

RIPON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2025

GRATITUDE EDITION

In Appreciation of Lorraine Jess
August 3, 1929 – July 3, 2025



Above: Lorraine Jess

The Society was saddened to hear about the passing of Lorraine Jess. Lorraine, was a long time friend and supporter of the Ripon Historical Society. She understood the importance of preserving family histories, and she championed this cause through an annual donation that funded the Society's Ancestry.com subscription.

Lorraine was also generous in that she shared her own family history and experiences with the Society. *(continued on page 2)*

In Appreciation of Joyce Rudolph
January 23, 1935 – July 12, 2025

The Society was saddened to hear about the passing of Joyce Rudolph, a key member of the organization during the early 2000s. Joyce wore many hats as a Society volunteer. She was a board member, exhibits curator, outreach liaison to the seniors community, Society records administrator, and open house coordinator. Most of all, Joyce was an advocate for Ripon History.

During her time as a volunteer, Joyce took meticulous care of the Pedrick Lawson House. *(continued on page 3)*



Above: Joyce Rudolph



Above: Lorraine Jess and daughter, Connie Jess Zolkoske at Susan Apps Bodilly's presentation on one room schools in 2024. Lorraine is holding her teaching smock worn while teaching at Round Prairie School. Below: 1952 photo of Lorraine in the smock that she wore to hide her pregnancy.



LORRAINE

In 2018, she granted an interview with Archivist, Carol Sachse, where she recalled everyday events of family life growing up in Ripon and early years of marriage to husband Eugene Jess. When talking about her time teaching at Round Prairie she said, "I loved that school. I had 7 or 8 students. 2 first graders, 2 second graders, 1 fifth grader, and I had a ball. I'd go out on Sunday night to start the fire so it would be a little warmer."

At the time that Lorraine was teaching, women were not permitted to work while pregnant. Lorraine wore a cream colored smock with a brightly colored collar and pockets to hide her pregnancy. The smock is part of the Society's permanent collection. Lorraine's past support of the Society continues to be appreciated.



Above: Joyce Rudolph in period costume at the 2009 Garden Walk. Below: Joyce Rudolph with wedding dress exhibit, 2010.

JOYCE

Around 2010, Joyce worked with antique experts to redo the home as a house museum. In a Ripon Commonwealth Press article covering the open house,

Joyce noted how important it is to keep and appreciate historic artifacts, "It preserves history, but it also gives the people of Ripon a chance to see how people lived back then." Joyce was particularly pleased with the acquisition of John Scott Horner's dining room furniture, noting that, "Because it came from one of the founders of Ripon, it has more significance."

Though she retired from volunteering and moved away several years ago, Joyce's past service continues to be appreciated.



DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

Special Thanks to Carol Sachen

Society Archivist, Carol Sachen went above and beyond to get the Society's garden ready for the Chamber's Twilight Garden Tour on July 19th. The tour was a big success with about 80 visitors. The garden looked spectacular thanks to Carol's hard work and commitment to our historic gardens. Thank you, Carol!



Carol Sachen (right)

GET TO KNOW OUR

DOCENTS: SATURDAY CREW

Linda Budnick

"I have been a docent for approximately 3 years. I volunteered shortly after I moved to Ripon."

"I enjoy meeting and helping people that come in to the Society. I also enjoy just being there, surrounded by history, and absorbing information from co-volunteer docents."

"My happiest moment at the Society was when a woman from out of town came in seeking info on her family. I was able to help her find much info and quite a few pictures. She was so happy when she left with copies of info and pictures! I was especially happy when we found a pic of one of my relatives in a picture with two of her relatives!"

NOTE: Linda takes care of the obituaries, adding print copies to the obituary binders in the archives. Thank you, Linda!

Dale Baird

"I started volunteering in December 2022 at Dickens Christmas."

Dale most enjoys, "Researching and learning about the history of Ripon, buildings, businesses and the individuals that were instrumental in its growth."

"Over the years my mom would cut out historical related pictures and articles from the paper and saved those for us to look back at Ripon and see its history of what she learnt or experienced growing up and what changed over the years. She was extremely proud of Ripon and would share that with me. Upon retirement and becoming aware of the society and visiting, Pat Grahn piqued my interest in volunteering/docenting."

Dale felt most proud when, "Creating a table of contents for the *Now & Then* articles since its inception. Also, helping research topics as patrons come into the Historical Society with their questions."

Thank you, Dale!



Saturday docents Dale Baird, Chris Wiegand, and Linda Budnick.

Chris Wiegand

"I've been a docent 11 or 12 years, and a board member 8 or 9 years. I enjoy reading old newspapers, listening to music and meeting visitors."

"I stopped at the Society to donate something, Tracy O'Brien and Gib Stoberl were working on a project and Gib asked me if I wanted to help and I said "sure," that's how I started."

"One Saturday morning, a man came into the Muesum and asked if we had any information on his father. Gib asked his father's name and he told us. Gib asked if he was from Ripon, he said "yes", Gib asked if he went to school in Ripon, he said "yes", Gib asked if he graduated from Ripon High, again he said "yes", Gib asked what year, he answered, 1941. I went to the shelf where the Ripon High School year books are and pulled out the 1941 book. I handed it to him and he sat down at the table and began looking through the book. When he got to the Senior pictures, he found his father. He said, "I never knew my dad or seen him, he was drafted into the war and my mother was pregnant at the time. 2 years later my father was killed in Germany by a sniper and I never got to see him. I also found a letter in our Veterans file that his father wrote to his mother about Christmas in Germany. After his mother received the telegram from the Defense Dept. that her husband was killed, they left Ripon and moved to Northern Wis., where her parents and relatives lived. The day he stopped, he was visiting a friend here in Ripon and thought he'd check the Historical Society for information. When he got the information, we all 3 were teary eyed."

NOTE: The project that Chris worked on was the index for WWII letters home. It took Tracy, Gib, and Chris 3 years, working on Saturdays, to finish the project.

Thank you, Chris, for giving your time on Saturdays!



Chris Weigand



THE FRIDAY CREW

Rhonda Cameron

The Society's newest volunteer is Rhonda Cameron. Rhonda is a retired school teacher from California. She chose to move to Ripon in 2024 because of its small town charm. Rhonda has been docenting every other Friday. She also partners with Pat Lubinsky for Pedrick-Lawson House tours.

Rhonda has also been working on the Society's hat collection which is in need of organization and proper storage. She has made dozens of muslin bags to keep our hats dust free in storage.

Rhonda's area of specialization is child education so she plans to work with the Society to create educational material about the history of Ripon.

Thank you Rhonda!

Pat Grahn

"I started volunteering at the Ripon Historical Society over ten years ago when my children were in high school. I wanted a new volunteer activity where I could make a difference and meet new friends. Since I had always had an interest in history, the Ripon Historical Society became the perfect outlet for me."

"As a museum docent I normally volunteer on Friday mornings. I really enjoy the interaction with people who stop in to see the museum, are looking for family information, or wish to donate something to the society."

"The one day that stands out the most to me is when two brothers visited the museum. They had both grown up in Ripon and moved out of town after high school graduation. They stopped into the museum to see if we had any information on their grandfather and his family. We just happened to have an exhibit up for the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I and their grandfathers complete Army uniform was on display. We also had many photographs of their ancestors in a family file in our archives. Both of these men were very excited to see their family artifacts utilized and preserved. They spent an enjoyable morning at the museum walking down memory lane and left expressing their great appreciation to the historical society for keeping the community's history."

NOTE:

Pat G. has also served on the historical society board of directors, created exhibits, given public presentations, and is the primary *Now & Then in Ripon* column writer for the Ripon Commonwealth Press.

Thank you, Pat, for all that you do!



Pat Grahn (left)



Pat Lubinsky: Belle Lawson Specialist

Former elementary school teacher, Pat Lubinsky, is the Society's resident expert on Belle Lawson. Belle bequeathed the property known as the Pedrick-Lawson House, at 815 Ransom St., to the Society in the early 70s. While Pat L. no longer docents on Fridays at 508 Watson, she frequently volunteers to be assigned the Lawson House as her place for yearly school tours, Dickens and other community events.

"I'm not sure how long I was a volunteer. It was probably ten to fifteen years. I enjoyed finding out about the history of Ripon. Tracy O'Brien asked me to volunteer. We taught at Murray Park, and we enjoyed bringing our students to the historical society. I enjoyed giving tours to the children who came to the historical society."

Thank you, Pat L., for continuing to fascinate visitors with your stories about Belle!

EVENTS CALENDAR FALL 2025

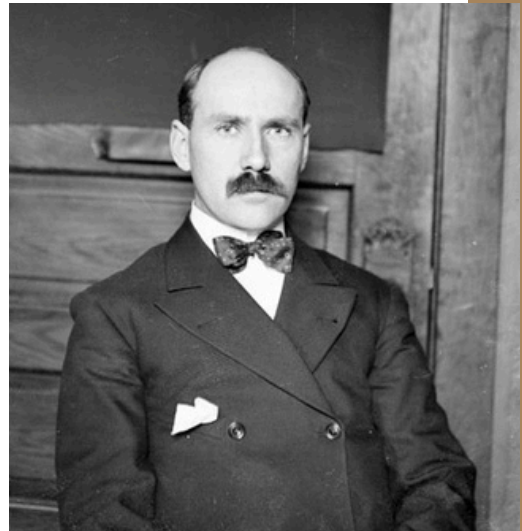
September 13th 1:00-4:00 PM, 508 Watson St. Heirloom Appraisal Event, with lecture by experts on antiques and history, Travis Nygard & Matt Koski, following at 4:00 PM, "Appraising Antiques and Art Today: Ten Myths and Truths About What is Valuable."

Travis Nygard (right) and Matt Koski to host heirloom appraisal event and lecture. The public is invited to bring antique family treasures, as well as collectibles, to the Ripon Historical Society as part of an heirloom appraisal fundraiser. **Cost of appraisal per item is \$10. Lecture is free to the public.**



September 25th 7:00 PM, 508 Watson St. Ripon's Celebrity Archeologist: The Life and Legacy of Professor Edward Clark

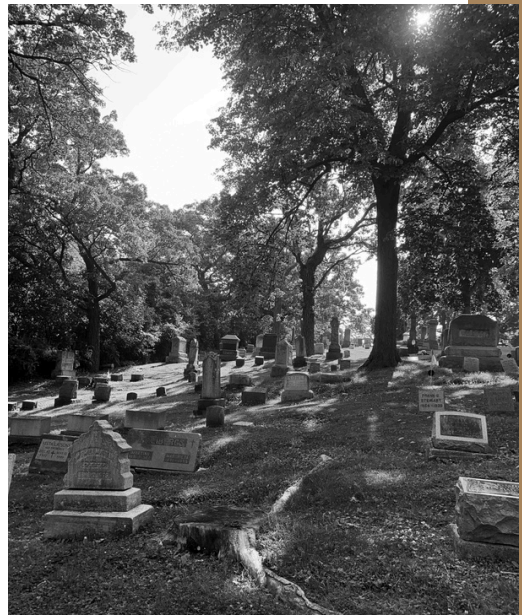
Ripon Historical Society Museum Director, Caron Sisko, and Ripon College Professor of Art, Travis Nygard, will present on Archeologist Edward Clark and the Ripon College collection of antiquities collected by Clark in 1904 while on sabbatical in Italy. Objects in the antiquities collection consist of ancient Greek and Roman clay vessels, oil lamps, bronze tools, and glass bottles. Some ancient artifacts will be on display for viewing and careful handling after the lecture. **Free event.**



October 19th 1:00 and 3:30 PM Hillside Cemetery Tour: "Grave Encounters & Hidden Stories"

This tour combines captivating storytelling, historical insights, and a touch of the macabre to create an immersive experience you won't soon forget. Whether you're a history enthusiast or a thrill-seeker, this tour offers a unique blend of education and chills. **TICKETED EVENT! Must purchase tickets in advance. Limited number of tickets sold! To Purchase tickets for the 1:00 PM and 3:30 PM tour go to:**

<https://hillsidecemeterytour1pm.rsvpify.com>
<https://hillsidecemeterytour330pm.rsvpify.com>



November 6th 7:00 PM, 508 Watson St. Exhibit Opening, Presentation & Art Show: "Gimme A Sign!"

Museum Director Caron Sisko, Ripon College Interns, and artists of Art MidWisconsin will be presenting an exciting new exhibit titled, "Gimme A Sign!," showcasing the history of signs in Ripon, WI. The new exhibit will also feature fine art pieces, created by Art MidWisconsin artists, inspired by some of the signs on display, exploring how artists use systems of lines, shapes, and colors to generate visual signification. Complimentary snacks, beer, and wine. **Recommended \$10 donation to attend.**

November 20th 5:30-6:00 PM, 508 Watson St. Ripon Historical Society Annual Membership Meeting.

Election of board officers. **Members only.**

November 20th 6:00 PM, 508 Watson St. Membership Dinner & Presentation.

Susan Apps Bodilly will present on "Old Farm Country Cookbook," a book of recipes she wrote with her father, Jerry Apps. Her presentation will be a culinary tour of life on the farm during the depression and WWII. Recipes from the book will be prepared by Society volunteers and board members to serve to members after the annual membership meeting. **For those of you who are not members but wish to attend the presentation and partake of the delicious recipes, there will be a fee of \$10. Free to Society members only!**

CONTACT US

508 WATSON ST.

RIPON, WI 54971

PHONE: (920) 748-5354

EMAIL: RIPONHISTSOC@GMAIL.COM

FOLLOW US

[FACEBOOK.COM/RIPONHISTORICALSOCIETY](https://www.facebook.com/riponhistoricalsociety)

[INSTAGRAM.COM/RIPONHISTORICALSOCIETY/](https://www.instagram.com/riponhistoricalsociety/)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

RIPONHISTORY.ORG

