



# Powder House News

May/June 2024

## **COA Mission**

Our mission is to enhance the quality of life of seniors in the community by providing services, which include nutrition, health screening, education, and other programs to meet their needs.

## **COA Board Meetings**

Board meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m., May 28 and June 25.

## **Office Location**

The Council on Aging office is located at the Town Offices, 23 Linden St., bottom floor, Room 118.

## **COA Members**

Bob Blair, Co-Chair  
Pat Wheeler, Co-Chair  
Kate Bliss  
Lori Fearebay  
Linda Robinson  
Karen Schultz

## **Phone**

978-838-2750

## **Medical Equipment**

The COA has a supply of medical equipment available. We accept donations of thoroughly clean equipment in good condition. Please consider donating your clean, used equipment so we can pass it on to someone in need. Contact Victoria Flynn-Sankaran at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com), or the COA phone 978-838-2750.

## **Transportation Services**

Transportation is available Tuesday – Thursday only. Rider information forms are available on the Berlin town website under Boards & Committees / Council on Aging / Bus Services. Call 978-838-2750 for assistance.

## **From COA/Social Services Director Victoria Flynn-Sankaran**

### **Powder House News Mailings**

Starting in September 2024, the Powder House News is going to be a monthly publication focusing on getting information on town events. The plan is to reduce the number of newsletters being mailed out to residents to reduce funding gaps. If you are interested in continuing to receive a mailed copy of the Powder House News, we ask that you reach out to us at 978-838-2750 or email [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com).

### **Digital Literacy Classes: May 2024 and June 2024**

Please call us at 978-838-2750 or email [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com) to register (registration closes 48 hours before class). Refreshments to be served. Surveys to be completed by participants before and after class. Classes will be capped at 8-10 participants each.

1. Test your Skills! Friday, May 10, 11 a.m.–12: 30 p.m. at Berlin Town Offices, Room 227
2. Special Topic: Best Devices for Me —Thursday, May 16, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. at Northbrook II, 1st Floor Common Room
3. Test Your Skills! Wednesday, June 12, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. at Northbrook II, 1st Floor Common Room
4. Special Topic: Apple vs. Android/Windows on Friday, June 21, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. at Berlin Town Offices, Room 227

### **Grab and Go Meals**

The COA is hosting another grab and go meal before the end of the fiscal year. We are having the meals on Thursday May 23 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The options are: 1) Roasted Chicken, w/ Mixed Veggies, Rice Pilaf, Roll & Butter & Dessert. 2) Baked Scrod w/ Mixed Veggies, Rice Pilaf, Roll & Butter & Dessert. A vegetarian or allergy friendly meal can be requested separately. The cutoff for meals will be Friday May 17 at 5pm. Please call the COA at 978-838-2750 or email [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com) with meal preference, number of meals and address if you are needing it delivered.

### **Technology Loan Program**

As part of the digital literacy grant, the Town of Berlin purchased some mobile hotspots and tablets for our senior residents to use. The Microsoft Surface tablets and the mobile hotspots are going to be available to check out at the Berlin Public Library. We are asking for at least a 3-day window to process any requests. You will need to be a library patron to check out these devices. If you have any questions, you can reach out to the Berlin Public Library at 978-838-2812.

### **Tai Chi Classes**

We had a pause in Tai Chi classes since the beginning of the year. We have resumed Tai Chi classes with Rev. Helen Morin on Tuesdays from 1-2 p.m. You can join virtually or come down to the COA Room 118 at Town Offices if you are interested.

## Nashoba Neighbors and the Bolton Council on Aging are co-sponsoring two exciting events in May



### Medicare Information Session May 21, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Confused about Medicare? Want to get answers to some of your questions? Are you newly retired, thinking of changing your current Medicare plan or want information about Medicaid and state-run programs?

Doug Stairs, a licensed Medicare advisor, will give an overview of what is available in 2024. He will clear up your questions about Medicaid, Medicare, Prescription Drugs, and Advantage Plans. Individual free sessions can be scheduled after the talk.

Houghton Building, 697 Main Street, Bolton, MA  
RSVP to Heather at 978-779-3314

### High Tea at the Bolton Country Manor May 29, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

“Powered by Connections” is the theme for Older Americans month this May. Nashoba Neighbors helps older adults connect with others in the community. Both members and volunteers have made positive connections. Join us to hear their stories and learn more about Nashoba Neighbors. Refreshments served! Wear a hat and/or bring your favorite tea cup!

Bolton Country Manor, 600 Main Street, Bolton, MA  
RSVP to Heather at 978-779-3314

## Get Help Paying Medicare Costs

Apply to the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) NOW to save up to \$3,000 a year on Medicare costs

### What is the Medicare Savings Program?

Medicare Savings Programs (MSP) will pay for some or all of Medicare premiums, deductibles, copayments, and co-insurance. Depending on your income, MSP will pay for your Medicare Part A & B premiums and cost sharing, or Medicare Part B premium, as well as lower your prescription costs. This is not an insurance plan.

### Who qualifies?

Medicare beneficiaries who meet the following income limits:



You Are	Your income is at or below
Single	\$2,824 per month
Married	\$3,833 per month

**NEW AS OF MARCH 1, 2024:  
THERE IS NO ASSET LIMIT**

**Call 1-800-841-2900 to  
Receive an Application**

Learn More at [Mass.gov/MedicareSavings](https://Mass.gov/MedicareSavings)



## Jury Duty Scam

The Massachusetts State Retirement Board posted on their Spring 2024 Newsletter an increased risk of financial scams related to Jury Duty. In Florida, individuals were contacted by a phone call claiming to be a US Marshall and people needed to pay a fine immediately to “avoid arrest”. There is a concern that this scam, along with other similar scams, may be coming up to other parts of the country.

Please remember that anything related to court proceedings (Jury Duty, etc.) will involve you being MAILED a summons. Failing to respond to a summons (showing up) may result in a fine. **ANY FINES WILL NOT NEED TO BE PAID OVER THE PHONE.** If you believe that you may be been scammed, please reach out to the Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol at 978-946-1243 and contact the Berlin Police Department at 978-838-2444. If you are not sure if something you have received is a scam, please contact the COA at 978-838-2750 or contact the Berlin Police Department.

## Berlin History Makers: The Roseberry Kids

There were eight of us — 1st generation Americans, Betty, Dora, Al, Maryanne, Louise, Joe, Lucy and Paul. Our parents immigrated to the U.S. from the province of Quebec. Joseph Roseberry arrived in Berlin 1928. He obtained a job working for Roy and Flora Marble on their pig farm on Linden Street, boarding there for seven years. He met Julienne, his future wife, on a trip back to Canada. She immigrated in 1934. They married in 1935 and lived in Boylston for a while, where six of their children were born. In 1946 they bought the 96-acre dairy farm on Linden Street, built about 1755, now Golden Skep, where two more kids arrived. We lived there until 1965-66 when my parents sold the farm and relocated to West Street, as the older siblings married or moved away to pursue their own lives.



*Joseph L. and Roy Marble in late 1920s or early 1930s*

Living on the farm was hard work, but as the saying goes, “Many hands make light work.” So, we all pitched in, not without some amount of grumbling though, to keep the farm going. We helped prepare fields for planting crops and gardens in the spring. Summers we spent making improvements and maintaining equipment for the everyday running of a farm. Haying was done in June and August to provide feed for animals in winter. It was also the time to gather nature’s bounty of fruits and berries growing wild on the property for jams and jellies; weeding the garden and harvesting and preserving vegetables as they ripened late summer and early fall. Fall was time to cut, split wood to stack in the cellar for warmth in winter. Winter was the time for tapping maples trees on Ball Hill and around the farm. Sap was collected into milk jugs on the horse-drawn stoneboat and brought to the ‘sugar house’ to boil into syrup — forty gallons of sap to make one of syrup, There is nothing better! There was, of course, twice daily, seven days a week, feeding and milking the cows.

It wasn’t all hard work though. After supper and evening chores were finished, most of us would go out to play kick-the-can, tag, hide and seek. Sundays we would sometimes go to the Rainsville’s on Barnes Hill and play softball or go horseback riding, target practice with bows and arrows or just play a game of shoot-em-up cowboys and Indians. Winter was the time for sledding down Ball Hill or a small hill in the pasture, ice skating on the pond, or, best of all, going for a sleigh ride.

As we grew up, we all moved away. Three of us came back to settle in Berlin — Al, Louise and Lucy. Al has served as plumbing and gas inspector for many years and holds the record for length of employment in the Town. He has contributed to 1870 Town Hall and 19Carter restorations, and other projects, usually with little fanfare. Louise has held many volunteer positions over the years serving on the Board of Directors for the Library for 15 years, Historical Society, the committee to bring back Olde Home Days, and active in Senior Citizens for many years.

She still serves on the Conservation Committee. Lucy was also on the Library Board for a decade, belonged to the Grange before it disbanded, served on Historical Society Board of Directors, and, along with Richard Wheeler, wrote their newsletter, for several years. She also wrote, published, and distributed the Powder House News for Council on Aging for five years; is currently a member of the Historical Society and Historical Commission and contributes to the Commission’s pages on TownofBerlin.com website.

It is with great pride we are able to contribute to our hometown and look forward doing it for many more years to come. — *Lucy Ayers*



*Al on the mule; Joseph H., Louise, and Lucy in front; Joseph L. and Julienne in back after a day of picking berries.*



## COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

For a complete listing of the meeting times and places of all Berlin town boards, commissions and committees, go to the "[mytowngovernment.org](http://mytowngovernment.org)" and click on "berlin, ma"

### COA

**Tuesdays from 1-2 p.m. Tai Chi** with Rev. Helen Morin in COA room 118. Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81287909508> Meeting ID: 812 8790 9508

**Saturdays from 9-10 a.m. Senior Yoga, Saturdays from 10-11 a.m. SAIL yoga** COA Room 118. Zoom Meeting Web Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89963068074> Meeting ID: 899 6306 8074

### BERLIN SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

**Saturday, June 29, 2 p.m.** The HONKY TONK PIANO MAN, Gary Landgren, returns with his spirit-lifting, foot-stomping keyboard electricity. Northbrook Village II Community Room at 135 Pleasant St., REAR.

### BERLIN CHURCHES

#### First Parish Church

**Sunday Worship:** 10 a.m. Meetinghouse and Zoom

**Family programming:** First and third Sundays

**Pizza Night:** Second Friday each month 5-7 p.m. Meetinghouse.

#### St. Joseph The Good Provider Catholic Church

**Daily mass:** Mon.- Fri. at 7:30 a.m.

**Weekend masses:** Sat. 4 p.m.; Sun. 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

### XIX CARTER

**HOURS:** Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm; Saturday 10 am-1 pm

**MON: TeaTime** 2-4 pm

**TUES: Morning Meditation** 8-8:30 am **Soup Noon-1 pm**

**WEDS: Coffee Hour** 9 am- Noon; **Irish Session** 7-10 pm

**THURS: Afternoon Games** 2-4 pm

**FRI: Coffee Hour** 9 am- Noon; **Open Art Studio** 9 am- Noon; **Fiber Arts Group** 2-4 pm

**SAT: Scones** 10 am-1 pm

### MAY SPECIAL EVENTS

**Sun., May 5, 6-8 pm: Jazz Jam**

All instruments and musicians welcome. For questions, please email [ken@parrishworks.net](mailto:ken@parrishworks.net). Suggested donation: \$5

**Sat, May 11, 4-5 pm: Divine Feminine Sound Bath**

Join Gina Cranford, Reiki Master/Sound Healing practitioner, for an immersive experience that honors the divine feminine energy within and around us. Registration: \$25

**Mon., May 13, 7:30-9 pm: Comedy Open Mic**

To sign up, email [MikeKComic@gmail.com](mailto:MikeKComic@gmail.com) on the Saturday prior. Ages 18+ adult humor! Suggested donation: \$5

**Thurs., May 16, 7-8 pm: Free Adult Improv Workshop**

Led by Meredith Charles, this class is designed to challenge

and inspire participants to stretch their brains and limits. Register at [19Carter.org](http://19Carter.org).

**Fri., May 17, 6:30-9 pm: Local Hero — Pizza & a Movie!**

Burt Lancaster, Peter Riegert, and Jennifer Black triumph in this humorous and heartwarming story of the love of community trumping capitalistic greed. Sponsored by Cordelia's Farm. Tickets: \$15 (pizza, salad & popcorn included in price)

**Tues., May 21, 1:30-2:30 pm: Book Club: *The Nature of Nature***  
*The Nature of Nature: Why We Need the Wild* by Enric Sala. Host Ann Ribbens welcomes anyone to join the discussion! For questions, please email Ann.

**Fri. and Sat., May 24 & 25, 7:30-9:30 pm: Off Brand Improv!**  
Off Brand Improv!, a troupe of improvisational actors will make you laugh and have a good time together! Tickets: \$18 in advance; \$20 at the door (cash only!)

**Sat., May 25, 9 am-4 pm: Open House**

Enjoy our extended hours as the Berlin Town Center hosts its second annual Berlin Dump Run.

**Closed on Monday, May 27 for Memorial Day!**

**Fri., May 31, 6-8 pm: 7:30-9:30 pm: Off Brand Improv!**

A troupe of improvisational actors will make you laugh! Tickets: \$18 in advance; \$20 at the door (cash only!)

### JUNE SPECIAL EVENTS

**Sat., June 1, 7:30-9:30 pm: Off Brand Improv!**

A troupe of improvisational actors will make you laugh! Tickets: \$18 in advance; \$20 at the door (cash only!)

**Mon., June 3, 7:30-9 pm: Comedy Open Mic**

Join Host Mike Koutrobis for a night of jokes and jests and just plain ole fun. To sign up, email [MikeKComic@gmail.com](mailto:MikeKComic@gmail.com). Ages 18+ as adult humor may be used! Suggested donation: \$5

**Sun., June 9, 6-8 pm: Jazz Jam**

All instruments and musicians welcome. For questions, please email [ken@parrishworks.net](mailto:ken@parrishworks.net). Suggested donation: \$5

**June 19-21, 9 am-Noon: Kids Science Camp**

Twenty kids entering grades 1-5 are invited to a fun morning camp exploring art, science, and technology! Registration: \$50 per child

**Thurs., June 20, 7-8 pm: Free Adult Improv Workshop**

Led by Meredith Charles, this class is designed to challenge and inspire participants to stretch their brains and limits. Register at [19Carter.org](http://19Carter.org).

**Sat., June 22, 7-9 pm: The Dashing Rock Trio (Celtic)**

The first concert in our Outdoor Summer Series! Individual Tickets: \$20 in advance; \$25 at the door. Summer Pass: \$125 (for all seven concerts)

**Sat., June 29, 7-9 pm: Nolan Slate Quintet (Jazz)**

The second concert in our Outdoor Summer Series! Individual Tickets: \$20 in advance; \$25 at the door. Summer Pass: \$125 (for all seven concerts)

**Sun., June 30, 4-5:30 pm: Armchair Traveler: Australia**

Join Keevan Regan, a film student, as he provides a unique perspective of the stunningly diverse landscapes of Australia. All are welcome!

## Meet Karen Belauskas, Treasurer's Office Assistant



The Treasurer's Office recently hired Karen Belauskas as a temporary part-time assistant. Karen is helping with the collection and processing of excise and real estate payments, answering phone calls, and assisting the customers at the service window. Karen is doing a phenomenal job and we are happy to have her.

## Meet Ken Patton, New Building Operator/Maintenance Employee



Hello everyone, and Happy Spring. I just wanted to take a quick minute to introduce myself to the wonderful people of Berlin. My name is Ken Patton, and I'm the new building operator/maintenance employee for the town properties. I ensure smooth operation of building services. I maintain, service, and repair all

aspects of town owned buildings. Prior to working here in Berlin, I worked for a small, family owned fire extinguisher company in Waltham mass. I'm originally from Hudson Ma, and I'm very familiar with this area. There is such rich history, tradition, and I love having all 4 seasons. I'm also a U.S. Navy veteran, serving most of my time overseas in Japan, where my home port was. I served on 2 different types of surface ships. The USS Independence (CV-62) which is an aircraft carrier, and the USS O'Brien (DD-975) which was a Destroyer. I'm very grateful for my time in the Navy, as it taught me about responsibility, respect, and gave me discipline. In my free time, which is far and few between. I like to stay outside, working on my house, or taking care of my lawn. I'm very excited to take on the work of keeping Berlin's buildings open, and running as smoothly as possible. I'm also excited to meet as many of Berlin's wonderful residents as possible. Feel free to say hello if you see me working in any of the buildings around town.

### Council on Aging—Board Vacancy

The Berlin Council on Aging has a vacancy on its board. If are interested in serving or have any questions, please reach out to us at 978-838-2750 for more information. Any Berlin resident over 18 can apply, though we do encourage seniors to get involved.

Meetings for the foreseeable future are in person in the Town Offices Room 118 or through Zoom (last Tuesday of the month 4 p.m.).

## Happy Spring Berlin!

The 2024 Annual Town Meeting will be held on Monday, May 6 at 7:30 p.m. at Berlin Memorial School in the Gym. The Annual Town Meeting warrant has been mailed out to all households and is also available online at: <https://www.townofberlin.com/home/news/2024-annual-town-meeting> or in hard copy at the Select Board Office, Room 206, 23 Linden Street. The warrant consists of 31 articles including the proposed FY25 Town and School budgets. We encourage all Berlin registered voters to attend this meeting and make your voices heard.

The 2023 Annual Town Report is also now available at: <https://www.townofberlin.com/select-board/pages/annual-town-reports>. Hard copies are also available at the Select Board Office.

The Annual Town Election will be held on Monday, May 13, 2024 from Noon-8 p.m. at the Berlin Municipal Offices, 23 Linden Street, Room 114.

The Town has been awarded a \$500,000 Complete Streets grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). This grant will improve pedestrian safety and connectivity within and around the center of town by building sidewalks, ADA complaint access ramps, installing bike racks, and paving the associated roads. This is the first time Berlin has applied for this grant since putting together its Complete Streets Priority Projects Plan in 2016.

Berlin has also received \$400,000 in Federal Community Project Funding through Congresswoman Lori Trahan's office for Phase 3 of the Town's radio project. The purpose of this project is to improve public safety radio communications in the Town of Berlin. Currently, our public safety radio system is operating with 1980's technology and equipment purchased used off of eBay and installed in 2004. Public safety personnel must resort to using cell phones to relay vital information in these instances. These gaps in communication jeopardize the town's ability to respond quickly and safely in an emergency, thereby endangering the lives of both residents and public safety personnel alike.

The solution requires a multi-faceted approach in three phases. Phase I replaces the antennas and feedlines at the two existing radio repeater sites and is underway. Phase II replaces the repeaters and the filters at the two current sites and will be put out to bid this spring. Phase III of this project would create a third radio tower site near the south side of town to address substantial gaps in radio communications coverage, install microwave technology to connect all three sites, and provide funding for the purchase of interoperable portable radios. Current radio coverage in Town is at 50.1%. At the completion of Phase I, coverage will increase to 68.4%. Phase II will bring coverage up to 80.6%. By funding Phase III, coverage would increase to 98.6%. We look forward to working with the Congresswoman and her team on this exciting project.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can ever be of assistance. You can email me at [townadmin@townofberlin.com](mailto:townadmin@townofberlin.com). You are also welcome to call the office 978-310-5919 or stop by Room 206 at the Municipal Offices on Linden Street. *Kristen Rubin*

# The Five W's: Berlin's who, what, when, where, and why

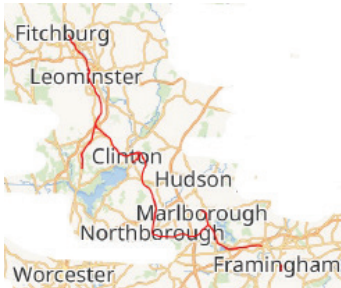
## Berlin's Agricultural Branch Railroad *By Dave Westerling and Ed Sterling*

Imagine what living in Berlin was like in 1850. According to published census data there were eight hundred and sixty-six souls living in Berlin. They had horses to provide power for household and farm chores and they had water power from dams for milling grain and cutting trees into board lumber. Shipping and travel between towns was by horse drawn wagons and buggies on gravel roads at best.

America was continuing its westward migration where gold was found in California and the golden spike in Utah linked the country which we call the United States of America. And railroads, rolled across our magical steel carpet. Berlinites began to think they were being left out of the national effort. Like many of today's rural communities they called out for inclusion and wanted to be part of the forward movement

Meanwhile the growing cities in Massachusetts began looking for areas which could supply produce and dairy products and raw building materials like lumber, quarried rock building blocks and other manufactured products.

Thus came the idea for a Massachusetts Agricultural Railroad. Authorizing Legislation was passed by the Massachusetts House and Senate on April 26, 1847.



The Agricultural Branch Rail Road Company was formed with public shares offered at \$100 per share. They sold like hotcakes!

The plan was to open the Central Massachusetts area between the Fitchburg Line in the North and the Boston and Albany RR through Framingham in the South. The Agricultural Branch Rail Road would connect Framingham with Leominster/Fitchburg and all of the towns in between, with two stations in Berlin.

Passenger train connections were at three locations (1) at Framingham (to Boston or Worcester), (2) at Clinton (to Ayer and Worcester) and (3) Fitchburg (Boston or Albany NY) and was possible when taking a train from either Berlin Station at Jones Road or Carter Station in West Berlin.

Here is the schedule for the early morning train

Miles	TABLE 20	6007	6021	6013
		A.M.	A.M.	A.M.
0.0	Fitchburg.....Lv	5:35	5:35	5:35
1.4	South Fitchburg.....	5:39	5:39	5:39
3.4	West Leominster.....	5:42	5:42	5:42
4.6	Leominster.....	5:46	5:46	5:46
7.1	Gates Cross'g.....	5:55	5:55	5:55
9.0	Pratts Jct.....	6:04	6:04	6:04
13.7	Clinton, Mass.....	6:09	6:09	6:09
15.6	Bolton, Mass.....	6:13	6:13	6:13
17.9	Carters.....	6:18	6:18	6:18
19.5	Berlin, Mass.....	6:25	6:25	6:25
23.0	Northboro.....	6:28	6:28	6:28
24.9	Talbot.....	6:33	6:33	6:33
30.3	Marlboro.....Lv	6:45	6:45	6:45
28.9	Marlboro Jct.....	6:50	6:50	6:50
30.8	Southboro.....	6:54	6:54	6:54
31.8	Fayville.....	6:57	6:57	6:57
35.3	Framingham Centre.....	6:57	6:57	6:57
35.1	Montwait.....	6:57	6:57	6:57
37.3	Framingham.....Dnc	6:57	6:57	6:57
.....	Framingham.....Lv	6:57	6:57	6:57

Number 6013. Passengers to Boston could leave West Berlin at 6:13 am and be in Boston at 7:53 am. The 6013 was probably called the milk train. Cans of milk were packed in ice on a special milk train car set up with wooden bins full of ice for the trip into

Boston daily. There were 3 southbound Framingham trains and 3 northbound Fitchburg/Leominster trains each weekday and Saturday. And 2 trains each way on the Sundays.

Another interesting facet we found was the inclusion of a dead end rail line from Pratts Junction which brought passengers south to Sterling Camp. What was that all about?

### Agricultural Branch Railroad, 19 Carter Street and the Methodist Revival Camp Sterling, Massachusetts

About the same time that the Agricultural Branch Railroad was being constructed, in April 1856, Reverend Gardner Rice, then principal of the Berlin Academy, established a Methodist Episcopal Church after holding prayer and class meetings, as well as preaching services. The Berlin Methodist Congregation held their prayer services in multiple locations in town until 1887 when a church was dedicated at 19 Carter Street.<sup>1</sup> This is the building we know as 19 Carter Street Gathering Place.

The Berlin Methodists families most likely often boarded the Ag Railroad trains at either the Jones Road or West Berlin stations to travel north to Pratts Junction, just beyond Clinton to switch trains to the shortline and train station at Sterling Camp and the Methodist Campgrounds.

Known as the Worcester Methodist Camp the area around the Washacum Ponds in South Sterling was used as a summer camp revival area which supported the Second Great Awakening. The Second Great Awakening was a Protestant religious revival during the late 1800s. It slowly drew to a close in the early 1900s.

The camp was started in the early 1850s, about the same time that the Agricultural Branch Railroad was being constructed. Pratts Junction Station was the connecting station between the Agricultural Branch Railroad and the Fitchburg and Worcester Railroad. In any case





Photograph of the Sterling Camp Station

this was good news for the Methodist congregation in Berlin. For instance, on any Sunday morning, Methodist Berliners could board the train at 9:14 am at Carter Station in West Berlin and be at Pratts Junction in 21 minutes at 9:35 am. It was a short connecting train ride to the Washacum Pond train Platform

From the Washacum Pond train platform campers could board a steamboat and travel across the pond to the wharf at the picnic ground. The camp was expanded over the years and was very popular with weekly visits and prayer meetings in churches. Many revivalists stayed in a large hotel or in many cabins along the lakeshore. Train service was a must. Some weeks more than 1000 campers were on hand traveling by train from all parts of the Commonwealth.

On Thursday, June 25, 1914 a fire destroyed a large portion of the camp. A note in a weekly Insurance publication<sup>2</sup> provided the details –

**Camp Meeting Grounds Conflagration at Sterling**

Fire starting probably from the upsetting of a kerosene lamp in a cottage at the Sterling (Mass.) Methodist Camp Grounds early Thursday was fanned by a brisk wind and before it burned out, destroyed about fifty frame buildings, including a hotel, several summer churches, and some forty cottages, the property loss being possibly \$40,000, with considerable insurance, in small policies.

Worcester, Clinton and Leominster sent apparatus.

The Agricultural Branch Railroad has served the citizens of Berlin over the last one hundred and seventy-five years. It has delivered our agricultural and manufactured products to Boston, to Massachusetts, the nation and the world. It has joined us closely with people from neighboring towns. It has served as a connection with joint business opportunities such as shipping our board lumber and agricultural produce. And continues to deliver building materials, feed and fertilizer to local industries and businesses.

A little bit of our history lives among us as sometimes late at night when you can hear that lonesome whistle blow here in our town. A recollection of an old friend and times gone by but here with us today.

The recent purchase of the rail line from New England based Pan American Rail by nationally based CSX

Corporation will likely mean better track maintenance and improved freight service. CSX has worked with the City of Worcester in extending frequent MBTA commuter rail service to Worcester and it has been a success. There has been recent talk about MBTA rail service to Marlborough which is an Agricultural Branch Railroad station. Stay tuned.

*The authors would like to thank the Sterling Historical Society and their former Curator and the staff at 19 Carter Street for references on history of the Worcester Methodist District Camp, and the Berlin Methodist Church respectively. Additional information was provided through the Wachusett Greenways Connector Newsletter.<sup>3</sup>*

References

- (1) <https://19carter.org/building-history>, 4/13/24
- (2) The Standard Weekly Insurance Newspaper, June 30.1914, Vol. LXXIV, 952 Oliver BLDG, Boston Mass.
- (3) The Greenways Connector, July 2015

## May/June Library Events

**May 4th @ 11 am: Beaded Bracelets** with Mystic Moon Beading. Come make your own gemstone button bracelet with Sue Underwood from Mystic Moon Beads! This class includes all materials, step by step instructions, and use of tools. Registration required. At 1870 Town Hall.

**May 15th @ 6 pm: Mental Health 101** with LUK, Inc. Join us virtually for this Mental Health 101 program provided by LUK, Inc., a not-for-profit social service agency located in Central Massachusetts dedicated to improving the lives of youth and their families. Registration required.

**May 18th @ 1 pm: Beekeeping Basics** Bring the family to learn about beekeeping practices, tools, and why bees are so awesome from local beekeeper AJ Moses. AJ will bring a smoker and a honey frame to taste honey.

**June 4th @ 6 pm: Hikes Through History** A sampling of hikes in Eastern MA from Alison O'Leary's *Appalachian Mountain Club guidebook*, Best Day Hikes Near Boston. At 1870 Town Hall.

**June 17th @ 6 pm: Japanese Folktales and Origami** Parents' Choice Award winner and former Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood guest Motoko regales families with delightful folktales from her native Japan, combined with hands-on origami activities. At 1870 Town Hall.

**June 22nd @ 10 am: Davis Bates Storytelling** Entitled Generations of Fun! This program will involve the audience in a variety of cultural traditions. Hear how stars came to be in the sky, how foam came to be in the ocean, and be prepared to sing, move and clap your hands. At 1870 Town Hall.

**June 27th @ 6:30 pm: Adult Summer Reading Book Club Discussion** Sign up in advance to request a copy of *The HalfKnown Life: In Search of Paradise* by Pico Iyer.



# Powder House News

TOWN OF BERLIN, COUNCIL ON AGING, 23 LINDEN ST., BERLIN, MA 01503

PRST STD  
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## Thank you to Our Sponsors

**Thank you, Thank you!** The Berlin Council on Aging would like to thank its gracious sponsors for helping to keep the Powder House News going: **Berlin Farms; Berlin General Store; Berlin Seniors; Golden Skep Farm; Chef Du Jour; and Kristine Romano, Esq., LLM, PC.**

## Gone But Not Forgotten

James Weatherbell . . . . .	February 20
Ronald Ackley . . . . .	February 21
Pedro Cosme . . . . .	March 24
Dolores Jenkins . . . . .	April 4
Walter Scott . . . . .	April 13

## Town Report and Town Warrant

The 2023 Town Report is available digitally at [townofberlin.com/select-board](http://townofberlin.com/select-board). Printed copies are available at the Berlin Town Offices and Berlin Public Library. Printed copies of the 2024 Town Warrant have been mailed out to all households; you should have received one. A digital copy is also available at [townofberlin.com/select-board](http://townofberlin.com/select-board).

## Annual Spring Town Meeting

The Berlin Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 6, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. at the Berlin Memorial School Gym. Please check out the [townofberlin.com](http://townofberlin.com) website for any additional updates closer to the meeting. The 2023 Annual Town Report will be available for reference at town meeting. There will be a limited supply of the Warrant Articles available at town meeting. Please bring your copy to the meeting.

## Farmer's Market Coupons — RSVP

It is that time of year again for farmer's markets. Through our local food service agency Making Opportunity Count (MOC), we will hopefully have a limited number of farmer market coupons to distribute. Last year, we were able to request additional farmer market coupons due to a high number of requests.

Priority continues to go to senior housing and lower income residents. Since there are a limited number of coupons, these will be given out on a first come, first serve basis.

If you are interested in being notified when they are available, please let us know at [coordinator@townofberlin.com](mailto:coordinator@townofberlin.com) or call 978-838-2750.