**OVERVIEW**

**Stories in Stone: The Texas State Capitol 1882-1888** is a project that exhibits an alternative methodology to investigating the multi-layered histories embedded in the built environment. This project analyzes the history of the capital through its stone technology and in doing so reveals critical but formerly marginalized stories. **The Limestone-Granite Controversy of 1884** proved to be a defining moment in the history of the capital and resonated through the quarry, laborers, politics, public sentiment, and community development. The project emphasizes the analysis of the material byproduct as the intersecting artifact to exhibit a story of the capital from an alternative perspective.

The rough quarry-finished red granite that forms the current exterior was not the initially proposed material by architect Elijah E. Meyers in his 1882 design drawings. Limestone located in southeast Austin, in what is now laboratories at Oak Hill, was the material of choice for the first few years of construction. However, after short construction began in 1883, the quality and quantity of limestone came into question. After much controversy and investigation, the material was subsequently changed to red granite sourced from Granite Mountain in nearby Marble Falls. The switch from limestone to granite caused a triple effect of modifications to the built forms of the project and the broader cultural landscape. More laborers, railroad, quarry infrastructure, and overall cost of construction had to be mitigated by the Capitol Building Commission and Capitol Syndicate contractors.

The analysis of the different histories surrounding the stone and osteopathic techniques extends beyond textual documentation. My research involved a myriad of methodological approaches that range from transcribing countless laborers from Capitol payroll slips, no quarry site visits, personal interviews, and osteopathic workshops. The complex histories of the quarries and their community impact are stretched along a storyline of skilled stonecutters, convict lease laborers, and their descendants. This project aims to provide the reader with a different historical interpretation of the built environment through material investigation.

**QUARRIES**

The history of the Oatmannville and Granite Mountain quarries and their surrounding communities continues to be a history that demonstrates how a quarry or construction and culture relate to one another. Quarry workers and quarry families live in both rural and suburban landscapes that fundamentally alters the perception of the quarry. Convict lease laborers are not the only workers to be featured in this project. The process of quarrying and in doing so reveals critical but formerly marginalized stories. The process of quarrying and the technological development that grows alongside the stonecutters, quarry workers, and quarry families is an integral part of the project narrative.

**LABORERS**

The construction of the Texas State Capitol employed contract, immigrant, and convict laborers during construction from 1882-1888. Texas town and economic conditions in Texas during the Gilded Age were tumultuous. Laborers and immigrants who traveled from around the country were in need of work, and the construction of the Texas capitol provided a scope of work. Texas, like other southern states, still was thinly, economically, and culturally recovering from the Civil War. Southern states developed mature labor systems that aided in reconstructing and establishing the south. The construction of the Texas State Capitol serves as a primary example for political, historical, and social figures in Texas aligned with the capital to signify and accommodate more technological advancement through the construction process. The Limestone-Granite Controversy proved the necessity for the Laborers Controversy surrounding the extraction of stone, contract, and convict laborers. Texas stonecutters occupied the same space as paid contract laborers and molto alba black, white, and模样 ornament at the quarry. The Quarry and construction site served as a blueprint for a new social interaction that was unique to the capitol construction. The quarry through the construction of the stone exhibit the work of the convict laborer charging their large block from the face of the quarry. Rough, worn-out, and weathered block is hand-hewn with chisels displaying a variety of stone working tools that prove the skilled convicts effective.

The Texas State Capitol’s multi-layered meanings of power, culture, and politics, amongst a multitude of other interpretations, constitutes a series of human experiences that are embedded in the granite and limestone architecture. The traditional identity of quarry and construction environments were intertwined into something entirely different as a result of the introduction of multiple labor types, social classes, and demographics into the social milieu. This introduction of populations and skill types serves as a question. How did the diverse stone cutters feel about working, the convict stone cutters that worked alongside the convict stone cutters?

**TECHNOLOGY**

The quarrying and stone construction technology of the Texas statehouse required the architects to adapt traditional quarrying and construction methods to increasing technological development. In the early years of the operation the quarrymen used saws to emit the quarries and the logistics for moving the stone in preparation for transportation. At the project's progression the quarry incorporated more mechanical technology and very primitive technologies to adapt and keep pace with workers and skilled manual stone cutting. Stone shaping and finishing utilized traditional stone carving, shaping, and stone cutting. My research involved identifying how to keep the technology clean and sharp. Craft, iron, honor, and personal relations arrived in planning and occurring the stone to the limestone structure.

**CONCLUSION**

The labor landscape surrounding the quarries and stonecutters that built the capital is an integral part to understanding alternative histories. The process of gathering and interpreting stone for the construction becomes a common narrative that leads multiple laborers and quarry families to an alternative storyline.

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**References:**

- Daniel Scott, University of Texas School of Architecture, Master of Science in Historic Preservation
- "Sharp of line, sensitive in texture, the huge mass is even more impressive because of the rough quarry finish. There is a mountainlike grandeur and variety to the Capitol. Evening brings a purple cast to the earth-red surfaces at daybreak the granite is the gold of the sun." —Henry Russell Hitchcock, Temple of Democracy, 1976