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Only One Quarry Business Now At Work Where Once Large Industry Flourished

(Continued from last week)

They were originally interested in building stone, but later branched out into finishing and monumental marble. In 1902, the Gouverneur Cut Stone Co., acquired a quarry site near the second Davidson pit, on the Milton Barney farm, then owned by Mrs. George B. Winslow, where they built a mill and then changed their name to the Extra Dark Marble Co. They were builders in 1905 of the Gouverneur Memorial arch on the occasion of the centennial that year. The Extra Dark Marble Co. continued in business and filled several contracts such as churches and public buildings in various localities, but its career ended about 1908. The Extra Dark Co. mill burned in April, 1910. At that time the owner and operator was Joseph C. Callahan. This quarry property was not rebuilt after the fire. The J. C. Callahan estate still owns the Extra Dark quarry site.

Mr. Hampton continued in the marble business and with his son, George M. Hampton, started the firm of E. M. Hampton & Son. They operated in connection with the Gouverneur Marble Co., carrying out other contracts. In 1914 the Hamptons designed the bank front of the Bank of Gouverneur and furnished the stone to replace the original brick front.

Empire State Marble Co.

The Empire State Marble Co. was organized in 1890 by Duncan G. Wood, J. W. Tracy, Gilbert Mattison and James Dowole, the latter two being from Oswego, and they located on the Charles W. Overacker farm, a mile southeast of the village, and not in sight of a highway. They uncapped a quarry and erected a mill.

Prospecting on the William Kitts farm, adjoining the Empire Co. property to the east, resulted in 1890 of the forming of the Northern New York Marble Co. by George B. Massey of Watertown and John Webb and William A. Beach of Gouverneur. Mr. Webb managed the plant for eight years, when D. J. Whitney took charge. These two plants were situated across from the New York Central

tracks from the Gouverneur stockyards, a mile and a half outside on the Antwerp road, but a ridge hid them from view of any highway. The Empire plant was leased to the Northern New York Marble Co. in 1901 and later the two passed under the same ownership, with the George B. Massey interests in control. The Northern New York Marble Co. was operated for several years with fair success, with Albert M. Jepson as superintendent. A crushed stone plant was operated in connection with the Northern New York Co. also in charge of Mr. Jepson.

The Northern New York Marble Co., operation was regarded as being fairly good, but after the fire that destroyed both the Northern New York and the Empire Marble plant in October, 1912, subsequent actions disclosed financial weakness. The Empire Co. had ceased operating before 1910. In 1915, the Northern New York Marble Co. was declared bankrupt. One siding, leaving the main line tracks near the Gouverneur stockyards, served both these plants. The siding was abolished soon after the 1912 fire.

At this time the marble business was suffering further declines and monumental dealers were taking more to the Vermont marble. Concrete blocks had made their appearance and were being used in place of marble for buildings. In the first decade of the new century, a relatively small marble operation was running where previously there had been employed as many as 200 men.

Emery Tyler now is the owner of all the quarry sites of the Northern New York Marble Co. and William Hall, present owner of the former C. W. Overacker farm, owns the old Empire Marble Co. site.

Genesee Furnace Co.

In the spring of 1897, John W. Tracy of Gouverneur, purchased the Samuel Graves farm on the Scotch Settlement road, and opened a quarry for marble manufacture, on a cross road leading from

the Scotch Settlement road across the New York Central tracks about half way between Gouverneur and Richville. The quarry was situated near the tracks which permitted a siding. Mr. Tracy leased the quarry to H. P. Binwanger of New York. The 1905 centennial history stated that this quarry venture had not become active at that time.

Mr. Binwanger sold the site to the Corrigan-McKinney Co., of Cleveland, Ohio, for the purpose of producing a fluxing material for their own use. This company had a blast furnace at Charlotte, near Rochester. After several superintendents, Fred J. Porter was put in charge in 1908, the company operating as the Genesee Furnace Co., actually a subsidiary of the Corrigan-McKinney Co. The plant burned on November 5, 1912, but was rebuilt immediately.

Mr. Porter continued in charge and the Genesee Co. ran continuously until September, 1917, when the plant was dismantled and the machinery removed.

Mr. Porter reopened the former Northern Crushed Stone Co. on the old Northern New York Marble Co. property, after World War 1, operating as the Hy Grade Limestone Co. This was the finale of the three quarries on the orig-

inal Northern New York Marble Co. and the Empire Marble Co. site.

Davidson Brothers, of Chicago, somewhat on the nature of big time contractors, in 1888, leased ten acres of J. Bower Preston, on part of the Harvey D. Smith farm. This concern had a marble finishing plant in Watertown and was interested in obtaining local marble for their Watertown mill. Erwin B. Hurlbut was in charge of this first quarry pit. After about one year, they decided to abandon the Preston farm quarry and prospected one on what was

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Note: A letter dated Oct. 12, 1988 from Mrs. Mary Ashley, a granddaughter of J. C. Callahan, states that her grandfather never owned Davidson Co. #2 quarry (according to his obit.) and the Extra Dark quarry property of about 9 acres is no longer in the Estate of J. C. Callahan. Mrs Ashley stopped paying taxes on the land.

Nelson B. Winters, Town of Gouverneur Historian.