

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

Dogs n Suds once was popular Ripon hangout spot

During the “dog days” of summer people of Ripon may remember stopping by the Dog n Suds for a treat. Dog n Suds was located approximately where Anytime Fitness, 1069 W. Fond du Lac Street is located today.

The drive-in opened in the spring of 1963 and was owned by Nick Goluba (1921-1976) and his wife, Mary Casson Golduba Anderson (1925-2017). The couple had moved to Ripon from Streator, Ill., had four children, and lived at 518 Lincoln St.

A *Ripon Commonwealth Press* article talked about the Dog n Suds opening and stated that the drive-in will feature “hot dogs, root beer and light lunches, prepared in a modernistic, attractive building on Highway 23...” The article continued, “Customers can take their choice of where to park for service from a ‘car hop.’ The canopy provides space for 12 cars while many more can park around the building. In addition, diners can eat at the counter or at any of four tables inside the building.”

Dog n Suds is a franchise which started in Champaign, Ill. in 1953. During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s it became one of the most successful fast-food franchises in the country. At one time it had several locations throughout Wisconsin and today has 20 locations around the country.

Goluba, who was an auto mechanic by trade, talked to the *Commonwealth* about how he got into the drive-in business.

“There was a Dog n Suds located next to my garage in Streator and I mentioned that I might be interested in a similar business. I talked to an area manager for Dog n Suds and he mentioned localities in Wisconsin that were open. We looked at Ripon one Sunday and right away decided to locate here.”

The Ripon Dog n Suds measured 26-by-30 feet when it was built. A 20-by-20-foot addition was added in 1968, expanding the kitchen and adding a walk in cooler.

Advertisements in the *Commonwealth Press* from the late 1960s show that hamburgers sold four for 99 cents (approximately \$9 today), a basket of 21 shrimp sold for \$1.29 (approximately \$11.15 today), and half a chicken for \$1.39 (approximately \$12.58 today).

The Dog n Suds was a hangout for the Ripon High School football team, which was known to chug mugs of root beer after football practices. Many high school students got their first job working at the drive-in.

In July of 1964, Robert Feller, an all-time Cleveland Indians pitching great, demonstrated mound skills and different pitches and signed autographs for ap-



THIS IS AN undated photograph of the Ripon Dog n Suds which opened in 1963 approximately where Anytime Fitness, 1069 W. Fond du Lac St., is located today. submitted photo



THIS MUG is from the Ripon Dog n Suds. The Ripon High School football team was known to hang out at the drive-in after practice and chug root beer from mugs like this one. Dawn Brown photo

proximately 85 Ripon Little League players at the Dog n Suds.

In the summer of 1971, the Dog n Suds was sold to Robby's Systems of Fond du Lac. Goluba cited poor health as his reason for selling the business. The *Commonwealth* reported, “Robby's owns a chain of 21 fast food drive-ins throughout Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota.”

After a renovation, the location reopened and continued as a drive-in. However, the deal with Robby's did not work out and the drive-in only operated as Robby's for a short time. Goluba then operated Mister Nick's Drive In at the same location. Goluba passed away at age 55 in 1976.

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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THIS CARD HAS a number on the back side that patrons placed in their car window when getting car hop service at the Dog n Suds. Joe Walker photo

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