

WHAT IS THE BLACK MARBLE & LIME COMPANY



The Black Marble & Lime Company is an Oregon corporation with an authorized capital stock of \$250,000, the shares having a par value of \$100 each. The company is organized for the quarrying of black marble and for the manufacture of lime, the stockholders and officers being Union and Wallowa county citizens.

Property owned by the company includes 580 acres of mountain land five miles southwest of Enterprise, Oregon, on which is located the black marble quarry about which people in Eastern Oregon have read a great deal during the past year.

It also owns a plant site of 60 acres along the right-of-way of the Joseph branch of the Union Pacific System and a strip of land for the construction of an aerial tramway from the quarry has also been secured. Four kilns and complete hydrating machinery for the manufacture of lime have already been purchased and are at the plant site ready for installation this spring.

Some idea of the extent of this deposit of this black marble limestone can be gained from the report of Henry M. Parks while State Geologist of Oregon—

"the limestone quarries consisting of black marble parallel the contour of the hillside for a distance of more than a thousand feet. The thickness of the series of beds is known to be as much as 500 feet and it is exposed in a stream canyon for a distance of 500 feet into the hill. There are without doubt ten million tons now available." On the same land is a valuable stand of timber to be used for kiln fuel.

For fifteen years lime from this deposit has been burned in a crude and meager way, supplying local needs. Infrequently, as a surplus would accumulate, some of it found its way to outside markets where its superior quality was immediately recognized. Many offers were sent operators of the original crude kiln to purchase regular supplies but they could not be cared for due to limited output and lack of capital for extending the plant.

Users of lime say that this product is equal to the best in the entire country and that the black marble is equal to the Belgian marble which has always commanded a market premium.

What the Oregon Bureau of Mines and Geology Says About These Wallowa County Lime and Marble Deposits

Thirteen years ago—February 1914—in the monthly publication of the Oregon Bureau of Mines and Geology an authoritative though early statement of the wealth of black marble or limestone deposits owned by this company was printed. After commenting on the tremendous extent of the deposit, the report says, in part:

"The striking feature of the marble is that the color of a large portion of it is almost jet black. The black color is due to the presence of carbonaceous matter in the original limestone, which was altered to graphite when the limestone was metamorphosed to marble. At a depth of sixteen feet from the surface blocks of sixty to seventy-five cubic feet can be obtained without difficulty. The face of the outcrop has a very steep slope to the northeast and very little or no soil covering except in a few places where the slope is gentle. Stripping, therefore, would be a minimum consideration.

"The chemical composition shows the rock to be a fairly pure limestone. From the color, one would naturally infer the presence of a considerable amount of impurities, but among a number of samples analyzed there is less than five per cent of insoluble matter present. The products which could be made from this deposit of limestone are lime, marble, and building stone. Its chemical composition would indicate that this rock would produce a good grade of lime. This last conclusion is borne out by the fact that a considerable amount of lime has already been manu-

factured here, and it is said to be of excellent quality. Such a limestone would also, so far as its composition is concerned, furnish the lime for a Portland cement mixture.

"There is a considerable demand for a good black marble that will take a high polish. It is a well known fact that the Belgian black marble brings top prices in the market. It seems highly probable that a considerable amount of building stone might easily be made available from the lighter colored portions of the deposit toward the west end of the outcrop. On the whole, the stone appears to be a very valuable one from the standpoint of quarrying. Best results financially would probably be yielded by combining a plant that would turn out more than one of the above suggested commercial products. The climatic conditions in Wallowa valley are favorable to the operation of any one of these industries for nearly the entire year."

It is the development of this industry, described thirteen years ago by the state geologist, in which the Black Marble & Lime Company is engaged. Recent tests and investigations prove that the deposit is even greater in extent than thus outlined and that the composition of the lime produced makes it equal to the finest lime in the country selling at a market premium.

Black Marble & Lime Company

Enterprise, Oregon