

# Quarries Once Major Industry of This Area; But One Now Operating

(Continued from last week)

After this option expired in 1884, the New York group, of which Milo M. Belding, sr., the silk manufacturer was a leading figure, completed purchase of the properties and organized the St. Lawrence Marble Co., retaining the Whitneys, who stayed in their employ until August, 1887, when Daniel Whitney retired from the operation.

Mr. Whitney states that by reason of insufficient capital having been provided at the start and business losses in the 1894-1895 hard times, the St. Lawrence Co. went bankrupt in 1896. Mr. Belding bought the property in 1898 and ran it successfully for several years, but the decline of the Gouverneur marble business was felt by all quarries by 1900.

There had been considerable demand for stone for buildings, and from 1884 for twenty years such local buildings as the Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist churches, the Masonic Temple, three business places, the Kamargo Furniture Co., Collins Hardware store, the Gralyn movie theater and the present Prosser restaurant, had ashlar marble fronts.

Another quarry venture was that of John N. Baxter and John A. Sanford of Rutland, Vt. The Vermont men prospected several months in 1881 just east of the lime kiln lot, which may still be seen in the quarry area. But they were not satisfied with the local product for monumental work, which now can be seen was prophetic of the future of Gouverneur marble for this class of work. They abandoned any idea of installing a plant here.

The 1880-1890 period was one of mixed success and failures in the marble industry. However there were also built in this period many churches, public buildings and other structures in many cities from Gouverneur marble.

## Whitney Marble Co.

Thomas J. Whitney in 1881, with others, prospected with a diamond drill near the site of the old Gouverneur Marble Co. mill, situated just south of the New York Central railroad tracks, and on the left side of the tracks, while proceeding south. This prospecting resulted in the forming of the Whitney Marble Co., the organizers being Mr. Whitney, Stephen B. Van Duzee, Lewis Eckmann, Daniel Peck, John W. Tracy, Abel Godard, Fred H. Haile, H. E. Gates and George P. Ormiston. Mr. Whitney retired after one year, and some of the incorporators took turns at managing the quarry and mill.

In 1883, there was an expansion in the form of a four gang mill. This plant was partially destroyed by a boiler explosion on May 1, 1884. Employes of the Watertown Steam Engine Co. were making repairs when the accident occurred and two of the boiler repair men, Joseph Oliver and Oliver Dashneau, were killed, together with four quarry employes, W. Frank Newcomb, Eli Jackson, W. T. Miller and Charles Murray. The Watertown Steam Engine Co. assumed the responsibility for the accident and paid the death claims, and rebuilt the mill.

## Gouverneur Marble Co.

In 1883, three acres had been purchased from the Barney lot, where the first operation started. This company was in financial difficulty in 1887, resulting in bankruptcy, and reorganization in 1888 as the Gouverneur Marble Co., with the principal stockholders being Mr. Van Duzee, Mr. Eckmann, Mr. Peck and Mr. Ormiston. The following year saw D. J. Whitney managing the company at an increased capacity. Succeeding Mr. Whitney as manager was Alexander Z. Turnbull, and Morris Eckmann, in 1898.

## Cut Stone Co.

The Gouverneur Cut Stone Co. was formed in 1897 by Edward M. Hampton, Ole B. Fisher and Richard Mahon. This company at first obtained its marble supply from the Gouverneur Marble Co. and operated in a building near the Gouverneur Marble Co. plant.

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