

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

# Ripon's Haas Brewery family: Letters from Chicago

The Haas family, German immigrants, arrived in Ripon in 1865 when John Haas Sr. (1841-1907) was hired to work for the Ripon City Beer Brewery.

Haas went on to purchase and rename the business "Haas Brewery" as its sole owner.

The Haas family initially lived in a few different locations, but eventually settled in at 750 Ransom St. When John Haas Sr. died in 1907, his only child, Conrad John Haas Jr. (1876-1918), who attended Ripon schools, followed his father's legacy by taking over the family's business.

In December 1918, the Spanish Flu pandemic was raging worldwide. John Haas Jr. and his wife, Ida Tessler Haas (1885-1977), did not want to travel to Chicago, but felt obligated to attend a business event which was important to their brewery. They took the train from Ripon to Chicago and stayed at the Hotel LaSalle, located at the corner of LaSalle and Madison streets.

Recently, the Ripon Historical Society was contacted by a descendant of the Haas Family wishing to donate original family letters to the society's professional archives for conservation.

Handwritten by Ida Haas to Art Stewart (1885-1976) in Ripon, the letters are dated between Dec. 11 to 13, 1918.

### Dec. 11, 1918

"Dear Art, I just sent you a telegram hours ago asking for fifty dollars (which equates to \$1,021.25 today). Since that time, the doctor has visited our hotel room and told me about my husband John [Haas]. He says his temperature is still 100 and that he is unable to sit up without fainting while the nurse makes the bed. When I talked to John he thought he could go home (to Ripon) tomorrow. The



**DESCENDANTS DONATED** this photo of Conrad "John" Haas Jr. in his younger years.

*submitted photo*



**THIS PHOTO OF** what is believed to be Ida Haas was given to the Ripon Historical Society by her descendants.

*submitted photo*

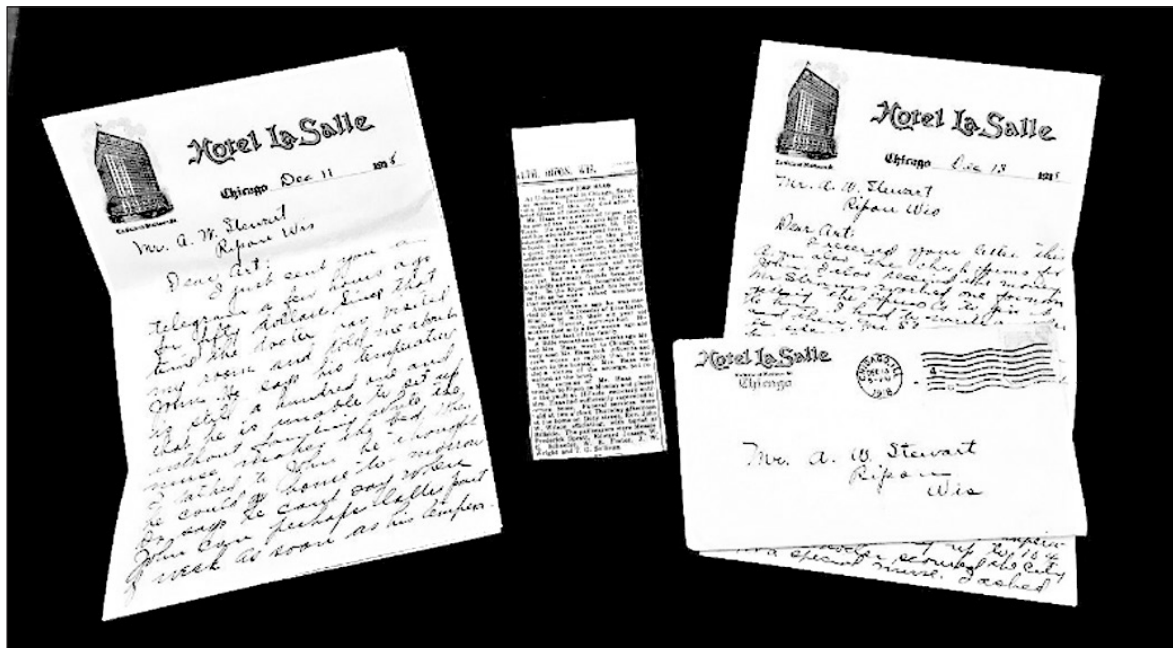
doctor says he cannot estimate when John can travel – perhaps the latter part of the week as soon as his temperature is gone. And even then it would be hard for him to get on his feet because he is so weak.

"Well Art, if that is the case, I'm sure we'll need fifty dollars more or what do you say about sending John's checkbook. I don't know what to suggest be-



**BY 1880 THE** Haas Brewery sold an average of 1,200 barrels of beer annually.

*submitted photo*



**PICTURED ARE IDA** Haas' letters along with John Haas Jr. obituary, which appeared in the *Ripon Commonwealth Press*.

*submitted photo*

cause I am not familiar with the sending of money. John is too sick to bother about it. I talked with him Monday and he hoped that we had enough money, but that was before I took sick and needed a doctor also. There's no more room at the hospital here (in Chicago), or the doctor would have sent me there (the hospital) too. John is asking the doctor every day to find me a room, too, but it's impossible.

"I am having a much lighter flu than John. I'd better not try to sit up much longer – my temperature is almost gone but I am so weak I wonder how we will ever get back home (to Ripon.) Especially if John feels as I do, and I know he is a hundred times worse. I do hope all is well at home and the brewery. I haven't heard from mother at all. I'll be at the Hotel LaSalle until I can come home. Sincerely, Ida Haas."

### Dec. 13, 1918

"Dear Art, I received your letter this morning and also the check for John. I also received the money Mr. Strauss worked on getting the Express Company to give to him. I had to write an order and then Mr. Strauss had to be identified. I couldn't help but laugh when he told me about that. He said not to bother sending home for more. Just to get it from him. He surely has been straightforward, but Art I am going to lengths about all this just now when all that is uppermost

in my mind is John. Poor fellow was on the road to gain yesterday. Very little temperature, but last night John took a setback. His temperature has gone way up to 104 and the doctor scoured the city for a special nurse. I asked the doctor several times if John was going into pneumonia and he quietly answered "no." Only that he will say he's (John is) worrying about you (his wife.) Now you know, Art, that John is very sorry for me. I know, but he isn't the kind to go to pieces like that on me. I'm sure it's something else. I think while he's in bed here he thinks of his financial affairs and I wish you'd write him a cheery letter. His address is now the Chicago Union Hospital, 834 Wellington Street. The doctor thinks I can go to see him Sunday if my high temperature is gone by then. John begs me to come to him on the telephone line yesterday. But the doctor says I'd take a chance on my life if I did go. Today John is too sick to even talk to his nurse. Thank you for your trouble, Ida Haas."

Sadly, John Haas Jr. died the

next day, Dec. 14, 1918. His body was returned to Ripon, and both he and Ida are buried with other Haas family members in Hillside Cemetery.

Ida outlived her husband by 59 years. She died in 1977.

The Ripon Historical Society

thanks the donor for these priceless documents. Haas Brewery memorabilia are highly collectible today, but the descendant felt if he passed away the letters could be discarded.

Those who have letters, documents, photographs or written history about Ripon ancestors and

would like to donate the originals or have the historical society scan the materials in order to keep the originals for future reference, may call 920-748-5354, or email [riponhistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:riponhistsoc@gmail.com).

*The Ripon Historical Society is the oldest continually operating historical society in Wisconsin. It is located at 508 Watson St. and is open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

*For more information follow us at Facebook/riponhistory or [www.riponhistory.org](http://www.riponhistory.org).*



**John Haas Sr.**

## K-9/RPD plans to purchase new dog from kennel Rony came from *continued from page 1*

appearances. We congratulate K-9 Rony on a well-earned retirement from police service."

The department plans to purchase a dog from the same kennel that produced Rony, Shallow Creek Kennels in Pennsylvania.

"They match the dog with the handler, so they want to meet Brandon first and see where he's at, then they are able to match a dog with him," Wallner said. "We have certain criteria that we ask for for the dog, too. Because our program is funded through donations, we have to have a dog that is social."

K-9 Rony has a long history of spending time with students at schools in the area and appearing at functions as a part of

the fundraising activities of the police department. The new dog will do the same.

Once Howell is matched with a dog, the team will go through training from Dec. 16 through Jan. 24, 2025. Once that training is complete, Howell and his K-9 will be deployed for duty in Ripon, or wherever they are needed.

Anyone who wants to donate to the "Rony's Recruit" program may call the city of Ripon Police Department non-emergency number 920-748-2888. Donations also may be dropped off at the police department or mailed to City of Ripon Police Department, K-9 Program, 100 East Jackson St., Ripon, WI, 54971.



**RIPON POLICE OFFICER** Trevor Hanke talks to the audience about being a K-9 handler during the 2022 Children's Fair as K-9 officer Rony lays by his side.

*Jonathan Bailey photo*