

Joseph T. Hannibal. *Guide to the Building Stones and Cultural Geology of Akron*. (Columbus, Ohio: Division of Geological Survey, 2006). 75 pp. Paper. \$11.00, Guidebook No. 19.

Joseph Hannibal weaves together geology, geography, and history to provide a *Guide to the Building Stones and Cultural Geology of Akron*, an interpretive tour of the built and natural landscape of Akron, Ohio. The book can be read as a stand-alone work or carried into the field to find and understand the physical traces of Akron's geologic, architectural, industrial, and commercial past. Hannibal's guidebook, number 19 in a series of field guides of Ohio's geologic history, was written for the 2006 North-Central Section meeting of the Geological Society of America, which met in Akron, Ohio.

The book, organized in the style of a field guide, is arranged to guide visitors through a series of stops in and around modern-day Akron. Hannibal's introduction effectively describes the purpose and use of the book, which can easily be used in the span of a day to view aspects of the city's natural landscape, as well as buildings, structures, and other site features. The main thrust of the work is an extensive, detailed, but accessible discussion of geologic formations and use of building stones, many of which were quarried locally or regionally, in a wide variety of applications spanning Akron's entire history.

Hannibal's understanding of the natural and built landscape is narrated meticulously and clearly, while not losing the general reader along the way. Not content merely to point out the usual 19th or early 20th century landmark buildings and structures constructed of natural stone or concrete, he also discusses more recent architecture, such as canal park restorations at Locks 2 and 3 of the Ohio & Erie Canal, the Oliver R. Ocasek Building, Cascade Plaza, The University of Akron buildings, and the U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building.

The stops described by Hannibal allow readers to travel in a systematic path around the community, learning about building stone, the formations from which stone was quarried, and a little bit of history about each of the areas. At most stops along the route the mix of history and geology is done effectively, although leaning heavily toward interpretation of the stone and its origins. The history is kept relatively brief so as to keep visitors moving along the route. This is done very effectively with many of the stops, such as the Portage Path terminus, Stan Hywet, John Brown Monument, Glendale Cemetery, Summit Lake, most of the canal sites, and most of the building sites. A few of the sites seemed a little lean on history, like the Akron Zoo, the Mustill Store and sites, the

Oliver Ocasek Building (who was Ocasek?), Cascade Plaza (urban renewal?), and the East Ohio Gas Company. In particular, the more modern structures were covered in less detail, but would have served as wonderful examples linking Akron's past as an industrial giant to today's renaissance of development and use. Issues such as historic preservation, urban renewal, the transition in the city's core commercial direction, and the tremendous role of the university in the city's rebirth need not have been examined in depth, but could have linked the use and presence of the physical landscape and built environment between the past and future. Sites along the old canal corridor could have provided the opportunity to note how the city's approach to development has come full-circle from its origins as a canal town to again consider the corridor as a stimulus for economic development and recreation.

Hannibal's writing style tends toward the technical, due in part to the guide's intended audience, but is actually quite accessible to general readers because of the excellent glossary of terms in the back of the book. Scale maps, diagrams, and graphs are employed by the author to help sort out the technical discussion of geologic formations as well as providing effective application of scale illustrating the extent of physical features. The mix of illustrations significantly adds to the effectiveness of the book. Three tables provided at the end of the book are very useful, including: a geological time scale; a table featuring summaries of uses or occurrences, sources/locations, and age of each formation; and another table relating trade names and rock unit names of building and ornamental stones. These additional features allow the average reader to better understand the technical descriptions, and a very thorough list of references lead the reader to more information on related topics.

Visitors using the book as a field guide are aided by a variety of useful illustrations, including details of rock formations, construction details revealing the craftsmanship of the stone masons, vintage engravings of sites, maps, and contemporary photographs. The author's understanding of the stone mason's art adds a rich element contributing to enjoyment of several of the stops along the route. Each photograph, illustration, or map is thoughtfully captioned to enhance the field experience. The book might have been spiral-bound (so that it could be opened flat) to enhance its field use, but this is a minor point.

Guide to the Building Stones and Cultural Geology of Akron is a significant contribution to the understanding of Akron's natural and built landscape because the guide effectively interprets the relationships between the geologic and geographic setting that reflects Akron's past development. The work is a worthwhile addition to the bookshelves of local geologists and historians alike.

Stephen H. Paschen
University Archivist
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio