

The quarrying of Mount Airy Granite as a commercial venture dates back to a short time after the coming of the railroad to Mount Airy in June 1888. The Charter of the first Corporation being dated May 14, 1889, which would make the industry in its fortieth year.

Since that time the project has shown a steady growth and has been in continuous operation, never having been shut down for the causes common to almost all new ventures of this character.

During the Corporation's formative years it had to contend with the problems of introducing an entirely new and untried granite into markets where several splendid granites were already established, and to overcome the conservatism and prejudices of architects and the buying public, which is invariably the reception given any new granite entering the field. In addition to this there was a marked stringency in the money market all the time; they had also to build up an organization to care for the increasing business. In spite of these handicaps the industry made a consistent growth and the material established itself until it came to be considered as one of the standard granites.

The original holdings of this Corporation was a tract of land comprising 40 acres near Mount Airy through the centre of which extended a long narrow strip of naked rock of approximately 25 acres. Since then additional parcels of land adjacent to the original 40 acres have been purchased until the acreage has reached approximately 260 acres with mineral rights on approximately 400 acres more, and the exposed granite has grown from 25 acres to about 75 acres, due to continuous stripping for last 10 years. In addition to the above there has been acquired five mountains of granite approximating 1800 acres in Wilkes and Alleghany Counties. The deposits on these 1800 acres give every evidence of being the same granite as that at Mount Airy, which insures a supply of raw material that is practically inexhaustible.

The equipment installed to date is such as is standard for such an operation, except possibly the cableways, which on account of the area of the deposit being worked take the place of derricks in pit quarries. There are two very large cutting sheds capable of serving 300 stonecutters, equipped with four electric travelling cranes of 30 and 20 ton capacity and 60 foot span, 3 polishing machines, 3 granite cutting lathes, 1 polishing lathe, 2 large carborundum saws, 2 complete sandblast installations, 45 surfacing machines and the usual smaller tools.

The power plant consists of 3 Heine watertube boilers of 215 horsepower each, 2 ret. tub. boilers, 150 horsepower each, 5 air compressors of approximately 10,500 cu.ft. 2 direct connected electric units of 100 K.W. each and a motor generator set of 55 K.W. to furnish current for the cranes.

All the later equipment is electrically driven; the current being hydro electric power furnished by the Southern Public Utilities Company, but should this show a failure there is ample steam equipment that could be started up within an hour.

The quarries are served by heavy compressed air pipe lines, 14 cableways, each with its hoist and other equipment, 2 heavy inclines for stones too heavy for the cableways, each equipped with its derricks and heavy hoist engines.

The waste stone is taken care of by a heavy gyratory crusher having a capacity of 350 tons daily with the necessary housing, bins, shafting and delivery equipment, and the whole is served by several miles of railroad sidings, a new Porter locomotive of 65 tons, 11 flat cars, 6 all steel 20 yard dump cars, 1 locomotive crane of 40 tons, one of 20 tons and a crawler crane of 12 tons. There is also an all steel house for the locomotive.

The requirements for water have been taken care of by a Goulds triplex pump electrically driven, pumping from a seepage pool 40 x 100, and of sufficient capacity to fill the two elevated steel tanks of 50,000 to 60,000 gallon capacity in 4 hours. In addition to this we have an emergency equipment capable of caring for our needs should the other fail.

During the past ten years 35 modern houses have been built or remodeled for employees who do not already own their homes. The quarry is in a rural community about a mile from Mt. Airy and the employment has been so steady that the operation is surrounded by workmen's homes within a radius of three miles, each with its garage and large garden and all paid for, or being paid for from their earnings with us. There is a small floating population, almost all the workmen being tied to our industry by ownership of realty, or marriage, or other relationship, so that of the 700 men employed in the granite industry it is safe to say that over 90 per cent are fixed to the community by some stable tie. There are a great many granite cutters who served their apprenticeship with us and although they are now veterans in their line of work they have never cut any granite but ours. Fathers and sons are working side by side and in some cases the third generation is following in their footsteps.

Mount Airy granite is used for all purposes where granite may be applied. It has been shipped all over this Country, even into the New England territory and into Cuba.

At the present time its chief uses are heavy monuments, both public and private, buildings, public and private, mausoleums private and community, bridges of all kinds, street curbing, paving blocks, broken range facing for residences and churches, rubble and riprap for various purposes and crushed stone.

The attached tonnage sheet will show that there has been a gradual increase in the quantities shipped, both in the number

of cars and quantity on each car, but it does not show the most important detail. The character of the stone shipped is not indicated at all but in addition to the increase in quantities there has been a marked increase in the value of each unit, the tendency being more and more towards granite work having higher values. In the earlier years of the quarrying it was necessary to dispose of greater quantities of low grade material as there was more of this class of stone in the surface ledges and in addition the merits of the material itself were not known and appreciated. Each year the quantity of granite sold for its commoner uses remains nearly stationary while that for the higher class is increasing.

By: J. D. Sargent, President
The North Carolina Granite Corporation
Mount Airy, North Carolina.

October 30, 1929.

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For much of the history of this industry prior to my coming to Mt Airy in — I must necessarily refer to the records and the recollections of others so will treat it in a general way only. During the Corporation's formative years it had to contend with the problems of introducing an entirely new and untried granite into markets where several splendid granites were already established and in addition these were years of marked money stringency and to overcome the conservatism and prejudices of architects and the buying public.* In addition to this there was a marked shrinkage in the money market all the time. ~~and so large a proportion of the business~~
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briefly

In trying to relate to you, some of the history
of Mt. Airy Granite, I find it necessary to use
the personal pronoun "I" more than I would
like and I trust you will not consider
me unduly egotistical, for while I confess
to a great pride for our project here and its
really outstanding success I take equal
pride in admitting that without having
a granite of Mt. Airy's merit and the loyal
cooperation and skilled assistance of
my associates, these happy conditions
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Machine shop — Fargus shop

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Willard

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