

# The 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 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. It is all made of Fletcher granite. The map is made up of eight colors of granite, and fits together like a jigsaw puzzle. The map represents the eight cities and towns along the world famous 26.2-mile route from Hopkinton to Boston. Designed by Mark C. Flannery, of Lexington, many, many from Fletchers had part in its creation.

(A Fletcher Photograph)



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, now owned by the Mass. Turnpike Authority since 1959, exits into the North End and the 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)

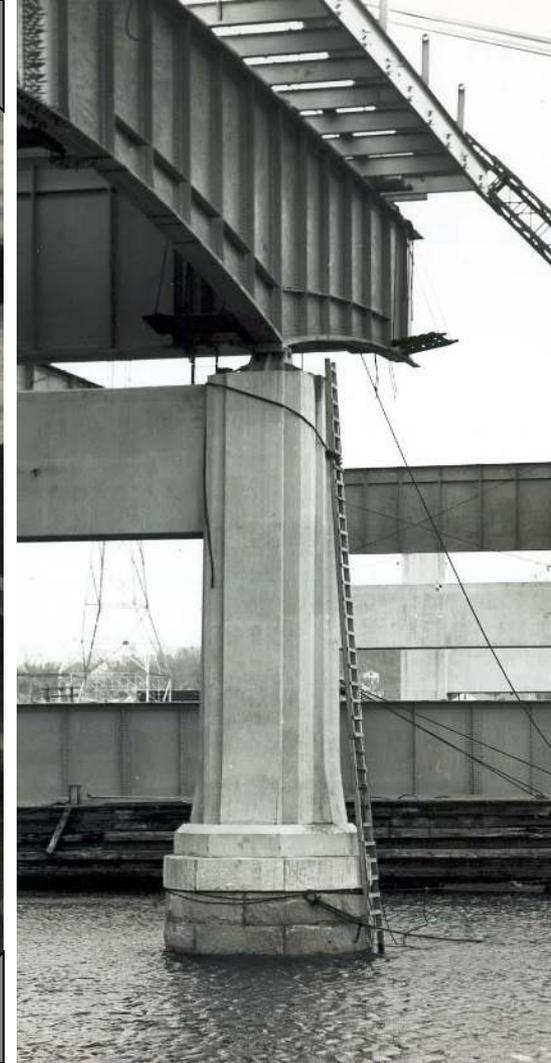
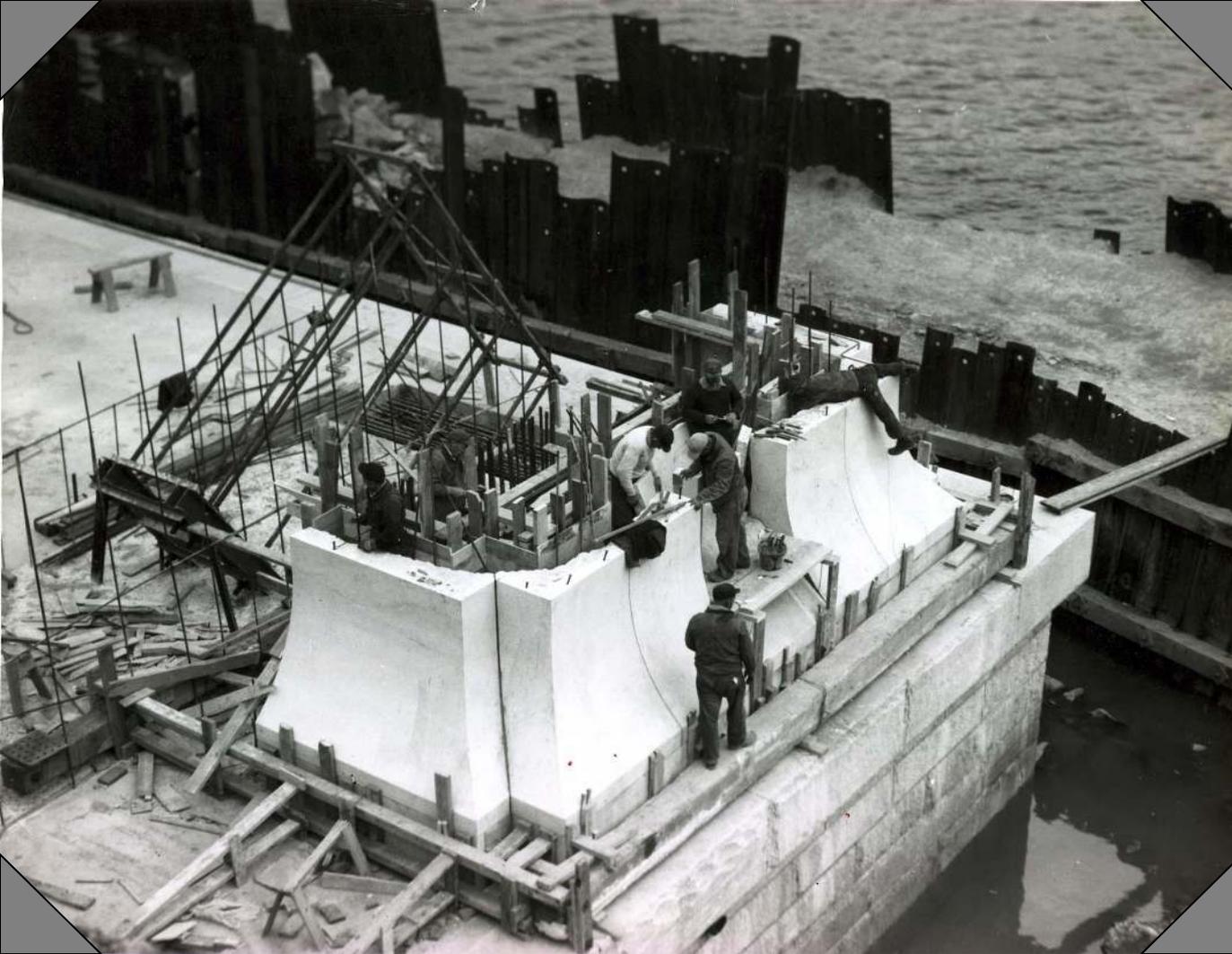
See the NHP website at

[http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/gero/hsr5a.htm](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 begin construction of a tower on the Sakonnet River Bridge, Tiverton and Portsmouth, RI. Typically, granite would only 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 and is 2982 feet long and handles more than 40,000 vehicles per day. These photos are dated 1955. The bridge was built from 1954 to 1956.

(Fletcher Photos)



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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 has both Milford Pink and Chelmsford Grey granite. (See [nationalshrine.com](http://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 back in 1825.

This photograph was taken in 1975 for the 150<sup>th</sup> 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).



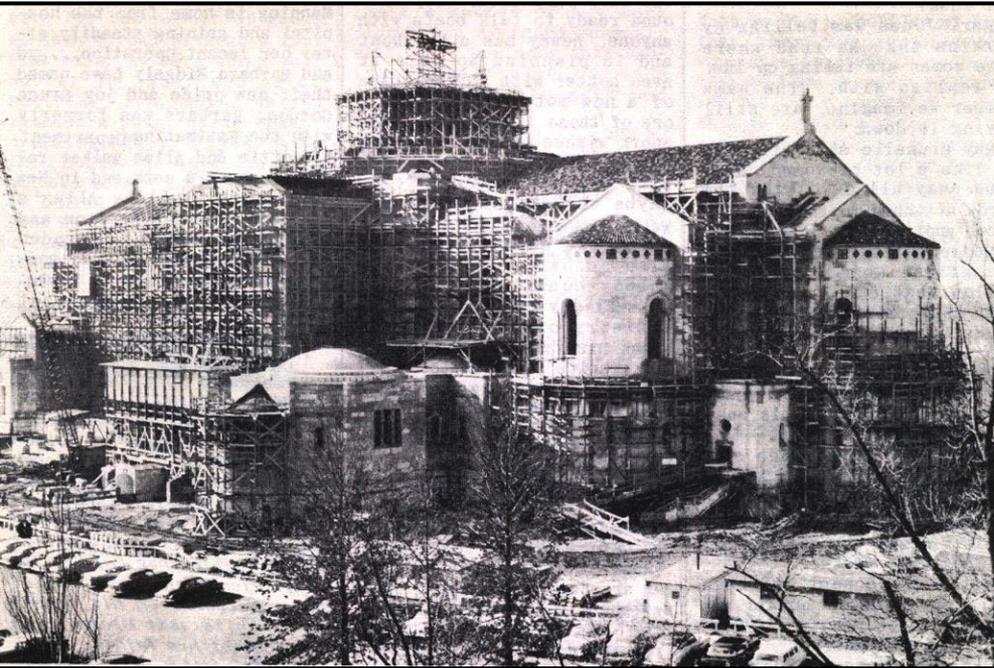
("B&M Bulletin, 1997," Dana Goodwin)

(From the collection of Sandy Shepherd)

## ENGINE 410

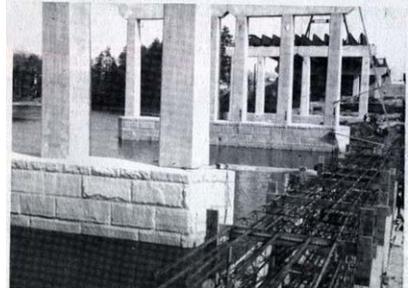
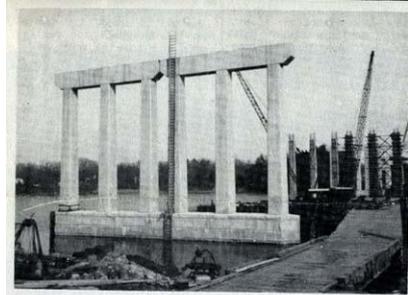
While hauling granite from the Fletcher quarry, on March 14, 1952, Engine 410 slipped off the tracks at Gilson's Crossing in Brookside (Nabnasset). An old steam derrick tried to get it back on track. Finally cables and pulleys did the trick.

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. 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.

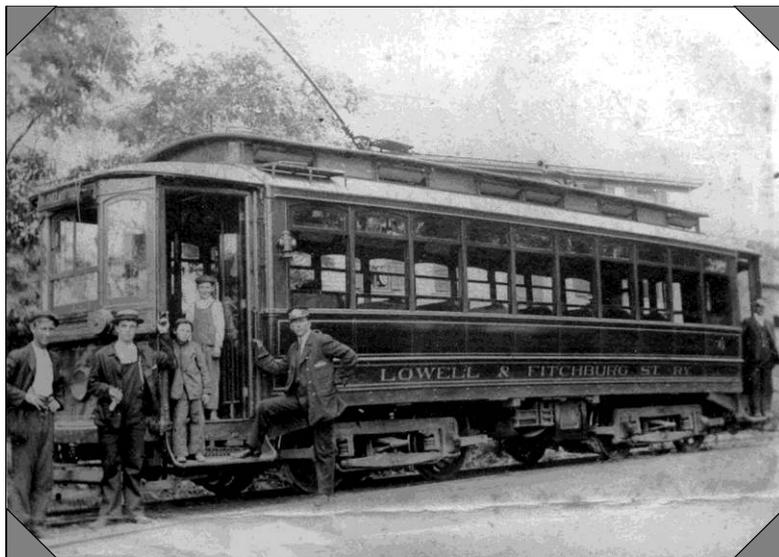


"Shrine Takes Form"

(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)

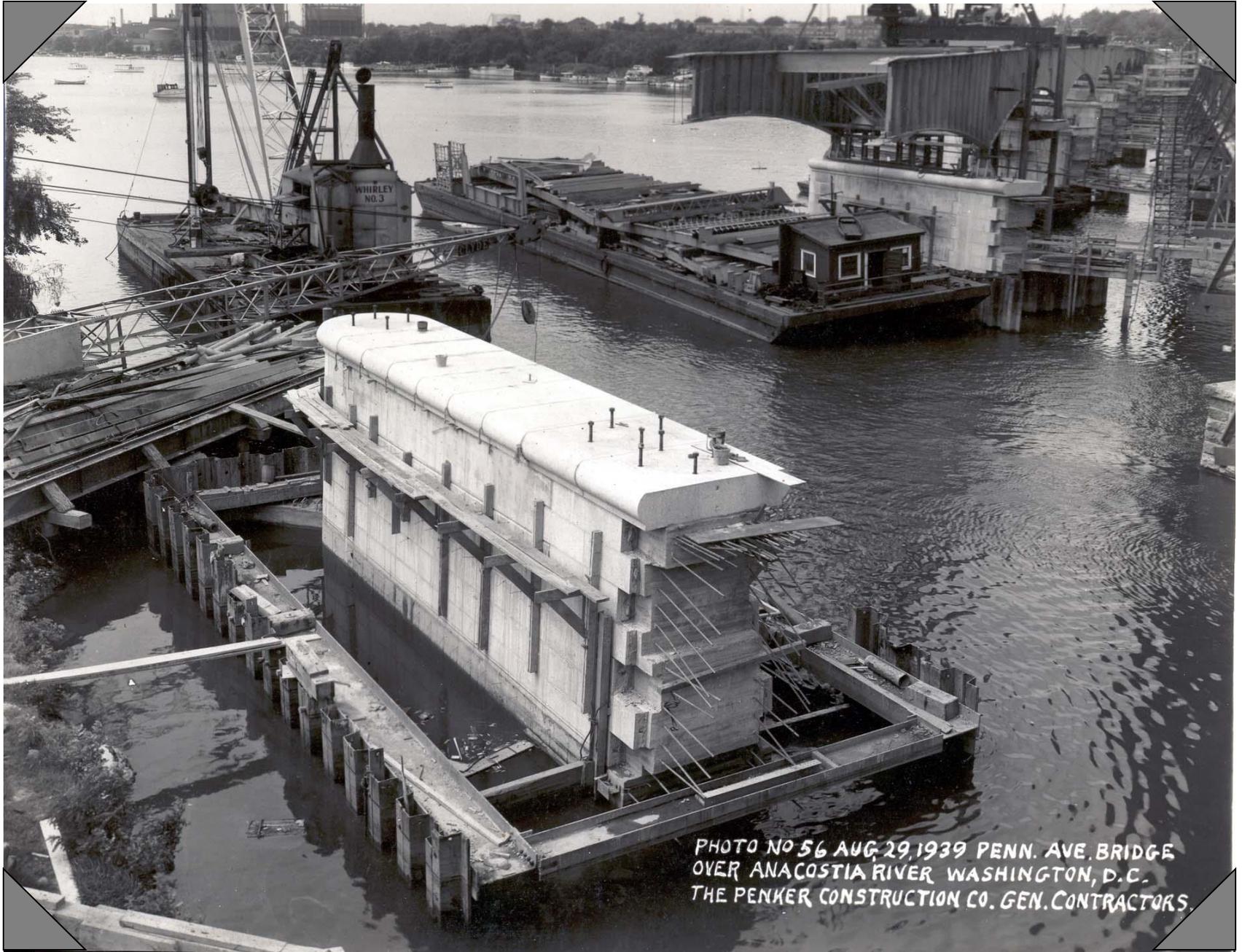


PHOTO NO 56 AUG 29, 1939 PENN. AVE. BRIDGE  
OVER ANACOSTIA RIVER WASHINGTON, D.C.  
THE PENKER CONSTRUCTION CO. GEN. CONTRACTORS.

PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE BRIDGE, WASHINGTON. D.C. 1939.

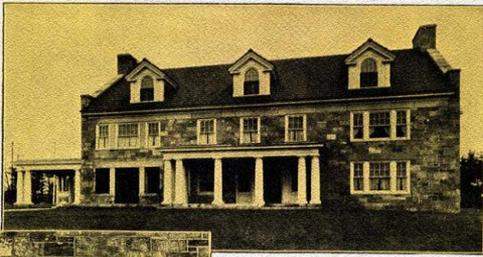


The Sumner Tunnel opened in Boston in 1934 and is 6,751 feet long. In this photo dated Apr. 24, 1933, the workers finish the last of the paving at the Boston Portal. The tunnel was named for William H. Sumner, born 1780, son of Governor Increase Sumner.  
(A Fletcher Photograph)

**Chelmsford  
Gray Granite**

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

F. W. Stickney  
Architect




**C**HELMSFORD GRAY GRANITE is the ideal material for the country house or city residence.

For the exterior facing and trim the standard Chelmsford Gray is particularly 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*

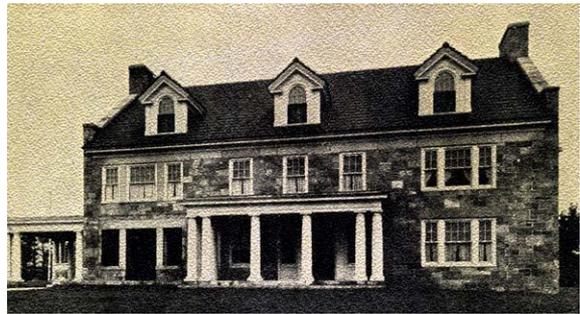
J. B. REINHALTER, SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, 456 MONADNOCK BLOCK, CHICAGO, ILL.

**H. E. FLETCHER COMPANY**  
WEST CHELMSFORD, MASS.

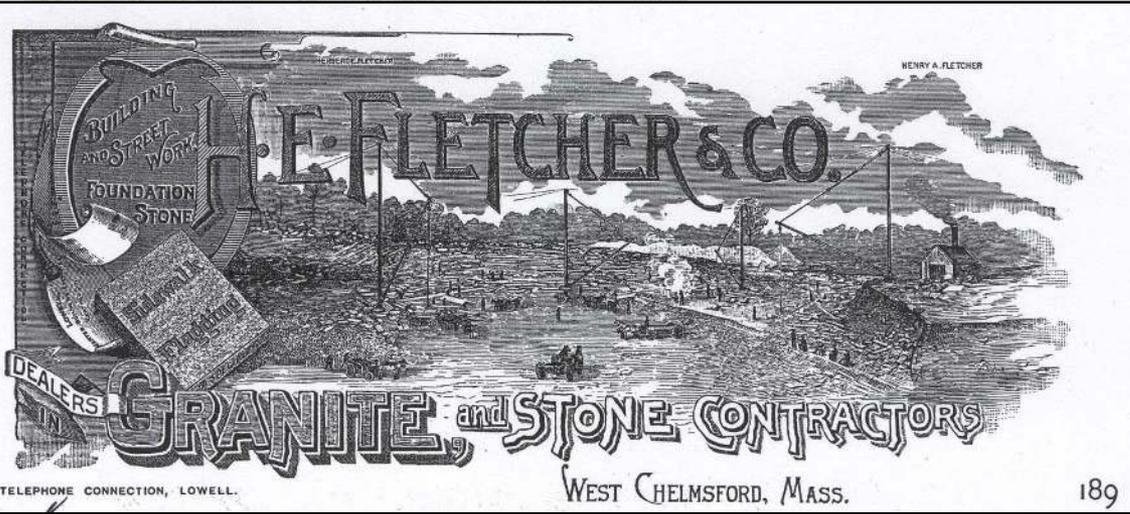
**OUR HOME**

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.



**H. E. FLETCHER & CO.**

**GRANITE, and STONE CONTRACTORS**

WEST CHELMSFORD, MASS.

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DEALERS

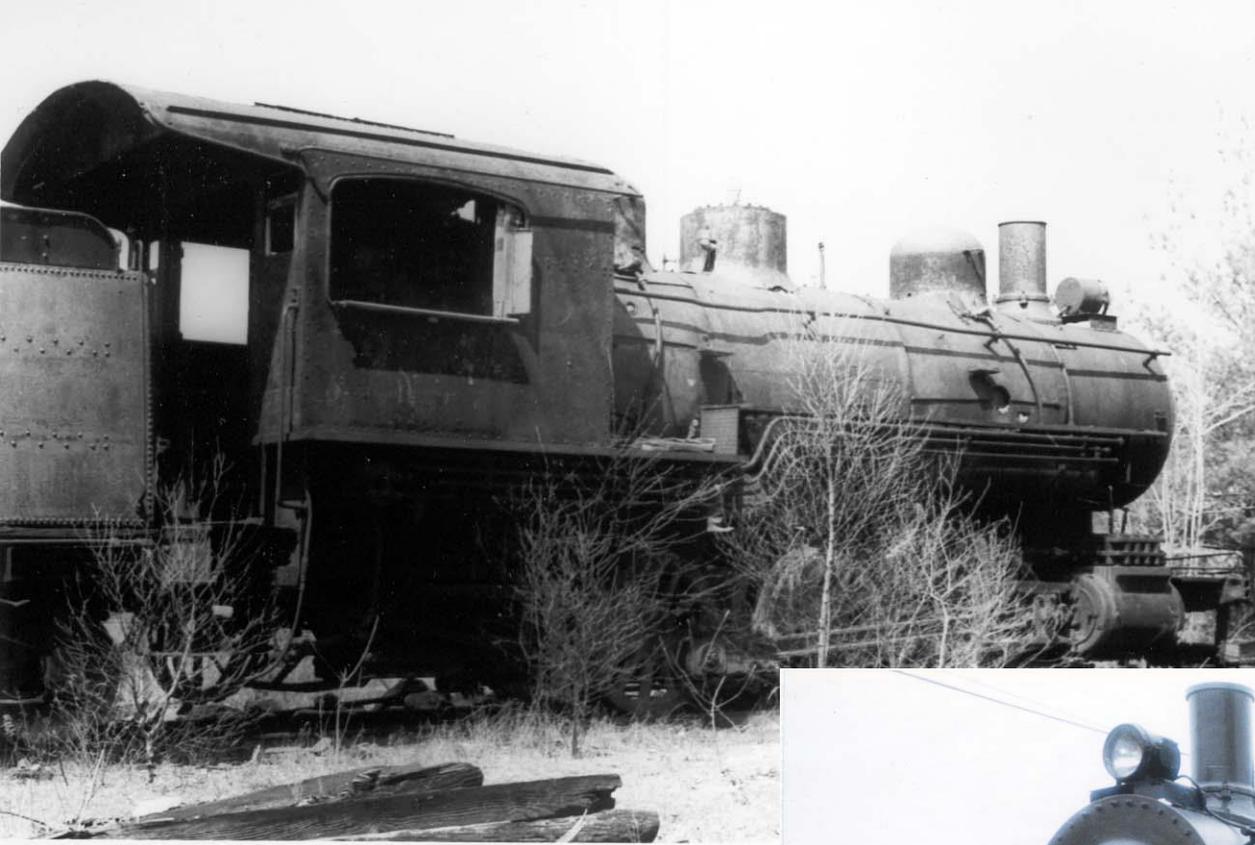
TELEPHONE CONNECTION, LOWELL.

BUILDING AND STREET WORK  
FOUNDATION STONE

HENRY A. FLETCHER



National Records & Administration Building, Washington, DC.





The Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, Washington, DC, over the Potomac, going to the T. Roosevelt Island . Built in 19XX

(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 operational 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.

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

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