

HISTORY OF  
GOLDSBORO BROWN SANDSTONE QUARRIES

by

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Two miles west of Goldsboro on what early in the 19th century was known as the Andrew Fortenbaugh farm, Thomas Symington of Baltimore in 1851 opened what became known as the Goldsboro Brown Stone Quarry. The ridge ran east and west and the vein of stone which was about twenty feet in thickness dipped from north to south at an angle of 45 degrees. This is a peculiarity of all similar ridges of sandstone rock in York County. The top soil in this and surrounding localities is reddish owing to disintegration of "Red Rock" which is found underneath the top soil and also cropping out at various points. The surface sandstone had long been used for building houses, barns and later for school houses.

The York Jail was built of this surface stone. From the above farm the six pillars for the Capitol at Harrisburg were taken in 1819-1820. They were six in number and several sections were used for each pillar, the content of each being 104 cubic feet. It required about 24 sections, each  $7\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$  feet in the rough, which with the wagon weighed 8 or 9 tons. Two men, Mr. Ort and Mr. Kissinger contracted to deliver the stone to Harrisburg. To transport a load of this character over a hilly road, as well as the river mountain required a strong wagon to which eighteen (18) horses were attached. The amount of iron used in the wagon amounted to 1300 lbs. This wagon after the job was completed was burned at Eichinger's Mill above Marsh Run. The Harrisburg bridge which had been built two years previously was refused to the contractors. Nothing daunted, they forded the river and fulfilled the contract. Mr. Fortenbaugh received one dollar (\$1) per load for the stone. Some of the sites from which the stone was taken are visible one hundred years later. Many surface stones were also used in furnace hearths.

Mr. Symington was a Scotchman and done a large business in stone of all kinds. He transmitted many blocks of stone almost as heavy as those taken to Harrisburg from his quarry to cars at Goldsboro and thence by rail to his steam stone sawmill at Baltimore. The Carlisle Jail was built of stone taken from this quarry.

In 1856 the farm and quarry came into the hands of George Betz then of the Western Reserve, Ohio. His ancestors for several centuries had been continuously in the business in Europe and America.

The new proprietor brought to the business great skill and energy. He opened a second quarry to the west of the revine on the same ridge which turned out equally well. Ten years afterward he disposed of the property to others and later it came into the hands of the Hummelstown Brown Stone Company who discontinued operation.

Other ridges were tested in the locality with varying degrees of success.

The sandstone of York County is part of the new Red Sandstone formation which extends from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick through the Connecticut Valley, crossing the Hudson River. It forms the Palisades above New York City. It is especially evident at Newark, N.J. Crossing the Delaware River it appears on the eastern counties of Pennsylvania extending along the northern part of Lancaster and Dauphin Counties. Crossing the river it appears in the northern portion of York County and forms nearly all of Adams County. It then passes southerly, being found in Maryland.

In Pennsylvania its width is from fifteen to thirty. Owing to corrosion and inundation at some places its width is much less. It is only here and there that ridges of stone are found. At most of the places described, embraced in its area, the bodies of stone lie horizontally at various places mentioned. The stone has different features as relates to color, hardness, cleavage, fossils, etc. Many expert workmen were employed at Goldsboro, the most skillful coming from England, Scotland and Wales. The business does not conduce to longevity and very seldom is an aged man seen among the craftsmen.

The dust is gritty and siliceous and sets up pulmonary irritation that but frequently eventuates in phthisis. There are many interesting facts connected with this new Red Sandstone formation that would be of the greatest interest but which space forbids to mention.

The day will come when some gifted genius like Hugh Miller who invented the old red sandstone formation in England and Scotland with ease and graceful charm; will also do the same for the latter formation of America--the material is ample.