

California Stone Production as of 1892

Excerpt from

“Stone Production, Part II”

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California Stone Production circa 1892

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California.

"Until within a comparatively few years the demand for stone in this state has not been very great, and consequently the development and growth of the California industry is by no means in proportion to the resources in stone of all kinds which the state has revealed and which have been recognized and known for a long time. Most of the buildings of the state have been of pine or redwood, the abundance, accessibility, and cheapness of which have caused their general adoption. The mild climate has also tended to retard the adoption of the more substantial stone in the erection of dwellings. Insufficient facilities for transportation have naturally also been an obstacle in the way of quarry development, and in some localities where fine stone is abundant and accessible this drawback will be felt for years to come.

Even where the demand for stone becomes as great in comparison with other building materials as could possibly be expected, the number of large cities in California and neighboring states is sufficient to offer inducements for the development of more than a small fraction of the valuable quarry property known to exist, and shipments to remote points will have to be made before production will be commensurate with the possibilities. Such shipments are, however, by no means out of the question in view of the fact that a larger amount of eastern stone is shipped to California than would ordinarily be suspected. This is notably the case with slate, and to some extent also with other kinds of stone produced at eastern quarrying centers. This state produces the following kinds of stone, named in the order of their commercial importance: Granite, limestone, marble and slate.

"**Granite.** – This comes from seventy-six quarries in the following counties, named according to the value of output: Placer, Sacramento, Sonoma, Alameda, Fresno, San Bernardino, Solano, Humboldt, San Diego, Tulare, Nevada, Los Angeles, Marin and Calaveras. It is thus evident that granite is quarried at points scattered over an area extending from the extreme northern to the extreme southern part of the state. The great bulk of the product comes, however, from the first five counties, four of which are near Sacramento and San Francisco. The total output for the state in 1889 was valued at \$1,329,018. Of this amount Placer county produced \$299,000 worth; Sacramento, \$289,000; Sonoma, \$215,000; Alameda, \$142,000, and Fresno, \$120,000. Somewhat less than half of the output is used for street paving and a slightly smaller quantity for ordinary building purposes. The granite quarries in the southern part of the state, while capable of producing large quantities of good stone, depend for their demand upon the southern portion of the state, and consequently the production will be necessarily limited until a wider territory of

consumption is made available by a decided cheapening in transportation. In Fresno county are recently opened granite quarries twenty-two miles north of Berendo. Large developments are promised, the stone being so situated as to be accessible and easily handled. It is not regarded as a monumental stone, but it does not stain and answers very well for building. Large quantities of fine granite are to be found at Declezville, Victor and Riverside in San Bernardino county; and at Temecula in San Diego county. In Placer county, Rocklin and Lincoln are the most important producing centers. The stone from these quarries takes a brilliant and lasting polish and is quite popular with builders. Quarries have been operated for about twenty years at Rocklin, Lincoln, Loomis, and Penryn. The Central Pacific railroad takes about 90 per cent. of the product to San Francisco. At Penryn the latest improvements for finishing and polishing granite are to be found in more complete condition than in any other locality in the state.

“The Folsom quarries of Sacramento county are at a point one mile above the town of Folsom City, which is twenty miles from Sacramento. Stone from these quarries has been used in the construction of the stone viaduct at Mare Island navy-yard, and also at the state capitol in Sacramento. It also enters largely into the stone buildings in San Francisco. These quarries lie for two miles on both sides of the American river. In this vicinity one of the prisons of the state is located. A large dam constructed of granite across the American river was completed in December, 1890. The labor was for the most part convict labor furnished by the state. This great work was commenced in 1866, but for a complication of reasons was somewhat delayed until 1888, when it was reundertaken and pushed with vigor. Most of the granite recently quarried has been used in the construction of this dam and also of the canal. The enormous water power which this dam will render available will be used in the prison and also in the city of Sacramento, where it is expected an important industrial era will be inaugurated by the utilization of power for this source. The dam and canal are the most substantial structures of the kind on the Pacific coast. It is the intention of the granite company operating at this point to put large quantities of stone upon the market as soon as the canal and dam operations are entirely completed.

“The granite-quarrying operations of Sonoma county are practically limited to the production of basalt paving blocks, which has for years constituted an important industry in this county.

“**New and Prospective Developments.** – During 1890 new granite quarries were opened by Mr. Matthew Lumber, of Rocklin. The Western Granite and Marble Company, of San Jose, the Carlow Bros., of Sacramento, and the California improvement company of Oakland, are all engaged in new developments of quarry property.

“**Sandstone.** – In 1889 sandstone was produced to the value of \$175,598 from fifteen quarries scattered over the following counties, named in order of output: Santa Clara, Amador, Ventura, San Bernardino, Yolo, Solano, and Napa. Of the total output Santa Clara yielded \$100,000 worth; Amador county was second, with a product valued at \$35,000. At San Jose a sandstone of light color and good quality is quite extensively quarried. It has been adopted upon the basis of its merits and its accessibility for use in the construction of Stanford University. The Sespe Mountain sandstone of Ventura county is claimed to be the finest sandstone in the state, particularly for ornamental building.

“Marble. – Four quarries in San Bernardino, Amador, Inyo, and San Louis Obispo counties produced in 1889, \$87,030 worth of marble. Of the total output San Bernardino produced to the value of \$78,000, by far the larger part of the entire product. It is thus evident that southern California yields the bulk of the marble output of the state. The marble industry of California is in its infancy. The most advanced development is found in the quarries at Colton, San Bernardino county. Equipment for sawing, dressing, and polishing has just been completed. The stone is not what could be called strictly first-class, but occasionally fine blocks are quarried. The quarries are so situated as to render operations easy and inexpensive.

“The quarries are so situated as to render operations easy and inexpensive. The developments in Inyo county are watched with interest. Shipments are steadily being made, and it is expected that railroad communication with Mojave will be made before long. Considerable prejudice among California marble workers against the marble of the state has had to be overcome, and, in view of the fact that the best quality of stone is not usually obtained near the surface, such unfavorable impressions are natural, but not always fair. Time must elapse before the stone can be fairly judged.

“New and Prospective Developments. – The stockholders of the Carrara Marble Company in Amador county have been prospecting for a new railroad to their quarry. The marble from this quarry is regarded by certain experts in the state as the best to be found on the Pacific coast.

“Slate. – Eighteen thousand dollars’ worth of slate was produced from three quarries in El Dorado county in 1889. The product was used for quite a variety of purposes and appears to give entire satisfaction to the consumers. The demand for slate has been such in the past as to cause its importation from the East; the industry which has been opened up in the state ought therefore to thrive, and from present appearances it will grow steadily. At the Chili Bar slate quarry abundant water power is available, and while at present a large amount of dead work in stripping, etc., is to be done, the outlook for liberal production in the course of a year is exceedingly good.

“Limestone. – Twenty-two quarries, scattered over eight counties in the state, produced limestone valued at a total of \$516,780. Of this amount \$513,130 represents the value of lime manufactured, so that it appears that only a small quantity of the total limestone production of the state goes for anything else than lime. The productive counties named in order of value of output, are as follows: Santa Cruz, \$266,650; San Bernardino, \$74,000; Kern, \$47,630; San Benito, \$37,500; and smaller amounts in El Dorado, Santa Clara, San Diego, and Placer. The first-named county has for years been the principal producer of lime. Wood is abundant, cheap, and to be had immediately at the quarries. Transportation to San Francisco is by water. These advantages will probably enable Santa Clara county to maintain the lead for years to come. The most improved appliances are in use, and the lime is undoubtedly the best in the state. In San Benito county active operations have been inaugurated and the stone is of good quality. The following analysis of the limestone in this county has been made:

ANALYSIS OF LIMESTONE FROM SAN BENITO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.			
	<i>Per cent.</i>	<i>Per cent.</i>	<i>Per cent.</i>
Carbonate of calcium.....	96.00	99.2	99.0
Silica	2.10	.7	.5
Gypsum.....	Trace.	Trace.	Trace.
Total.....	98.10	99.9	99.5

“The lime produced has to be hauled by twelve-horse teams to the railroad, thus adding to the cost; but it is said that this increase in the cost is largely offset by the ease of quarrying.

“William C. Day”

