

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

160 Years of Ripon news: Stories you can't make up

The *Ripon Commonwealth Press* printed a centennial edition of the paper in 1965 covering 100 years of the production. This edition stated, "Twenty-three different newspapers have served residents of the Ripon community from the earliest paper, *The Herald*, established in 1853 to the present day *Commonwealth Press*."

The special edition mentioned that Ripon once had two daily papers, the *Ripon Daily Post* from 1881-1882 and Stone's *Free Press* published for a brief time in 1885. There also were two German language papers published in the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

The *Commonwealth Press* is now 160 years old. The modern paper has both a print and online issue. Historic issues of Ripon's papers may be found online through the Ripon Public Library at www.riponlibrary.org, by clicking "Research," then "Local History" and finally "Ripon Newspapers 1855-2005."

The following are some unique tidbits from the *Commonwealth Press* over the years.

June 6, 1881

Monday Mr. Wm. Pickard of Metomen was married to Mrs. Lockwood of that town. Pickard is 66 years of age, and Mrs. L. a little less than 50. Mr. P.'s wife has been under the sod about two months. She was an estimable well-related lady who enjoyed the respect and esteem of all who knew her. That her husband should now do so outrageous a thing as this is a shame and disgrace to himself, and a humiliation to his relatives and neighbors. It is certainly too bad to have an old man make such a blank fool of himself. It might possibly be excused in a giddy young spring of 18 summers, but when hoary winter slops over in this wise, it is simply too base and too mean to admit of a decent setting out in a newspaper.

Drunk breaks into local home, March 12, 1885

Last Saturday night a drunken ruffian, whose name we omit out of respect to his friends, paid our quiet little city a visit and after filling his hide full of whiskey, proceeded to "paint the town red." About 9 o'clock his bravery led him in his wanderings to visit the house of Mrs. Granger who lives in Ceresco. He demanded admittance and when it was refused, proceeded to kick the door down. At this stage of the game, Mrs. Granger drew her little gun and began taking a hand in the painting process by firing four shots, when he sought a more quiet neighborhood, traveling too rapidly for the other three bullets to catch him. He soon reached Brayton's Drug store where Dr. Barnes extracted the bullet and dressed the wound, which is painful but not dangerous. Many think Mrs. Granger should be punished for not killing this fellow who is always insulting someone.



OVER THE YEARS, 23 newspapers have been printed in the Ripon community and covered local news. This included the earliest, *The Herald*, established in 1853, and two German language papers. The current paper, the *Ripon Commonwealth Press*, now is 160 years old and is printed weekly and also available online.

Protests poolroom bruised for effort, Feb. 28, 1884

About noon Wednesday, D.G. Woodward came down the street with his face badly bruised, a tooth knocked out and others loosened. It seems Mr. Woodward went into Slip Allen's paint shop and remonstrated with Slip about allowing his boys to play pool therein.

A torrent of bad language followed when Slip went at Woodward and mauled him and thrust him out. This is a far sample of the kind of reception any father will meet who goes into a saloon to protect his boys. It is regular saloon fruit, and most detestable of all, the city fathers know these things, yet they say not a word.

How many young men in Ripon are spending all they can get in these saloons. Minors get liquor for the asking and drunkard the same. Gambling is carried on in many of these dens, yet all enjoy licenses from our city fathers. Shame!

Car scares horses, wagon overturns, Aug. 5, 1904

Tuesday afternoon Fred Procknow, driving Lueck and Kaiser's team, met

Dr. A.S. Mitchell in his automobile just east of the St. Paul depot. The horses were terribly frightened and turning short capsized the wagon, throwing Mr. Procknow out. He was cut and bruised about the head and face, and one foot is so severely injured that it will be some time before he is able to resume his work. One of the horses was badly hurt.

It is claimed that Dr. Mitchell was asked to stop or slow down his machine, but failed to do so. An automobile going at a high speed is sure to frighten a horse and most drivers slow down when meeting a team, and if necessary, stop entirely.

One reckless automobile driver can throw a whole township into a state of nervous hysteria. He spoils all pleasure for the owners of horses and does much to make automobiles unpopular.

Writes name 2,920 times on post card, Dec. 16, 1904

Mrs. Frank Lueck was awarded the gold watch offered by Kingsbury and Lambert, the jewelers, to the person who write the words, "Kingsbury and Lambert" the largest number of times on a postal card. Mrs. Lueck wrote the firm name 2,920 times.

Stewed cabbage in car, Jan. 4, 1918

At 12:30 Sunday morning the fire laddies were called out and the blaze was found to be a car on the C.M. & St. P. track at the stone elevator on Scott Street, Mr. D. Witt, who now owns the elevator, had loaded a car with cabbage and to keep it from freezing placed two oil stoves therein, and after burning the oxygen out of the air in the closed car one or both of the stoves exploded setting it on fire, and flames had reached the car roof and had also burned through the bottom before being discovered. The car and cabbage were both destroyed.

Trainmen put out washer plant fire, Nov. 21, 1913

What might have been a serious fire was averted Saturday evening when a blaze was discovered in the new factory of the Barlow and Seelig Manufacturing Company (now known as "Alliance Laundry Systems.") One of the employees had failed to completely disconnect the electric current on the motor which propelled his machine with the result that the motor became overheated and started a blaze after the force had left the building. Trainmen on the Berlin division saw the blaze while passing, and the engine crew promptly stopped their train, broke in the door of the factory and with water from the tender of the engine, extinguished the blaze.

Automatic corn popper was novelty, July 22, 1927

Oliver Lentz, proprietor of the Shoe Inn, has recently added a novel popcorn machine to his business. The new machine, which has attracted quite a bit of interest, has novel features. The corn is automatically fed into the hopper, run onto an endless chain and buttered without being touched by hand.

Police light installed, Dec. 5, 1913

The city has just installed on a prominent corner of the public square a red electric signal light which is operated from the central telephone office and the purpose of which is to summon the policeman on duty. Any one desiring the officer at any hour of the day or night can call up central who will turn on the signal light. The officer can then call up central and find where his presence is required. This should be especially useful in case of tramps attempting to annoy housewives, or in summoning the police at night for any reason.

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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