

## Now & Then in Ripon ...

*Looking back with the Ripon Historical Society*

# Professor debunks theories of haunted Ripon College painting

Ghost stories abound at Halloween and Ripon College has no shortage of them.

Ripon College has been named on multiple haunted college lists and in 2014 was voted the second-most haunted campus in the Midwest.

For more than 40 years, people visiting the C.J. Rodman Center for the Arts on the campus have wondered about the “ghost” seen in a 17th-century portrait, which hangs in a climate-controlled showcase in the lobby gallery.

This large 76-by-50-inch oil on canvas painting, attributed to Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), features Princess Amalia of Solms-Braunfels (1602-1675) — also known as Princess Amalia of the House of Orange. Seen peeking out from behind or alongside her skirts on the right-hand side of the portrait is the faint outline of a small child.

Travis Nygard, assistant professor of art history at Ripon College, doesn't consider the child in the painting to be a ghost. He noted that this barely visible child was one of Solms-Braunfels daughters.

“The painting is unusual as it was originally conceived as a double portrait, with one of her children ... painted-out (removed) of the composition, for reasons that are unclear.”

Nygard added that “perhaps the portrait became a gift, and an image of a child would have presented Amalia to the recipient in too personal a way.”

Even with this knowledge from an art history expert, people still perpetuate the idea that the child appearing in the painting is a ghost.

The portrait once hung at the Coombe Abbey in Warwickshire, England, which was a grand country house made form a renovated 12th-century monastery.

“It is probable that the painting was a present to the former Winter Queen of



**THE SCALE OF** the large portrait of Princess Amalia of Solms-Braunfels (1602-1675) may be seen from this photograph. People feel the painting is haunted due to the vague outline of a child to the right of Princess Amalia's skirts. *submitted photo*

Bohemia, Elizabeth Stuart (1596-1662), whose art collection was inherited by the Craven family and hung for centuries at this location,” Nygard said.

The painting was likely sold in an auction of art from the Coombe Abbey in the early 20th century. It then was owned by several different people before becoming the property of the Rojzman Foundation.

This foundation was started by Lillian Rojzman Berkman (1922-2001) and Marc Rojzman (1917-1967), who became wealthy by managing the J.I. Case Company of Racine, a large farm machinery business.

“The Rojzmans wished to enhance the lives of people of the Midwest by donat-

ing their art to a school that would cherish and share it,” Nygard said.

So, in 1982, the portrait of Princess Amalia was donated to the college. In 1975, another Anthony van Dyke painting “Portrait of a Young Gentleman, Roger Townshend” was donated to Ripon College and hangs opposite of the Princess Amalia painting in the C.J. Rodman Center for the Arts.

*The Ripon Historical Society is the oldest continually 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.*

## Ripon Public Library will host semi-annual used book sale Nov. 9-11

The Friends of the Ripon Public Library will hold its Fall Used Book Sale from Thursday, Nov. 9 to Saturday, Nov. 11 in the basement of the library at 120 Jefferson St.

Thousands of books have been donated since the spring sale and those in the Last Chance Room are priced at 50 cents and as low as 10 cents for children's books.

Featured displays this fall include the Civil War, books for babies and toddlers, graphic novels for all ages, \$1 cookbook specials and Christmas celebration.

In the sale rooms shoppers will find a collection of teddy bears that were donated to the sale, the usual large selection of books for children, thousands of DVDs, many adult fiction and nonfiction books with new copyright dates, as well as a large selection of vintage books for both adults and children.

The assortment of jigsaw puzzles also is larger than ever.

**Thursday, Nov. 9: Book sale open from 4 to 7 p.m.**

All are welcome, and members of the Friends of the Ripon Public Library will receive \$3 off admission or off one purchase made during the book sale. Join the Friends of the Ripon Public Library on opening night and enjoy the member benefit.

**Friday, Nov. 10: Book Sale open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Open to everyone looking for a great deal on gently used books. Admission is free.

**Saturday, Nov. 11: Book Sale open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

The Friends of the Library semi-annual used book sale continues with a \$3 grocery bag sale in the Last Chance Room — the Showroom is excluded from the bag sale.

Cash and checks will be accepted along with credit cards for purchases over \$10.

A crew of Friends of the Library volunteers work every week sorting and organizing the flow of donations that come in daily. About 160 hours of volunteer time is put in every month. Over the past months, much of the Last Chance Room has turned over and most of the Show Room has also been refreshed.

The mission of the Friends is to promote and support public resources and community programs at the Ripon Public Library and proceeds from the sale are used to support this mission.

In the past year, the Friends of the Ripon Public Library have assisted with funding the digital hoopla service, summer reading programs for all ages, take and make kits, support of the renovation project, providing a copier for public use and more. It also has maintained a Book Stop Shop in the main lobby of the library throughout the year.

For more information, call Desiree Bongers at 748-6160 or email [director@riponlibrary.org](mailto:director@riponlibrary.org).

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