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All of the above articles are from:

*Stone,*

Monthly publication devoted to the stone industry in all  
of its branches, New York,  
Vol. XLI, No. 5, May 1920, pp. 225-227

This article, which begins on the next page,  
is presented on the Stone Quarries and Beyond web site.

<http://quarriesandbeyond.org/>

Peggy Barriskill Perazzo  
Email: [pbperazzo@comcast.net](mailto:pbperazzo@comcast.net)  
January 2018

## Developing a Great Granite Quarry

**W**HATEVER may be thought of the architecture of New York's "old" post office (not ancient in point of years but now relegated to the rank of a branch office in the march of events) there can be no question as to the excellence of the stone of which it is constructed. This stands today a little mellowed by time, but as sound as the day when the building was erected, a lasting tribute to the merit of Maine granite. As all stone men know, the structure is built of granite from Dix Island, Me., and this material was also used in a number of other public buildings. A recent writer has given an interesting account of the beginning of the industry on this island, now unhappily entirely given up.

Back in the early fifties Horace Beals, of New York, accepted Dix Island in lieu of a bad debt, remarking facetiously at the time that it would make an ideal spot to commit suicide. Little did he realize that the magic wand of fortune would be so waved above this little pile of barren reefs as to transform it into a veritable kingdom of Croesus. Little did he dream that his little granite isle, so remote from the pathways of the world, would duplicate the fable of King Midas.

The exigencies of reconstruction following the civil war were the controlling influences which caused Dame Fortune to smile so benignly upon Dix Island, transform it into a flourishing community such as had not existed on the coast of New England and surely which has not been equaled since. The Government wanted materials for enormous building enterprises, and it was extremely indifferent as to what it paid for them provided they were received in a hurry.

The first contract fulfilled by the Dix Island Granite Company, a company formed in New York with Edward Learned, of Pittsfield, Mass., as president, and Courtland P. Dixon, of Brooklyn, as manager and treasurer, was for the Charlestown Custom House. This contract was followed by a two year period of inactivity, and it was believed that the Dix Island boom was of merely an ephemeral nature.

Then along came the New York Post Office contract, accompanied

by almost incredibly lucrative prospects. In addition to paying for cutting and all other expenses, the Government gave the company a 15 per cent bonus on the gross costs. Money poured freely into the coffers of the Dix Island Granite Company.

Father Knickerbocker wanted his post office in a hurry, which made necessary an influx of quarry men and cutters which rapidly outgrew the inadequate housing facilities on the island. As a result two board-houses were erected at Government expense, called the Shamrock and the Aberdeen, which were capable of accommodating 1,000 men. Exceedingly appropriate names, these, since most of the men hailed from either Scotland or Ireland.

The men were of hardy stock who had worked in the marble hills of Carrara and in the quarries of Dumfries and Dalbeattie—men accustomed to long hours and small pay—who found themselves transported to an environment of opulence, where eight hours constituted a day's work and where astonishingly high wages were the accepted thing. With 1,485 men on the payroll, representing an aggregate of \$106,000 a month, it can be readily inferred that something was



STATUE FOR THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL AT WASHINGTON

Sculptor: Daniel Chester French. The statue is about twenty-two feet in height, is made in sections, and is carved in White Georgia marble from the Georgia Marble Company's quarries at Tate, Ga.

(photo caption) "Statue for the Lincoln Memorial at Washington. Sculptor: Daniel Chester French. The statue is about twenty-two feet in height, is made in sections, and is carved in White Georgia marble from the Georgia Marble Company's quarries at Tate, Georgia."

apt to happen when the members of this isolated community were turned loose in town on the mainland.

That town was Rockland, and it has known no such prosperity since. Men have been known to leave the island on a Saturday night with \$500 in their pockets and come back Monday morning without enough money to pay their fare on the little steamer Firefly, which made daily trips to the mainland. Older residents of Rockland recall a gambling house which



ASSEMBLING THE LINCOLN STATUE

Putting together the sections of the heroic figure inside of the Lincoln Memorial at Washington

proved to be a veritable Monte Carlo, where the stonecutters left a goodly share of their earnings.

It was not necessary to go to the mainland to seek amusement, however, for there was an opera house on the island which boasted a seating capacity of 400 and which was said to be as good as any in the country at that time. Theatrical stars whose names were not unknown to Broadway occasionally appeared on the programme of this strange little playhouse where sea gulls commented dismally on the merits of the show from reserved seats on the ridgepole, learning all about it by sending out scouts who sailed casually by the open windows, but always returned screaming with information—this quaint little playhouse where the orchestra, composed of a fiddle, a piano and a drum, was often drowned out by Neptune's majestic organ music or the shrieking of the wind. Broadway stars sometimes, but stars were not insisted upon. Owing to the scarcity of shows and limited transportation facilities almost any kind of performers received approval from a not particularly blase audience.

The New York and Philadelphia post offices and the Charlestown Custom House were the only large contracts handled by the Dix Island Granite Company, but there were other smaller jobs, among which were the

eagles adorning the New York Post Office and the pilasters of the Treasury Building in Washington.

The golden days of Dix Island were brought to a close in 1878, when operation ceased and a general disintegration of the plant began.

### To Quarry Limestone Near Rochester

According to local reports, a new company has been organized to take over and operate the plant of the Becker Limestone Company, situated on the New York Central Railroad, east of Chili Station, Monroe County, N. Y. The papers of incorporation state that the new company will begin business with a capital of \$50,000. The following Board of Directors will have charge of the affairs of the company: Fred H. Becker, of the Becker Limestone Company; Matthew P. and John H. Odenbach and Fred J. Waddell, of Rochester. The new organization will be known as Dolomite Products Company, and plans are being made to carry on a general rock-crushing and quarrying business.

The land on which the plant is located, a short distance east of Coldwater, an old lime kiln, which, as long as can be remembered, had been a landmark throughout this part of the country. Its high chimney was visible for miles around the countryside. The property was taken possession of by the Becker Limestone Company about three years ago and production began in 1918. The old quarry had not been worked for nearly a quarter of a century, and the stone lime kiln had gradually fallen into decay. The products manufactured by the Becker Company consist mostly of agricultural lime and dolomite limestone, used principally as a flux in steel mills, open-hearth furnaces and glass-manufacturing plants.

### A Stone Polishing Machine in France

Produce, such is the order in our industry. In each section circumstances make it necessary to increase efficiency of the workman by perfecting tools. Thus we find numerous ingenious and useful machines making their appearance which testify to the fertility of resources among inventors, says a French exchange.

The stone industry had been relatively neglected in France, from this point of view, especially as regards polishing marble, granite, etc., which is generally done by hand.

For machine polishing, a portable apparatus which could move over all the surface was required. Such a machine has now been constructed by the Société Westinghouse of Havre. It is an electric machine in which the motor works, by a gearing, a tool holder into which the polisher is fitted. Motor and holder can easily be displaced. For polishing, the tool must be applied with sufficient pressure on the marble. This pressure is obtained by the weight of the motor, so

(photo caption) "Assembling the Lincoln Statue. Putting together the sections of the heroic figure inside of the Lincoln Memorial at Washington."

that the workman has merely to guide the machine, set it working and stop work.

It can be stopped by pulling a lever, thus cutting off the current. Then it rests on its two legs. In this position the machine is slightly raised so that the polisher can be easily removed. When at rest, the machine can be run on rollers over all the surface to be polished. The conductors run in tubes under the frame which contains the switch worked by the lever. All is dust and damp proof, an important point as regards the electric motor. The conductor tubes rest with rollers on an adjustable support. In one hour, the machine polishes 1 sq. m. of marble which by hand would take ten hours.

### Waste Granite in the Barre District

Waste in the great granite center at Barre, Vermont, consists of three types of material—the rough blocks rejected at the quarries on account of imperfections, the chips or spalls resulting from trimming and dressing at the cutting plants, and the granular and pulverized material from the dust collectors. The waste piles at the quarries are of immense proportions and constitute a serious handicap to quarrying in that they cover up good rock deposits, and are also so large that waste disposal becomes more and more expensive, says Oliver Bowles in a recent bulletin of the Bureau of Mines. The problem of utilization of such waste material is a topic of keen interest to all granite producers.

Barre is not situated on a water route, and thus trans-



CORNER OF A TENNESSEE MARBLE QUARRY  
Portion of the pink marble quarry of the John J. Craig Company, near Knoxville

portation costs prohibit the shipment of waste blocks for rip rap or ballast. Crushing plants use a small amount of this material for road construction, but aside from this, the waste is practically valueless.

Investigators of waste utilization problems are awaiting with interest further information concerning an enterprise undertaken at Montpelier, Vermont, to utilize crushed granite for the production of brick similar to sand-lime brick. Granules of granite are mixed with lime, moulded, and hardened under steam

pressure. The brick produced are said to be of excellent quality for structural purposes.

There seems to be no logical reason why waste granite could not be utilized for the manufacture of building stone and paving blocks, for many of the defects which condemn a stone for monumental purposes are not all detrimental for building or street paving. For the most part, monumental stone workers are not particularly interested in other branches of the granite industry, and a combination of industries such as that suggested above has not appealed to them.

There is a considerable content of potash in Barre granite, as in all granites in which orthoclase is the



TENNESSEE MARBLE BLOCKS ON THE BANK  
Output of the "Diamond T" pink marble quarry of the John J. Craig Company, near Knoxville

predominating feldspar, but as the potash is present in silicate form, it is difficult to separate. Many patents have been taken out for the recovery of potash from feldspar, but operation on a commercial scale is yet in the future.

A process of mechanical separation of mica from granite dust, and utilization of the remaining mixture of quartz and feldspar in the ceramic industries is now in the experimental stage.

Pulverized granite may be used in abrasive soaps, for poultry grit, and as filler in such products as roofing and fertilizer materials, but markets that consume any considerable quantity of granite for such purposes have not yet been established.

While the problem of utilization of waste granite is at present largely unsolved, there are evidently a number of avenues for useful application of the materials that bear sufficient promise of their utility to justify careful consideration and study. Suggestions regarding any phase of the problem of waste granite utilization will be welcomed by the Bureau of Mines.

### A Very Old Carved Marble Font

The beautifully carved marble font used by the first Nestorian missionaries to China in the seventh century is still to be seen in the Sianfu lamasery, says a correspondent of the *North China Herald*.

(photo captions) "Corner of a Tennessee Marble Quarry. Portion of the pink marble quarry of John J. Craig Company, near Knoxville." & "Tennessee Marble Blocks on the Bank. Output of the 'Diamond T' pink marble quarry of the John J. Craig Company, near Knoxville."