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Stone Construction*

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From the Editor

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From the Editor

This *Quarterly* takes a slightly different approach to architectural history and preservation. It is based on the idea that without a sturdy foundation of knowledge of the elements and processes that form buildings there is no true understanding of the depth and complexity of what a historical structure is and what it takes to preserve it. Stone as a building material offers the base upon which other elements of construction build, so it makes sense to begin there.

This issue is not meant to provide a workable knowledge of stone construction, but offer enough information to make readers aware of the variations and possibilities of building with stone. These structures hold historic importance because they originate in a time when craftsmen formed buildings based on physical labor and the art of fitting and carving stone. The stone structures are the record of a time and a skill that has been replaced by assembly line repetition and a desire to use what fits, not work with natural variety.

Stone is the foundation, literally the bedrock, upon and out of which humans have made their homes. Caves carved out of mountains by wind, water, and weather; outcroppings that shelter animals and provide nesting ledges; simple enclosures that protect fire from spreading and going out. From simple huts to pyramids and from an altar to a gravestone, we employ stone to protect ourselves and serve as vessels to hold our hopes and beliefs.

Stone is monumental at the same time that it is scaled to the human body. Pick up a pebble; rest upon a rock. Raise a stone circle to measure time; drop a stone into a lake to show a child the expanding ripples.

Stone endures and allows humans to leave a mark that will outlast us all. Stone contains the remnants of how this planet began, and we use it to mark where we end. Stone remains to mark our connection to the earth and our return to it.

—Heather A. Cross



The Eastside Community Center, Old Town—Threatened by road development and expansion, this crenellated, castle-like building is a prime example of uncoursed random stone work used for public buildings in the early 1900s. Repointing and the stone's durability have helped the structure weather many uses.