

# **California Stone Monument & Building Industry circa February 1910**

## **“The West Coast”**

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## **“The West Coast”**

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“San Francisco, Feb. 18. – The local demand for granite and sandstone, as well as marble for building purposes, is still rather moderate, marble being especially inactive, as the contracts which have been expected on new buildings in San Francisco are still being held up on account of bad weather and other causes. There is, however, considerable work on hand at most of the local cutting establishments, and the larger plants are keeping quite busy, having some work still to do on old jobs, while new contracts placed within the last month or two are about to be started. The marble business is not very well distributed, the bulk of the work now underway being in the hands of a few large firms. The latter, however, are greatly encouraged with the outlook, which is much better for stone and marble than for most other building materials. In addition to the jobs recently let, a number of large structures are in prospect for the spring for large institutions, etc., on which expense will not be spared. The granite and sandstone cutters have work on hand which will last well into the summer, and by that time expect to take on enough in addition to keep them busy the remainder of the year.

“It is still too early to make any definite predictions as to the extent of the marble monument business around San Francisco this year, but dealers feel well assured that it will be larger than last year. Retailers generally report extremely good sales for so early in the season, and while the demand is not up to the average for spring and summer many dealers have already been able to unload most of the stock taken on before the first of the year. Several have come into the market, and a number of large orders have been received by local wholesalers, though the majority will not begin to stock up for another month. The situation at Colma, just outside of San Francisco, where many of the retailers are located, looks very promising.

“Realini & Pratini, formerly with Prader & Russell, who started in business last summer at 768 Broadway under the name of Broadway Monumental Works, are building up quite an extensive business, notwithstanding the fact that their location is at a long distance from any of the local cemeteries. In addition to moving a large lot of American marble monuments in the last few months, they have just completed a large coping job, and have taken a contract for an expensive vault, on which they are now at work. The structure is to be of granite, with roof, floor and interior of marble. They expect to have another important vault job before the end of the month, and look forward to an extremely good season.

“There is a very fair movement of building marble in Los Angeles at present. There is even more building going on there than in San Francisco at present, and several good sized contracts have recently been let for inside work on large buildings.

“The Dolomite Marble Co. has been incorporated in Los Angeles, with a capital stock of \$500,000, by G. N. McCullough, R. R. Thompson, T. C. Bundy, D. M. Shanks and P. F. Rice.

“Governor F. D. Proctor, of the Vermont Marble Co., arrived in San Francisco from Seattle early this month, and after spending a week at the local offices left for the return trip.

“The local plant of the Vermont Marble Co. has received no Alaska marble for the last few weeks, though occasional shipments are arriving at Seattle. The quarries in Alaska are closed at present, on account of bad weather, but a lot of new machinery is now at Seattle ready for shipment to the quarries, and will be installed during the coming summer. The output will be much larger than last year. The company is still busy here with the preparation of the Alaska product for the market, and several large lots of it have been placed. Another lot has been taken for the Normal School at San Jose, Cal., and this material has been specified for the Odd Fellows’ hall, replacing Italian marble. The architect for the new B’Nai B’Rith hall has also decided upon Alaska marble in preference to Italian. The Vermont Marble Co. is not yet well started on its large contract for the Pacific Union Club, but the material is being shipped from various quarters, some from Italy and some from the Tennessee quarries. This is the principal job now under way, but several of fully as much importance are about to be let.

“The largest marble job in many months will be that on the Olympic Club, though some alterations will probably be made in the specifications. Bids were taken several weeks ago, but it was decided to make a few alterations in the plans, which will appear in final shape some time next month.

“Contracts have not yet been let on the new courthouse at Bakersfield, Cal., but bids will be received shortly. It will require a large amount of both granite and marble. Another Bakersfield job in sight is an addition to the First National Bank, in which more or less marble will be used.

“Rowe & Runnelshave bought out the marble and monument business of Barnum & Barnum at Bakersfield, Cal., and will handle building work as well as monuments. They are carrying a large stock of Vermont marble monuments, as well as some local granite, and expect to cover the southern San Joaquin Valley more thoroughly than has been done in the past.

“Ernest Boucher, of the Western Marble Supply Co., San Francisco representatives of the New Pedrara Mexican Onyx Co. and of some exporters in Italy, has moved from the Hansford building to the Monadnock building. The new Pedrara Mexican Onyx Co.’s plant at San Diego, Cal., is keeping very busy, with several large contracts for work both here and in the south.

“There is some indication that people here are coming back to the marble washstand, which has of late years been largely replaced by enameled iron. Several large orders have been taken by the Vermont Marble Co. and others from plumbers both in San Francisco and the northern coast cities for marble lavatory fittings, and they are evidently regarded with more favor than for some time past. This is not a large item, but ‘every little bit helps.’

“The dead body of Peter Taube, of Seattle, president of the American Marble Co., was found recently on the company’s property at Fox Island, Alaska. The cause of his death has not been learned.

“The first shipment of stone for the new Puget Sound Navy Yard dry dock has just been received at Bremerton, Wash. The work will require some 2,000 carloads of granite, taken from the quarry at Index, Washington.

“As a result of the extent to which the Alaska marble has been cut into the demand for California material, local quarrymen are planning to extend the market for their fancy lines this year.

“The Columbia Marble Co. in the absence of any immediate work is planning an advertising campaign on California marble, which will be extended all over the Pacific Coast and the east. The quarries in Tuolumne county are showing new grains and new qualities, which the management thinks will leave all the other marbles far behind when it comes to marketing the product. The new samples of these marbles, the Portola and the Blue, have arrived and are on display in the local office. A number of local architects have seen these marbles and have commented favorably on them, and it is now the intention of the company to get all the architects and prospective builders to take a look at the products. The Portola marble has a russet background, a golden vein, in some spots an onyx effect, and is medium blue clouded. The blue marble is of very dark blue hue and takes a high polish.

“The Baxter Marble Co. is doing very little in the local market at the present, owing to the lack of demand and to the inability of the company to move the product from the quarries. The roads from the quarries in Tuolumne county to the nearest railroad station will not permit heavy teaming, on account of the rainy weather, but the quarries are running to the full capacity, storing up a quantity of blocks, in anticipation of activity in this line with the opening of spring.

“Guido E. Musto, secretary and treasurer of Joseph Musto Sons-Keenan Co., is erecting a residence on the Presideo (sic) Heights district in San Francisco, and is using marble extensively in the interior decorations and a number of solid carved mantels. The casings in the reception hall will be in a light marble and will be the same as was used throughout in the decorations of the recently completed Palace hotel in this city.

“Joseph Musto Sons-Keenan Co. are completing the marble veneering outside work on the Powell Street Investment Co.’s two new buildings on Powell street, near Market. The company is also doing the interior work on the new building of the Knights of Pythias in this city, the interior of Nevada black and gold marble on the Praeger building, the interior of Italian marble on the Rivers building, and the interior of the Salinas Valley Bank building is finished red antique and Italian Pavonazzo.”