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Hard Facts About Granite

Granite is a hard, coarse-grained rock consisting of different minerals, chiefly quartz, alkali feldspar, and plagioclase feldspar. The minerals are interlocked like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, making it one of the strongest and most durable rocks.

New Hampshire's nickname was The Granite State as early as 1830.

The actual birth date of the moniker can be pinpointed to the American Revolutionary hero General Lafayette, who stopped by Concord in 1825 as part of a triumphal tour. A young lawyer named Philip Carrigain penned a seven-stanza song entitled "Lafayette's Return" for the occasion. It included this line: "He comes, by fond entreaties moved, The Granite State to see."

As early as 1810, granite was used to build a state prison in Concord. After the prison was complete, inmates hewed 3,000 tons of granite to build the State House.

In the early days, huge blocks of granite were transported by teams of horses through expanding roadways and river canals. Canal transportation dominated until the railroad came to Concord in 1842. By 1920, granite was transported by road.

In 1823, a single Concord boulder, split into blocks, was sold in Boston for \$6,219.

In 1894, New Hampshire ranked fifth in New England and the United States in value of granite produced: \$737,702.

In 1850, Rattlesnake Hill quarries employed 20 people. By 1900, 1,000 worked there. Today, about 45.

In 1929, 25 percent of the employees in Concord were employed in the granite quarries.

In 1896, about 31,000 tons of granite were shipped out of Concord by rail. That was considered a dull year.