

Marble Firm Buys Hailesboro Quarry

By Fred Pierce
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GOUVERNEUR — Basin's Inc. of Wheatland, Wyo., which operates a marble quarry and crushing mill in Hailesboro, has been sold to Georgia Marble Company, Atlanta.

The local general manager, Carl A. Rohde, said he has been told there will be no immediate effect on the Hailesboro operation, although he said the 20 to 30 workers are concerned about the development.

"It's going to be business as usual," said Mr. Rohde. "At least at first."

Georgia Marble, a subsidiary of the Jim Walters Corp., Tampa, Fla., has white marble quarries in Georgia and Alabama. It specializes in manufacturing fine marble grinds used in paints and rubber, and competed with Basin's for markets in many marble products.

Basin's Hailesboro operations, formerly known as North Country Aggregates, produces marble chips for lawn and garden use, pre-cut and cultured marble, and lime.

The marble quarry's operations date back to nearly the turn of the century. In 1915, three Gouverneur stone quarries combined to form the Gouverneur Limestone Company.

The consolidated company, managed by Morris A. Eckman, reflected a declining demand for marble following 30 years of prosperity at Gouverneur's stone quarries.

Gouverneur marble was used to build for churches, government buildings and mansions throughout

the north country and beyond. Some was shipped to Chicago for the "Miracle Mile" along Michigan Avenue. Gouverneur came to be known as the 'City of Marble,' with many of its buildings, and even its sidewalks, made from the material.

After the Depression, however, demand for marble buildings dropped even further. The company's primary product became marble chips for use in driveways.

In 1947, the quarry and its stone mill was taken over by Joseph Balducci, and became the Balducci Crushed Stone Company, specializing in producing lime for agricultural use.

Lime production is still a primary enterprise for the company, and one that Georgia Marble is not involved in.

Eventually, the stone quarry was again merged with other stone quarrying and crushing operations, and was re-named North Country Aggregates Co. Inc. It was taken over by Basin's in July 1984.

Under Basin's ownership, it shipped 22,000 tons of its 100,000-ton annual production of white marble chips to Chicago. There it was bagged, and distributed for lawn and garden use throughout the midwest. Mr. Rohde said the new parent company, in time, is likely to try to enlarge Basin's market by producing different products.

"I don't know enough about what they're presently doing," he said, to try to predict which way the company will move.

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