

RAILROADS HELPED BUILD RIPON

Trains made it easy for goods and people to come to Ripon and for farmers to send their goods to big markets, like Milwaukee. The railroads also provided truly significant improvement in mail service.



C. & N. W. Depot, Cass St.

- The first railroad line to reach Ripon was laid in 1856. The track came North from Milwaukee and extended through Ripon to Rush Lake with its terminus in Berlin.
- One indication about how train access and rapid business success was realized was when Ripon's farmland jumped from a then average of \$8.00 per acre to \$35.00 per acre almost overnight.
- In 1861, David Mapes opened the Ripon & Wolf River Railroad from Ripon to Omro. This line brought much needed lumber from the north for building new homes.

- In 1871 rail lines opened to Oshkosh and Fond du Lac.

- The first Passenger Train Depot in Ripon was built in 1872 on Cass Street and accommodated the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad.

- Originally a wooden frame building, the depot eventually burned in 1892 and was replaced by a more modern brick structure at the corner of Blackburn and Jackson Streets where Condon Total Comfort is currently located.

Right: C. & N.W.
depot, 1897

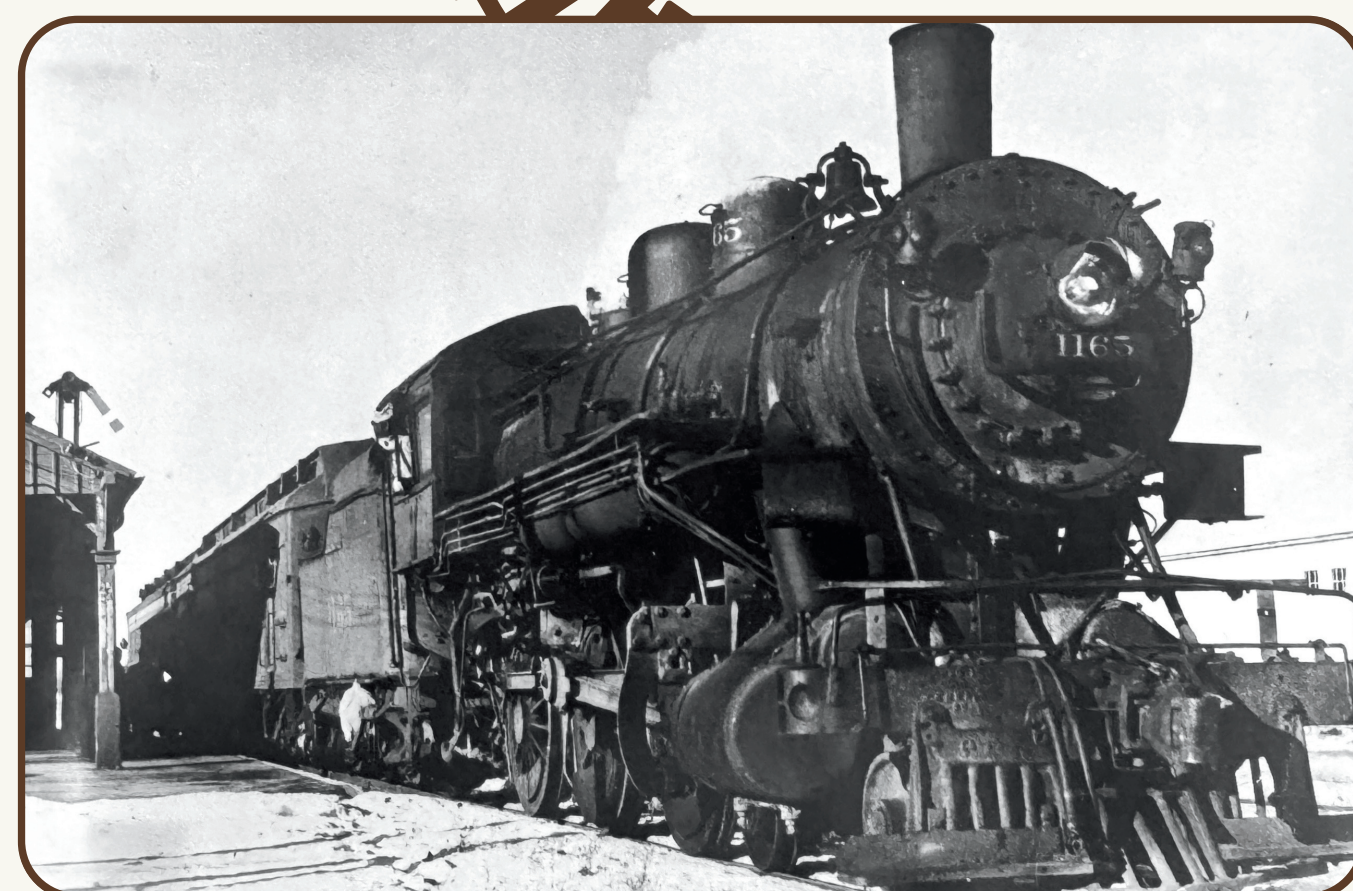


- In the 1880s, a branch of the Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul Railroad arrived in Ripon at a second depot located across town, on Fenton St. known as the Milwaukee Road. The passenger train started in Berlin and went south to Milwaukee.

- The 1920s was Ripon's heyday as a rail junction. Up to 20 trains passed through each day, stopping at Ripon's stations, mills, and freight houses.

- In the 1930s, farmers brought their cabbages to the train depot by horse and wagon, then shipped them out on the C. & N.W. railway to bigger markets.

- The last Northwestern passenger train left Ripon in April of 1954. The last Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific R. R. to Berlin passenger train left Ripon in March of 1958. (Right) By that time roads had improved, and Americans started driving automobiles as their primary form of transportation.



Above: Equipment used on the
C. & N.W. line between Fond du
Lac and Marshfield, 1910-1940.



Right:
Wagons
full of
cabbages.
Buchholz Grocery
shipped cabbages from
Ripon on the Chicago &
Northwestern railway in
the 1930s.

