

# BUILT FROM STONE

## THE WESTERLY GRANITE STORY

VOLUME  
32 of 52

### GRANITE GIANT INTRODUCES GIANT CHANGE

There were two giants on Quarry Hill: The Smith Granite Company and the New England Granite Works. Both companies employed hundreds of men; both produced work of the highest quality; both were nationally renowned, yet there were major differences.

The New England Granite Works, James Batterson, President, was a large company with its headquarters in Hartford with quarries and cutting sheds in Westerly, RI and Concord, NH. The Westerly quarry had been opened in 1865 by George Ledward who later sold it to James Batterson. For a while it operated under the name Batterson & Ledward. Later it was known as the Rhode Island Granite Works, a division of the Hartford-based parent company, the New England Granite Works.

This company produced many outstanding monuments including the Soldiers' Monument in the Gettysburg National Cemetery, the Antietam Soldier, and the Mallory Gates at the Elmgrove Cemetery in Mystic CT.

J. G. Batterson, a business visionary, introduced profit-sharing in a January 4, 1886 letter to his Westerly superintendent, James Gourlay. "On all orders executed at the New England Granite Quarry, in Westerly, R. I., during the year 1886, commencing January 1st, ultimo,

both capital and labor, in proportion to the amounts or values contributed by each, shall share in the net profits made on such orders during the year." The letter specified that the net profits were to be divided into three parts-one part to be paid as a dividend to labor, one part to be paid as a dividend to capital, and one-third to be reserved as a guarantee fund, to which fund would be charged all losses or bad debts, or credits given for materials and labor during the year. The labor dividend was to be paid first and issued to labor only. An individual's share of the profits increased for each year of continuous service up to five years. A workman who was discharged during the year for good and sufficient cause, such as drunkenness, insubordination, or bad workmanship, or who left the employment of the company without the consent in writing of the superintendent,



The Quarry Hill Giants: Smith Granite Company (left) 4th hole; New England Granite Works (right).



New England Granite Works was the first granite company to build a railroad spur from the main line to the cutting sheds on Quarry Hill, eliminating the difficult and dangerous task of oxen-powered carts delivering the product to the railroad yard.

was not entitled to participate in any dividend of profits for that year. "When the workmen are all interested in the results of their combined labor, there will be no room for those who are unwilling to earn, and fairly earn, the wages which they demand. When the industrious and skillful workman sees that his own earnings are being diminished by the slothful and unskilled workman at his side, he will rebel, and demand, as he will have the right to do, that a better man shall be put in the place of the laggard."

This Westerly granite company was a leader in industry with this plan a century ahead of its time.

Linda Smith Chaffee

In 1892 the New England Granite Company constructed this impressive entrance to the Elmgrove Cemetery in Mystic, CT. Dedicated in memory of Charles Henry Mallory, it was given by his widow, Mrs. Eunice Mallory, and their children. The gateway spans 54 feet, is 32 feet high and measures 6 feet thick. It consists of three arches, each with double wrought iron gates. The main archway, which serves as a driveway, is twenty feet wide by 22 feet high. It is flanked by smaller arches, six feet wide and ten feet high, for pedestrian use. Over the arches and just beneath the capstone is chiseled in relief the words "I am the Resurrection and the Life," and above the curve of the arch on either side are the Greek letters Alpha and Omega.



Richard Smith

### TODAY IN GRANITE

Local "Westerly Blue" granite is loaded by United Builders Supply, Co., Inc. employees Med Page and Ted Hannuksela onto UBS trailers and made ready for shipment to be fabricated into steps, pool coping, veneer stone and many other products. Westerly Blue is granite unlike any other granite in the world. Its fine grain and blue color is considered the finest granite available, and it has been used in many buildings and monuments. Westerly Blue is once again available at United Builders Supply, Co., Inc. in full bed veneer and the latest innovation in the stone industry as "Thin stone." Thin Stone has been cut to approximately 1" thick and is applied to foundations and elsewhere to allow for "Real" stone applications where no stone has gone before.



### PEOPLE WHO BUILT WESTERLY DOCUMENTED GRANITE WORKERS

|                      |                     |                       |
|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| McCarthy, Thomas     | McGowan, John       | McLaughlin, Alexander |
| McCarty, John        | McGrath, Patrick    | McLean, J.            |
| McClafferty, James   | McGrath, William P. | McLellan, A. M.       |
| McCloy, William      | McIntyer, James     | McLellan, Alexander   |
| McDonald, Michael    | McKeena, J.P.       | McMahan, James        |
| McDougal, William    | McKenan, Edward     | McMahan, Patrick      |
| McFarland, Alexander | McKenzie, George    | McMahon, John D.      |
| McGann, Frank        | McKenzie, James     | McMahon, John E.      |
| McGann, John         | McKenzie, James Jr. | McMalion, John        |
| McGaughey, William   | McKernan, Edward    | McNalay,              |
| McGaure, Frank       | McLaren, David      | McNally, Patrick      |
|                      | McLaren, David L.   |                       |

### HISTORY

The headline in **Westerly Narragansett Weekly** for September 5, 1895 shouts "THE PARADE" and then goes on extensively describing the first ever Labor Day parade in Westerly. More than a thousand men marched; more than ten thousand watched; six thousand copies of the program were distributed along the route. It seems as though every industry within an industry also had floats. The idea for a parade had originated at a picnic of granite workers and carrying it to fruition must have been a Herculean task.

The parade was delayed in getting off on time because "the fine display of the Smith Granite works had been marred by the breaking of one of the statuary models, and the float had been sent back to the quarry for another. It soon returned" and the parade began. The whole first division was composed of granite workers: 165 members of the Westerly Branch of the Granite Cutters' National Union (all of whom wore "a new apron, ... a light soft felt hat and a badge"); 23 tool sharpeners; and 20 tool and water boys, for example. Companies such as Joseph Newall & Co. Granite Works and the Dixon Granite Works had floats.

Ten yoke of oxen were attached to the Smith Granite Company float containing the statuary models, two of which were broken during the day. The Rhode Island Granite Works attracted a great deal of attention as every branch of the business was represented and all the men were actually at work on the float. Their names and occupations are all listed in the newspaper. Most of the granite-related floats are described, but were not the favorites of the "small boys" along the route who followed the float of I.G. Barber, the candy man, who from start to finish liberally scattered candies to the crowd.



BSH Museum

Labor Day Parade in 1895: The Smith Granite Company float with a team of oxen. The number of oxen was in honor of the day's festivities rather than necessary to pull the load.

### YOUR PART IN HISTORY

Share your stories, photos and artifacts. Earlier volumes of "Built From Stone" are now on the museum's website; [www.babcocksmithhouse.org](http://www.babcocksmithhouse.org).

Please call us at 401-377-8490 or 401-322-0452 or e-mail us at [builtinfromstone@gmail.com](mailto:builtinfromstone@gmail.com).

### COMING NEXT WEEK

The Beauty of Crosses



Babcock-Smith  
House Museum

SUN PUBLISHING CO.  
thewesterlysun.com

United Builders  
Supply Co. Inc.  
401-596-2831  
[unitedbuilderssupply.com](http://unitedbuilderssupply.com)

