

History of Ripley's Drug Store Block



C1900-1910 Ripley Block

When Ripley arrived in town, it was announced in the paper on Thursday, 12 November 1874 that "A. Hood sold his drug store to a Mr. Ripley of Wyoming territory, and he took possession last Wednesday."

In May 1875, Ripley began operations under the new liquor law; liquor can be bought only for medicinal, chemical and mechanical purposes and that no more drinks will be allowed in his establishment.

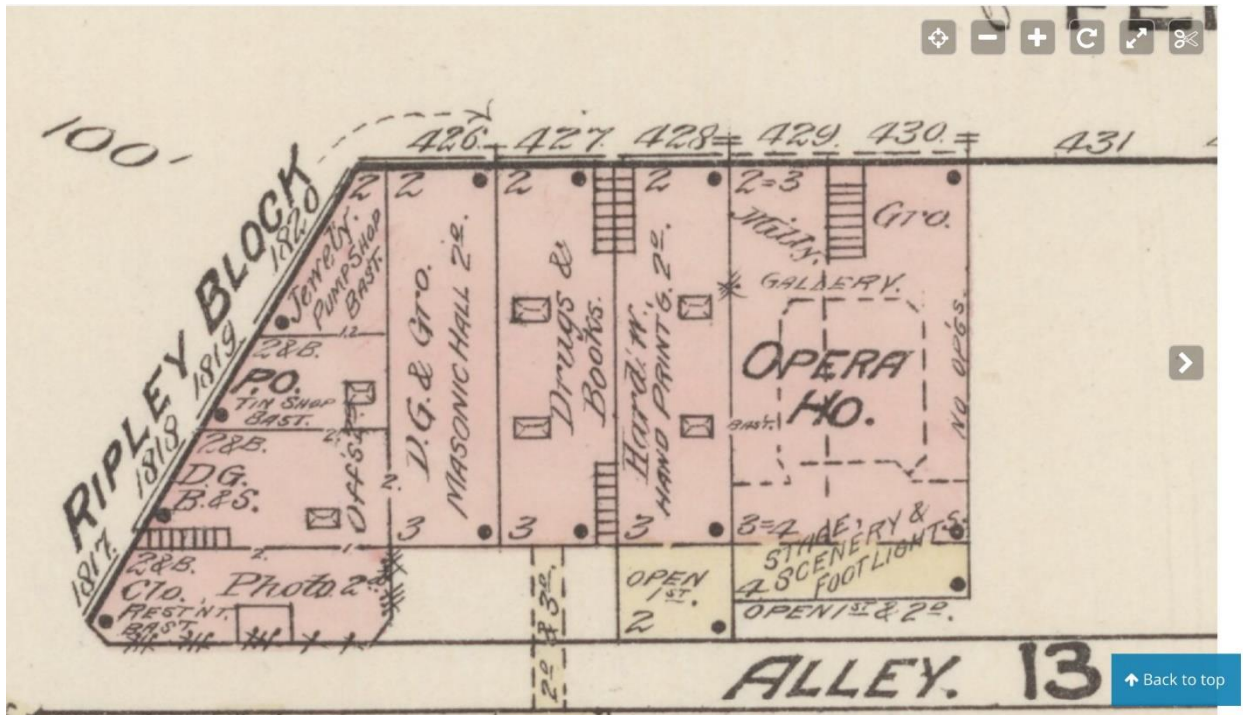
He was operating out of his new building which was advertised as being in the new Post office building. A map from 1877 showed a post office & insurance office located on the corner of Ferry and Bridge/Dowling where the Bank would be built in 1883.

On 7 October 1875 it was reported in the newspaper that Dr. John A. Malcom sold his drug store to L. G. Ripley who took possession yesterday (Oct 6). Ripley will remove his store to the Franklin House block. (When the Franklin House was built in 1873, two store fronts were also included.)

From the History of Muskegon County Michigan book published in 1882 there was the following biographical sketch:

L. G. Ripley, druggist, Montague, came to this place in 1874, and in 1878 erected at a cost of \$10,000, a fine two-story store of Zeeland brick opposite the Franklin House, 25x80 feet, and is now erecting an elegant new block adjoining, with 80 feet frontage on Ferry Street, and 115 on Bird Street. (Believe they mean Bridge Street.) Mr. Ripley deserves credit for his zeal and enterprise in beautifying the village with substantial blocks of buildings. His stock consists of drugs, stationery, and periodicals, and is quite extensive.

In November 1878 an announcement in the paper indicated that L. G. Ripley was moving into his new and convenient drug store which he had amply fitted up with every modern improvement.



1883 Ripley Block

On an 1883 map of the Ripley block on Ferry street shows a jewelry store on the corner, followed by a dry goods and grocery with the Masonic hall on the second floor. Then there is a Drugs & Books store followed by a hardware store with a hand printing office (The Lumberman) on the second floor. Next to that was the Burrows & Jones Opera house on the second floor over their grocery and a millinery shop on the first floor.

Back to the corner of Ferry and Bridge was the jewelry store with a pump shop in the basement. Next was the Post office with a tin shop in the basement followed by a dry goods and boots & shoes shop. A clothing store was next with a photo studio on the 2nd floor and a restaurant in the basement.

A report of the fire that occurred in October 1884, listed the names of the occupants in the building that were burned out:

Along Ferry Street -

Jeweler – W. H. Ricaby

Dry goods – J. R. Conley, ladies fashions

Groceries – J. F. Keiley/Keily, general store

With the Masonic Lodge on the 2nd floor over the Dry Goods & Grocery stores.

Drugs & Books – Ripley

Hardware store – Morse & Bell

With Hand printing (The Lumberman & Editor Bracelin's law office) on the 2nd floor

Millinery – Julia Gibbons

Grocery – Burrows & Jones

Opera House on 2nd floor – Burrows & Jones

Bridge/Dowling Street – next to the Jeweler

Post office on the 1st floor

Tin shop in Basement – Owner unknown

2nd floor appears to be unoccupied

Dry Goods and Boots & Shoes – T. Phelan

Clothing store – T. Phelan

Photography studio on 2nd floor – W. E. Marshall

Restaurant in basement – Fred Partridge (1885-?)

Also mentioned, but exact locations unknown –

Musician Instruments – Geo. M. Duram

Dentist – Dr. Hollis

Doctor – Dr. Kenyon

Residence – J. M. Popple

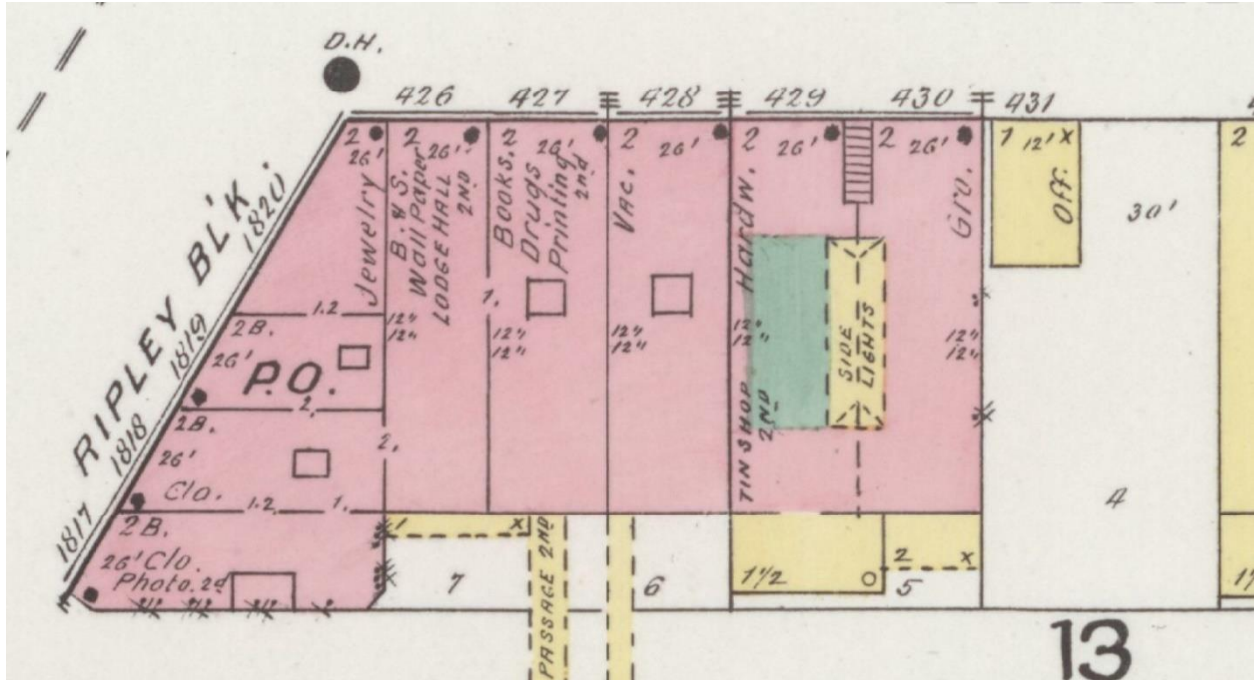
Residence – Geo. W. Beck

Rooms – E. L. Dodge & Wilbur Davis

Barber shop & residence – W. A. Frary

Doctor – Dr. Switzer

Township Library



1892 Ripley Block

The next map is dated 1892. Businesses along Ferry street are:

A jewelry store still occupies the corner spot. Max (1892-94); R. S. Calkins (1894-1901); Simon Fehrenbach was here for a while before moving to Water Street (need to check dates)

Next on Ferry is a Boots & Shoes and Wallpaper (whose???) store with the Masonic Lodge on the second floor.

Books & Drugs (Ripley) is next with the Printing office on the 2nd floor.

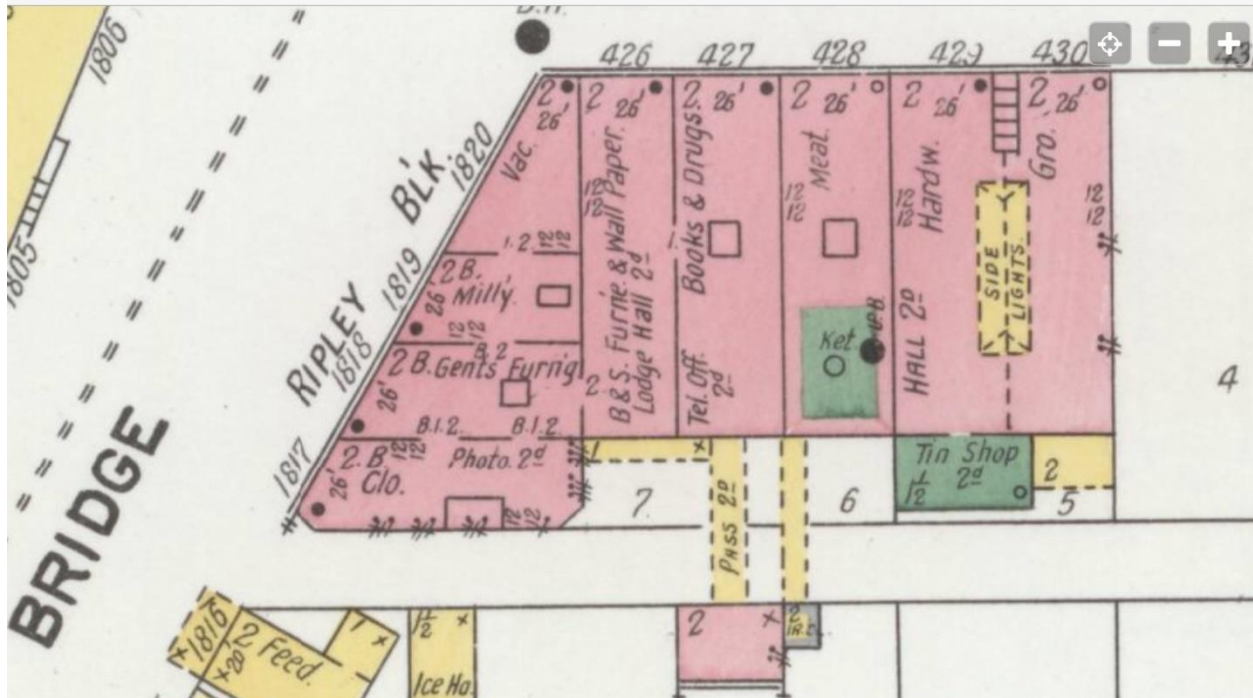
The next store front is vacant at the time.

Then there is a hardware (Wm. Peck & Son) on the first floor with a grocery next door (whose??) and with a tin shop on the second floor.

Going down Bridge/Dowling next to the jewelry store, the Post Office still remains.

Followed by a clothing store (T. Phelan) which now occupies the remaining 2 spots.

A photo studio is on the second floor over the end spot. (Theo Wirsing (1890-95); B. W. Ladd (1898-1905))



1902 Ripley Block

The 1902 map shows the spot that once housed a jewelry store for so many years as vacant.

Boots, Shoes, Furnishings (John Jaeger 1904-1915) and wallpaper are being sold in the second spot with the Masonic Lodge still occupying the 2nd floor.

Books & Drugs (Ripley) are next and the Telephone Office is located on the 2nd floor now.

There is a meat market next.

Followed by a Hardware and Grocery store. There is a Hall indicated on the second floor along with a Tin Shop.

A Millinery shop is located next to the vacant corner on Bridge/Dowling. (Mrs. L. G. Grubb)

Gentlemen’s Furnishings and Clothing occupy the last two spots. (T. Phelan)

A photo studio is still located on the second floor. Burrell W. Ladd (1898-1905)

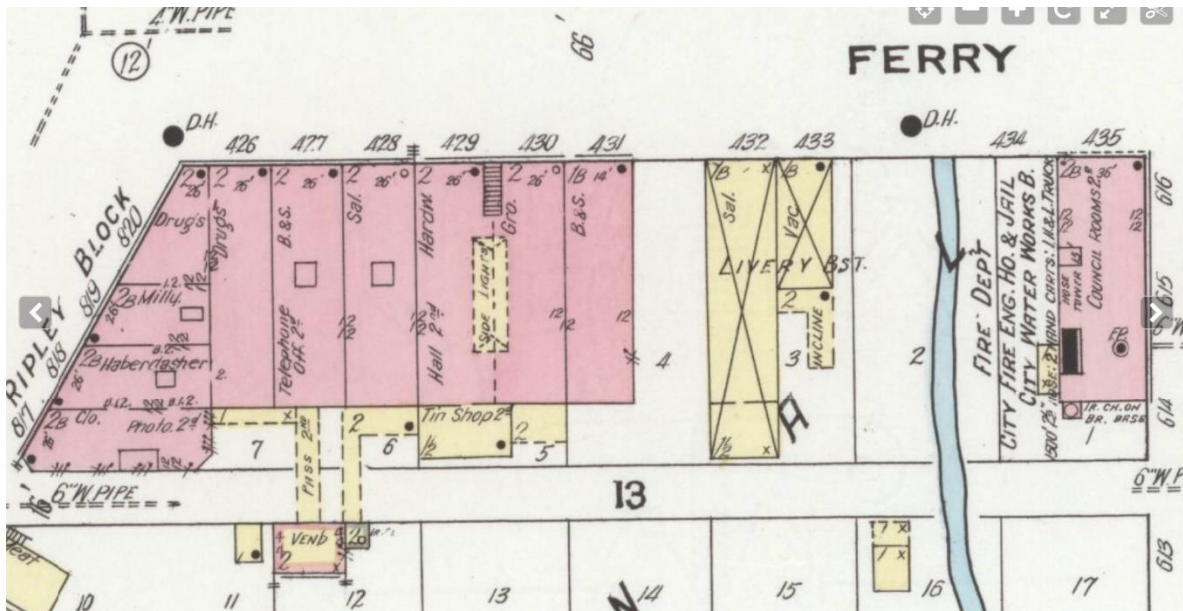
The last map is from 1910.

The corner spot is now listed as Drugs. – Ripley is using it as soda water & ice Cream dept.

The next business is also listed as Drugs. Ripley.

The Masonic Lodge is no longer listed on the 2nd floor.

The next is Boots and Shoes store (John Jaeger) with the Telephone Office on the 2nd floor. (Jaeger sold to Ripley Bros in 1915)



1910 Ripley Block

A Saloon now occupies the next spot. (Gust Kroll)

A Hardware store is next (Wm Peck) with a Hall and Tin Shop on the 2nd floor.

Next is a Grocery store. (Ohrenbergers??)

A new building containing a Boots & Shoes shop has been added to the block.

A Millinery still remains next to the corner drug store. (Mrs. L. J. Grubb)

A Haberdashery is next followed by a Clothing store in the last two spots (Phelan) with a Photo Studio on the 2nd floor E. B. Flood (1909-1917) followed by Fred Sweney (1922-25)



RIPLEY BLOCK -- This is the Ripley block in Montague in the early 20s. From left to right is the Pete Anderson Livery, Cliff Smith's Saloon, Hardy's

Meat Market, Ohrenberger Groceries, a hardware store, Gust Kroll's Saloon, Jager's Shoe Store and Ripley Drug. Photo courtesy Mayme Lipka.

Ripley Block in the early 1920s.



1936-1941 Ripley Block



1950s Ripley Block



2017 Ripley Block

TIMELINE for LIPKA'S DRUGSTORE

1874: Lafayette Ripley purchased the drugstore from A. Hood.

1875: Ripley bought Dr. John A. Malcom's drugstore. "Ripley's stock consisted of drugs, stationery and periodicals, and is quite extensive."

1878: Soda fountain in operation.

1883: Map of the Ripley Block showed 3 levels of businesses operating including the Opera House, the Post Office, the Masonic Lodge, the drugstore, and other misc. businesses including a pump shop, a tin shop, and a restaurant all in the basement.

1884: Fire burned out 28 businesses along Ferry and Bridge/Dowling Streets including the Opera House, Ripley's Drugs and Books, the Post Office, the Township Library, and the Masonic Lodge.

1892: Map shows Ripley's Books and Drugs again operating along Ferry Street.

1902: Map again shows Ripley's Books and Drugs on Ferry Street.

1910: Map shows Ripley now operating a Drugstore on corner lot which was used as a soda water and ice cream department. The next business also was listed as Drugs. Lafayette Ripley and his son Howard owned the drugstore for 77 years.

1952: Glen Lipka bought and began operating the pharmacy and fountain which he did until 2002 prior to his passing in 2006.

2007: Daughter Patty (Lipka) Ream took total ownership, operating the soda fountain.

2009: Lunch menu of sandwiches and soups were added.

Lipka Drugstore claims the title of "the oldest continuously operating soda fountain in Michigan".

The Lipka family operated the soda fountain in the years between 2002-2007 until Patty took over following her dream. In 2009 she added a lunch menu consisting of what she calls "fun sandwiches" which include "the turkey, lemon curd, Swiss cheese, and cucumber" and her most recent addition: "the cheeseburger quesadilla". When asked what her favorite soups are Patty responded, "French Onion and Cream of Mushroom". All of Patty's food items are made from scratch, and she tries to change the menu selections daily.

Customers often ask if the antique items on display are for sale, but the answer is, "No, because each item on display has a memory attached to it." Visitors are encouraged to look at the many items displayed, to ask questions, and share their memories of this nearly 150 year old piece of Montague's history.