



Tales & Trails

NEWSLETTER OF THE BERLIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- 'Giants of Berlin Industry' Ghost Walk and Christmas tree
- Review of G.W. Giants
- Museums add to their Collections
- Huser Blacksmith Shop is demolished

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Julie Boeck as Lulubelle Gillett at the 2019 Ghost Walk

Thanks to Robin Skipchak for sharing her picture

“GIANTS OF BERLIN INDUSTRY” THEME FOR 2019 GHOST WALK

The 17th 'Ghost Walk' at Oakwood Cemetery is now in the history books. This year's theme, 'Giants of Berlin Industry' featured the Berlin Brewing Co.' Berlin Chapman; Fuhrmann Canning Co; the Hamiltons; and Riverside Park Stock Farm.

Although it was a rainy day and evening, over 100 visitors toured the cemetery and heard about these special folks. Members of the Historical Society and other volunteers presented the stories about this unique chapter in Berlin history. For those who don't know about our five featured businesses turn to page three of this newsletter for a short bio about each. These companies provided employment for many Berlinites during their time. The Ghost Walk is BAHS only fundraising event and all the volunteers and attendees are much appreciated.

Berlin Museums Add to Their Collections with Community Donations

BAHS has been very fortunate this year to receive a number of donations for our collections. It is gratifying to have people think of us.

We are even receiving phone calls from folks out of town offering artifacts from their families that once lived in Berlin.

A number of articles of clothing and hats were received this year. Volunteers are busy cataloging the new acquisitions.

The Historical Society also had the opportunity to 'borrow' some of our military uniforms to a 6th grade class that was doing a project about "America's conflicts." Some of the students wrote and acted in skits about their subject and they enjoyed "having the real thing" for their costumes.

'Giants of Berlin Industry' Theme for This Year's Christmas Tree

BAHS is again participating in the 'Lite the Park' project in Nathan Strong Park. The club decided to continue the 'Giants of Berlin Industry' theme. Besides the five feature industry from the Ghost Walk they added current businesses; Badger Mining, Generac, RAJ, Russell Moccasin, and Wisconsin Spice.

Ornaments were hand-made depicting each business.

Over 100 trees are decorated each year.



**THE HUSER
BLACKSMITH SHOP
DISAPPEARS
INTO HISTORY**



Because of damage received during a July storm AND a deteriorating condition beyond what the club could afford to repair, the decision was made to take down the Blacksmith Shop.

This building was donated to the Berlin Historical Society by Marv Knecht in the 1980s. It had been used for warehousing for Lake State Slipper Co.

Little is known of the history of this hardworking Berlin brick one story building. Over the years it has served as a blacksmith shop, carriage repair, garage repair, weld shop, implement store, warehouse and museum.

George Huser moved into the building in the mid 1940s and ran Huser Welding Co. His business increased and became Huser Implement Co. by 1954.

When the Historical Society took over the building several transportation-related artifacts and tools were displayed and stored here. They have now been moved to storage for the time being.

No plans have been made at this time for the now vacant lot.

**2019 HONOREES
ADD TO
INSPIRATION WALL**



Senator Luther Olsen and Robert Malchetske, 2019 Honorees

In December three new Honorees were added to the ‘Be Proud, Be Inspired’ Inspiration Wall at the Berlin High School. The three are Senator Luther Olsen, Robert Malchetske and Lucy Smith Morris.

The pictures and bios for the newest additions are on our website at: berlin-reahistoricalociety.com/InspirationWall.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by both Sen. Olsen and Mr. Malchetske and members of their family. BAHS member, Sharon Fortnum represented Friends-in-Council, one of the clubs that Mrs. Morris belonged too when she lived in Berlin. Mrs. Morris died in 1934 but her influence is still felt today in Berlin.



Sharon Fortnum, representing Friends-in-Council with Lucy Smith Morris’ plaque.

Another plaque was added to the ‘Wall’ this year recognizing the three people instrumental in starting this project in 2013, Rear Admiral James Carey, Dr. Robert Eidahl and Roberta Erdmann. Dr. Eidahl was present one more year to help with the unveiling. He has retired from the Berlin Schools and plans on doing some traveling in retirement.

Nominations will be opened in the new year for the 2020 Honorees. Information can be found on our website.

Speaker Program to Continue

The club started offering a free speaker program in 2019 and are making plans to continue to bring speakers to Berlin in 2020. The first one is scheduled for Feb. 15th at 1 p.m. at the Berlin Senior Center.

Jo Ann Carr, author of the new book, *Such Anxious Hours, Wisconsin Women’s Voices from the Civil War* will talk about her book and sign copies for those interested.

One of the women featured was from Berlin.

**GIANTS OF BERLIN
INDUSTRY**

Continued.

Riverside Park Farms

One of our premier establishments in the late 1890s—early 1900s was Riverside Park Farms. It was started in 1892 by DeWitt C. Palmeter who purchased over 74 acres of land. This was the largest real estate sale in the city at that time. The property was from the river, west to Washington St. and from Canal St. north to Van Horn St.

Palmeter raised Harness Racing stock, both pacers and trotters, on the farm. He had a half-mile track for training and races, an indoor 1/8th mile track for training during the winter, a ‘hospital’ barn and another barn for the young colts and their mares. The indoor track was heated and even had electric lights.

In 1901 he struck ‘gold’ when he entered a 3 year old chestnut named ‘Peter Stirling’ in the Kentucky Futurity (Harness Racing’s equivalent to the Kentucky Derby).

‘Peter Stirling’ won the race, setting a world record of 2 minutes, 11 1/2 seconds. He was the first northern horse to win this prestigious race. Mr. Palmeter’s purse for this race was \$7,500 with another \$7,500 won in the 4 races ‘Peter’ raced on the trip down to Lexington. (\$7,500 computes to \$1million, 5 hundred 50 thousand in today’s dollars.

Shortly after a ‘welcome home’ celebration held back in Berlin ‘Peter’ was sold at auction for \$9,200. Riverside Park Farms went on to have several other ‘champions’ in their stock. People came from all over to purchase horses from Mr. Palmeter.

The *Berlin Evening Journal* of October 22, 1901 wrote of ‘Peter’ : “When he left the barn at the beginning of the season he was comparatively unknown...he returned as the greatest of his kind....adding value and prestige to the Riverside Park Farm and brought prominence...to the little city of Berlin.”

In 1911 the Farm would be sold to a local livery businessman who later split it up into residential lots and the racetrack and barns are gone.

This year's theme for the Ghost Walk was: '**Giants of Berlin Industry**' The businesses chosen were important employers for Berlin at one time. Here is a short history of the five "Giants" we featured at the Ghost Walk.

This theme was repeated for this year's Christmas tree in Nathan Strong Park.

Hamilton Shoes

You may ask how this is an industry but in the company's early history they actually manufactured shoes and boots. The Hamilton family came to Berlin in 1854 and started with a mercantile business on the corner of E. Huron and N. Wisconsin Sts. (where Associated Bank is today). A second store was added down the street around 1871. It was a very good business and employed 15 shoemakers at one time. Later the two brothers, Thomas and Joseph, split up the businesses with Joseph continuing the mercantile and grocery business with Tom concentrating on the shoe business.

They also were involved in the cranberry business for a while on a 960 acre marsh.

Hamilton Shoes is in its 165th year with a 6th generation Hamilton family member running the store. Hamilton's is recognized as the oldest, continuously family-owned shoe store in the State of Wisconsin.

Fuhremann Canning Co.

Was a division of Stokely Van Camp and started here in 1924 by the Fuhmann family. They had actually been in the canning business in other locations, such as Appleton and Sun Prairie in Wisconsin and De Forest, Ill. before coming to Berlin. The plant was located off old Ripon Rd. All that is left is the distinctive smokestack which is often confused with another large stack that was connected with the Carnation Co. That stack was destroyed in the 1956 tornado. Carnation was located on S. Church St./Highway 49.

Bohn Implement is located on part of the property today.

When Jacob Fuhremann and his family first came here they packed peas and beans but later dropped beans and added corn pack to their products. Jacob was also an inventor and held a patent for a vegetable-snipping machine.

The family was involved in the Berlin plant until 1947 when it was taken over by the Stokely Van Camp company. They continued operations here for several more years before closing up entirely. A fire in the late 50's destroyed most of the plant. The property was then sold to the Carri-Craft Co. and the Brooks family produced catamaran boats there.

Berlin Brewing Co.

The first brewery in Berlin, started around 1850, was located on the NE corner of N. Wisconsin and E. Liberty Sts. This business was soon sold to August and Edward Buhler who built a facility by a natural spring near the present Conservation Club. In 1867 they moved back into the city and built a building on Broadway. The brick for the building was made from the clay dug out for the basement. The first beer was brewed on 11/11/1867, the very day a son, Herman, was born. The Buhlers continued to brew for the next decade and then sold to Louis Schunk and a Mr. Schmidt. The brewery buildings were immediately enlarged and expanded and in 1882 Mr. Schunk became sole owner. Some of the brands brewed were 'Berliner,' 'Berlin Lager,' 'Eagle Brand,' and 'Berlin Tonic.' Later 'Berlin Export' was added.

The Schunks introduced the quaint customs of Germany, their home country. Mrs. Schunk transformed a staid visitor's room into a "rathskeller" that could not be equaled outside of Milwaukee.

After the Schunks, several other owners took over the operation until it was finally closed in 1964. So

technically we had a brewery here for over 100 years. It was located where McDonald's and the adjoining empty lot is today, almost that whole entire block.

Berlin Chapman Co.

This company was started about 1908 as Schaeffer Manufacturing and was a machine shop that produced an engine for trading vessels on the Fox River. That engine was later used in canning machinery. It was only in 1911 when Frank Chapman joined the company that the business took off. He dropped the engines and began designing products to be made in the shop such as a shaker sterilizer and cement mixers. Chapman entered the service for WWI and when he returned Mr. Schaeffer left the firm. Chapman enlarged the facility and began making equipment for canning companies. In 1923, Chapman was the sole owner and the name was changed to Berlin Chapman Co.

During WWII the foundry was heavily involved in the war effort making condensers for liberty ships, shell and tube heat exchangers among other things.

Frank Chapman was also an inventor and held several patents. He retired in 1944 and the plant was then headed by Harold Warner. Under Warner's leadership the foundry began producing castings for other companies. This expansion and diversification into the jobbing casting market signaled the beginning of the foundry's growth. For a lot of years Chapman's was Berlin's largest employer.

Then, starting in 1963, the company was sold several times until it was closed for good around 2017.

The plant was located on the "bottom" of S. Pearl St. and now houses a different business today.

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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 three museum buildings. The Museum of Local History, located at 111 S. Adams Ave includes a two-story brick house, and the former Kroll Bottling Works. 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

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