



Tales & Trails

NEWSLETTER OF THE BERLIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Mascoutin Yearbook Project
- Nominations now open for Inspiration Wall
- The Story of Berlin Brick
- BAHS In The News
- Reminder: dues are due

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Mascoutin Yearbook Project Completed



DVD of Berlin High School Yearbooks Years 1950 to 1989 now available.

In cooperation with the Berlin Library and Berlin High School and with the assistance of OCI (Oklahoma Correctional Industries), Mascoutin yearbooks from the years 1950 thru 1989 have been digitized and are on a DVD.

Because the Berlin Historical Society's collection did not include all the years designated, the Library and High School loaned theirs to the project. Each of the three entities now have a copy of the DVD for their own records.

We were contacted by OCI to participate in their program in November of last year. OCI is a state agency located in Lexington Okla. When their agency became aware that high school yearbooks were being damaged by tornados and floods or being destroyed by other means, and digitizing is something they do, they put together a program to help. After almost 4 years and over 2800 high schools and libraries later, they are extending this free service to other states. The project also provides job training and rehabilitation to inmates from the Department of Corrections. Because of the large volume of books they are doing, the block of 40 years was chosen. When that is finished they may offer to do other years. This is now a great tool for researchers of our yearbooks.

Inspiration Wall Looking for 2018 Nominees

Nominations are now open for the 2018 inductees to the Inspiration Wall.

This is the 6th year for the project run in conjunction with the Berlin Schools.

The Nomination form and guidelines can be found on our website at berlinareahistoricalandsociety.com. They can be mailed or dropped off at the Berlin Library. Nominations will close on July 1.

Anyone who had lived or now lives in Berlin can be nominated. The bios of past recipients are also on the website. The nomination form does not have to have all the nominee's information. The committee will contact the nominee when chosen. Be sure to include enough information so that the committee can make a good determination. Two or more nominees are chosen each year.



Be Proud, Be Inspired, Inspiration Wall at High School

BAHS in the News

Berlin Area Historical Society is in the news in several of the local vacation publications that are just out. The *Berlin Journal* has two seasonal publications, 'Fun on the Fox' and 'Discover Us.' We can be found on page 26 of Fun on the Fox and on pages 20 and 23 in the Discover Us. We appreciate these publication for promoting our museums.

The Berlin Parks and Recreation Department puts out a guide each year to the many activities that they sponsor in our parks and elsewhere. In 2018 they have again included our Ghost Walk information and museum hours to this booklet. We hope people will take advantage of the many opportunities and also include a trip to our museums.

The Ripon summer guide will also be including our information in their publication for folks who live in that area.

If you are looking for fun and recreation, be sure to pick up one of these publications.

Update on museum repairs

In the last Tales and Trails we mentioned some of the work that is slated to be done in our buildings.

The old maple tree in our yard will soon be removed. As we noted it has reached the end of its life.

A work party is being planned for the first Saturday in April to do some of the other maintenance projects that will need to be done before we open for the season. Anyone who has time that day is welcome. Call Lee Erdmann for times.

The brickwork on the Blacksmith Shop is on hold due to cost.

REMINDER

THE 2018 DUES ARE DUE.

We depend on these funds to support and maintain our mission and our buildings. See page 4 of this newsletter for information.



New Hat Display Added to the Church Room

Something new has been added to the Church room. A donation of lady's hats from the 50s and 60s has inspired this new addition. Hats used to be worn for church services for a number of decades. This array of pillboxes, veiled, flowered beauties, velvet and straw will be available to visitors to try on and remember their church days as they share their stories.

This is just one of several new displays that the club is working on for the 2018 open houses.

This past year tools were featured in the main room. Thanks to Dick Fortnum, Dave Olson and Lee Erdmann for supplementing our collection for this display.

For 2018 we will feature domestic tools and cookbooks with items from our collection and from the collections of our members.

Our camera collection will find a new home in the Bottling Works building.

We have acquired a number of typewriters from different eras and plan to make them an interactive display.

Other new displays are in the works and will be announced as they are finalized.

If you haven't visited the museums in a while, we invite you and your families to visit us and see all the new displays or reacquaint yourself. We are always willing to give tours on days other than the scheduled open houses.

Out and About Wis. Friends of John Muir

'Elizabeth Ryan' in the person of Bobbie Erdmann visited the *Wisconsin Friends of John Muir* in Montello on Saturday, March 10 for their annual meeting and talked about "her father," George T. Ryan, builder of many of the steamboats that went on the Fox and Wolf Rivers. This is one of the programs available through the Berlin Historical Society.

The Friend's motto is: *To Preserve the spirit and legacy of John Muir, the landscapes of his boyhood, and the park that is dedicated in his honor.*

The organization holds a number of events and activities related to the preservation of the area's natural resources. Their website at: www.johnmuir.org/wisconsin can be viewed for a calendar and all the details of their events. These include several family events.

We want to congratulate BAHS member, Chris Kalupa, on her promotion to Director of the Berlin Pub-

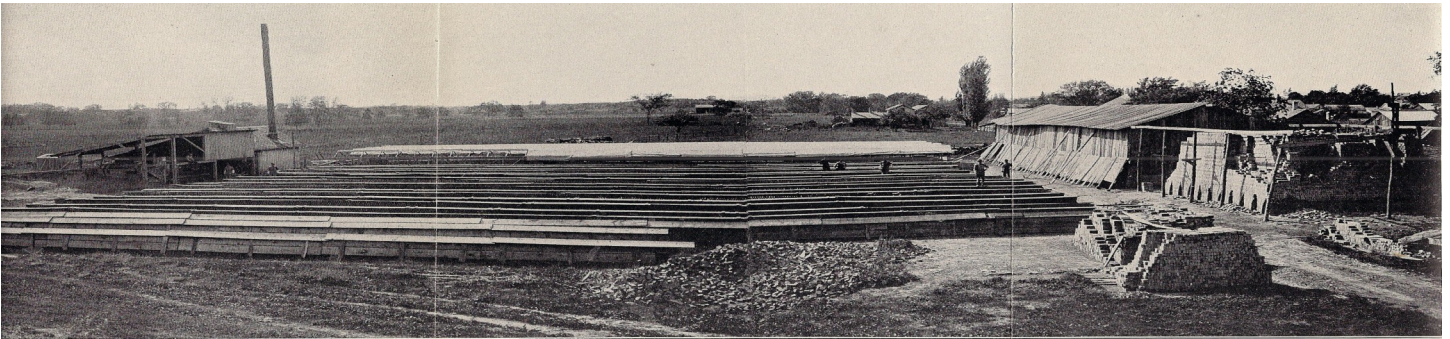


Bobbie Erdmann as 'Elizabeth Ryan'

Congratulations

lic Library. Chris has given much of her time to the club including chairman of the Ghost Walk committee and a member of the Inspiration Wall planning committee. She has been one of the decorators of our Christmas Tree in the Park, an event we have participated in for the last several years.

We appreciate all our volunteers. Couldn't do what we do without them.



How Berlin Brick Got Its Color

View of Morris brick yard in 1906

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.

The answer in a book, which is now out of print, the "Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey of Wisconsin Clays in 1901 and 1906, is that clay out of the same Berlin deposit varied in mineral content at different levels.

According to the government geologist, the clay for 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 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 of 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 for eight and a half days

at a cost of about 87 cents per thousand.

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 product 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 1899.

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

An interview with former resident, George Starling, gave more information. 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, however the Geology book stated it was due to difficulties in draining the pit where the clay was dug.

The book states that Wisconsin clays are fairly varied. The experts list residual clay, formed by soil waters attacking and weathering rock; sedimentary clay, formed by streams washing the sedimentary deposits; marine, deposited on ocean bottoms; estuarine, laid down in

shallow arms of the sea; lake clay; flood plain or terrace clay from silty overflow of streams, and 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 Morris. Berlin bricks are described as having an excellent ring and a high crushing strength. The book concluded "the future looks bright for Wisconsin brick." That was in 1906.

When the second story of the Peck's Hardware building was removed in 1962, several bricks inscribed with the word "Berlin" were found.

The Berlin Area Historical Society's museum at 111 S. Adams is built of Berlin brick as is the Masonic Lodge next door.

Note: part of this story comes from an article published in the Oshkosh Northwestern, Sept. 11, 1962.



WE'RE ON THE WEB
BERLINAREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.COM

**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.....
Telephone.....
E-Mail.....

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

Do you have an e-mail address? Or a new address? Please let Bobbie Erdmann know so that we can keep our membership lists up to date.
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