

# **The Quincy Quarry Rail Road 1893-1918**

**By Tom Bonomi for The Quincy Quarry and Granite Workers Museum 2013**

In 1893 a group of granite manufactures decided to build a railroad to open the quarry lands in West Quincy that border the Blue Hills. For many years prospectors had been aware of the vast amount of dark blue granite hidden away in that long range of hills that form the backbone of West Quincy. Some quarries had been opened, but the difficulty in transporting the stone to the West Quincy Depot had eaten up much of the profits.

In the spring of 1893 steps were taken to raise money to fund the project. The United States was in a serious economic depression and almost 25 percent of the nations railroads had failed. In spite of the difficulty they succeeded and construction was started in August 1893, by October of 1894 the road was completed.

The N.Y., N.H. & H.R.R., would operate the Railroad but it was owned and controlled by the Quincy Quarry Company. Thomas H. McDonnell was named president, and board of director's member Luther S. Anderson, who had several years experience as assistant treasurer of the Union Pacific Railroad, was appointed superintendent of construction.

The Quarry Railroad had five miles of track, including sidings and switches. The real estate cost \$100,000.00 and another \$70,000.00 was spent to build the railroad. It was built of the best materials. The rail section was 60 lbs to the yard. From the bridge at Burke's around the big fill as far as Elcock's spur it was laid with 85 lb rail and six hole angle bars. All curves and all joint ties were oak or chestnut. The straight line was laid with the best New Brunswick cedar.

The maximum grade was 4 per cent and the maximum curve was 16 degrees. Much of it followed what is today Ricciuti Drive. It reached as far as what was known then as Prout Brothers Quarry, now a water hazard at the Granite Links Golf Course. There was also a spur track that led into the Lyons Turning Mill.

Some of the owners of the Turning mill also had a financial interest in the Quarry Railroad.

On Saturday September 8 1894 a celebration and banquet was held at the Lyons Turning Mill to launch the new enterprise. A special train with invited guests left the Kneeland Street station in Boston at 1PM and met the Quincy delegation at the West Quincy Depot. A ride was then taken over the new railroad through the quarries. The Boston Cadet Band provided music on the journey and at the banquet. Many, including Quincy Mayor William A. Hodges, who was vice president of

the Quincy Quarry Railroad and also a stockholder of the Lyons Granite Company, made speeches extolling the economic benefits to Quincy the new Railroad would make.

C.P. Clark, general freight agent for the N.Y. N.H. & H R.R said" This new road gives you the same freight rates from West Quincy to the west as from New York to the west, and places you in the position to reach the great inland markets".

At 5 PM the speechmaking was over and the train was boarded for its homeward trip.

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### NEW ROAD IN QUINCY.

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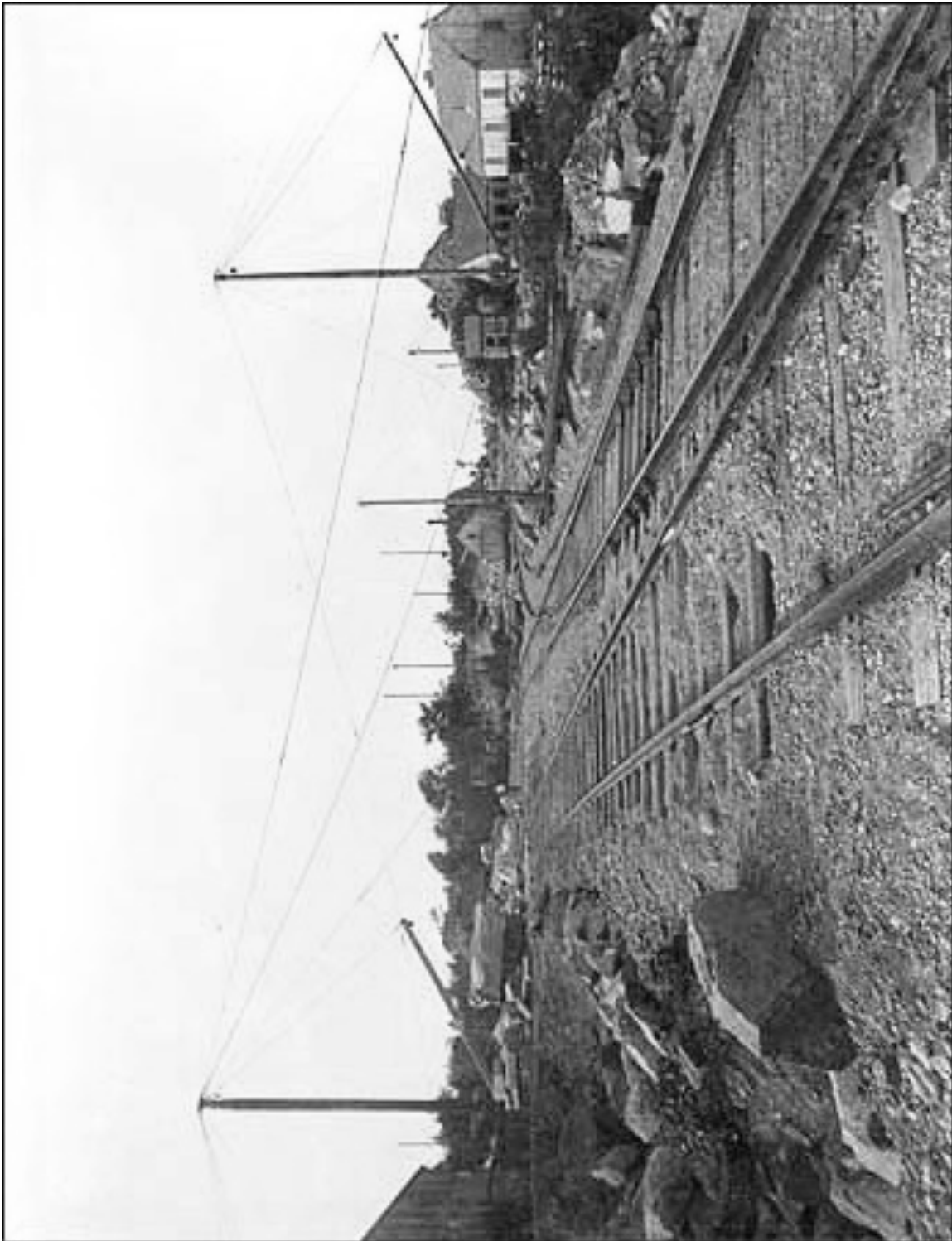
**The Line to the Quarrying District  
Opened Yesterday.**

QUINCY, Aug 29—The Quincy quarry railroad, a branch line from the West Quincy division of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad, which extends into the quarrying district of West Quincy, was opened yesterday. The first load of rough stone for monumental purposes was shipped from Berry Brothers' quarry, and the first car of finished work came down from Elcock & Sons.

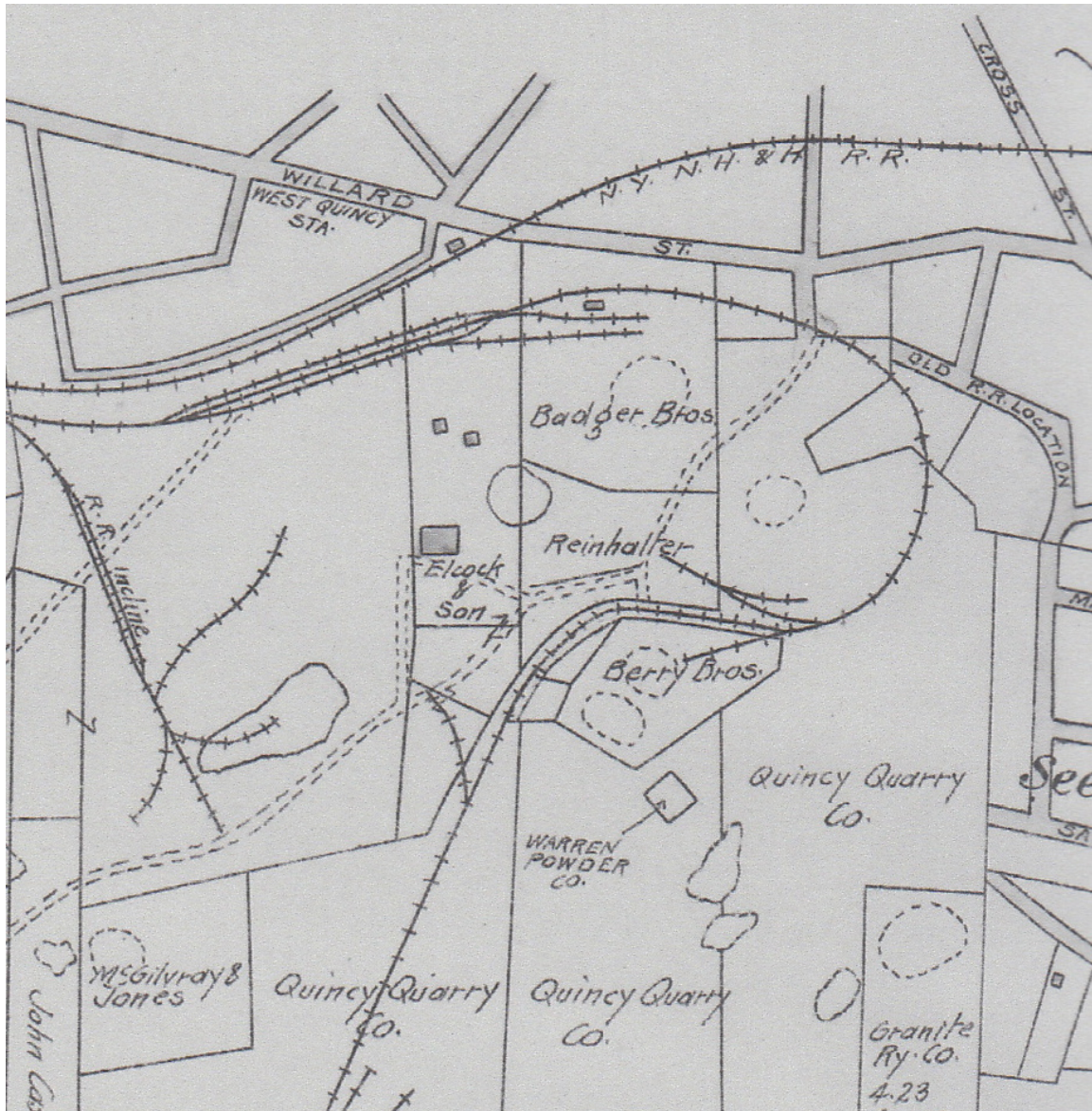
The road will prove a valuable addition to the quarrying interests of the city, and will open up lots of quarry land that was heretofore inaccessible. The road was built and will be run by Quincy capital, and by men who are all interested in the granite business in this city.

Miss Lillian T. Harlow of Quincy held the throttle of the engine on the trip yesterday, and Miss Georgiana Lane, another Quincy girl, rode on the engine on the preliminary trip the day before.

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Berry Brothers Quarry and Quincy Quarry Rail Road  
Courtesy of The Thomas Crane Public Library/ Parker Collection

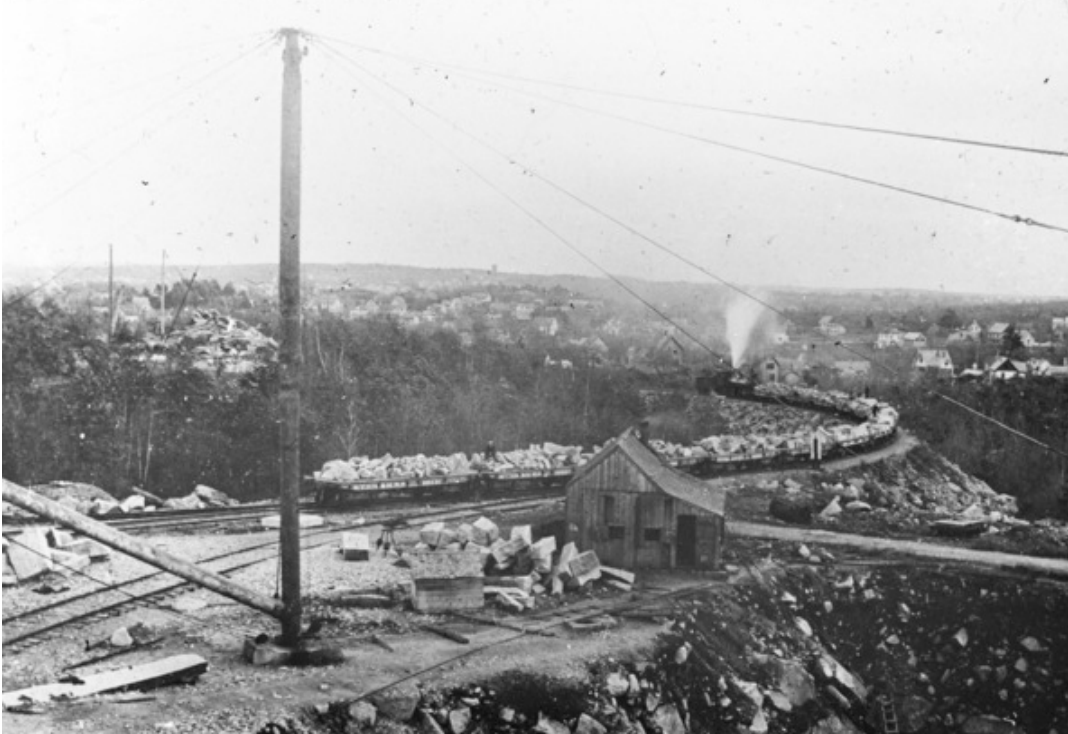
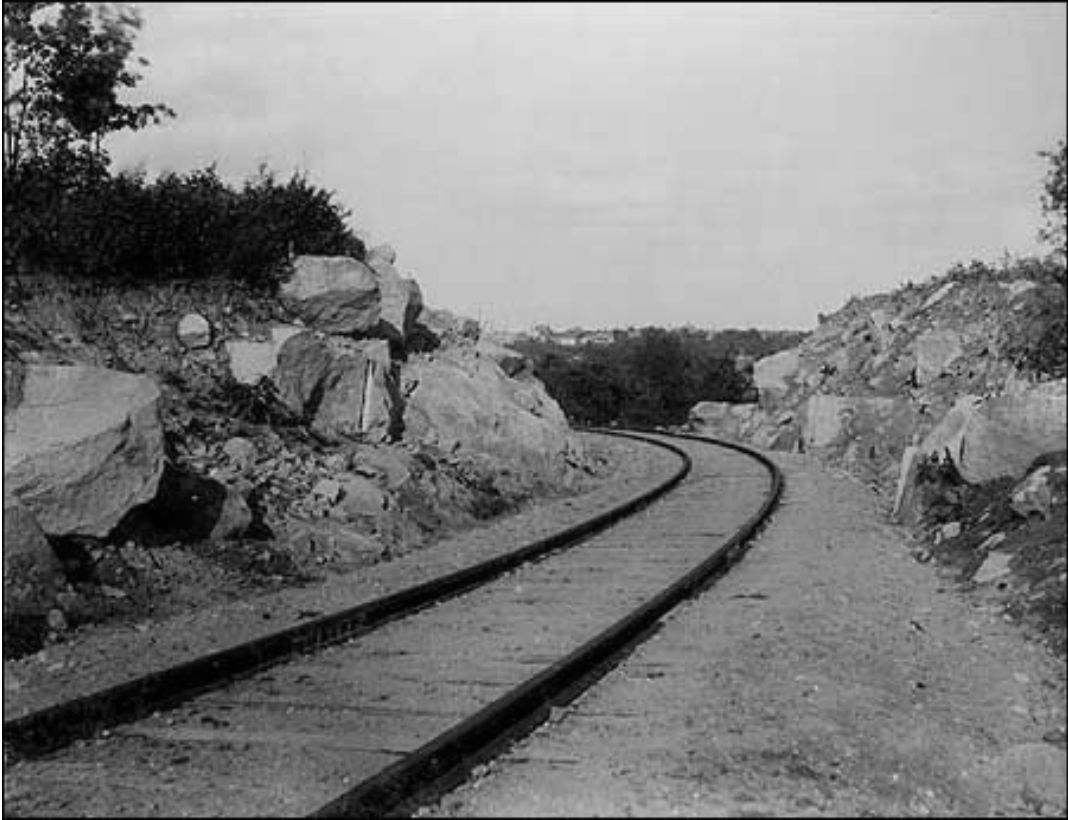


Close-up of 1897 Map showing a section of the Quincy Quarry Railroad

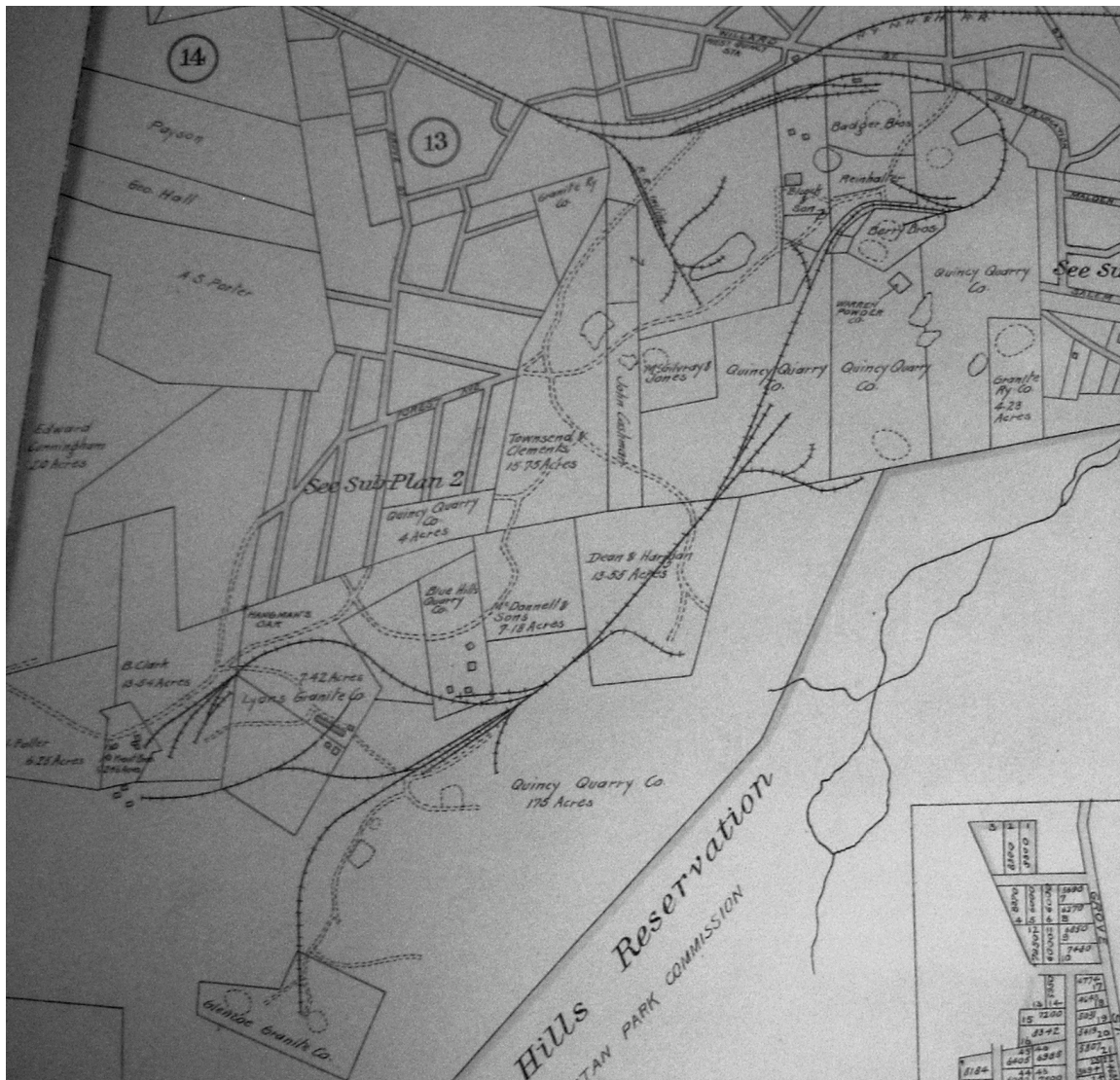
Note that the Granite Railway Company Inclined plane does not connect to the Quincy Quarry Railroad.

Elcock and Reinhalter Quarries later became the property of J.S. Swingle.





Two views of the Quarry Railroad looking east / Parker Collection  
Much of this roadbed is still intact minus the rails {2013}



In December 1894 The **Quincy Quarry Co.** filed suit against the state for 109 acres of land taken from them for creation of the Blue Hills Reservation. This land was part of the Lyman and Bailey estate and contained valuable quarry lands in Milton on which the Railroad was to extend {above map shows this property in 1897}

Some quarries serviced did include Badger Brothers, Reinhalter, Elcock and Son, Berry Brothers, Dean and Horrigan, McDonnell and Sons, Blue Hills Quarry Co., Lyons Granite Co., Prout Brothers and Glencoe Granite Co. and the Quincy Quarry Company.

T.H. McDonnell president and Barnabas Clark treasurer reported in 1896 the Quarry Railroad declared a 6% dividend on it's entire capital of \$175,000.00 At that time they were shipping 50 carloads of granite daily to supply stone for improvements to the NY NH and H Railroad. and others around the state In two years they did \$2.000.000.00 of business. In April of 1896 they unsuccessfully petitioned the city to

build an overhead bridge on Granite Street and a railroad crossing on Quarry Street in order to extend the Quarry Railroad to the North Commons. In August 1896 4000 tons of granite was shipped over the Quincy Quarry Railroad from the West District quarries.

The Quincy Quarry railroad was also popular as a tourist attraction. On many occasions visitors to Quincy would ride it up into the hills for the scenic views and to see the extensive quarry operation.

In 1900 all of this property including the Railroad was brought under the control of a corporation known as **The Quincy Granite Quarries Co.**



\$100 bond courtesy of The Quincy Quarry and Granite Workers Museum

In 1903 the corporation had financial trouble. {This author is still investigating the reason.}



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**Receivers Appointed.**

BOSTON, Nov. 30.—John W. Chasey and George H. Molte were appointed receivers of the Quincy Granite Quarries company today by Judge Colt of the United States court. It is alleged that the company defaulted in payment of interest on bonds aggregating \$1,750,000.

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**Quincy MAN APPOINTED.**

**J. W. McAnarney Receiver for Subsidiary Companies of the Quincy Quarries Concern.**

J. W.. McAnarney of Quincy was today appointed receiver of the Blue Hill Granite Company, the O. T. Rogers Granite Company and the Lyons Granite Company by Judge Colt of the U S circuit court on application of receivers Casey and Nolte of the Quincy Granite Quarries Company. The first three are Subsidiary companies of the Quincy Company.

The Blue Hill Company is a debtor of the Quincy company. The latter owns 172 shares of stock of the former; it also has a claim of \$7517.94 against it. The total indebtedness of the Blue Hill Company is about \$15,000, which it is alleged it is unable to pay.

The Lyons Company owes the Quincy company, it is alleged, \$9352.70, and the latter owns 250 shares of the capital stock of the former. The total debt of that company is \$30,000.

The O. T. Rogers company owes the Quincy company \$2262 and the latter holds 107 shares of the stock of the former. The total indebtedness of the sub-



**sidiary company is about \$18,400.  
Yesterday the court appointed the re-  
ceivers of the Quincy company at the  
instance of the American loan and  
trust company, trustee, and J. K. Hay-  
ward et al, bondholders**

**Boston Globe December 1 1903**

By 1906 the assets were sold at auction and reorganized as the **Quincy Quarries Co.** a Maine corporation. Theophilus King, a banker was the only Quincy stockholder. Some properties were sold and others were leased to individual operators.



Rail Cars at the Quincy Quarries Co. Lyons Turning Mill  
In 1906 the Turning Mill was leased to Robert Cantley  
Quincy Historical Society photo enlargement

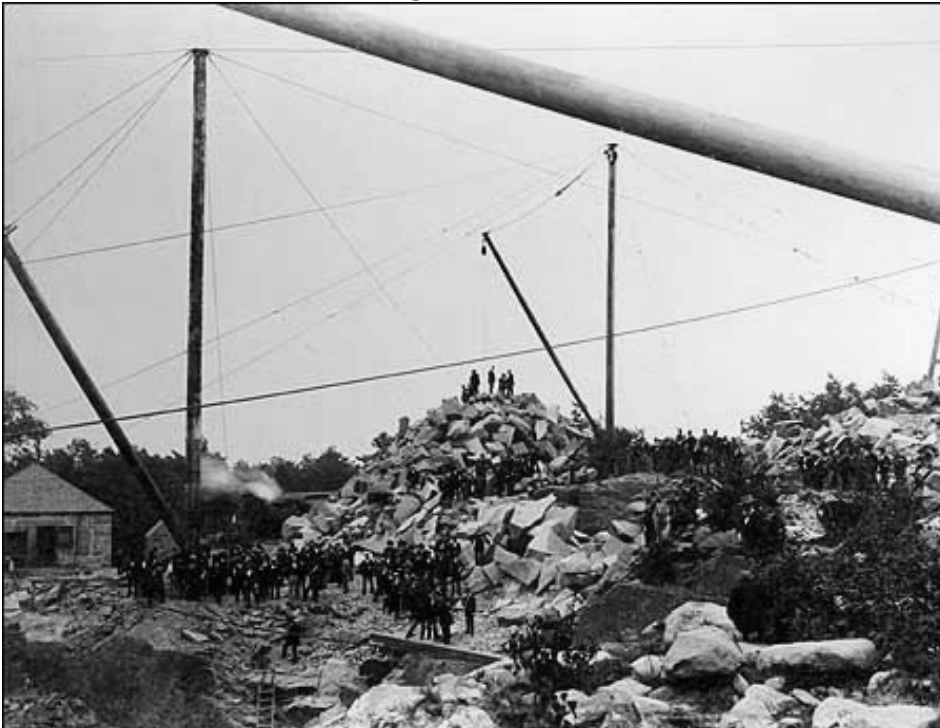
**QUINCY QUARRIES Co.,**  
**QUINCY, MASS.**  
 SUCCESSORS TO  
 THE QUINCY GRANITE QUARRIES CO., O. T. ROGERS GRANITE CO., LYONS GRANITE CO., and  
 THE BLUE HILL GRANITE CO.

**PRODUCERS AND FINISHERS**  
 ... OF ...  
 LIGHT, MEDIUM, GOLD LEAF, DARK AND EXTRA DARK QUINCY  
**GRANITE**

CUT AND POLISHED GRANITE FOR MONUMENTS, VAULTS, BUILDINGS, Etc.  
 TURNED AND POLISHED URNS, BALLS, VASES, COLUMNS, ROLLS, Etc., in all the Standard Granites  
 ROUGH STOCK FROM THE SMALLEST TO THE LARGEST TRANSPORTABLE SIZES

**ESTIMATES FURNISHED ON APPLICATION**

1905 ad from Granite Magazine



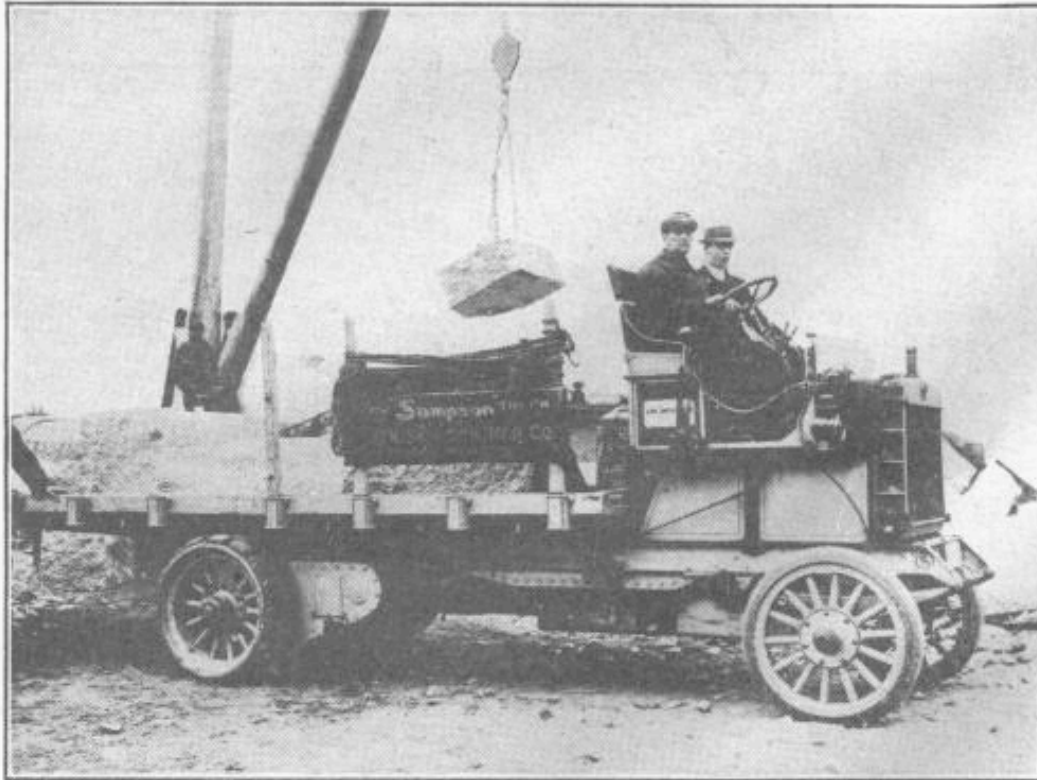
Prout Brothers Quarry /Thomas Crane public Library Parker Collection  
 This quarry is now part of the Granite Links golf course



Near Badger Brothers Quarry looking north /Thomas Crane Public Library/Parker Collection



Locomotive at Berry Brothers Quarry/ Parker collection



They "Stand the Racket" for Heavy Stone Hauling too—A "Sampson" in use by the Quincy (Mass.) Quarries Co.

By 1911 the **Quincy Quarries Company** was using the new mode of transportation the motorized truck. Much of the demand for granite at this time was for monumental stone. This Sampson truck could handle a 4-ton load and deliver it directly to any destination.

These trucks were probably used at their quarries on the North Commons {Quarry Street} These included Dell, Hitchcock, Fallon and Sons, Field and Wilde, and Adams Temple Fund.

The Quarry Railroad was still serving the remaining property around what is now Ricciuti Drive. Including the turning mill now owned by Robert Cantley.

Photo from The Monumental News

World War 1 had a detrimental effect on the granite industry in Quincy. The Fore River shipyards took many of the laborers away with the



prospect of them making higher wages. By 1917 many quarries were finding it difficult to attract men to clear the grout. The railroads were busy moving war supplies and rail cars were hard to obtain to ship what stone was being quarried.

The turning mill went out of business in 1917 and the machinery was shipped to Utah. The Quarry Railroad was torn up for scrap in 1918. The railway bed was now used as roads for motor truck transport of stone.

The **Quincy Quarries Company** continued in business until 1942. Their last quarry to operate was the old Hitchcock quarry in the north commons area. Once again a shortage of supplies due to World War 2 finally put an end to every quarry in Quincy except J.S. Swingle with his extra dark granite.

Modern construction materials were now being used and Quincy granite was only desired for monumental work.

The closed quarries in the north common eventually became the property of the City of Quincy and were now used as a municipal landfill handling tons of trash generated every day by the residents and industries in Quincy. These deep holes were a cheap and convenient way to get rid of the city's trash.

By 1968 the city of Quincy had run out of quarries in the north common and began to fill the remaining ones at what is now called Quarry Hills. Ricciuti Drive was built over much of what used to be the Quarry Railroad. The Granite Links golf course now occupies most of what was once land owned by the **Quincy Quarries Company**.

Although the landscape has changed there are still remains of a once great industry. The Lyons Turning Mill, and a few quarries are part of the golf course. {the names of many quarries changed with new owners} The Blue Hill Quarry is now the site of luxury apartments. Townsend and Clements/ Cashman Quarry is the Quarry Hills baseball field. Berry Brothers Quarry and sections of the Quarry Railroad are now part of the Blue Hills Reservation along with the Granite Railway and Bunker Hill Quarries. The Quirk Auto Auction now occupies the old Knox Quarry. Many small quarries are now covered by the Granite links golf course.

The quarries in the north commons that were filled, now are surrounded by hi rise residential units. The famous O.T. Rogers Quarry on Willard Street once part of the Quincy Quarries Company is now a Home Depot store.

The quarry derricks are gone but if you look closely you can still see where they once stood.

## **Management and Directors of the Quincy Quarry Railroad 1894**

**Thomas H. McDonnell- President-** and also a stockholder in the Lyons Granite Company. Born in Quincy in 1848 he was the head of McDonnell and Sons one of the leading granite firms in America. They had quarries in Vermont and New York as well as Quincy. He was also a director of the Quincy and Boston Street Railway. His firm was the first to introduce pneumatic tools in Quincy.

**William A. Hodges- Vice President** -Mayor of Quincy MA and stockholder in the Lyons Granite Company. He was a very successful businessman and held many positions in city government.

**Clarence Burgin- Treasurer-** also Quincy City Treasurer and a Director and Treasurer of the Lyons Granite Company.

**Andrew Milne- Director-** also Director and Clerk of the Lyons Granite Company. Owner of Milne and Chalmers Granite Company.

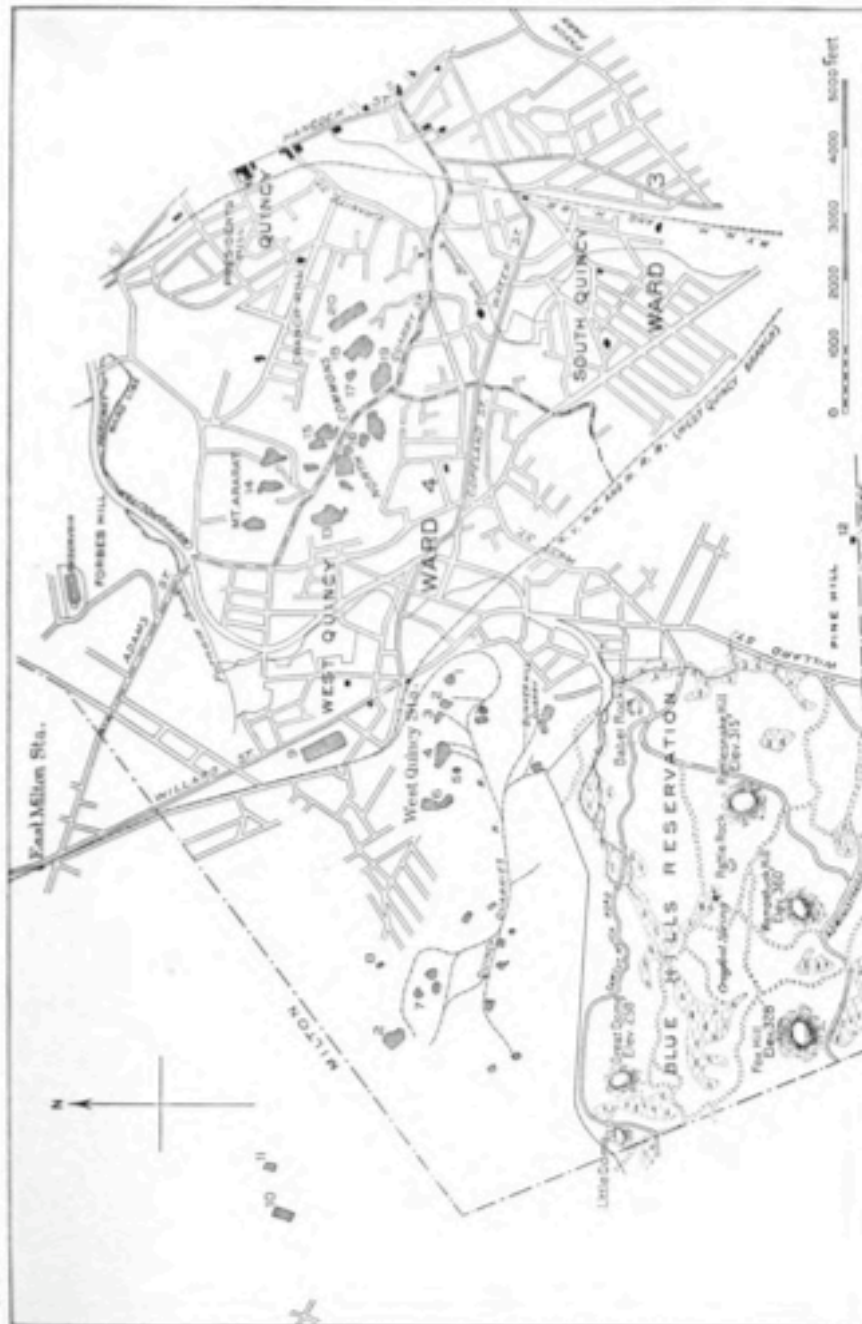
**James Thompson-Director-**also City of Quincy Councilor and President of the Granite Manufactures Association. Also a member of John Thompson and Son Granite Company.

**John Swithin- Director-**also a Director of the Lyons Granite Company. He was born in Quincy in 1854 learned the stonecutters trade with John Thompson and Son and in 1887 went into business with his brother. Also was in the real estate business

**Barnabas Clark {Clarke}-Director-**He lived in Quincy then moved to Boston. He was in the stone trade for 26 years then got in the liquor business.

His warehouse was on Kneeland Street in Boston. He was President and Treasurer of Prout Brothers Granite Company and a Director of the Lyons Granite Company.

**Luther S. Anderson- Superintendent- Director-Engineer** Harvard Class of 1882. In 1899 he also became manager of The Granite Railway Company.



MAP SHOWING LOCATIONS OF QUINCY GRANITE QUARRIES.

1. Wigwam quarry, Badger Brothers.
2. Reinhalter quarry, Thomas F. Mannes.
3. Swingle quarry, J. S. Swingle.
4. Granite Railway quarry, Granite Railway Company.
5. Lepage quarry, Lepage Granite Quarry Company.
6. John Cashman quarry.
7. Gold-leaf quarry, Quincy Quarries Company.
8. Saw Granite Company's quarry.
9. Rogers quarry, Quincy Quarries Company.
10. Maguire & O'Heron quarry, Milton.
11. Mount Pleasant quarry, Mount Pleasant Quarry Company, Milton.
12. Angelo Sartori & Brothers' quarry.
13. Dell Hitchcock quarry, Quincy Quarries Company.
14. Merry Mount quarry, Merry Mount Granite Company.
15. Ballou quarry, John C. Ballou.
16. Dierl & Winquist quarry.
17. Sahlsen quarry, Theodore Sahlsen.
18. McKencie & Patison quarry.
19. Hardwick quarry, C. H. Hardwick & Co.
20. Field & Wild quarry.
21. Fuller quarry, Quincy Quarries Company.





Remains of the Quincy Quarry Railroad south of Berry Brothers

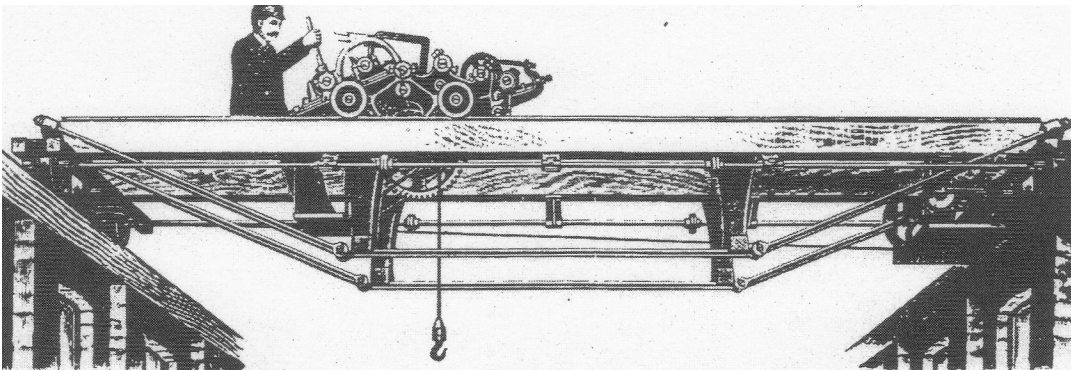


Rail bed near Badger Brothers Quarry {behind the Tuxedo store}  
Photos by Tom Bonomi 2013





Lyons Turning Mill center doors that would let a rail car pass through to be loaded or unloaded by the 20 ton overhead traveling crane.  
Photo by Tom Bonomi 2013



This ad from Granite Magazine shows a typical 20-ton overhead crane like one that was inside the Lyons Mill. It was supported by the inside buttress walls and could travel the entire length of the mill.