1967


Bern Porter
NAME | ADDRESS
--- | ---
BERNARD HAREL PORTER | 2001 Lee High Drive
AKA: BERN PORTER | Huntsville, Alabama

DATE OF BIRTH | PLACE OF BIRTH
--- | ---
February 14, 1911 | Houlton, Maine

POSITION | AGENCY
--- | ---
Not Shown | UNESCO, Paris, France

TYPE OF CASE | CSC CASE SERIAL NO.
--- | ---
Full Field | 4,24,67,638

PLACE(S) OF INVESTIGATION | PLACE(S) OF RECORD SEARCH
--- | ---
Orono, Ashland, Madison, Belfast, Madawaska, Presque Isle, Houlton and Guilford, Maine | Bangor & Waterville, Maine

DATE(S) OF INVESTIGATION | NAME OF INVESTIGATOR
--- | ---
January 30, 31 & February 1, 2, 3, & 4, 1967 | 

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The testimony of all witnesses is given in substance unless indicated by quotation marks.

SYNOPSIS

Period Covered: Approximately August, 1959 to February, 1960; August, 1960 to September, 1961 and December, 1961 to January, 1962. Investigation revealed that the subject was forced to resign from his teaching position at Ashland, Maine. One witness raised the question of whether the subject was legally married to his listed spouse, Margaret. Several witnesses described the subject as being a "Screwball." Local police files were negative. Credit Bureau Records were negative on credit information. Date of birth was found to be discrepant in an employment record. Place of birth was corroborated.

MADISON, MAINE
I have been a friend and neighbor of Harold Porter who is a successful Druggist here in town and lives at Number 61 Madison Avenue. I first became acquainted with his brother Bernard around Christmas of 1961 when he came here after having been teaching at some college in New Hampshire. Bernard has been here, off and on, on a couple of other occasions as I recall. He is a Scientist but is a "Screwball" or "Oddball." I heard that he left the teaching job in New Hampshire because of a morals question. His morals didn't involve anyone other than Bernard and his so-called wife, Margaret.

As I understand it, Bernard and Margaret are husband and wife in every regard except they don't have a wedding certificate. I understand that Bernard had a previous marriage which ended in divorce and I understand that he didn't want to tie himself down legally with another wife. This is just hearsay from information I have gathered from his sister-in-law. His first marriage was to a Show-girl in New York a long time ago.

When he came here in 1961, he stayed for a few months and then I believe he went on a walking trip through Russia. He and Margaret went alone and from what I gather, they walked from village to village to observe first hand how the people there lived. This is quite an unusual way to do any traveling or touring. I think that Bernard, although I like him, is very unstable in that he seems to roam all over the world and doesn't stay put in any one place. I certainly would not hire him for a job that would require him to be around for any prolonged length of time. He is the type of fellow who would just quit if he feels like it. He is a very independent thinker and if there is a conversation going on in which he is not interested he will just ignore everybody else there. I recall at a social gathering at my home, that Bernard stopped there and read the New York Sunday Times and ignored everybody the whole time the social gathering lasted. He is not the type of fellow who engages in small talk.

His appearance seemed to be good. He has money but where he gets the money I don't know. Not long ago he went to work for the United Nations in Paris and from there he was sent on to Brazilia, the new capital of Brazil in South America. Just what he is doing there I do not know. He has some very far-out scientific ideas. He has talked about houses made of air in which compressed air comes up out of the ground and you don't have to have any walls or windows. He also talked about women and men painting clothes on themselves and if they wanted to change they just wash it off. He also talked about making clothing out of
He talked about buying a big mansion here in Madison and setting up what he called a Thinking Factory. This mansion would be occupied by Professors and Scientists who were retired or on sabbatical leave. They would just stay there and think. Then if any of the industries in the area required advice they would be able to call on these professors and scientists for help in any problems that arose. It is a good idea and I believe it is one that is now in effect at Princeton, New Jersey.

Bernard worked with Doctor Oppenheim and some of those other scientists on the Manhattan project when the Atomic Bomb was developed. He and a lot of the other scientists who were connected with the Bomb left that organization because they were opposed to it being dropped on human beings as happened in Japan.

He never expressed any political beliefs but I would assume that he is a normal patriotic American. From my observations, his character and morals are good. He seems to be a normal masculine type of individual. As far as liquor is concerned he uses it very sparingly and I have never seen any signs of intoxication about him.

He didn't belong to any clubs or organizations. He seemed to stay in his brother's home most of the time and the only other home I have known him to visit was mine. He is a very quiet type of fellow and hard to get to know so he never had any friends around here.

As far as security is concerned I believe that he would be perfectly alright. However if you are considering him for a job lasting for several years you might be disappointed and find that he just gets fed up and would walk away from it.

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE: Subject was not known to the Postmaster or Postal employees, nor was he personally known to any other people in the neighborhood.

No record.
BELFAST, MAINE

I first met Bern Porter about 1959 and last saw him about 1961 or 1962. He is a brother of Doctor Everett Porter who is an Optometrist here in town. Doctor Porter used to live at 106 Lee High Street but now lives down on 4 Church Street. The family comes originally from Houlton, Maine. Bern has never permanently resided here in Belfast, but he has spent vacations at the home of his brother Everett.

He is married to a girl who used to be a Telephone Operator in California. Her name is Margaret. They do not have any children. As far as I know this is the only marriage for Bernard. They seem to be a devoted couple. She has a good business sense. From what I can gather Bern earned a lot of money over the years but like all scientists his mind was in the clouds and he didn't seem to know the value of money and just let it slip away.

Most of what I know about him I have heard from his brother. Bern as I understand worked on the Atomic Bomb at the so-called Manhattan Project. He was never employed here in Belfast but I believe he was briefly employed as a teacher in northern Maine.

I don't know that he ever became acquainted with anyone here in town. He was a hard person to get to know. You would be talking to him and then in the middle of a conversation he would walk away and start writing. He had a variety of interests in Physics, Art and Writing. He wrote Science literature and also some sort of story about playwrights.

His character and morals were good. As far as I know he doesn't drink at all. He wouldn't drink because it might dull his thinking ability. I would say that he must have been immature in money matters. I know absolutely nothing about his affiliations or associations.

I have no reason to question his loyalty to the United States. He comes from a good family background, he certainly is not the type of person to talk too much, but I am not in a position to give him a positive recommendation because of my limited contact and knowledge of him.

I know that Bernard Porter who is the brother of Everett Porter, an optometrist here in town, did stay at his brother's home. He gave us forwarding addresses
which we kept for six months. However Bernard Porter thought that
we should keep forwarding mail for him indefinitely because he
apparently wanted to keep his brother's address as his permanent
mailing place. However, we could not keep this up and he was so
informed. I never met him personally and know nothing about him.
I do know that his brother Everett is a very high-type fellow. I
am unable to refer you to anyone here in town who might have known
this person.

INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE: Neighbors in the vicinity of
106 High Street were interviewed but none of them knew
the subject although they all knew Doctor Everett
Porter quite well both as a neighbor and as their
Optometrist. Everett Porter was interviewed but was
unable to furnish the names of any persons in town
who would have known the subject. A check at the City
Clarks' Office failed to reveal that the subject was
ever a registered voter in Belfast nor had he ever paid a
Poll Tax.

Criminal Record

BELFAST POLICE HEADQUARTERS, Record Search by R. Lawless, Chief
of Police:

No record.

ASHLAND, MAINE

Employment

ASHLAND COMMUNITY DISTRICT, Main Street, Record information furnished
by

My records show that Bernard Harden Porter, born February 11, 1911,
was employed as a Teacher from August 22, 1960 until December 21,
1960, when his contract was voided. The vote of the School Board
on December 21, 1960, stated reason for termination was lack of
respect by the pupils, disregard to textbook content and lack of
control over student groups. He was paid $1,399 for 75 days of
teaching. His yearly salary would have been $4,700 per year. His
local address is just listed as Ashland, Maine. We have 180 legal
school days but we start school in August and then interrupt for
two weeks vacation during the potato harvest season. It is for this
reason that he only worked 75 days between August 22 and December 21.

According to our record he was married but his wife's name is not
listed.
Bernard Porter approximately the last week in August of 1960. He came to Ashland from Calis, Maine and when he was terminated he moved to Madawaska, Maine. Because he has a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Science, however, Bernard was asked to teach English because he has a literary background also. He was married but didn't have any children. I don't recall his wife's first name. He is a very intelligent type of person but just didn't work out as a Teacher. The school regulations permitted the teachers to smoke in the Teacher's room but the students were not permitted to smoke anywhere in the buildings or on the school grounds. It was found that Bernard Porter was allowing his students to smoke during the lunch hour in the classroom. That if the teachers had the right to smoke then the pupils had the right to smoke. He agreed to discontinue this but from time to time by observation, it was found that he was again allowing the students to smoke.

All teachers are required to keep a lesson plan book filled out two days in advance. This is a regulation enforced in practically all schools in the United States. Bernard Porter refused to do this. Then it developed that he was presenting literature of a sexual nature to the students. This type of literature might have been alright with grown-ups but with children of high school age it was not acceptable or proper. I don't recall whether he read the literature or poetry from books or whether the poems were his own creations, or just what the situation was. However on the basis of these three main areas this was a forced resignation and he was well-aware of the reason for his termination. There would have been a great uprising by the parents in the community. I definitely would not consider him for rehire.

As far as his own personal morals were concerned I never heard anything objectionable about him. To my knowledge he did not use intoxicants. In his spare time he did a lot of walking and hitchhiking. Weekends he and his wife used to hitchhike all around through the surrounding areas. I don't believe he was friendly with anyone in town even among the schoolteachers. In the morning he would go into his class room and he would stay there all day and have nothing to do with the other teachers.

He never said or did anything that would cause me to question his loyalty to the United States. I think his complete disregard for
the rules and regulations was a serious matter. For this reason
I would not recommend him for a position of trust vital to our
national security. He is the type of person who does as he pleases
and ignores rules and regulations. He would not create a very good
impression because if he were talking to somebody and didn't have
any interest in what they were talking about, he would just walk
away and leave them standing in the middle of the floor by themselves.

I am a member of the local School Board now and was in 1960 when
Bernard Porter was a teacher here. He was a real queer sort of person.
He did not act in a normal sort of way. He was an English teacher
and instead of teaching properly was writing and encouraging the stu-
dents to write poetry. He told them not to be ashamed or afraid to
write about sex. He used vulgar expressions in class and smutty talk.
The School Board received complaints from parents about the poetry.
He had complained to the Superintendent and Principal about his lack
of discipline in the classroom but they did nothing. Porter just
walked around the classroom and didn't seem to be aware that the pupils
were present. Then when he referred to the girl students as whores
the Board told the Superintendent to fire him or allow him to resign.
He should have been aware of the reasons for his termination of contract
because the Superintendent told him as directed by the members of the
School Board.

Bernard Porter was married but I don't recall his wife's name. He
didn't drink as far as I know. He didn't belong to any clubs or take
part in any town activities. He didn't have any friends at all. He
just seemed to walk around town by himself. He never made any sexual
overtures to any of the students but the talk was not good.

As far as loyalty to the United States was concerned I did hear some
sort of rumors or talk but there was nothing concrete. I certainly
would not rehire him as a teacher and would not recommend him for a
position of trust involving our national security.

I knew Bernard Porter as a fellow teacher here in Ashland for a period
of four months. He was a very queer sort of person. He had one
shirt to his name and I never saw him with another shirt on during the
three or four months he was around. He didn't have a car and used
to walk and hitchhike all around. He was not a talkative type person
and not the type of individual you could get to know anything about.
No one seemed to like him in town.
that in the fall of 1960, when we had a vacation during the potato harvest, Bernard and his wife went to some Literary Convention in Canada. Towards the end of the vacation we were having a Teacher's Convention in Portland and Bernard and his wife showed up there all covered with grass or hay. He said that they had run out of money while in Canada and had to hitchhike back and had to sleep in a field in Portland. I don't recall his wife's name. She was an odd type of person also.

He got threw I think mainly because he called the girls in the classroom prostitutes. I don't know any of the details. There was something funny about him because in the summer of 1961, an FBI Agent interviewed me about Bernard and asked if I would appear in court if required to testify. There was a question about his loyalty as far as stories I heard, but nothing that you could put your finger on. I would hate to stop him from getting a job but on the basis of the way he was here I could not recommend him for a position of trust vital to our national security.

I knew Bernard Porter during the four months he taught English at the high school in Ashland, Maine. I was that year and received complaints that he was passing out mimeographed literature that was sexy. I don't recall specifically the words used in the literature nor the phrases used. The complaint was passed on by me to the School Board and Mr. Porter was fired. I do not recall that any complaints were made about anything that he said in class. He didn't bother the boys or girls.

Bernard Porter was a very odd sort of person and did not mix in with the teachers or the people in the community. He and his wife were alone and didn't have any children. I don't recall her name. She seemed to be a very nice person.

As far as character and morals are concerned, I wouldn't want him to teach my children nor anyone else's children. He did not drink as far as I know. He didn't belong to any clubs or organizations. He and his wife did a lot of walking and seemed to be outdoor types of people.

There is nothing questionable about his loyalty to the United States. I would not recommend him for a position of trust with the United States Government.
I was formerly a resident of Ashland, Maine, and School Board in 1960 when Bernard Porter was hired to teach there. We normally have an opportunity to interview candidates for teaching positions but in 1960, he was hired in a hurry by the Superintendent of Schools because of a last minute withdrawal of a teacher. Bernard Porter is what I would call a "Screwball" but he was not crazy by any means. I think that he was an intelligent man but was not able to direct this intelligence properly. He had a good educational background but did not work out as a Teacher and had to be fired. The parents in the community were up in arms about the way he was teaching English. He seemed to lead all or many class discussions into the field of Sex. He put a lot of emphasis on poetry and the material he gave to the students was either in the form of his own poetry or books of poetry. Whatever way he gave it to them it was of a sexy nature. In themselves these poems were alright for adults but not for children. On the order of the school board he was fired by the Superintendent of Schools.

He was rather sloppy about his appearance. He did not drink as far as I know. I don't think that the fellow is completely normal as far as his mind was concerned. Sometimes he would talk with you very coherently and in a normal fashion. Other times in the middle of a conversation he would just walk away from you.

I know nothing about his funds or what he did in his spare time. Nothing that I can recall raised a question of his loyalty to the United States. Prior to his coming we had had a problem regarding questionable loyalty of the Principal and Assistant Principal but this never came up on Bernard Porter. I would not rehire him as a teacher and definitely would not recommend him for a position of trust vital to our national security.

I just knew Bernard Porter during the fall of 1960 when he taught school here in town. He was a very quiet sort of person and never had much to say. I know him through his character and morals seemed to be okay and I never knew of him drinking. He seemed to be emotionally stable and mature.

I did hear that he got fired but I have no first-hand information on that. I know nothing about his affiliations or associations. I
believe in his spare time he did some writing.

There was some talk about loyalty but I don't know just what was involved. I don't feel that I can recommend him for a position of trust both because I don't know enough about him and because of this question which was talked about. He was married but I don't recall his wife's name.

I only knew Bernard Porter during the three or four months that he was a school teacher here. He came here as a teacher, was fired around Christmas of 1960. He was a very brilliant person and I think that he was too intelligent an intellectual for this community. He was fired for making statements in school. He taught English and some how or other the class discussions involved the use of the word whore. Between classes a boy asked for a definition and example of the word whore and Mr. Porter pointed to a group of girls in the classroom or the corridor and said that they were whores. This was overheard and reported to the School Board and he was fired. I don't think personally that he meant that in the way that it sounded.

He seemed like a very nice man. I never knew of him to use intoxicating beverages. He was quite different from the type of person that we have here in town but I think that it was just because he was an intellectual. He didn't associate with anyone in the community that I know about. He was a very good teacher and helped some of the pupils in their other courses such as Math and Science. I don't believe he belonged to any clubs.

I never had any reason to question his loyalty but because of talk about him, I would not recommend him. However I must say that I never saw anything wrong with Mr. Porter.

ASHLAND POLICE HEADQUARTERS. Record Search by .

No record.

ORONO, MAINE

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE, University of Maine, Record information furnished by .
Our records show that Bernard Harden Porter, born Houlton, Maine, February 14, 1911, home address, P. O. Box 164 Ashland, Maine, took a Correspondence Course running from September 1, 1960 to January 4, 1961. This was an educational course entitled, Teaching Reading in the Elementary School. He received a grade of "B" for this course. This is the only information I have on this former Correspondence Student. I am unable to refer you to anyone who might have known him personally.

UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT. Record Search by

No record.

ORONO POLICE HEADQUARTERS. Record Search by

No record.

BANGOR CREDIT BUREAU, Bangor, Maine (Also covers Orono, Belfast, Ashland, Calis, and Madawaska, Maine) Records furnished by

On May 26, 1962, we did a Credit Investigation for the Garden State Credit Bureau of Clifton, New Jersey on Bernard Harden Porter, wife, Margaret. Their local address was shown as 106 High Street, Belfast, Maine. He was found to be approximately age 50 and a self-employed retired Physicist and Book Publisher. It was found that he did assignments for the Government throughout the country in the Physics line. At the time of the investigation he was living in Florida but we do not have his Florida address. His address previous to New Jersey apparently was 677 East Colorado Street, Pasadena, California. Nothing unsatisfactory was found regarding this person.

MADAWASKA, MAINE

North Star Hotel, 38 Bridge Street.

I do not have any records and don't recall the name of the person, that in 1961, a man about age 50, and his wife came here to stay. He was not at all friendly and had no personality. I tried to be friendly with him and talk but he used to just walk away. He payed his bills and never caused any trouble. He did not work and every day he and his
wife used to walk over the bridge to Canada. This made me suspicious and I asked the Immigration people to do an investigation of him. The FBI investigated him I heard, and he turned out to be alright. He was some sort of a writer and was typing in his room practically all the time when he wasn't out walking. He was here for several months and left. I don't know if he left because I had him investigated or just what the cause was. As far as he was concerned, rather than causing you to be suspicious, I know nothing derogatory regarding him.

Prior to coming here he lived in an apartment at the home of 445 Main Street and I think that she kicked him out because he and his wife appeared to be so strange.

I recall that in 1961 I had a man and wife stay here for about two weeks before I told them I needed the apartment they were occupying. They went from here to the North Star Hotel and I never saw them after that.

They were a very strange couple. The man appeared to be about 50 years of age and his wife somewhat older. They were not friendly and didn't seem to want to talk. As I recall, she said they had come here from Mexico.

The man spent a lot of time writing and I used to hear the typewriter going all hours of the night. The woman used to take a lot of letters to the Post Office. I was afraid that they were members of some unusual religious sect and were trying to convert people in the town. This was why they frightened me and I asked them to leave.

He had a lot of books. I know they were here in the cold weather because he wore a quilted jacket over his suit. This is all I can recall about him and his wife. I do not have any records that far back and do not recall their name.

United States Post Office.

I recall a man named Bernard Porter receiving his mail here, care of General Delivery about six years ago. He was a queer looking sort of person and dressed in a sloppy fashion. There was a lot of talk about him because he was around so long and didn't seem to have any job. I heard afterwards that he was investigated by the police and it turned out that he was doing some sort of research. He was a very quiet type of fellow. He received mail from all over the country. Some of the mail was addressed to him as Bernard Brooks as well as Bernard Porter. He must have been here six or more months.
I recall he lived part of the time at the North Star Hotel on Bridge Street. That is at number 30 and it is the lowest number on Bridge Street.

In addition to seeing him at the Post Office I used to see him out on the road walking. He used to walk up and down Main Street looking in the stores and just walking along. A fellow acting in a town such as this would naturally cause suspicion. This is the only information I have on him. He would say Good Morning and that is all. He wasn't the type you could get to engage in a conversation.

I recall Bernard Porter being around town for five or six months back in 1961. He had a wife with him but I don't recall her name. A fellow who is just hanging around without any apparent means of income stands out like a sore thumb in a town of this size. He and his wife lived at the North Star Hotel.

My only personal contact with him was on one occasion when I talked to him about walking on the railroad tracks. He said that he meant no harm and was just walking that way and found it convenient to walk on the tracks. He paid his bills as far as I know and seemed to be a very nice man. He told me that he was a writer. This is the only information that I have on this individual.

I recall a Bernard Porter being around town here for a period of five or six months back in 1961. He lived at the North Star Hotel which is right near here. We became suspicious of him because he and his wife used to walk over the bridge to Canada most every day. On other occasions he would stand in the middle of the bridge for hours at a time just looking at the water and the cars going by. Other times he would stand here near the Immigration Station and watch the cars being processed as they came over from Canada. We thought that he might have been trying to figure out a way to smuggle people in. However he was interviewed and it was found that he was a United States citizen alright, and was in the area gathering material for some sort of a book that he was going to write. I don't believe any report was made of this incident nor do I know if we asked the FBI or any other government agency to investigate this man. This is the only information I know about him.
HADAWASKA POLICE HEADQUARTERS. Record Search by __________

No record.

HOULTON, MAINE

HOULTON PIONEER TIMES (Record Search by Investigator)

This is a weekly newspaper and an article dated October 15, 1960, was found relating to the subject. The article is as follows:

LOCAL "BOY" MAKES GOOD. BERN PORTER VISITS HOULTON.

Renown Physicist Also Head of the Porter Publishing Company—Has Many Varied Interests.

Hardwood trees in Tasmania, Houses made of air, Communication systems for the Atlas Missiles, Clothing that sprays on from the shower, Atomic Bombs, Experimental literature, Institute of Advanced Thinking.

New alphabet, Publishing, 4 year old PhD's sleep reading, Bills in pill form and ___

Talking with Bern Porter, a Houlton native, born in Porter's settlement about fifty years ago, is difficult.

Subjects, strange and varied, popped to the surface as though one were quickly thumbing a massive encyclopedia.

Bern Porter is a renowned Physicist—he got his advanced degree from Brown after being graduated from Colby—Writer of several books, of more than 200 articles, Scientist, Raconteur, World traveler and Envisioner of the world of tomorrow. He is a local boy who has made good in a hundred different ways.

Porter, married with no children, is a Chairman of the Board of Bern Porter Publishing, which prints Vangird Series of books sold in Universities and book stores throughout the world. Bern Porter Publishing was founded in 1937 but "Now I am getting my checks every month, doing some special work and just traveling," Porter said.

Porter was in the town of his birth last week for the first time in thirty years. He and his wife were passing through after a trip to New Foundland where they were tracking down a lead on an as yet unpublished write-up.
Before that Porter was in Tasmania where he was conducting a scientific study on Hardwood Trees, a major industry. In the meantime, he was in Arizona on a Pilot Project (Institute of Advanced Thinking) in which a house is being constructed there.

And in Chicago, Scientists in his program are painstakingly working on a whole new system of communications which centers around a new alphabet and printing. The Air House is most fascinating.

Here, compressed air is shot skywards through 3 inch slots in the ground. These upward moving air streams form an invisible barrier through which neither heat nor cold can move. In such a house there would be no windows or doors. Aluminum screens would be drawn for privacy.

Porter apparently doesn't mind the invitation of ridicule due to the revolutionary departure of his interest in work.

"We are using our resources up faster than nature can replace them. We must turn to the sun, sea, and air. These are the resources of the future and we must learn to harness them for use," he said.

Porter was a consulting Physicist in the development of the first Atom Bomb. He has been a consultant in the development of communication systems for missiles. He appreciates the past for what it is but insists mankind can live better and more efficiently in the present by continually probing the future.

He admits his projects may seem ludicrous to the everyday man, but "Someday they will take these things for granted, just as today we take the mighty power of the rockets for granted."

The Porters won't hang their hats anywhere right now. They are on the move constantly, studying, interviewing and watching. "Soon, we are going to return to Maine and live here," Bern declared.