

# BUILT FROM STONE

## THE WESTERLY GRANITE STORY

VOLUME  
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### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Imagine putting together a three-dimensional puzzle with 450 granite pieces, some 33 feet long, at a remote site and ending up with a watertight and perfectly plumb vault? Your client, the Gould family, would like it perfect.

The setter boss planned the sequence of steps and for all contingencies.

Arrangements were made with the cemetery superintendent to have a local contractor build a foundation for the vault, allowing about six months for the foundation to cure.

Once all the pieces of the vault had been cut and numbered, they were boxed for shipment. The first shipment contained the stones in the bottom course and the final shipment contained the roof stones.

When the shipments arrived, local teamsters moved the stones to the cemetery. The derricks placed the pieces needed first closest to the site and those needed last would be furthest away. No stone was moved, no equipment used, no task undertaken without the express orders of the setter. He had complete responsibility.

Next, the foundation was checked to make sure it was perfectly level

Setting the center roof stone on the Whitmore Mausoleum, Norwich, NY. (1903)



BSH Museum



BSH Museum

The Gould Mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx was produced by the Smith Granite Company from Westerly blue granite in 1893. It features 30 Ionic columns, each 18 inches at the base and 18 1/2 feet tall, on all four sides, 32 crypts, and two levels inside.

and square. Beginning with the first course, the stone was lifted and then gently lowered into place on a bed of mortar. A day's work might consist of setting the stones on one side of the vault. The entire course on all four sides was set and allowed to cure for a couple of days before the next course was set. At the end of each day, the joints were "struck"; that is, mortar was added to the joints to ensure that the vault was weather-tight. The floor was set before the walls were built and then boxed again so that it was protected from damage during the remaining construction. The walls had to be square and plumb and small mistakes at the bottom would be magnified in the upper levels. Staging was built around the vault as the work progressed so that the workers could guide the stones into place. Columns had to be set plumb and set so that the next level would rest evenly on all the columns.

Setting the large heavy roof stones presented the final challenge. A crane lifted the roof stones into place and they were set with mortise and tenon to prevent slippage. Setting the center roof stone was the final test of the setting job. The derrick lifted the stone and lowered the stone to just above its final position; then it was lowered into its final position with jacks. If all had been done correctly, the final stone slipped into place and your client was happy.

Linda Smith Chaffee

### 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.

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



Local mason, Fred Lindsley, shows a hand-carved Westerly Pink fireplace. The firebox was carved from a single piece of Westerly Pink Granite. The Westerly Pink Veneer was provided with sawn tops and bottoms. Fred finished each block by hand. Materials were provided from the recently re-opened quarry owned by United Builders Supply.

### WESTERLY GRANITE

Part of the Freedom Trail in the city of Boston, the Declaration of Independence Plaque was erected on Boston Commons in 1925. The bas relief by John F. Paramino was based on a mural by John Trumbull in the Rotunda of the Capitol building in Washington D.C. It was cut by the Smith Granite Company from Westerly dark pink granite for a cost of \$3725.



(http://www.flickr.com/photos/wallyg/493017976/in/set-72157600189278271/)

### PEOPLE WHO BUILT WESTERLY DOCUMENTED GRANITE WORKERS

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Collins, Michael      | Comolli, Farochi (Frank) |
| Collins, William 2nd  | Comolli, George          |
| Combe, A. H.          | Comolli, Joseph          |
| Come, Peter           | Comolli, Mansuetto       |
| Comi, Adia            | Comolli, Natali          |
| Comi, Antonio         | Comolli, Radolfo         |
| Comi, Charles         | Comolli, Richard         |
| Comi, James           | Comolli, William         |
| Comi, John            | Connell, John            |
| Comi, Leonida         | Connell, Michael Jr.     |
| Commiskey, Michael H. | Connors, Timothy         |
| Comolli, A.           | Connors, Michael         |
| Comolli, Charles      | Conroy, John             |

### STONE CHIPS

On the company store: Then there's another story where they would come in and say, "I want a pair of shoes." "Well, they're in the back room. Go get one that fits you." So the fellow would go in and he'd say, "Nope, none here" and he'd throw his old shoes out the window and walk out with the new ones.

Isaac G. Smith, Jr. (b.1922) in an interview in 1985

### 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 [builtfromstone@gmail.com](mailto:builtfromstone@gmail.com)

### COMING NEXT WEEK

Brotherhood



Babcock-Smith  
House Museum

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thewesterlysun.com

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