

Now & Then in Ripon ...

Looking back with the Ripon Historical Society

Crane receives patent for helping to improve sulky plows

Riponites who applied for patents weren't just inventors.

Most owned and operated businesses for their everyday income. Many were farmers seeking to improve their equipment and related parts. They were similar to the Wright Brothers, who invented the airplane, while their day job was operating a bicycle shop.

This is the fifth in a series of articles about early Riponites applying for Patents.

Benjamin James Crane (1825-1903) was a farmer and resident of Ripon and surrounding communities for more than 50 years. He arrived from Rome, N.Y. as a young man in 1846. His family first settled in the town of Springvale before moving to Ripon.

The *Ripon Commonwealth Press* noted that Crane married Maria Antoinette Loper Stewart (1827-1930), who was at that time a widow. Maria lived on a farm before moving into city, where she resided on Spaulding Street. Stewart was the daughter of Amos and Caroline Loper, founding members of the Republican Party and residents of the Ceresco communal living settlement which pre-dated Ripon.

Benjamin Crane applied for a U.S. patent application for his concept and design for improving "sulky plows."

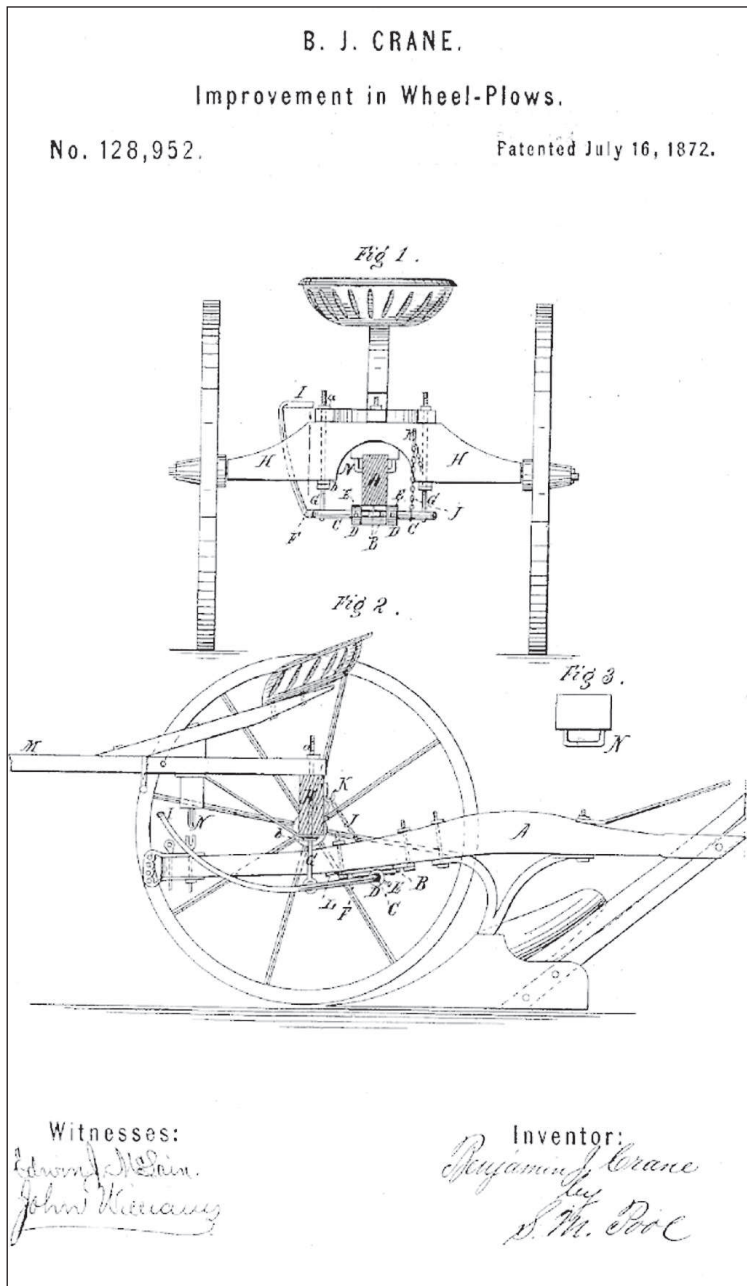
A sulky plow was a horse-drawn riding plow that could be set to turn the soil on either the left or right side, enabling for creating highly-efficient plowing patterns for gardening and crop raising.

Crane's design patent concept and application included his vision for modifications to this type of plow including:

- An adjustable rear-elevation to enable for making shallow and deeper rows for planting;

- Adding double plates of iron, which adjusted the plow's crank shaft and its adjustable wedge-shaped plow plate by using various toggle capabilities.

These modifications also allow for regulating the width of furrows when plowing. Although these mechanical and functional additional were proposed to allow for a variety of plowing techniques, it was noted as a "cheap and efficient solution to allow for easy control, light drafting, saving the cost and need for new farm implements that would need



THIS IS BENJAMIN J. Crane U.S. patent approval for improving sulky plows.
U.S. Patent Archives photo

to be purchased for plowing - adding higher cost investments (for farmers)." Records show this patent was approved and granted to Crane in 1872.

Plat maps of Ripon in 1874 until Crane's passing in 1903 show he and his wife owned approximately 196 acres of farmland. Both Crane and his wife are buried in the Loper Cemetery at 570 Aspen St., in Ripon. Additional in-laws are buried in the Loper Cemetery, perhaps indicating their familial loyalty to blood relatives and their spouses.

Crane's design concept and patent application was witnessed by William K. Wyckoff (no dates on gravestone) and Nicoll H. Wyckoff (1805-1878), who are buried at Hillside Cemetery in Ripon. They were business men who operated Naiad Waterproof Oil manufacturing factory and sales in Ripon.

Crane's patent for improv-

ing the sulky plow was signed by individuals who are listed as buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington D.C.

Did you know?

- The U.S. Government and Congress grants four different types of patents to secure inventor rights to design, use and sell products, enhance processes, or register new species of plants.

- There were 110 U.S. patent applications filed from individuals in Ripon in the 1800s.

- There were 66 U.S. patent applications filed from individuals in Ripon in the 1960s.

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 follow us at Facebook/riponhistory or www.riponhistory.org

RIPONFEST/Parade

moves to Sunday continued from page 1

funding from the city of Ripon. Riponfest 2.0 depends solely on donations and sponsors to put on the three-day event.

With funding in mind, the group announced its latest fundraiser: A spaghetti dinner. It will be held today (Thursday) from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at the Ripon Area Fire Department firehouse, located at 515 Aspen St.

Meals will be \$12 per person in advance or at the door, and along with the spaghetti dinner, a 50/50 raffle also will be held., along with other items to be raffled off.

"We are hoping to fill up the place," Stibb said.

The committee is working on events for this year's Riponfest 2.0 and is making some changes. The parade, which has been on Saturday in years past, now will be on Sunday and will begin at 11 a.m.

"There were a lot of people who were still working on Saturday morning, so they couldn't come to the parade," Stibb said. "This way it will be better."

The car show will return Sunday, June 30 and Stibb hopes to see even more entries this year than last, which boasted nearly 200 vehicles of all types and years. The goal, he noted, is to get to 300 entries.

"We will be happy this year if we get to about 250 or so," he said.

Along with the car show and parade, other events will include a cornhole tournament, minnow

races, a treasure hunt for kids, the carnival, music Friday evening and all-day Saturday and a fireworks display.

Riponfest 2.0 had originally approached the city of Ripon asking to move the city's fireworks from the Fourth of July to Riponfest, but the council did not take action on that request.

Stibb said the committee was working on getting sponsors for their own fireworks, and all paperwork has been done for approval for that part of the event.

"At least people won't have to be concerned about fireworks in one park or another, since

there will be one in both parks," Nigbor said. "Everyone gets what they want."

The reason Riponfest 2.0 is a three day event, according to Stibb, is the carnival people wouldn't come out for a two-day event and carnivals are very hard to come by now.

"There are only about seven carnival companies in Wisconsin and we almost didn't get one. Fortunately, we moved the event and were able to secure a carnival from the U.P.," Nigbor said.

For anyone who wants to help out the Riponfest 2.0 team put on this year's event or who just want a plate of spaghetti, the place to be Thursday night is the firehouse on Aspen Street. No advance ticket purchase is required, Stibb said, just come in and get a ticket at the door and enjoy a meal.

"At least people won't have to be concerned about fireworks in one park or another, since there will be one in both parks," Nigbor said. "Everyone gets what they want."

Joshua Nigbor,
Riponfest 2.0 board president

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