Iron River Quarry (Orienta) 1898

Iron River Quarry 1995
Buildings from the Iron River Quarry

"Redstone", Oliver G. Traphagen House (1892), 1511 East Superior Street. Prominent Duluth architect, Oliver Traphagen utilized extensive quantities of brownstone in his Romanesque Revival designs.

St. Louis County Historical Society

The Jefferson School, Duluth.
Bayfield County Brownstone Quarries

Pikes Quarry 1883  Along Highway 13 three miles south of Bayfield.
S 33, T49N, R4W  1883-1897
199? To present
Around 100,000 Cu..ft. each year.

There are some conflicting reports as to when the quarry was actually started and closed. In Thwaites(1) book he states that the quarry operated from 1888 to 1897. However, Eckert(2) uses the dates 1883 until at least 1897. But in Eckert’s book “The Sandstone Architecture of the Lake Superior Region, she states that stone was still being quarried at Pike’s Quarry in 1905.

The quarry is located at Van Tassell’s Point, three and a half miles south of Bayfield along highway 13. The first owner was Robinson D. Pike (Capt. R.D. Pike) from Bayfield, Wisconsin. In 1892 the quarry was reinvested in by Francis W. Denison, George H. Quayle and Robinson D. Pike. The name of the quarry was changed to the “Bayfield Brownstone Development Co. Mr. William Knight was the manager.

Many of the old brownstone buildings in Bayfield were made from stone from this quarry. The First National Bank was constructed in 1905. Captain Pike also had an office built in the bank building for himself. Pinehurst Inn south of Bayfield on highway 13, and state fish hatchery located along Pike’s Creek were also built using stone from Pike’s Quarry. Captain Pike’s house was also made of brownstone. Today it is the Pinehurst Inn.

There were three separate areas to the quarry. One is adjacent to highway 13 and the two others were further up the hill. The stone along 13 is softer and was used mainly for pier and breakwater constructions. The stone from the other two quarries was used for construction purposes. The smaller of the three quarries was filled in around 2000.

The present owners of the quarry are Neil and Donna Schultz. The quarry is again active, being used for replacement stones for old building that are being restored.

 Pillsbury Hall on the university of Minnesota campus used stones from the Pikes Quarry when the hall was renovated. The Armory, (The Red Gym student center) on the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison, was also renovated with brownstone from Pike”s Quarry.

Buildings made from stone from Pikes Quarry

Bayfield Bank

Bayfield Library

Bayfield Fish Hatchery

Pinehurst (Original Pike House)
The Brownstone Quarries of Bayfield County

The Washburn Stone Company- 1885. Located at Houghton Point
Section 27, T-49-N, R-4-W

This quarry was opened in the spring of 1885 by Babcock & Smith. The quarry operated from April 1st to November 1st each year. The quarry consists of two openings. Eventually the larger opening quarry had to be abandoned. The quarry kept flooding and pumps had to be run 24 hours a day to keep the water out so cutting could take place. It operated for 11 years. The smaller quarry was operated much longer.

A lot of the stone from this quarry was used by the C., St.P., & O. R.R. in their bridges and culverts. The railroad company use this stone almost exclusively while the quarry was operating.

The quarry had 1 3-hp. hoisting engine, 1 pump boiler, 3 channelers, 2 steam derricks, 2 hand derricks, and 1 steam drill. The average number of employees was between 30 and 35. Channelers got paid $2.00 a day and hoisters $1.75. They sold between $6000 and $15,000 worth of stone each year.

There were many building throughout the area and state built from the Washburn Stone Company. There is some confusion as to exactly which buildings were built with stone from which quarry in Washburn. Many references say, “the building was built using stone from the nearby Houghton Quarries”. However, there were 3 separate quarries at Houghton Point, the Prentice Quarry, the Washburn Quarry and the Hartley Brothers’ Quarry.

According to the list printed by Ernest Buckley in his 1898 book, “On The Building and Ornamental Stones of Wisconsin”, more buildings in Washburn were built from the Washburn Quarry than the other two.

He lists the Bayfield County Court House, Northern State Bank, Walker High School, Union Block and many others around Wisconsin and Minnesota. Seeing as how most of these buildings were built in the late 1800's or very early 1900's not many people are still around who can remember, it is probably best to say the building was build with local stone.

The quarry closed in the early 1900's. After the quarry filled with water the first log rolling championships were held here in the 1920's. Today the quarry is part of Bodin’s Resort.
Babcick and Smith Quarry 1898
The Washburn Stone Company

Bodin's resort quarry today
Builds made from the Washburn Quarries

Washburn Library

Bayfield County Courthouse

Washburn History Museum

Chequamegon Book & Coffee

Monolith

Washburn Family Dentistry
The Prentice Brownstone Quarry  
Houghton, Wisconsin

Houghton Quarry - 1888  Located three miles north of Washburn, Wisconsin.  
Section 27, T-49-N, R-4-W.  At Houghton Point.

The Prentice Brownstone Company Quarry was the largest quarry operation in the 
Chequamegon Bay region.  Frederick Prentice owned about a mile of Lake Superior shoreline 
just north of Washburn.  In 1888 he organized his company with $1,250,000.  His partners were 
George H. Barr, Edwin Ellis, Cassius M. Hamilton, and Eugene A. Shores.

They had the land cleared and stripped earth of the surface of the stone.  The Chicago, Saint 
Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad ran a track to Houghton.  There were also rails running 
to the dock so stone could be shipped by boat or rail.  The Quarry employed between 200 and 
300 men.  A village was built at the site for the workers.

They had their own saw mill to produce boards for the buildings, a store, blacksmith shop, 
houses and a boarding house.  They built storehouses, stables, workshops and a barn.  They also 
had a water tank and water system.

In 1892, Frederick Prentice offered to donate a huge brownstone monolith for the Wisconsin 
Exhibit and the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.  The monolith was cut loose from the quarry in 
November of 1892.  It was one hundred and fifteen feet long, ten feet wide at the base, four feet 
wide at top, and the longest monolith ever quarried by over nine feet.  However, due to lack of 
funds the monolith was never removed from the quarry in one piece.  It was cut into smaller 
pieces.  However, four twenty-five foot monoliths were shipped to the fair.  One was carved as a 
Chippewa chief, one a Wisconsin badger and two were carved has heads of African Americans. 
The quarry closed in the early 1900's.

Many buildings in the area were built from the Prentice Quarry brownstone.  An example of a 
brownstone monolith can be seen standing in front of the Washburn Historical Museum. 
The Washburn State Bank was built in 1889 from stone from the Houghton Quarry.  Other 
buildings from the Houghton Quarries were; The old Walker School, the Bayfield County 
Courthouse, the Washburn Library, Washburn Family Dentistry building, Chequamegon Book 
and Coffee Co., St. Louis Catholic Church, and the Washburn Free Library.
Record Monolith from Prentice Quarry 1892

Prentice Quarry 2006
The old Houghton School

The Washburn Pumphouse

Saint Louis Church
The Brownstone Quarries of Bayfield County

Hartley Brothers’ Quarry. 1885. Located at Houghton Point
Section 27, T-49-N, R-4-W.

This quarry opened in 1885 and was unsuccessful. It reopened at a nearby site in 1887 and operated successfully until 1897. In 1896 the Hatley Brothers bought more land from Babcock & Smith, who owned the Washburn Stone Company. They bought the land north of the Washburn Stone Co.’s quarry at Houghton. They opened a third hole at this new site. However, by 1897 all of their quarries were idle.

Very little information seems to be available about this quarry.

One of the Hartley Bros. Quarries
2006
Bibliography


Benton, Marjorie. Chequamegon Bay and Apostle Islands. 1972


Coventry, William. Duluth’s Age of Brownstone. 1987
A special thanks to the following for helping with this project:

Port Wing History Museum
Sondra Rockenbach
Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College
Robert Norlin
Bradley Schultz
Steve Grooms
Dick Bodin
Neil & Donna Schultz
Jane Bucy
Yvette Fleming
Ruel Fleming
Linda Bailen
Xcel Energy
Richard Mihalek
Linda Rau
Rod Olson

Washburn Historical Museum
Avery & Marilyn Haak
Martha Carey
Tony Woiak