

BUILT FROM STONE

THE WESTERLY GRANITE STORY

VOLUME
26 of 52

THE COMPANY STORE ON JULY 1, 1890

Before the days of credit cards and ATM's, how were workmen to buy essentials if they had no cash on hand? At the company store, of course.

The Smith Granite Company Store began in the 1850's in a small wooden building on Granite Street and records show that it was doing business in 1857. In 1884, the company opened a new larger store to the north of the old store in a granite building on the corner of Tower and Granite Streets where it operated for 39 years. The property was sold in 1919 and the stone building, which housed the Holliday and Joyce ESSO service station and later Hoxsie Buick, is now empty, but the granite work can be admired.

The storekeeper, Frank Barber, set up a debits and credits account for the employee or his designated family member and the transactions listed in some of the store record books, owned by the Babcock-Smith House Museum, give a glimpse into community life.

July 1, 1890 was a busy day at the store with more than 300 transactions. Some were simple purchases that today would go to the express lane. J. O'Donnell bought yeast for 2 cents; Chas Ledward bought a cigar for 5 cents; Pat Holiday bought a bag of flour for 98 cents. Other orders were lengthy. William Holliday

bought chops, sugar, tea, coffee, potatoes, currants, raisins, stove polish, a stove brush, gelatin,

pickles, cheese, thread, 10 yds. print fabric, matches, slippers, lemons, oatmeal, steaks, ham, cabbage, cookies, a hat, paper and envelope, sugar, crackers, vinegar, tapioca and stamps. This order came to \$13.32 which was debited to his account.

The store also served as a way to get cash. On that same day in 1890, Thomas Keenan got \$6.00 cash.

Even the owner took advantage of the convenience of the company store. Orlando Raymond Smith bought some candy, crackers and 6 yards of calico to bring home to his wife Julia. He spent 98 cents.

Linda Smith Chaffee



Smith Granite Company Store built 1884, picture taken circa 1885, located at corner of Granite and Tower Street



The old Smith Granite Company Store was housed in a small wooden building. The Gourley House on Tower Street is in the background circa 1880.



Preparing for the new Smith Granite Company Store circa 1882. Water Tower under construction, Gourley House behind water tower. Old company store in right foreground. Building materials for new store center foreground.

TODAY IN GRANITE

A chimney protrudes from a rooftop in Westerly, RI. Local mason contractor Fred Lindsley used square cut "UBS Westerly Pink Granite." The cap of this fireplace chimney was fabricated from a single piece of "UBS Westerly Pink."

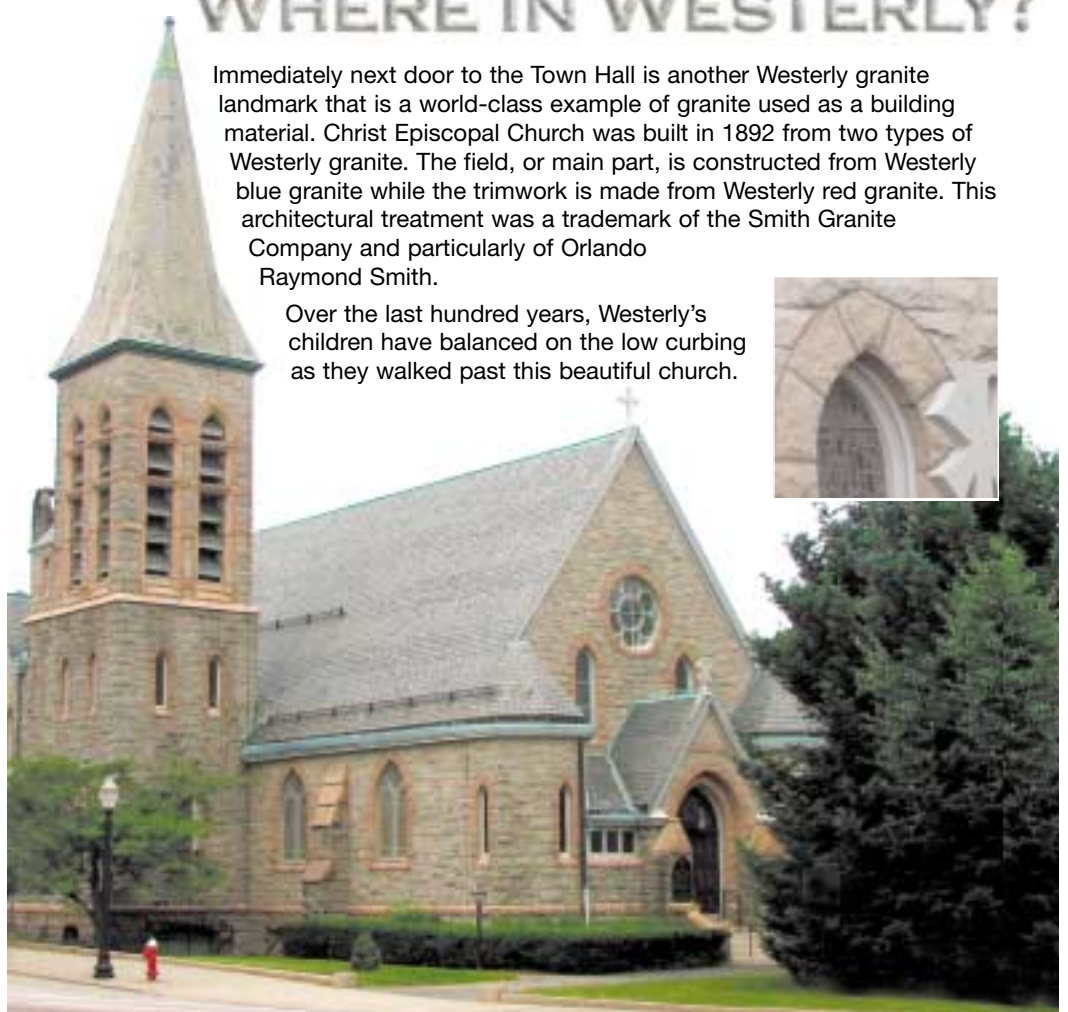


United Builders Supply, along with the Babcock-Smith House Museum and The Westerly Sun, is proud to be part of this effort in bringing the heritage of the Westerly Granite industry back to the people of Westerly. United Builders Supply Co., Inc. is excited to be able to offer these historic granites, a treasure from the past, to the marketplace again.

WHERE IN WESTERLY?

Immediately next door to the Town Hall is another Westerly granite landmark that is a world-class example of granite used as a building material. Christ Episcopal Church was built in 1892 from two types of Westerly granite. The field, or main part, is constructed from Westerly blue granite while the trimwork is made from Westerly red granite. This architectural treatment was a trademark of the Smith Granite Company and particularly of Orlando Raymond Smith.

Over the last hundred years, Westerly's children have balanced on the low curbing as they walked past this beautiful church.



Christ Episcopal Church, on the corner of Elm and Broad Streets, is made of both Westerly blue and Westerly red granite.

STONE CHIPS

"Some idea can be formed of the quarrying business, when it is known that one branch of it alone — that of paving stones — has shipped eighteen thousand tons to N.Y. during the past season, to say nothing of the large quantities sent elsewhere."

Narrangansett Times; January 10, 1890

YOUR PART IN HISTORY

Share your stories, photos and artifacts. Be part of the BSH Granite Research Center. Earlier volumes of "Built From Stone" are now on the museum's website; www.babcocksmithhouse.org.

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

COMING

NEXT WEEK

Battlefield monuments

PEOPLE WHO BUILT WESTERLY

DOCUMENTED GRANITE WORKERS

Greenway, John	Guzzani, Louis	Harvey, Patrick
Greenway, Richard J.	Haley, Patrick	Hawke, Joseph
Gregg, Alexander	Hamilton, A.	Hawke, Martin
Greto, Vincent	Hamilton, James	Hawke, William
Griffini, J.	Harmin, Charles	Hawkins, Michael
Griffini, John	Harper, Alexander	Hayes, Fred
Grinola, John	Harper, David	Hayes, Henry
Grinoli, A.	Harper, W.	Healey, Dennis
Gritta, James	Harris, Allen	Healey, Michael
Grogini, Louis	Harrison, Hugh	Healey, Patrick
Gropelli, James	Harty, Laughlin	Healy, Jeremiah
Gulley, William	Harty, William	Hefferman, William



Babcock-Smith
House Museum

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