

Stone Boats

When this area of the state was first being settled, the land had to be cleared of rocks left by the glacier. The size of the stones varied from small rocks that were easily picked up by hand to large boulder-sized rocks. In addition to these stones, each spring there were others lifted to the surface by the freezing and thawing of the soil. Farmers had to remove the stones before crops could be planted, so a “stone boat” was used to carry them from the field. The stones were often “recycled” for use in other farm operations such as a building’s foundation or a stone fence like the one you see before you.

Narrative credit: Art Pope, Professor Emeritus UW-Madison

Presented by the Town of Middleton



Illustration credit: Katie Ryan, Town Resident

“Stone boats” were constructed of heavy wood timber in the form of a sled. Because they were low to the ground, the farmer had to do less heavy lifting of the stones.