

# **Bangor Excelsior Slate Company Descriptive Catalogue Genuine Bangor Roofing Slate, 1890s**

**Offices: Easton, Pennsylvania  
Quarries: Bangor, Pennsylvania**

Excerpt from “Introduction” of the above-cited booklet:

“This souvenir is presented to our customers as an introduction to the quarries they patronize, that they may feel better acquainted with their product, which they use; and to architects and our friends in general, that they may be more familiar with the process of the manufacture of our celebrated Genuine Bangor Excelsior Slate.

“Knowing that very few architects, and comparatively few of the many thousand roofers, even though they have followed the business for years, have ever visited the slate region, we feel confident that this effort to portray and describe the manufacture of roofing slate will be duly appreciated. A book of illustrations descriptive of the workings of an industry whose product has become so well known and so universally used cannot fail to be of interest to the user....”

“The scenes portrayed in the following pages are from the Blue Mountain district in the extreme northern portion of Northampton County, Pennsylvania, at the rapidly growing town of Bangor. This Bangor region has long been acknowledged to produce the highest grade of black roofing slate, and in the very centre of the celebrated vein is located the Bangor Excelsior quarries.”

**Note: A list of online resources is available at the end of this document.**

This booklet, which begins on the next page,  
is presented on the Stone Quarries and Beyond web site.

<http://quarriesandbeyond.org/>

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November 2017

# BANGOR EXCELSIOR SLATE COMPANY



TRADE MARK

GENUINE BANGOR ROOFING SLATE.

EASTON PA.

QUARRIES  
BANGOR PA.

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE

OF THE

angor xcelsior late o.

R. S. BROWN, Proprietor.

MANUFACTURERS AND SHIPPERS OF

Genuine Bangor Roofing Slate.

Offices: Easton, Penna.

Quarries: BANGOR, PENNA.



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The Eschenbach Press, Easton, Pa.

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BANGOR EXCELSIOR SLATE COMPANY.



OFFICE: EASTON, PA. QUARRIES: BANGOR, PA.

## Introduction.



HIS souvenir is presented to our customers as an introduction to the quarries they patronize, that they may feel better acquainted with their product, which they use; and to architects and our friends in general, that they may be more familiar with the process of the manufacture of our celebrated Genuine Bangor Excelsior Slate.

Knowing that very few architects, and comparatively few of the many thousand roofers, even though they have followed the business for years, have ever visited the slate region, we feel confident that this effort to portray and describe the manufacture of roofing slate will be duly appreciated. A book of illustrations descriptive of the workings of an industry whose product has become so well known and so universally used cannot fail to be of interest to the user; and it goes out to our friends as a greeting and a small token of our appreciation of their past favors.

The scenes portrayed in the following pages are from the Blue Mountain district in the extreme northern portion of Northampton County, Pa., at the rapidly

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growing town of Bangor. This Bangor region has long been acknowledged to produce the highest grade of black roofing slate, and in the very centre of the celebrated vein is located the Bangor Excelsior quarries.

Since the opening of these quarries their product has proved of such superior quality that they have steadily grown in favor, and it has been found necessary to increase their output from year to year, until now we pride ourselves on being the largest producers of Genuine Bangor roofing slate in the United States; and still the demand is equal to the increased production. As patrons, you will readily understand why this is so, for you have decided upon the superiority of slate over other roofing materials, and have considered its numerous advantages, such as durability, beauty and cleanliness as compared with decaying shingles and corroding metal, greater safety from fire, and a consequent low rate of insurance which it secures, requiring no paint or other application to keep in repair; and you have also tested the merits of Bangor Excelsior slate in particular. We are willing to leave the result of that test with our customers, feeling confident that their verdict will be that none can excel the product of our quarries in careful selection of stock, quality, uniform color, toughness and durability. And our aim shall be to maintain this standard so long as we solicit their patronage.



General View of Bangor Excelsior Property.

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*(photo caption)* "General view of excelsior property."

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ALTHOUGH impossible to obtain an entirely satisfactory picture, the one on the opposite page very fairly represents a portion of the interior of the quarry where Mother Earth has deposited an almost unlimited supply of nature's own roofing. Here the adept workmen ply their perilous vocation, drilling and blasting out the slate rock in immense blocks, and reducing them to a size that can be handled by the powerful machinery by which they are elevated to the surface. This is done by means of hoisting engines, with steel wire ropes connected with carriages run over two-inch wire cables extending over the pit. The skill which these quarrymen attain in drilling and loosening the blocks in the directions desired, and handling the rough slate, would be surprising to the uninitiated.



Northeast Corner of Quarry.

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*(photo caption)* "Northeast corner of quarry."

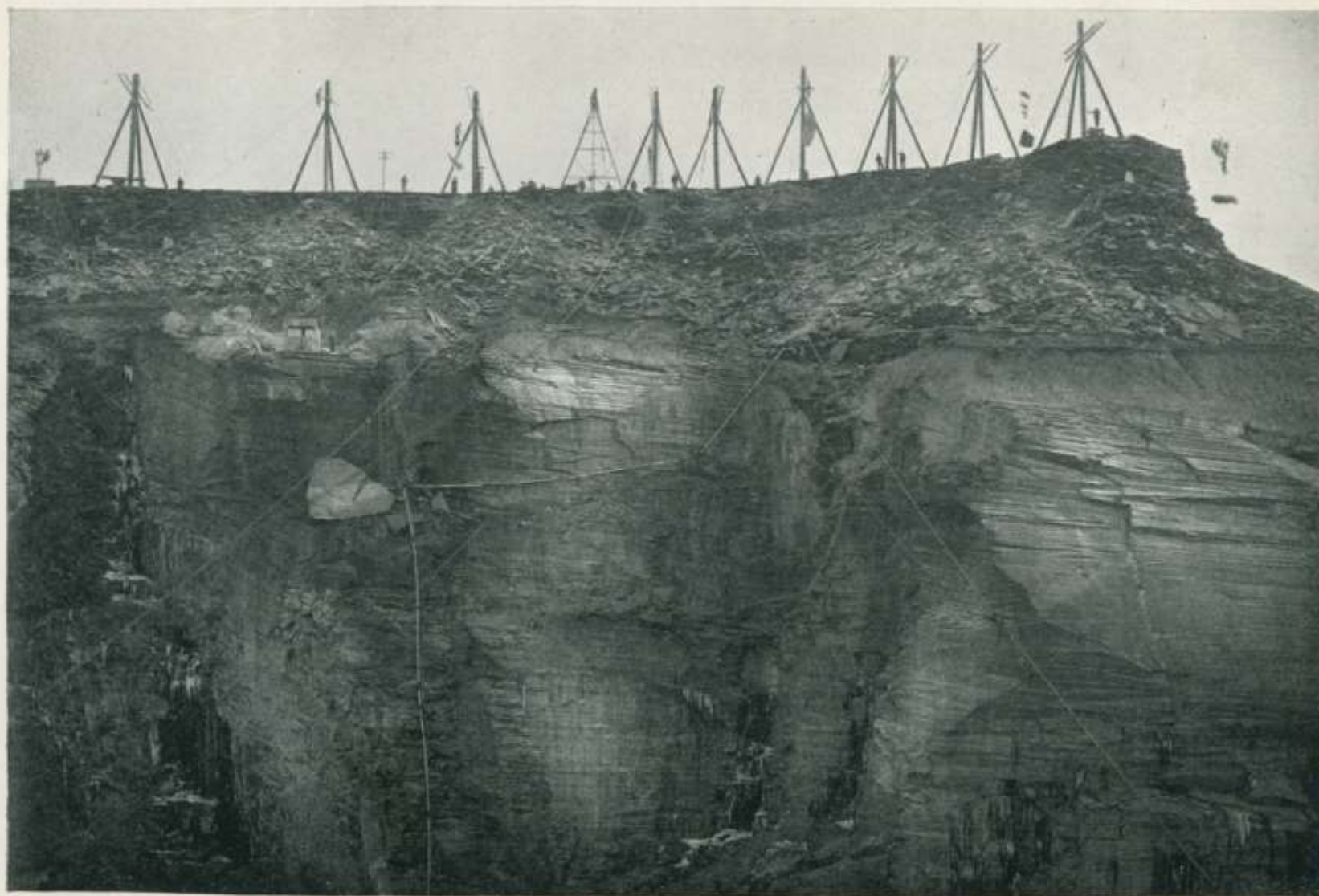
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THIS presents another view of the interior, with the wire rope cables extending over the pit, over which the grappling carriages can be seen bearing their freight to the surface. At the left, on a ledge of rock overlooking the hole, will be observed a small signal station, from which a signalman can survey the entire workings below; and by means of a system of electric signals he directs the movement of each of these carriages until the load is deposited on the cars at the landing.



Face of Rock Through which Quarry has Descended.

*(photo caption)* "Face of Rock Through which Quarry has descended."

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HERE is shown a group of derricks on the landing. To the left of the picture and back of each derrick is an engine house not shown in the engraving. In each is a reversible engine in charge of an engineer, who operates the engine in accordance with the electric signals given by the man at the signal house previously referred to. Here will be seen the cars on which the large blocks of slate are lowered from the derricks, ready to ascend the incline to the workmen above. About fifty of these cars are kept constantly moving.



The Landing.  
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*(photo caption)* "The landinig."

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**T**HIS engraving presents a view of the incline railway with the rough blocks of slate on their upward journey. On either side of the track is seen waste cuttings of slate, which are constantly being thrown out by workmen, until a young mountain has arisen back of the quarry. The building on the left is the quarry office, which has two separate telephone connections with the main office at Easton and with the city; also private wire connections with the loading station at the railroad siding shown hereafter, so that perfect supervision of the entire plant can be had from any one point. On the opposite side of the track from the office is the power house, which handles the freight over these inclines by means of cables which wind over large drums on the engines. It may be of interest to know that between nine and ten miles of wire cable are used in the operation of these quarries.



The Inclines, Showing Cars Ascending.

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*(photo caption)* "The inclines, showing cars ascending."

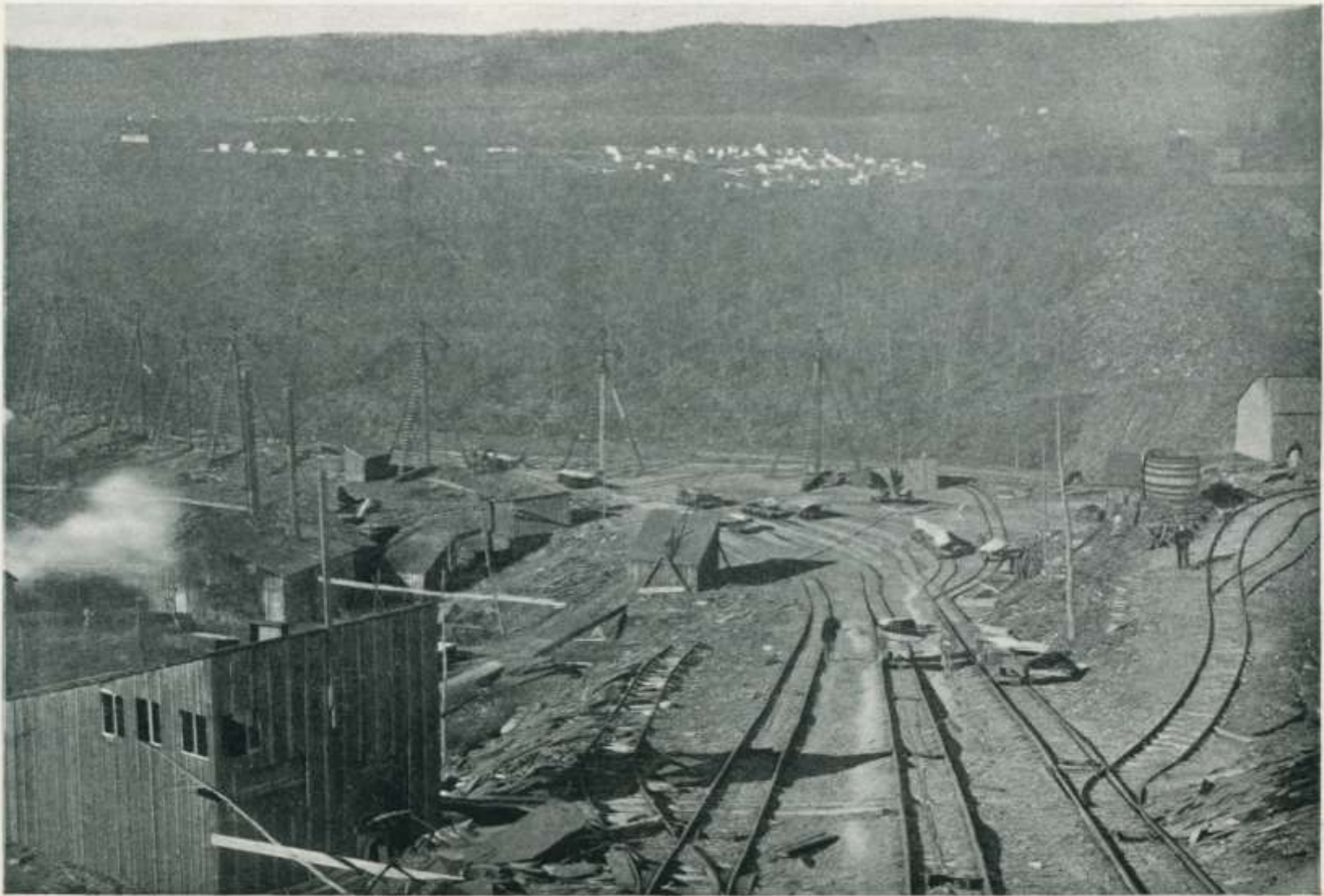
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THIS is a reverse of the preceding view, looking down the incline from the overhead bridge. It takes in one of the boiler plants, and also one of the engine houses located back of each derrick. One of the switches leading off the incline to where the material is delivered to other workmen is shown at the right.



Looking Down the Inclines to the Landing.

*(photo caption)* "Looking down the inclines to the landing."

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IN the opposite page is shown one of the groups of buildings in which the slate goes through the last process of manufacture. The cars are switched from the incline to side tracks at different points, where the large blocks of slate are distributed among the different workmen; and by use of drill, hammer and chisels in their hands, the rough blocks soon begin to assume a finished shape. Here they are split and resplit until they are brought down to the standard thickness; then taken to the dressing machine and cut to the desired size and placed in piles, where they are inspected and assorted, and are then ready to be stamped with our trade-mark.



Portion of Quarry Bank—Blue Ridge Mountains in the Distance.

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*(photo caption)* “Portion of quarry bank – Blue Ridge Mountains in the distance.”

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SOME idea of the nature of the work done at the many small buildings can be gained from the following page. The large blocks of slate are first worked into convenient size for handling, when the material is taken inside and split and resplit until the slate is brought to standard thickness. It is then cut into the various sizes with a dressing machine made for that purpose.

It may be of interest to know that from the time the large blocks are loosened in the quarry they have to be kept "fresh," by wetting the edges, until the splitting process is finished.



Workmen Sculpting and Splitting Blocks of Slate.

*(photo caption)* "Workmen sculpting and splitting blocks of slate."

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ANOTHER group of workmen's buildings, including one of the stockyards where the finished slates are piled up according to sizes and marked off into lots of 100 for convenience in shipping, is shown in the following illustration. When an order is received at our main office in Easton for our Genuine Bangor Excelsior Slate, it is immediately telephoned to the quarry office at Bangor, the goods promptly selected from the stock, as shown in this picture, counted and loaded on truck cars, and lowered on the loading incline to the railroad siding below. Our facilities for shipping were greatly increased by abandoning the use of teams for carting the slate to the siding, as is customary.

Therefore it can readily be seen that by placing orders with us direct you avoid the delays, such as remailing orders, etc., incidental to business transacted through middle men. Correspondence in regard to orders can also be attended to more promptly and satisfactorily if carried on direct between the manufacturer and roofer.



Portion of Stock Yards on the Quarry Banks.

*(photo caption)* "Portion of stock yards on the quarry banks."

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THIS view presents the last work performed by the manufacturer. When the slate are lowered on the truck cars to the railroad siding, they are carefully recounted and loaded into cars, and safely secured, to avoid breakage in transit, and the car is then ready to be sealed and sent on its way.

This brings us back to our starting point at the foot of the hill. We have endeavored to convey our reader along the course which the slate naturally take from the time they are quarried until shipped, and give him an insight into the workings of their manufacture. He has observed the gradual development of the slate at the different stages on our round; he has seen everything handled by steam from the pit to the hill, and down again to the railroad siding by the loading incline; he has passed along its two and a half miles of track; and we trust he has been impressed with our unequaled facilities for handling orders promptly.



Private Railroad Siding and Telephone Lines.

*(photo caption)* "Private railroad siding and telephone lines."



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WITH the increasing use of roofing slate comes the increasing popularity which it justly deserves. It is nature's roofing. The average life of a good slate roof is estimated at not less than ninety years; a good tin roof twenty-five years, and much less if not frequently painted; shingles fifteen, and iron ten years. Although the first cost of a slate roof may be a trifle higher than the cheapest of the materials mentioned, yet it is cheaper by far when durability is considered. Besides, it requires no paint or other expense after being properly laid, to say nothing of its beauty, cleanliness, and other advantages.

All the engravings shown in this book are reproductions from actual photographs, and will serve to give some idea of the importance of this industry and demonstrate that we have the largest and best equipped plant for the manufacture of slate in this country, and perhaps any country. The four following pages will serve to show the different grades of slate and some of the machines and tools used in connection with the slate business.



Workman Punching Slate, Ready to Lay.

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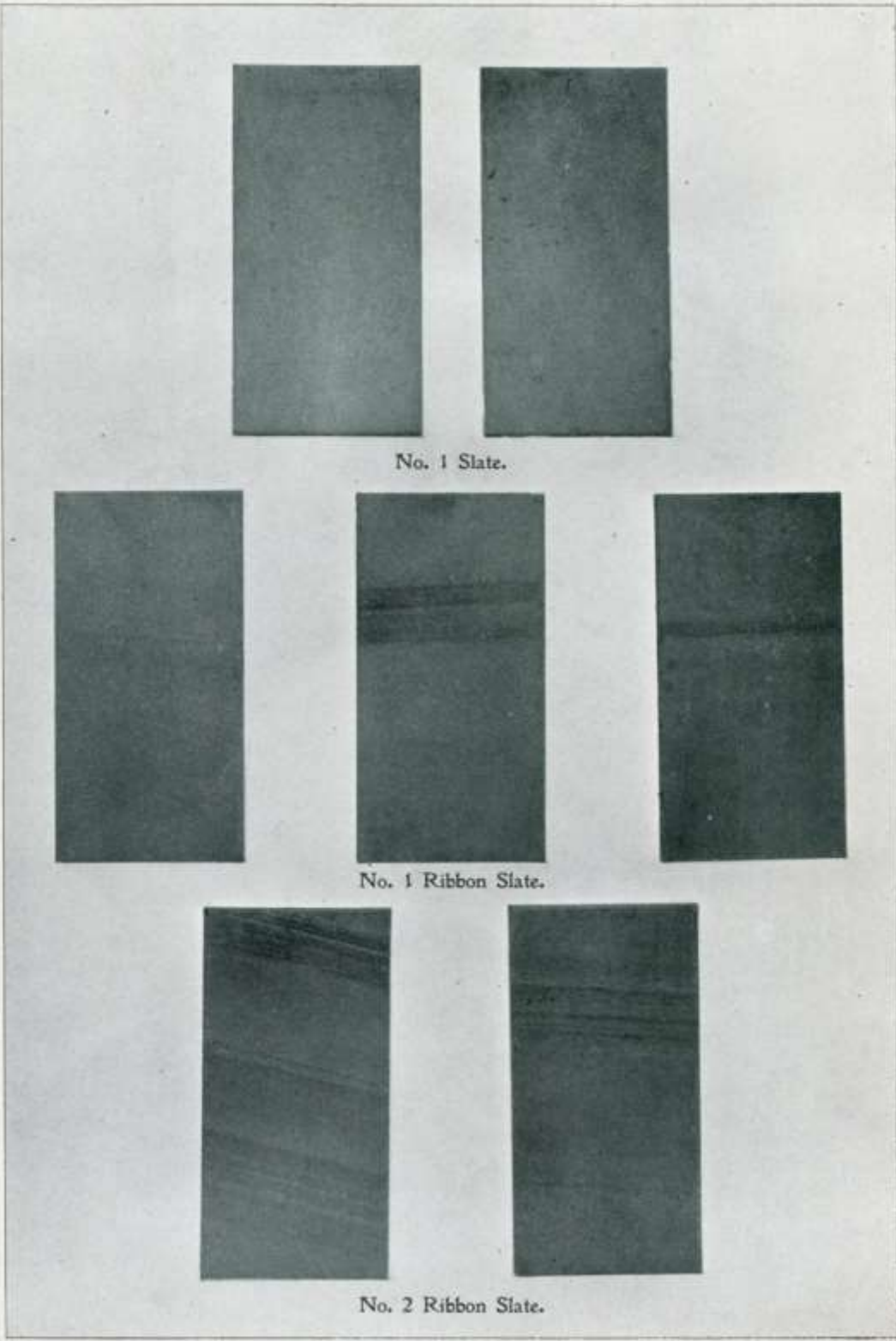
*(photo caption)* "Workman punching slate, ready to lay."



Workmen Splitting and Dressing Slate to Size.

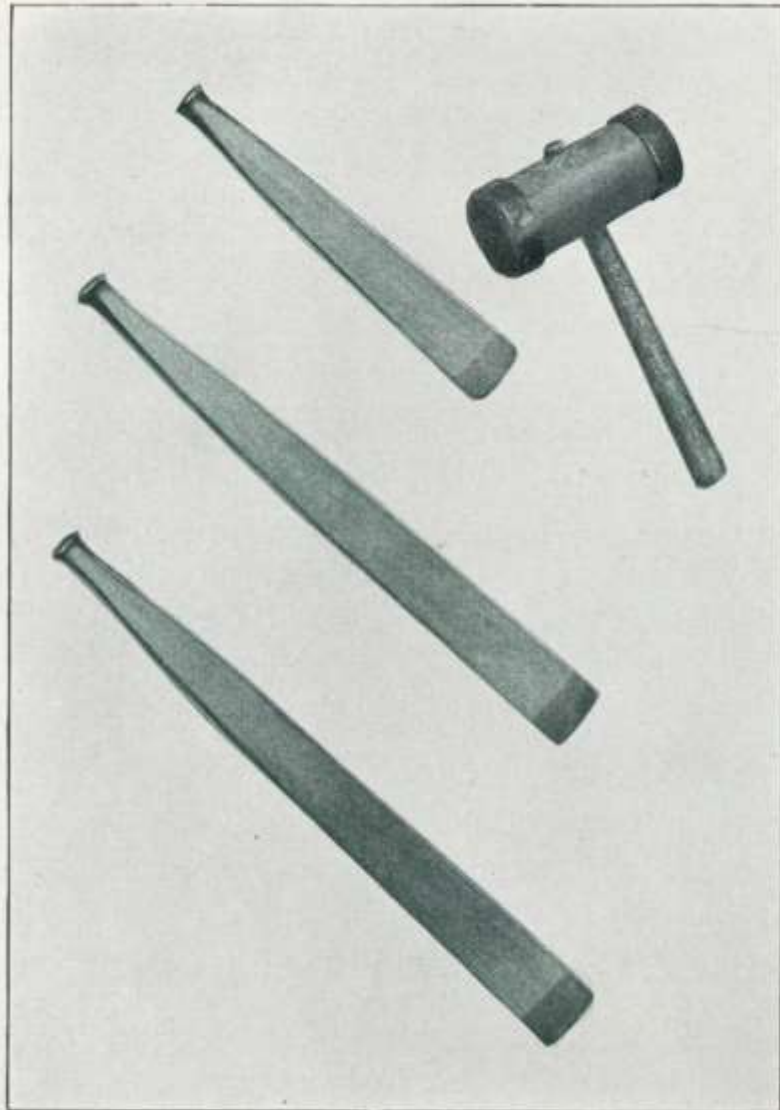
*(photo caption)* "Workmen splitting and dressing slate to size."

28

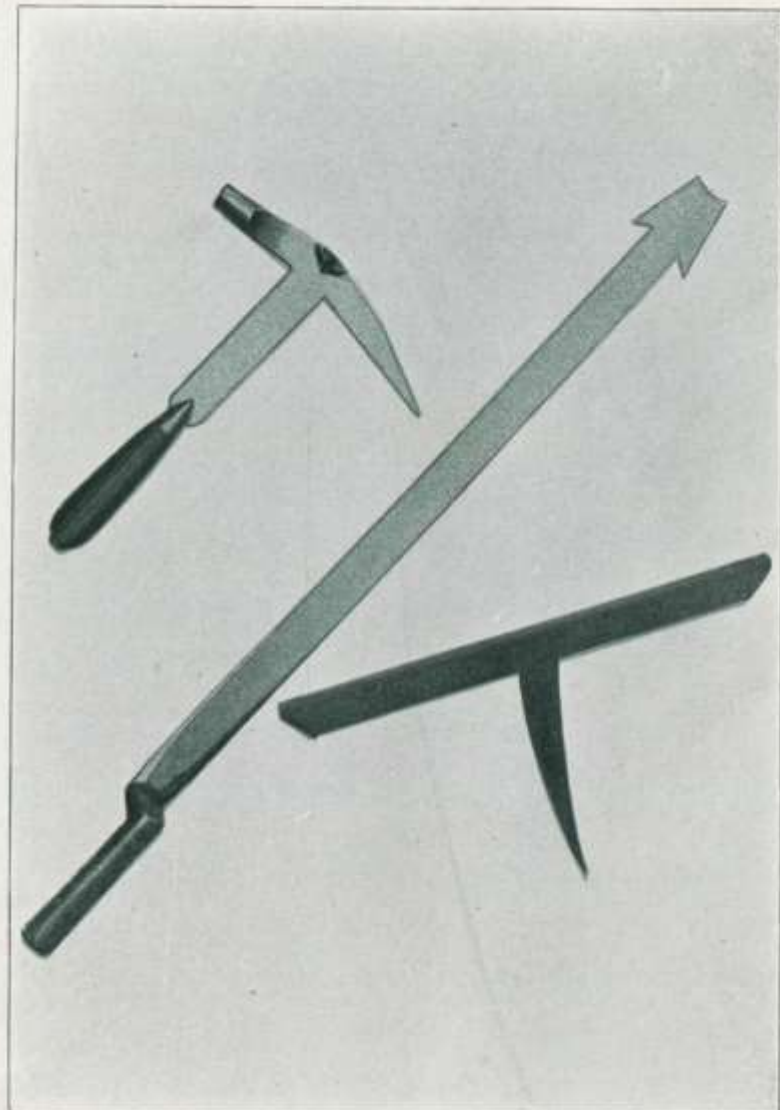


The Three Principal Grades of Genuine Bangor Slate.

(photo caption) "The three principal grades of genuine Bangor Slate."



Slate Makers' Splitting Tools.



Slate Roofers' Tools.

(photo captions) (left photo) "Slate makers' splitting tools." & (right photo) "Slate roofers' tools."

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## Trade-Mark.



MUCH inferior slate has been passed off as Bangor, and this led to the organization of the "Bangor Roofing Slate Manufacturers' Association," with its system of issuing certificates with each shipment. This proved to be insufficient protection to the dealer, because he might carry different grades of slate, and after they were unloaded from the cars he had no means of proving that any particular slate he was using from his yard had been received in a car for which he held certificate; nor could the architect feel assured on this point. Therefore, as an additional safeguard to the public and ourselves, we have recently adopted a trade-mark, printed in red, as shown on the opposite page, which now appears on our No. 1 Slate and No. 1 Ribbon Slate. This is a sure means of identification, and if specifications call for "Genuine Bangor Excelsior Slate with trade-mark," the architect, the dealer, and the consumer can all tell by looking at the slate whether the specifications are being complied with. We still furnish the certificate, in addition to the trade-mark, to those who desire it.

**This Trade-Mark is Placed on Our Slate Without Additional Cost to the Purchaser.**





BANGOR EXCELSIOR SLATE COMPANY.



OFFICE: EASTON, PA. QUARRIES: BANGOR, PA.



WE present views of our offices in the Drake Building, Easton, Pa., where all correspondence should be addressed, and where we would be pleased to have any of our patrons call upon us at any time. Our facilities for doing business at this end of the line, as well as at the quarries, are unsurpassed.



Main Office.

*(photo caption)* "Main office."



Private Office of R. S. Brown, Proprietor.

*(photo caption)* "Private office of R. S. Brown, proprietor."



Secretary's Office.

*(photo caption)* "Secretary's office."



Private Room of R. S. Brown, Proprietor.

*(photo caption)* "Private room of F. S. Brown, proprietor."



BANGOR EXCELSIOR SLATE COMPANY.



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HERE follow a number of views of buildings recently covered with our Genuine Bangor Excelsior Slate, merely to show the class of buildings on which it is used, and the favor in which it is held by experienced builders and architects, as well as to convey some idea of the extensive territory over which it is favorably known.



New York State Reformatory, Napanoch, N. Y.

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*(photo caption)* "New York State Reformatory, Napanoch, New York."



Residences Recently Erected in Different Parts of the United States Covered with Genuine Bangor Excelsior Slate.

*(photo caption)* "Residences recently erected in different parts of the United States covered with genuine Bangor Excelsior Slate."



St. Patrick's Church, Port Henry, N. Y.

*(photo caption)* "St. Patrick's Church, Port Henry, New York."



St. Mary's Hospital, Evansville, Ind.

Court House, Atchison, Kansas.

L. & N. R. R. Station, Montgomery, Ala.

*(photo captions) (left photo) "St. Mary's Hospital, Evansville, Indiana." (center photo) "Court House, Atchison, Kansas." (right photo) "L. & N. R. R. Station, Montgomery, Alabama."*



L. & N. R. R. Station, Montgomery, Ala.

Church at Mansfield, Ohio.

Public School Building, Harrisburg, Pa.

*(photo captions) (left photo) "L. & N. R. R. Station, Montgomery, Alabama." (center photo) "Church at Mansfield, Ohio." (right photo) "Public School Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania."*



Residences Recently Erected in Different Parts of the United States Covered with Genuine Bangor Excelsior Slate.

*(photo caption)* "Residences recently erected in different parts of the United Sates covered with genuine Bangor Excelsior Slate."

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**I**N the early history of our country, while cheap buildings were constructed, the forest furnished a convenient and cheap covering for them, but with the rapid growth and development of its resources came a growing demand for a better and more lasting roofing. This demand was met in the form of slate, which was discovered many years ago in Wales; but it was not until more recently that its value as a roofing material was realized.

The first slate quarried in Pennsylvania for roofing purposes was nearly a hundred years ago, at the village of Slateford, Pa., about nine miles east of Bangor, and the limited product was floated down the Delaware River to Trenton and Philadelphia. The industry has gradually developed, until now the earth is forced to annually give up immense quantities of her hidden roofing, for which a market is now found in almost every State of the Union, and large quantities are exported annually to foreign countries.

To give our readers a fair idea of the immense output of the Bangor Excelsior Slate Quarries, it is only necessary to state that the annual product of these quarries was many times greater than was the combined annual output of all the quarries in the country as recently as twenty-five years ago, and the production of the Bangor Excelsior Quarries is still larger than that of any quarry in the United States.

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EVERY book should have a moral, and every means of advertising an object. We therefore trust that the roofers and architects who have perused this work have found our object apparent, and will realize the importance of the slate industry and the advantages of slate as a roofing material, particularly the Bangor Excelsior, more fully than ever before.

In closing, we will merely call attention to a few points which are frequently lost sight of. When figuring for a slate roof do not consider the first cost of the slate at the quarry only. Very many overlook the fact that the transportation charges on cheap and inferior slate are just as much as on the best; the cost of labor for laying is the same, or more; the loss from breakage is considerable. And while a good slate roof will permanently retain its color and last a lifetime without repairs or any expense for painting, as is necessary with iron, tin or shingle roofs, the cost of keeping a poor slate roof in repair is best understood by those who have experienced it, to say nothing of the annoyance and unsightly appearance of the roof.

All these disadvantages consequent to the use of cheap and inferior slate, and other kinds of roofing material, very much more than offset the comparatively little difference there may be in the original cost of the very best slate roof; again proving the old adage, "The best is the cheapest,"—that is:

THE GENUINE BANGOR EXCELSIOR SLATE.



BANGOR  
EXCELSIOR  
SLATE

TRADE MARK

**For further historical information about the Bangor Excelsior Slate Company of Bangor, Pennsylvania, and the slate industry, see the links below:**

- \* **“Slate-Making in Pennsylvania,”** in *The Manufacturer and Builder*, November 1884, pp. 252-253, on Stone Quarries and Beyond at: [http://quarriesandbeyond.org/articles\\_and\\_books/pdf/slate\\_making\\_in\\_pennsylvania\\_manufacturer\\_and\\_builder\\_nov\\_1884.pdf](http://quarriesandbeyond.org/articles_and_books/pdf/slate_making_in_pennsylvania_manufacturer_and_builder_nov_1884.pdf)
- \* ***Hower’s Lightning Slate Reckoner on 33 Practical Sizes Roofing Slate***, by F. M. Hower, Proprietor of the Peach Hill Slate Quarry and President of the Eagle Slate Company, Cherryville, Pennsylvania, 1884. Available on Stone Quarries and Beyond at: <http://quarriesandbeyond.org/pdf/Howers%20Lightning%20Slate%20Reckoner%201888%20-%201904.pdf>
- \* **“History of the Slate Industry,”** excerpt from *Hower’s Lightning Slate Reckoner on 33 Practical Sizes Roofing Slate*, by F. M. Hower, Proprietor of the Peach Hill Slate Quarry and President of the Eagle Slate Company, Cherryville, Pennsylvania, 1884. Available on Stone Quarries and Beyond at: <http://quarriesandbeyond.org/pdf/History%20of%20the%20Slate%20Industry%20fr%20Howers%201884.pdf>  
<http://quarriesandbeyond.org/pdf/Howers%20Lightning%20Slate%20Reckoner%201888%20-%201904.pdf>
- \* **“Peach-Bottom” Slate (York County, Pennsylvania)** (October 1890), *The Manufacture and Builder*, Vol. 22, Issue 10, October 1890, pg. 225. (Article in digital images viewed at American Memory, Library of Congress.)  
<http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=manu;cc=manu;rgn=full%20text;idno=manu0022-10;didno=manu0022-10;view=image;seq=00233;node=manu0022-10%3A1>
- \* **“The Bangor Excelsior Slate Quarry,” Bangor, Pennsylvania**, from the “Leading American Quarry Centres and Operators” section of *Timber & Wood Working Machinery*, Special Issue, February 2, 1897.  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=3s42AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA562&lpg=PA562&dq=%22Bangor+Excelsior+Slate+Company%22&source=bl&ots=ey-NbC3kQ-&sig=sR1yaWdWMZPrR2gnCmwJeBhyOyI&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiU9c-B0eLXAhWJ-IQKHY20AawQ6AEILTAB#v=onepage&q=%22Bangor%20Excelsior%20Slate%20Company%22&f=false>
- \* ***History of Northampton County [Pennsylvania] and the Grand Valley of the Lehigh***, Under Supervision and Revision of William J. Heller, Assisted by an advisory board of editors, Vol. II, 1920, The American Historical Society, Boston, New York, Chicago. Available on the Internet Archive at: [https://archive.org/details/historyofnortham02hell\\_0](https://archive.org/details/historyofnortham02hell_0)
- \* ***Slate Deposits and Slate Industry of the United States***, by T. Nelson Dale with sections by E. C. Eckel, W. F. Hillebrand, and A. T. Coons, United States Geological Survey Bulletin No. 275, Series A, Economic Geology, 63, 1906. Available at U. S. Government Publications at: <https://pubs.usgs.gov/bul/0275/report.pdf>

(List of online resources continued on the next page.)

\* *Slate in Northampton County, Pennsylvania*, by Charles H. Behre, Jr., Pennsylvania Geological Survey, 4th Series, Bulletin M9, 1927. Available on the Internet Archive at: <https://archive.org/details/slateinnorthampt00behr>

\* *Slate in Pennsylvania*, by Charles H. Behre, Jr., Pennsylvania Geological Survey, 4th Series, Bulletin M16, 1933. Available on the Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/slateinpennsylva00behr>

\* *Slate in the United States*, by T. Nelson Dale and Others, United States Geological Survey Bulletin 586, 1914. Available at the U. S. Government Publications: <https://pubs.usgs.gov/bul/0586/report.pdf>

### **More Online Resources about Bangor Excelsior Slate Company of Bangor, Pennsylvania, and the slate industry:**

\* **“The Dally Slate Photo Galleries,”** Pen Argyl, Pennsylvania, on the American Industrial Mining Co. web site at: <http://americanindustrialmining.com/slate-quarry>

\* **“In Pursuit of the Quarry: Pennsylvania’s Slate Belt,”** by Alyssa Miller, Spring 2010, at: <http://pabook2.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/SlateBelt.html>

\* **“Once rock-solid slate industry is down to 13 quarries,”** 28th May 2003, in AggregateResearch.com at: <https://www.aggregateresearch.com/news/once-rock-solid-slate-industry-is-down-to-13-quarries/>

\* **“Peach Bottom Slate: The slate extracted from these Pennsylvania quarries was once hailed as the finest in the world,”** Delta, Pennsylvania, on Atlas Obscura at: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/peach-bottom-slate-region>

\* **“Pennsylvania’s Slate Belt,”** by Lenny Flank, November 5, 2015, on Hidden History at: <https://lflank.wordpress.com/2015/11/05/pennsylvanias-slate-belt/>

\* **“Pit and Quarry: The Cement and Slate Landscapes of Pennsylvania,”** by Frank Matero, Fall 2015, on the Scenario Journal at: <https://scenariojournal.com/article/pit-and-quarry/>

\* **Postcard photograph of “Carbon Slate Quarry (1910 or earlier),”** on mindat.org at: <https://www.mindat.org/loc-219247.html>

\* **The “Slate industry”** section of Wikipedia at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slate\\_industry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slate_industry)

\* **“Slate Industry Historical Marker”** (in Bangor, Pennsylvania), on ExplorePAhistory.com at: <http://explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1-A-339>