

Stone Quarrying by the California Indians

The materials used by the California Indians were mainly stone, wood, bone, pottery, and skin.

The most important function of their quarries was to supply materials for the implements and tools to be used to hunt (stone points for war or hunting weapons, mortars or metates for grinding seeds, sling stones, chipped knives for meat cutting), or to maintain their necessities such as house-building, skin-dressing, clothing, or decorative or ceremonial objects such as beds).

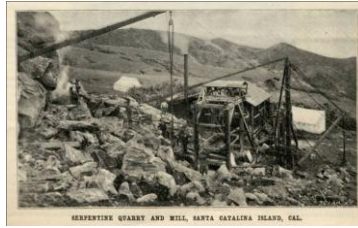
Generally, stone was quarried locally; but the California Indians traded with neighboring and distant Indian tribes for important sources for stone materials not available in their own area.

Researchers have concluded that there was no private, individual ownership of the California Indian quarry sites. The stone resources belonged to the group. Because of this the quarries belonged to all tribal members. Some tribal members developed abilities to produce finished or manufactured articles from a particular stone.

The Indians on the Coastal Ranges of California were known to have used stone the earliest when they quarried obsidian, soapstone, red ochre, and chert in Sonoma County and red ochre and schist in Contra Costa County.



Deposits of serpentine (verde antique) and soapstone (steatite) have been quarried on Santa Catalina Island since the Indians lived there.



Stone & California Mission Construction

The most prevalent types of construction of the Spanish missions in California were the use of adobe bricks, wood, and a masonry technology brought from Spain and Mexico. Experienced masons and laborers were brought from Mexico and Spain to train and work with the Indians to build stone columns, foundations, trim, aqueducts, lavanderías, fountains, some ranch buildings during the late 1700s, etc.. More substantial buildings were constructed of stone from local quarries, such as Mission San Juan Capistrano's "Great Stone Church."



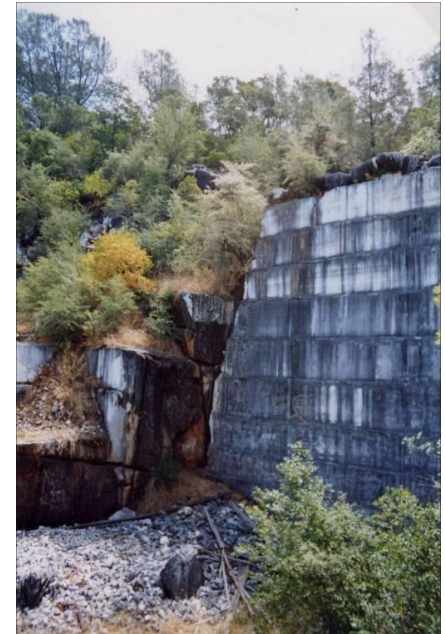
Gargoyle Waterspout in the Mission San Luis Rey de Francia Lavandería, photo by Nicole McClellan



Mission San Miguel Arcángel, photo by E. Collacott "Mines and Quarries of the Indians of California," by Robert F. Heizer, Calif. Div. of Mines, July 1944. *The California Missions*, Elizabeth L. Hogan, Ed., 1993.

History of Quarrying in California from the California Indians up to Present Time

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Stone Quarries & Beyond:

Quarry Workers – Stone Cutters & Stone Carvers
– Historical Dealers of Stone & the Finished Products

<http://quarriesandbeyond.org/>

History of California Stone Quarries
http://quarriesandbeyond.org/articles_and_books/ca-hist_of_ca_quarrying_fr_ca_ind_to_pres_jan_2011.html

Some California Stone Quarries

By Peggy B. Perazzo

Below are photographs of some of the California quarries that supplied dimension stone. A few of them are still active. You can learn more about California quarries and view photographs in the California state section of our web site.

<http://quarriesandbeyond.org/states/ca/california.html>

Colusa Sandstone Quarry ca early 1900s (left)
Brownstone Quarry (aka Colusa quarry) 2006 (right)



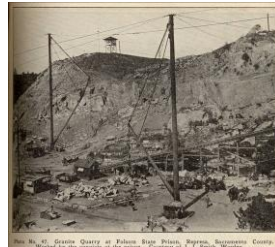
Raymond/ Knowles Quarry, "Sierra White," Madera County (below & lower right) & **Wagon hauling Academy Black Granite**, Fresno County (left)



McGilvray Granite Quarry & Works
 (left 1900s)



(right 2010)



Folsom Prison Quarry
 Sacramento Co. (late 1800s)



Folsom State Prison & Power House (late 1800s)



Granite Quarry, Corona,
 Riverside Co. (ca 1904)



Shed & Yard at Rocky Pt. Granite Quarry, Tulare Co.



Cameron-Deering Quarry, Lakeside



Simpson Quarry, Santee,
 San Diego County



Columbia Marble Quarry & Works
 Tuolumne County



Sespe Canyon
 Ventura County



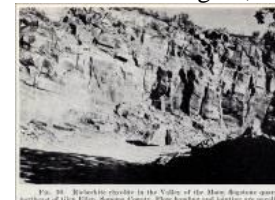
Upper story of the Digg's building in Woodland
 built of Ventura Co. Sandstone



Eureka Slate Quarry & Works,
 Slatington, El Dorado County



F.W. Aggregates dolomite quarry, Inyo County



Riebeckite rhyolite in the Valley of the Moon flagstone quarry, Sonoma Co.



Modern transportation for desert & mountains (ca 1919)