"California's Granites are Unsurpassed

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"Company Builds Mausoleums for our Cemeteries: Many of Finest Structures on Pacific Coast Erected by His Firm"

In the "Little Journeys to the Homes of Big Industries," section of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 7, 1921, pp. 7.

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Peggy B. Perazzo
Email: pbperazzo@comcast.net
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John D. McGilvray, pioneer stone expert and founder of the McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company

(Photo caption: "John D. McGilvray, pioneer stone expert and founder of the McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company.)

"One of the great natural resources of California was for years comparatively unnoticed and a magnificent source of wealth remained undeveloped.

"This was the now promising stone industry. Although a few experts and master stone men, like John D. McGilvray, founder of the great McGilvray-Raymond Granite Co., with a half dozen of the largest quarries in the country now in operation, knew of the wonderful possibilities of California stone on account of its superior qualities, yet it was not extensively used owing to ancient methods.

"A few stone buildings had been created before this time, but the cost was almost prohibitive. McGilvray introduced modern methods of handling stone in building construction, which made it possible to use it in competition with other materials. By this means he constructed a market for California stone. He lived to see the day when his judgment was sustained by the almost universal acceptance of his opinion that California granite for qualities of durability and capacity to take a fine finish, whether hammered or polished, was unequaled anywhere in the world.

"Born in Scotland of good family, he early became acquainted with the best stones of that famous country. By trade he became a stone cutter and designer, and there were few quarries in Scotland noted for its fine stones, or for that matter on the continent of Europe, with the texture and qualities of whose products he was not familiar.

"Besides being a craftsman of acknowledged capacity, John D. McGilvray was a man who thought for himself, on original and progressive lines as his whole career shows. On coming to America, he first located in New York, next he went to Chicago and following this he tried Denver always on the lookout for some opportunity that would be worth while.

A Pioneer in Developing California Stone

"John D. McGilvray incorporated a company for dealing in stone in Denver in 1880 where he remained for some time, being very successful in his business. In 1893, he came to California, and on investigating the outlook by an examination of the qualities of the stone he became convinced that here was his opportunity to develop in a larger way than was possible elsewhere.

"In 1897 he incorporated the McGilvray Stone Company for the purpose of popularizing the California product in building construction. Later in 1907, he re-incorporated under the name of McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company of which corporation he remained the head until his death in 1916.

"This brief record shows that John D. McGilvray may justly be considered a leading pioneer in the development of the new large and important stone industry of the Golden State. He became in time not only the most potent influence in creating a market for California stone, but also in advancing the architectural standards of our more important buildings on lines of permanence and beauty.

"After the great fire and earthquake of 1906 he had a clear demonstration of his contentions that California stone was the best building material for large buildings in the West. The Emporium building, which he constructed for the Parrott Estate in the nineties, and the Flood building across the way were both left standing practically intact, while all around them was a mass of debris and burned rubbish. The Emporium building was so staunchly built and the stone was of such a high grade that it even withstood the efforts of the dynamite squad, when they tried to level it to cut the pathway of the great fire.

"The best encomium that can be passed upon the founder of the McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company is to mention some of the magnificent buildings of San Francisco and vicinity which were erected under his auspices, and which stand as living monuments to his enterprise and ability. On some of these buildings are jobs that are world records. On the First National Bank building, which he erected are four cored monolithic granite columns, through which smaller steel columns pass, that are the longest in the world, being eighteen feet of solid stone. The McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company also holds the record in sandstone, having placed in the Southern Pacific building cored columns twenty-one feet long. The coring of columns had never been done before of that length and the fact that such great masses of stone could be cut from California quarries, so perfect in texture, is a positive demonstration of its superior character.

Builds First Skyscraper Erected in San Francisco

"The McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company built the first great skyscraper in San Francisco for Claus Spreckels in 1898, which held the record for a long time as being the tallest building on

the Pacific Coast. Next the company began to construct the various stone buildings which have made Stanford University known around the world for the architectural beauty of its stone work. The Stanford chapel has become particularly celebrated in art circles for the magnificence of its design and the faultlessness of its construction.

"The first important building of granite erected by the McGilvray firm was the United States Custom-house, on Washington and Battery streets. Since that time it has erected the San Francisco City Hall and Public Library buildings, among the most beautiful in the world, the Union Trust Bank building, the First National Bank building, the Kohl building, the Newhall building, the St. Francis Hotel, the Examiner and Chronicle buildings, American National Bank building and the **Courthouses of Sacramento, Solano, Kern and Yolo counties**. The McGilvray company is now building that imposing and distinctive structure, called the Commercial Insurance building on Pine and Montgomery streets.

"The McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company operates quarries at Raymond, Madera county, at Sites, Colusa county, at Greystone, Santa Clara county, and Lakeside, San Diego county. The plants at all these quarries with their modern mechanical equipment for extracting and cutting this stone are among the largest in the country. The control of these various quarries practically gives the firm command of almost inexhaustible sources of the best building materials in the West for generations to come. The McGilvray-Raymond granite is of beautiful color and texture and lends itself to almost any kind of construction. The severest tests have shown this California granite to be superior to anything the East can produce. It takes an unrivaled polish. Its wonderful strength and firmness prevent breaking in the process of construction and the most delicate carvings can be executed with ease as can be seen on so many buildings noted for their architectural splendor erected by the McGilvray company.

Company Designs and Constructs Mausoleums

"The stone from Lakeside, known as Silver Gray, is considered among the finest monumental stones in the United States. In recent years, with the decline in building construction due to the war and other causes, the McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company has gone extensively into the business of making and constructing mausoleums and memorials for our cemeteries. So great has been their success that this end of the firm's business has become a most valued asset. The firm believes that people who want memorials should insist on having California granite as this State has the finest grade of stone that can be found anywhere in the world.

"The McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company is in a position to design as well as construct, the most important memorials. The firm has to its credit many of the notable mausoleums in our principal cemeteries, among which may be mentioned the M. H. de Young memorial in Holy Cross, the I. W. Hellman memorial in the Home of Peace Cemetery, the Hitchcock and Murphy memorials in Cypress Lawn and the Musio and DeBarnardi; memorials in Holy Cross.

"The McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company not only builds and constructs all kinds of edifices in which stone can be used, but also is a large wholesale dealer in various kinds of stone used in building construction and for memorial purposes. The shipments of the company extend all over

the Pacific Coast, and no firm or corporation in the West is doing more at the present time to extend the market of this important California industry.

Sterling Qualities Perpetuated in Five Sons

"John D. McGilvray to whom California is indebted for building up a great industry, possessed many of the qualities of the fine stones of his native land. But it was in America and in helping to build up the West that he exhibited these sterling qualities – endurance, strength, reliability. At the same time he showed he was impressed with the beautiful, like a sensitive artist, just as Scottish granite can take the finest polish like a silver mirror.

"One other thing must be mentioned as an additional contribution to California. He left a family of five of as manly, energetic and progressive sons as live in the Golden State. Before his death a few years ago all these sons were helping their father to develop his business, since which time all of them have made distinctive reputations in the business and commercial worlds, showing that they are really 'chips of the old block.'

"At the present time John D. McGilvray, the eldest son of the founder of the McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company, is president and general manager, directing the firm with the same wise supervision and success as was shown by his father. H. S. McGilvray is vice-president and has charge of construction work in San Francisco. A. B. McGilvray is treasurer of the firm and manages the great granite quarry at Raymond. W. S. McGilvray has charge of the company's plant in Los Angeles, at 678 South Utah street, while Malcolm McGilvray, the fifth son, occupies the position of assistant secretary.

"So in some way or other all the sons of California's greatest stone man are contributing to the upbuilding of the company's business."