick. Special conditions in the firing might result in pink rather than red brick from the upper layers of the stack in the kiln. Those exposed to more heat or longer burning resulted in the darker shades.

During each summer until about 1910, operations at the Morris yards southwest of town began with digging the clay out of the pit and then

“pugging” it to a stiff-mud brick in a Brewer brick and tile machine run by steam power. About 15,000 bricks were turned out each day and moved on trucks to the drying yards. Canvas covers protected the stacked bricks from rain and wind until they went into the kilns. The Morris kilns had a capacity of one million bricks. These had to be burned (fired) for eight and a half days at a cost of about 87 cents per thousand.

According to History

According to the history of the Morris business in the 1901 book only the best quality tamarack wood was used in the kilns. Fifteen men were employed at \$1 and \$1.75 per day. Markets for the project were chiefly in Berlin, Ripon, Omro, Wautoma and Green Lake – with 700,000 about the average yearly output. They sold for \$5 per thousand, kiln run, in 1898.

Since the clay for Berlin brick was termed slightly calcareous, it is judged unsuited for vitrified wares.

Turning from the pages of the government survey to a personal note from a former Berlinite, George Starling, the brick story becomes more lively.

Starling remembers the Morris brickyard on S, Washington Street as a fine place for neighborhood boys to swim in the early spring when the river water was still too cold. He said the rainwater in the swimming hole at Morris’ was about 15 feet deep, but varied with the amount of rainfall.

Bringing in Tamarack

Starling told of farmers in winter, when their swamps were frozen solid, bringing in tamarack wood for use in the kilns. He noted that there

were three kilns about 30 feet high and each with four firebox doors. He added that the Morris yards also made some drain tiles. He attributed the closing of the yards about 1910 as due to brick being made more cheaply elsewhere. In this regard the 1906 survey book said the “temporary suspension” was due to difficulties in draining the pit where the clay was dug. Operations are still suspended to date (1906).

Mrs. Norbert Secora, has a personal interest in the Berlin brickyards because the old Gordon brickyard begun about 1850, was on Secora land on the hill on Van Horn Street. The Secoras found the Gordon name on their abstract and can still see where the hill is sharply cut down where material was taken out many years ago. Norbert remembers when the clay deposit hole was full of water. He likes to recall the frogging expeditions of his childhood in the swampy area of the former brickyard.

The geologists wrote in the survey, “Berlin clay does not differ greatly from other clays of Wisconsin.”

Even though that’s what the book says, “Wisconsin clays are fairly varied to begin with. The experts list residual clay: formed by soil waters attacking and weathering rock; sedimentary clay: formed by streams washing sedimentary deposits; marine: deposited on ocean bottoms; estuarine: laid down in shallow arms of the sea; lake clay: flood overflow of streams, and (continued on page 2)

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**NEWSLETTER OF THE
BERLIN AREA
HISTORICAL**

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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.....
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Do you have an e-mail address? Or a new address?
Please let Dave Olson know so that we can keep our membership lists up to date.
david9604@att.net
920-229-9604

Individual Dues—\$10.00

Family —\$15.00

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