

Bluestone Quarries

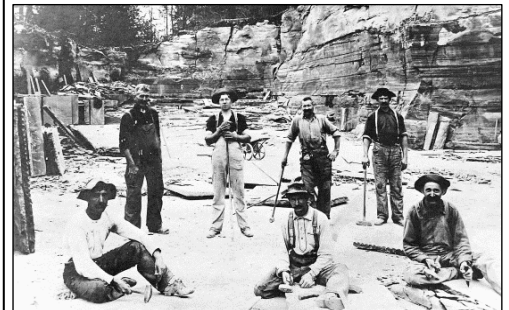


Bluestone is a type of sandstone unique to the Catskills, deposited as part of the Catskill Delta. Large stone formations lying just beneath the surface, where the layers can be lifted and cut to size. Quarrymen had to contend with tough, dangerous conditions of weather extremes, isolated locations, dust, bruises and rattlesnakes.

Albany was the first city to lay down bluestone sidewalks. Bluestone was also used on the Capital building. William M. Tweed (Boss Tweed) forged a partnership with the New York and Pennsylvania Bluestone Company and made huge profits by arranging for the company to supply the bluestone for New York's sidewalks. Many of the New York City sidewalks laid in the early 19th century came from our local quarries, as well the stonework on City Hall. By 1850, bluestone was being shipped by river sloop to Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, San Francisco, Milwaukee, St. Louis and even, Havana, Cuba.

Miners still quarry bluestone using the same manual, labor-intensive methods employed for hundreds of years. The growing bluestone industry is important to construction and architecture nationwide. New York's industry is valued between \$40 and \$100 million annually and it employs more than 700 full and part-time employees. Most bluestone is quarried within a 90-mile radius of Colchester Township.

Gregorytown Quarry 1907



Mills Quarry--Shinhopple



Mink Brook Quarry-Downsville



Downsville Stone Dock-D & E Train Station