

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RIPON

Ripon was built on the northern edge of one of the largest stretches of open prairie in Wisconsin. The first white settlement within the present city limits was a small utopian community known as *Ceresco*, founded in 1844.

One-half mile east of Ceresco, other settlers formed Ripon, named after the English cathedral city located in Yorkshire. It drew most of its settlers from New England, New York and Pennsylvania. Ceresco disbanded in 1851 and in the two villages combined two years later and incorporated as the City of Ripon in 1858.

Like many cities in Wisconsin, Ripon grew quickly attracting a large German and Polish population in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

OTHER THINGS TO DO while in Ripon

**Visit** the Little White Schoolhouse, *Birthplace of the Republican Party*

**Shop** our many distinctive establishments on the east & west sides and in Ripon’s Historic Downtown district.

**Tour** the Ripon College campus

**Hike or Bike** one of Ripon’s many trails

**Enjoy Downtown Ripon** at Friday Night Concerts June through August & the Farmers Market on Tuesday evenings & Saturday mornings June through October, both on the Village Green

**Have fun** at Larson’s Famous Clydesdales Show, and the historic Campus Cinema

**Contact the Ripon Area Chamber of Commerce for more information about all Ripon has to offer!**

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Self-Guided  
Historic Walking Tour

Part B

Approximate Walking Time  
60 Minutes



Prepared by the  
Ripon Area Chamber of Commerce

WELCOME TO HISTORIC RIPON!

This self-guided walking tour will show you many of Ripon’s historic sites. Feel free to wander from the path we outline. Take your time and enjoy the beauty of this historic city.

To enjoy Ripon’s architecture to its fullest, don’t forget to look up! Some of the most beautiful and well-preserved details on many homes and buildings are along the roofs or tops of porches. Some of the architectural styles you will pass today include:

**Greek Revival** (1825-1860)  
Low-pitched gabled or hipped roof emphasized with a wide trim band. Porches supported by prominent square or round columns. Elaborate front doors with sidelights and transom lights.

**Gothic Revival** (1840-1880)  
Steeply pitched roofs with steep cross gables decorated with fanciful verge boards. Gothic windows often extending into the gables with no visual break. One story porches.

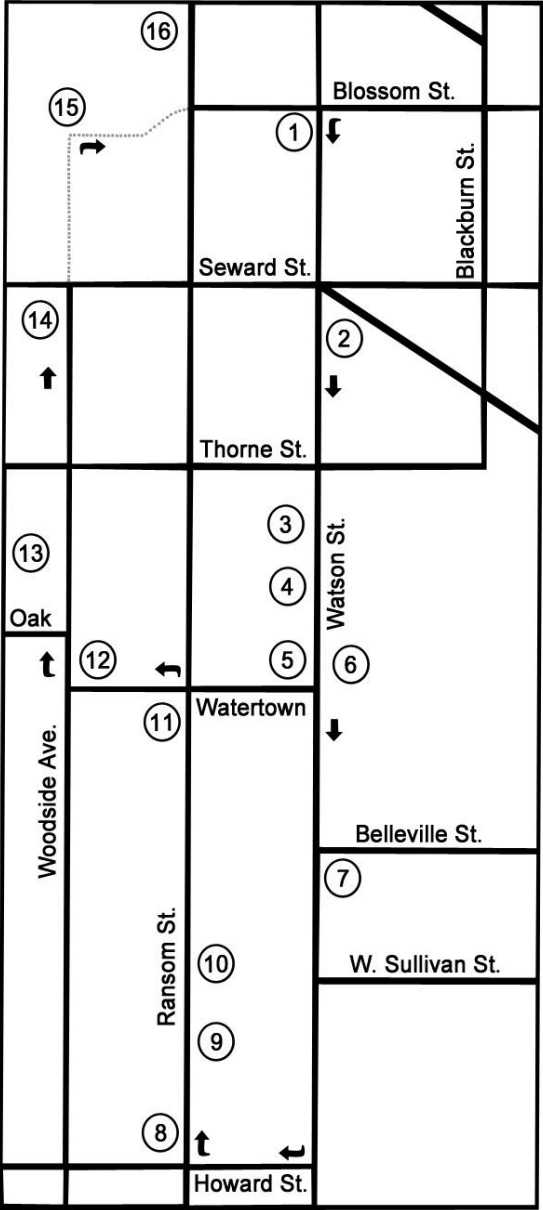
**Italianate** (1840-1885)  
Two or three stories. Low pitched roof with wide overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets. Tall narrow windows, commonly arched or curved on top with elaborate crowns. May have a cupola or tower.

**Queen Anne** (1880-1910)  
Steeply pitched roof of irregular shape, usually with dominant front facing gable. Patterned shingles, cutaway bay windows and other buildings components designed to prevent a smooth surface. Partial or full-width asymmetrical porch with delicate turned spindle work.

**Neoclassical** (1895-1950)  
Façade dominated by a full-height porch with a roof supported by classical columns typically with Ionic or Corinthian capitals. Symmetrically balanced windows with center door.

Map for Tour B

Follow Arrows



**1. Downtown Ripon**  
**Corner of Watson and Blossom Streets**  
Downtown Ripon is noted for its many fine examples of late 19th and early 20th century commercial architecture. Fire destroyed some of the original downtown buildings and dates of previous fires helped determine when replacement buildings were constructed. Generally, buildings from the 1860s to the 1870s are located around the square and to the south. Buildings from the 1890s and 1900 are mostly in the 300 block of Watson Street where we are now headed. As you proceed south take note of the stylistic similarities of the buildings. Notice the changing detail in the building cornice lines as well as the use of imported cast iron columns and trim.

**2. Old Carnegie Library**  
**401 Watson Street** – Built 1905 Ripon’s Library Association was formed in 1855 but lacked a permanent home until this building was constructed. Built with a grant from steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, this building housed the Ripon Public Library from 1905 until 1973. In that year the library moved to larger facilities north of City Hall. Now home of Ripon College Office of the President.

**3. Pickard Home**  
**508 Watson** – This building now houses the Ripon Historical Society, which was chartered in 1899 and is one of the oldest municipal historical societies in Wisconsin. This small museum has been the society’s home since 1965. The Historical Society welcomes visitors several times each year during scheduled Open Houses.

**4. Bumby Home**  
**526 Watson Street** – This “Painted Lady” was built by the founder of Ripon Foods, now Bremner, Inc., makers of Rippin’ Good Cookies. The Bumby family was very prominent in Ripon and the construction of this Queen Anne took six years at the turn of the century. Note the curved glass windows.

**5. Reed Home**  
**536 Watson Street** – This refurbished brick Italianate home was built by Judge Reed, an

alderman and mayor of Ripon. Reed’s descendants still live here.

**6. Haseltine Home**  
**537 Watson Street** – Originally from England, the Haseltine built this house in early 20th century when they moved from the home which is currently the Republican House.

**7. Zobel Home**  
**603 Watson Street** – Another “Painted Lady,” this home was built by the musical Zobel family. Edgar Zobel composed many musical scores including the “South Woods Symphony” named for the nature area southwest of Ripon.

**8. Haase Home**  
**750 Ransom Street** – This turn of the century Neoclassical home was built by the Haase family who owned the Haase Brewery on Silver Creek in Ripon.

**9. Lyle Home**  
**629 Ransom Street** – This home has stayed in the family and is still lived in by descendants of the original builder. Note the fence around the property. It was used to keep animals out rather than in. This was true of the many homes of the period.

**10. Barber Home**  
**621 Ransom Street** – Built by a physics teacher at Ripon College, this Italianate home used to face Watson Street. When the lot on Watson was sold, this side, which was rear of the house, was transformed into the front.

**11. J.B. Barlow Home**  
**203 Watertown Street** – This Tudor style house was built in 1929 by Joseph B. Barlow, one of the founders of Speed Queen. The bricks for the house came from the chimney of the old Arcade Mill.

**12. Manville House**  
**541 Woodside Avenue** – This is an outstanding example of French Second Empire, or Mansard architecture. It was built in 1871.

**13. Richard Catlin House**  
**512 Woodside Avenue** – Richard Catlin was the brother of George Catlin, famous artist of the American Indian. For some time this cut stone mansion built in the 1850s was the only house on the block and was done in the fashionable Italianate style.

**14. Hughes House**  
**Corner of Seward and Woodside**  
This well-preserved Italianate house was built in 1863 by William E. Merriman, first president of Ripon College. Between 1901 and 1966 it again served as the president’s home and is now the home of the Admission Office of Ripon College, the Hughes Honor Society. It is named after Richard Hughes, fourth president of the College.

**15. Ripon College**  
**300 Seward Street** – A coeducational, non-sectarian liberal arts college, Ripon College enrolls about 1,000 students. Founded in 1851 by the city founders, they set forth to grace their community with “an educational institution of the highest order.” As you walk up the hill, on your right is Farr Hall of Science built in 1961, and on the left is Bartlett Hall built in 1888. Attached to it is the Harwood Memorial Union which was built in 1942. As you reach the crest of the hill, Lane Library, built in 1930, is on your left and Todd Wehr Hall, which houses many classes, is opposite. Straight ahead are the three original campus buildings, East Hall built in 1851, Smith Hall, built in 1855, and West Hall, built in 1867. From these three buildings the college has expanded to the south and west where most of the residence halls are located. The physical education and fine arts complexes are to the west at the bottom of the hill. In front of East Hall you will see an historic marker erected by the State of Wisconsin commemorating the college’s founding.

**16. First Congregational Church, UCC**

**220 Ransom Street** – In 1850 the Congregationalists and Presbyterians organized the first church in the Ripon area. Their small wooden church was built on this site in 1853. It was replaced by the present structure 12 years later. Designed by noted Wisconsin architect Townsend Mix, the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

*End of tour. You may now proceed down Blossom Street to Watson Street and on to the Little White Schoolhouse if you wish. We hope you enjoyed your tour of historic Ripon!*