

A Berlin Institution
Market Square formerly known as "The Common"
And Cattle Fair Day

A **town square** is an open public space commonly found in the heart of a traditional town used for community gatherings. Most town squares are hardscapes suitable for open markets, music concerts, political rallies, and other events that require firm ground. Being centrally located, town squares are usually surrounded by small shops. At their center is often a fountain, well, **monument**, or statue.

Berlin's 'Commons' Market Square was once a gathering place for buyers, sellers, farmers, employers, businessmen and housewives. It is where several streets converge in the downtown area, Huron, Capron, and Water Sts. and Park Ave. Its importance was established early in Berlin's history. Published in the *Marquette Mercury* of May 15, 1851 was an ad to lease a building on the corner of Huron and Market Square indicating that this location was a marketing center from those very early days of the city.

Agriculture was an important product of Berlin residents and growers would bring their livestock and produce to 'The Commons' to sell to households and merchants. The *Berlin Weekly Journal* of October, 1879 reported on the creation of the Berlin Cattle Fair organization. A committee of finance had raised over \$100 and "the project was booming." By October 23rd a meeting at City Hall adopted the articles of association and the "Industrial Fair and Market of the City of Berlin" was begun. "Each month on the first Wednesday after the 15th or on the 15th if it is a Wednesday' was the formula for determining cattle fair day on Market Square since 1879.

Reports of activities and events at Market Square were regularly reported on in the local newspapers. Young men and women would come to the Square looking to be hired on the farms or by the merchants and businessmen of the day.

The Green Lake County fair used to be held in Berlin and one year the town square was the main location for all events. Berlin's once famous Mardi Gras used the square as the central location for events planned for the day.

When agriculture dwindled in the mid twentieth century, Market Square was still used by farmers, home-growers and craftspeople to come together on that specific Wednesday to sell their wares.

In recognition of the importance of this special place, the Berlin Area Historical Society would like to erect a monument to forever remind our citizens that it is not just a place to park your car but was once the center of community, commerce and fellowship. The monument we are recommending is similar to the one on our grounds recognizing and remembering the peoples of the 1st Nations that lived here before us. We will write the dialog and supply the pictures for the sign. Funds for the project will be supplied by BAHS.