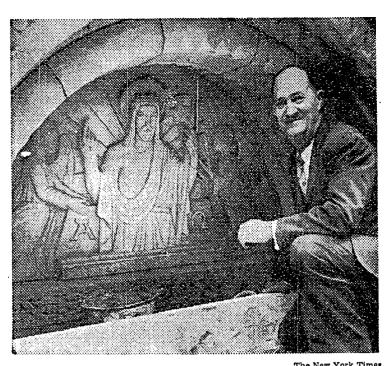
About New York

Stone Carver Comes Out of Retirement at 71 to Do Pointing on Church Edifice



Catholic

Araldo Perugi inspects handiwork at Roman Church of Our Saviour, Park Avenue and 38th Street.

By MEYER BERGER

STONE carvers are a vanishing breed in New York City. In the whole metropolitan area there are only eighteen unionized experts on statuary and on other carving for building exteriors. Most are building exteriors. from 60 to 70 ye Most 70 years old, or

more,
When Vermilya, Brown,
Inc., local builders, found an
calling for \$755,000 ntem calling for worth of worth of stonework for the new Roman Catholic Church of Our Saviour at Park Aveof Our Saviour at Park Avenue and Thirty-eighth Street, they had no idea how scarce good carvers were.

But Henry J. Pizzutello, whose family has run stone-works in New York for generations, undertook the church job on subcontract with some misgiving. Half of the carvers in the New York area were at work on the Baltimore Cathedral and on the National Cathelia Shina in National Catholic Shrine Washington.In despair, Mr. Pizzutello turned to men in retirement.

He finally coaxed Araldo Perugi, tall but weary, to do the pointing and some carving. Araldo is 71. He has worked with chisel and hammer since he was a boy in Carrara in Tuscany, where the lovely Carrara marble has been quarried for 1,000 years. over well Araldo has forgotten the

names of some of the churches with his works since 1910.
"Names and places," he says,
"recede in memory. They go
to hide in dark places when
you are past 70." But the
Park Avenue edifice needed
him. He was the only stone
pointer around.

Now a good skyscrapers decorated a good pointer, Mr. Now,

Pizzutello olains, e۶ than a good carver. The pointer transfers the work, with calipers and other ancient instruments, from the plaster model, in true scale. You are fortunate, it seems, to find one pointer among thirty to forty ordinary artisans in the trade. Araldo Perugi held back at

st because ne disjourney from his home in coklyn each working day first because he did not want Brooklyn to the church and to Mr. Pizzutello's yard in the Bronx. He said, "Old bones complain when they carry the load that was feather-light in youth."

But the boss stoneman, a patient man, got around that. He arranged to send the work to his cousin's stoneyard, to S. Pizzutello's at Thirty-Pizzutello's at eighth Street and Eighteenth Avenue in Brooklyn. Araldo sighed, heaved his weary sighed,

shoulders, and undertook the task. He did the pointing for all carvers could do the detail to proper depth and width. He finished all the carving for the reliefs in two of the tym-pani and arches, one in Park Avenue, the other in Thirty-Avenue, the other in Thirty-eighth Street. The carvers' union made a

rare concession for the church ever project. Ιt has union rule that its members must do their work manually, as their great ancestors did, as their great ancestors did, with a kit of 125 to 150 chisels of varying degrees of sharpness or breadth. They were not to speed up the work by using automatic devices.

On the church assignment, however, the oldest carvers like Araldo work with air

however, the like Araldo with work airhammers, pneumatic machin-ery that gets the job done four to five times as fast as with hand-wielded tools. It is a rare privilege, but even as they grab at it the old ones seem a bit ashamed. Secretly they tell you it is profanation of their ancient art.

Mr. Pizzutello says the

carving on the Church of Our Saviour is the largest assignsince St. Bartholomew's Church went up in Park Avenue, just north of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. storia Hotel, twenty-years ago. The depression and the sober planes of modern architecture kept reducing the call for carvers.

It is altogether likely, Mr. Pizzutello thinks, that the

Pizzutello thinks, that the carving and statuary on the Church of Our Saviour may be the last major carving job New York will ever see. He said, "The older men are gathered in by time and they have no apprentices to replace them. It is so even abroad. The art dies there, too, and with sickening rapidity."

ity. Araldo Perugi nodded. A veil seemed to film his eyes. When he spoke the words were sad, edged with bitterness. He said: "The sons of words of ness. He said: The sons of carvers in America drive buses. They have no heart for the work of their fathers. If they do not drive buses they aspire to college and to engineering. In my time it engineering. was not so."

There have been, as every reader knows, an overable ance of muttnik witticks but in Jackson Heights an overabundwitticisms, thè other day Frank G. M. Corbin, an executive, stopped short at sight of a pampered mutt trotting downstreet in a mink jacket. He reports, "It wasn't just that; the dog also wore a wrist watch (left front paw) which seemed of good paw) which seemed of good make and expensive. The most charitable thought I had was that perhaps the gadget was merely a symbol of office. Watch dog, you know."