

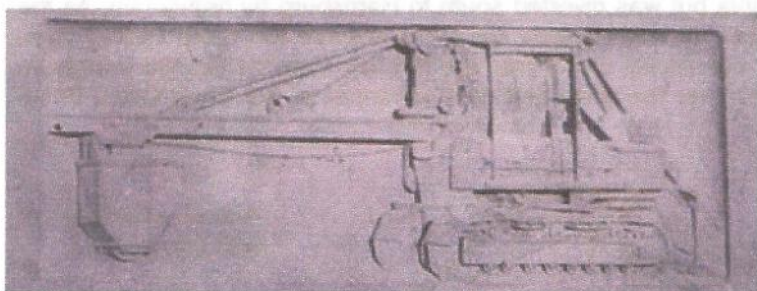
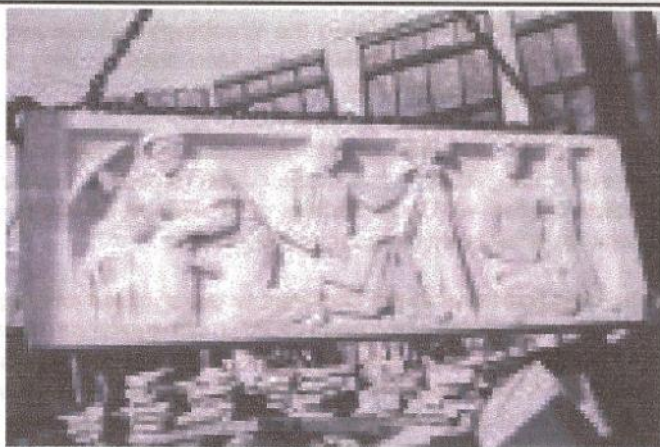
MISSING ART DECO PANELS LOCATED THROUGH ADSW WEBSITE

In August 2004, ADSW webmaster Joel Shprentz posted a preservation alert seeking help in locating 32 granite panels carved at the Fletcher Granite Company around 1930. The panels, which depict the building trades, were carved by Fletcher employees Pierre Moreau and Camille Boucher of Roverval, Quebec.

Descendents of Moreau and Boucher, with the help of the Westford [Connecticut] Museum and Historical Society had been searching for the panels for almost two years before they were located in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania by photographer Seth Gaines.

In 2003, Dan Provost, the grandson of Pierre Moreau brought 5 photographs of granite friezes depicting the Industrial Revolution of Man into the Westford Museum seeking help in locating the panels. Pictured along with the panels were Pierre Moreau, master carver for Fletcher Granite and his cousin and apprentice, Camille Boucher. Provost believed that the panels has been shipped to Washington, DC.





A number of actions were taken to locate the panels. Provost's pictures were posted on the Westford Historical Society website in August 2003. A number of agencies and individuals were consulted in Washington DC, including a retired curator of engineering at the Smithsonian. With the assistance of architectural historian and photographer Bill Lebovitch, the historical society contacted many other people in their search for the panels.

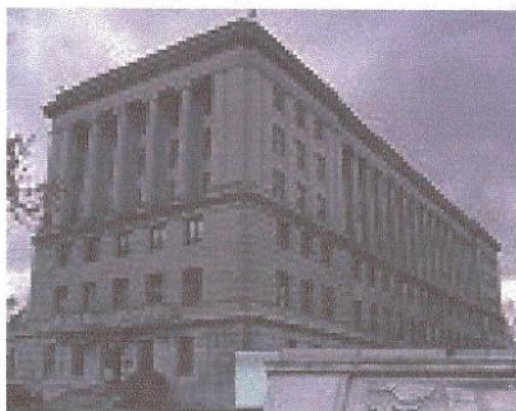
Many leads were followed without success. One person in California believed the panels were installed in New York City. Publication of two of Provost's photos in the Society of Industrial Archeology newsletter moved the search to the West Coast after a National Park Service employee suggested that the panels were installed on the Washington Boulevard Bridge in Los Angeles. Upon further investigation, however, what appeared to be a promising lead proved fruit-

less. Although the panels on the Washington Boulevard Bridge had a similar Industrial Revolution of Man theme, they are made of brown and black terra cotta, not granite.

At this point, a series of fortunate events conspired to locate the panels. First, ADSW webmaster Joel Shprentz posted Provost's photos on the Art Deco Society of Washington's website with a request for assistance in locating the panels.

The next fortunate event occurred when amateur photographer Seth Gaines, who frequently photographs old buildings, including theatres, war memorials, court houses, and state capitols, happened upon the ADSW website while surfing the web. He viewed the panels, but at this point had no clue as to their whereabouts.

Several weeks later, Gaines was on a road trip to Scranton, Pennsylvania but was diverted south to Harrisburg by heavy rain. As the weather cleared, Gaines set out to explore the State Capitol complex. He quickly discovered the missing Fletcher Granite panels installed over the north and east entrances of the North Office Building.



Photos courtesy of
Seth Gaines





On November 28, 2004, Gaines posted the following on the ADSW website Forum:

"Not sure about 32 panels, but there are 6 of them on the North Office Building on the Capitol campus in Harrisburg, PA. The building was built in 1927, and three panels each are over the N and E entrances. There are two types of steam shovel, a caterpillar tractor, the steamroller, the laborers, and the surveyors. Perhaps they made sets? ...I don't see any photos that aren't on the building. ...Any they're in great shape. I got good photos of them today."

Shprentz notified Marilyn Day at the Westford Historical Society. Day, in turn, contacted Jason Wilson, Research Historian, Pennsylvania Capitol Preservation Committee, to confirm that the panels were, in fact, the long sought Fletcher Granite panels.



Day later wrote on the Westford Museum website:

"How does one say thank you to so many people whose persistence wouldn't let us give up the search? When Dan was called with the news that the panels his grandfather and uncle had worked on so many years before had been found, you'd have thought he had just received the greatest Christmas present ever!

Don't you wish all preservation alerts ended this way? Nice work Joel and Seth!