THE QUARRIES of the GRANITE RAILWAY COMPANY

The First Railway in American Being and Exposition of the Growth of the Quarries and the uses to which the Granite may be put Copyright 1928 by the Granite Railway Company Compiled, arranged and printed by direction of Walton Advertising & Printing Company Boston, Mass.

Foreward

They were talking about building stone, and the man who had just returned from Eygpt had a story to tell.

"I saw them dig a great statue out of the sand," he said, "out of the sand and the darkness of more than four thousand years. They told me that it was the statue of a king. Little by little they opened a pit about the figure, and then took away the sand close around it in slow and careful handfuls. Pretty soon one could lean over, look down and see that ancient fate. It was all quite wonderful to me, but perhaps what seemed most wonderful of all was the beautiful condition of the stone. In spite of its long burial, not a line of the fine sculpturing was blurred, not an edge of it corroded, not a sulfate of it marred."

The secret of ageless Egypt, of the dignity, the beauty and the strength of her great temples and memorials, is that same Egyptian stone.

It is granite, yes, but more exactly "syenite," for it does not contain mica. They quarried it at Syene in upper Egypt. Did you know that one of the finest deposits of it is here in the United States-stone such as the Egyptians themselves would have been proud to use? If you want to see it lying in the earth, being cut from the living rock, go to Quincy. The Granite Railway Quarries are handling it there now with a new installation in the modern way.

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THE Granite Railway Company wishes to call to the attention of architects and others the pre-eminent qualities of dark Quincy granite which make it a most desirable building material. For more than one hundred years the quarries of the Granite Railway Company have been in continuous operation, and for the first fifty years of that period the principal use of the stone quarried was for buildings. Gradually the enduring characteristics of the stone and the increasing cost of labor led to its use almost exclusively in monumental work. With the advent of steel frame buildings and the development of improved methods in granite manufacture, the desirability of this particular stone for certain architectural purposes has again become recognized.

In 1826 the Granite Railway Company was organized under the guiding hand of Colonel Thomas Handasyd Perkins and chattered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the dual purpose of quarrying stone and transporting it by railroad to the Neponset River, whence it was taken by vessels to all parts of the Atlantic coast from Maine to Louisiana. The railroad which it built in 1826 was "THE FIRST RAILROAD IN AMERICA" For half a century the company operated both its quarries and its railroad, then it gave up its railroad and devoted its entire energies to the quarrying side of the business, relying for its transportation on the great network of railroads teaching to all parts of the United States. From the quarries of the Granite Railway Company came the stone for many notable buildings. Bunker Hill Monument was built of stone from its

Bunker Hill Quarry. The Boston Custom House, converted into Boston's loftiest building by the addition of a tower which serves as a landmark for many miles around, was built of stone from its Pine Hill Quarry. From the same quarry came the stone for Minot's Ledge Light, one of the famous light houses of the world, rising from the water near the entrance to Boston Harbor at one of the most dangerous points on the New England coast.

Granite Railway stone was a wise choice of those old builders, for, even in the variable New England climate, after seventy-five or a hundred years it has not yet begun to show the ravages of time. Its components are quartz, feldspar and hornblende. The name "syenite" was first used by Pliny.

The Quincy syenite first used in buildings was selected for its hardness and its permanence. While stone polishing is one of the oldest arts, the methods were at first rough and crude, making the cost of polishing too great to permit of the use of large polished surfaces in building construction. It was early recognized, however, that Quincy syenite when polished presents a uniquely beautiful surface, unusually dark in color, yet with far more lively a sparkle than is ordinarily associated with so dark a material. The beauty of this polished sulfate, together with the contrasting gray of the hammer-finished stone, led gradually to a larger and larger part of the output of the Granite Railway syenite being used by the monument manufacturers, until twenty or twenty-five years ago practically the entire output was going into monumental use, and the architectural advantages of the stone were for the time practically forgotten.

Only in recent years has the realization come that changing con ditions once more offers an opportunity to the architect to obtain new distinction of design by the use of this same Granite Railway stone which was so widely used for structural purposes two, three, or four generations ago. Not only does the modern steel-framed building permit the use of much thinner veneers than was feasible in the days when masonry walls were all bearing walls, but also the methods and machinery for polishing stone have so improved that it is now possible to polish large sulfates of granite at greatly reduced cost. At the same time saws have been devised which enable the granite manufacturers to cut the solid block into veneers of almost any thinness desired, down to less than one inch. Owing to its hardness and strength, and the ease with which it can be cleaned by simple washing, polished Granite Railway syenite is especially adapted for use as a facing on the lower stories of buildings that are subject to the dirt of the streets and likely to be chipped by the wear and tear of passing traffic.

The beautiful dark color of its polished surface contrasts well with lighter stone in upper stories. As a setting for windows and doorways, for bronze and iron grill work, for marble carving or panels, polished. Granite Railway syenite provides a background which brings out the contrasting detail without subordinating its own intrinsic beauty.

The syenite from the quarries of the Granite Railway Company is taken from strata far below the sulfate of the ground. Every block is closely examined, and any that is not perfect in color and texture is discarded. Two standard shades of color, the dark and the extra dark, give the architect a choice permitting considerable flexibility in chromatic design.

The new Parker House in Boston stands on the site of the old hotel of the same name, which for many years was one of the most famous hostelries in America. The present building was completed in 1927. In planning it, every effort was made to have it as distinctive architecturally as the time-honored name that it bears is distinctive historically. The location is in the very heart of the city, at one of Boston's busiest corners, and the continuous traffic streaming past during

business hours subjects the exterior walls to more hazards and abuses than are ordinary even in the usual conditions of congested municipal surroundings. It was essential that the base course, and, on account of the slope of one of the streets, the first story also, should be faced with the strongest and hardest material available. Color was also important, a dark neutral being particularly desired to contrast with the light stone above, to set off the windows and grill work, to eliminate the danger of staining, and to reduce to a minimum the need and the difficulty of cleaning.

Granite Railway syenite suited the requirements in every way. No stone offered greater strength or greater durability, and no stone offered in combination with these qualities an equally dark yet lustrously sparkling surface. Granite Railway syenite provided the color, the strength, the permanence, supplying in its own surface such intrinsic beauty that elaborate detail was not required to obtain a satisfactory result. Owing to the great improvements in the methods of sawing and polishing stone, it was possible to use a veneer four inches in thickness at a cost not greatly exceeding that of ordinary granites, and the results have more than justified this slight extra cost. The beautiful setting given to the show windows on the street floor proved of tangible value in securing tenants for the shops. The National Mount Wollaston Bank of Quincy completed its new building in 1925. Granite Railway syenite, hammer-finished, was chosen for the entire front. The architects, in answer to an inquiry, say:

"We used Quincy granite from the Granite Railway quarries for the main facade of the National Mount Wollaston Bank Building at Quincy. Our reasons for using this material were in general as follows: There is no better stone available for the construction of a building than the natural granite. While there are, of course, a variety of different granites of various qualities and colors, we know of no granite which is any denser than the Quincy granite. In addition to its density, it is very beautiful in color and takes a wonderful polish. "We presume that the cost of Quincy granite is the reason why it is not more extensively used. In this case, by using a comparatively thin ashlar, the actual amount of granite used even for the entire facade is not so tremendous. Care used in the design of the building, so that the beauty of the front would depend more on the beauty of the material than on any excessive ornamentation - such as is found on a great many buildings where less expensive materials are used enabled the bank to use this wonderful material at a cost which it could well afford."

The McCrory Five and Ten Cent Stores at Dayton, and at Youngstown, Ohio, used polished Granite Railway syenite for the bases under the piers and for the sub-bases under the show windows of their main facades. The Construction Department of the McCrory Stores Corporation, New York City, writes in this connection: "We are mailing enclosed photograph of our store at Dayton, Ohio, indicating Quincy granite used as a base for the piers and sub-base under the show windows. We selected granite for this purpose because of its durable character and the fact that it can readily be cleaned and washed, and always presents the same highly polished surface.

"Since the two installations mentioned in your letter have been made, we have standardized on the use of granite for the entire base of our show windows. The photograph we are submitting indicates part wood and part granite."

The new Palmer House in Chicago, shown on another page, one of the largest hotels in this country, used polished dark Railway granite on the first floor of their new building, which they say "was selected because of its well-known durability." The architects, Holabird and Roche, advise us that "granite was used in wide polished slabs without ornamentation to form piers separating and flanking the main entrance doors; it was also used to form bulkheads beneath

show windows for the entire length of the Wabash Avenue, Monroe Street and State Street frontages.

"For alterations in connection with the installation of the shop for C. D. Peacock, Inc., granite piers framed in bronze and decorated with applied bronze ornament were used to accent their shop from the remainder of the building. In this case the use of the material was particularly successful in maintaining the tone and character of the elevation and at the same time providing the special emphasis required by the tenant."

In conclusion, should you contemplate construction involving as its basic elements stone; concrete, brick or stucco, we hope you will give us an opportunity to suggest ways in which Railway granite can be used to advantage and profit as a trim or base material. The management of the Granite Railway Company desires to place its skill and knowledge of the possibilities of syenite granite at the service of the architect and contractor. It welcomes, therefore, inquiries about the use of the granite in any way. The knowledge of the various applications of syenite possessed by the Granite Railway Company enables it to suggest economical and efficient new ways of using its granite both in the ashlar and in the usual form. In fact, new uses for the employment of syenite granite are coming to us frequently from those whose ingenuity has discovered methods of application which have not been used heretofore. The company is always glad to meet problems involving the use of its granite and to help the architect or contractor to a proper solution.

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View Photos »

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- HENRY H. KIMBALL, Clerk

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- JOHN C. PRATT, 1877 to 1888
- WILLIAM B. SEWALL, 1888 to 1900
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- HENRY M. FAXON, Since 1907