

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

# Engraved Willard stone recently found in a rubble pile

The Ripon Historical Society recently received an engraved stone that was found in a pile of fill dirt and rubble by Bruce Mueller, an amateur historian and archeologist.

The rubble came from the area of Silver Creek Dentistry, 1209 W. Fond du Lac St., and was dumped on an empty lot northwest of Ripon near Waukau.

Mueller has volunteered in the archeological lab at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. He and his late brother, who had a metal detector, liked to explore various locations in the greater rural area.

Mueller noted that the stone he donated to the historical society had a boot shape which made it look different than other items found at the Waukau rubble site. Once the stone was turned over, he discovered the stone had writing carved into it. Knowing that the rubble had come from Ripon, he called the Ripon Historical Society to see if it wanted the stone.

The 31-inch-high and 10-inch-wide stone is engraved “1844 Blue Ledge Farm 1892 Henry Willard.”

Willard (1817-1895) was born in New York. His obituary in the *Ripon Commonwealth Press* noted that he came west in 1844 and “walked from Kenosha to this place and located his land claim and the deed to his farm was the first one recorded in the neighborhood of Ripon.”

His obituary on [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) notes that he moved to the Ripon area in 1846 or 1847. Ripon’s Pedrick Genealogy Notebooks state that Willard moved to his Ripon-area farm in 1849.

Whatever the year that Willard arrived in Ripon, he was one of the area’s first pioneer settlers. Willard married Sara Cole Willard (1822-1906) in 1845 and the Willards had four



**THIS ENGRAVED ROCK** was recently donated to the Ripon Historical Society. It was discovered in dirt fill and rubble that was removed near Silver Creek Dentistry and dumped near Waukau, Wis. The stone reads “1844 Blue Ledge Farm 1892 Henry Willard.” Willard was an early pioneer settler of Ripon.

children.

Willard owned land west of early Ripon in what then was the community of Arcade. Some historical accounts state that Willard owned 150 acres of land and early plat maps note that he owned approximately 140 acres.

A house and farm land was located on the west side of Arcade Glen Road just south of West Fond du Lac Street.

The 1862 township of Ripon plat map shows a stone quarry just south of West Fond du Lac Street on both sides of Arcade Glen Road. The 1874 township of Ripon plat map shows the stone quarry on the east side of Arcade Glen Road.

The eastern half of Willard’s



**THE HENRY WILLARD** (1817-1895) farm and quarry is found on the 1874 plat map of the township of Ripon. *submitted photo*

Quarry. Willard’s daughter, Helen Willard Toombs, (1846-1929) married William Toombs (1825-1883) and they lived in South America.

After William died, Helen moved back to her parents’ farm. It is unclear how H.T. Toombs is related to Helen.

The Oct. 10, 1899 issue of the *Ripon Commonwealth Press* reported that stone for the foundation of Ingram Hall, a new science building at Ripon College was being taken from the “Willard-Toombs quarry at Arcade.” This brick building was razed in 1969 and sat just east of Todd Wehr Hall, 300 W. Seward St. It is unknown when the Willard-Toombs quarry closed.

The engraved rock in the rubble pile would have come from the stone quarry on Wil-

*The Ripon Historical Society is the oldest continually operating historical society in Wisconsin. It is open Fridays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information follow us at Facebook/riponhistory or [www.riponhistory.org](http://www.riponhistory.org).*

Thank You

to Ripon Historical Society for putting in the article on Veteran’s Day about our mother, Gladys Hritsko.

-The Hritsko Family

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