

Then & Now - Princeton News Tidbits

To honor April Fool's Day Month, we share these News Tidbits, that might tickle your funny bone.

First:

The next time you are washing your hands & complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s.

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June. Since they were starting to smell, however, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

* Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women, and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it . . . hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the Bath water!"

* As many of you know, Princeton's Wachusett House Hotel was on the Lower Common, where Dingman Park is today (from 1825 to 1910). What you may not know is that, before it burned to the ground in late 1910, there was only one bathtub for its guest to share in the entire 60 room Hotel.



Second:

1941 – Wachess made breed history, both in the ring and at the pail. In her breed, she was the leading junior two-year old in milk production, with a record of 14,726 pounds of milk and 526.1 pounds of fat.

According to Wachusett Meadows farm manager Paul Beardsley, she was the only Milking Shorthorn cow in America to have produced over 100 pounds of milk in one day. Wachess was a Grand Champion at the Eastern States Exposition, and

her sire and dam, one grandsire and one granddam all won similar honors in their day.

Beardsley has used Wachusett Chess, a son of Wachess in the herd, and today there are eight granddaughters of this famous cow in his herd. Wachusett Chess and four of his bull calves sold last year for a total of \$2,175, and average of \$435 a piece, two going as far away as the Pacific coast.



Lastly – Princeton Criminal:

It is hard to believe, but in the early 1930's, Worcester County had a crime wave that was started by a resident of the quiet little town of Princeton. His name was John Karabanainiz (Kaspar) and lived on Greene Rd. This road begins just below the Harrington Farm and goes to the left.

The crime wave started, with a numerous number of school break-ins in our neighboring towns to Princeton. I remember the main items of interest that were stolen were typewriters. I am not sure how many of these robberies with which he was eventually charged, for he apparently did not work alone.

At the same time, John obtained a police uniform, and he would place himself

along different roads and stop cars for speeding. He would then tell them that for some fee, which he would divulge to them, he would not write them a ticket. Naturally someone later called the regular police, but by the time they would arrive, he would be gone. He also obtained a military officer's uniform and attempted to procure arms.

During one winter many of the summer homes in Princeton were broken into. He seemed to enjoy trashing and vandalizing these various rich people properties. The Allen Residence was one of these places, and he also had apparently been living there off and on. While in these homes, he would remove the furniture covering sheets and scattered flour and sugar all over them. These break-ins got to be so frequent that the State Police stabled a horse at the Brooks Family barn at 50 Worcester Road. From this location they would set out on daily patrols in the snow and cold visiting the various homes that were closed-up for the winter. They never caught him, but did find footprints leading to and from various properties.

Frank Simonatis, who served as the Police Chief and Fire Chief at that time, worked with the State Police in these investigations. Kaspar was arrested many times, but he didn't seem to be kept in jail for very long. It may be that at that time, his crimes were not serious enough to keep him in jail for any long period of time. One incident I remember is the day the town fire siren started to blow and blow, and we saw numerous police cars rushing into town past our house. It seems that someone had reported seeing Kaspar and called the police. This time the Chief, who was a big man, thought he had him cornered, but Kaspar caught him by surprise, and knocked him down and threw his coat over his head and then escaped.

Within a few days, the police went to catch him at his home in the dark of night. They approached his home with the car's lights and sirens turned off, Frank got out up the road and circled around behind his parent's house and barn, while the other officers approached the house from the front. Kaspar's mother met them at the front door, and she told them that John was not there. It seems that when he heard the knock at the door, he went into his cellar and escaped through a tunnel that led into the barn. But the Chief knew of this tunnel, so when he came out of the back of the barn the Chief nabbed him.

This was the last of his escapades for a long time.

This story was transcribed by William Brooks II, from a conversation he had with Frank Simonatis before the start of WWII.