

BUILT FROM STONE

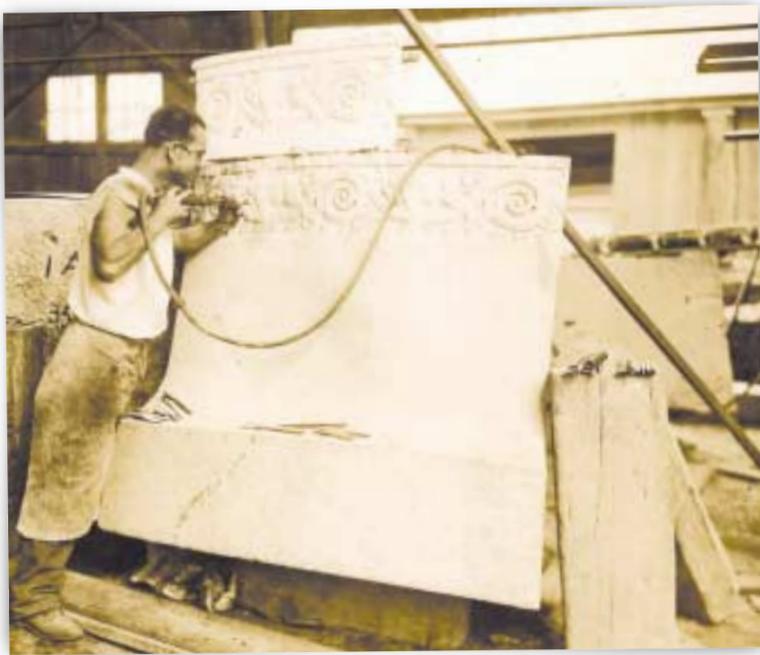
THE WESTERLY GRANITE STORY

VOLUME
47 OF 52

BUZZI MEMORIALS

Angelo Peter Buzzi left his Italian family and his native Arzo, Switzerland near the border with Italy and came to America around 1923, eventually settling in the Westerly-Stonington area in 1933. Born on June 3, 1900, he watched and learned throughout his youth from his two older brothers who were already stonecutters. He began cutting and carving stone when he was only seven years old and perfected his trade at a special school in Zurich known for producing outstanding sculptors and stone carvers. Angelo was already an accomplished stonecutter by the time he arrived in the United States. Over a period of many years, his work earned him a reputation as one of the finest stone carvers in the Westerly-Stonington area.

Angelo's carving is present in the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the General Accounting Office, the Federal Courthouse; and the John Erickson Memorial all in Washington, D.C.; Penn and Grand Central Rail Stations, the Museum of Natural History and the Equitable Trust Building in New York City; the Veterans Administration Building in Columbia, South Carolina; the West Virginia Capital Building; the Massachusetts War Memorial on Mount Greylock in the Berkshires; and the Federal Reserve Building in El Paso, Texas. Closer to home his work includes the Roger Williams and World War I Memorials in Providence and the Moses relief statue on the Boston Court House.



Angelo Buzzi carving one of the panels for the Providence, Rhode Island War Memorial which was erected in January of 1929.



The Buzzi Memorials Company on Route 1 in Stonington, circa 1955.

In 1933 he established Buzzi Memorials on Route 1 in Stonington and continued its operation along with his son, Harold, until Angelo's sudden death in 1963. In addition to his local company business and his extensive regional municipality and government work, Angelo also frequently worked on individual monuments for the Bottinelli Granite Company in New London and the Joseph Coduri and Fraquelli & Brusa Companies in Westerly.

Although gravestone carving is and was the Buzzi Memorial stock in trade, Angelo secretly preferred the memorial work for cities and towns as detailed above. In a 1954 article in the Mystic Valley River Journal he said, "Gravestone work is sad. All the while I work on one of them I can't help thinking that this is for someone who has lost a loved one. But when I work on the memorials to history, then I am happy."

Angelo's son Harold is an accomplished monument designer and sandblaster, having learned his trade from Oscar Nurmi at the Bottinelli Granite Company. At an age when most of us have been long retired, Harold, age 80, is still at his office and work shed on almost a daily basis. Since most of the major Westerly and Pawcatuck granite quarries have ceased operation, today, Harold receives most of his granite monument stones from the Rock of Ages Company in Barre, Vermont and from both India and China.

John B. Coduri



Harold Buzzi preparing letters for sandblasting in his shed in Stonington in 2010.

TODAY IN GRANITE



HISTORY

Treasures surface in response to newspaper series:

When Linda Holman was cleaning out the home of her mother Bertha Strong, she found something that no one at the Granite Research Center had never seen. About 8 inches long, the silk ribbon has a beaded fringe and is printed with "Niantic Union Workers." We think it is a convention ribbon worn to identify members of the Niantic (Bradford) delegation. There is no date on the ribbon. Linda's grandfather William Dow was a granite worker.

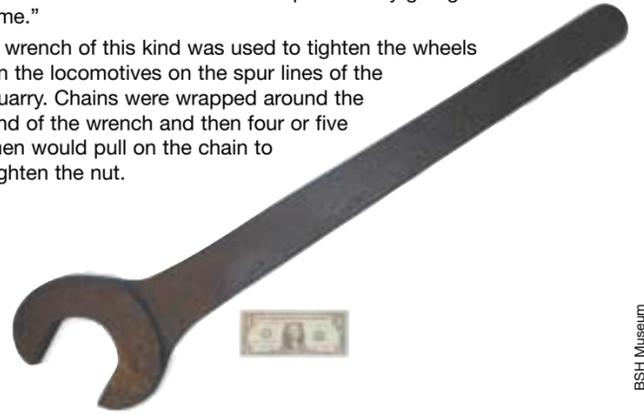


BSH Museum

Phil Panciera brought this 38" long wrench to the Babcock-Smith House Museum and told this story.

"This wrench was found on the ground beside a locomotive in the Smith's quarry yard. For many years a local junk dealer had it in his possession. On one of my visits to see what was new in the junk dealer's shop, I noticed the wrench. Tools are of interest to me, being an auto mechanic for many years. I offered \$5 for the wrench. This wrench has been a conversation piece in my garage for some time."

A wrench of this kind was used to tighten the wheels on the locomotives on the spur lines of the quarry. Chains were wrapped around the end of the wrench and then four or five men would pull on the chain to tighten the nut.



BSH Museum

PEOPLE WHO BUILT WESTERLY DOCUMENTED GRANITE WORKERS

Stewart, James. C.	Sullivan, Maurice
Stillman, O.	Sullivan, Michael
Story, W. G.	Sullivan, Michael F.
Straddler, H.	Sullivan, Michael J.
Suber, John	Sullivan, Morris
Sullivan, Bartholomew	Sullivan, Patrick J.
Sullivan, Frank A.	Sullivan, Thomas M.
Sullivan, James	Surber, Anson
Sullivan, John	Surber, Frederick A.
Sullivan, John F.	Surber, John
Sullivan, John P.	Susena, Rinalda

STONE CHIPS

On oxen and their drivers: "The oxen would bring the rough stone into the stonecutter's shed where they had to cut it. They'd be an old Irishman or an old Yankee or an old Finlander or whatever he was. All nationalities driving those oxen. And every man knew his own oxen, see? If he got somebody else's pair of cattle, you know, he might just as well be trying to make that chair do something for him. The oxen wouldn't do nothing for him. He had to have his own driver ... If he was off on a drunk for a couple of weeks, the oxen stayed right in their barn. They never went out. Nobody could drive them."

John Keena (b. 1885?) in an interview (1984?)

YOUR PART IN HISTORY

Share your stories, photos and artifacts. Earlier volumes of "Built From Stone" are now on the museum's website; www.babcocksmithhouse.org.

Please call us at 401-377-8490 or 401-322-0452 or e-mail us at builtfromstone@gmail.com.

COMING NEXT WEEK

Occupational Hazards



Babcock-Smith
House Museum

SUN PUBLISHING CO.
thewesterlysun.com

United Builders
Supply Co. Inc.
401-596-2831
unitedbuilderssupply.com

