

Local rock vital in c

Hardness main attribute of Fall River granite

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FALL RIVER — In the days of its great building, Fall River saw mills, houses, streets, churches and government buildings go up in parts of the city that had recently been brush and forest.

Whether these buildings were sacred or profane in purpose, meant to be homes or temples of business, all had one thing in common:

Granite.

Granite rises from the east side of the Taunton River as the underpinning of Fall River, the superstructure of her hills. You can trace the granite ledges from Assonet to Tiverton.

Granite gave its name to the city's Granite Block to the Granite Mill to Granite Row and Granite Street and the Fall River Granite Co.

Fall River granite was used here, of course, but it also was used to build mansions in Newport, parts of Fort Adams and the base of the Statehouse

'No rock can be finer for architectural purposes than the granite of Troy.'

— Edmund Hitchcock,
geologist

in Albany, N.Y.

"Fall River is built on a hill of granite," wrote local historian A.S. Phillips in his history of this city.

The pioneer Massachusetts' geologist Edmund Hitchcock noted in 1841, "No rock can be finer for architectural purposes than the granite of Troy," as the city was then called.

Local granite is made up of quartz, feldspar and hornblende. It is superior in its hardness, a stone meant to last

ages.

In later years, this very quality diminished the importance of Fall River granite, since its very hardness makes it difficult to work. Still, for about 50 years, Fall River granite built a city.

At first, they built Fall River factories from fieldstone, and they looked like barns. Then, they opened the ground and began to build in granite.

Many manufacturing companies owned their own quarries and a number of mills were built where they were because the granite was there. In other towns, bricks had to be made on-site or brought in — but in Fall River, the granite was everywhere.

The granite came from quarries owned by men named Beattie and Durfee, Davol and Earle.

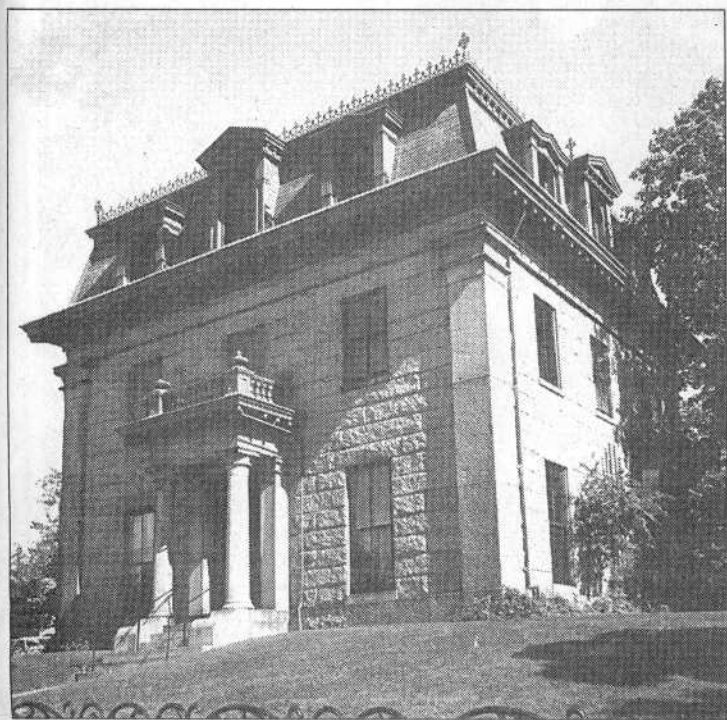
Beattie's prime quarry was on North Quarry Street and was said to produce the city's best granite. Granite from that quarry ended up in the former city hall and the old Durfee High School.

From a ledge in Assonet came the granite for the Sagamore Mills, brought in by railroad. Granite quarried in the city moved on wagons drawn by oxen.

Throughout Fall River, houses have granite foundations and curbs are cut from granite.

In the quarries, granite was removed by men using a variety of implements, some similar to crowbars. The larger pieces were hoisted out of the quarries by derrick. Curbs and paving stones were cut by hand at the quarry.

Some of the granite blocks used in the construction of the mills were immense. For instance, some of the singly cut stones that went into the American Print Works were 12 feet long, three feet square and weighed 18 tons.



city's construction



Left, the Fall River Historical Society is one of many examples of granite buildings that can be found throughout the city. Above, St. Mary's Cathedral is built with Fall River granite in an 11th-century Gothic style. Fall River granite was also used to build mansions in Newport, R.I., parts of Fort Adams and the base of the Statehouse in Albany, N.Y.

In Fall River, St. Mary's Cathedral is built of granite in the 11th-century Gothic style. The old Durfee High School was built in modern Renaissance style, it too being built of granite.

The Fall River Public Library is constructed of dressed Fall River granite. The YMCA is made of hammered Fall River granite and gray Roman brick.

The only thing you can't do with Fall River granite is give it a high shine. Fall River gran-

ite resists all attempts to alter its nature. It's not fancy, but it's durable and therein lies its eternal value.

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