

Elizabeth Hood 1849–1925

Fruit Grower & Founding President of South Woods

Elizabeth Hood was in her late thirties when she came to Ripon, along with her 18 year old daughter Gertrude, in 1884. By the time she was in her fifties, she had given up teaching, owned several parcels of land, and taken up farming, specifically orchards.

She was also the founding president of the **South Woods Park Association**, a local group established by women in Ripon to preserve the local natural woodland.

- **The Stand Against Logging:** When the 20-acre forest tract known as South Woods was threatened with logging, local women stepped in to save it.
- **Bypassing Bureaucracy:** They initially approached the Ripon City Council to purchase the land. However, a city purchase required a majority vote by citizens, which would take too long.
- **Crowdfunded Action:** To prevent losing the forest, the women decided to buy the land themselves. Every member who could afford it pooled together a **\$2 donation** (\$79 in 2026 value) to secure a \$2,000 purchase contract.
- **Association Leadership:** Within six months of the purchase agreement, the group formed the official South Woods Park Association. Elizabeth Hood was elected as the first president.

Today, **South Woods Park** remains a beautiful, preserved asset for the Ripon community because of their proactive grassroots organizing.

Elizabeth left Ripon in 1910 to live with her daughter in Milwaukee. Elizabeth died in 1925 and is buried in Ripon.

Right: Postcards of a woman walking into beautiful South Woods were sold in 1923.

