

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED SEP 17 1976  
DATE ENTERED JUN 7 1978

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Walker Cut Stone Company

AND/OR COMMON

Wilkeson Cut Stone Company

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

E of Wilkeson

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Wilkeson wa

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Washington

VICINITY OF

3rd - Donald L. Bonker

CODE

53

COUNTY

Pierce

CODE

053

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

#### CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

#### OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

#### PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

#### STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

#### ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

#### PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Burlington Northern Railroad - (see attached sheet)

STREET & NUMBER

820 Central Building

CITY, TOWN

Seattle

VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County-City Building

STREET & NUMBER

930 Tacoma Avenue South

CITY, TOWN

Tacoma

STATE

Washington

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

none

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located on the edge of the town of Wilkeson, the Wilkeson Cut Stone Company quarry is 35 miles from Tacoma and approximately 1000 feet above sea level in the foothills northwest of Mt. Rainier. The quarry has been worked continuously since 1904 operating under a single ownership between 1911 and 1959. A majority of the equipment in use today is the same machinery in place in 1929 - much of it installed as early as 1915.

Although the appearance of the buildings has changed somewhat, the quarry activity has never been significantly modernized. Steam drills are still used to bore holes in the face of the sandstone cliff, vertical boilers once referred to as donkey engines operate the derricks, and the gang saws and associated pumps are driven by a system of belts and wheels. Besides alterations and additions to the buildings, which are frame structures with board and batten or corrugated steel siding, the only major change in the process has been the replacement of an inclined tramway that transported blocks of stone from the quarry to the fabricating plant by a 45 ton dump truck.

The quarry is a section of hillside roughly 250 feet in height and 175 feet across with three derrick cranes positioned in a triangular relationship and supported by an interconnected set of guy-wires. These are used to carry men and equipment from the yard to temporary work platforms anchored on the face of the cliff and to move the stone once it has been shot free.

A series of blasting holes is drilled along the intended fracture line. The holes are then reamed into an oblong shape which controls the direction of force produced when the black powder is finally detonated loosening the desired block of stone. The block is then hoisted onto the truck where it is carried around the hill to the yard below. There the block is taken on a small rail cart to one of two gang saws for sizing prior to shaping or finishing.

The gang saws cut a series of slabs to any desired thickness using blades prepared on the site from steel bands about 15 feet long, five inches wide and one-quarter inch thick. These are notched at intervals of several inches and placed in a horizontal frame that is attached to a connecting rod on a belt driven wheel. Angle shot (fractured steel beads) is pumped in a slurry of water to the top of the stone. The shot is the actual abrasive carried back and forth by the reciprocating notched bands. The water and wasted shot are scooped up by a rotating spiral chamber pump and return to the top of the stone. Seventeen hours of sawing are required to cut through a block seven feet thick.

The slabs are then cut or broken to width depending upon the next stage in manufacture. At this point the work flow branches to any of several options. It can be directed to the planer, shaper, lathe or drill; it can be surfaced with a silica slurry sander, sculpted or stored for sale in block form. Although oversize and somewhat antique, the machines used in these later processes are fairly conventional, resembling their metal working or wood working counterparts.

The following is a list of all buildings as well as equipment manufactured prior to 1930 and currently in use by the Wilkeson Cut Stone Company:

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Improvements: Nyall Gordon and Bill Beebe, partners  
Wilkeson Cut Stone Company  
Wilkeson, Washington

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<u>Description</u>	<u>Manufacturer</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>Date of Manufacture</u>	<u>Location</u>
100 HP Derrick Crane (steam)	Clyde Mfg.	10x12	1927	Quarry
100 HP Derrick Crane (steam)	Clyde Mfg.	10x12	1922	Quarry
100 HP Derrick Crane (steam)	Washington Mfg.	10x12	1912	Quarry
50 HP Tramway Hoist (steam)	Unknown	8x10	1923	Quarry
50 HP Derrick Crane (steam)	American Mfg.	8x10	1929	Yard
	Serial #FTVT			
Gang Saw	Patch Mfg.	7'x6'x13'	1915	Bldg. #5
Gang Saw	Patch Mfg.	6'x6'x13'	1915	Bldg. #5
Cut-off Saw	Patch Mfg.		1926	Bldg. #4
Stone Planer	Patch Mfg.	FB	1911	Bldg. #6
	Serial #4751			
Stone Planer	Patch Mfg.	FB	1909	Bldg. #6
	Serial #1531			
Stone Planer	Patch Mfg.	SS20	1908	Bldg. #6
Stone Radial Drill	Bertram Co. Ltd.	8 ft.	1913	Bldg. #6
Stone Lathe	Patch Mfg.	4'x20'	1910	Bldg. #6

<u>Building #</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date of Const.</u>
0.	Office Building	Wood frame, 24'x44' single story	1947
1.	Main Warehouse	Wood frame, metal clad, 40'x80', 25' eave height	1941
2.	Sander & Cut-off Bldg.	Wood frame, metal clad, 30'x48'	1941
3.	Machine Shop & Maint.	Wood frame, 24'x80', single story.	1941
4.	Cut-off Saw Bldg.	Wood frame, 36'x48', two story	1927
5.	Gang Saw Bldg.	Wood frame, 60'x80', two story, metal clad	1927
6.	Warehouse	Wood frame pole shed, metal roof 24'x48'	1956
7.	Storage & Restrooms	16'x24', wood frame, single story	
8.	Derrick Crane Shed	16'x24', wood frame, single story	
9.	Blacksmith Shop	16'x24', wood frame, single story	
10.	Derrick Houses in Quarry (3)	16'x20', wood frame, single story	

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The acreage indicated for the Walker Cut Stone Company nomination includes only the yard and fabricating plant, the transportation system and the quarry itself. Considering that the available surveys and reference points are inadequate for a precise boundary description, the boundaries shown are chosen for reasons of convenience. Quarter - quarter section lines define an area with reasonable accuracy encompassing the significant rock formations, buildings, and associated equipment.

Portions of the road between the quarry and the yard are excluded from the nominated acreage. Expanding the boundaries to encompass the road where it winds around the back of the hillside would take in additional property not directly associated with the quarrying operation.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1911

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Robert Walker, S.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wilkeson Cut Stone Company is the oldest and largest operating sandstone quarry in the Pacific Northwest. A fabricating plant in the quarry yard includes shaping and surfacing equipment capable of producing dimensionally cut stonework to architectural specifications, such as cornices, columns and sculptured stone. Acquired by the company between 1911 and 1915, this machinery was used in preparing stone for the construction of dozens of buildings including the Washington State Capitol at Olympia (completed in 1928) and six associated structures.

The town of Wilkeson was first settled following the discovery of coal deposits in the canyon of the Carbon River in Pierce County in 1862. Mining for local distribution began eleven years later, and in 1876 the Northern Pacific Railroad built a branch line to the area.

The existence of a sandstone outcropping was noted by Sam Wilkeson in 1869 while conducting a reconnaissance for the Northern Pacific with Chief Engineer W. Milnor Roberts. This was an expedition undertaken to study the local geology and terrain prior to construction of the railroad's transcontinental route. Wilkeson was a former journalist and a friend of financier Jay Cook, who ordered the survey. Several months after returning east, Wilkeson was elected corporate secretary for the railroad.

The sandstone was first quarried by the Northern Pacific in the early 1870's for use as ballast in construction of the original roadbed for its trackage along the Pacific Coast. The first building constructed of Wilkeson Sandstone was begun in 1883 when the material was made available to commercial contractors. Completed in 1884 and still standing, St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Tacoma was erected by Charles B. Wright, former president of the Northern Pacific, in memory of his wife and daughter.

The quarry and surrounding lands were later leased to a series of private operators who removed stone sporadically over a period of several years. Eventually, in 1911 Robert S. Walker established the Walker Cut Stone Company succeeding the Bell-Scott Company. The previous lessee. Walker was an Englishman and a professional stonecutter who had been purchasing stone from his predecessors at the Wilkeson quarry. He retained ownership of the company until 1959, when Albert S. Kerry, Jr. and George Pocock of Seattle acquired Walker's proprietary interest and lease to the property. The corporate name was later changed to Wilkeson Cut Stone Company to increase identification of the firm with the quality and reputation of Wilkeson sandstone. Presently the company is owned by Nyal Gordon and Bill Beebe, who maintain a profit making business.

In the early years under Walker's ownership the quarry supplied cobblestones for paving streets in Tacoma and Seattle and massive drum-shaped grind stones used for reducing wood to pulp before modern chemical methods were perfected by the paper industry. The Company's first fabricating plant was on a railroad spur in Tacoma, although Walker had

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Quarrying Wilkeson Sandstone", The Northwest.  
Northern Pacific Railway Company. May-June, 1968, ppg. 13-15.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 40

UTM REFERENCES

D	1,0	5,7,3	4,3,0	5,2	1,7	7,0,0	700
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
B	1,0	5,7,3	8,6,0	5,2	1,7	2,9,0	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The SE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 27, T19N, R6E W.M. and the SW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 27, T19N, R6E, W.M. and the NE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 27, T19N, R6E, W.M. and the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 27, T19N, R6E, W.M.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jacob Thomas, Historic Preservation Specialist

4/30/76

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

P. O. Box 1128

(206) 753-4116

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Olympia

Washington 98504

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*James H. Cannon*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

September 13, 1976

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Lucy*

DATE

6/7/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*William Cole*

DATE

6-6-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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removed much of his equipment to the quarry site by 1915.

Major buildings in cities as far away as Spokane have been constructed of Wilkeson sandstone. A seemingly disproportionate number of these structures survive throughout both Washington and Oregon. The Washington State Capitol Building is reportedly one of only two solid stone domes in the United States. Using much of the original steam operated and belt driven machinery the company is still producing dimensioned stone in commercial quantities to meet the changing demands for cut stone in the construction industry. Recently the company has completed a contract for restoration stonework used in repairing a fire-damaged historic building on the Pacific University campus in Forest Grove, Oregon.