

## CATALANS FACTORY (S.XIX)

In 1837, the industrialist **Antonio Canals y Llinás** and the neighbor from Fines, **Luis Giménez Liria**, formed a company to take advantage of the marble seams of the Sierra de los Filabres. With the name **Canals, Giménez and Company**, build in this place the marble sawing factory that we see today. Until then, marble was worked manually in family workshops using ancient techniques that were passed down from generation to generation.

For this reason, the creation of this factory, the first of its kind in the Almanzora Valley, was a great advance for the exploitation and production of marble in the region. Using the waters of the Almanzora river collected by the Los Morales ditch, these were led to the factory which, through the aqueducts arranged at the back, were poured through a waterfall or bucket. When the water fell by gravity on a waterwheel arranged inside the factory, enough force was created to move the machine equipped with saws, known as "art", with cut the large blocks of marble.

This industry model would spread through the municipalities of Macael, Olula del Río and Purchena, giving rise to the first industrializing episode of the marble sector in Alto Almanzora and Sierra de Filabres, since it allowed almost uninterrupted exploitation both in the quarry and in the factory.



*Current aerial view of the factory where you can see the aqueducts for the water conduction.*

For the conduction of the marble pieces from the quarries located in the municipality of Macael to the factory, the Los Molinillos path was used, which ran



from the town of Fines to the quarries through the dangerous Rambla del Castillo. The marble company carried out works to widen and reinforce the road so that carts and carts could circulate through them to transport the marble from quarries five kilometers from the factory.

*Tradicional transfer of the marble from quarries to sawmills.*

The name popularly received by the factory comes from the origin of Antonio Canals and his second partner Pere Puig, who in 1844 renamed the company **Canals, Puig & Company**, whose purpose was *“to exploit, process and sell the marbles from the quarry of the Sierra de Macael”*. Pascual Madoz in his Geographical-Statistical-Historical Dictionary of Spain and its Overseas Possessions when describing the population of Fines and its industry, describes it as follows:

*“... 2 factory. For the production of white and blue marbles; the main one located to the South of the population. On the bank of the indicated river, containing a magnificent iron machine with 60 saws to cut the marble, to which the water gives movement, and another that moves at the same time as the saws, with which the boards are first polished: 60 men work in this factory and build all kinds of works of this kind of stone. [...] Both were built in 1837 by a Catalan company. ”*

Throughout its operation the factory passed through various owners such as the sculptors Manuel Moreno and Pietro Nicoli, until in 1866 it passed into the hands of the Meytadier family, of French origin and settled in the town, until its closure in 1934. After the Civil War would be acquired by Antonio Mateos Sorroche who would put it back into operation until its final closure in 1960.



*Current image of the entrance to the factory.*



*Current factory images. Aqueducts.*

**HOW TO GET:**

GMS Coordinates: 37°21'13.7"N 2°15'47.2"W

GD Coordinates: 37.353798, -2.263116

<https://goo.gl/maps/SpmpRzNWwovMBXwbA>