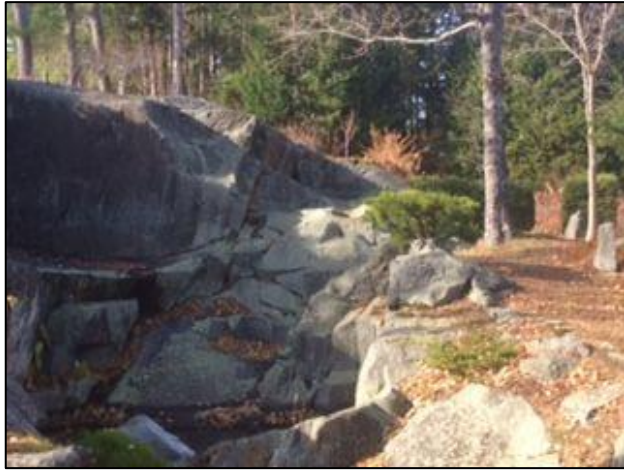


Heal Black Granite Quarry “Shleppinghurst”

Douglas Pierce
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Heal Black Granite Quarry. This is a small quarry (4-acres) on a 60-acre parcel of land in Lincolnville, Maine. It was originally known as the Orlando Richards quarry. In about 1902 it was leased by the partnership of Amasa S. Heal and Llewelyn Wood (Heal & Wood). They were in the



Heal Black Granite quarry in Lincolnville.

monument business, in Belfast, and they selectively cut stones from the black granite quarry to meet the specific requirements their customers. In 1908 Heal bought out Wood's interest, and he continued in the business, without partners, until his retirement in 1935.



This sample of Heal Black Granite is one foot long and weighs 10 pounds.

The stock of the quarry was “black granite with a bluish tint, of fine grain and taking a high polish.” Granite taken out of the Heal Quarry stayed close to home. Almost all was used for gravestones found in local cemeteries.

The Maine Geological Survey conducted a petrographic analysis of this small body of intrusive rock and classified it as an “Olivine norite of black shade, medium texture, containing: greenish olivine, black hornblende, greenish hypersthene, biotite, magnetite, and secondary chlorite.”

A. S. HEAL
MARBLE WORKS
 Bridge Street

Mr. Heal is one of the largest granite and marble dealers in this part of the State, and the memorials which come from his works are beautiful specimens of handiwork. He has designed and built many of the finest memorials in the State, and cemeteries throughout this and other counties contain many beautiful and unusual specimens of Mr. Heal's handiwork.

Mr. Heal has a well equipped establishment, including pneumatic tools for carving, lettering and cutting, also other up-to-date appliances to be found in a first class marble and granite yard.

The A. S. Heal concern will be pleased to submit drawings, etc., and to quote prices on memorials, of every description, and to guarantee a class of work that cannot be equalled anywhere else, at such reasonable prices.

[Just to clarify: In the geological lexicon there is no such rock as a “black granite.” This rock is black, but it is not granite. Its mineral composition is entirely different from granite. However, to a commercial quarryman, black granite is a perfectly legitimate and meaningful name for an igneous intrusive rock that is black.]

Quarriable black granites are typically small and comparatively rare, which adds to their value. Three of the minerals identified in the Heal Black Granite are green. In the hands of a skilled craftsman, colors might be brought out in the stone by selective cutting and polishing.

In this undated newspaper advertisement Mr. Heal described how well equipped he was, and noted that his business was one of the largest in the state. His work force was seven men plus himself, manufacturing headstones and monuments. He purchased granite (and marble) from other quarries as needed to complement the black granite.

In the accompanying photograph one can see the well-ordered stone yard with a dozen complete monuments, partially crated and ready to be delivered.

In 1920 Mr. Heal published the following Notice: "I have sold my marble business on High Street to C. A. Bruce, but have NOT sold my GRANITE SHOP on BRIDGE STREET, or gone out of business as has been reported. I am now devoting my whole attention to the quarrying and manufacturing of granite."

This old, undated photograph shows the stone yard and several other apparently active buildings. At the far-right in the picture is the distinctive style of what appears to be the office building. →



← The comparison confirms this as the remaining piece of the old Heal place, on Bridge Street. It is more than 100 years old—a symbol of Belfast's role in the granite industry. In 2010 it was moved a short distance farther up Bridge Street, to make room for a municipal parking lot. (Photograph by the author, 29 Oct. 2020)

A. S. Heal passed away in 1953, at age 96. Beneath this rugged memorial stone in Grove Cemetery lie the mortal remains of Amasa Heal, his wife Belle, their daughter Geneva, and her husband Maine Hills.



The current and long-time owner of the property is Ken Cleaves. He is not in the granite or marble business. When he came to the site more than 35 years ago, the land around the small quarry had grown up into a spruce and pine forest punctuated by towering piles of discarded granite. Mr. Cleaves has poured his life and soul into creating a wonderful landscape of weathered black rock and selected plantings.

Mr. Cleaves lovingly calls his landscape "Shleppinghurst."

Acknowledgements

Megan Pinette knew about the unusual black rock in Lincolnville and urged us to investigate it. She provided encouragement as well as newspaper notices and old photographs from the Belfast Historical Society Museum Archives. My wife, Susan Pierce, participated in the site visit and interview with Ken Cleaves, took pictures, and critically reviewed the draft of this report.

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