

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

Ripon's first monument company started around 1861

At Halloween time, thoughts turn to cemeteries and the monuments found in them. One of the first monument companies in Ripon was started around 1861 by Cyrus Pedrick (1830-1915).

Pedrick was in the monument business in Ripon until 1866.

One of Pedrick's carved headstones may be found in the gardens at the Ripon Historical Society's Pedrick-Lawson House, 515 Ransom St. Pedrick sculpted the headstone for his nephew Charlie Pedrick (1861-1862), who died of scarlet fever at 14 months old. He used his other nephew, Edward Pedrick (1859-1921), as the model for the 2-foot tall monument which features a kneeling boy.

Charlie's headstone was removed from his grave in 1920 when new matching headstones for the family were placed in Hillside Cemetery. For years, Charlie's original headstone was stored in the caretaker's tool house of Hillside Cemetery.

In 1958, Charlie's brother, Sam Pedrick (1868-1963), started researching and recording art in Ripon and rediscovered the headstone. Both the hands and head had snapped off and were then reattached. It went on display at the Ripon Community Art Center. The headstone later went to the Ripon Historical Society in 1968 and after 1973 was moved to the gardens at the Pedrick-Lawson House.

In 1864, the monument company became known as "Baldwin and Pedrick." The Sept. 23, 1904 *Ripon Commonwealth Press* printed the obituary of Henry Baldwin (1827-1904).

The obituary states that Baldwin "Came to Ripon in 1859. A year or two later he entered here



CYRUS PEDRICK CARVED the small white monument on the right hand side of this undated photo for an infant nephew, Charlie. Pedrick was in the monument business in Ripon from approximately 1861 to 1866. In 1920, it was removed from the grave when new headstones for the family were placed in Hillside Cemetery. For years the headstone was stored in the caretaker's tool house of Hillside Cemetery and after 1968 was moved to the gardens at the Ripon Historical Society's Pedrick-Lawson House.

submitted photo

the employ of Cyrus Pedrick, as a traveling salesman for the marble and monument trade, at length succeeding to the proprietorship of the business, which he has followed to the end of life."

Around 1866, Baldwin became a partner with Robert Stuart (1843-1922). The name was changed to "Stuart & Baldwin Marble Works." It is not known why Pedrick left the business in Ripon. However, he went on to own the same type of business in the Wauwatosa area of Milwaukee.

Baldwin became a brother-in-law of his former partner when he married Mary Pedrick Baldwin (1837-1907) in 1874. She was born while her mother was aboard a steamship traveling on Lake Erie. She came to Ripon in 1849 with her parents — Samuel (1791-1850) and Millicent (1801-1855)

— and brothers Cyrus and Marcellus (1828-1899) who become some of Ripon's first settlers and residents.

By 1871, Stuart & Baldwin Marble Works was located on the south side of East Fond du Lac Street about halfway between Blackburn and Watson streets. A sketch of Stuart & Baldwin's Marble Works is found in the 1874 Fond du Lac County atlas map. Two other Stuart family members worked at the company. City directories list the Stuart family living above the company.

The May 19, 1876 issue of the *Ripon Commonwealth Press* reported that a monument was ordered from the Stuart & Baldwin Marble Works for James Towle (1808-1876) of scotch granite. The paper reported that "It will be, when completed, one of the finest pieces of work ever sent out from their shop."

The 16-foot high monument still is located in the Mackford Union Cemetery, southwest of Ripon at W683-W699 County Highway X, Markesan.

In 1881, Stuart left the business and moved to Kansas.

The *Ripon Commonwealth Press* reported about Baldwin's business in February 1881, writing that "Orders are constantly filled for points all over central



THIS SKETCH OF Stuart & Baldwin's Marble Works comes from the 1874 Fond du Lac County atlas map. This business was located on the south side of East Fond du Lac Street about half way between Blackburn and Watson streets. *submitted photo*

and northern Wisconsin and are not confined to this state alone but extends to Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota. ... He uses a variety of granite and marble, and turns out all kinds of work, from a common \$20 headstone to a \$1,000 monument [equal to \$630 to \$30,000 today]."

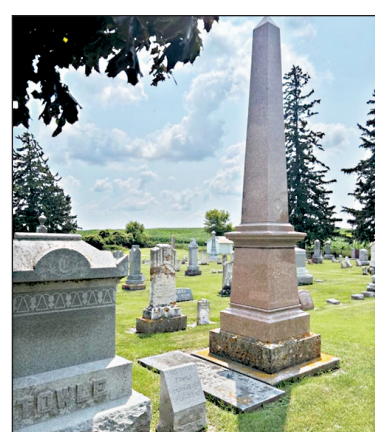
Baldwin continued in the business until he passed away at age 77 in 1904.

Ripon's cemeteries including Hillside and Woodlawn, as well as many surrounding cemeteries, are filled with monuments that came from the Ripon Marble Works.

Today, people can purchase a headstone from Archie Monuments at Divine Passage and from Twin City Monuments, who have two locations to look at the headstones, as well as through Butzin-Marchant Funeral Home.

The biggest change to the monument industry is that today gravestones also may be purchased online.

The *Ripon Historical Society* is the oldest continually operating historical society in Wisconsin. It



THE 16-foot high monument on the right is located in the Mackford Union Cemetery southwest of Ripon. The May 19, 1876 issue of the *Ripon Commonwealth Press* reported that it was made for James Towle (1808-1876) of Scotch Granite by Stuart & Baldwin Marble Works located on East Fond du Lac Street. *submitted photo*

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APPROVES/AC system needs replacing at Murray Park *continued from page 1*

property values within each municipality.

"The Ripon Area School District is pleased to have finished the 2023-2024 school year with a balanced budget and is projecting the same for 2024-2025," Adams said. "Since much of the district's revenue is tied to student enrollment, the district is encouraged by a net growth of 44 students in the September count, including an increase of 10 students for the in-person 4-year-old kindergarten program."

Additionally, with more students attending through open enrollment, the district expects approximately \$495,000 in additional revenue from tuition payments compared to last year. Overall, the district remains in a strong financial position, accord-

ing to Adams.

The overall levy for 2025 is \$6,877,433, with changes coming due to increases in open-enrollment tuition revenue. A total of \$112,514 was added to the general fund and subtracted from the debt service.

The general fund stands at \$4,277,060, with the debt service at \$2,227,798.14 and the community service fund is \$260,000.

The revised budget includes updates for state-certified values, covering general aid, property taxes, per pupil aid, private school vouchers and other state aid. It also reflects adjustments for more accurate estimates since the annual meeting, including expected increases in open-enrollment revenue, related expenses and medical insurance

premiums starting in January 2025, Adams noted.

The 2025 budget and mill rate was approved by the School Board by a 5-0 vote, with three members absent.

In other action

In other action from the meeting:

► The School Board approved the hiring of a special education teacher for Murray Park/Quest Elementary to replace two long-time substitute teachers. Molly Houllihan has experience with several school districts as a special education teacher and came highly recommended.

► The School Board also approved the election notice for three members who will face reelection, if they choose to run,

next April. The members include Betsy Heffernan, Kelly Nielsen and Gary Rodman. The deadline to file for candidacy is Jan. 7 at 5 p.m. Once filed, a declaration of candidacy may not be withdrawn. The election will be held April 1.

► A top priority for this school year for the district is the replacement of the air conditioning system that serves the main hallway section of Murray Park/Quest Elementary School, including the office, art, music and library areas.

The current unit, which is original to the building and is nearly 33 years old, has far exceeded its expected lifespan. This past summer, the unit underwent multiple repairs due to leaks in the refrigerant lines, which have become brittle and prone to cracking.

The refrigerant is expensive as it consists of a blended material. The estimated cost to replace the air conditioning unit is \$115,000. The project will include installing a new outdoor condensing unit, two new evaporator coils and updated refrigeration lines that no longer are buried underground.

Bids for the project should be received in November and December and reviewed, followed by approval by the School Board. Work should begin in April, with the old equipment removed when the new equipment is on site. This was an information item, so no action was taken at the meeting.

The next scheduled meeting of the Ripon School Board will be Monday, Nov. 18 at 6 p.m. in the Ripon High School community room. The public may attend.