

BUILT FROM STONE

THE WESTERLY GRANITE STORY

VOLUME
15 OF 52

MOVING 42 TONS

How do you move a 42-ton granite shaft from Westerly to the Bronx, NY in 1895? It's a real challenge.

Moving granite is difficult because it is heavy, brittle and often large. Methods of transportation changed greatly during the one hundred twenty-five years of the granite industry and was especially challenging before the internal combustion engine made trucks available. Initially there were carts drawn by either horses or oxen, the latter were named for their driver. An ox cart with high wheels, which were as much as twelve feet in diameter, was used to move granite blocks to the sheds for cutting. To move a finished piece of granite, a low bed wagon was used, drawn either by horses if the piece was relatively light or by oxen if the piece was heavier. Finished work had to be hauled down Granite Street hill, through Dixon Square, up High Street to the Westerly Railroad Station. Going downhill, two oxen were in front of the cart to provide steering, but as many as five pair were behind the cart to hold the load and prevent it from going downhill too fast. Large blocks of granite were dragged behind the cart to further slow the cart. Once loaded on the train, the piece could go anywhere the railroad went.

Paving blocks were sometimes taken down to the river and put on barges to be shipped.



Oxen at New England Granite Works, looking north. Houses in the background are on Ledward Avenue. Notice the large high-wheel cart in the right foreground. The wheels are twelve feet in diameter.

A spur from the main railroad line was first brought into the New England Granite Works around 1870 and extended in 1892 into the Smith Granite Company, making it no longer necessary to haul granite down the hill to the station. The finished product could be boxed and company-owned locomotives loaded it onto railroad cars. Once the pieces reached their destination, they had to be hauled by a large team of horses from the railroad freight yard to the cemetery or other place.

When trucks became readily available, moving granite around the plant and shipping it became much easier. The finished work could go directly to the site without transfers, saving time and reducing the chance of damage during shipment.

Linda Smith Chaffee



The Hall Shaft boxed and on a railroad car, ready for the railroad trip to New York City. This monument was so long, nearly 50 feet, that the end of the monument overhung the railroad car; an empty car had to be coupled to this one to accommodate the swing.



Smith Granite Company Locomotive circa 1932.

TODAY IN GRANITE

Recently, United Builders Supply provided samples of both Westerly Pink and Westerly Blue to the German Research Centre for Geosciences in Potsdam, Germany. These samples are being used to study the brittle fracture in the Earth modeling, the processes preceding powerful earthquakes. Westerly Granite fits very well for these researches because of the small grain size, pretty homogenous properties and repeatability of experiments. The U.S.

Geological Survey has been studying Westerly Granite for decades, and now international research groups will be able to conduct similar studies thanks to United Builders Supply.



Westerly Granite in stock at United Builders Supply Co. awaiting shipment. Westerly Pink and Blue Granites are available as a "Thin-Stone" and full bed veneer in both Square, Rectangle and Ashler Strips.

STONECUTTERS' HOMES

Stonecutter Frederick Pascoe lived an easy walk from the Smith Granite Company where he worked on many different styles of monuments.

Right: Once the home of stonecutter Frederick Pascoe on 42 School Street



Pascoe worked on the Kates classical monument in North Laurel Cemetery in Philadelphia, PA. The monument was produced in 1896 at Smith Granite Company from blue Westerly granite for \$1800.



Locally Pascoe's work can be seen in the James Pendleton sarcophagus (River Bend Cemetery) produced in 1889 by the Smith Granite Company from blue Westerly granite for \$1710.

STONE CHIPS

We always talk about the man who was a teamster and he drove his oxen. There was a great vertical drop into the quarry and he backed the oxen up underneath the shear poles and they kept going and they went right over the shear down into the quarry. The oxen were killed. So they got the butchers in town [who] went right down and butchered the meat right in the quarry hole and brought the meat up and did whatever they do to preserve it. From that day on that man was always known as Butcher Shea and he was a teamster at the Smith Granite Company for many many years.

Isaac G. Smith, Jr. (b.1922) in an interview in 1983

YOUR PART IN HISTORY

Share your stories, photos and artifacts. Be part of the BSH Granite Research Center.

Please call us at 401-377-8490 or 401-322-0452 or e-mail us at builtinfromstone@gmail.com

COMING
NEXT WEEK

Setting stones

PEOPLE WHO BUILT WESTERLY DOCUMENTED GRANITE WORKERS

Clancy, Timothy	Codding, A.C.
Clancy, Thomas	Coduri, Albino
Clancy, William	Coduri, Joseph
Clarica, Pasqua	Coduri, Richard
Clark, George	Cokkins, James A.
Clemens, Peter	Colargni, Edgio
Clemens, Thomas	Colavigge, Egedio
Clemens, William	Cole, John
Clemens, William J.	Coletti, Daniel
Coccoran, Patrick	Collins, George
Cocks, J.	Collins, James
Cocks, James	Collins, Joseph H.



Babcock-Smith
House Museum

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