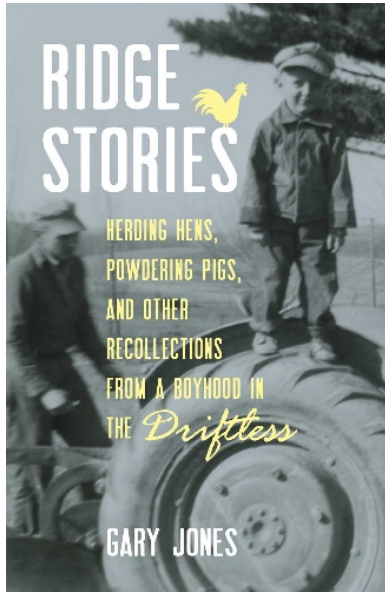




Wisconsin Historical Society
P R E S S

Memoir the Heart & Hardscrabble of Farm Life in Wisconsin's Driftless



RICHLAND CENTER, Wis. -- These days, Wisconsin's Driftless Area is celebrated—and much photographed—for its nooks, crannies, and sweeping rural vistas. But for families scratching out a farm between the rocks and ridges in the mid-Twentieth Century, Driftless life was lived with more heart, humor, and hardscrabble, than pretty pictures might imply.

“Wind was a fact of life during my boyhood on our ridge farm,” writes author Gary Jones in his new Wisconsin Historical Society Press memoir, *Ridge Stories: Herding Hens, Powdering Pigs, and Other Recollections from a Boyhood in the Driftless* (Paperback: \$20, ISBN: 978-0-87020-923-9), which gets real about rural life in the windy southwest Wisconsin hills. “Sometimes when I crossed the road between our house and the barn, I considered putting rocks in my pockets for ballast.”

From free-range chickens and farm forecasts to the art of cursing like a farm wife, Jones shares a collection of interrelated, plainspoken essays about his family's small dairy farm and the folks “on the ridge”. Among them, readers will meet Gramp Jones, whose oversized overalls saved him from losing a chunk of flesh to an irate sow; the young one-room-school teacher who helped

the kids make sled jumps at recess; Victor the pig cutter; and Charlotte, a lawn-mowing sheep who once ended up in the living room.

Reviewer and fellow rural life memoirist **Jerry Apps** admires Jones's honest look at mid-century farm life. “From winter blizzards to one-room schools, *Ridge Stories* takes me back to my own years growing up on a farm...when we learned how to make the most of small pleasures and make do when times are tough.”

Often humorous and occasionally touching, Jones's essays paint the true, vivid picture of the Driftless and the ridge farmers who call it home.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gary Jones has written professionally as a freelancer since the 1970s, publishing in the *Milwaukee Journal*, *Milwaukee Sentinel*, *Milwaukee Magazine* and several Door County publications. He taught high school English for many years and in retirement has taught college composition courses at UW-Platteville. Raised on a farm “on the ridge” near Richland Center, Wis., he and his wife divide their time between Door County and Platteville, Wis.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 14, 2019 – Book Talk & Signing

Time: 3 p.m. / **Location:** Brewer Public Library, Richland Center, Wis.

Nov. 21, 2019 – Book Talk & Signing

Time: 6 p.m. / **Location:** Driftless Historium, Mount Horeb, Wis.

Dec. 2, 2019 – Book Talk & Signing

Time: 5:30 p.m. / **Location:** Liberty Grove Library, Sister Bay, Wis. Platteville, Wis.

Media: For review copies, interviews, or events, please contact: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 816 State St., Madison, Wis. 53706; (608) 264-6465; e-mail: kristin.gilpatrick@wisconsinhistory.org. The Wisconsin Historical Society Press has been publishing Wisconsin history and culture since 1855 in support of the mission of the Wisconsin Historical Society. It is the state's oldest publisher.