

Dane C. Richards

March 14, 1876 – October 1938

Dane C. Richards, Aged 62, Victim of Tragic Gun Mishap Local Mail Carrier Laid to Rest in Highland Cemetery

Funeral services for Dane C. Richards, aged 62, for nearly 38 years a rural mail carrier out of the Monticello post office, who was fatally injured in a shooting accident at his home at the south edge of the village Thursday morning, were conducted at 1:30 p. m. Saturday at the Voegeli funeral parlors followed by interment in Highland cemetery.

Rev. A. Muehlmeier, retired pastor of the Evangelical Reformed church, presided at the services. Pallbearers were: John Keefe, retired local mail carrier, who sorted mail at his desk beside Mr. Richards for 25-years; Frank G. Clark, Herman Babler, and Olin E. Mitmoen, rural carriers; I. B. Pierce, former Monticello postmaster, and Atty. W. A. Loveland, a classmate of the deceased.

The rites were attended by a large number of relatives, friends, and mail patrons of Mr. Richards. Representatives of the postal service were here from Edgerton, Monroe, Albany, Brodhead, and Juda.

Terrifying Shock

Monticello citizens had not yet recovered from the shock created by the accidental death of another of its residents the day before when the terrifying news of Mr. Richards' sudden passing broke over the community. He had failed to report at the post office to put up the morning mail, but this was not considered unusual because he had occasionally had car trouble, and since he was in excellent health, there was no apparent reason for alarm. When he had not appeared at 9:15 a. m., his nephew, Postmaster Roswell S. Richards, went to his home. As he neared the residence, he could see his uncle's car headed toward the driveway, giving rise to the belief that he was about to start for the post office. Driving into the yard, he could see Mr. Richards leaning into the side of his car in a natural position as if fixing something on the inside of the vehicle.

Body Found in Car

When Mr. Richards failed to respond to repeated calls, his nephew found that he was lifeless upon reaching the car. Belief that death was due to a heart attack was quickly dispelled upon discovery that Mr. Richards had been shot through the jugular vein by the charge from a 410 shotgun. The gun was "broken down," the stock laying near the rear seat. Apparently under the impression that he had unloaded the gun before, Mr. Richards dragged the barrel toward him with the result that the weapon was discharged as the exposed trigger struck the ridge in the middle of the car. He is believed to have died instantly.

Native of Mt. Pleasant

A native of Mt. Pleasant township, Mr. Richards was born March 14, 1876, a son of John and Martha Lewis Richards. The family later moved to the village where the elder Richards was a prominent merchant for many years. "D. C." graduated from Monticello high school, attended the Edgerton schools for nearly a year, and then graduated from the Monroe high school. He also completed his freshman year at the University of Wisconsin.

In 1901, Mr. Richards married Mabel Richards at Ishpeming, Mich. She preceded him in death about 12 years ago.

Outstanding Athlete

A man who had always strictly adhered to the principles of clean living, Mr. Richards was an exceptional athlete in his youth. Endowed with surprising speed for a man of his weight, he was one of the outstanding football players in southern Wisconsin, having been a stellar member of the university freshman team back in the Pat O'Dea era of Badger football. Playing fullback on Monticello's city team, he once suffered a broken nose in the first few minutes of play, and through sheer courage, remained in the game until the final whistle. In the first years of his rural mail carrying, he frequently made his route by foot or on bicycle. Once he rode his bike to the world's fair in Omaha, Neb., a remarkable athletic achievement considering the poor road conditions in those days. He was also a skillful amateur boxer, who bested many highly touted pugilists touring the towns back in the 90's.

A hale and hardy individual, Mr. Richards' physical fitness was an outstanding example of the value of correct habits. Underneath his brusque, care-free, and jovial manner was a spirit of kindness and generosity which brought happiness to many individuals. Quiet and unassuming, many of his kindnesses were known only to intimate friends. A man of irreproachable character, Mr. Richards' honesty, loyalty, and friendship were never questioned. His love for the finer things in life found expression in prolific reading of the classics and growing flowers. He was one of those refreshing individuals who minded strictly to his own affairs—rarely did he speak of other persons except in praise and he achieved his measure of life's happiness through the same rigid application of his principle which characterized his adherence to other tenets of honorable living.

Survivors are a daughter, Mrs. Roy Gruenewalt, Brodhead; three grandchildren; the mother, Mrs. Martha J. Richards, who observed her 90th birthday anniversary October 4th; a sister, Mrs. C. D. Kennedy, and two brothers. S. Earle and John S., all of Monticello. Besides his wife, his father also preceded Mr. Richards in death.