

**Prime or Richmond Marble Quarry
Brandon, Rutland County, Vermont¹**

By

William J. Powers, Jr.
December 6, 2010



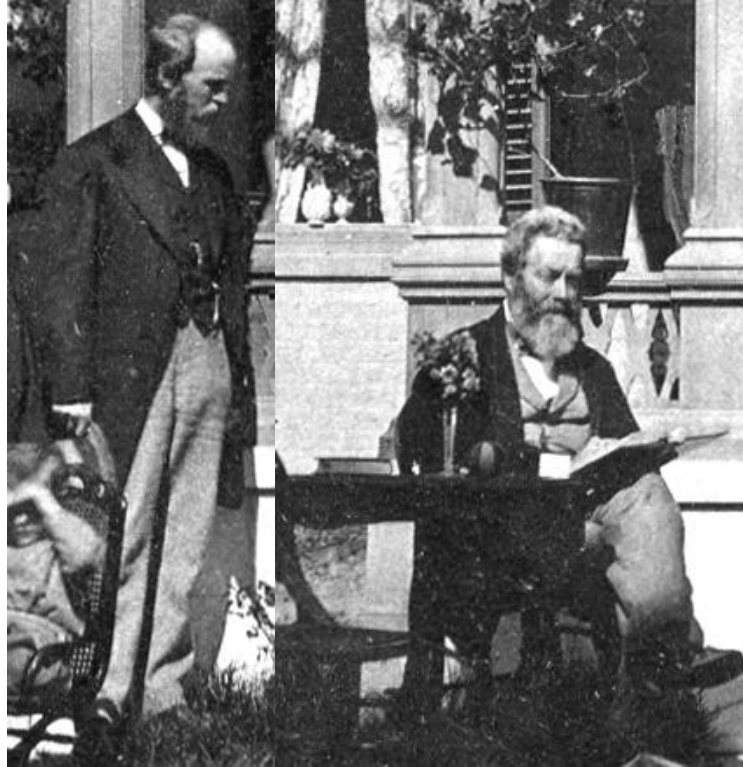
Prime/Richmond Quarry, Brandon, Vermont, November 2010.

On July 16, 1866, farmer and large land owner in Brandon, Vermont, Josiah Rossiter, Jr. for \$50,000 conveyed 15 acres in Brandon to Henry Currier, Charles F. Joy, George W. Dean, and Daniel Caverly of Boston, Massachusetts. The parcel was west of Hawk Hill and east of the railroad tracks. It was described as: beginning at the center of a stone culvert across the Rutland and Burlington Rail Road on the land and farm owned by Rossiter and about 1½ miles south from Brandon Village.

Included in the purchase was a right of way for a railroad track from any part of the premises to the railroad, if convenient, across or over the land of Rossiter, other than conveyed in the 15 acres. A reasonable compensation for the use of land for the railroad track was expected.²

On the same day, Currier, Joy, Dean, and Caverly, for \$20,000 mortgaged to David W. Prime of Brandon, the 15 acres in Brandon that Josiah Rossiter sold to them, including appurtenances. David Prime was Josiah Rossiter, Jr.'s son-in-law.

Under the terms of the mortgage, Currier, Joy, Dean, and Caverly were to pay Prime in three promissory notes; one for \$5,000 payable in 3 months from the date, one for \$5,000 payable in 6 months after the date, and the other for \$10,000 payable in 18 months after the date, and all payable at the Brandon National Bank. The mortgage was paid in full by July 13, 1868.³



**David Prime (l.) and probably, Josiah Rossiter, Jr. (r.)
at Prime's home on Park St., Brandon, Vermont ca. 1867.**

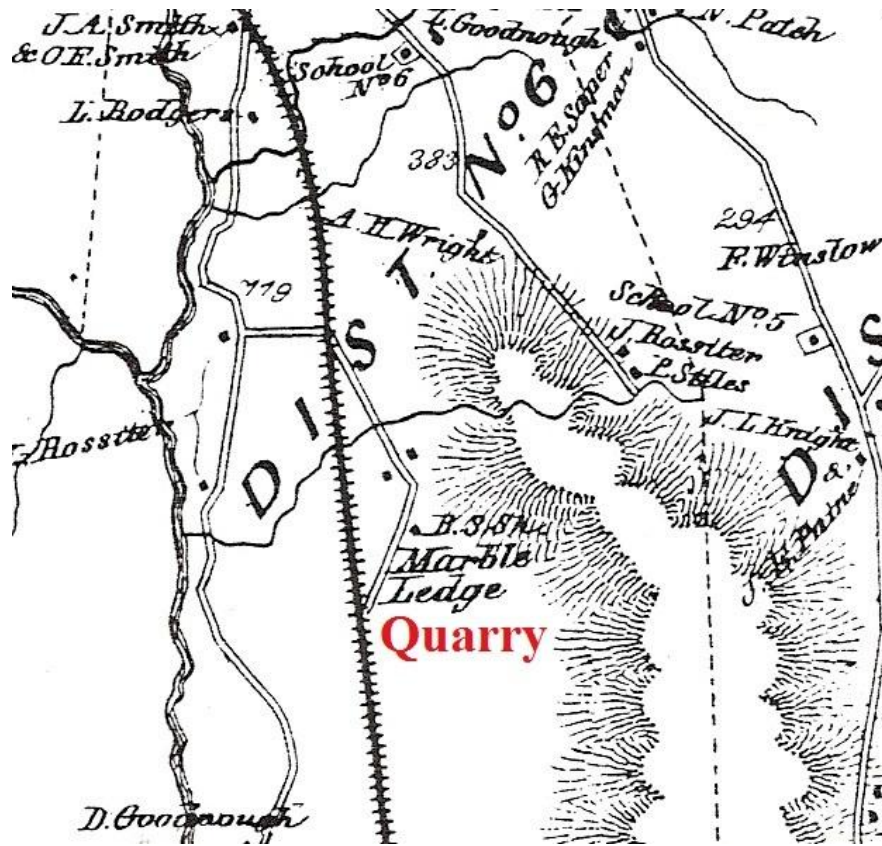
Apparently, since David Prime held the first mortgage on the quarry property, and the mortgage was paid off, the quarry became known originally as the Prime Quarry. The quarry opened in 1866.⁵

On November 6, 1866, Currier, Joy, Dean, and Caverly, sold for \$37,500 to Henry B. Richmond a merchant of Boston, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the 15 acre parcel in Brandon that they had purchased from Rossiter. This also included the right of way for a railroad track across Rossiter's other land. Richmond was held responsible for the mortgage that the grantors had with David W. Prime.⁶

The following year, on September, 12, 1867, Daniel F. Caverly sold out his interest in the property for \$12,000, to the other owners.⁷

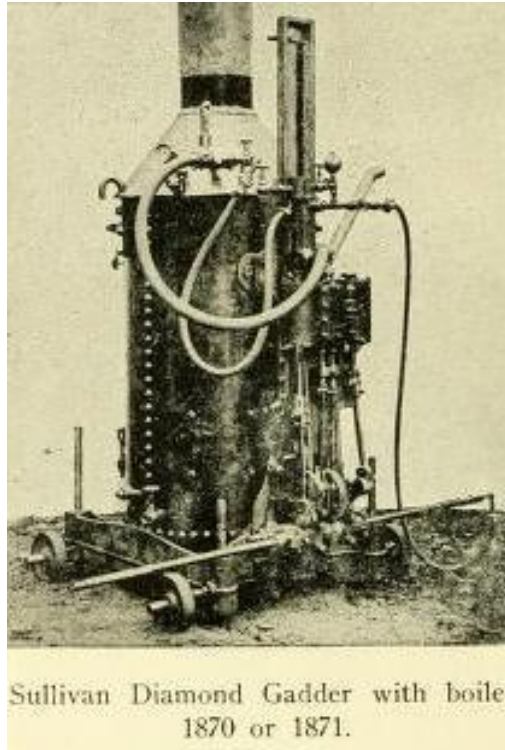
Co-owner of the quarry property, Charles F. Joy, a 65 year old wool dealer from Chelsea, Massachusetts,⁸ had organized *C.F. Joy & Company* to quarry the marble. For the annual period ending 30 Jun 1870, the following depicts a summary of the Prime/Richmond Quarry activities for the previous fiscal year:⁹

Company:	C.F. Joy & Company	Wages for year	
Business:	Quarrying Marble	Dollars:	\$8,100
Capital:	\$150,000	Months operated:	12
Motive Power		Materials:	
Kind:	Steam	Kinds:/Qty/\$:	Powder, 15 kegs, \$56
Horsepower:	30		Coal, 12 tons, \$144
Machines			Iron & Steel, \$300
Description:	Engines	Products	
Quantity:	6	Kinds:	Marble removed
Avg. No. of Employees		Quantities:	5,400 tons
Adult males:	20	Value:	\$30,000



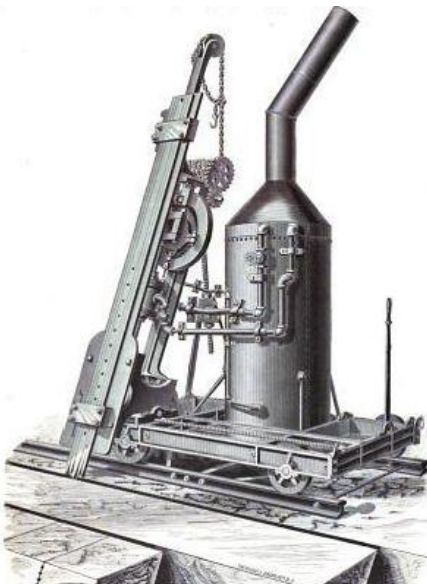
Brandon, Vermont District #6
Prime/Richmond Quarry, 1869.¹⁰

Steam-driven channeling machines were introduced to Vermont quarrying operations in the 1860s. The Prime Quarry purchased the third machine produced by the Sullivan Machine Company of New Hampshire. The first channeler was never sold, but used on contract work in Vermont marble quarries and for a time on red sandstone at Portland, Connecticut. The second was sold to the Columbian Marble Co. and used in its quarries near Sutherland Falls, Vermont.¹¹

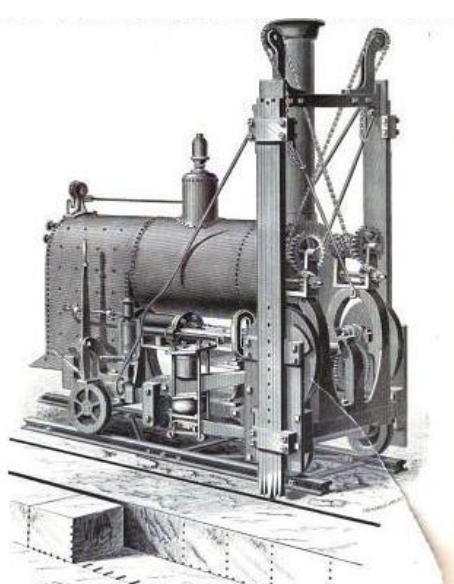


Sullivan Diamond Gadder with boiler
1870 or 1871.

On August 19, 1870, Henry B. Richmond mortgaged his interest in the quarry for \$20,000 to John H. Lester and George H. Bigelow of Boston, trustees under the will of Jonathan Buffington, late of Roxbury, Massachusetts. This included the right of way for a railroad track and all the interest that Richmond had in “all marble in block or in ledge or quarry; also all tools, engines, machinery, fixtures, and other personal property used in quarrying marble on said premises; including all cattle and horses.”¹²



Wardwell Single Gang Machine



Wardwell Double Gang Machine

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While under Henry B. Richmond's ownership, the *Richmond Marble Co.* owned three of the Wardwell stone channeling and quarrying machines.¹⁴

On November 11, 1871, Lester and Bigelow entered into an agreement with Henry Currier of Charlestown and George W. Dean of Boston, each owning a 15/64 interest in the marble quarry and personal property; and Henry B. Richmond of Boston, having an interest in 19/64 in the same property, the title now in Lester and Bigelow's names; and Charles F. Joy of Chelsea and Shadrack R. Brackett of Lowell, holding 15/64 parts of the same property, all of Massachusetts.

Lester and Bigelow had already loaned Richmond large sums of money based on his interest in the property. Currier, Dean, Richmond, Joy, and Brackett had already expended large sums of money in the development and quarrying the marble from the property. Now, however, they were not in a financial position to complete the development of the quarry and manufacture the marble and get it to market.

Lester and Bigelow were willing to loan further sums using the property as security for developing the quarry and erecting a mill for completing the manufacture of the marble and getting it to market. The condition of the loan was that it could be done with safety and security for the ultimate refunding of the money to them. The money being loaned was from the trust funds of the Buffington estate. Therefore, Lester and Bigelow agreed to advance \$5,000 and other funds in the future to Currier, Dean, Richmond, Joy, and Brackett. Both parties agreed to the following terms:

1. Lester and Bigelow, by themselves, would take immediate possession of all the property, after first making an inventory. They would keep a record of it in a book and record all future transactions regarding the property.
2. They would carry on the business in the most prudent and careful manner until the mill was erected; and the marble already quarried would be placed in condition to be sold.
3. They would sell the quarried and manufactured marble until they could pay themselves all the money, with interest, advanced under this contract and expended in erecting a mill or any other necessary construction, or in the purchase of tools. This included costs in the development of the quarry, or in the manufacture and sale of marble. They would be reimbursed for expenses incurred in any other mode connected with carrying on the business not exceeding one percent per annum on all moneys advanced and expended by them in carrying on the business. They would be able, out of the net proceeds of the business, to refund themselves all the money together with interest on the same which they had advanced or loaned, upon the security of any portion of the property; also moneys that they used in procuring any liens, attachments, incumbrances, etc.

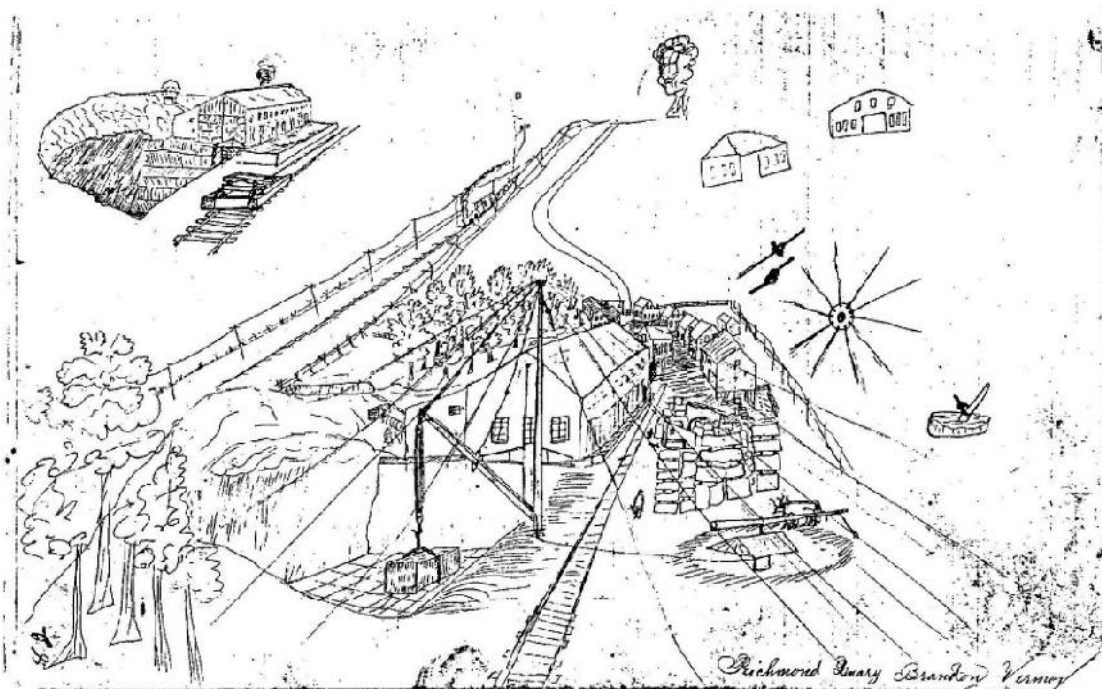
After full payment of all the claims of Lester and Bigelow, and of all expenses incurred by them, the property would revert back Currier, Dean, Richmond, Joy, and Brackett according to their proportions.

For the purpose of making this security more available to Lester and Bigelow, and in consideration of the money advanced and loaned for the purpose of carrying this contract into effect, Currier, Dean, Richmond, Joy, and Brackett would at all times when

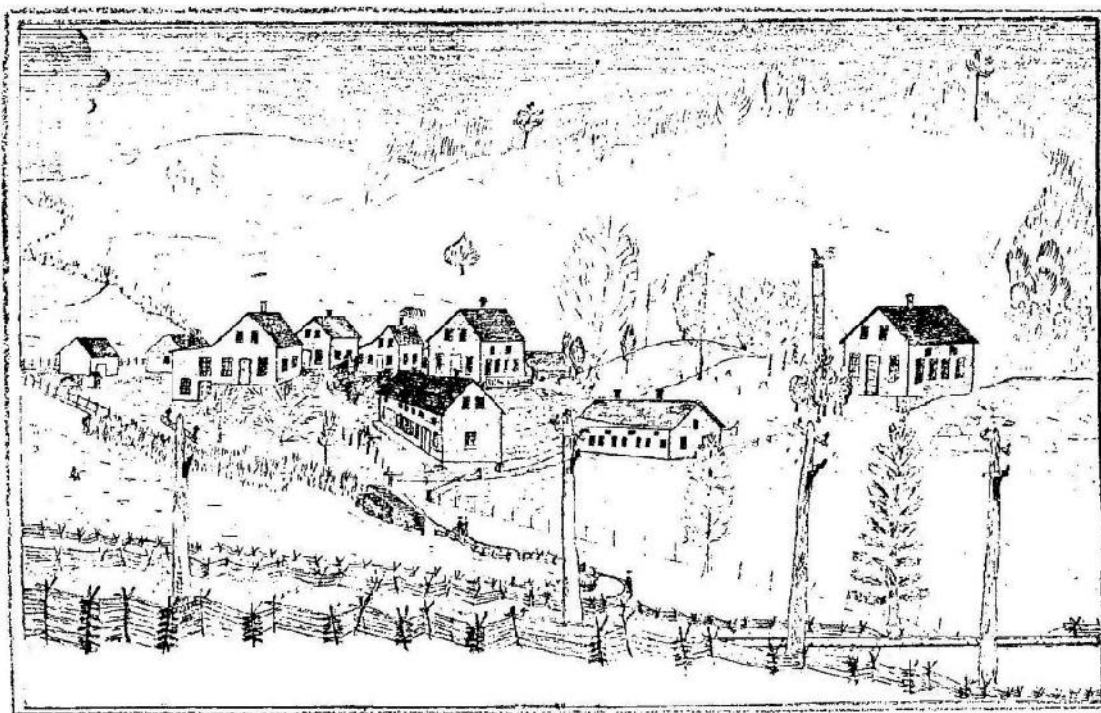
requested be ready to execute further contracts as may become necessary to carry into effect the intent of this contract.

It was further agreed that if it was not practicable for John H. Lester and George B. Bigelow, by careful management of the property for the term of five years, to obtain a sufficient amount of money over and above all expenses to refund all the money advanced under this contract, together with interest, then they could sell all or any portion of the property. The money from the sale would first be applied to extinguishing the claim of Lester and Bigelow, and the balance paid to Currier, Dean, Richmond, Joy, and Brackett in the proportion to their shares. They also agreed that if the property was sold at auction, Lester and Bigelow would become the sole owners.

It was further agreed that if either of Currier, Dean, Richmond, Joy, or Brackett shall pay at any time to John H. Lester and George B. Bigelow all the money which has been advanced to that particular party and all disbursements and expenses made and incurred under this contract with interest and commissions in conformity with the provisions of this contract, that portion of the estate belonging to such party so paying shall be released from the operation of this contract and revert to the owner. But the contract shall continue in full force so far as consistent as to all the other parties.¹⁵



Richmond Quarry from the south, 1876.¹⁶



RICHMOND
QUARRY.

Richmond Quarry from the north, 1876.¹⁷

“This company built a mill of six gangs, a dozen or more tenements, and operated a number of years. Owing to financial embarrassments, work was suspended in 1876 and the property has remained idle since.”¹⁸

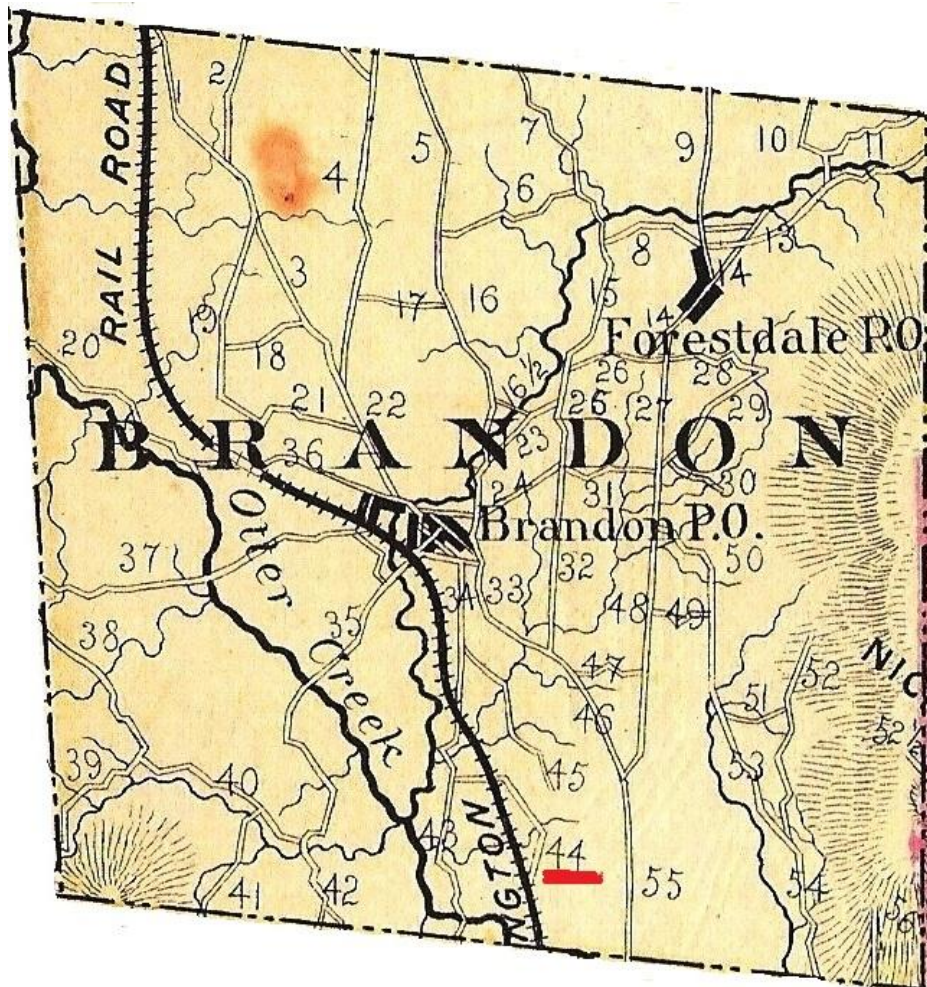
The “financial embarrassments” were such that Samuel Bigelow filed a foreclosure suit in the Rutland County, Vermont Court of Chancery in September 1878.

On the 2nd Tuesday in September 1878, Samuel Bigelow of Boston, submitted a petition setting forth that Henry Currier of Charlestown, Charles F. Joy of Chelsea, Henry B. Richmond, and George W. Dean of Boston on November 26, 1870 had executed a mortgage on the Prime Quarry land. The condition was that a promissory note for \$20,000 dated 26 Nov 1870 signed by them were to pay Bigelow the \$20,000 in three years from the date with interest to be paid semi-annually at the rate of six percent per annum during the three years.

The suit dragged on for three years, full of complications and cross complaints. Some of those involved, such as Charles F. Joy, died and others were no longer involved. Finally, on March 21, 1881 the Court ordered and decreed that Samuel Bigelow was due \$22,088.92 on his mortgage and his costs were \$235.45, making the total due him \$22,324.37. If the defendants couldn’t pay on or before March 21, 1882, with interest, then all shall be foreclosed.¹⁹

While all the legal issues were ongoing, the actual work on the quarry may have been waning. In the early 1880s, Benona Franklin “Frank” Wheeler was the only person

recorded as living on Brandon Town Road # 44, the road to the Prime/Richmond Quarry. His employment consisted of being the overseer of a marble quarry. Since he was the only person recorded as living on Town Road #44, he was probably “overseeing” the Prime/Richmond Marble Quarry.²⁰



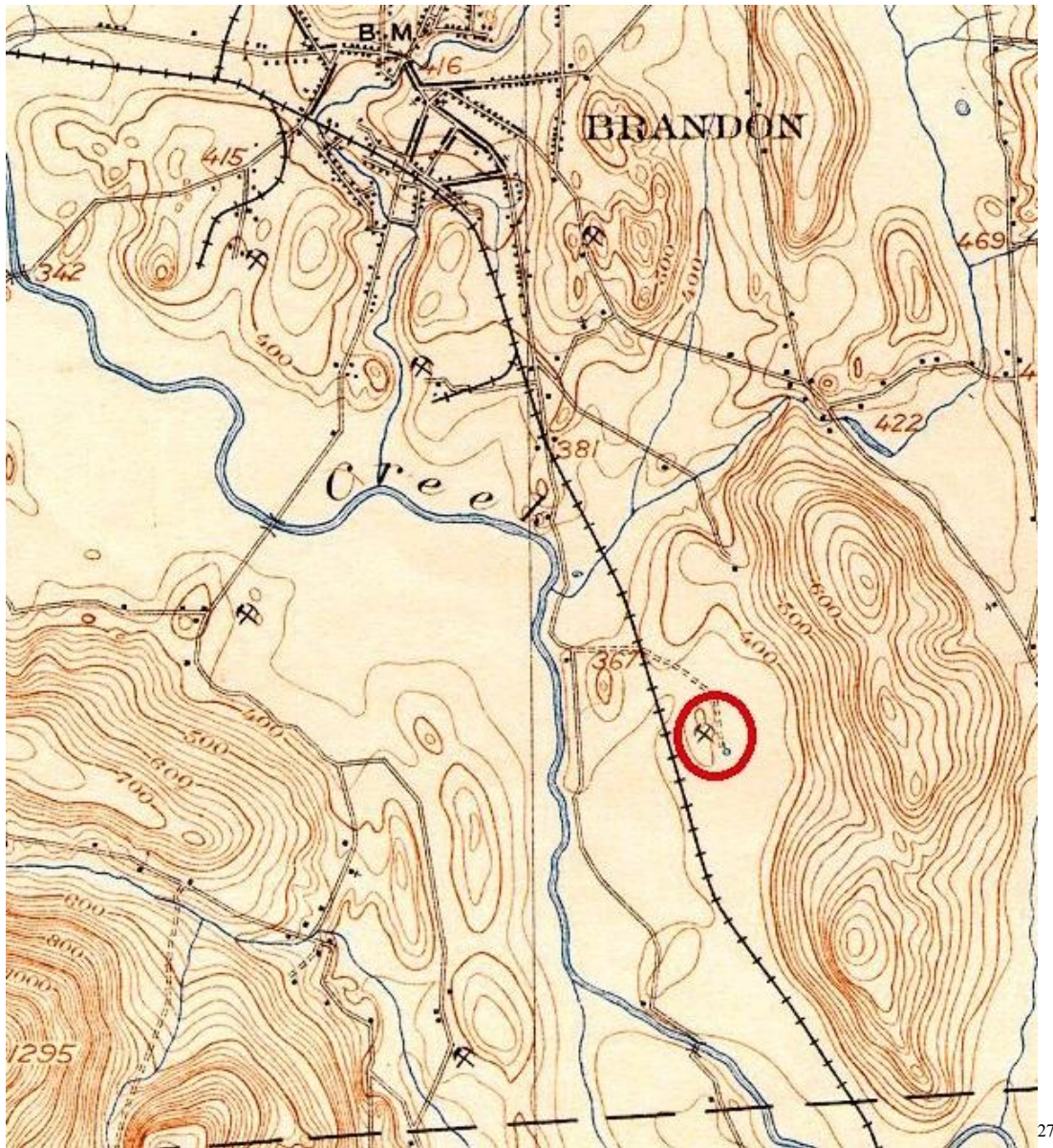
1881 Map of Brandon, Vermont showing Town Road #44, site of the Prime/Richmond Quarry

In 1885, the Prime/Richmond Quarry was still not being worked.²¹

Samuel Bigelow followed through with the foreclosure. On October 15, 1887, he sold the 15 acres, with quarry to Abraham B. Coffin of Boston, Massachusetts for \$37,900.²² He also sold to Coffin for \$1.00 and “other good considerations” “all the marble in block or sawed; all the tools, machinery, and fixtures – one engine, one boiler, and all other personal property belonging to me of every sort and kind now on the premises known as the Richmond or Prime Quarry situated in Brandon, Vermont or belonging thereto.”²³

Four days later, Coffin sold the same 15 acre property to George Briggs of Brandon for \$5,000;²⁴ followed by the same personal property that he had received from Bigelow.²⁵

One year later, on October 14, 1888, George Briggs, for \$1.00 sold all the property he had received from Abraham B. Coffin to the Vermont Marble Company of Proctor, Vermont.²⁶ The quarry is now (2010) property of the OMYA corporation.



Prime/Richmond Quarry site, 1904

A 1912 report gave the following information regarding the still abandoned quarry:

“The abandoned quarry at locality 238 is a mile north of the Landon, a little east of the railroad, and about 2 miles S. 25° E. of Brandon station. (See Pl. I.)

The marble is a calcite marble of milk-white color, with little cloudy dolomitic and muscovitic beds. The calcitic parts are irregular in texture and have a grain diameter of 0.05 to 0.75, mostly 0.12 to 0.38 millimeter, being thus of grade 4 (medium). The marble contains some pyrite and a little quartz.

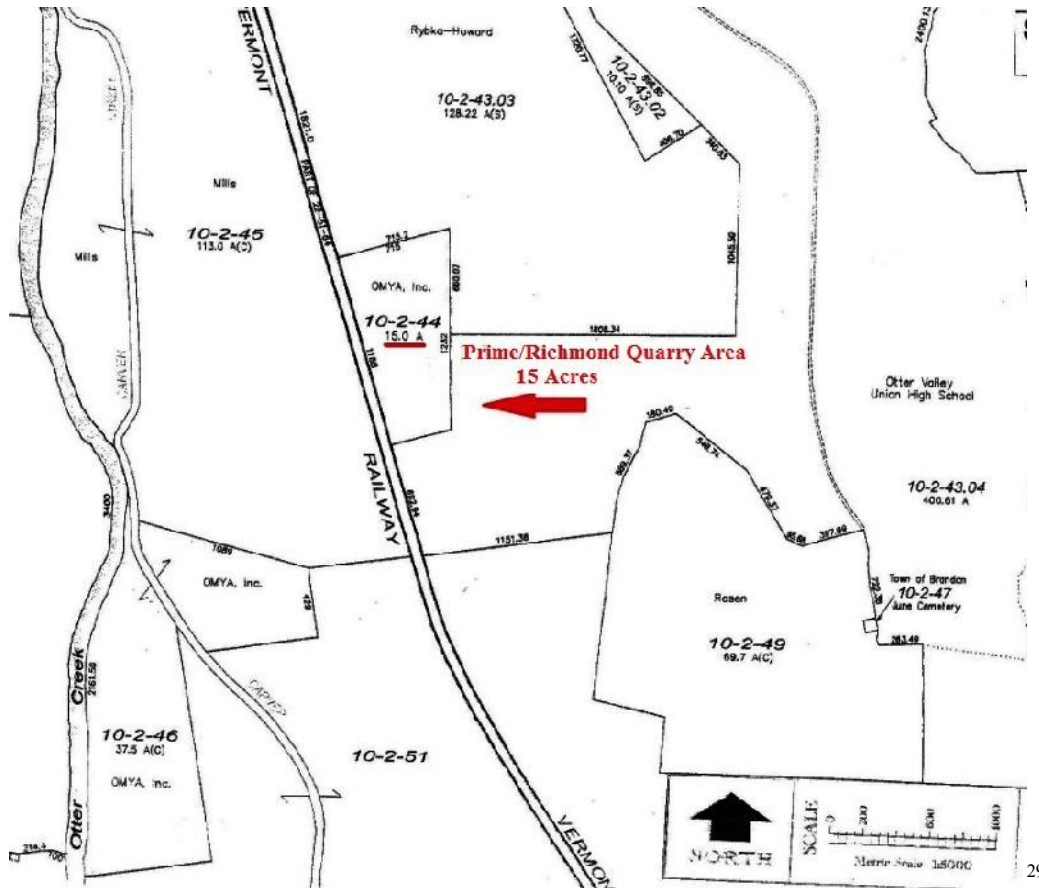
The plicated bedding is vertical and is crossed by low eastward-dipping cleavage ('reeds')."²⁸



Prime/Richmond Quarry, Fall 2010



Prime/Richmond Quarry, Fall 2010



Prime/Richmond Quarry area, 2010.

¹ Also known as “quarry locality 238,” the “Dean Quarry,” and Vermont Archaeological Site VT-RU-214).

² Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 29:209-210, 16 Jul 1866.

³ Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 29:211-212, 20 Jul 1866. Mortgage of land in 29:209-10, 16 Jul 1866 for \$20,000 to David Prime. 15 acres. Mortgage paid in full by 13 Jul 1868.

⁴ Picture courtesy of Blaine Cliver, Brandon, Vermont, Sep 2010.

⁵ Smith, H. P. and William S. Rann, Editors. *History of Rutland County Vermont with Illustrations & Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men & Pioneers*. Syracuse, N. Y. D. Mason & Co., Publishers, 1886. Chapter XIII. Pages 171-200: Marble and Slate in Rutland County. Page 187.

⁶ Brandon, Vermont Land Records. 29:293-4, 6 Nov 1866.

⁷ Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 30:34, 12 Sep 1867.

⁸ Census, 1870, Massachusetts, Suffolk County, Chelsea, P.O. Chelsea, 1 Aug 1870, p. 184.
2868/3104

Joy,	Chas. F.	65 m	Wool Dealer	4,000	4,500	VT
	Eliza L.	64 f	Keeping House			MA

28868/3105

Joy,	Chas. F., Jr.	25 m	Clerk in a store	1,000	800	MA
	Nellie R.	24 f	Keeping House			ME

⁹ Census, Products of Industry, 1870, Vermont, Rutland County, Brandon, page 1.

¹⁰ Beers, J. W. Map of Brandon, Vermont, 1869.

¹¹ *The Granite Monthly*. Vol. 53. 1921. Harlan C. Pearson, Publisher. Pages 146-7.

¹² Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 39:480-482, 19 Aug 1870.

¹³ _____. *Stone: A Journal for Producers, Workers, and Users of Stone, Marble, and Granite*. Volume 1, No. 3, July 1888. Published by the D.H. Ranck Publishing Company, Indianapolis, Indiana. Pages 74-77.

¹⁴ _____. *Stone: A Journal for Producers, Workers, and Users of Stone, Marble, and Granite*. Volume 1, No. 3, July 1888. Published by the D.H. Ranck Publishing Company, Indianapolis, Indiana. Pages 74-77.

¹⁵ Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 32:585-590, 11 Nov 1871.

¹⁶ Callum, Kathleen E. and Robert A. Sloma. *To Settle On The Land: Phase IA Archaeological Sensitivity Study of the Old Brandon Farm Development on Hawk Hill, Town of Brandon (Chartered as Neshobe), Rutland County, Vermont*. Published by GEOARCH, Inc., No. 99 BR 2. 594 Indian Trail, Leicester, Vermont, 05733. 1999. Page 99. (Cites: Soulia, C. J., 1876 Richmond Quarry: Brandon, Vermont. Unpublished papers maintained by the Brandon Historical Society, Brandon, Vermont.)

¹⁷ Callum, Kathleen E. and Robert A. Sloma. *To Settle On The Land: Phase IA Archaeological Sensitivity Study of the Old Brandon Farm Development on Hawk Hill, Town of Brandon (Chartered as Neshobe), Rutland County, Vermont*. Published by GEOARCH, Inc., No. 99 BR 2. 594 Indian Trail, Leicester, Vermont, 05733. 1999. Page 100. (Cites: Soulia, C. J., 1876 Richmond Quarry: Brandon, Vermont. Unpublished papers maintained by the Brandon Historical Society, Brandon, Vermont.)

¹⁸ Smith, H. P. and William S. Rann, Editors. *History of Rutland County Vermont with Illustrations & Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men & Pioneers*. Syracuse, N. Y. D. Mason & Co., Publishers, 1886. Chapter XIII. Pages 171-200: Marble and Slate in Rutland County. Page 187.

¹⁹ Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 37:335-344, Mar 1881.

State of Vermont - Rutland County

Samuel Bigelow

v.

Henry Currier and others

In Chancery

March Term AD 1881

Decree

²⁰ Child, Hamilton, *Rutland County, Vermont Gazetteer, 1881-2*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Printed at the Journal Office, August, 1881. Page 289:

Wheeler, Frank, (Brandon), r 44, overseer of marble quarry.

²¹ *The Marble Border of Western New England*. Vol. 1, Part 2. Middlebury Historical Society (Middlebury, Vt.), Philip Battell, Ezra Brainerd, Henry Martyn Seely. Published by the Society. 1885. Page 47.

²² Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 39:515-516, 15 Oct 1887.

²³ Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 39:518, 15 Oct 1887.

²⁴ Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 39:516-517, 19 Oct 1887.

²⁵ Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 39:518-519, 19 Oct 1887.

²⁶ Brandon, Vermont Land Records, 40:621, 14 Oct 1888.

²⁷ Map courtesy of Blaine Cliver, Brandon, Vermont 2010.

²⁸ Dale, T. Nelson. *Commercial Marbles of Western Vermont, Bulletin 521*. United States Geological Survey, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 1912. Page 135.

²⁹ Brandon, Vermont Tax Map, January 2010.