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GRANITE QUARRYING ON CAPE ANN LECTURE FINDING AID & TRANSCRIPT

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Video Description

In this second in a series of three fireside chats presented in coordination with the Gloucester Lyceum and the Sawyer Free Library to help preserve the 20th century history of industry on Cape Ann, long-time Gloucester resident and author Barbara Erkkila (1918-2013) talks about a childhood and life immersed in the granite industry. Erkkila lived in Lanesville as a child, and her grandfather worked periodically at the nearby Blood Ledge Quarry. With a long career at the

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Gloucester Daily Times as a feature writer and editor and an avid curiosity about the world around her, Erkkila has become an authority on the granite quarrying industry on Cape Ann. In 1980 she authored the book *Hammers on Stone: The History of Cape Ann Granite*, and over the years she donated her large collection of quarrying tools and related artifacts to the Cape Ann Museum. Erkkila entertains the audience with stories about all things granite, from evolving methods of extracting and transporting the granite to on-the-job hazards to jewelry making.

Subject list

Barbara Erkkila	<i>Albert Baldwin</i>
Lanesville Cove	galamander
Blood Ledge Quarry	blondin
Steel Derrick Quarry	oral history project
Sinikka Nogelo	<i>Hammers on Stone: The History of Cape Ann Granite</i>

Transcript

Linda Marshall 0:09

It's wonderful to see everybody here today. My name is Linda Marshall. I'm the Director of Programs at the Museum. And the Museum, along with our partners, The Gloucester Lyceum and the Sawyer Free Library are very pleased to present the second in a series of three Fireside Chats. The purpose of these public programs, which are funded by New England Bio Labs, is to aid in the preservation of the history of Cape Ann in the 20th century. And each of these events, as you can see are being filmed and will later be broadcast on local cable television. And then will also become part of the permanent archives of the Library of the Museum. We are working on a third Fireside Chat, hopefully to be scheduled during the next couple of months. So please stay tuned for more information about that. I also wanted to mention that at the reception desk there's many materials relating to upcoming programs both at the Library and at the Museum. So please take a look at those on your way out. And we have copies of Barbara's book, *Hammers on Stone*, for sale, as well as this pamphlet, which is free. This was published by the education department. It's some general information on the granite quarrying industry, so help yourself to those. We are especially honored to have Barbara Erkkila Ricker here today to share her thoughts and memories of the granite quarrying industry on Cape Ann. Barbara is the author of *Hammers on Stone, the History of Cape Ann Granite*, which is a book much loved by

local residents. And during the mid 1990s, Barbara donated her extensive collection of Cape Ann quarry tools and equipment to the Museum. And much of this is on display in our granite gallery on the third floor. So I invite you to visit that today if you have time. A very special thank you to Sinikka Nogelo from Cape Ann TV for acting as moderator today. And I just want to say thank you so much for being here. I hope you enjoy the program and I know that Carol Gray from the library had a few things that she wanted to say first.

Carol Gray 2:24

Thank you very much. The Library is very pleased to be able to be partnering with the Cape Ann Historical Museum and especially pleased to have Barbara here today. As a resident of Lanesville, I'm particularly happy to see her again and find her just as charming and radiant as she always has been, very lucky. I just want to make a couple comments about some programs that are coming up at the library. Next Thursday we're having a wonderful program, *Writing a Memoire* with Susan Luckzie as moderator, and Linda Bacon, Anita Rosenbloom, Dorothy Stevens, and Pat Silvie will be four of the panelists talking about their memoire writing program. And we're very pleased with that. So, Barbara, its very happy to have you here and we're looking forward to your interview.

Sinikka Nogelo 3:14

Thank you. Let me start by thanking the Cape Ann Historical for giving me this lovely opportunity and Barbara this is such an honor. I'm just delighted. It's gonna be so much fun. It's cool. All these folks came. Is this not loud enough? Now is that better? No? I guess I'll speak normally. Now that's echoing. Let's see if we can both use the same mic, it might work. What do you think? Okay, let's try this.

Sinikka 4:28

We are going to start by having people listen to a couple of minutes of your wonderful life story, a little biography. I know a lot of folks in the room will know Barbara really well. But hey, not everybody does.

4:42

So Barbara Erkkila was born Barbara Louise Howell in Boston in 1918 and moved to Cape Ann as a toddler with a mother and two sisters, after the untimely death of her father. She grew up surrounded by quarries and graduated from Gloucester High School in 1936. After which, she worked as a stenographer and traffic manager at Russia Cement Company, later Le Pages. And she worked for the *Gloucester Daily Times* until her retirement in 1985. Having been a writer, editor, photographer, you name it. She was both very well known and appreciated on Cape Ann. Barbara studied and taught Russian, made jewelry, and then had time for family. She married Onni Erkkila in 1941, and they had three children, John, Kathy and Marjorie. John married Betty Gilman of Rockport.

5:41

During World War Two, Barbara did her part by serving on the Price Panel for the Office of Price Administration and as a member of the AIC nurses aid class at Addison Gilbert Hospital. Later on, she served on the Gloucester Historical Commission, as the Secretary of the Lanesville Community Center, and worked with the Girl Scouts. She's a certified genealogist who belongs to Sandy Bay Historical and the genealogical societies of Ohio, Delaware and Virginia. She's a charter member of the North Shore Rock and Mineral Club and a member of the North Shore Button Club. In 1954, Barbara edited the Lanes Cove Cookbook and *Hammers on Stone*, a book of great interest to those of us here today, was published in 1981 [1980], the year her husband, Onni, was killed in a motorcycle accident [1981]. In 1989, "Village at Lanes Cove" was published. And in the Bicentennial year 2000, Barbara married Ashton Ricker and they made their home in Chelmsford. Now the first time I had *Hammers on Stone* in my hand, I was visiting Barbara when she lived in her apartment at the Senior Housing on Dale Avenue at the old high school. She was donating an autographed copy for an auction item I was putting together for the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce. It was a wonderful visit. Of course, I had coffee, and she was incredibly hospitable. But, the amazing thing besides wonderful Barbara herself, was a treasure trove.

7:28

She had art, she's clearly a collector, but she had granite industry artifacts under her coffee table, under her couch, under her bed, every single nook and cranny that could be found. And she said how very much she hoped her artifacts will find a home and here they did, right here at Cape Ann Historical.

Barbara Erkkila 7:54

They certainly did. And those movers were amazed when they came with a small truck. They came to get the tools and they went to pull a little cart thing out from under the bed, you know those things with wheels, and those wheels had absolutely flattened! And so they had to pull and tug as they went out the door. With the truck all loaded they said, "How in the world did you fit all this in that apartment?" It was a corner one on McPherson, on the fourth floor. You can fit a lot in a little space if you think about it.

Sinikka 8:32

That sounds like you had granite there but it was only the artifacts. But, oh, you did have granite! No wonder it was so heavy.

Barbara 8:43

Yes, I have a lot of granite, I was afraid the floor might give way, but it never did. I had granite balls all polished and mounted on the mantle It was basically a display for [?] and I saw it in a catalogue, and I said I can put the balls on that one. And I had a rock tumbler too, going in the front hall where you come in. So that was nice too. Everybody would stop and say, "What's that?" I said I was polishing the rocks, so I can make jewelry.

Sinikka 9:21 (sound comments)

I put this microphone on, I'm going to speak up, so you can just keep that. I think our conversation will flow.

Barbara 9:30

Sinikka said some wonderful things about me. I'm bowled over completely.

Sinikka 9:38

I'll get you humble in a minute. (Audience laughter)

Barbara 9:42

I know you spoke about the *Gloucester Daily Times*. When I was quite a young kid, old enough to read the papers, I always wanted to work for a newspaper. My mother always said if you set your aim on what you want to do, even if you get sidetracked, you get there. And I did, I had wonderful years at the Times. And we did all kinds of crazy things. But it was great because you could go anywhere or do anything. They'd say "oh, that's just Erkkila from the Times."

Sinikka 10:19

I bet those articles would be really fun to look up in the archives.

Barbara 10:25

But you know some of them I had copies of. And they sounded so tame. And I said that's not the way you begin an article! At the time you did. It was all so terribly tame.

Sinikka 10:36

So what's your very first memory of a quarry?

Barbara 10:40

Of a quarry itself? Probably the noise. We lived in Lanesville, actually the street was Norseman Avenue when I was growing up. And first thing I remember is going up my grandfather's on Revere Street in Bay View. And, that was one of the working quarries and it was wonderful, Sinikka. But if you go barefooted, you have to be careful because it was a quarry road. And you had to walk where the granite dust was and not where the pointed gravel, I call it gravel, it was chips actually from the quarry.

Sinikka 11:25

Of course kids used to go barefoot very commonly.

Barbara 11:28

Oh yeah. We always did. We had put shoes on Sunday though. One Sunday, at the Annisquam church, it was a children's day. And my mother said, "Now you're all dressed up, now you can go have some nice programming." So we got down there we said, I said to my sister, "Oh, look at the people coming out of the doors, that's funny." So we went in and we got in line, just in time to walk down to get a plant, and walk out. My mother had forgot to set the clock.

12:08

So that's not granite, but that is a granite street story. My grandfather said when I was about eight he had coffee at the Essex Memorial, and he said, he turned to a page, and he said, Barbie, he called me Barbie. He said, when you grow old you remember this, fishing is important in Gloucester. It's number one, but granite is also important. He said don't ever forget it, so I didn't. Okay. So he didn't he was, he was a blacksmith at Blood Ledge Quarry and the name Blood Ledge sounds terrible doesn't it? But that wasn't where it got its name, it was owned originally by James Blood. Used to be named like the library and all these places. So that's how it got its name, it still has that name. But the granite it had was fabulous.

13:15

Not only was it a beautiful grained pattern, but it had a greenish tint. And that green tint, every body seemed to like it. One day, it was only a year, might have been two years ago, when I was in Chelmsford, the phone rang. It was an engineer working on the Holland Tunnel down in New York. He said, "We've heard that you know where the granite came from ,that's on this tunnel." He said, "because the fellows that are going to redesign it have broken up all the pieces, and we've got to have them quarried again and replace it. Now where do we go to find the quarry?"

14:00

He said, "Do you know?" I said, "Yes, I know." Well he couldn't believe that. He turned to another guy off the phone and said, "She says she knows where the quarry is!" So they called me again and I said, send me a piece of granite just to be sure. I said I think I know where it's from. So, sure enough express drove in the next day with it. And of course it was Blood Ledge Quarry.

Sinikka 14:27

Yes, I guess there's demand now, we thought that you had lived during the end of the heyday of the quarry here and then only Johnson's was left. But now people are calling. You mentioned the different tints, that Blood Ledge was green tinted, and what were the other colors and where were they?

Barbara 14:48

Rockport, I say, well Rockport, it was really Pigeon Cove. As you know, Pigeon Cove is famous for its light gray. It really is pretty granite. Because I say... well, but Bayview had light gray too and they called it Old Pit. 'Course when it was running they didn't call it Old Pit. They called it Deep Pit. And it started out in 1848. And, it was, the man who ran it was, of all things, named Richard Ricker. And he was in partnership with Alex Sargent. Now their house is still there, you can't see it from the road. It's one of those of the long roof that goes down, way down on one side. And so they got together and decided they were going to do the Washington Street crossing. Now, you take it for granted. You go by, you know Bayview where the old fire barn

was and the Bradstreet School, you go down the hill. And you can see Hodgkins Cove on the left and that's the hollow that you never could drive across. There was no way. So Ricker decided he was going to do it. So he got the granite out. He said he had a little motion. Do you all know what a motion is? It's a two-man quarry. One runs the derrick and the other puts the irons on the block they are trying to take out. And that's how they work together.

Sinikka 16:23

Do you know the origin of being called a motion?

Barbara 16:25

It's Scottish I understand, but it is, yeah, I always thought that it was called that because it was temporary. But no. I don't know if there is an exact term for it.

Sinikka 16:37

Those are really the earliest quarries. Let's talk about the start of the quarrying and what the earliest uses were, for just a second.

Barbara 16:44

Oh, yes, way back. Well, I guess really quarrying back in the 18th century. Just in Lanesville and Bayview. 'Cause Rockport was just a bunch of woods until the fisherman came in. And that's true. Anyway, it was all woods of course along the coast, but they started breaking up, making steps. And thought, why do you have wooden steps when you can have stone steps. So they started hacking away at exposed ledges. You know that there are those exposed ledges on the Cape Ann and you couldn't go anywhere without tumbling over one. But they find a good one, nice, easy to get at and then started going at it with hammers and chisels

17:35

They thought, hey we could get steps out of this! Let's get a bigger block. Maybe we could get some nice looking ones, they said why don't we get some smaller blocks. I hear they're doing these now in Salem. And that's what they did. That's breaking them up and selling them and they'd work all through winter on a good day. They stack them up, and in the spring, the first schooner that came into the cove, Hodgkins Cove or Lanes Cove, loaded. It was loaded with paving and they'd take forty thousand tons in it. I don't know how they ever did it. In fact you couldn't load a three masted schooner right in the cove, you had to load part of it and then get it out through the gap. Do you know what the gap is in Lanesville? At the cove? It is 56 feet, I think, wide? I had to tell Coast Guard how wide that was.

18:41

And, I didn't know until I got hold of this retired fisherman and he got in his dory and measured it. He was wonderful. What he told me the next day, it was so funny. I met him sitting on steps of Pythian Hall I said, hey George, how are you today? "Well, I gotta tell you what happened to me," he said. "Some old lady came up to me and wants to know how wide the gap was, so I went out and measured it." I didn't tell him who the old lady was. (Audience laughter)

Sinikka 19:16

I guess you had actually done 20 years of research for your book. You didn't know a book was going to come out of it.

Barbara 19:21

And that's right, Sinikka, I was writing features for the Times and one day called Paul Kenyon said, you all remember Paul Kenyon? Oh he was wonderful. And he said, "Now Barbara why don't you put these together, make a book out of it?" That was fun.

19:40

We had a guest at the house one day. And he was very nice, and he and his wife were talking about the book in progress. And I said, he said, "What are you going to call it?" I said, I think I'll call it Cape Ann Granite and he said "Oh that won't do." So I had come up with something else and it turned into 'Hammers on Stone'.

Sinikka 20:06

Growing up you say your first memory was the noise. What was it, the hammering? Was it the blasting? Can you describe the kind of the noise and how long it went on the everyday?

Barbara 20:16

Yes. At first was just the hammers and the clinkers, I was gonna say steel, probably iron first and then they went to steel, and it makes a definite noise. You hear it all the time, the rattling of chains. And then as such more powerful, like the surfacing machine. You could hear those working way up in Bayview if you were in Lanesville because they clattered so. They did the surface of a big block, no more than the length of this table and probably just as high. And then it will take twelve men to do it, the work that they did, in a few hours. That's what I heard, the surfacing and the whistle. And the whistle would blow when they would go to blast and that was usually around four o'clock in the afternoon. And just about then, we'd hear the whistle, my mother would say, they are going to blast! So everything comes to a standstill when you know they are going to blast.

21:25

And then you hear that "crump" noise, that was a blast, and then you wait. You don't want to hear a whistle again because that meant the doctor supposed to come. And then that special signal of the Doctor Roley. He used to drive a Chrysler, did you ever hear of one here? That was a 1902. I never saw it. That was a little bit beyond me. Anyway, he'd go to the quarry and he'd take the person that was ill, or got hurt, or whatever. Most quarry injuries, you'd be surprised, were jammed fingers. Even today, there will be big slabs of granite. And they keep a wedge between them all the time. If you don't watch your fingers will get in there. My husband, this one that's a ripper, you know, he told me the boss told him when he went up to the quarry, "You can divide those big slabs but if you get your fingers caught don't come crying to me." I always thought, ooh!

22:40

So anyway, you know what happened, this fellow in Lanesville, he was just wonderful. He was always teasing everybody and one day he was out in the quarry. Oh, he was out in the boiler room so he said I'm going to relax while I don't have to work yet, so we took off his shoes and slid them under something. While he was sleeping the other fellows nailed his shoes down. He was surprised. That was Rogers, he was a good guy.

Sinikka 23:21

Okay, yeah. Now we have some interesting vocabulary that goes along with the early quarrying. Galamander, what's a galamander?

Barbara 23:32

On Cape Ann they are garmanders. You see those two words if you're down Maine, they are galamanders. They are big wagons. They're reinforced. The ones down in Maine, have four wheels. But there are a lot of two wheel ones down in Lanesville and Bayview and Rockport. And they were called garmanders. And I was trying to find out which is the correct word. I even got a call from some company that were publishing a dictionary, and they want to know if I could tell them which was which, you know. I said I don't know the answer to that. But, we call them garmanders, but when they put an "l" in it, I don't know unless they were swearing.

Sinikka 24:22

That would be interesting. Because I lived in Ethiopia, they had Garry carts. I think it came from Italian. It's a very similar word. These carts carry big blocks of granite right underneath the axle, right?

Barbara 24:37

That's what they did. They bring the cart over the blocks over the block they wanted to lift, to move, and they had a little derrick that was mounted on the rear axle. And they would get that block lifted, just enough to clear any of the rubble on the road, or what you call. And that's how they moved. And they would pull mostly by horses. But in Bayview they prefer oxen. They most always used oxen. I don't think I saw very many horses. We see granite garmanders going down the street and think nothing of it. Oh, that was so common to see them. But they were always painted blue. Did you know that? They always painted them blue?

25:27

You know, because you could buy blue paint at the Quarry Store. It didn't cost much. And some of the people liked it so much they took it home painted the kitchens with it. It looked real pretty, it really did. I saw a kitchen painted blue. It was beautiful. But my mother always called it wagon wheel blue. It was nice looking. So that colored up the place, didn't it, having blue wagons.

Sinikka 25:55

How long did those stay in use? I know they used them in the 19th century.

Barbara 26:02

Oh, until they got the railroad. Yeah, well, they were quarry railroads. The first one was in Bay View. And that first engine came in, probably around 1874 I think it was, don't write it down 'cuz I might be off with it. And I know the second one came in at 1876. But the first one, I didn't think I had a picture of it. I found one! I kept looking at the length of the wheel. It was an old four wheeler like four wheels. And it was about 20 feet long the second one, so both called Polyphemus. Number one and Polyphemus number two. Well number two I met the woods when I was blueberrying. You could go along on the track, you'd hear it coming and, of course, if you're a youngster you'd get a big kick out of it. And you'd see it coming down the track. You could wave to the engineer, it was great. And in the wintertime the engineer always put the coals when he raked them out in a special pile because all the little kids would come, with anything, just to gather up the good coals and take them home. And that's what they did. I always liked the engineer. He lived in Bay View anyway. And he always waved at the kids, that's what he did.

27:39

It's funny about the garmander though as you say that cart in Ethiopia, I traced the garmander to India. And I've been writing to a man who owns the granite company in India. And he's just been wonderful, always trying to see what he can find. And he told me about some old way of breaking up a ledge by burning bushes on top of it. And I thought, oh my they don't do that now. No. In fact, I like to claim now, everybody help me, that the first granite splitting was done in Gloucester down near the Boulevard. That might not be right.

28:21

That was in 1802 and the people from Quincy claim they did it first. Well, by the date they could have. But this man, his name was Conan, I think his name was Conan. Anyway, I think he gave a demonstration. And he had learned it from a man named Tarbox who lived in Danvers. And it was Tarbox who was showing the Quincy people how we cut granite with a tool. By pounding these holes every six inches, about four or five inches deep. So they decided they could do that in Gloucester. So this man who used to work there moved to Gloucester, and I say, he was the first one to do it. So Tarbox was moving around...

Sinikka 29:26

So many groups of people worked in the quarry, original people who are already here, and Irish, we have Swedes, we have Finns. How many people have actually been part of the industry and of course, there were so many other jobs that had to support the industry that... Talk about some of the activity all around the industry. And then of course, we're gonna want to know about lifestyle. So what they did in their time off. (Audience laughter)

Barbara 29:59

'Course I lived in what they call Finn Village. I'm not Finnish but, I'm living there. Felt like one of them too. And I tried to learn Finnish but I learned the wrong words at first, my mother said we won't have any of that! I didn't know. So, it's really great. The old Yankee quarry people, the ones who really go into the quarry and work on the ledges and drill them and split them, getting ready for the derricks. They were Yankee old-timers. But they said, Oh, I don't know what were going to do...

30:44

Here come the Irish! They loved the Irish and that turned out great. Everybody's working. And they said, oh here come the Finns and the Swedes... It is just wonderful. And one of the quarrymen, he was oh, he was head of the Rockport Granite Company. And he said to someone, "You know, I'd rather have a left handed Finn going around this quarry than three right handed Yankees.

Sinikka 31:12

'Course I'm a Finn so I believe it totally

Barbara 31:25

Of course I married a fellow whose people came from Finland, my first husband. So I feel close to the Finns. But I never could make that coffee bread as good as they can. So what the, what the Finnish people did was establish a community like they had back home. But first they had to build their sauna. Everybody know what the Sauna is? They say steam bath, but a sauna is not steam, don't make that mistake, it's heat! And so they said well, after we get the sauna built and the house built, I think we should build a big hall and we could have programs, put a stage. Speakers can come in. I always remember the time that Walker Hancock came and directed the play, "Seven Fathers". That was one of the biggest events. And then we had basketball games and all kinds of things. It was the Finnish people who were doing it and we benefited from it.

Sinikka 32:37

I had no idea that Walker had that talent.

Barbara 32:40

Oh, he can do anything! He used to come over to eat pie, over my house. He was a nice man.

Sinikka 32:50

So what was the working life for the men who worked in the quarry? What time did they start, how long did they go each day?

Barbara 32:57

First they worked a 10-hour day. That's the only one I'm familiar with, and they work six days a week. And they went on strike in 1890. There were about three big strikes. But there was one around a 1890 where they said, hey we can't do this! Other places in New England were

shortening the working hours. They said I think we should do that too. They got real rough with it, but they did have an hour shortened to 8.

33:33

Then they said well, we don't want to work Saturday. Pretty soon they cut that out too. But you know Johnsons Quarry over at Pigeon Cove, that was the last quarry operating as a big quarry. And course it's filled with water. I think there's enough water there for all of Rockport. But anyway, Don Johnson used to own it finally. He's the one that built the big seat in the hallway coming in the front door. That's from his quarry. And he brought it over, it was so big. It was so big, they didn't dare put it on the elevator. So they thought we leave it where it is. If you're handling a big thing like that you might as well.

34:20

But you know one day they are doing this statue. They're getting out the granite for the statue. And it was one big thing coming out of Blood Ledge Quarry, and they said now what are we going to do? Because we have these big pieces, because this is gonna be huge. Because they have a nice bottom work, like a big piece you've got at the front or desktop. The stopped me cold when I saw it, its huge! That, they said they loaded up the railcars to go down to where it would be worked on. And as you go down, it's a downgrade all the way from Blood Ledge to the road; they crack the ties on the tracks! Is that what you call it, ties? That go across? It cracked every one of the ties, some actually split in half! There was so much weight on those cars. But they did it.

35:23

Did I tell you about the captain that got lost? He wasn't lost, but a lot of people thought he was. He was taking all this wonderful granite. I think it was going to Washington. I have to read my book to see what it says. I think, he had to sail out of Bayview. And Colonel French was in charge, he was General Butler's right hand man. So he, Colonel French was in charge of the quarry at time and he got this schooner. They loaded up with the granite and the best pieces went down on deck. 'Cause naturally, you wouldn't put it below. And off they went. Well, a storm came up. And they didn't know what happened to the schooner. No word came. No wireless. They never made port. Oh they didn't know what happened. Everybody was in a tizzy. They were all meeting together, feeling terrible. And all of a sudden came word, the Captain has arrived in Washington!

Sinikka 36:34

You say in your book they were 900 miles out to sea.

Barbara 36:37

He went way off course. And it's a wonder the crew didn't mutiny. Because they really, because they pleaded with him, "We can't ride out this storm with all that weight on the deck. We got to shove it overboard." "No way", he said. "You're not putting that overboard." So he held on, and by golly he was right.

Sinikka 37:00

So you're in danger transporting, not just working in the quarries but transporting things.

Barbara 37:07

So Colonel French was so tickled he gave him a gold watch, that's something.

Sinikka 37:12

(Inaudible) in those days, that's for sure. I guess the boats were, are called floating ledges, called carrying on a ledge, stone sloops.

Barbara 37:24

Oh yeah. It a wonder, a stone sloop. Of course the most famous one was the *Albert Baldwin*. And actually that was the last one that the Granite Company owned. And I'd seen him myself. I knew the Captain. When I was a little kid, he used to come and talk to me. Captain Poland, that's another thing I get into. It was just wonderful. But he said *Baldwin*, he used, Captain Poland, would take his younger relatives with him. And I think in the book, it says something about how he told kids to "get down there, make gingerbread. That's what we like." So these kids, "Gee, I don't know this could come out right or not." "Oh if it don't come out right, throw it out and make another one."

Sinikka 38:16

There were actually some small jobs for boys in the quarries. Didn't they used to do drill holes or something?

Barbara 38:21

They were water boys at first, and they knew how to go down those long ladders in the corners that would start swinging like this when you've got part up. And they had to know how to balance themselves carrying water, or they wouldn't have any left by the time they got to the guy that was thirsty. But they did drill holes mostly for paving cutters. The paving cutters would be sitting in what do you think like a row of shanties. And the roofs would be the kind that would hinge so you could open them. I used to think, even in my book, I said was for air and sunlight. Don't believe it. Don't believe me. Partly right, but also the derrick will drop the rock right through.

39:12

The big rock of granite so the fellow could work on it. So, you couldn't shove it through the door so they dropped it down through the roof. Well I learned that later. So anyway you're right, the boys will be paid sometimes six cents for each hole they drilled in the first big block. And that will help the paving cutter because that's just preliminary, and then he takes over with new chipping. Well he knows exactly... how he ever knew how many blocks he was going to get out of a big block! I never could figure that out. Because the boss will come by and he'd look

and see how many chips that the fellow had in the barrel. Because if he had too many chips, he'd say, "You're wasting it."

40:06

Get a little better measurement." And there were 32 measurements of paving blocks, because every city in the United States wanted different sizes, I think, especially in New England. And that's what they would do, Sinikka, they would try to conform to that. The boy would earn enough to go to the company store. Each big quarry had a company store.

Sinikka 40:33

Now there was... Granite products are being transported in the roads and the railroads and everything. What kind of safety things did they have? How did you know it was time to get out of the way?

Barbara 40:49

Probably because they made so much noise because the wheels were bound with metal. Yeah.

Sinikka 40:54

Think about it. Yeah. Oh, you know I need to ask you about a gang saw for a very special reason. Because when you were researching how they work, you met your current husband.

Barbara 41:07

Yes, I did! What a strange thing. Does everyone know what a gang saw is? It looks like it belongs in medieval times. It's a club, a club, clumsy looking thing. And it's not even straight. It has a base and a pit. And then it rises up like this. It's about 25 feet high. It rises a little bit more. And then it has some wedges in a row.

41:40

All set level. When you look in you discover it has long saws, big long blades, and they're about six or eight or nine feet long. It takes two men to carry one and sometimes there were nine or 10 of them. And they get them, set them in just so... It has to be right. My husband said he crawled all over the rig. Make sure it was running right. And then, to know the saw was all together while they saw the block, that's brought in below it, well, they had to get what they call a pitman.

42:26

And that's one of my family names by the way. It was a pitman, that's just a big, like a handle. I call it a handle but its 30 feet long I think that's run by a donkey engine. I had a donkey engine given to me for the museum but they never showed up with it. Some body ran off with it. Never got it. But anyway, it's really something to see that go. With the, with the saw blades moving, but not fast. They move about like this. Very slowly, but they can cut, saw right down through a block and come out with about 10 slabs about three inches thick.

43:12

I don't know how they do it. So my husband, that I married recently, see I wanted to know more about the gang saw. I had seen one working but I never talked to a man who ran it. I've been down in Providence watching Cape Ann granite going through the gang saw. What a sight that was. So I was told to go look up Ashton Ricker. I said Ricker, that's a quarry name! I said Richard Ricker was the first one in Bayview to start a quarry. Well, this might be a relative, I don't know. So I said, well I knew an Aston Ricker in Sunday school; well it couldn't be the same one!

43:56

So, I wrote a note and said I love to know more about gang saw if he'd be willing to have the interview, and I try not to take up too much time. So, ended up with, with he and his daughter came to my apartment. And we had the interview right there. He told me all about it, and it turned out he is a descendant of Richard Ricker. Oh my gosh. So I married him.

Sinikka 44:30

My last words will be for later because I want to talk about the jewelry and the new book. But I don't want all you out there to miss your chance to ask Barbara what you'd like to know. Any questions out there? Yes.

Audience Member 44:48

Tangentially, I understand that Baker's Island off Salem was a source, early source of granite.

Barbara 44:59

I didn't hear every word she said.

Sinikka 45:02

I'll repeat the questions. She understands that Baker's Island, that is an early source of granite. Is that correct?

Barbara 45:10

Not a source of granite, they brought it there. Baker's Island. It came from Rockport and Bayview, and it was also coming in from Quincy.

Audience Member 45:19

So that was worked on Baker's and used in Salem?

Barbara 45:30

I didn't know that one. Used in Salem? Most granite in Salem is Rockport granite. I say Rockport granite meaning, Rockport Granite Company.

Sinikka 45:40

I think we may have the answer.

Audience Member 45:45

I'd like to know the story behind Steel Derrick.

Sinikka 45:50

We haven't even talked about Derrick's and that's just amazing.

Barbara 45:55

Amazing thing about Steel Derrick is the way they got the granite out. Got it down the hill to the wharf without killing everybody! But, it's all downhill. They went so fast on those little cars. I say little cars, but stone cars are very sturdy and they usually have two decks and the granite, the big block is on the top, and the fellow has to decide which way he's gonna shove it off when he gets where he's going. If you pull a lever on the top one it will tip to the right, if you pull the lever on the left, it will tip to the left. That's pretty good. I never saw stone cart moving because I came along when we used engines. And even in Rockport they had an engine 'cuz they got it from Lanesville. But they did buy one. They had more than one engine.

46:57

But, Bakers Island? I'm sure they brought the granite there. I don't think they find it. If they did find some, I'd love to hear more about it

Sinikka 47:13

It's true, Gloucester shipped to Newburyport, Salem.

Audience Member 47:17

How do they keep the water out of the quarry when they were working on them?

Barbara 47:21

Good question. So, they had pumps that they floated on a raft. And they would keep running day and night.. Come to think of it, that's one of the sounds that we heard as kids that we have here. (Sound) You'd hear it day and night and that kept the water levels down. Because actually, those quarries are like springs, and they're clear water. They are beautiful. 'Course these years they throw cars in them, so you don't. Get them all out and clean them up they might be pretty good.

Sinikka 48:02

Did you ever have granite raining on the roof of your house?

Barbara 48:06

No, but I know some people who did, that they blasted at the quarry. And in those early days you know they used a black powder before they started using dynamite, which can be controlled a little better, but you still get a lot of rock chips and breakage that you can't use. That's why they have so many grout piles in Lanesville. In the woods all of a sudden you walk

along and see a heap of granite. What's that doing there? That's what they didn't want to use. Of all things, it was Alfred Nobel who invented dynamite. I didn't know that. I was excited when I found that out. But, in the Times office one day, you know how you get stymied sometimes for a word? The HS was sitting there, the boys is over here, and I'm sitting way back here. And they said is there any difference between dynamite and TNT? I said there certainly is!

49:13

Why do you want to know something like that? You know how they started to blast? They put the powder in a deep hole about two-inch in diameter, and they put a few pebbles in it. That so it won't jam. They put in the black powder carefully; fill up the holes with spoons. Which, I have a quarry spoon at home I used to hold up my curtain with it. And, they put holes in you're supposed to tamp it down very carefully tamper it down. Usually the man in charge was known as the blaster. And that was his title, because he knew all about black powder. And then to set it off, you ran a trail of black powder from the hole for what they called "the safe distance." And he didn't put a match to it. You may think so, but all he did was pick up two drills, and strike them to create a spark and blew up the whole thing.

Audience Member 50:31
(difficult to hear question)

Sinikka 50:52

She's asking about the Stonecutters disease. Her husband's father had died quite young of silicosis.

Barbara 50:58

Silicosis. But they call it Stonecutters consumption. That's what the early people, and I heard about that when I was a kid, because a lot of people came down that and didn't know what caused it. They didn't know it was the dust from the granite. They had no idea in fact one man I told him about. He said, in fact I talked with him, and he told me he said, "You know, I think I got around alright, avoiding some stonecutters consumption cause I kept changing my job." He said, "First I worked in the quarry way down there." Then He said, "I decided I'd come up and work on the railroad. And I got tired of that. So I go over where they're shipping." When you're shipping granite you have to box a lot of it. So that's what he did, carpentry and boxing granite. And he said, "I was lucky." Said, "but my 3 brothers died of it." It's very sad. They found out it was silicosis, now they call it. But they have wonderful... where they do granite now you think you will inside hotels or something. Everything streamlined and water everywhere if you want it. I've never seen any dust. There was a granite company in Providence, Rhode Island that worked on Cape Ann granite. And I walked in once in there was a piece, flat against the wall with a quarter inch of dust on it, I couldn't believe it, and that was in the 1950s. And I was surprised to see all that dust. That was a time I ran through. I was supposed to follow the young foreman, notice I said young, young foreman who was showing me around the Cape Ann Granite. He went on woozing down this plank. The plank had water under it and gray sludge. And I was supposed to follow him. And I had high heels on, cuz I always wore high heels, and

that I ran after him and lucky I ran because as I got partway down, one as a wire saws snapped, and wire went right in front of me! It would have killed me!

53:25

I said I don't think I'll hang around in here. But anyway, he was such a young one. I didn't like him cuz he wouldn't give me a piece of granite to polish.

Sinikka 53:39

You do like to polish. I'd like to start talking about your jewelry just a little bit. When did you start making jewelry? Obviously you use granite, since artists do use what they love and do what they love. So how long have you been at it?

Barbara 53:52

Oh, Cathy, how long have I been doing that? Well you started it. You and Margie went south and came back with a rock tumbler. It is so great. I started getting all kinds of granite colors, and I started making buttons and I sold them. Fancy that! I went to button meets, where people buy buttons. Marielle, she's in the audience. So, I'm getting off the track again.

Sinikka 54:34

It's good for people to know you're still involved, what you're doing now. I have this particular one (necklace)it's got a granite rock on it. Three of them.

Barbara 54:44

I know where that came from, yes.

Sinikka 54:46

Where's my necklace from?

Barbara 54:49

Well, that looks like Rockport Gray, very light, and I'll tell you later where it comes from.

Sinikka 54:59

It is great.

Barbara 55:02

It's wonderful to make a necklace or something. I've got a little one here. This is Blood Ledge, my earrings are Rockport granite. And my ring is Lanesville. Oh, my bracelet somewhere. And my watch was made in Switzerland!

Audience Member 55:29

Is there any series of photographs that shows all the different colors and inclusions of Rockport granite?

Barbara 55:44

I don't know if there's a breakdown of Rockport granite. They weren't great with photography in those days. I wonder. No, I haven't seen any.

Audience Member 55:56

You love the colors so I just thought as a series...

Barbara 56:08

You know, I think I have a sales bulletin that came from Fletcher's Quarry over in Chelmsford. And one of them is a Cape Ann granite. It could be well, certainly not Old Pit, they're not running, so it must be Rockport gray. And of course you know Johnsons Pit was running for a long time and is one of the last ones.

Sinikka 56:33

And there's also some pink, you mentioned green and some bluish tint. That was the most interesting things. As far as landmarks when you read her book, there are all kinds of landmarks. You mentioned the Holland Tunnel is the proudest War Memorial away from here and the Miles Standish statue, I think you talked about. But locally, St Ann's, but then Manchester library. I always like driving by looking at Manchester Library. What is it? Sapface granite? It's not supposed to be the good stuff. It's beautiful though.

Barbara 57:06

It's a rust color. And somebody tell me what the word is? Sapface .

Sinikka 57:21

I couldn't read my own writing.

Barbara 57:25

It has a rusty look.

Audience Member 57:27

Speaking of the granite, there's a lot of homes that have added porches and foundations that I don't think people could at that time afford. Where did they get the granite for say, the working shed or what have you, that they build it on their own?

Barbara 57:43

What year do you think it might have been?

Audience Member 57:46

My grandfather was a stonemason and he had a garage and shed. And it beautifully done but I don't know how he got it. When I was young I wouldn't think to ask such a thing. But really, you know, how would they pay for it? Where did he get it?

Barbara 58:04

Lots of quarries, they're not satisfied with a batch of granite and they throw it in the swamp or something. And he probably said, well gee, I'd like to have this piece of this, okay? So they say take it. The foreman would just say take it and he did something nice with it.

58:21

Well sapface is rusty like Manchester Library. And they built their office in Rockport near the bridge. And that is sapface, it's pretty stuff.

Audience Member 58:37

Do they make an awful lot of cobblestones?

Barbara 58:40

Oh yes, but they're called the paving blocks. I always correct it because cobblestones are round from the beach. And they did use those originally especially in Salem. They put them in the roads. But imagine trying to ride over a wagon on round cobblestones. It must have been awful. See any hands up or we get to..

Audience Member 59:09

My house is entirely granite. And, there are two quarries on the property. But I've been told the stone came from Nickerson's, does that make any sense ?

Sinikka 59:24

What came from the Nickerson's?

Audience Member 59:25

The stone came from Nickerson.

Barbara 59:28

Is that Folly Cove, right? Yeah. That's a big quarry. A man named Nickerson did run it. And his main business was paver blocks and foundation blocks.

Sinikka 59:41

He said he has two quarries right near his house.

59:47

Is it odd that the stone would have come from a different quarry rather than what's in his yard?

Audience Member 59:56

I have a painting of the stone being laid in the house about 1911.

Barbara 1:00:03
Is it all gray granite?

Audience Member 1:00:04
Yes.

Barbara 1:00:06
But you say the pattern is different? The pattern of the granite is different?

Audience Member 1:00:11
I don't think so

Barbara 1:00:14
Well, it should have a lot of black, actually, quarry for that area. Anyway, sounds wonderful to live near two quarries. Granite house. Did you build the house?

Audience Member 1:00:35
My great aunt built it in 1911. She never lived in it. She lived next door and painted pictures in the house.

Barbara 1:00:48
I'm trying to think of her name. Yes, Helen Hale. I did some research on her. And I have some photographs of it being built given to me by... Who was the relative that lived there last?

Audience Member 1:01:06
Lillian.

Barbara 1:01:08
No. Nancy, yes she gave me the photographs. They're just great it shows how... that's a big house!

Audience Member 1:01:24
It's big because the painting studio's half of it.

Barbara 1:01:29
That's wonderful.

Audience Member 1:01:30
I'd love to see the photo sometime if I may.

Barbara 1:01:34

Great. It sounds great. It's a real privilege to live in such a beautiful place. You can see all of Folly cove and the bay. Nice.

Audience Member 1:01:48

And the wind doesn't come through the walls.

Sinikka 1:01:52

A question over here.

Audience Member 1:01:56

I live over in Lanes Cove by the Harvey barn. We got here few years back. But I keep seeing photographs, actually there's one upstairs, that have boats in the cove. One was the Fenton an old steamship in there. But the cove was all frozen over. There's a big Cooper masted schooner in there. With the cove all frozen over. I am curious if you have any recollection of ships working in the winter through there. If you would know how they got in and out of the frozen cove.

Barbara 1:02:26

I hope they were local schooners. Were they schooners, or sloops, or fishermen?

Audience Member 1:02:31

A couple of pictures I have are schooners. And one upstairs is the Fenton, which is a steamship. The cove was all frozen over you can see this the steam, smoke, coming out of the stacks.

Audience Member 1:02:44

But they're loading up and they're pulling out soon it looks like.

Barbara 1:02:50

They go frozen trying to get out I know there are lot of pictures with Cove but I've never seen one has a steamer in it. Amazing!

Audience Member 1:03:01

Its a big one called Fenton

Barbara 1:03:06

That's terrific. In Lanesville the fishermen just left their schooner right there no matter what the weather was. But they usually were on the Northeast wharf tied up. Not, over on the west could you get the full breath of the storm on the west. The bad place to be. I love the Cove. They used to be coal barge. Why, shouldn't tell you that one.

Sinikka 1:03:36

Is there any other quarries besides Steel have to use blondins to move the rock over the course of derrick quarries besides, which one did you say still there?

Barbara 1:03:55

Oh it, also Old Pit in Bayview had a blondin. In fact I climbed the blondin and carved my initials in.

Sinikka 1:04:04

Tell us what a blondin is.

Barbara 1:04:06

A blondin is a tall, actually a support for a huge cable and the cable would support other cables that hung, I don't know how to say this, vertically so that they could hook on to a stone and move it along the cable, from one side of the quarry to the other. The derrick will take over and hoist it and but they had two of the blondins and I don't know how high they were, 60 feet, maybe more. And Steel Derrick had the same kind. I think there's a photo in the gallery that might show that Derrick, excuse me, that blondin. It seems to me I've seen one there. But you haven't lived in Bayview unless you climbed the blondin and carved your initials.

Sinikka 1:05:09

Are they under water or still out to be seen, your initials?

Barbara 1:05:18

Well. I don't know if anybody could read them. I wasn't so great with a jack knife.

Sinikka 1:05:23

Questions.

Barbara 1:05:25

It's fun.

Sinikka 1:05:27

Tell us about your latest book, the one you're working on now.

Barbara 1:05:31

Oh well, I started in, the book is a slightly mixed up. But, I went through the Egyptian influence, you know, without getting too much bogged down in Egypt. But it was a tool I was after, and I had a nice tool come from the man in Cairo at that famous museum. And, what I was interested in is the man in India who was telling me how they do quarrying. He sent me photographs. You have to know all the ancient methods. And then I started in on how they first split granite on Cape Ann. And tried to follow it through the different stages. Of course there's no cut off point. You can't say, oh here look, they quarried granite this new way by cutting slots into the stone in this year, unless you picked up the 1802 I gave you, that might work. But anyway, if one man sees another one doing it and he copies it because it worked pretty good. Then I thought why don't I start finding out more about the wire saws, we don't know anything about wire saws. So

I found nice fellow that used to run them in. They're amazing because they were invented not too long ago. If they didn't get the twist right in the wire, they have all gone the same way now, the wire threads the grip to the rock where it would saw. So, they discovered if they could reverse the wire every seven inches or so it would carry it along and it wouldn't twist. Simple.

1:07:31

How about that thing down in Providence? It used to break up Cape Ann granite and almost shake the building down. They call it the guillotine. They did. I saw it work. They put a granite block from Cape Ann, moved it in, got it positioned and then the guillotine came down like a knife blade. They got it centered just so, then all the sudden the guy hit a lever and the whole thing went bang and the roof went just like this. None of the windows fell out. They must be used to it. It was really something, what a noise.

1:08:16

And, you know over in Pigeon Cove, which of course is Cape Ann granite, they had the first burner, that burned granite. Zing right down like this, 12 feet down to loosen the ledge so the fellows could draw it out. And I was there when they first went in. You'd think an airplane came down in the quarry and was going around, it was deafening. But that, was in 1956 I think.

Sinikka 1:08:52

Wire saws and oxen were long gone by then.

Barbara 1:08:56

There's so many things. If you get me going I'll sit here all afternoon!

Sinikka 1:09:03

Bob's battery's about to run out is there anything you wanted to record for the library that we didn't get, that the tape might still pick up?

Barbara 1:09:15

But I worked in the library for a few years, and the museum too. But just think, I couldn't have done all my research for the last 20 years or more, without the library, with the volumes of newspapers. I used to sit down below somewhere where they were and copied notes. Read and copy notes. I had a wonderful time, one day they all went home and left me. The janitor came in and said, "I thought nobody was here. Time to go home!"

Sinikka 1:10:00

Who's going to title this book for you? Do you have a name for it yet?

Barbara 1:10:06

I'm kicking it around. If you have any good names for a book...

Sinikka 1:10:11

What was it about?

Barbara 1:10:14

It takes in the main Quarries in New England and it will go, I picked out two or three important things that I thought belong to this area, like Quincy. Oh, they're great granite people down there, they had four railroads, stone rails, you can't beat that. It's so they belong in that vein, it's so much in their islands. You see that's what was different they're all islands offshore, and they quarry right down where the tide comes in. So they can only ship when the tide's a certain level. Oh my. But otherwise they wouldn't have any water. I never could figure that out, but they did a wonderful business and their granite is a different color, they have some gray but it's mostly pinker. They call it Jonesport, at least what we call Jonesport. It is named for a town on the coast. It's a red granite similar to Scotland. I went to Scotland and sat in a quarry too. I always wanted to.

Sinikka 1:11:31

Hey you can see the world with quarries, Scotland now India. Thank you so much. I think that there's a lovely reception awaiting you. And I'm sure people can catch you in person. And that's what they'd like. I want to thank you so very, very much.

Barbara 1:11:46

I thank you.

Sinikka 1:11:48

I had such a good time. (Audience applause)