

GRANITE QUARRIES: DIGGING INTO BIDDEFORD'S HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is Ryan Kingston and I am a junior at the University of New England. As part of my internship with Blandings Park Wildlife Sanctuary (www.bpws.org) during the summer of 2010, I did some research into the history of granite quarries in Biddeford. Several quarries are located in Blandings Park and the surrounding area. These quarries are a distinct part of the landscape, and many cut stones can be found along the trails in Blandings Park, remnants of what was once a huge export industry in Biddeford. Most of the information below is from old newspaper articles found at McArthur Public Library. Some additional information was found through internet research. For further information, see the sources at the end of this report. Thank you and I hope you find this information interesting!

TIMELINE

1836: John Emery and Edward Gould sold a total of 34 acres to what would become known as the Biddeford Granite Company.¹

1837: C. T. Jackson published the first geologic survey of the state of Maine. "The granite industry was already firmly established in the Penobscot Bay area, eastern Washington County, Hallowell, Biddeford, and Blue Hill areas when Jackson published his report."²

1848: Palmer, Ralph Curtis, John Emery, and Abial Kelly, all of Kennebunk, owned the Biddeford Granite Company. These men sold the above mentioned land to Saco Water Power Company (stock of that company transferred to William P. Haines). The Company quarried for some time, but demand was small, and went out of business.¹

1886: 30 ton engine received to run on railroad at Andrews Quarry.³ That summer James Andrews and Sons began a contract for the New York Harlem Bridge and a bridge in Philadelphia (New Market Street). Both contracts total half a million dollars. The firm signed the contract to provide 10,000 yards of stone to New York and 600 for Philadelphia, but the New York contract was raised to 25,000. Work began in August, and by December about 3000-4000 yards were completed. The firm began with small capital, and had to pay high costs to equip the quarries with a railroad and the proper equipment. The firm began with 200 men, and eventually employed up to 500.⁴

1887: In March, Quarrymen employed by James Andrews & Son quit working. "They have not and do not now receive their pay according to contract." The strike began with 50 quarrymen, who drew in the 40 stone cutters (most were from Massachusetts). Some of the cutters quit, and others said they would, once they finished the stones they were working on. Strikers proceeded to the river landing on the Saco River where men were

loading a schooner bound for New York and induced them to stop working. New York owed Myles Tierney, the contractor building the Harlem Bridge, about \$100,000. If he were paid, the quarrymen would be paid. The men were owed about \$4,000, and some were owed money from December. The day before this newspaper article was written, George Andrews received a call⁵ from James Andrews (in NY at the time) stating that a \$3,150 check was en route, which would supposedly end the dispute.

April: Stonecutters at Andrews Quarry again on strike. They were paid for their work in March, but not for January and February. The firm was loading a schooner for a Philadelphia contract, and offered workers a bond for payment as soon as the money for the stone was received. The men requested a man in the firm to be named as surety, and a strike occurred when he refused. Four or five liens were placed upon the stone in the quarry, amounting to \$300-\$400. Some stonecutters left their claims in the hands of attorneys, and went back to Massachusetts. At this time, the firm owed at least \$6,000 to workers. Quarrymen who lived in Biddeford were inclined to keep working.⁶

December: Men on strike once again because they had not received pay from the New York contract. The firm decided to lay off the entire crew, and work ceased for at least a week. A warrant for insolvency was issued against the estate of James Andrews and George Andrews, individually and as members of the firm. The firm had run behind by at least \$30,000.⁴

1892: In September, Biddeford Granite to be used for Maine building at World Fair in Chicago. 287 feet of stone was to be shipped by W. A. Roberts and Alfred Goodwin at a cost of \$300, which they hoped would be partially paid by Biddeford citizens.⁷

1892: The Biddeford Weekly Journal published an article on the Biddeford Granite Company, which had recently formed, and gives some mention of its origins. (See 1836).¹

1899: In June, two men from New York “looked over the proposed location of the railway from the Andrew ledge and the wharf facilities” and the quarries in the area. It is said that they had the money to buy the site, but it was not known if they would.⁸

1912: Andrews’ quarries sold to Mark Gordon of Pool Street (about 12 acres). James Andrews had passed away by this point. Gordon had been in charge of a large quarry at Stonington, and it was expected that he would develop the quarries.

FURTHER LINKS AND INFORMATION

“The introduction of reinforced concrete spelled the doom of Maine's granite industry in the early 1900's. The introduction of union labor was also cited as one of the causes of the decline of the industry. Business costs could not keep up with locally quarried stone and the newly introduced reinforced concrete.”²

Biddeford granite went to the Washington Bridge in New York, completed in 1888.
http://books.google.com/books?id=Y7fRAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA61&lpg=PA61&dq=Myles+Tierney+washington+bridge&source=bl&ots=xQa_sef3_e&sig=CNzSm9crqtA2jJ1ull2WSdUQJ0&hl=en&ei=WigNTLvJA8H58AbW07mLBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=Myles%20Tierney%20washington%20bridge&f=false

Preface: Final payments not made until March, 1889 Page 17: Granite came from quarries in Biddeford See Wikipedia for more information:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_Bridge

The website "Quarries and Beyond" is a great resource if you are interested in quarries around the country, and includes a list of quarries in Biddeford. The information below is from "Maine Quarries and Prospects," a product of the Maine Geological Survey in 1958. This is available on the website and at the McArthur Library.

http://quarriesandbeyond.org/states/me/me-maine_granite_quarry_list2.html#biddeford

Biddeford, York County, Maine

• *The Ricker Quarry* [\[106\]](#)

This quarry was "in Biddeford city at 19 Granite Street." The operator was George H. Yates of Biddeford, Maine. Granite from the quarry was reportedly a light-gray shade with conspicuous smoky quartz and slightly bluish-white feldspar with a coarse texture. Transport of the granite was by cart 1 mile to the railroad.

The Ricker Quarry opened in 1865. In 1905 the quarry was 100 by 50 feet and had a depth from 5 to 25 feet. Granite from the quarry was used for monuments, etc.

• *The Gowen Emmons Quarry* [\[107\]](#)

This quarry was "in Biddeford city, at 17 Granite Street." The operator was Frank Morin of Biddeford, Maine. Granite from the quarry was reportedly a light-gray color with conspicuous smoky quartz and slightly bluish-white feldspar and a coarse texture. Transport of the granite was by cart 1 mile to the railroad.

The Gowen Emmons quarry opened about 1865. In 1905 the quarry had two openings: an old opening 200 feet northeast to southwest, 100 feet across and had

a depth from 30 to 70 feet; and a new opening 250 feet from northeast to southwest, 200 feet across with a depth from 10 to 60 feet.

Granite from the Gowen Emmons Quarry was used for buildings and monuments. Examples are the hospital at Dover, New Hampshire, and the Lincoln Monument in Springfield, Illinois.

• *The Wormwood Quarry* [\[108\]](#)

This quarry was located "in the town of Biddeford, 1 ¼ miles southwest of Biddeford city, in West Biddeford." The operator was Ira T. Wormwood & Sons of Biddeford, Maine. Granite from the quarry was reportedly a medium pinkish-buff color with a coarse texture.

At the time of the report, the quarry measured 40 by 20 feet and had a depth from 6 to 8 feet. At the time of the report, the quarry had been idle since 1916.

Granite from the Wormwood Quarry was used for buildings. An example is the trimmings on the St. Joseph's Church in Biddeford, Maine. Material for the dry dock at Charleston, Massachusetts, was quarried from an old adjacent opening.

• *The Andrews Quarries* [\[109\]](#)

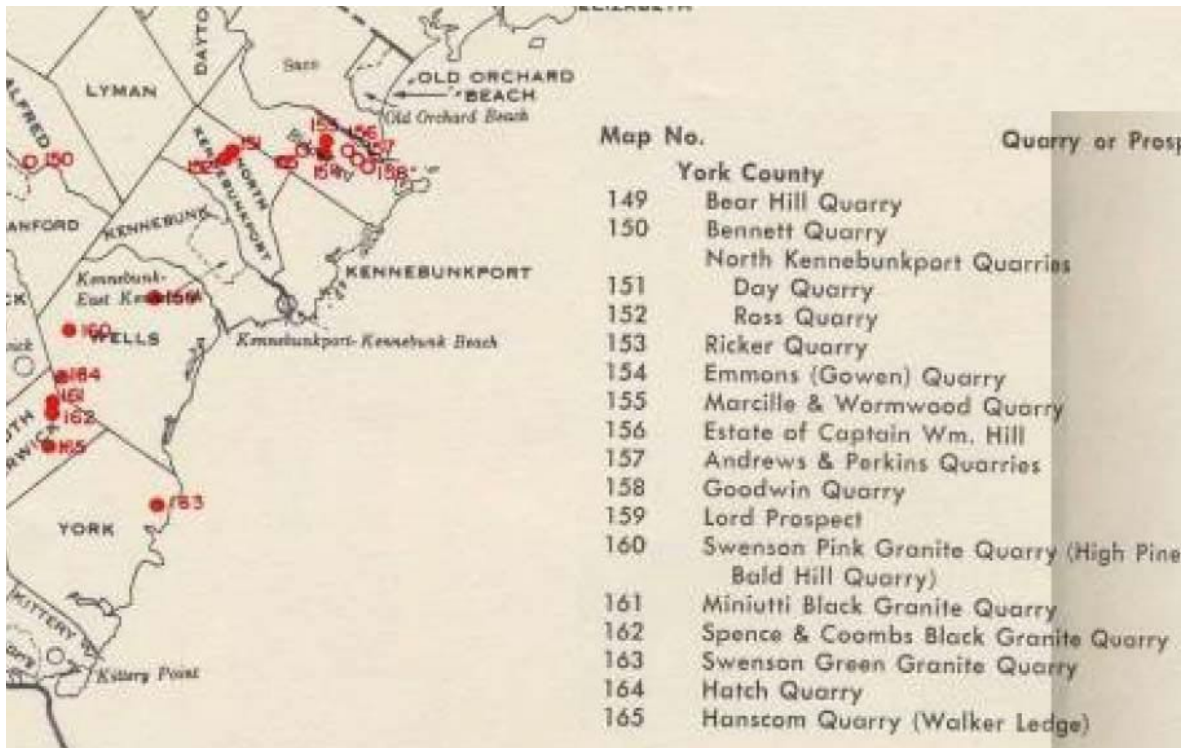
These quarries were "in the town of Biddeford, about 1 ½ miles southeast of Biddeford city and half a mile south of Saco River." The operator was George Willett Andrews of Biddeford. Granite from the quarry was reportedly a light-gray color with conspicuous black mica with a coarse texture. Transport of the granite was by cart half a mile to the Saco River, or 2 miles to the railroad at Biddeford.

The Andrews Quarries opened in 1862 and again in 1895. There were six small openings of varying dimensions. One of the quarries was a "boulder quarry," which was worked in 1905. At the time of the report, the quarry was abandoned.

Granite from the Andrews Quarries was used in buildings, monuments, etc. Examples are: the Tribune Building in New York and the General Dix monument in Portland, Maine. "This quarry has furnished granite for the Delaware and Saco River breakwaters and curbing for Dover and Rochester, N. H."

Below is a map with the locations of quarries in Biddeford. It can be found here:

http://quarriesandbeyond.org/states/me/me-granite_quarry_prospects_large_map.pdf.



SOURCES

- 1 Biddeford Weekly Journal: "Brief history of local granite companies." 4/29/1892. Page 3, Column 6.
- 2 <http://www.maine.gov/doc/nrimc/mgs/explore/mining/sites/aug03.htm>
- 3 Biddeford Weekly Journal. 11/5/1886. Page 3, Column 1.
- 4 Biddeford Weekly Journal. "James Andrews & Sons Petition and go into Insolvency." 12/23/1887. Page 3.
- 5 Biddeford Weekly Journal. "Out On a Strike." 3/4/1887. Page 3, Column 4.
- 6 Biddeford Weekly Journal. "Out On a Strike." 4/29/1887. Page 3, Column 3.
- 7 Biddeford Weekly Journal. "Good 'Ad' For Biddeford." 9/16/1892. Page 3, Column 3.
- 8 Biddeford Daily Journal. "Visited Quarries." 6/30/1899. Page 5, Column 2.
Biddeford Daily Journal. "James Andrews Quarries Sold." 4/20/1912. Page 4, Column 4.

Blandings Park Wildlife Sanctuary is a grassroots 501©3 land trust founded in 2006. BPWS has a mission of conservation, education, recreation, and research to benefit all. Their focus area of about 1,000 vacant areas was designated by the state of Maine as a significant wildlife habitat and is home to the endangered Blanding's turtle and the threatened spotted turtle. BPWS is an all volunteer organization and depends on contributions from generous folks like you to continue their mission to forever preserve the upland forested wetlands, vernal pools, and valuable wildlife species in their focus area. A network of trails is maintained for your hiking and outdoor enjoyment. For more information on Blandings Park Wildlife Sanctuary, please visit their website at www.bpws.org.