

● mansfield public library, mansfield, ohio

DEFIANCE PUBLIC LIBRARY

October 27, 1959

Miss Nellie Gary, Librarian
Defiance Public Library
Defiance, Ohio

Dear Miss Gary:

Your question about the red sandstone quarried at Mansfield has proved to be an interesting one. I hope the following information will be of help to you.

According to the GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF OHIO, Vol. 3, pub. in 1878, the type of rock in and around Mansfield is of the Waverly Conglomerate variety and I quote "Much of the rock is beautifully colored in waved bands and lines of black, yellow and red, as delicately shaded as the best artificial graining of wood. Very beautiful specimens can be obtained, and if it were harder it would make a very ornamental building stone. It dresses smoothly and endures exposure well, but it is soft and easily worn away by abrasion."

Apparently the Mansfield rock is not considered as valuable as the Berea type although "The heavy beds of the Waverly afford an inexhaustible supply of stone of good quality for bridge and foundation purposes, which would also make a fair building stone!"

The company which supplied the stone for your library must have been Bowers and Co. This organization was originally established in 1840 and the firm operating at the time your building was erected came into being about 1887. Their trade extended all over the state of Ohio and some of the notable buildings in which this stone was used were the United Bank of Cincinnati, a number of fine residences in Walnut Hills, the Y.M.C.A. at Dayton, and many others. This information was garnered from a pre-centennial booklet published by the Richland County Historical Society in the early 1900s. Bowers & Co. went out of existence in 1912-1913, the reasons being as follows: first, the best stone was too expensive to quarry; and second, cement and cement blocks were cheaper and gradually took over the uses to which the sand stone had been put, e.g. foundation building and bridge work.

Since then, abortive efforts have been made to quarry the rock. However, the operation must be too expensive because none have succeeded.

Very truly yours,

Virginia Skiles
Reference Dept.