

Ripon Historical Society  
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## A Letter from the Board of Directors

Dear Membership Family,

The Ripon Historical Society would like to thank you for your support. Put simply, without your support we would not be able to provide the public with such engaging programs, services, events, new exhibits, and increased access to our collections. We are always looking for new ways to engage with the public and improve our level of service to the community. As you may have noticed, one of these ways is with the print version of our newsletter. The newsletter is now in color and also features more content and more images.

We are excited to offer a color newsletter to our supporters. However, this means that we now have increased the cost of producing our print newsletter. It is of vital importance to us that you continue to receive a quality publication and we need your help to make that happen. We value your support of our mission to collect, preserve and, most importantly, provide access to materials of enduring value that tell Ripon's story.

Sincerely,

David Sakrison, *President*  
Caron Sisko, *Acting Vice President*  
Travis Nygard, *Secretary*

Roberta Walker, *Treasurer*  
Matt Koski  
Steve Reimer

Lara Grant  
Joe Walker  
Chris Weigand

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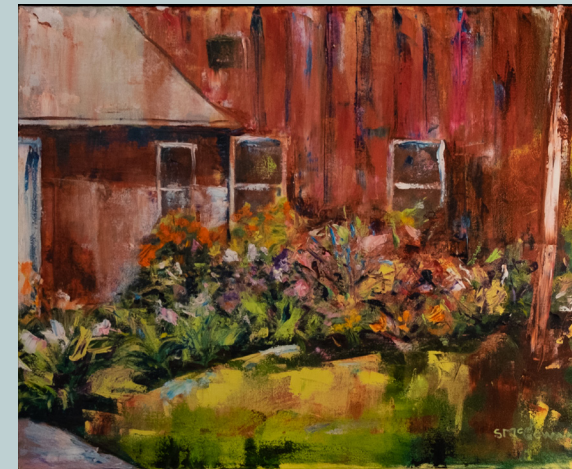


# RIPON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

July 2023

## Welcome to Our New Online Catalog

We recently invested in a new online collection management system called CatalogIt. While only a small fraction of our collection has been digitized so far, we are excited to offer you a virtual tour of our current exhibit on display in the historical society's main museum, "**Art and Artists of Ripon.**"



**Art and Artists of Ripon Exhibit, 2022**  
Sarah McGowan  
"Windsong Farm Barn"  
Oil painting  
2005

You may view the exhibit online as well as our book collection at:  
<https://hub.catalogit.app/10559>.

The online catalog is also linked from our website: [riponhistory.org](http://riponhistory.org). Simply click on "Catalog" located at the top of the homepage.

## On Opening Up Our Collections... Building Better Relationships...and Increasing Museum Engagement!

Why are we going online with our collections? The Ripon Historical Society wishes to enhance your museum experience, share valuable artifacts that tell the story of Ripon, and increase accessibility to our collections.

For materials that are too delicate to exhibit, the online catalog might provide the only means for showing and viewing them. Photographs and documents that are fading or small can be seen better on a website, whereas they might not be seen at all if not digitized. In addition, by reducing the amount of physical handling that some materials receive, they may be preserved longer.

The online catalog enables archivists and curators to provide in-depth descriptions for the artifacts, targeting materials to users with a variety of educational or interest levels. In the physical space, descriptions and explanations are often restricted to brief captions or labels due to insufficient room, or because labels might distract from the objects.

We now have the ability to extend the life of exhibitions indefinitely, to arrange materials in different contexts so as to present multiple perspectives, and to recreate past exhibits. It is a resource that tremendously adds to the physical setting in the museum.

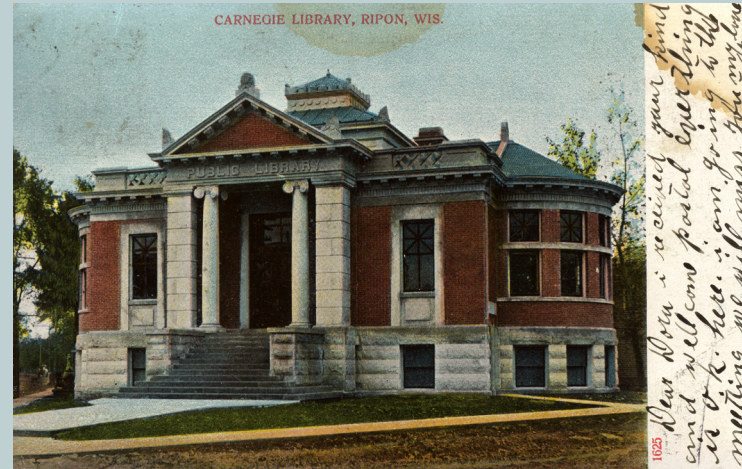
**"The Ripon Historical Society wishes to enhance your museum experience."**

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## Historic Building Spotlight

One of the strengths of the historical society is that we preserve information about the architecture of our community. Did you know that in our archives you can look up information on most of the historic commercial buildings downtown? Or that we have information on many of the historic homes in town? Use of our archives is always free and open to the public.

The building that we are placing the spotlight on in this newsletter is the Carnegie Library. It was built in 1905 and today houses the Chamber of Commerce.



**“Use of our archives is always free and open to the public.”**

A fun fact is that when our current public library was built, the community rallied together to move the books. They were passed down Watson Street like a bucket brigade.

## New Acting Vice President

Caron Sisko recently stepped up into this role, having previously served as the organization's co-Secretary. Her background is in the fields of archives, artifacts, and art. One of her many strengths is building community connections, in recent years having engaged with groups like the Ripon Rotary, PEO, elementary schools, and Ripon College. A fun fact is that she is also a children's book author.



## See You Again in 25 Years

The historical society must say so long to the Ruben Gold Thwaites Trophy. It's hard to believe that a year has passed since our 2022 award. It is time to give the trophy back to the Wisconsin Historical Society so that it may be passed on to a 2023 winner. We will be eligible to compete for this award again in 25 years, and in the coming years we will strive to become deserving winners once again.



## Walking Tours By Appointment

The volunteers of the Ripon Historical Society regularly lead walking tours for community groups. If your organization, class, or club would like to take advantage of this type of opportunity, please call or email us. Tour topics available include:

- Historic houses near Watson Street.
- Ripon College's outdoor art and architecture.
- The Ceresco neighborhood and its utopian history.
- Hillside Cemetery's history and monuments.
- History and architecture of downtown Ripon.

Some of our volunteers that have helped to lead tours include Steve Arbaugh, Travis Nygard, Carol Sachen, Caron Sisko, David Sakrison, Pat Grahn, Linda Budnick, and Lara Grant.



Ripon College students enjoying a walking tour of historic houses.

## Follow our events schedule at:

[www.riponhistory.org/events](http://www.riponhistory.org/events) and [www.facebook.com/riponhistory](https://www.facebook.com/riponhistory)

### Contact Us

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### More Information

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## This Just In! New Art

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Works by Evelyn Kain: Above left, "Winter in Driftless," linoleum print. Above right, "Radishes," linoleum print. Below left, self portrait, print on textile.



Evelyn Kain was an avid outdoorswoman, who hiked many of the trails in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin, which has unusual geographic features because glaciers never reached the land there. She made linoleum prints that are hand-painted of this grand place, in different seasons. She was a skillful gardener and paid tribute to the bounty of the land in a print depicting radishes. She also made several self-portraits on quilted backing, with embroidered embellishment.

Demonstrating that people can develop great skills at any point in life, Ralph Wickstrom learned to sculpt metal after retiring from a career as an exercise science professor. Gene Kain taught him to weld, and many of his sculptures are made from salvaged metal that he sourced from junkyards near Ripon. They attest to the ability to transform humble materials into objects of great beauty. The sculpture, now in the collection of the historical society, was gifted from the estate of Ralph's wife Jo, who was also an anchor of the community.



Above, metal sculpture by Ralph Wickstrom

**"These works are especially interesting from a historical perspective, as they help us to understand the past in Ripon."**

## Ripon College Alumni Weekend 2023

The Ripon Historical Society hosted an open house on Saturday, June 24, for Ripon College's Alumni Weekend. The Pickard House, the barn, and the Pedrick-Lawson House were open for tours. Several alumni stopped by for the event and everyone enjoyed the exhibits.

The artist Anita Wallace (top, right), class of 1978, was one of Professor Olympia Ogilvie's closest students, and she was thrilled to see a photo of her mentor's work on display in the Art and Artists of Ripon exhibit. Ripon College also owns three of Wallace's paintings.

Sisters Lizzie Brown, class of 2013, and Sarah Brown, class of 2008, (right) noticed a photo of men cross-dressing from the 1920s. They connected with it, as a tradition in their family is for people to put on plays for each other, often involving cross-dressing. The original photo is in a scrapbook in the archives of Ripon College, assembled by Earl Wyman. The display they are looking at was made by students in Travis Nygard's class Museums, Artifacts, and Cultural Heritage in 2023.

Professor Emeritus and former Ripon Historical Society President Bill Woolley, photographer Rod Haynes, class of 1978, and historian Todd Behrens (bottom, right) enjoyed a conversation while reminiscing about the college and local history.



The class of 1978 presented the college with a photograph by Haynes at their class reunion. The photo is titled *Lake Whatcom from Electric Avenue, Bellingham, WA.* (left)



## Upcoming Programs

**Saturday Vintage and Antique Ripon Photo Postcard Swap, Trade or Sell Event:**  
Sep 16, 1:00pm - 3:00pm  
508 Watson St

Bring your vintage or antique Ripon photo postcards to swap, trade or sell. We will also be able to scan and email photo postcards for you to share with family and friends online. Tables for viewing will be available in our large reference library on the first floor.

**Make Way for Liberty: Wisconsin African Americans in the Civil War**  
Sep 21, 7:00pm - 8:30pm  
508 Watson St

Author Jeff Kannel will present **“Make Way for Liberty: Wisconsin African Americans in the Civil War,”** based on ten years of research and his book published in 2020 by the Wisconsin Historical Society Press. This includes Black veterans who lived in Ripon before and after the war, also with connections to Berlin. Following the presentation copies of the book will be available for purchase and the author’s signing.

**This event is free and the general public is welcome!**

**Hillside Cemetery Walking Tour**  
Oct 21, 1:00pm - 2:00pm  
Hillside Cemetery at Congress St (next to Ripon College)

Join us for a guided walking tour to hear stories about individuals and families who were part of Ripon’s history.

Ripon Historical Society President,  
David Sakrison (right)



**Trick or Treat at the Pedrick-Lawson House**  
Oct 29, 1:00pm - 3:00pm  
515 Ransom St

Ripon College students host trick or treat at the Pedrick-Lawson house museum. There will be Halloween candy for children and a free walk-through the house to see artifacts from historic Ripon.

## This Just In! New Art

We are thrilled to announce that the historical society was recently given several artworks by Gene and Evelyn Kain, as well as a sculpture by Ralph Wickstrom. Many of our members will fondly remember these artists in Ripon. They were all professors at Ripon College, and also heavily involved in the community.

These works are especially interesting from a historical perspective, as they help us to understand the past in Ripon. Gene Kain was a professor of studio art, and his wife Evelyn was an art historian. The Kains were great enthusiasts of the natural landscape in Wisconsin, and this inspired several of their works. A ceramic vase by Gene Kain depicts the mullen plant that is often seen growing in the Cersco Prairie of Ripon. The public is always welcome to walk on the trails of this nature preserve on the campus of Ripon College. His love of plants is also apparent on a bowl that he embellished with leaves, as well as a bronze cherry tree.

Below, ceramic vase depicting the mullen plant by Gene Kain. Right, Bronze cherry tree. Above, right, ceramic bowl with leaves.

