

Westford Historical Society

2003



Where Has All The Granite Gone?



The Federal Judiciary Building in Washington, D.C., completed in 1992, has 65 to 70-thousand cubic feet of Fletcher granite. The stone was fabricated at Westford and Vermont and then trucked to Washington for final assembly.
(A Fletcher Photograph)

THEODORE ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL

(27 October 1858 – 6 January 1919)

This monument was dedicated Oct. 27, 1967. It is part of our National Park System and is located on Theodore Roosevelt Island in the Potomac River, Washington, D.C. Eric Gugler designed the monument, Paul Manship designed the statue, and the granite came from Westford including all the granite in the plaza area.

Below are two fountains in the same park. Peter Dirubbo, Dick Martin, Pat Deveau, Johnny Vasselin, and Weston Clark of Fletcher's cut these 35-ton bowls. George A. Ricker, Jr., saw operator, was a supervisor on the 2nd shift at the time.



(A Fletcher Photograph)



(October 1967, Courtesy of the National Park Service)



Charles E. Edwards

Charles S. Edwards

John Burne

Quarry workers at Fletcher's Quarry about 1915/16. There are 81 employees in the full 32" panoramic photograph. People of Swedish and Italian descent made up 90% of the work force in the early 1900s. Generations of the same family have found work at the quarry. Today, many of the workers are of French Canadian, Portuguese, Brazilian and Polish descent. In Aug., 2002, seven Fletcher employees graduated from the "English for Speakers of Other Languages" course at the Nashua [NH] Adult Learning Center. In 1900 the company quoted a job: the men were to work 8 hour days, 6 days a week, at a pay rate of .33 per hour. (From the museum collection, donated by Rita (Edwards) Miller)



The Boston Athletic Association (BAA) celebrated 100 years of the Boston Marathon in 1997 with the installation of this monument in Copley Square Park, Boston. The map, which represents the eight cities and towns along the world famous 26.2-mile route from Hopkinton to Boston, was designed by Mark C. Flannery and is made up of eight colors of Fletcher granite. The names of the winners from the four main categories for the first 100 years are inscribed around the perimeter. Many from Fletchers took part in its very detailed creation. (A Fletcher Photograph)



"We furnished the blocks for the Sumner Tunnel. I know we shipped over a million blocks in there." (David Iver Olsson: 1892-1979) Photo says: Paving at the East Boston incline of the Sumner Tunnel, May 4, 1933. Opened in 1934 by the City of Boston, the Sumner Tunnel provided one-lane traffic each way between the North End and East Boston. It wasn't until 1961 that the Callahan Tunnel was opened beside it. The Sumner, owned by the Mass. Turnpike Authority since 1959, exits into the North End and the Callahan exits into East Boston. Fletcher's was on the job here from September 1932 to April 1934. The contract was for \$69,500. (A Fletcher Photograph)



(A Fletcher Photo)

FRANCIS VIGO

Francis Vigo, an important merchant in Spanish-controlled St. Louis, was well-known and respected by the French in the Vincennes, Indiana, area. Vigo embraced the American cause and helped finance and supply Clark's campaign during the Revolutionary War. (From the George Rogers Clark National Historic Park, Indiana brochure)

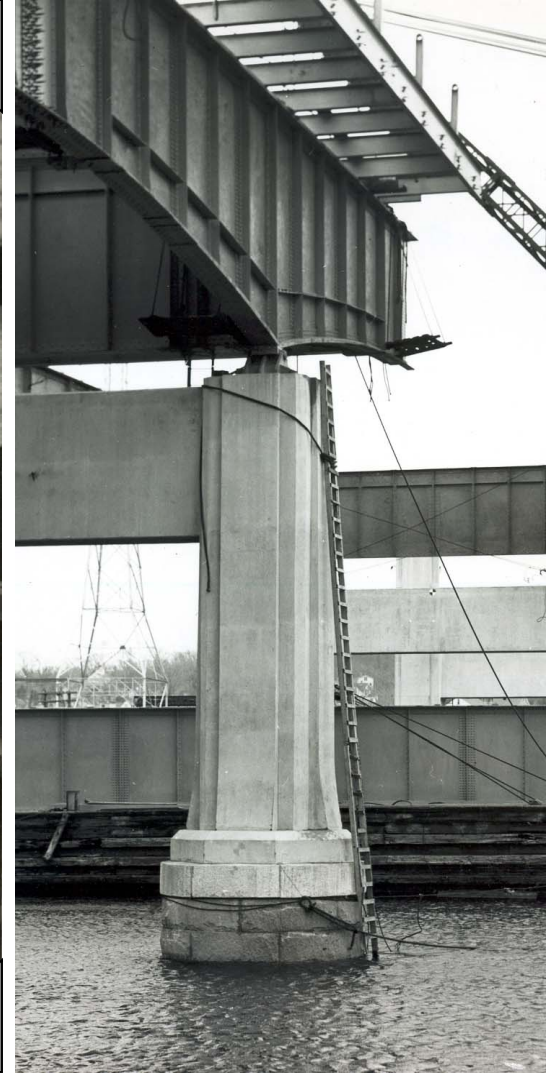
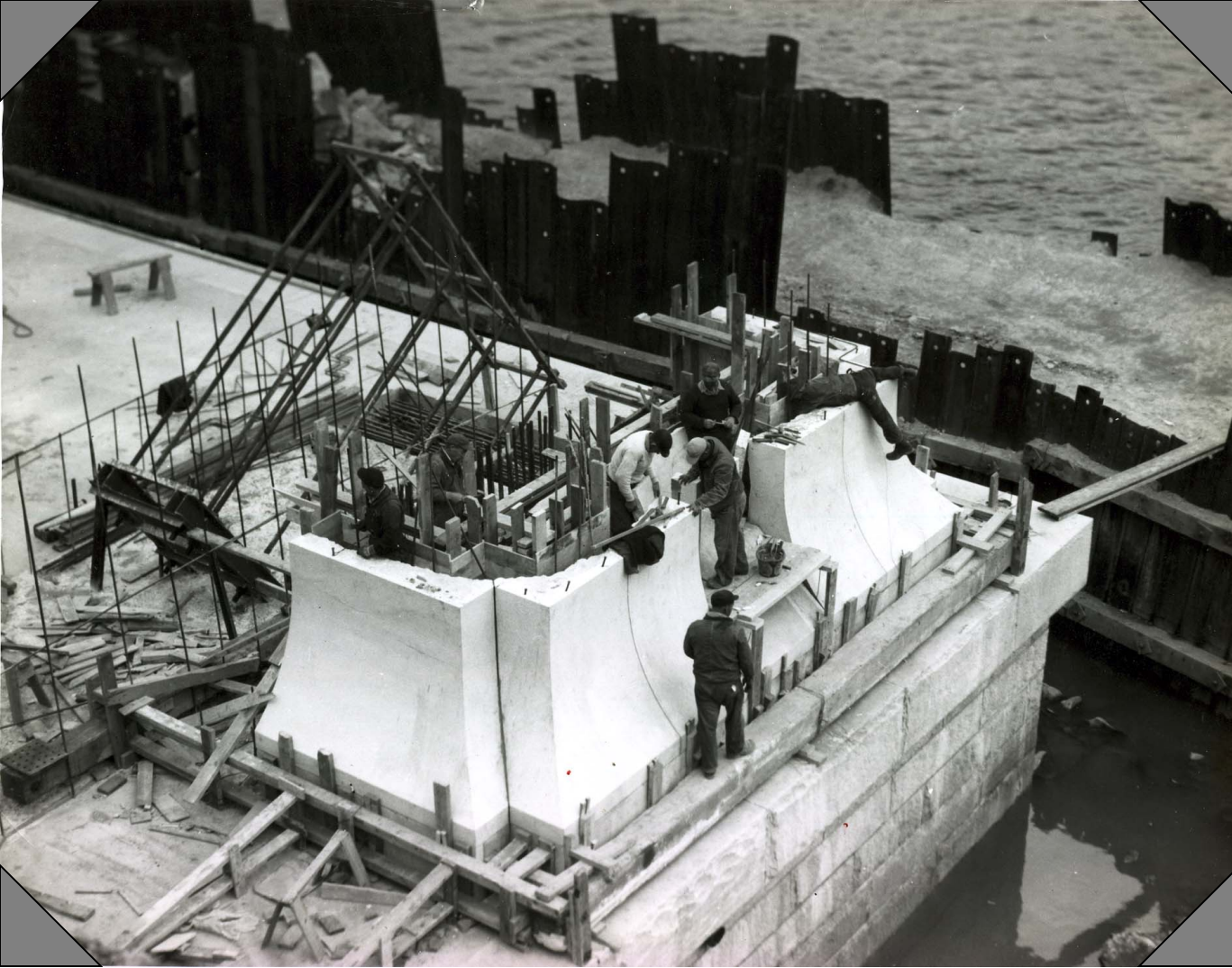
See the NHP website at

http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/gero/hsr5a.htm

Dedicated in June of 1936, this 10-ton granite monument of Francis Vigo was created from Chelmsford granite. Here sculptor, John Angel, works at Fletcher's, copying from a plaster model.



(George Rogers Clark National Park website photo)



Sakonnet River Bridge, Tiverton and Portsmouth, RI

Workers beginning construction of a tower on the Sakonnet River Bridge, Tiverton and Portsmouth, RI. Typically, granite would be installed to just above the water line, with the remainder concrete. However, in this case the job called for granite to the top, and the towers were then filled with concrete. The bridge has 27 spans, is 2982 feet long, and handles more than 40,000 vehicles per day. It was built from 1954 to 1956; these photos are dated 1955.

(Fletcher Photographs)



In 1996, 135 employees gathered on "Granite Day," celebrated in August, at the Fletcher Granite Co. At the close of 2002, there were 162 employees. It takes dedicated, skilled workers and heavy equipment to quarry the stone.

(A Fletcher Photograph)



Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, (Michigan Ave. at 4th St., NE) in Washington, DC was one of the largest projects Fletcher's ever worked on. Begun in 1920, building was stopped due to recession and war and did not resume until 1954. It has both Milford Pink and Chelmsford Grey granite. (See nationalshrine.com)



FANEUIL HALL & THE QUINCY MARKET AREA

During the 1970s the old Quincy Market Area in Boston underwent tremendous restoration and revitalization. The fronts of all the building which had granite were redone with Chelmsford Grey granite.

The pillars for the original Faneuil Hall had been carved from boulders in the Oak Hill area of Westford back in 1825.

This photograph was taken in 1975 for the 150th anniversary of the Market.

(A Fletcher Photograph)



Eight Chelmsford grey granite pylons, Battery Park, NY, 19' high; "Everyone, even the office help came to the sheds to cut the rubber stencils for sandblasting the names on the stone surfaces. The giant slabs were set down and took up all the floor in the mill" (George A. Ricker). The name, rank, organization and state of 4,601 missing in the waters of the Atlantic during WWII are inscribed here. "Fletcher's had the Federal project of making and lettering thousands of granite markers for servicemen everywhere - not just WWII, but previous engagements" (Ricker). The East Coast Memorial monuments were dedicated by President John F. Kennedy in 1960. (Photo courtesy of The Battery Conservancy)



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("B&M Bulletin, 1997," Dana Goodwin)



(From the collection of Sandy Shepherd)

ENGINE 410


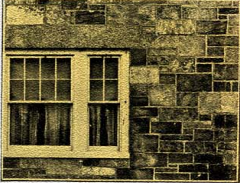
The 410, an 0-6-0 switcher, was built by the American Locomotive Works Co. of Manchester, NH, in 1911 for the B&M Railroad. In 1950 it was taken out of service and sold to the H. E. Fletcher Granite Co. While hauling granite from the Fletcher quarry, on March 14, 1952, Engine 410 slipped off the tracks at Gilson's Crossing in Brookside (Nabnasset). An old steam derrick tried to get it back on track. Finally cables and pulleys did the trick.

By 1990 it was again retired. Now, totally restored, you may see Engine 410 at the Lowell National Historic Park where it sits along side Dutton Street. George "Sandy" Shepherd, from Westford, was one of a handful of men who worked on its restoration.

**Chelmsford
Gray Granite**

Residence of H. E. Fletcher
West Chelmsford, Mass.

F. W. Stickney
Architect

CHELMSFORD GRAY GRAN-
ITE is the ideal material for
the country house or city res-
idence.

For the exterior facing and trim the
standard Chelmsford Gray is par-
ticularly well adapted, either in
rock-faced or hammered finish. It
may also be used, with excellent
architectural effect, as trim in combination with other masonry materials.

We also produce, in limited quantity, an unusually interesting "Seam-Face"
granite. The varied tones and textures of this product lend just that charm
of age and rugged beauty, so desirable in the country house, blending it into
the natural surroundings as a permanent and harmonious feature.

You will find it worth while to become better acquainted with Chelmsford
Gray, and also with the Fletcher Seam-Face Granite.

*Sample of Chelmsford Gray Granite will be
sent to any practicing architect upon request*

J. B. REINHALTER, SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, 456 MONADNOCK BLOCK, CHICAGO, ILL.

H. E. FLETCHER COMPANY
WEST CHELMSFORD, MASS.

OUR HOME

I will build me a house of slate-gray rock
On the slope of Old Oak Hill
Where the reckless winds go trumpeting by
And my eyes can take their fill.

I will build me a house of slate-gray rock
From the best of the granite seams
Where the clouds roll up in a thick, white mist
And the sun through the doorway streams.



In 1887, Herbert Elery Fletcher married Carrie Hill of Vermont. Herbert hand-picked all the granite to go into this home built by him in 1909/10. It was used as a residence until 1950, and since then it has been used for offices for the Fletcher Granite Company.
(A Fletcher Photograph)

HENRY A. FLETCHER

H. E. FLETCHER & CO.

GRANITE, and STONE CONTRACTORS

WEST CHELMSFORD, MASS.

189

TELEPHONE CONNECTION, LOWELL.

DEALERS IN

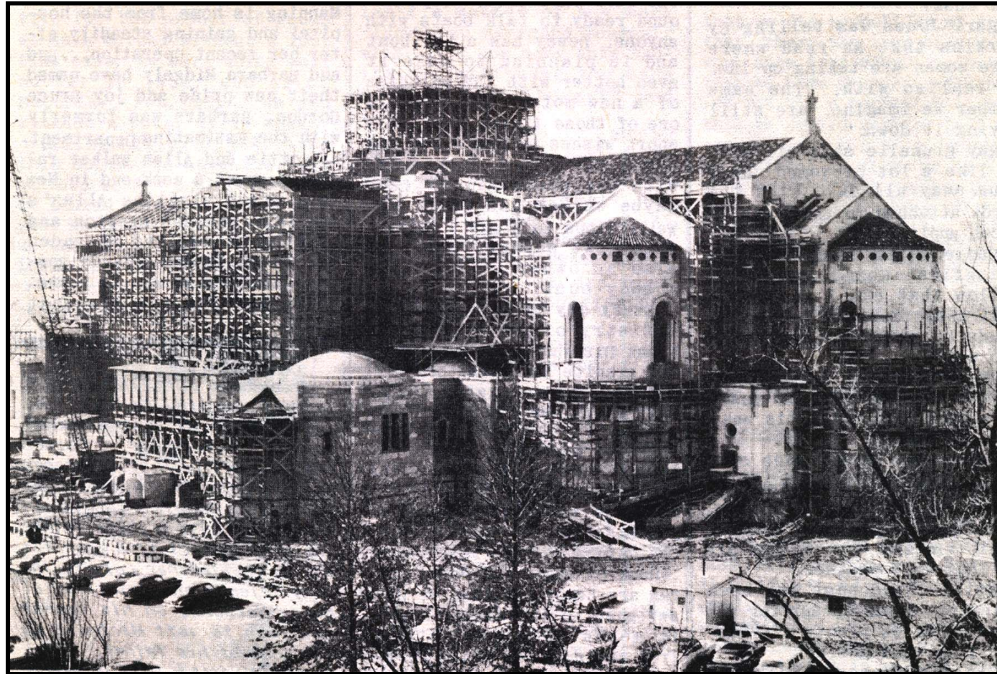
BUILDING AND STREET WORK
FOUNDATION STONE

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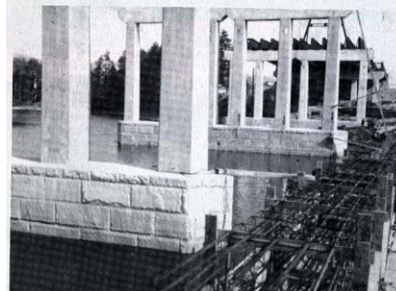
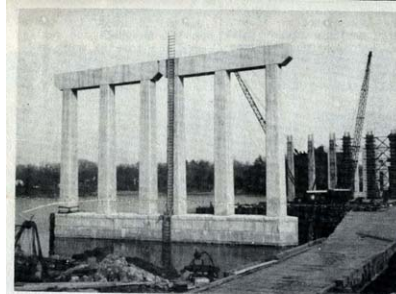
GRANITE, and STONE CONTRACTORS



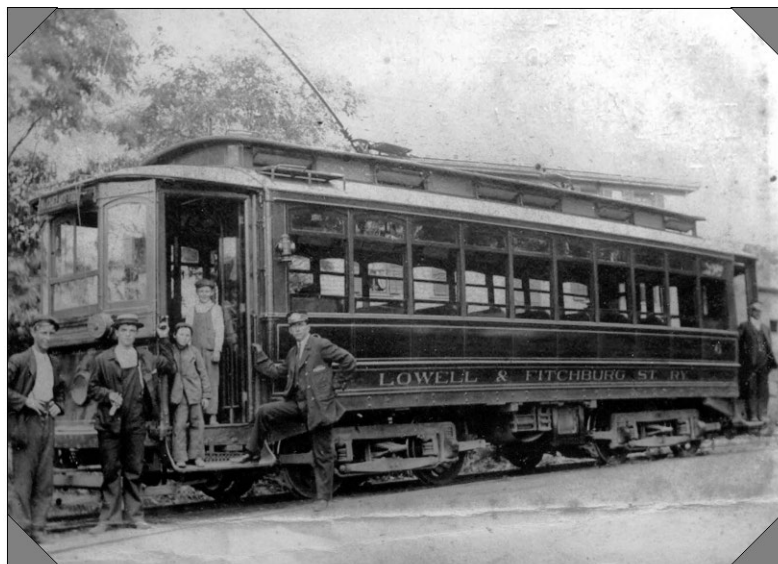
National Records & Administration Building,
Washington, DC.



“Shrine Takes Form”
(Fletcher’s newsletter: *Granite Chips*, Mar. 1958)



Saugatuck River Bridge piers about 1957. Five granite piers are faced with Chelmsford grey at Westport, CT. A total of 19,000cf.
(From *Granite Chips*)



Lowell & Fitchburg Street Railway trolley car 6 in 1906 with Abe O’Clair on the left. It had a companion car, number 8, which was used to transport men to and from North Chelmsford and Fletcher’s Quarry.
(From the Museum collection)



Granite being moved from the quarry to the cutting shed on the south side of Route 40 (Groton Rd.). The 80-ton G.E. diesel electric locomotive was purchased in July 1953 and is nicknamed “The Locy” by Fletcher employees.
(A Fletcher Photograph)

GRANITE FROM THE FLETCHER GRANITE COMPANY

Where Has All the Granite Gone?

A belt of extremely hard and beautiful granite, called Chelmsford Grey, lies beneath our feet from Ayer, MA to Pelham, NH. The belt only averages between one to three miles in width, but it runs very deep. It is quarried by several companies, chiefly among them, Fletcher Granite Company. Founded in 1881 as the H. E. Fletcher Company, more than 100 years later the company is still very active and is the longest operating company in Westford, MA. It has outlasted the mills along the Stony Brook and many high-tech companies. Estimates are that the rock will last for another 100 years.

Look around in the villages and in the center of town at the many monuments, foundations, doorsteps and walls that are made from this local stone. While bridges and curbing are the mainstays of Fletcher's product line, local granite has found its way into bridges, buildings and monuments. This calendar will take you beyond our own doorways, to show you places where Fletcher granite has been used. From Massachusetts, to Washington, D.C., to San Francisco and Hawaii, granite from Westford is a national traveler.

Many thanks to the Fletcher Granite Company for sharing their photographs and history with us so we can share it with you in 2003.

FLETCHER GRANITE COMPANY, LLC
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978/251-4031

Our cover photo was taken by Alan L. Chaffee

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