

Some general notes about Llano Uplift geology

According to Tillie Badu Moss Fry in her 1943 Master's thesis at the University of Texas, the igneous rocks of the Llano uplift were formed in the "Pre-Cambrian epoch", roughly 1.1 billion years ago. After a period of erosion, the area was covered by a Cretaceous sea, roughly 140 million years ago, and then uplifted and eroded. The area has "probably been above surface since the Upper Cretaceous period", roughly 75 million years ago. Most overlying limestones from later periods have totally eroded in the center of the area. Overlying limestones along the eastern fringe (roughly paralleling US Highway 281) show the impact of erosion of the granites to the west, with quartz and feldspar mixed into the calcium carbonate of ancient shelled animals. The Llano River enters the area from the west and flows generally east to the Colorado River. The river enters Llano County at about altitude 1200 feet and falls to about 800 feet at Kingsland. Hills rise to 1800-2000 feet in the northwest corner of the county.

Most printed sources repeat the statement that there were **thirteen different granites** produced in Llano County at one time or another. Evelyn Gould - widow of pioneer Edward Gould, the operator of Premier Granite for many years - said in 2003, that "there were quarries all over this county".

Badu, N. J., "Grandfather of Scientific Geology in Llano County". N. J. Badu had quarry rights on property that became Granite Hills Ranch, 12 miles east of Llano. Badu had obtained quarrying rights from J. C. Stribling, the ranch's owner, in the 1890s. Badu was the first to commercially produce grey granite from the site, **beginning in the 1890s.**

In 1902 Badu began to place Llano area minerals on display at the State Fair of Texas and "continued this for many years". (Fry, p. 130. He sold the rights to the ("Stolz") quarry in 1929 to Pete Stolz. "Professor N. J. Badu is often considered the grandfather of scientific geology in Llano County. For more than forty years, Professor N. J. Badu believed in the future of mining in Llano and devoted his energy to make this dream a reality." (Tillie Badu Moss Fry, as quoted in the Marble Falls Highlander, June 7, 1973. Fry was Badu's granddaughter)

Other early leaders in granite production: In regard to granite quarrying, Fry noted that "in 1908 there were 3 granite yards with 75 men employed", and that "hundreds of cars of granite were shipped per year". (Llano News, Nov 12, 1908.) In 1911 there were three granite finishers, including Frank Teich, T. W. Norton at Llano Granite Works, and the Z. A. Blodgett Granite Works. (Fry thesis p. 156.)

In 1917 the largest granite producers were the G. A. Parkinson quarry operated by Gooch and Company, the Frazier Granite Company quarry and quarries operated by Fred Kothe, Tom (T. W.?) Norton and Frank Teich. (Fry 156) She noted that \$322,655 worth of granite was shipped by rail in 1925. (Fry, p. 158) In 1928 "209 cars of granite were shipped from Llano", (Fry 158). The arrival of the Austin and Northwestern Railroad in 1892 provided Llano County with a reasonable way to ship heavy loads of granite for the next sixty years. But, with the arrival of paved roads and motor trucks in the 1930s, the shipping of granite by rail began to decline.

Ed Gould and Premier Granite: Tom Gould and his son W. E. (Edwin) Gould bought Premier Granite Quarries from Pete Stolz in 1944. Premier Granite yard was located on Highway 29 East in Llano, right at the railroad spur crossing. Edwin was discharged from the armed forces in 1945 and joined the firm which operated as a partnership" (Llano News @ 1964).

Beginning in 1949, Tom and W. E. Gould operated a "deep quarry" on FM 2545 about 3 miles north of Highway 1431 west of Kingland. It was called the "Premier quarry" and produced a rich granite called "Premier Rose" granite. The granite was produced for monuments and was the mainstay of Premier's wholesale monument business. As time passed, granites from other parts of the world were imported and finished at the Premier Granite Works in Llano. Much of the foreign stone was shipped by rail using a spur extending north from the Llano wye across 29 into the stone yard. For many years, bulk stone was loaded at the Premier plant, cut, shaped and finished, and shipped out of the county by rail. Tom Gould remained active in the business until his death in 1960.

In 1962, the firm began to expand. Three old polishing units were moved into a new polishing shed and another new polishing mill was purchased. A year later, an additional 125 feet was added to the existing 125 feet of overhead crane gantry to allow more room in operating the crane. And, in May, 1963, the firm expanded again, installing a machine called a "gantry profile grinder", which ground smooth tops and ends on monuments. Operated on a track, it had room for as many as 30 pieces of stone.

Edwin Gould provided the leadership for the firm from 1960 until his death in 1993. In the later years, much of the stone produced at Premier and at the Premier Quarry at Kingsland was shipped by truck. "The quarry (near Kingsland) was working until about a year ago" (@2001) according to Evelyn Gould, widow of Edwin Gould. Edwin (Ed Gould) passed away in 1993.

Mrs. Evelyn Gould mentioned on April 10, 2003, that the "manufacturing equipment was still in place (at the old Premier plant on Highway 29)...the cutting machines, the polishing wheels". One of the very distinctive sounds in Llano was the steam whistle at the Premier plant, which sounded at 7 AM, noon time, and 5 PM. to mark the day at the plant. When the plant closed, the whistle stopped.

Frank Teich. German-born Teich studied with stonecutters in Germany. Sometime between 1885 and 1890, Teich operated a quarry in Llano County, but left "to spend some time in Europe gathering ideas". He returned in 1901 to open a granite and stone yard called "Teich Monument Works" about one and a half miles east of Llano on the railroad. Teich was located at MP 97.4 and Llano wye was at MP 98.8. A settlement called "Teichville" grew up around the Teich Works. Teich's business became a "big operation". He produced many public monuments and did the exterior detailing of a number of public buildings. He worked in granite and later in bronze. A number of buildings at Teichville were depicted in a photo in Oatman, Llano: Gem of the Hill Country, p. 66. A large granite working building, a studio and a home were located at "Teichville".

His monuments included The Confederate Monument and the Fireman's Monument on the capitol grounds in Austin, the Sam Houston Monument in Houston, the Governor Pease Monument in Austin and others. He did the bronze statue of LaSalle in Navasota, and the Shanghai Pierce statue near Blessing, Texas. "Teich was in an indirect way responsible for bringing the sculptor Pompeo Coppini to Texas". He died January 27, 1939 in Llano and was buried there. He has been called by some "the father of the granite industry of Texas", Handbook of Texas on Line, "Teich, Frank".

The story of granite and minerals in Llano County is more complex and detailed than can be expressed in a single two-page summary. We regret that many pioneers are not mentioned in this short study. A more detailed 11-page study can be obtained for a \$10 donation to Hill Country Railroad Association, PO Box 383, Llano, Texas 78643.