

THE JOHN SWENSON GRANITE COMPANY, INC.

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03302

CAPITOL 5-2783

July 29, 1965

Mr. Eisenhower  
City Engineer's Office  
City Hall  
Concord, New Hampshire

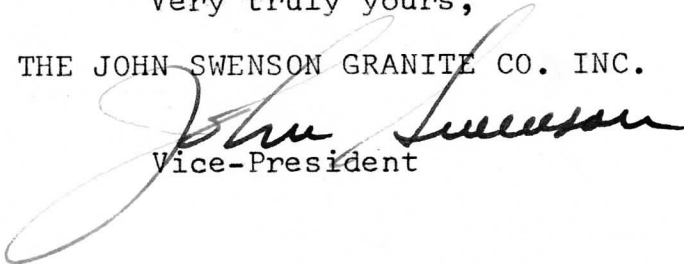
Dear Mr. Eisenhower:

Enclosed is a brief history of the Swenson Granite Company for use in the time capsule.

If for any reason the material contained in the story is not adequate, will you please advise.

Very truly yours,

THE JOHN SWENSON GRANITE CO. INC.

  
Vice-President

JS/asb

The John Swenson Granite Company is, in 1965, the sole survivor of an industry in Concord which included approximately a dozen operating quarries, 30 manufacturers and employed somewhat over 1000 men sixty years ago. The Company now in its third generation was founded by John Swenson on October 4, 1883. Mr. Swenson was born in Sweden and came to Concord as a young man, where he learned the granite trade prior to forming his own business. The present officers of the Company are Guy A. Swenson, President and Omar S. Swenson, Treasurer sons of the founder, and John, Kneeland, David and Malcolm, grandsons.

The Swenson Quarry, known as the "Granite Railway" quarry, is situated on "Rattlesnake Hill" approximately 500 feet above the Merrimack River. The hill is about 3 miles in length and contains numerous now abandoned quarries, and runs from North to South. The stone for the old New Hampshire State Prison was quarried here in 1812, and for the original portion of the New Hampshire State House in 1816-19. The granite used in both of these buildings was taken from surface boulders.

The Company not only operates the extensive plant on the west side of North State Street, but purchased in 1963 the former New England Box Company Mill, east of the Claremont Division railroad tracks at the rear of 256 North State Street. It was in this plant that the granite was manufactured for the Columbia Broadcasting System Headquarters Building, a thirty-eight story sky-scraper on Sixth Avenue, New York City. At the present time, in addition to the Gray quarry in Concord, a Pink granite is quarried in Wells, Maine, a Green in York, Maine and a White granite in Woodbury, Vermont. A Black deposit is being developed in Tatnic, Maine, and plans are being made to open a quarry on Vinalhaven Island, Maine on land recently purchased.

Prior to 1890, drilling was done by hand only. Around 1900 pneumatic tools were introduced by the now defunct New England Granite Company. Steam was the main source of power for the drills and derrick hoisting engines. In 1955, the jet channeler was introduced to replace the old air driven channel bar machine. The upper levels in the quarry which appear to be corrugated were cut by the old method. The jet channeler, which operates on fuel oil and oxygen, has proved to be 300% faster. At 5,000 degrees, it spalls the granite off in small particles leaving a relatively smooth face. The Company has also developed and installed much modern machinery used in the finishing of building granite, and in addition to shot saws, both diamond and wire sawing equipment is now used.

Granite quarried and fabricated by The John Swenson Granite Company has been used in many fine buildings and memorials in every State of the Union, including Puerto Rico and Hawaii, and may be seen locally in the following buildings:

The New Hampshire State House Addition and Annex  
New Hampshire Savings Bank  
Concord Public Library  
Merrimack County Savings Bank  
Sculpture group over entrance to N. H. Historical Society  
Concord Federal Savings and Loan Association  
N. H. Employment Security Building  
Concord National Bank