

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

# As peas are ready to be picked, recipes from past shared

The Ripon area is well known for growing vegetables. A Bureau of Business Research and Service report published in 1948 noted that by 1920, Wisconsin was packing half of the nation's total crop of canning vegetables. The number of Wisconsin canneries peaked in 1931 at 170 canneries and several were found in the Ripon area.

Peas are typically harvested between June and July. Harvesting large acres of peas is often referred to as the "pea pack." Many of the peas are then taken to area processing facilities to be canned.

Recently, Ripon Historical Society volunteer Linda Budnick was doing research in a 1938 issue of the *Ripon Commonwealth Press* and came across an article that mentioned Daisy E. Fenelon (1881-1957) winning a canned pea recipe contest. Budnick, who is an avid family genealogist, noted that Fenelon is her first cousin three times removed.

Fenelon, along with Winifred Swanson Hargrave (1884-1976), Ella Wilken Kirst (1893-1983), and Maud Cater Bryan (1894-1979), had submitted recipes. They were named as Fond du Lac County winners of the recipe contest, which was sponsored by two radio stations along with the Wisconsin agricultural authority.

Approximately 2,000 recipes using canned peas were submitted from every county in the state.

The *Commonwealth* printed two of the winning recipes and stated: "The recipes were judged on palatability, appearance and originality." The article also informed that "Prizes awarded in each county consist of one case of Wisconsin peas for the first prize recipe; one-half case Wisconsin peas for the second prize recipe; and four cans of Wisconsin peas to each of five honorable mention recipes."



**THE RIPON HISTORICAL** Society, 508 Watson St., has a new exhibit of Green Giant memorabilia. The items belonged to David Fox, who worked at the Ripon and Rosendale plants from 1961 until 1993. Green Giant was one of many canneries that operated over the years in the Ripon area. *submitted photo*

Since the article in the paper didn't mention who won what prize and who submitted what recipe, Budnick decided to prepare both recipes in honor of her cousin. Budnick had what she called a "pea party," inviting her sister and a cousin to cook with her and share the meal.

"We cooked the recipes as they were written" Budnick said. "We didn't take short cuts like using Bisquick and we used canned not frozen peas."

In preparing the meal, Budnick used a family cooking pot that she had inherited, noting "It made the meal extra special." After eating, the three relatives walked through an area cemetery looking at family gravesites and reminiscing about their family past.

Budnick grew up in Wau-

watosa, Wis., but as a child she visited relatives in Ripon. She said that "Ripon has always been my happy place because I spent to many wonderful times here as a child."

She located her great-great grandmothers home on East Fond du Lac Street with help from Ancestry.com.

Budnick then pursued the owner of the house to sell it to her and retired to the community.

"It has been so fun to me to volunteer at the Ripon Historical Society and come across so many references to my relatives," Budnick said. "So many people have given me photographs or items belonging to my family. It's been just wonderful."

The winning recipes that Budnick found in the *Commonwealth*



**RIPON RESIDENT LINDA** Budnick cooked these dishes from canned pea recipes found in a 1938 *Ripon Commonwealth Press*. Her first cousin three times removed Daisy E. Fenelon (1881-1957) was mentioned in the paper as being one of four winners of a state wide canned pea recipe contest. *submitted photo*

and recreated are listed below as printed in the paper.

Historic copies of Ripon's newspapers can be found on line through the Ripon Public Library.

**Hot Salmon and Celery Salad Roll:** Number 1 tall can drained salmon, minced; 1/2 cup raw celery, diced very fine; 1/2 mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Mix well. Make a biscuit dough using: 2 cups flour, 4 teaspoons baking powder; 3/4 cup milk. Mix and roll out very thin. Spread with salmon mixture. Rollup like jelly roll. Cut slices 1-inch thick and place cut side upon a buttered baking pan. Bake 25 to 35 minutes in a 400 degree oven. Served with creamed peas.

**Creamed Pea Sauce:** Two number 2 cans peas, 4 tablespoons butter, 4 tablespoons flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, 2 cups milk. Make a sauce from the butter, flour, salt, pepper and milk. Add the peas and reheat.

**Ham and Peas Shortcake:** 3/4 cup flour, 4 teaspoons baking powder, 2 tablespoons sugar,

1 teaspoon salt, 1 1/2 cups corn meal, 1 1/4 cups milk, 1 egg beaten, 4 tablespoons melted fat. Sift the first five ingredients together three times. Add milk, egg and melted fat mixed together. Pour into 8-inch square pan. Bake at 425 degrees for 25 minutes. Cut the corn bread in eight serving pieces, butter and put together and top with the creamed ham and peas.

**Creamed Ham and Peas:** 2 tablespoons butter, 4 tablespoons flour, 1 1/2 cups drained peas, 1/4 cups cooked ham cut into 1/4 inch cubes, 1 whole clove, 2 1/2 cups milk, small piece bay leaf. Melt butter and flour, stir well and add seasonings, then milk added slowly. Cook until thick. Add ham and peas. Serve very hot.

*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.*

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