

Cold snaps led to several tragic deaths

Last week we read about people who were injured by the cold. Today we will hear about others who were not as fortunate.

John Conley found his 46-year-old brother, Mike, dead in his home about four miles south of Monroe on Sunday, January 8, 1905. There was no fire in John's house where he lived alone; the body was frozen stiff. John, who lived a short distance away, had seen Mike on Friday. John had passed by the house twice on Saturday and did not see anyone and noticed no smoke coming from the chimney. He went over on Sunday afternoon and forced his way into the locked house. Mike was laying across the bed partially dressed. He had placed the kindling for the morning fire behind the stove. It was believed that he had been dead since Saturday morning.

It was reported in January 1910 that Edward Norder, a 27-year-old blacksmith was frozen weeks earlier under the Banta bridge of the Milwaukee railroad about two miles west of Monroe. His body was found by George O'Meara and Dan Parmer while they were hunting. The body, which was frozen fast to the ground, was at the bottom of a steep embankment with all but one shoulder buried in the snow. Some believed that he had been lying there since the first snowfall in early December.

Parties who had seen Norder did not agree on the time of his disappearance. Some said he left the city on December 11 to return to the Trickle farm west of the city where he had been working, which was the night of the first heavy snow. L. H. Norder, the Jackson street blacksmith, said that he saw his brother on the following Monday. Norder said

his brother was going to Iowa where he would take a job as a blacksmith. Edward had also talked of going to work for Knipschild, where he was expected to show up the following Monday morning.

It was believed Edward perished while searching for his hat. The hat was found some distance from the body. It was explained that the wind must have blown his hat off and that he went down the embankment to retrieve it. He had been cut by the wire fence he went through. He must have become exhausted while climbing back up. He was lying on his back with the overcoat collar pulled up under his face with his arms folded. That snowstorm was followed by bitter cold, making it possible that he was frozen in a short time.

Will Olson found the frozen body of Iver Gordee about two miles north of Browntown while returning home from the Norwegian church about 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 12, 1913. Gordee had ridden with the Olsons in the rain from Browntown to the Olson farm Saturday evening. Mr. Olson had one of his sons accompany Gordee part of the way home from there. "Having gone within a short distance of Gordee's house, Young Olson turned back, expecting the man would reach home safely. His clothes were wet from the rain Saturday night and froze to his body." Gordee, who lost his wife to diphtheria in January 1908, had been addicted to alcohol for some time; because of this Herman Fritz of Monroe had been appointed his guardian.

Another sad, tragic death was attributed to mental health issues. Hattie Maddrell, almost 40, from South Wayne, was found frozen to death "at a lonely spot in a field a mile northwest of the county farm"



on December 30, 1917 after drinking four ounces of formaldehyde. Her body was found the next morning by a county farm patient who was setting traps for game. "Whether the slow setting poison she had swallowed took effect before the bitter cold of the night congealed her body will probably always remain an unanswered question."

Miss Maddrell had been suffering from mental health issues for the previous month while staying with her brother, Harry. After he had briefly left home that afternoon, she left the house and rode the passenger train to Monroe. Nothing is known about her time in Monroe, except that she purchased the formaldehyde at a local drug store.

Maddrell's body was found "in a



Back in the Day

By: Matt Figi

Photo supplied

This photo of Iver Gordee as a young man was provided by Beth Luhman. Unfortunately, Iver was frozen to death in 1911 at the age of 48 and found near his home north of Browntown. He was buried in the cemetery at the Jordan Lutheran Church.

little gully that had been washed out by water, seated on a little ledge. She had broken off the top of the cork in the bottle and then had broken the neck of the bottle in

order to drain its contents. After drinking the poison, she had laid the bottle an arm's reach from her and placed her muff over it."

A very short article on Friday, December 27, 1918, informed the readers that Henry Krueger, about 50, of Gratiot, was found frozen to death that morning in a cornfield near Gratiot. He was a brother of S. W. Krueger and was "last seen Tuesday night following the blizzard."

The Times reported on January 15, 1916, "Jack Hyde, the friend of all, and for the past eight or ten years a familiar character about the public square, met death last night by freezing. His lifeless body was found this morning in the alley to the rear of

the east side of the square."

Jack had spent most of his time in the business district with Abe Heer's meat market being one of his favorite haunts as he was sure to get sufficient food there through the kindness of the owner. He sought a bed in some hallway at night, usually one where he could enjoy steam heat. Most commonly he would lodge in Dr. Roub's office. He apparently didn't reach there before it was closed that night.

"Jack was known to all in the city and was a friend to all. He was never known to do a mean act and so far as known was without enemies. Jack, while only a dog, had many good qualities." He was the property of Spy Hyde.

— Matt Figi is a Monroe resident and a local historian. His column will appear periodically on Saturdays in the Times. He can be reached at mfigi48@tds.net or at 608-325-6503.

ALICE IN DAIRYLAND

Celebrate Chinese New Year with Wisconsin Ginseng



Photos supplied

Ginseng is a root crop that is consumed around the world, especially in Asian cultures. It is used in traditional medicines, as a dietary supplement, and a botanical element. Ginseng is grown in numerous places throughout the world, but Wisconsin ginseng is prized for its high quality and unique, bittersweet taste.

Wisconsin has grown to be the number one producer of ginseng in the nation, producing 98% of the nation's total crop. Most of that ginseng is grown in Marathon County, and approximately 85% of it is exported to Asian countries.

Ginseng produced in Wisconsin is typically used in teas, taken in capsule form, ground into powder, or sliced for steeping or cooking. The powder form makes a convenient way to incorporate ginseng into all your favorite recipes, especially things like breads or cookies. I recently added some powder to a cranberry orange bread that my family and colleagues all enjoyed! Recipes can be found at www.ginsengboard.com, but experimenting with your current favorite baked goods, soups, stews, and more will show you how versatile this specialty root is!

This time of the year is a great time to try ginseng if you have not before. January 22nd marks the Chinese New Year, but celebrations can last up to 16 days. The holiday is celebrated across Asia and each county has their own ways to ring in the New Year. In China, it is the most important festival of the year and celebrated with feasts, gifting, and time with family. Chinese New Year is the time to worship ancestors, exorcise evil spirits, and pray for a good harvest. Activities at the celebration include the lion dance, the

dragon dance, temple fairs, and flower market shopping.

Each Chinese New Year, there are specific rituals that occur. Some of the popular rituals include putting up decorations, using fireworks, making resolutions for what you want to accomplish in the upcoming year, and serving food that symbolizes good fortune. Ginseng is a popular food to serve at this time, as it symbolizes a "gift of good health".

Wisconsin Ginseng is a wonderful addition to recipes or your daily life any time of the year, but if you are looking for a special occasion to try it out, Chinese New Year might be just what you have been waiting for!

— Taylor Schaefer is the 75th Alice in Dairyland, Wisconsin's agriculture ambassador who works with media professionals to educate consumers about the importance of agriculture to Wisconsin's economy and way of life. She can be reached at taylor.schaefer@wisconsin.gov.

EXCITING TIMES IN HISTORY

As the Monroe Times celebrates 125 years of publishing history from Monroe, Green County, and the state line region, we are looking back on the middle portion of that timespan: Specifically the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. We'll feature prior stories and moments of historical relevance from our paper's archives throughout the year.

On this date, 53 years ago today (Wednesday, January 21, 1970) ...

Ransome Miller Pays Surprise Visit Here

By HELENE E. ZIMMERLI

After an absence of nearly 22 years, Ransome Miller, Toluca, Mexico, made a surprise visit to his Green County relatives en route to Washington, D. C., regarding a Peace Corps contract for his bilingual school.

He combined pleasure and business — Chicago, Washington D. C., New York, Philadelphia and then to the West Coast. He is owner and principal of The North American Institute of Bilingual Studies, with several schools in Mexico City, in Toluca, and Iraeuato, the strawberry capital of the Americas.

In Toluca, he is building a new school, reported to be the most modern in all Americas, including the United States. It will have 8,000 square meters, one of the largest and newest concepts in schools, catering to Americans who want to specialize in language study. It should be ready in December of 1970 — at a cost of 2½ billion.

Miller has a teaching staff of 53 teachers, Mexicans, Americans, Canadians, two Germans — "a multinationality staff." Next year he has plans for a preparatory school. Toluca is an industrial area, with 135 American, German and Japanese enterprises — needing bilingual-trained personnel.

Many of his graduates come to the United States to work, but the majority work right there in Mexico. Of the six persons just elected to represent Mexico in the International Youth Association meeting in Japan this July, two were his students — both with very high grades.

"Wages in Mexico are lower, so are living costs. Specialists make good salaries, bilingual secretaries make rather high salaries compared to plain secretaries," he pointed out.



RANSOME MILLER Heads Mexico Schools

maternal great-great-grandfather, Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada was President of Mexico.

Ransome was employed as a clerk at the Eugene Hotel during his Monroe High School days and vacations. He attended Mexico City College, gaining an idiomatic mastery of Spanish, along with Latin American customs and culture. This was the only liberal arts school south of the Rio Grande giving the American type Bachelor of Arts and Master's degrees. He was named in "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities in 1955. He had attended the University of Colorado and also studied a year in London, and at the University of Mexico, where he had taught five years. He had also taught at Mexico City College.

Ransome was spending Christmas in his Mexico City house an hour's flying time from his resident at Toluca when he received word of the necessity of his going to Washington, D.C. He had planned that for a little later during Holy Week when the weather would have been more desirable.

"Not accustomed to cold weather, I'm freezing," he said one cold, cold day in Monroe. It was indeed a change from 65 to 75 degrees weather the year 'round. It was his first vacation in eight years and he made the most of it.

One of 15 children in his family, he had many relatives to visit. A family gathering was held during his visit at the home of a brother, Chester, Washington Township, with whom his father, Homer Miller, now lives.

Ransome is due back in Toluca on Friday, flying out of Houston, Texas.