

Now & Then in Ripon ... Looking back with the Ripon Historical Society

Vintage Ripon baseball games full of rivalry, humor

By Pat Grahn

The baseball season has started and the *Ripon Commonwealth Press* from years ago gives a look at some interesting games played in Ripon years ago.

May 19, 1887

Tuesday afternoon a fair-sized crowd assembled at the fairgrounds to witness the contest for supremacy in the baseball arena between the Republican and Democratic clubs organized for the occasion.

Owing to the numerous changes in positions and players, it is almost impossible to give anything like an intelligible summary. Several players were disabled and substitutes put in from time to time during the process of the game.

Frank Barnes hit the ball so hard he broke a bat in three pieces. Fish tried to do likewise and succeeded in getting four pieces out of the bat. Harkness, late pitcher of the Oshkosh league club, umpired a part of the game, and gave good satisfaction. His life was not endangered a single time by a decision.

DEM-GOP ball game was 38-38 - July 14, 1887

The game of ball between the Democrats and Republicans Friday afternoon was a hotly contested affair. It was a regular "slugging" match, two and three base hits and home runs being of great frequency in the latter part of the game. After playing four hours and nine innings the score stood 38 to 38, the game was called on account of darkness.

One to naught - July 23, 1908

Last Sunday the Fond du Lac Telephone baseball team came rushing over here with blood in their eye, accompanied by three or four league players to everlastingly wipe mother Earth with the Ripon Brewers, and we guess they did it. Well, the professionals from the county seat city went home rather unhappy with nine "goose eggs" to their credit.

We are informed that one or two Ripon sports fans dropped a little "cold cash" on the Fondy whirlwinders.



MAYOR LEWIS G. Kellogg hits the ball in what is believed to be a Republicans vs. Democrats game in 1908. Kellogg was a democrat. *submitted photo*

That served them right, stick to your own town and defy all competition — whether in baseball or business.

Dems ball team alibis in loss to Stone's GOP - Oct. 9, 1908

Just as we go to press it is learned that another game will take place between the Democratic and Republican baseball teams. The following letters, made public today, explain themselves:

Mr. J.L. Stone, Captain Republican Team:

There is no doubt that our team was robbed of victory today by rank decisions of the umpires. On their merits we have the Republicans beat to a standstill. We hearby challenge your team to another game to be played at any time and place, and to be officially umpired.

*Yours respectfully,
J.G. Seelig, Captain Demo-*

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Mr. J.G. Seelig, Captain, Democratic Team:

Yours of October 7th at hand. Same here only just the other way around. Your challenge is accepted.

*Yours,
J.L. Stone, Captain Republicans*

Ripon mailmen stamp 19-4 defeat on Berlin Post Office softball contingent - June 30, 1939

The Ripon post office softballers put a visiting delegation of Berlin mailmen through the cancellation machine in short order out at Ingalls Field Wednesday night. But after stamping a 19 to 4 defeat on the visitors, they didn't reroute them back to Berlin until they had filled them up with "beer and dogs" at a wiener roast which climaxed the game.

Inter-city games played by mailmen - July 28, 1939

Taking the ball by the seams, so to speak, the Berlin mailmen today challenged the Ripon postal employees to a softball return engagement Wednesday evening, August 2, in an attempt to gain retribution for the terrible slaughter suffered by the former at the hands of the latter in a previous game on June 28.

Apparently, it has taken both teams a month to recover from the pulled muscles and Charley-horses suffered in the former game.

The Ripon Historical Society is the oldest continually operating historical society in Wisconsin. It is open Fridays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information, visit www.riponhistory.org, facebook.com/riponhistoricalsociety or instagram.com/riponhistoricalsociety/.



J.L. STONE HITS the ball in a 1908 game between Republicans and Democrats at Ingalls Field. Stone was the captain of the Republican team. *submitted photo*



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