

ABOUT THE HISTORIC QUARRY

The quarry, known during its operating days as the Chester-Hudson Quarry, played a key role in the early development of the Town of Becket and the surrounding area. Granite from this quarry was used for monuments in many states. The quarry was operational from the 1860's until the 1960's. When the quarry was abandoned, much of the equipment and structures were left just as it was (as if the quarrymen had gone for lunch and never returned). The site has stayed the same, plus some rust, until now.

TESTIMONIAL

"I have visited a lot of extractive industrial sites. The Becket Quarry stands out in my mind as probably the best granite quarry I have seen in Massachusetts. It is large enough to be very impressive, but small enough so that its operations and technology are clearly visible in the landscape and artifacts. It is also in a remarkable natural setting with spectacular views and abundant wildlife."

Matt Kierstead, Practicing Industrial Archaeologist

EXPERIENCING THE HISTORIC QUARRY

We are happy to offer a self-guided walking tour through the historic quarry. Please follow the designated markers and signs. This tour will be expanded throughout the coming years.

During the tour you will learn about granite quarrying and the objects that were used during the process. To make the most of your visit, please note the list of definitions contained in this brochure. A separate trail map of the historic walk can be found in the kiosk at the quarry entrance. As you take the self guided historic walk, note the objects and informative markers, and be sure to look at the quarry pit. This pit is now filled with water and surrounded by stands of birch and other trees, flora and fauna. Try to imagine a time when the pit was dry, and devoid of greenery and vegetation, when only grey rock, machinery, and derricks defined the landscape. Note that ravens now nest in the crevices. Look for the remains of wooden derricks that once lined the pit. The largest of these derricks, now renovated, can be seen towering over the quarry pit. These derricks once worked to lift the cut stone and transport it out of the pit for further processing.

The quarry pit is surrounded by huge 'grout piles' which rise upward displaying thousands of pieces of jagged granite – the dramatic by-product of the quarrying effort. Along the quarry trails are other numerous artifacts and objects including pieces of machinery, tools, trucks and buildings. In addition, old rail beds lie dormant and remind visitors of the time when the stone was transported down into the town of Chester for processing.



Derrick Winch

Themes explored by the museum's education department include: granite and granite quarrying, stone cutting and monuments, development of quarrying machinery from colonial times through the industrial revolution (from wood to steel), social history of the quarry community to include immigration issues and influence of quarrying on the development of Berkshire towns, and the relation of area railroads to the quarrying industry. Oral history footage, documented by a professional video producer, is available for viewing. These videos feature interviews of residents of Becket and beyond whose ancestors worked in the quarry. Many of these same relatives of quarrymen have given the museum gifts of historic objects such as photographs, newspaper articles, maps, ledger books, letters and other primary sources of importance to the collection. We are indebted to those who have made contributions of time, funds, and primary documents, and urge anyone having information about the former Chester-Hudson Quarry to contact our office.



Blacksmith's Shop

HISTORIC SELF-GUIDED WALK AND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

In addition to this historic walk, you may learn about school and public programs, exhibits and guided tours by calling the BLT Historic Quarry office at: (413) 623-2100 or by visiting our web site at: www.BecketLandTrust.org

BECKET LAND TRUST HISTORIC QUARRY & FOREST

Mullen House Education Center
12 Brooker Hill Road (at corner of Route 8)
Becket, MA 01223

Tel: (413) 623-2100

Website: www.BecketLandTrust.org

E-mail: historicquarry@BecketLandTrust.org



Becket Land Trust Historic Quarry & Forest



Large Guy Derrick

- Historic Quarry
- Hiking Trails
- Nature Walks

QUARRY ROAD, BECKET, MA

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The Becket Land Trust ... HISTORIC QUARRY & FOREST



Ingersoll-Rand Compressor Truck



Grout Pile



Derrick Winch (Steam Powered)



Staple Anchorage



Bull Wheel

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

Blacksmith's Shop: Place where fabrication of metal parts for use in quarry took place.

Blasting Tunnel: Test area.

Bull Wheel: Device for controlling the derrick by means of rotation.

Broach: Little web between the consecutive holes of the channel (drill marks).

Channel Bar: The drill assembly traveled along a 'channel bar' so that the holes would match like a drill press.

Channeling Bits (Threaded): a) used for cutting the broach between the channeling holes b) came in various sizes for drilling blasting holes.

Compressor Truck: Supplied compressed air necessary for quarrying operations.

Derrick (Large Guy Derrick): The Derrick was used for removing the large quarry blocks up to the quarry rim and for removing quarry waste by means of a grout pan. The Derrick consisted of a wooden mast and wooden boom with iron castings (all attachments). The mast was supported with 8 by 10 guy wires that were attached to a spider plate at the top of the mast. The derrick was rotated by means of a bull wheel approximately 10-12 feet in diameter, located at the bottom of the mast. The power source of the derrick was originally a steam winch with three drums to control the three functions of the derrick. These three functions would have been 1) rotation 2) boom raise and lower 3) lift line raise and lower.

Derrick Winch: Powered (originally steam and then electric) drum assembly for raising and lowering wire cable and for turning the derrick.

Downhaul Ball: Used to keep the slack out of the lift line as it was being lowered, also known as headache ball (for obvious reasons).

Drill Bit and Sharpening Die: This was on the Ingersoll-Rand compressed air sharpening machine that you see in the Blacksmith's shop for sharpening blast hole drill bits.

Drill Bit Evolution: There are three stages (plus a pre-stage) of the evolution of the drill bit. a) pre-stage: a hand drill for blast holes which would be struck with a sledge hammer with one, two or three drillers striking a single, double or triple jacking! b) First Stage: one piece forged on end of drill steel c) Second Stage: detachable threaded bit that is steel as opposed to carbide d) Third Stage: carbide detachable bit (probably widely used by 1950...but, our quarry never got to that point).

Drill Marks: Indentations in pieces of grout indicating drill activity as part of cutting process.

Electric and Steam Winches: The power source for the standing derrick.

Generator Shed: Contained electric generators. The power source for the electric winches.

Granite: Plutonic igneous rock having visibly crystalline texture; generally composed of feldspar and mica and quartz.

Grout Pan: For collecting debris as a result of the quarrying process chips, dust and overburden (top soil).

Grout: Sharp edged pieces of granite that are by-products of the quarrying process.

Grout Piles: Hills composed of pieces of grout.

Guy Wire: Woven wire rope used to stabilize derrick masts.

Haul Truck: Used in combination with trailer to haul granite down to Chester to the polishing shop.

Ingersoll-Rand Compressor: Machine used to compress air to run tools.

Ingersoll-Rand Sharpener: Machine used for sharpening and re-shaping the drill bits.

Monument: A structure erected to commemorate persons or events. Our quarry produced many monuments for cemeteries.

Motion: A small pit approximately 20 x 40 that is a small exploratory quarry used to determine where the seam of granite was going.

Quarry Pit: Large open cavity created by extraction process during quarrying operations.

Rail Grade: Old railroad tracks leading to polishing station in Chester.

Staple Anchorage: Large steel staple placed in a rock, boulder or ledge used to anchor a derrick by means of a cable.

SAD (Stiff Armed Derrick): Crane consisting of a mast and a boom fixed at a right angle.

Sullivan Drill: For drilling holes in stone for explosives.

Worthington Compressor: Portable unit to supply air power to drills, moved from place to place.

DIRECTIONS FOR LOCATING THE HISTORIC QUARRY

The Becket Land Trust Historic Quarry and Forest is located on Quarry Road in Becket, MA. Take Route 20 to Becket. At the intersection of Route 20, Route 8 North, and Bonny Rigg Hill Road, turn south onto Bonny Rigg Hill Road. At a 4-point intersection, turn left onto Quarry Road. Continue on Quarry Road, until you come to our signs and parking area on the right.

On site parking is plentiful. Maps, membership materials, brochures, and other information about school and public programs, exhibits and our oral history initiative are available at the kiosk (located at the foot of the access trail), or at our off-site facility in historic North Becket Village.

THE FOREST PRESERVE

The preserve, which abuts the historic quarry, houses a demonstration forest, miles of hiking and cross country ski trails, beautiful vistas, flora, fauna, wildlife, vernal pools and quiet areas for contemplation of nature.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Historic Quarry and Forest is open year round, dawn to dusk, and admission is free to the public. Our office is located in the Mullen House Education Center. Please check our web site, www.BecketLandTrust.org, for office hours and special exhibit information.

ABOUT THE BECKET LAND TRUST

THE BECKET LAND TRUST, which owns and operates the Historic Quarry and Forest, is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. It was founded by a group of citizens concerned about protecting the Town of Becket's rural character, natural resources and ecologically sensitive areas. The Historic Quarry and Forest was the result of an extraordinary community fund-raising campaign to save a 300+ acre parcel of primarily wooded land from industrial development. To prevent detrimental impact on the site and the community, local citizens donated money to enable the Becket Land Trust to purchase the property and open the site to the public for recreational enjoyment. We welcome your membership, donations, and active participation. Volunteers are always needed for various jobs throughout the year. Members receive an annual Newsletter and e-mail notification of special events, educational programs, exhibits, guided tours and volunteer work days. Please join us.

All Photos by H. David Stein except historic images of quarry workers.

The Quarry Walks project was made possible, in part, by funding from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation - Central Berkshire Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Foundation, the Highland Communities Initiative, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation - Recreational Trails Program.

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