

The Century Granite Company

The Century Granite Company was founded by Felix Tyler in 1949. Tyler, a mining engineer who worked on the relief sculptures at Stone Mountain in Stone Mountain, Georgia, had a lengthy career as both an entrepreneur and engineer in the granite industry. Initially, he co-founded Puritan Granite Company in Elberton but later sold his share to start the Century Granite Company which operated for 56 years at the works on West Tate Street. The company relocated in 2005 to its current location on Williams Street in Elberton and became known as the Century Harmony Company.

The Elberton granite industry dates to about 1889. This time period also coincides with the introduction of new rail service to Elberton on the Richmond and Danville Railroad and the development of the steam-powered pneumatic drill used in mining. Together, these technologies, with inexpensive transportation and more efficient mining practices, brought Elberton to the forefront. At first, Elberton granite was used as structural stone in abutments, piers, and foundations, but sometime after 1890, gained national prominence over marble for use in memorials and monuments, primarily as grave stones. The Elberton Granite Association estimates that Elberton granite makes up about a quarter of a million (roughly one-third) of the annual production of granite monuments made in the United States today. And the Century Granite Company, with its 56 years of operations on West Tate Street, was a major contributor to this success.

Today, Elberton granite is used commercially in the manufacture of structural blocks, building cladding, countertops and floors, but its legacy as a top producer of stone memorials and monuments remains unsurpassed. For these reasons, the Georgia SHPO (see January 16, 2014 letter in Appendix B) has determined that the former Century Granite site, including its buildings, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A because the site helped contribute to Elberton's long-standing reputation as a leading producer of granite. Under this designation, properties are eligible for listing in the National Register if they are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history (National Register Bulletin 15, page 17). Although the structures are beyond repair and would be razed under the Proposed Action, the following buildings are historically relevant:

- The original 1949 timber building used in the bulk of operations measures approximately 170 feet by 45 feet in size.
- A large linear building measures approximately 350 feet by 45 to 50 feet in size.
- The remains of a smaller office building partially destroyed by fire.

These structures and the corresponding viewshed have been included in the Area of Potential Effects (APE) shown in Figure 2-2. The view to the south consists of the former Route 17 right-of-way (or Bowman Highway and now West Tate Street Extended) and the fill slope that rises above the Century Granite Company buildings. The slope restricts the view beyond this point. The view to the north includes the granite industry buildings along the north side of West State Street. These buildings are in use today.

The APE begins about 550 feet west of the crossing of West Tate Street Extended over the existing Hartwell Railroad. The APE then proceeds to the southeast, following the southern edge of the embankment of the former right-of-way of Route 17, the Bowman Highway. The APE extends approximately 2400 feet along the southern edge of the fill slope, to a point across the railroad tracks of CSXT. From there, the APE follows the southern edge of the ballast of the CSXT tracks for approximately 1600 feet. The APE then turns north and crosses the railroad tracks and extends for approximately 500 to the western side of the bend in Harry McLendon Road. The APE then turns to the northwest for approximately 600 feet, to a point on the east side of Harry McLendon Road. From there, the APE extends for approximately 3225 feet to the west, crossing the back portions of several granite industry operations. It then turns to the southwest for approximately 700 feet back to the point of origin. The APE includes the buildings and grounds within the viewshed of the Century Granite Company works and is approximately 88.8 acres.



Photograph No. 1: Interior view of the main Century Granite Company Building, facing east.



Photograph No. 2: Interior view of the main Century Granite Company Building, facing west.



Photograph No. 3: Western façade of the smaller Century Granite Company Building.



Photograph No. 4: Exterior view of the main Century Granite Company Building and Shed.

