



Tales & Trails

NEWSLETTER OF THE BERLIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

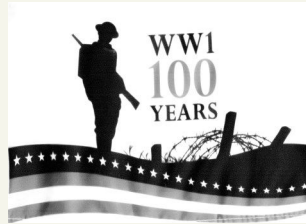
SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Ghost Walk remembering WWI
- 2017 Honorees chosen for 5th year of Inspiration Wall
- The Father of the Fur Industry: Harry C. Truedell
- Recent Donations Add to Our Collections

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**GHOST WALK
· SOLDIERS IN ARMS ·
BERLIN ENLISTS ·**



The world is recognizing the 100th anniversary of WWI with a number of commemorations and events. The Berlin Historical Society

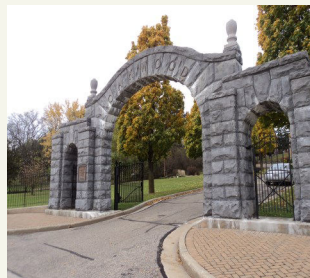
by used the anniversary for the theme of their 15th annual Ghost Walk held in Oakwood Cemetery.

Berlin's involvement and history with the war was emphasized during the event. While the original date for the Walk was rained out those who attended on Sunday learned how Berlinites were engaged in helping to win the war.

Tourgoers heard about soldiers, Major Guy McClelland and Robert Carey; nurse, Kate McElroy; Col. Geo. Morton, founder of the Liberty War Veterans; and home service workers, Mary Starks, Minnie Shelton, and Gert Putnam.

Letters home from various servicemen were available in the chapel to read. A number of other artifacts from the club's collection was on display. Visitors could look through the *Honor Roll* book from 1919, published by the *Berlin Journal*, to find their ancestors who served.

Special emphasis was given to the arch at the entrance to the cemetery which is Berlin's WWI monument.



Inspiration Wall's Newest Honorees Unveiled
2017 is the 5th anniversary of the Inspiration Wall project located at the Berlin High School. The newest Honorees were unveiled at an evening reception held on October 27th.

Joining past Honorees this year are Dr. Stephanie Ceman; Judge Wm. 'Mike' McMonigal and Phillip J. Sass. The accomplishments of the three continue to exemplify the attributes and character of the theme chosen for the Wall. We are proud to be able to include them on the 'Be Proud Be Inspired' Wall.

Pictures and short bios of the three can be seen on the Berlin Historical Society website.

Nominations for 2018 will be open after the first of the year. Information is also on the website.



2017 Honorees

REPAIRS TO HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDINGS

"When it rains, it pours..." Three of our buildings all needed repairs over the summer. A major repair to the main museum building was a complete rebuild of the chimney and an interior wall on the second floor which had been absorbing a water leak for some time.

Wiring in Clark School needed some work done which was provided by member, Jerry Buttke. Three windows in the school had to be replaced also.

Prices for repair of the rear wall in the Blacksmith Shop is still forthcoming. This will be major brickwork job.

The final project for 2017 is the huge maple tree in the side yard. Unfortunately it is reaching the end of its life and will need to come down.

The Bottling Works building received a major cleaning over the summer and new displays were put up just in time for a bus-load of visitors from Michigan.

New Museum Archives Program Acquired

The club acquired a new program to catalog its collections. Volunteers will be working over the winter entering in all the inventories we have. A new numbering system for the collection will make it easier to find items when doing displays etc.

On a side note the club will participate, with the Berlin Public Library, in another new program to digitize some of the Berlin High School's annual, the *Mascoutin*. The years 1950 to 1989 will be included in this free program. The two organizations will combine their collections to provide the years included. The finished product will be located at the library for easier access by the general public.

Harry Truesdell, continued 1

director of the Waushara Telephone Exchange; he formed the Berlin Canning Company; served as Mayor 1901-1905; was candidate for Assemblyman of Green Lake County in 1904 and in that same year was President of the Wisconsin Municipality League. Having a keen interest in education he was influential in locating the County Normal School to Berlin in 1908 and served as President of the Normal School Board for 12 years. In 1912 he tried for State government running on the Democratic ticket for Secretary of State (he was defeated). He served on the Board of Directors for First National Bank for over 30 years; and was a charter member and the 1st President of the Berlin Rotary Club when it was established in 1923. He was also a charter member of the Berlin X-ray Club. (a study and philanthropic club for men).

Harry Truesdell retired in 1925, turning over the management of the business to L.C. Smith. In July of 1927 the company incorporated. Barney Swan, who came to the company in 1924 took over the management in January 1948 and upon his retirement turned it over to his son, Robert.

Harry died in October of 1928 at the home of his sister, Mrs. Martha Sackett on Pearl St. He had been ill for two years previous, confined to his bed for the last 2 ½ months. His was one of the largest funerals in Berlin's history. Banks, stores, the library, and the Normal school all closed for the funeral.

He was reported to be one of the richest men in Berlin. His estate was worth more than \$200,000 which computes to approximately \$13,800,000 in today's dollars. He set up an endowment fund, managed by a set of trustees. \$150,000 was set aside for a home for the aged, to be named after his mother, Juliette; \$4,000 went to Oakwood Cemetery; \$1,000 to create a monument for Nathan Strong in said cemetery; \$5,000 to sister, Martha; \$300 a month to his brother, Louis (his brother Lambert was long gone); \$500

Harry Truesdell, continued 2

each to the Methodist, Baptist and Congregational churches and \$100-\$500 to Truesdell employees. The balance was put into stocks and other securities to be invested in public improvements. In 1984 the Berlin Historical Society was a beneficiary of that fund.

By 1957 the last of the Truesdell heirs passed away, thereby releasing funds from the will. This balance was specified to be used to establish a home for aged women of the city. It was to be called Juliette Smith Truesdell Home for Aged Women. The two remaining trustees decided to invest the funds into the Berlin Memorial Hospital Nursing Home. And now you know "the rest of the story" as to how we have a Juliette Manor.



Additions to our Collections

Recent donations to the Historical Society is adding much to our collections. They include:

***Several boxes, still being inventoried, given by Maria & Ron Kolpin in honor of Avis Kolpin and her sister, Vi.**

*** an 1894 Memoirs of Friends in Council booklet from Christie House museum in MN.**

***4-1890s prescriptions from local drug-stores from JoAnn Walker, Germantown WI.**

***3 pair of antique eye glasses, a glass case from Dr. Johnson and several old newspapers from Marilyn Paveleske, Berlin**

***several items of Gerald Heaney memorabilia from Jerry Fitzpatrick of Texas.**

We appreciate all these folks thinking of us and passing these things along. Each adds another chapter to Berlin's story.

HARRY C. TRUESDELL—FATHER OF FUR INDUSTRY

“Fur” season is surely here. The first question is, “Are you going to purchase a new fur coat, robe, neck piece or muff?” The second question is “Where are you going to purchase it?” Everything in furs obtained from us will be found of the highest quality, perfect in fit and right up to date. You will do yourself an injustice to purchase anything in furs without first seeing our line which is by far the largest in this vicinity or the largest that we have ever had. Our retail department is exerting every effort to please our customers.”

This is part of an advertising article that appeared in a 1912 Special Edition of the *Berlin Journal* for the Truesdell Fur Coat Co.

Newcomers to Berlin and perhaps some people who have lived here for some time, wonder how Berlin became known as the ***Fur and Leather City***. There are manufacturers in this city who employ more people now, however, there was a time when the manufacturers of fur and leather products were the largest employers in Berlin. For hundreds of miles around, our city was known for its fur and leather goods and products, because of their traditionally excellent quality that was always in strong demand.

The undisputed “father” of the fur industry was Harry C. Truesdell. Born December 18, 1863, his parents gave him the name of “Henry Clay” Truesdell in honor of the man who was Secretary of State under President John Quincy Adams. Sometime, early in his life, the name ‘Henry’ was changed to ‘Harry’ which stuck with him. Most of his life was spent in Berlin. He attended Berlin schools, including two years at Berlin High School.

Henry C. was the 3rd surviving son of John Calvin and Juliette Smith Truesdell. John Calvin was born in the town of Liberty, Susquehanna Co., Pa. in 1825 to John Sr. and Lucy Upson Truesdell. John Sr. was a native of Li-

tchfield County, Conn. When he moved to Pennsylvania his iron will, energy, strict business methods and individuality of character placed him among the prominent men of that part of the Keystone state. Squire Truesdell was the favorite local magistrate for over a quarter of a century.

Young John prepared himself for the legal profession early. He was admitted to the bar by the Supreme Court in Sunbury Pa. in 1847 (at the age of 22) and in that same year came to Wisconsin and established an office in Oshkosh. He also became interested in several business enterprises of considerable note including a toll bridge across the Fox River at Oshkosh, the Sheboygan plank road, land entries and village plats, also inland navigation. He owned and ran the steamer *Peytona* on Lake Winnebago between Fond du Lac and Oshkosh.

In 1849 he married Julietta Smith, daughter of Lambert and Margaret Smith. The couple had 5 children, two died in infancy and Lambert, Louis and Henry survived. In 1857 he sold all other business interests and moved to Berlin to become one of the first lawyers in this city.

During the Civil War he actively recruited a company called *Truesdell’s Rangers* or Company C, 32nd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He was a candidate for public office three times; for Attorney General, State Senate and State Assembly but defeated in each case by less than 10 votes. At the time of his death in Dec. of 1883 he was one of the oldest practicing attorneys in the state.

With a father like this you will begin to understand the ambition, drive and creativity of the son, Henry Clay. In the year 1878, after only 2 years in high school and at the age of 15, he entered the clothing firm of W.W. Collins as a clerk. A little over two years later he was made a partner. By 1898 he was the sole owner.

In a write-up about the business in the 1898 Semi-Centennial Souvenir book, published by the *Berlin Evening Journal*, the author raved about the quality and variety of goods available at his store. This establishment occupied both floors of a brick block at 305 Huron St. (now 119 W. Huron St about the middle of the block). He carried ready-made clothing from the best manufacturers in the country, along with hats, neckwear, fine dress shirts, collar and cuffs, gloves, etc. They also had a tailoring department with a large selection of cloth goods. In addition to retail clothing, the firm did business in jobbing gloves and mittens and the manufacturing of fur coats.

By this 1898 edition H.C. had been alderman for the Third Ward two years, part of which he served as acting mayor; a member of the school board two years; chairman of the democratic city committee, and delegate to the 6th District congressional conventions of ‘92, ‘94, ‘96.

By 1900 he began the tanning of fur pelts and the greater manufacture of fur garments, robes, and mittens. This factory was located on Commercial St. By January of 1901 he sold out the clothing store to Eugene Thomas and the custom tailoring portion to John Krahling, a past employee. He then devoted all of his time to the fur factory and the broom business in which he was a partner with Henry Luther. His fur company employed salesmen who traveled the country selling products from huge trunks.

Finally the business outgrew their space and he moved to the building that most people know at 220 Broadway.

H.C. did not just devote his time to his business, he was always involved in looking after the best interests of this city. In 1894 he was a

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**NEWSLETTER OF THE
BERLIN AREA
HISTORICAL**

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Berlin WI 54923

Phone: 920-361-2460
E-mail: contact@berlinareahistoricalsociety
Facebook: berlin area historical society

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 Dave Olson know so that we can keep our membership lists up to date.
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920-229-9604