“An Interesting Story of Standard Granite”

Some Facts About the Light Barre Granite Quarries of the Standard Granite Company – The Reopening of the Famous Sunnyside Quarries

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(Article submitted by Andreas Kuehnpast)

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Introduction to the article by Andreas Kuehnpast:

In the early 20th century the Standard Granite Company was one of the leading granite quarriers on Millstone Hill in Barre, Vermont. In 1917 it operated the Barclay quarry, the Stephens & Gerrard quarry and the Sunnyside quarry. The article describes the history of this group of quarries.

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A quarry property cannot be bought one day and operated the next. It takes years to develop a quarry and far-sighted judgment to look ahead and carefully analyze the future possibilities of an undeveloped mountain of granite. Such judgment was one big-business characteristic of the late Hon. William Barclay, who some years ago bought quarry property “on the hill” near Barre and established what is known as the Standard Granite Co., owned and operated at present by his son, D.M. Barclay.

William Barclay was born in Scotland in 1850. He learned the granite business there when a young man in Aberdeen. Later he came to Barre and was a pioneer there in the granite business. He was always identified with the best interests of the business and the city in which he lived, having been mayor of Barre for three terms.

The Standard granite business was established by William Barclay in 1890, when he purchased quarry properties originally opened by Richard A. Hoar, now a prominent criminal and corporation lawyer. Mr. Hoar sold to Kimball Flanders and then it passed into the ownership of Tim Kelliaher of Concord, N. H., who took up his residence in Montpelier. Mr. Kelliaher later became associated with Scott George. Mr. George retired from the granite industry about 1890, when William Barclay bought his interest, and at the death of Mr. Kelliaher Mr. Barclay became sole proprietor of the property, and it has remained in the Barclay family ever since. In 1911 the Standard Granite Co. leased from the Gazeley estate the strip of land adjoining the Standard property and in the fall of 1912 they bought the properties owned by the Stephen & Gerrard Co. of Barre. The Stephen & Gerrard property joined the piece of property known to the trade as the Sunnyside granite quarry. This quarry was owned and operated up to about 1904 by the late William Barclay and the late Ernest Riddle. The Sunnyside quarry was later taken over by the Barclay interests. This additional property, together with the Stephen & Gerrard quarry and that owned by the Gazeley estate and the original Standard Granite Co. property, gives the Standard Granite Co. today a strip of quarry land nearly a half mile long.

Up to 1914 the difficulty had been to get satisfactory railroad connections to facilitate shipments from the Standard properties. At that time, however, through the efforts of D. M. Barclay, a strip of land was bought along the main line of the Barre & Chelsea Railroad and a long siding run into the quarries under the loading and quarrying derricks erected to handle stones of all sizes which makes the shipping facilities of the Standard quarries the best possible to obtain. In spite
of all the disadvantages of shipping in the early history of the business, some of the largest monuments, even up to the limits of transportation, have come from the Standard quarries.

The stock for the celebrated Burns statue, located in Barre, was contributed from the Standard quarries by William Barclay, who designed it. Although this statue was put up in 1899, nearly 20 years ago, it is as bright and well preserved as the day it was put up. This is one of the fine attributes of Standard granite – it holds its color and stands the rigid test of time.

D. M. Barclay, the present owner of the Standard properties, is a young man born into the granite business. He has inherited that energy and business acumen possessed by his father. He is prominent in several societies in Barre, and keeps up the studious habits formed in his college days by taking a keen interest in engineering affairs, as he holds a prominent place in the Vermont Society of Engineers.

Last year Mr. Barclay put in two new boilers in the power plant and set up some new derricks, making six derricks in all operated on the property. He also put in the latest idea in a Lidgerwood hoist.

Owing to the increase in activity in the quarry operations it requires most of Mr. Barclay’s time on the hill, and the general increase in the demand for Standard stock has made it necessary for him to establish a downtown office in Barre, a suite of offices having been opened up in the Aldrich Block, So. Main St.

James Walker, son of the late George Walker, looks after the outside selling work for the Standard company, and Wesley J. Ploof, long identified with Barre quarry operations, is the superintendent.

Mr. Barclay’s latest activity has been to reopen the celebrated Sunnyside quarry. About 1904, on account of difficulties of shipping, the Sunnyside quarry was closed and has remained idle ever since. Having improved shipping facilities, Mr. Barclay decided to reopen the Sunnyside quarry. To further add to the value of this quarry he bought all of the property belonging to Matt Haley adjoining the southeasterly end of the quarry. This includes valuable quarry land as well as valuable dump land and timber, two spring water systems, houses, barns, etc.

When Mr. Barclay decided to reopen the Sunnyside quarry, those who knew the character of the stone were delighted with the prospect. The Reynolds monument, a genuine Italian Renaissance design, which has been duplicated many times was cut in Sunnyside stock.

This Sunnyside quarry being in operation it is now possible for the discriminating buyer and dealer to procure this superfine granite.

For LIGHT BARRE GRANITE Always Specify STANDARD STOCK

STANDARD GRANITE CO., Barre, Vt.

(The photographs that accompany this article start on the next page.)
“Power house and loading facilities of the Standard Granite Co.” (pp. 14)

“A big sheet of granite in the Standard Quarry. Note the size of the sheet as compared with the four men.” (pp. 14)
“Top view of the quarry showing some of the fine patterns taken from the Standard quarries.” (pp. 14)

“The big derrick just before its erection in the Sunnyside Quarry.” (pp. 15)
“The Sunnyside Quarry before work of reopening was commenced.
Note big mast of Derrick to be erected on the spot.” (pp. 15)

“General view of the top of the Standard Quarries showing the big derricks in operation.” (pp. 15)
Barclay Brothers’ Power House and Dump Pile, Barre, Vermont (postcard photograph)

“View on the bank at the Barclay quarries, showing a nice pattern being loaded.”

*Monument Trade Builder*, March-April 1918.”
Sunnyside Barre Granite
The Superfine Stock of the Barre District

The Sunnyside Quarry as it looked just before it was reopened early in the summer.

The Sunnyside quarry, known to some of the older men in the business to contain some of the finest light Barre granite on the hill, is again in operation. It is now possible for dealers and manufacturers to obtain this stone in any quantity and any size desired.

It was necessary to close this quarry some years ago because of transportation difficulties. These difficulties have been overcome and the Sunnyside stock is again brought into the market. Specify Sunnyside stock in your next order and you will be surprised at the fine texture and beautiful color of this celebrated stock.

For further information on Sunnyside stock or other standard Barre granites address

STANDARD GRANITE CO.
BARRE, VERMONT