

Piccirilli ...

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PHOTO: FILE

Guglielmo Marconi, also known as the Wizard of Wireless, was another of the Piccirilli brothers' projects. Marconi proved it was possible to send messages across the Atlantic using electromagnetic waves instead of wires. Marconi died in 1937.

French always expressed his appreciation for the Piccirilli's work, and he asked Attilio to design the allegorical figures of "Indian Literature," "Indian Lawgiver," and also the Firemen's Memorial at 100th Street. French recognized the Piccirilli's talent to such an extent that from the moment they began working for him, all of his sculptures, with the exception of two, were carved by the brothers.

In addition to all the already mentioned sculptures carved by the Piccirilli brothers, there are also original sculptures by Furio, such as "The Seal," which is also in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum, and which won the Gold Medal in the National Academy of Design Exhibition in 1930. Also on exhibit in the Metropolitan's West Wing is Attilio's "Fragelina," an abstract marble of a young girl growing into a graceful woman. And, in the Woodlawn Cemetery, Attilio's replica of his original "Outcast" marks the grave of his nephew Nathan, who died in World War II. The original "Outcast" is thought to have been destroyed by a fire in the churchyard of St. Mark's in the Bowery.

There is not much known about this family of stone-carvers, who, with their well known sculptures, have left their mark not only in New York, but all over the United

States. The colossal central figure of Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., weighing 150 tons, and measuring 19 feet in height, is one of the best-known examples of the Piccirilli brothers' work.

However, people who have learned about the Piccirillis have already begun to put their efforts together to honor their talent and the contributions they made to American art.

Mary Shelley and Bill Carroll, two professors, and residents of the area of Belmont where the Piccirilli's studio once sat, have been conducting extensive research on the family. They have published articles on the Piccirilli brothers in local newspapers and given lectures at the New York Historical Society on the family's contribution to American culture.

Because of Shelley and Carroll's work, the New York Times published an article on the Piccirilli brothers in 1999, and people are beginning to become acquainted with their story. Professors Carroll and Shelley would like to see a playground or park built on or near the vacant lot where the Piccirillis' studio once was. "Perhaps even rename the street to Piccirilli Place; it would be appropriate to commemorate their achievements," said the two historians.

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