

# “New Towers of Stone in Chicago”

(Article about the S. W. Straus Building & the Chicago Tribune building in Chicago, Illinois)

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*(Excerpts from the article)*

“Rising to a height of 475 feet, or 215 feet above the Chicago building height limit of 264 pierces the sky-line as a monument of a new architecture. This massive structure takes the form of a hollow square, built around the site, with an inside light and air court entirely surrounded by offices. This main shaft of building is twenty-two stores high and carries a ten-story tower on the Michigan Avenue side...The first five stories are faced in Select Buff Indiana Oolitic Limestone and the balance, including the tower in Variegated Indiana Limestone. All of this stone was quarried and furnished by the Indiana Quarries Company of Bedford, Indiana....”

## **Tower of Carved Stone**

“Few buildings in America have been designed with more care to every detail of surroundings and architectural effect than the new Tower Building for The Chicago Tribune. Architects from foreign countries, as well as the foremost in American entered the competition...The material for the exterior of this beautiful building is ‘Old Gothic’ Indiana Limestone, furnished, cut and set by J. Hoadley & Sons Co., Inc., of Bloomington, Indiana. Except for purposes of wider variations in color, all the stone for this exterior came from the Hoadley quarries....”

This article, which begins on the next page,  
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Peggy B. Perazzo  
Email: [pbperazzo@comcast.net](mailto:pbperazzo@comcast.net)  
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## New Towers of Stone in Chicago

**R**ISING to a height of 475 feet, or 215 feet above the Chicago building height limit of 264 feet, the tower of the new Straus building pierces the sky-line as a monument of a new architecture. This massive structure takes the form of a hollow square, built around the site, with an inside light and air court entirely surrounded by offices. This main shaft of building is twenty-two stories high and carries a ten-story tower on the Michigan Avenue side and containing in its "bee hive" cap a complete set of cathedral chimes, an exact counter part to the Metropolitan Tower bells in New York City. The exterior of the building follows the best known examples of Florentine architecture in Indiana Limestone. The first five stories are faced in Select Buff Indiana Oolitic Limestone and the balance, including the tower in Variegated Indiana Limestone. All of this stone was quarried and furnished by the Indiana Quarries Company of Bedford, Indiana. In all, approximately 103,000 cubic feet of this beautiful stone was used, or about 200 carloads. It is interesting to note in this connection that the stone was fabricated well in advance of the delivery date to the building and at one time The Central Oolitic Stone Company of Chicago, the cut stone contractors, had 80,000 cubic feet of finished stone in storage; about 25,000 cubic feet in its disposal yard in Chicago and about 55,000 cubic feet under its tramway storage at Bloomington, Indiana where its mill is located. This assembling of the cut and carved stone enabled this firm to deliver it to the Archer Stone Setting Company at the building as required and in record-breaking time. All of the stone carving for the building was done at the plant of the Central Oolitic Stone Company plant, with the exception of the sculptured heads in the arched windows of the third story, which were carved in the wall. The buffalo heads that flank the belfry in the tower were carved in the plant.

The stone work up to the sixth story has a deep joint treatment, above which is plain ashlar finish with perpendicular lines emphasized to accentuate the height of the structure. On all but the Michigan Avenue side the walls are carried up straight from the sidewalk. On Michigan Avenue the center section, about eighty feet across is set back about three feet from the line of the corners and is thus carried up into the great tower. In addition to the two elevator entrances, one on Jackson Boulevard and the other on Michigan Avenue, there is the great arched entrance on the latter street that leads to the main banking room of the Straus Company, occupying the entire second floor and reached by a stairway of Hauteville, Belgian Black and Tennessee Marbles and divided by a bronze railing. The main banking room, 170 feet

in length and 160 feet wide, designed after the Italian Renaissance style, has a height of forty-five feet, or the equivalent of three ordinary stories of the building. Fourteen columns of the Corinthian order of Hauteville Marble, each forty feet high support the ornamental ceiling of bronze and gold. The walls of the room are Travertine stone and the floors Pink Tennessee Marble with mosaic patterns of Belgian Black marble. Careful handling of materials and uniformity of design are the outstanding features of the



S. W. Straus Building, Chicago, as Seen from Grant Park. Architects: Graham, Anderson, Probst & White. Exterior of Select Buff and Variegated Indiana Limestone furnished by the Indiana Quarries Company. Cut Stone Contractors: The Central Oolitic Stone Company.

(photo caption) "S. W. Straus Building, Chicago, as seen from Grant Park. Architects: Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, exterior of Select Buff and Variegated Indiana Limestone furnished by the Indiana Quarries Company. Cut Stone Contractors: The Central Oolitic Stone Company."

great structure, truly an example of American organization and construction methods that enabled the architects, Messrs. Graham, Anderson, Probst and White to see their plans executed with dispatch and at the same time with strict adherence to details that would not have been possible in earlier times. The erection of this great structure emphasizes another point and that is the availability of natural stone in both quantity and quality for operations of magnitude. Although a natural product that had to be taken from a quarry the stone for the exterior was delivered to the setters as it was needed and the walls went up with the same rapidity as the remainder of the building. In the Straus building, in the Standard Oil Building in New York, in the New Tribune Tower Building in Chicago, illustrated on another page, and in scores of other skyscrapers of recent construction the stone industry has proven to the architects and contractors of the country its ability to meet all conditions and to deliver and set stone with the same facility as though it were a manufactured product.

#### Tower of Carved Stone

Few buildings in America have been designed with more care to every detail of surroundings and architectural effect than the new Tower Building for The Chicago Tribune. Architects from foreign countries, as well as the foremost in America entered the competition



Tower of the Chicago Tribune Building, showing Beautiful Effects of Carved and Ornamented "Old Gothic" Indiana Limestone. J. Hoadley & Sons Co., Cut Stone Contractors. Howell & Hood, Architects.

and it is worthy of note that a foreign architect won second place, although still worthier of note that first place was awarded to an American firm and that of the majority of the best designs submitted the competitors were Americans. The Tribune Tower, then, is an example of the best of American architecture, soaring and lofty and yet dignified and ornate, effects made possible by eight wide pieces of masonry rising unbroken from the street level to the base of tower buttresses, some thirty stories high. Above the four-story base of the structure the main shaft of the building rises unbroken to a height of twenty stories and above this the richly carved, ornamental crowning tower rises nine stories higher. A feature of the building is the manner in which the window openings are disposed around the tower in three vertical tiers between the eight masonry pieces. The material for the exterior of this beautiful building is "Old Gothic" Indiana Limestone, furnished, cut and set by J. Hoadley & Sons Co., Inc., of Bloomington, Indiana. Except for purposes of wider variations in color, all of the stone for this exterior came from the Hoadley quarries. In the tower portion, that is from the 25th story up, there was used approximately 125 carloads of highly carved and ornamental stone, all of which was shipped complete from the Hoadley plant ready for setting. The accompanying illustration shows the pinnacle of the tower, the free standing tourelles and the huge arched buttresses. In its completed state this towering structure from the prize competition plans of John Mead Howells and Raymond M. Hood, associated architects, takes its place as one of the most beautiful office buildings and notable examples of architectural design in America.

Tribune Tower is a Gothic structure rising 473 feet on the ground on which stood the Kinzie cabin, the first structure in Chicago. From the 13,000 square feet of bedrock on which it rests, 130 feet below Lake Michigan's level to the tip of the flagstaff is 720 feet.

Its exterior materials, except for steel window frames, are Gothic materials—limestone and lead. The interior fabric comprises: Travertine marble, mahogany, oak, statuary bronzes, cork for much of the floor surfacing and antique plaster. Building and site cost \$8,500,000. The cost per cubic foot exceeds by 40 cents the cost per cubic foot of any other skyscraper in the world.

Howells & Hood of New York, the architects, won the \$50,000 prize in the competition. The Tour de Beurre of the Rouen Cathedral was the inspiration of the structure.

#### State Aids Architecture

The legislature of the State of Michigan has made an appropriation of \$400,000 for the first unit of a building for the architectural school of the University of Michigan. This is said to be the first time that a state legislature has made an appropriation for such a purpose.

(photo caption) "Tower of the Chicago Tribune Building, showing beautiful effects of carved and ornamented 'Old Gothic' Indiana Limestone. J. Hoadley & Sons Co., Cut Stone Contractors. Howell & Hood, Architects."