

Rocklin quarries in 1904

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The following paragraphs are excerpted from a California State Mining Bureau publication of 1906 titled *Structural and Industrial Mining Materials of California, Bulletin No. 38*. The State Mining Bureau is now called *California Geological Survey*. The report discusses Rocklin as the main source of Sacramento Valley granite in 1904.

Rocklin (is the) principal granite-producing point in the Sacramento Valley. First quarry opened in 1863, stone used in construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Stone used in construction of the State Capitol in Sacramento, Hibernia Bank and Crocker building, San Francisco. Rocklin quarries lie close together in area less than a mile square on "gently rolling plain. Granite occurs at the surface in most cases. Fifteen quarries in operation in 1904, several idle. Most were small and operated by Finns, Russians, and Italians. Largest and most northerly situated owned by Rocklin Granite Co., "a rectangular pit, sunk in surface of the rolling plain. The opening is about 100 feet deep, 100 feet wide, and 250 feet long.." (1)



Ira Delano's Rocklin Granite Company Quarry produced curbstone to rebuild San Francisco streets after the earthquake and fire of April, 1906

Quarry owned by Adolph Penru Quarry 50 feet deep, 50 feet square, 300 years (yards) south of Rocklin Granite Co.'s quarry.

Allen Quarry 300 feet west of Rocklin Granite Co. property.

The Mining Bureau Report credits Rocklin as the Southern Pacific's main source of the granite needed for construction of the Transcontinental Railroad starting in 1863. (It was the Central Pacific, not Southern Pacific)

The source of railroad granite was the Brigham and Hawes Quarry near the corner of today's Pacific Street and Farron. Evidence is thin that the Capital Quarry, now the Big Gun Quarry, near Pacific Street and Rocklin Road might also have been a source of railroad granite.

The Mining Bureau Report identifies Ira Delano's Rocklin Granite Company quarry as Rocklin's largest. Delano's Quarry could yield granite slabs for monuments that were 16 feet long, 20 feet wide and 12 inches thick.

In 1906, the year of the report, granite was in high demand to rebuild San Francisco after the earthquake and fire in April that year. Delano provided granite blocks to repair the city's monumental buildings, but his biggest shipments were granite curbing to rebuild the city's streets. Some Streets in downtown San Francisco are still lined with Rocklin granite.

Delano's Quarry survived until 1916 when Delano closed his business and moved to San Francisco.

Delano's Quarry was south of today's intersection of Rocklin Road and Granite Drive. The City of Rocklin bought the quarry pit in 1941 for \$10.00 and used it as the city dump for about 30 years. Today the pit is backfilled and underpins a parking lot and motel. Gases from the pit were leaking to the surface and into the motel as recently as 15 years ago

Ira Delano's brother, Mansfield Delano, a veterinarian, was the principal owner of Rocklin's race track which operated from 1895 until 1914 when it fell victim to a failing Rocklin economy and a 1909 state law outlawing horserace wagering.

The Mining Bureau Report also identifies a 50'x50' quarry pit owned by Adolf Pernu located 300 years (yards) south of Delano's Quarry. That quarry is probably the lake behind the clubhouse of the Sierra Lakes Mobile Home Park which is across Rocklin Road from the Rocklin Library. Locals know it as Pernu's back quarry. It is much larger now than in 1904.

Pernu operated as the California Granite Company with quarries in both Rocklin and Porterville. In 1907 he

bought the Capital Quarry, now Big Gun, and operated it as his largest quarry until he died in 1931. The Capital Quarry was the source of the granite that built the State Capital building in Sacramento in the late 1860s and early 1870s

Pernu built Rocklin's Old City Hall at 3980 Rocklin Road as a company store for his employees in 1912.

The Mining Bureau Report also identifies Ira Allen's Quarry which is the lake-filled quarry in front of the Rocklin Library at the corner of Granite Drive and Rocklin Road. Finnish immigrant of 1889, Matt Ruhkala, acquired Allen's quarry prior to the time of the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire and operated it as one of the early quarries of his Union Granite Company. He participated with Ira Delano, and probably with Adolf Pernu, in producing curbstone for San Francisco.

Union Granite operated several quarries in Rocklin and elsewhere during the twentieth century including the Capital Quarry from 1933 until 1977.

Rocklin's granite industry saw a steady decline between 1910 and 1920. Engineers were perfecting the manufacture of cement based concrete during this period and an extended quarry-worker strike closed half of Rocklin's quarries permanently in 1915. Only five or six quarries operated into the mid twentieth century, most were part time and intermittent operations.

The Capital Quarry closed permanently in 2005. It was the last of Rocklin's 62 quarries to close.