

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

At the time of the town of Gouverneur Sesqui-Centennial observance May 24-30, 1955, the Balducci Crushed Stone Co. is the only quarry business now in operation, where once there existed many quarries, producing building stone, crushed stone, limestone and monumental work.

Eight quarries once were active here, for the most part in the area south and southwest of the village limits. There were likewise marble and kindred types of quarries, southwest, north and east of the village.

In the early days of the marble industry, the highway from the Somerville road, now Route 11, ran through this quarry section.

There are now living four men that were either quarry operators or owners of quarries which they ran themselves. The oldest is Fred J. Porter of 69 Rock Island street, 89, who, besides operating a town of Gouverneur quarry, was also interested in a second quarry at Natural Bridge, the Basic Refractories Co.

Morris Eckmann, 99 Park street 85, had 37 years experience in the marble industry.

John J. Sullivan, 83, of 200 E. Main street, had varied quarry experience.

Harry H. Hodgkin, 75, of 265 E. Main street, was a relatively late comer in the stone business, but he has the distinction of seeing the quarry and mill he established, now being continued as the only one in existence. Once approximately 200 men were employed in the quarries.

Daniel J. Whitney states in the 1905 Centennial history of Gouverneur that the first marble business was established in August, 1865, by Nathan E. Whitney, and J. H. Sawyer. Mr. Whitney later operated it alone. Still later Dan-

iel J. Whitney was taken into the firm which became N. E. Whitney and Son.

The first quarries continued under various heads with the quarrying being mostly done by blasting out stone from ledges in fields to be used for foundation walls, road building, and similar uses.

## First Quarrying

It was in 1876 that the actual quarry business came into being when Daniel J. and Thomas J. Whitney and John S. Honeycomb formed a company and contracted with the town of Gouverneur to furnish stone for the 1878 West Main street bridge piers. They leased land on the James K. Barney farm for their operation. On this site of the former Gouverneur Marble Co., is now a building owned by Charles I. Ruderman.

The Whitneys and Mr. Honeycomb began the production of cut stone for buildings at this time, their product being used in the erection of the two store fronts now occupied by the B. O. Kinney Co. at 27-29 E. Main street, trim for the Presbyterian church at Canton and stone for the County Clerk's office was also furnished by the Whitenys. This operation was done from 1879 to about 1886 when it was purchased by the Gouverneur Marble Co.

The first quarrying operation was almost entirely for the type of building mentioned, but in the fall of 1887, Mr. Whitney relates that they got out some stock on another part of the Barney farm, apparently nearly across the railroad tracks from an area south of the Clearview restaurant, and this stock was worked up into monuments. A demand had sprung up for dark marble monumental stock. Alexis W. Whitney, a

brother of D. J. and T. J. Whitney, bought out his brothers. T. J. Whitney returned to Vermont for a time and D. J. continued in the monumental business in his marble quarry holdings and built up a monumental trade.

A dispute over the terms of a contract for the lease of the Barney farm between Mr. Barney and

D. J. Whitney resulted in suspension of work on the Barney farm and arrangements by Mr. Whitney and J. Bower Preston for a lease of part of the Harvey D. Smith farm in the same quarrying area and work began in 1880. Up to this time all quarrying work was done by taking advantage of natural seams and the use of the plugs and feathers method. Powder was also used in blasting to reduce large stones. At this time hand channeling was substituted.

Joseph E. McAllaster in 1880 became interested in the marble industry and with D. J. Whitney formed a company known as the Gouverneur Marble and Whitney Granite Co. Quoting Mr. Whitney, "An arrangement was made with a firm in Cleveland, to saw larger blocks while the smaller sizes were shipped to dealers either roughly broken or pointed to size. As hand channeling was a slow method, a diamond drill channel machine was installed in 1881 and a side track from the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg railroad, which passed close to the quarries was run to the new property, apparently the first siding to be run to a marble quarry." New York capitalists obtained an option on this quarry and D. J. Whitney and T. J. Whitney, who had returned from Vermont, ran the business under contract based on the cubic feet of stock produced.

(To be Continued Next Week)