

## **Ripon Historical Society 2024 Review**

2024 has, in many ways been a good year for the Ripon Historical Society, and we enter 2025 financially stable. Current paid membership is up by 39% compared to the end of 2023. Donations are up by 8% this year. But our work is never done. We must strive to envision new ways to increase donor support so that the organization may enhance public programs, maintain its buildings, and continue our mission.

### **2024 Year End Highlights**

- More than 700 visitors toured our museum buildings, attended our monthly programs, and events. Our website's active users ranged from 600 to an amazing 4,000 monthly, with many returning for more than one online visit. There were thousands of visits to our Facebook page and many "likes," "shares," and "comments." We currently have 1,700 followers on Facebook, and, in the past 6 months, we have grown our Instagram followers from 30 to 102.
  
- We continue partnerships with Ripon Public Schools, the Ripon Public Library, the Chamber of Commerce, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Little White School House Museum. We plan to look for new ways of collaborating with other community organizations and resources.
  - This year we have once again partnered with Ripon College to provide two students with fall internships. Interns worked closely with Director, Caron Sisko, to install the new annual exhibit "Melodies in Time: A History of Music in Ripon." The new exhibit was celebrated with an exhibit opening and reception that was attended by over 50 people. In 2025, the Society plans to enhance the internship experience with as added intern presentation to the public at the next annual exhibit opening. The Society is also seeking grant funding for durable goods that will elevate the internship experience and the quality of the annual exhibit. Plans are already in the works for next year's theme. Stay tuned!
  - About 100 2<sup>nd</sup> graders from Barlow Elementary School visited us for a tour of our buildings. The children were particularly wowed by the special guest, Alexander Perry, vintage organ enthusiast from Indianapolis, who gave a demonstration about the reed organ in our front parlor.
  - The Society has hosted class visits from Ripon College. Professor Becky Matzke's class looked at artifacts related to World War 2 to learn what it was like on the home front, in Ripon. Professor Travis Nygard also visited with his students for a presentation on the Society's quilt collection by volunteer, Pat Grahn, and a presentation by Director, Caron Sisko, on overshoot weaving and coverlets in our collection.
  - Other successful programs and events were: Two genealogy workshops, a presentation on Ceresco by Prof. Travis Nygard, and a woodworking event at the Pedrick-Lawson House.
  - The Society also participated in the Dickens of a Christmas Tour of Homes, welcoming well over 200 visitors.

- Our weekly column in the Ripon Commonwealth newspaper continues to raise the Society's visibility, foster renewed interest in Ripon's history, and increase support for the Society and its mission. In 2024, Now & Then contributors were Pat Grahn, Steve Arbaugh, Travis Nygard, Caron Sisko, Clara Carlson (Intern), Amanda Von Ruden (Intern), Lili Alderson (Intern). This year's fall interns were also given the opportunity to write articles, and they will be published in early 2025.

- New website features: Our website is continuing to offer more features. Our Newsletters are now available online. We are also offering more content from our collections on our Catalogit HUB. Our online collections include WWI and WWII propaganda posters, our newest exhibit "Melodies in Time: A History of Music in Ripon," our quilt and coverlet collection, and all Now & Then articles from 2024.

**Officers elected for 2025 are:**

Steve Riemer, President

David Sakrison, Vice President

Dani Moore, Treasurer

Ian Stepleton, Secretary

**Coming up:**

In 2025, additional content from our collections will become available on our Catalogit HUB, which is accessible via our website. This year, we have an exciting line up of speakers and events, new exhibits, and, for the first time, we are self-publishing a zine, featuring favorite things from our collections.