

Stone Quarries & Beyond:

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

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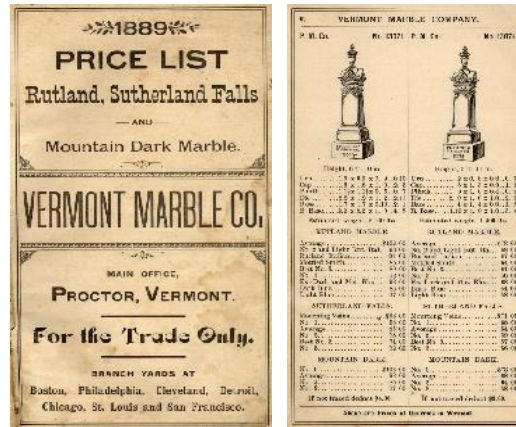


Detail of Cecilia Baldwin's Stone, Knight's Landing Cemetery (no signature)

If you are interested in more information on stone carvers and monument companies, you could visit the following section of our web site:

The "Historical Cemetery Stone & Monument Carvers & Dealers"

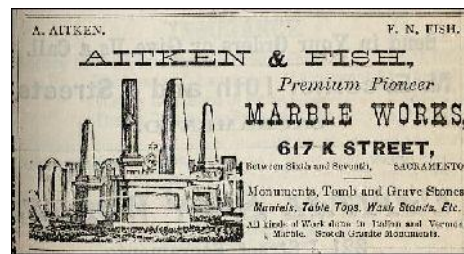
http://quarriesandbeyond.org/states/ca/ca-stone_carvers/menu.html



Vermont Marble Co. Price List, 1889



Memorial Department section of the 1902 *The Sears, Roebuck Catalog*, pp. 809.



Advertisement for Aitken & Fish, Premium Pioneer Marble Works, Sacramento

Some Stone Carvers & Monument Companies that Produced the Yolo County Cemetery Stones in the late 1800s-early 1900s



Peggy B. & Patrick Perazzo

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Some Stone Carvers & Monument Companies that Produced Some of the Yolo County Cemetery Stones in the Late 1800's to Early 1900's

By Peggy B. Perazzo

I have been researching the cemetery stone carvers, monument companies, and the old cemetery stones created during the 1800's and early 1900's in parts of northern California for many years. I began my research by surveying northern California cemeteries near where we live to find out where most of the stone carvers and monument companies were operating and to plot how far their stones had spread. I found that there were clusters of stone workers and monument companies in Sacramento, San Francisco, and San Jose; and towns such as Woodland almost always had at least one monument shop of its own. Local companies employed salesmen to travel throughout the area using wagons, river boats, and later automobiles to advertise and sell their cemetery stones.

Once I started photographing and listing the cemetery stones in some of our northern California cemeteries, I began to wonder where the stones had been originated. I learned that the very white, clear marble usually came from places such as Vermont or Italy via ship. In 1869 when the Transcontinental Railroad opened, cemetery stones began to be shipped via railroad. Many of these stones came as "blanks" enabling local companies to carve the names and dates on the stones as needed.



White marble stone of Barbara Lowe, died in 1888 (not signed)



Indian Diggings marble stone of the Cook family, signed by Aitken & Co., Sacramento

One easily identifiable type stone used in northern California cemeteries is the heavily veined Indian Digging's marble that was quarried at Indian Diggings near Placerville. This quarry was discovered and operated by Israel Luce who, at that time, was the partner of another

well-known Sacramento monument company owner, Andrew Aitken. The Indian Diggings marble does not take a high polish, and you'll note that some of these stones have deteriorated along the gray-blue veins more than some of the white marble stones. Many times the Indian Diggings marble was used for the base and foot stone, while a more expensive marble was used for the top portion of the stone.

John W. Combs, Alameda Marble Works, San Jose, whose company created the Maranda Campbell stone, at times used his own quarries to procure stone for his monuments. (You will find a photograph of one of his quarries below.) Many of the local quarries were small affairs compared to the large, prosperous quarries in Vermont, Georgia, Italy, and other locations.



John W. Combs, San Jose, in one of his California marble quarries (photo compliments of Ruth Combs Edvalson, granddaughter)

Sandstone, used less often in Yolo County cemeteries, was used in the construction of both the mausoleum and sandstone cemetery stone located in the Woodland Cemetery. It is not yet known which sandstone was used, but there are several possibilities. The blue-gray Winters sandstone quarry, referred to in a 1906 geology book as the Putah Stone Quarry, was located at the present-day Monticello Dam. There were other sandstone quarries that could have provided sandstone for Yolo County cemeteries at Benicia in Solano County (buff color) and at Sites in Colusa County (blue-gray in color). So far, I have not found any signed sandstone cemetery stones.

Limestone was less expensive than marble. I may have found one limestone cemetery stone to be signed, but it could be a lesser grade of marble. When we accompanied the El Dorado Mineral and Gem Society on a field trip to locate the Indian Diggings marble quarry, it was difficult to differentiate marble from limestone, although "marble" is defined differently as a geological term than as a stone industry term.

Once pneumatic tools were widely used, granite

became the choice for cemetery stones because of its durability. Many of the old, softer marble stones have deteriorated due to environmental causes; but granite resists such changes much better.

People used catalogs (also known as pattern books) to order the style and type of stone used for their cemetery stones from companies such as Sears, Roebuck & Co.; Montgomery Wards; and the Vermont Marble Company. So similar cemetery stones can be found throughout the United States.

The signed stones I found were created almost exclusively from marble. The signatures could have been carved at the shop when they were created – either in Yolo County or elsewhere – or they could have been signed later after having been received from catalog orders or purchased from nearby branch offices of large companies located in other states and countries. (Be aware that the person's or company name carved on the stone may not have been the entity that created the cemetery stone.)

During my survey of northern California cemeteries, I compiled the names carved on the signed cemetery stones. (These signatures can usually be found carved on the lower portions of the stones.)

Benoit Bertholet, a master stone mason who immigrated from France, operated the sandstone quarry at Devil's Gate, at Monticello Dam about 9 miles from Winters, from about 1892 through 1908. Stone from this quarry was used for cemetery stones, curbing, and bases in the Winters Cemetery, and on buildings in Winters, Woodland, and other structures. This sandstone has been referred to as "Winter's sandstone."

The following are some of the names of carvers and companies that I located carved on stones in the Woodland Cemetery:

Aitken & Fish, Sacramento; Aitken & Co., Sac.; Aitken & Luce, Sac.; I. Luce & Co., Sac.; Devine, Fecit, Sac.; J. C. Devine, Sac.; Wm. Boyne & Co., Sac.; A.C. Thompson, San Francisco; Pioneer Steam Marble Works, S.F.; J. W. Combs, Alameda Marble Works, San Jose; M. Hebener & Co., Woodland; J. R. Mitchell, Woodland; J. O. Shafer, Woodland; Shafer & Barnes, Woodland; H. P. Martin, Woodland; W. Rogers, Woodland; Martin & Rogers, Woodland; Rogers Bros., Woodland.

Visit our web site to learn more about stone quarries, stone carvers, monument companies, and the finished products.

