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"Introduction to 'Producing America's Buried Treasure'"

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Introduction to "Producing America's Buried Treasure"

The oldest commercial enterprise in North Georgia in continuous operation is the quarrying and finishing of marble. In 1836 an itinerant Irish stonecutter on his way to Nashville by stagecoach stopped at a tavern near Marble Hill and while there found that the Cherokee Indians were using a white, crystalline stone for bowls, steps and many other things. Upon investigation he found that there was a generous amount of the marble available in outcroppings and he immediately started the business of quarrying and processing the marble.

The work was hard and with the limited equipment which he had Fitzsimmons did manage to quarry a considerable amount of the stone and manufacture monuments from it. Many of these monuments are to be found in North Georgia cemeteries today. In Lawrenceville, Ga. there is a memorial on the Courthouse Square which was produced by Fitzsimmons. During the War Between the States the courthouse was burned and the walls pulled down covering up the memorial. It was many years before the debris was cleared away and despite the fact that some of the edges and corners of the Georgia Marble memorial were battered and broken the memorial was reset and is to be found there today.

Marble has been the medium of remembrance since the earliest record of man. King Solomon used marble extensively in the building of his temple many centuries before the time of Christ. The elegance of the ancient Egyptians, the magnificence of the Greek artisans and the splendor of the Roman craftsmen--these were all expressed in marble and except for the ravages of war and earthquakes it is

possible that most of these masterpieces would be standing today.

At Agra, India there is a quarry which produces a crystalline marble almost identical to the white marble quarried at Marble Hill. Near Agra is to be found the Taj Mahal--the old world's most magnificent memorial building or mausoleum--which has been standing for about four hundred years. The building is in perfect condition today. The new world's counterpart--Georgia Marble--has been used that long, or perhaps even longer. In excavating the Etowah Mounds near Cartersville, Ga. archeologists found marble figures buried deep beneath the mounds. These were perhaps attempts at portrait statues of rulers of some ancient ancestors of the Cherokee Indians who were native to the mountain section of North Georgia.

Even though marble was produced commercially from 1836 and the supply was, and is, unlimited, the market was restricted because of a lack of transportation. In fact, a quarry block was sent to the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876 by oxcart. With the promise of a railroad being built and proper financial backing, the Georgia Marble Company was organized in 1884 as a quarrying company only. Immediately finishing or processing plants sprung up all over and it was not until 1917 that all of the companies except one monumental finishing plant at Canton, Ga. was incorporated into the company. In 1941 this plant was also incorporated into the company making the Georgia Marble Company sole producers and wholesale manufacturers of Georgia Marble. In 1886 with the coming of the Marietta and North Georgia Railroad (later the L & N) new and nationwide markets were opened and Georgia Marble became the most sought after building and monumental material in America.

The skylines of America's great cities have been made more permanently beautiful by Georgia Marble. Churches, Universities, Colleges, Libraries, State Capitols, Museums and buildings of every kind owe much of their beauty to the natural beauty of Georgia Marble and their permanence to the high quality of the material. The capitols of Utah, Minnesota and Rhode Island and Puerto Rico were built of Georgia Marble as were many of the buildings in our nations capital, Washington.

The achievements, works and writings of prominent Americans have been recorded for posterity in buildings, public memorials and cemetery memorials of Georgia Marble. The Lincoln statue in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, 19 feet high and carved from 10 quarry blocks, was the masterpiece of one of the worlds finest sculptors, Daniel Chester French. There is the McKinley memorial at Niles, Ohio, the Harding memorial at Marion, Ohio, the Louis Pasteur memorial in Chicago, the Senator Key Pittman memorial at Reno, the memorial to the founder of Labor Day and the Carpenters and Joiners Union, Peter McQuire, at Merchantsville, N. J., the George Eastman memorial at Rochester, N. Y., the Procter memorial at Ivorydale, Cincinnati, the Governor Sholtz memorial at Daytona Beach, Florida, the Governor Gene Talmadge memorial at McRae, Ga., the Douglas Fairbanks and David Selznick memorials and DeMille and Clark mausoleums in Los Angeles. In Danielsville, Ga., his birthplace, there is a memorial to Crawford W. Long, discoverer of the use of anaesthesia. In St. Joseph, Missouri there is a memorial to Dr. Jacob Geiger who built the first hospital west of the Mississippi River. At Moultrie, Ga. there is a memorial to a late circus owner which has as its principal feature,

a free standing elephant about six feet high. In Montgomery, Ala. there is the Hank Williams memorial. Hank Williams was perhaps the most prolific writer of popular and sacred songs of his time and at one time he had four songs on the "Hit Parade" TV show simultaneously. In Nashville, Tenn. there is the Horace Greeley Hill memorial to the founder of the H. G. Hill chain of grocery stores. In Louisville, Ky. there is the memorial to the late president of the L & N Railroad, J. B. Hill, and also the Hillerich memorial to the founder of Hillerich and Bradsby, manufacturers of Louisville Slugger baseball bats. In Buffalo, N. Y. there is the Hueber memorial to the inventor of the windshield wiper. These are but a few of the thousands to be found all over the country to people who have contributed much to the American way of life.

Georgia Marble has been the medium of expression of beauty in parks and cities. The Bok Tower at Lake Wales, Fla. is considered to be the most beautiful carillon tower in America and is often referred to as America's Taj Mahal. In Washington, D. C. are to be found the Folger Shakespeare Library, the DuPont fountain and the Columbus fountain. Just inside the entrance to the Washington Stadium is a memorial to Clark Griffith, owner-manager of the Washington baseball club and one of the founders of the American League. Also in Washington are many buildings of Georgia Marble. In Chicago one will find the largest building in ground area, 15.7 acres, the Chicago Museum of Natural History, the Shedd Aquarium with its finest and largest collection of marine life in the world and the Buckingham Fountain, the worlds largest fountain with more than one hundred tons of water flowing through it.

Atlanta owes much of its beauty to the generous use of Georgia Marble. There will be found the new State Office buildings, the College of Business Administration, Emory University, the Candler Building, the Hurt Building and Hurt Park Fountain, the Municipal Auditorium, Fulton County Federal Building, Federal Reserve Bank Building, and many others which are outstanding landmarks. Atlanta cemeteries have memorials which bear the names of people and families prominent in business, industry, finance, medicine, arts and sciences-- Glenn, Campbell, Williams, Candler, Robinson, English, Woodruff, Yates, Grady, Rhodes, Haverty, Clay, Schane, Goddard, Warren and Grant to mention but a few.

These conditions exist not only in Washington, Chicago and Atlanta but in practically every city and town in the country.

The products of The Georgia Marble Company are not limited to Georgia Marble and its by-products but include from other divisions, marble from Vermont, Tennessee and Missouri; Limestone from Alabama; Alberene Serpentine from Virginia; as well as crushed and ground stone, terrazzo chips and agricultural limestone from Whitestone and Mineral Bluff, Ga. and Wingdale, N. Y.

Some buried treasures may be worth more per pound or per ton but none are so spectacular as marble because it becomes a part of the landscape and skyline of America. This is particularly true of Georgia Marble.

THE GEORGIA MARBLE COMPANY
TATE, GEORGIA