



RIPON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

April 2023

In celebration of our upcoming 125th anniversary in 2024:

We are exploring options for a new historical society logo. The branding featured in this newsletter is inspired by artifacts in our collection and by Ripon's architectural history.

A potential logo: More than the Sum of Its Parts

Shape.

The octagon shape references several octagon buildings that existed at one time in Ripon. The "Jacob Woodruff house," that still stands on Liberty Street, in Ripon, is one of them. In the mid-1800's, the octagon house was cutting-edge forward-thinking design. While the design fad did not last long, this architectural theme is symbolic of regeneration and renewal.

Pattern.

The Ripon Historical Society has many historic quilts in the collection. Two quilt patterns, from 19th century quilts, have been incorporated into the logo. The quilts are evidence of the creative talents of the women who made them. The quilts tell stories of time and place through their intricate design and usage of materials.

Letter.

The "R" in the center of the design was inspired by an imprint on the bottom of a soda bottle manufactured in Ripon. It is likely prohibition era, although more research is needed. During this period, breweries often shifted to soda production to stay afloat. We know that Haas Brewing operated a bottling plant in Ripon, so it is likely that soda was processed in that facility. The bottle symbolizes both change and adaptability.

The logo's components come together to define who we are.

This logo symbolizes the Ripon Historical Society's steadfast commitment to preserving history, sharing stories, and our continuing adaptability so that we can best serve today's Ripon community.



19th century quilts



Soda bottle



Octagon house

Gift Area Planned for the Pickard House

The Ripon Historical Society has decided to create an area in the Pickard House to sell affordable items that celebrate local heritage. The items that will be in the gift area are still under consideration, but they are likely to include notecards, books, mugs, DVDs, and more. We are proud to have volunteers and board members with expertise in business, marketing, and design, and we are using their talents to more fully serve you.

Ripon Historical Society



GIFT SHOP

Souvenirs to own, to remember, and celebrate a place:

In Ripon, people have been purchasing souvenirs since the nineteenth century. Many of them were later donated to the museum. In our permanent collection, the historical has items that were sold in the town's gift shops centuries ago, from coffee mugs to postcards to glassware to spoons. The photo shown here is of a souvenir sugar and creamer set from our collection.



The Ripon Historical Society Constitution and Articles of Organization were declared and signed on October 24, 1899.

In 1898, Wisconsin State Historical Society Director Reuben Gold Thwaites visited Ripon as his very first stop to encourage local communities to discover, conserve and share unique history. Following this meeting, twelve months later Ripon's interested individuals formally founded the Ripon Historical Society in 1899. The founding date, combined with our continued mission and the effort of many leaders and volunteers over time, qualifies us to be referred to as the oldest continually operating local historical society in the State of Wisconsin.

“The oldest continually operating local historical society in the State of Wisconsin.”

**To help celebrate our 125th Anniversary we are busy planning!
We are looking forward to:**

A customized version of our new logo for the organization that can be used throughout the year, to honor our 125th anniversary.

Special products will be offered for sale as part of our ongoing fundraising efforts, both online and in a newly-created gift shop area, within our Pickard House Museum.

A new exhibit will feature the organization's most treasured artifacts, connected to stories, events and individuals in Ripon's ongoing history.

We are considering publishing a book of our best "Now & Then in Ripon...Looking back with the Ripon Historical Society" articles, that have been featured in the weekly Ripon Commonwealth Newspaper.

In addition to the above, we will host a special 125th Anniversary Open House event for members, non-members, and anyone interested in our exhibit and its collections.

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Partnership Programs Continue

Historic Preservation Commission

Ripon Historical Society Board Members Pat Grahn, Matt Koski, Steve Riemer, and Joe Walker are currently serving on the City of Ripon Historic Preservation Commission. They are assisting this group with grant writing for updating the Watson Street Commercial Historic District design guidelines, collaborating to expand the Ripon historic building QR Code and audio signage program, and marking Ripon's districts which are on the National and State Register of Historic Places.

"Partnership programs help align Ripon experiences, including historical information, knowledge sharing for local citizens and tourists, alike."

Little White School House

Ripon Historical Society Administrator, Steve Arbaugh has joined the Little White School House Board of Directors. Steve is involved in the pending physical relocation of the school house building museum, annual strategic planning, and the new visitors center, led by Ripon Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Mandy Kimes.

Public Library

The Ripon Public Library is partnering with the historical society to showcase artifacts and exhibits within their building at 120 Jefferson Street, and the historical society is sharing information and newspaper articles to support the library's building and landscaping renovation campaign. The Society also assisted the library with their 100 Extraordinary Women of Ripon campaign by providing information about women in Ripon's history.

March 2023 "Business After 5" Event

On March 21st, the Ripon Historical Society and Chamber of Commerce hosted a "Business After 5" event as an opportunity for attendees to network, tour our exhibits, see the archives, and share food and drinks. Guests included Chamber of Commerce members, Ripon College professors, local business owners, historical society members and non-members, and Ripon Police and Fire District team members. The Ripon Historical Society is happy to be a member of the Ripon Chamber of Commerce and partner with them on various projects.



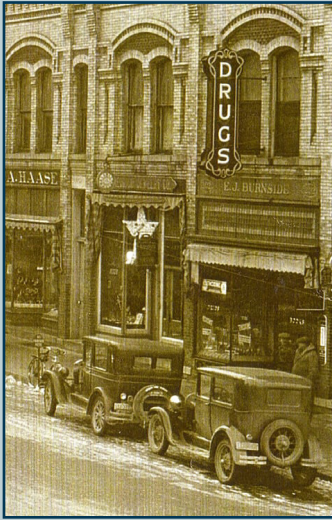
Record Number of Visitors Interested in Ripon's History

During this past year, 2022, we enjoyed a record number of over 1,000 visitors in-person who toured our Museums and attended events, which was a 65% increase over the prior year. Our Facebook social media traffic and posts reached 70,000+ individuals, a 60% increase over the prior year. Our revised website, now in its third year since launch was visited by 5,500 individuals, a 99% increase over the prior 12 months. Web user sessions increased 111%, including returning and new visitors. The age ranges for our social media and website audiences include both males and females, from 18 to 65+ years-old.

"Web user sessions increased 111% including returning and new visitors to the website."

This Just In!

We never know what's going to walk in the door. We received the donation of a clock inscribed Fargo & Harger Jeweler's & Opticians, Ripon, Wisconsin, in its original packaging, from Ripon business owners Tammy & Ernie Gutierrez of Back Porch Gatherings. The shop which originally sold the clock was located in a building that included several jewelry businesses over many decades, operating under the names Wollcott & Kingsbury, Edward Ensign, William Davy, Fargo & Alan, and Fargo & Harger. The building now houses Dear Prudence Women's Boutique and Apparel at 217 Watson Street.



The jewelry shop where the clock was purchased was located at 210 Watson Street (currently the home of Dear Prudence Women's clothing boutique). Note the watch-signage hanging above the storefront in the early 1900s.



Internship for Credit

This past year, the Ripon Historical Society mentored an intern from Ripon College, spearheaded by board member Professor Travis Nygard. Intern, Dawsyn Friedauer organized and accessioned specific artifacts relating to his curriculum, created exhibits, and also wrote articles about his areas of study coupled with volunteer work that were published online and in print. His comprehensive workload and achievements earned him college credits in addition to completing his chosen minor. The society looks forward to continuing to partner with Ripon College, its students and volunteers, along with potential interns this coming semester. We are also proud to have hosted classes led by Professor Travis Nygard and Professor Becky Matzke at our Pickard House Museum.



Ripon College students check in to complete their work at the historical society.

Ripon Public School Events

Over 200 Ripon Public School and Charter School students visited the historical society this past Fall. Second and fifth graders, parent volunteers, teachers, and our docents shared stories, interacted with artifacts and exhibits in the Pickard House Museum, and created colorful paper designs, inspired by quilt patterns, that were then given to their classrooms for display as a memory of our day spent together.



Update: Wisconsin State Marker Project

Approximately one year ago, historical society member Al Mortenson generously donated funds to replace the Wisconsin State Historical Marker located in Ceresco Park. The current marker, installed in 1972, is degrading, and is small. The new and larger replacement will allow the story of the Wisconsin Phalanx and founder Warren Chase to be told in more detail. This marker project has many steps that take time to complete and needs state approval. We have met all requirements but, unfortunately, the new markers are delayed in production and will not be available for delivery for at least nine more months. We are hoping the new marker can be installed in the Spring of 2024.

Follow our events schedule at:

www.riponhistory.org/events and www.facebook.com/riponhistory.

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More Information

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