



RUBYE HORTON BEMIS

GIRLS ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

The Legend's Wife

IHS Girls
Physical Director
and Coach

Ruby (Horton)
Curry Bemis

October 2018

By Aileen Carney
Sweeney

Horton Family Background

Ruby Horton - The Early Years

Ruby Horton (aka Ruby) was born the daughter of Franklin Lewis 'Frank' Horton and Bertha (Shoemaker) Horton in 1900. Ruby was raised in Iliion, on South Third Avenue, and graduated in 1918. Like many future Iliion graduates, Ruby worked summers as a playground assistant at the Typewriter Park playground. She began a three year program, at the Posse-Nissen School of Physical Education, in Boston, Mass in the fall of 1918. She started her teaching career in Boston. Ruby returned to Iliion and commenced her teaching career at the Iliion High School before 1925. She was in charge of the girls Physical Education program. In 1925,

she was already listed as a supervisor when the faculty list of 1925 was announced. Ralph 'Joe' Bemis began his Iliion tenure, in 1925, as the only new supervisor in that year.

Rubye's father, Franklin Lewis 'Frank' Horton passed away in January 1925.

- [October 1, 1918 The Herald Dispatch](#) - Utica NY Herald Dispatch 1918 - 3408.pdf

- [July 5 1919 The Utica Observer](#) - Utica NY Observer 1919 - 2171.pdf

- [1922 The Utica Observer](#) - Utica NY Observer 1922 - 0023.pdf

- [August 10, 1925 The Utica Daily Press](#) - Utica NY Daily Press 1925 - 4587.pdf

Brother Ralph Horton IHS 1916

Ralph Horton, Rubye's brother graduated from Iliion High School in 1916. During his time in high school and after, he played football in Iliion. The first football game of the 1920 season pitted the Iliion High School Team against a team of former students named the "All-Collegiate Team".

"Iliionites will be indeed fortunate on Saturday afternoon of this week in witnessing the first football contest of the season: in fact, what is believed to be the first football attraction staged in central New York this year when the All-Collegiate team lines up against the pigskin chasers bearing the standard of the Iliion High School. The game will take place at Hunt's Stadium, and should be a hummer from start to finish, as there is intense rivalry between the two teams."

"In the line-up of the All-Collegiates will be found such sterling and well known players as Chick Roberts of West Point, Ralph Horton, Carl Peterson, Edgar Dunning of Union College, Tod Tucker, Harry Griswold and Ralph Campbell of Dartmouth, Walt Davies of the University of Buffalo, Del Cady of the A. E. F. championship team, Roy Bennett of Syracuse and Ed Ashley of the United States navy, Punk Jones, the former flashy end of the gold and brown; Rende Peterson, Tom Williams and Leo Hannon are also included in the list of players. Upon glancing at the above list, one can readily see that a big football treat is in store for Saturday afternoon."

- [September 10, 1920 The Herald Dispatch](#) - Utica NY The Herald Dispatch 1920 - 3825.pdf

Local Drug Stores

Ralph Horton earned his undergraduate degree from Union College. He then attended and graduated from the Albany School of Pharmacy. He returned to Ilion, married Vera Ramsey in 1927 and worked at Getman's Pharmacy and later Griffith's Pharmacy.

The Golden Bombers were treated to free ice cream sodas, at Griffith Pharmacy, every time they won a football game, in the fall of 1935. "Ralph Horton and Co., must have had a good many busy Saturdays this past season". - The Ilion Sentinel October 31, 1935

Ralph Horton opened his own pharmacy, Horton's Drug Store, in 1939, on East Main Street in Ilion.

Miss Horton and the Girls Championship Basketball Teams

January 1927 - Pursuit of Mythical Championship



1928 Iliion Girls Basketball Team

Top - Standing Back Row - T. Bedworth, A. Bleau, H. Jordan, A. Best
Middle Row - M. Harter, A. Watson, Manager, Miss Rubye Horton, Coach
Bottom - Seated Front Row - M. Raux, D. Bleau, Captain, V. DuBois

Miss Rubye Horton was the first Iliion girls coach to lead her girls basketball teams to championships in multiple years. The Utica Observer newspaper featured the team in a January 28, 1927 article. - [January 28, 1927 The Utica Observer](#) - Utica NY Observer 1927 - 0601.pdf

The Iliion High School Girls' basketball team has established a season's record to date that is causing valley court fans to sit up and notice.

Playing in seven games since the start of the season, and meeting some of the strongest opposition, both at and away from home, throughout this season, the Iliion girls have yet to taste defeat.

The Iliion girls have started for an undefeated season and the mythical championship of Central New York for teams playing girls' rules.

The team is coached by Miss Rubye Horton, physical Instructress of the Iliion High School. Martha Mae Raux is the manager.

"Friday night at the Mohawk Armory the girls added the Mohawk girls team to their list trimming the Mohawkesaes who are now developing a girls team, by the score of 11 to 0. Next Friday, after school hours, the Iliion Court Stars will meet the strong Oneida girls on the local high gym court in what gives promise of resulting in a regular battle. The Oneida sextet is one of the leading teams in the section."

"The Iliion players are: Jump center, 'Pat' Ashton, 'Del' Bleau: side center, Ann Worrall: forwards, 'Tilly' Tillinghast, 'Tricky' Harter, 'Ted' Bedworth and Helen Jordan: guards, Capt 'Millie' Harter, 'Dot' Bleau and Hazel Stale: coach, Rubye Horton: manager, Martha Mae Raux."

The season's record:

Iliion Opp

16 Whitesboro 6

17 Dolgeville 11

11 New Hartford 7

10 Dolgeville 9

17 New York Mills 13

13 Whitesboro 10

11 Mohawk 0

111 56

The 1927-1928 Basketball Season

Coach Horton opened 1927-1928 basketball season in December 1927. The team had limited access to the basketball court, to practice, because the new court was not yet ready. In 1926, the three-story north and south wings were constructed at the high school and opened for the Junior High School. The new gymnasium (later known as the girls' gym and later the library/media center) was finally ready for use in 1928.

The Utica Observer newspaper featured the team in a December 8, 1927 article. - [December 8, 1927 The Utica Observer](#) - Utica NY Observer 1927 a - 4698.pdf

"The Ilion High girls' basketball team last year's claimant of the Central New York championship title, will open the season Friday afternoon at 4:30 at the new high school court. The opposing team has not as yet been selected, although word has been received from several teams accepting the date."

"This year's team has been practicing in a limited way under Miss Rubye Horton, coach, due to the floor of the new court not being ready. Last season the girls won 16 out of 18 games played, the new majority of these games by top best scores. The coach and the girls are out again this year to duplicate better last season's record and has shown plenty of spirit in their workouts."

A few of last year's outstanding players were lost to the team through graduation, but the material being moulded by Miss Horton for this season's contests gives promise of attaining the standing reached by last year's squad."

This year's combination will be composed of Marie (Trickie) Higr and Thelma (Ted) Bedworth forwards, Ardell (Del) Bleau, center, Martha (Mart) Raux, a center; Capt. Dorothy (Dot) Beau and Ada Best, guards."

Several promising substitutes are being developed, who will be ready to step into the regular lineup any time. Annette Watson is the team's manager."

April 1928 Ilion High Sextet Finishes Another Successful Year



The Utica Observer newspaper featured the team's season accomplishments in a April 7, 1928 article. - [April 7, 1928 The Utica Observer](#) - Utica NY Observer 1928 - 2087.pdf

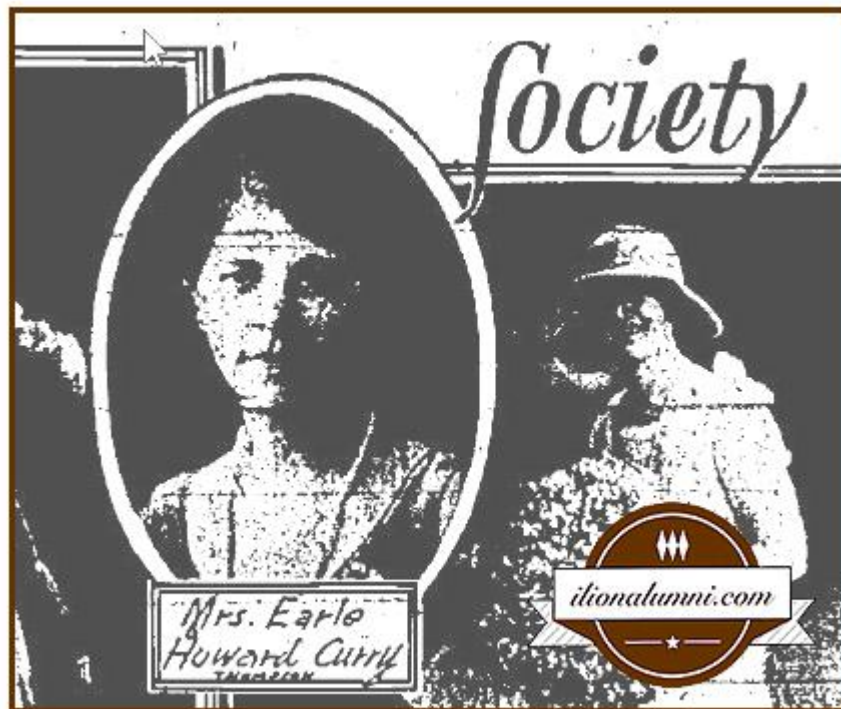
The Ilion High girls' basketball team have just completed another successful season winning 12 of 13 games and totaling 421 points to their opponents

193."

The Iliion girls played seven home contests not meeting defeat on their own court.

"Miss Rubye Horton is coach of the team, and is being congratulated upon rounding out a strong team again this season, involving the building up practically a new first program."

Miss Horton Marries Earle Curry - August 16, 1930



Life wasn't just coaching sports for Miss Horton. In the summer of 1930, she found the time to get married. She was 30 years old when she tied the knot. The average age for women to marry in 1930 was 21.3 years old.

"A marriage of unusually wide interest was that of Miss Rubye Carolyn Horton, daughter of Mrs. Bertha S. Horton, 31 South Fourth Avenue, Iliion

to Earle Howard Curry, son of Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Curry, Boston, Mass. The wedding took place Aug. 16 in the Little Church Around the Corner, New York City. Mrs. Curry is a graduate of the Posse Nissan School Boston, Mass. and has been assistant physical director at the Iliion High School." Mr. Curry was graduated from Dean Academy and attended Boston University. He was employed by the Remington Cash Register Company. - [August 24, 1930 - Utica Observer](#) - Utica NY Observer - 2008.pdf - [August 24, 1930 - Utica Observer](#) - Utica NY Observer 1930 a - 1823.PDF

1930-1931 Girls Basketball Champions



March 22, 1931

Above is the girls' basketball team of the Iliion High School, which has won its second championship in two years of league competition. Rear Row, left to right: Lillian Hunter, Edith Schmidt, and Leona Christiana; center, Ellen Williams, Elizabeth O'Brien, manager; Mrs. Rubye Curry, coach; Mariland Cox; Front row, Alice Hanning, Capt. Alice Treiber, Jeannette Ashton and Helen Maury. - [March 22,](#)

Girls Expect To Get Trophy During The Week

"The Gold and Brown girls' basketball team of the Iliion High School has completed its season with another excellent record, adding another championship to its credit."

"Last year was the first year of the organization of a high school league for girls and the local outfit won the title without a defeat. This year the team again won the championship, and this week it is expected that the cup will be awarded to Capt. Alice Treiber."

"The girls have not only annexed league victories, but teams outside of the circuit like Canastota and Sherrill, have been defeated by the local quintet."

"Mrs. Rubye Curry, coach, is looking forward to another championship basketball team next year, but she will be handicapped by the loss of both of her star forwards, Treiber and Manning, and also the loss of Edith Schmidt, guard. The following players will receive letters: Capt. Alice Treiber, Alice Manning, Lillian Hunter, Jeannette Ashton, Edith Schmidt, Mariland Cox and Elizabeth O'Brien, manager."

1930s Girls Sports Program Expands under Coach Mrs. Rubye Curry

Field Hockey, Tennis, Archery, Hiking, Basketball

Mrs. Rubye Curry, Athletic director, supervised all the activities for indoor and outdoor high school girls sports.

The year 1931 heralded the start of organized girls' field hockey.

The year 1938 proved how advanced and varied the sports programs had become.

Both the high school girl and boy teams finished the 1938 tennis season undefeated. That was the first time that had happened in the history of the local school. Mr. E. E. Swarthout and Mrs. Rubye Curry, athletic directors for girls, were in charge of the two squads. - [June 20, 1938 - Utica Daily Press](#) - Utica NY Daily Press 1938 - 2311.pdf

A hiking club was started for juniors and seniors. The club had weekly excursions on the trails. Each group has a leader and the trip usually ended with an outdoor meal.

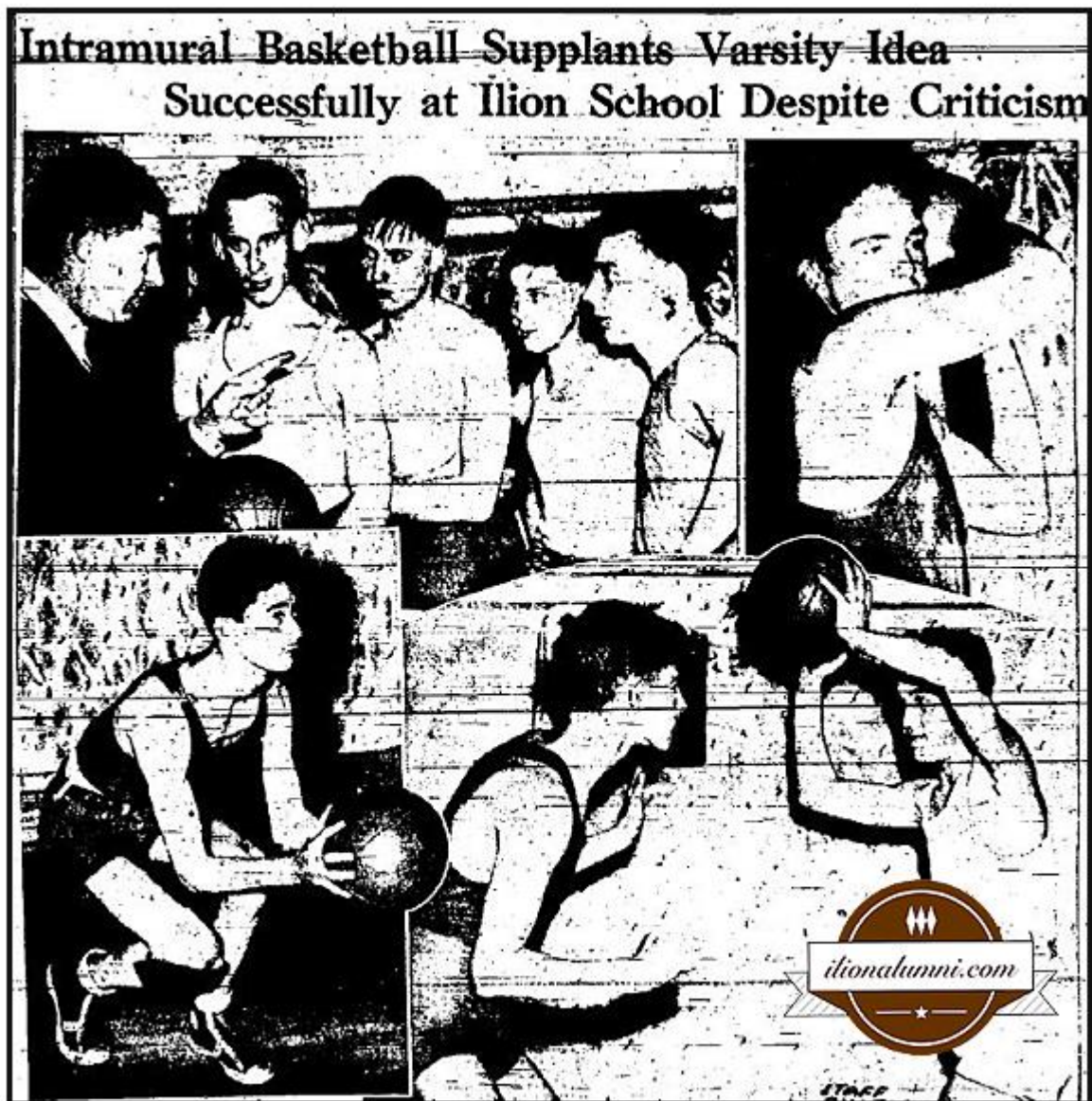
A skiing club is contemplated and also a skating team. This will be the fourth season for the girls bowling league.

Archery began in 1937 when it was taken up by a group of girls unable to participate in more strenuous activities. Teachers also took up archery as a recreation. Miss Annette Schabel assisted Mrs. Curry in managing the weekly meets of senior and junior girls.

There were four teams of volleyball operating for senior girls that played weekly.

Intramural basketball started in December and completed about Easter. There were eight senior and eight junior girl clubs playing four matches each week. - [October 16, 1938 - The Utica Observer](#) - Utica NY Observer 1938 a - 0250.pdf

1930s Boys and Girls Intramural Program



To Ilion High fans who like varsity competition, intramural basketball may not be to their liking but it's proving a popular change among the students. At present four leagues are in operation.. Pictured above are several of the boys active in the sport. Top, left to right, shows Coach Bemis stressing fundamentals to George Kane, Ken Edgett, Fred Hammond and Dick Morris; right, Robert Watson shown in a correct passing posture. Below, Harry Seymour is about to try his luck at hooping one while on the right, Lynn Cagle is setting up a block with Stanley Van Alstyne looking for his receiver. - [January 9, 1938 - The Utica Observer](#) - Utica NY Observer 1938 - 0465.pdf

Intramural Basketball replaced Varsity Basketball

More Than 200 Boys and Girls Make Up 36 Teams in Court Leagues

Joe Bemis instructor for boys

Mrs. Rubye Curry for the girls

The championship basketball teams of the late 1920s and early 1930s were a thing of the past by 1938. At some time in prior years, Varsity Basketball for boys was discontinued as a program. The Utica Observer January 9, 1938 newspaper article summarized the intramural program.

To Iliion High fans who like varsity competition, intramural basketball may not be to their liking but it's proving a popular change among the students. At present four leagues are in operation. Pictured above are several of the boys active in the sport. Top, left to right, shows Coach Bemis stressing fundamentals to George Kane, Ken Edgett, Fred Hammond and Dick Morris; right, Robert Watson shown in a correct passing posture. Below, Harry Seymour is about to try his luck at hooping one while on the right, Lynn Cagle is setting up a block with Stanley Van Alstyne looking for his receiver.

Basketball for the many rather than for a chosen few is the policy at the Iliion High School. There's more than 199 boys and girls making up 36 teams in intramural leagues.

The practice of developing 8 or 10 boys into star athletes and sending them out to compete with varsity teams from other schools was abandoned several years ago.

The move was made in the face of criticism which still exists to some extent but has worked out to the satisfaction of school authorities.

This winter finds four leagues operating at the school. Two junior leagues are for boys and girls under 16. And the senior leagues admit the older and larger pupils. Coach Joe Bemis is instructor for the boys and Mrs. Rubye Curry for the girls.

The gymnasium is large enough to provide two courts and four teams are in

action at the same time. Senior boys play Tuesdays and the juniors on Thursday and the girl squads on Monday and Thursday.


Since basketball was made an intramural rather than a varsity activity, other sports have turned definitely in that direction.

The theory of the School Board that excellence in sports comes after sound preliminary training in intramural activities has proved sound.

Runner up in the last open tournament at Iliion Golf Club was a high school student; winner of the Iliion tennis tournament was a high school grad, high school bowling teams are better than many men leagues.

Iliion school basketball players have little trouble in holding their won on the faster independent local league.

Coach Bemis Dismissed - April 1939



Legal Action Is Rumored Over Bemis Dismissal

Iliion—Fred J. O'Donnell, attorney for Coach Ralph W. Bemis, Thursday declared he disagreed with an official interpretation of the Civil Law Service Law affecting teachers, but would not comment on reports that legal action might be taken regarding Bemis' dismissal by the Board of Education.

Bemis, who was dismissed in April, after serving as physical education director in Iliion schools

the board there had never been any complaint regarding his work. First letter was written late in April and a second letter asking for an immediate reply was sent May 1. It was learned from school officials.

The board consulted the law division of the State Education Department and was given an opinion by Charles A. Brind, who contended veterans' preference was not applicable to teachers.

In April 1939, the Iliion Board of Education dismissed Coach Bemis who had served as physical education director in the Iliion schools for more than 13 years. At the time of his dismissal, Coach Bemis believed the Board had not provided him with reasons for his firing. In a letter to the Board of Education, sent in late April, he stated that there had never been any complaint regarding his work. Another letter was sent on May 1 asking for an immediate reply from the Board of Education. Coach Bemis hired Fred J. O'Donnell, as his attorney, in the matter. Bemis and his attorney contended that because he was an honorably discharged World War veteran, he could not be removed from his position except for incompetency or misconduct. Bemis filed legal action with the Supreme Court demanding reinstatement as physical education director. - ["Legal Action Is Rumored Over Bemis Dismissal" - June 7, 1939 - Utica Daily Press](#) - Utica NY Daily Press 1939 - 1793.pdf

1940 Census Data - Hortons

31	05	@	25	no	Horton Ralph	head	0	M	W	43	M	00	02	60
					Vera	wife	1	F	W	41	M	00	44	30
					Curry Ruby	daughter	5	F	W	40	D	00	03	60
					Horton Bertha	mother	3	F	W	79	WD	00	7	7
					Shoemaker Floyd	brother	5	M	W	9	S	00	5	6

Sometime after June 1938, Rubye and Earle Curry divorced. Rubye Curry's marital status was shown as divorced in the [1940 census](#).

Her [census data](#) was recorded under her married name. Rubye was living with her brother, pharmacist Ralph Horton and his wife Vera, in their family residence at 31 South Fourth Avenue. Her mother, Bertha Horton, and a cousin, Floyd Shoemaker, also resided at the same address. Rubye's occupation was listed as teacher and her age was 40 years old. Oddly, the 1940 census also showed that she had been *unemployed for 22 weeks* up to March 30, 1940. - [1940 Census - Iliion EDN No. 22-19 - S. Fourth Avenue](#)



April 1941 Miss Rubye Horton Replaced

The last time Rubye Horton appeared in the Iliion High School Yearbook 'The Mirror', as a member of the faculty, was 1941. The photos and pages for that yearbook were most likely prepared in the fall of 1940. By that time the book was published, she had resumed the use of her maiden name.

"The appointment of Erva Metcalf as girls' physical education teacher was announced by the Board of Education following a meeting held Tuesday evening. Miss Metcalf is a graduate of Russell Sage College, class of '41, and of the Horace Mann School, New York. She will fill the position formerly held by Rubye Horton." - ["School Board Appoints One New Teacher" - April 14, 1941 - The Iliion Sentinel](#) - Iliion NY Sentinel 1941-1943 - 0251.pdf

Life After Teaching and Coaching

Girl Scouts - Camp Kiwanis

In 1947, Mrs. Frank Wilson, Girl Scout Council chairman appointed Miss Ruby Horton, as the overnight camping supervisor for the Iliion girl scouts. Miss Horton has been aiding in scout work through the winter. The scouting plan was to have groups of eight girls that would have two full days and nights of camp work. The camp was known as Camp Kiwanis in Russell Park. The camping program ran for four weeks. Parties at the camp were planned for each of the last two weeks of July and the last two weeks of August. The Russell Park girl scout camping program continued on for more than two decades, well into the 1960s. - [Feb 4, 1947 - The Iliion Sentinel](#) - Illion NY Sentinel 1941-1943 - 0251.pdf

Family Life

As was common at the time, multifamily generations lived together. Rubye and her mother resided in her brother's home on S. Fourth Avenue. Rubye's mother, Bertha Horton, passed away in February 1947.

"Mrs. Bertha Horton, 86, died Feb 3, 1947, in her home, 31 S. Fourth Ave. She was born near Mohawk, daughter of Alonzo and Mary Crim Shoemaker. She resided in Iliion most of her life and was married to Frank Horton on June 6, 1895, in Mohawk. She attended the Baptist Church. She leaves a daughter, Miss Rubye C. Horton, a son; Ralph H., and a sister, Mrs. Augusta Stern, all of Iliion." - [Feb 4, 1947 - The Iliion Sentinel](#) - Illion NY Sentinel 1941-1943 - 0251.pdf

Rubye continued to live with her brother and his wife, Vera. Her sister-in-law, Vera (Ramsey) Horton died in March 1947. Ralph and Vera never had any children.

Horton's Drug Store - Ralph Franklin Horton

"Ralph Franklin Horton, 61 of 31 S. Fourth Ave, died Dec. 2, 1958, in Iliion Hospital after a long illness. He was born in Iliion, May 8, 1896, son of Franklin and Bertha Shoemaker Horton. He married Vera Ramsey in 1927, in Iliion, She died five years ago. Mr. Horton was owner of Horton's Drug Store, E. Main St., which he operated 20 years. He graduated from Iliion High School and from Albany Pharmaceutical School in 1921. Mr. Horton had served in the Army Ordnance Department during World War I. He worked for Getman Pharmacy many years ago and later for the Griffith Pharmacy before opening his own store."

"He was a descendant of the Crim-Shoemaker family. He was a member of the former Crim-Shafer American Legion Post band. He also was a member of Iliion Volunteer Fireman, Iliion Elks, BOOE 1444; American Legion Post 40 and 8 and was a member of the Baptist Church. He leaves a sister, Miss Ruby Horton of Iliion; a Cousin, Floyd Shoemaker with whom he resided; several other cousins. The funeral will be at 2 Friday from the Applegate Funeral Home the Rev. Arthur Lacey , pastor of the First Baptist Church, officiating. Burial will be in Armory Hill Cemetery." - [Dec 3, 1958 - The Utica Daily Press](#) - Utica NY Daily Press 1960 - 9052.pdf



Photo courtesy of Deb (Perlock) Marley and Matt Marley - current owners of the former Horton-Bemis home

Rubye Horton Married Coach Bemis

The exact date is unknown, but sometime after 1958, Rubye Horton married [Ralph 'Joe' Bemis](#). She would have been over 57 years old when she married Coach Bemis. They continued to live in her brother's former home, at 31 S. Fourth Avenue, Iliion NY.

Rubye Bemis died, at the age of 91 on July 5, 1991. Ralph W. 'Joe' Bemis passed away, one year later, on August 31, 1992. He was 93 years old.

[BACK](#)

Digital Image Copyright & Copyright © 1997 - 2018 ilionalumni.com
October 24, 2018