

Now & Then in Ripon ... *Looking back with the Ripon Historical Society*

Schwiesow family members served Ripon for many years

The Schwiesow family through two generations made a large impact on Ripon, which included caring for animals, volunteering, working in local government and financial donations.

Family's father sets the pace

William F. Schwiesow (1880-1944) was born in Columbus, Ohio and spent his early life there. A graduate of Ontario Veterinary College in Ontario, Canada, he practiced for 43 years in Ripon while living at 215 Blackburn St.

When William established his veterinary practice he actually converted the barn next to his residence into a animal hospital, where people could bring both small and large animals to be treated, healed and cured.

William's veterinary motto on his business card stated "all calls will be answered day or night and promptly attended (regardless of weather)."

The Ripon Historical Society's professional archives has William's original veterinary degrees, traveling luggage with instruments, family photos and other memorabilia.

A member of the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Society, William also served as its president at the time of his death.

For many years, William also was an active member of the Ripon Fire Department.

William married Huldah Woodill (1876-1957). The Schwiesows had a son, Carleton (1910-1993), and two twin daughters, Mabel Schwiesow Lent (1917-2001) and Mildred Schwiesow (1917-2001).

Ripon asks Carleton to continue veterinary business.

Schwiesow's son, Carleton succeeded his father and took over the family veterinary business following his graduation from Ripon College in 1932 and his veterinary medicine graduate degree from Ohio State

University in 1936.

Carleton served in the Army Reserves in the infantry, but was transferred to the veterinary corps. He then was called to active duty with the Civilian Conservation Corps.

During World War II, he was called into active duty in the Army and served as an inspector of meat for the Quartermasters Corps until 1946.

Upon returning, Carleton became Ripon's veterinarian until his retirement in 1963. After retirement, he joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a meat inspector, continuing to work until age 70 in 1980.

Carleton was a member of the Ripon Masonic Lodge, Zor Shriners, American Legion, Green Lake Sanitary District, Northeast-Southeast Wisconsin Veterinary Association, Ripon School Board and Ripon Fire and Police Commission.

He also served as a trustee to the First Congregational Church of Ripon. Carleton and his wife, Jean (1918-1990), lived at the Schwiesow family home located at 215 Blackburn St. and later moved to 7933 Union St.

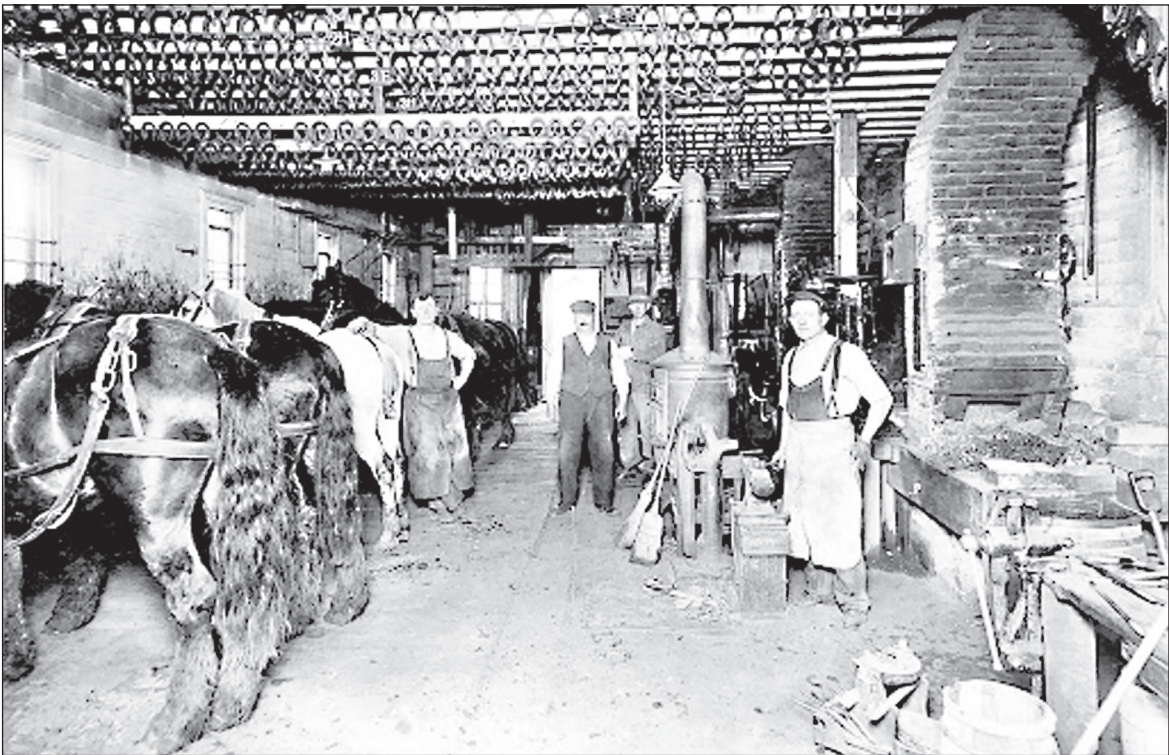
Jean Schwiesow emerges as a leader

Volunteerism was a way of life for

Jean Schwiesow, who served as the Ripon Girl Scouts secretary, Ripon Red Cross Blood Bank volunteer and first-ever woman president of the Ripon United Way. She also orchestrated planning for Ripon's Heritage Days citywide event in 1954, became City Council liaison to the Ripon Chamber of Commerce and served on the Ripon Hospital board.

In 1963-1964, Jean stepped up to work on the Wisconsin Governor's Commission to further the education of women and simultaneously was elected to become the city of Ripon's first-ever woman alderman, a role she carried until 1968.

Her biography was featured in "Outstanding Civic Leaders of America," published in 1968. A number of local and regional



AN ANIMAL HOSPITAL occupies the Schwiesow family barn, which before being razed was located at 111 Blackburn St. Horseshoes, sorted by size, can be seen hanging in the rafters. *submitted photo*

newspaper articles profiled her commitments and achievements throughout the years.

Twin sisters left final legacy.

William's twin daughters, Mabel and Mildred, attended Ripon public schools and also Ripon College.

Mabel became an accountant and then in 1942-1945 worked for the U.S. government inspecting bombs during World War II. While in Chicago she met and married her husband and lived in Illinois until retiring on Buffalo Lake in Montello in 1980.

After her husband died in 1987, she moved back to her family's home on Blackburn Street to once again live with her twin sister, Mildred.

Reunited in Ripon, the twin sisters volunteered much of their time to local clubs and led Young Republican activities, plus events at the Little White Schoolhouse.

As a single woman, Mildred was a self-employed business person, belonged to the Ripon Philatelic Society (collection and study of postage stamps), managed her parents' health-care and finances during their elderly lives, plus created a diversified investment portfolio.

Toward the end of their lives, the sisters retired together at a nursing home in Markesan. They passed away in 2001 within 11 days of each other.

Their final contribution surprised many people in Ripon as their combined two estates provided \$2.5 million dollars (equivalent to \$4.2 million in 2023) to be equally split between Ripon College and the University of Wisconsin Foundation for Cancer and Cardiology Research.

While both sisters had attended Ripon College over short periods of time, they had never made any monetary contributions before, leaving a final legacy no one expected.

The Ripon Historical Society is the oldest continually



Jean Schwiesow



PICTURED ARE TWINS Mildred and Mabel Schwiesow as young women in their teenage years, around 1934. *submitted photo*

operating historical society in Wisconsin. It is open Fridays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information follow us at Facebook/riponhistory or www.riponhistory.org.



THE SCHWIESOW FAMILY home was located at 215 Blackburn St. Two generations of Schwiesows lived in the house. *submitted photo*

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