

BUILT FROM STONE

THE WESTERLY GRANITE STORY

VOLUME
13 of 52

A LASTING TRIBUTE

“Nothing is certain, but death and taxes.” And when death came, families had decisions to make about how to mark the burial place. If they wanted the very best, grieving families sought out salesmen from the Westerly granite companies which had offices in major cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Providence, Cleveland, and Boston as well as in Westerly.

Often the family would have a design in mind, but salesmen were always prepared to offer ideas from their promotional material. The salesman would then try to match the clients’ wishes with their budgets, the requirements of the cemetery lots, and the capabilities of the company. A contract would be agreed upon which contained both a preliminary design and the specs for the final monument.

If the monument called for a statue, the sculptor would begin his work. First with sketches and then with clay, his design would take shape. He would sculpt a statue, often life-sized, in clay, perfecting the proportions and details. Then a mold was made and a plaster cast was poured. When the plaster was set, the mold was removed, leaving a plaster copy of the sculptor’s

design. Later, the statue cutter would use these casts to create an exact copy in granite.

A draftsman would design the monument’s other components, indicating the dimensions of the base(s), die, cap, and other “non-statue” features and lay out the lettering in life-size drawings for the inscription.

Stonecutters and letter cutters would use these drawings to faithfully reproduce the design in granite.

The order books for the Smith Granite Company show



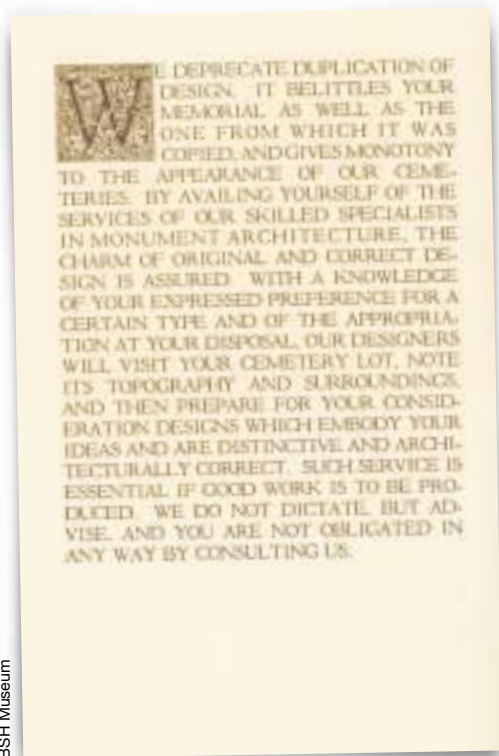
Sculptors’ Studio at the Smith Granite Company. The Smith Granite Company employed four sculptors: Edward Pausch, Stanley Edwards, Robert Barr, and J. G. Hamilton. By dating the works in the background, it is hypothesized that Edwards is standing and Barr is seated.

detailed drawings of every component of the monument with each dimension carefully specified. The drawings are works of art in themselves and foreshadow the beauty of the finished product. If anything could help relieve the sadness of a grieving family, it would be the beauty of the finished memorial.

Linda Smith Chaffee



Sales brochure of the Smith Granite Company circa 1920.



A page from a promotional booklet of the Smith Granite Company circa 1920.

TODAY IN GRANITE

UNITED BUILDERS SUPPLY, along with the Babcock-Smith House Museum and The Westerly Sun, is proud to be part of this effort in bringing the heritage of the Westerly Granite industry back to the people of Westerly.

A treasure from the past, United Builders Supply is excited to be able to offer these historic granites to the marketplace again.



Westerly Pink Granite columns with Westerly Blue Granite steps at a home in Westerly. United Builders Supply provided the Westerly Pink blocks with the tops and bottoms sawn. Fred Lindsley, a local Mason, along with his crew, hand dressed each piece to form the columns.

PEOPLE WHO BUILT WESTERLY DOCUMENTED GRANITE WORKERS

Carrani, Giovanni	Casani, Giovanni
Carson, Gordon	Cassani, John
Carson, Jack	Casy, Martin
Carson, John	Casy, William
Carson, Robert	Cato, Thomas
Casarico, Mario	Catto, Antonio
Casey, D.	Catto, Charles
Casey, Daniel J.	Catto, Frank
Casey, James	Catto, Frank G.
Casey, Maurice	Catto, Jacob
Casey, Patrick	Catto, John
Casey, William	Catto, Peter
Casani, Amileari	Cautelin, John, Sr.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

A stonecutter’s point is a roughing tool used to approximate a surface. The point is held in the left hand and hit with a hammer. The rough pointing is done in the “easy way” (the way the granite cuts most “easily”) and the fine pointing is done in the direction of the hard way.



BSH Museum



Granite cutter’s pointing tool.
(left) Hand pointed surface wall in front of The Elms.

WHERE IN WESTERLY?



BSH Museum

STONE CHIPS

On what happens if a stonecutter made a mistake: “Well, they would start all over again, sometimes you would spoil that stone and, of course, if you spoil it, it runs into money. The company pays for that. Of course the company buys that stone and it’s work ... and sometimes it do happen and the company takes a licking and sometimes ... there is a trick to it they would patch it up, but you wouldn’t know it for a while, but after awhile you can see there is a patch there. Probably drops out but after years you know. ... The foreman would come to the blacksmith to put [the stone] over the fire . . . the same color ... and of course they would put it in and you would know that stone was patched.”

Frank Turco (b.1910) in an interview in 1985.

YOUR PART IN HISTORY

Thank you for supporting The Babcock Smith Open House. We are pleased that so many of you came out to share your photographs, treasures and knowledge of the local granite industry with us. We know there are more of you out there and encourage you to contact us with your stories. Babcock Smith House Membership Drive is currently in full swing so come join us!

Phone: (401) 377-8490 Linda Chafee or Email: bsh1734@verizon.net

COMING NEXT WEEK

In the sheds where the stones took shape.



Babcock-Smith
House Museum

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