



# **Sacco & Vanzetti**

## **Commemoration**

## **Society**



**[www.saccoandvanzetti.org](http://www.saccoandvanzetti.org)**



Site of the payroll robbery and fatal shooting of Frederick A. Parmenter, paymaster of the Slate and Morrill Shoe Company and Alexandro Berardelli, his guard, on April 15, 1920, for which Sacco and Vanzetti were tried, found guilty, and executed.





View of the site of the payroll robbery and fatal shooting from the opposite direction.



Nicola Sacco's mug shot.



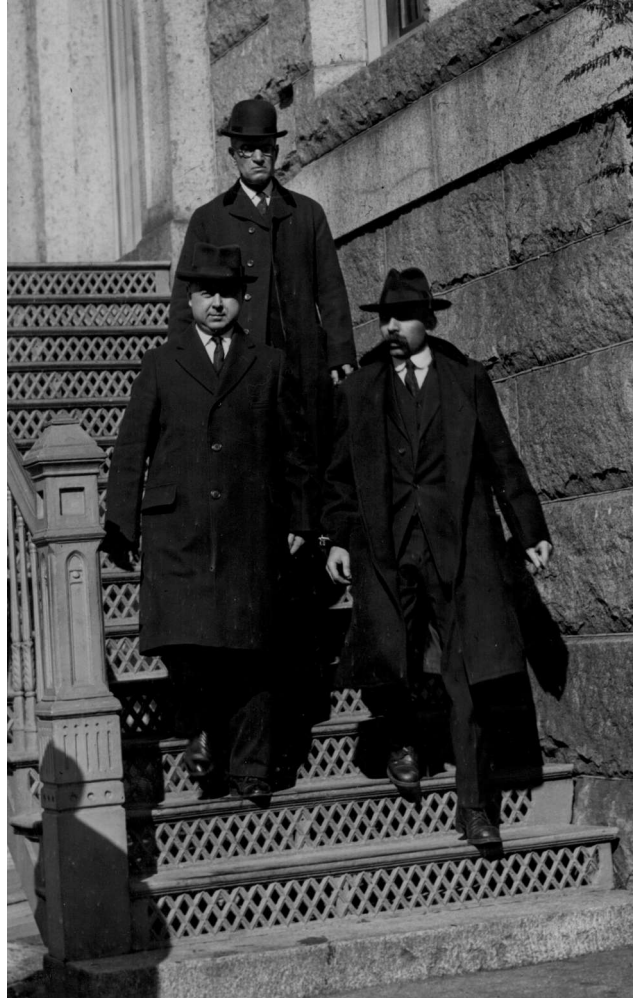


Bartolomeo Vanzetti's mug shot.



Sacco and Vanzetti being escorted to the Norfolk County House in Dedham. [*News service photo, October 31, 1921*]





Vanzetti being escorted from the Dedham Courthouse.  
[*Undated news service photo*]

Instructions received from Spl. Agt. in Chg. C. A. Bancroft.

1.

REPORT MADE AT: Boston, Mass.	DATE WHEN MADE: Nov. 29, 1921	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: Nov. 27, 1921.	REPORT MADE BY: [REDACTED]
TITLE AND CHARACTER OF CASE: INTERNATIONAL PROTEST MEETING ON BEHALF OF SACCO AND VANZETTI AT THE GRAND OPERA HOUSE, BOSTON, MASS.			
FACTS DEVELOPED: At Boston, Mass.: HENRY ABRAHAMSON COSTANTINO ZONCHELLO CALEB HARRISON Speakers: DEC 2 - 1921 Wm. J. Burns			
The inclemency of the weather was no doubt one of the principal reasons for the failure of the INTERNATIONAL PROTEST MEETING ON BEHALF OF NICOLA SACCO AND BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI -- the two Italian anarchists of this district who were found guilty of first degree murder-- held last Sunday, the 27th instant, at the Grand Opera House, Boston.			
The meeting, which was held under the auspices of the WORKERS' DEFENSE CONFERENCE OF NEW ENGLAND, for the purpose of supporting the motion for a new trial and for collecting funds for SACCO and VANZETTI, was, in fact, attended by approximately 150 persons, composed of Italians and Hebrews, the American element being almost unnoticeable.			
The persons scheduled to speak at that meeting were AARON VELLEMAN, COSTANTINO ZONCHELLO and CALEB HARRISON. AARON VELLEMAN however, did not appear, and in his place spoke HENRY ABRAHAMSON of the city: [REDACTED]			
Due to the inclemency of the weather, the writer was unable to arrive at the meeting place at the time the meeting was opened. He arrived an hour later, that is, when CALEB HARRISON opened his address.			
After the close of the meeting, however, Agent spoke with person who was in attendance during the entire meeting and who informed:			
REFERENCE:	COPIES OF THIS REPORT FURNISHED TO: WASHINGTON 2, BOSTON 2.		
ORIGINAL			

The Department of Justice's Bureau of Investigation kept close tabs on the those groups and individuals, both locally and across the country, organizing support for Sacco and Vanzetti. The report above covers a meeting in Boston on November 27, 1921, and is just one of the over 2,000 redacted pages released in 1975 through the Freedom of Information Act.



## Demonstrations held in Boston on March 1, 1925 and October 31, 1926



Photo and poster for two of the many demonstrations held in support of Sacco and Vanzetti. [John Adams Courthouse Exhibit]



Arrested protesters being escorted to jail. [*News service photo, August 1927*]





Sacco and Vanzetti sympathizers, some wearing black armbands, picketing in front of the State House. [News service photo, August 16, 1927]



Forty women and several men arrested at one of the many pickets which took place in front of the State House. [*News service photo, August 16, 1927*]



Mary Donovan, Recording Secretary of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, making arrangements to raise bail for the forty women and several men arrested for picketing in front of the State House. [*News service photo, August 16, 1927*]





Another of the many pickets in front of the State House.  
[*Undated news service photo*]

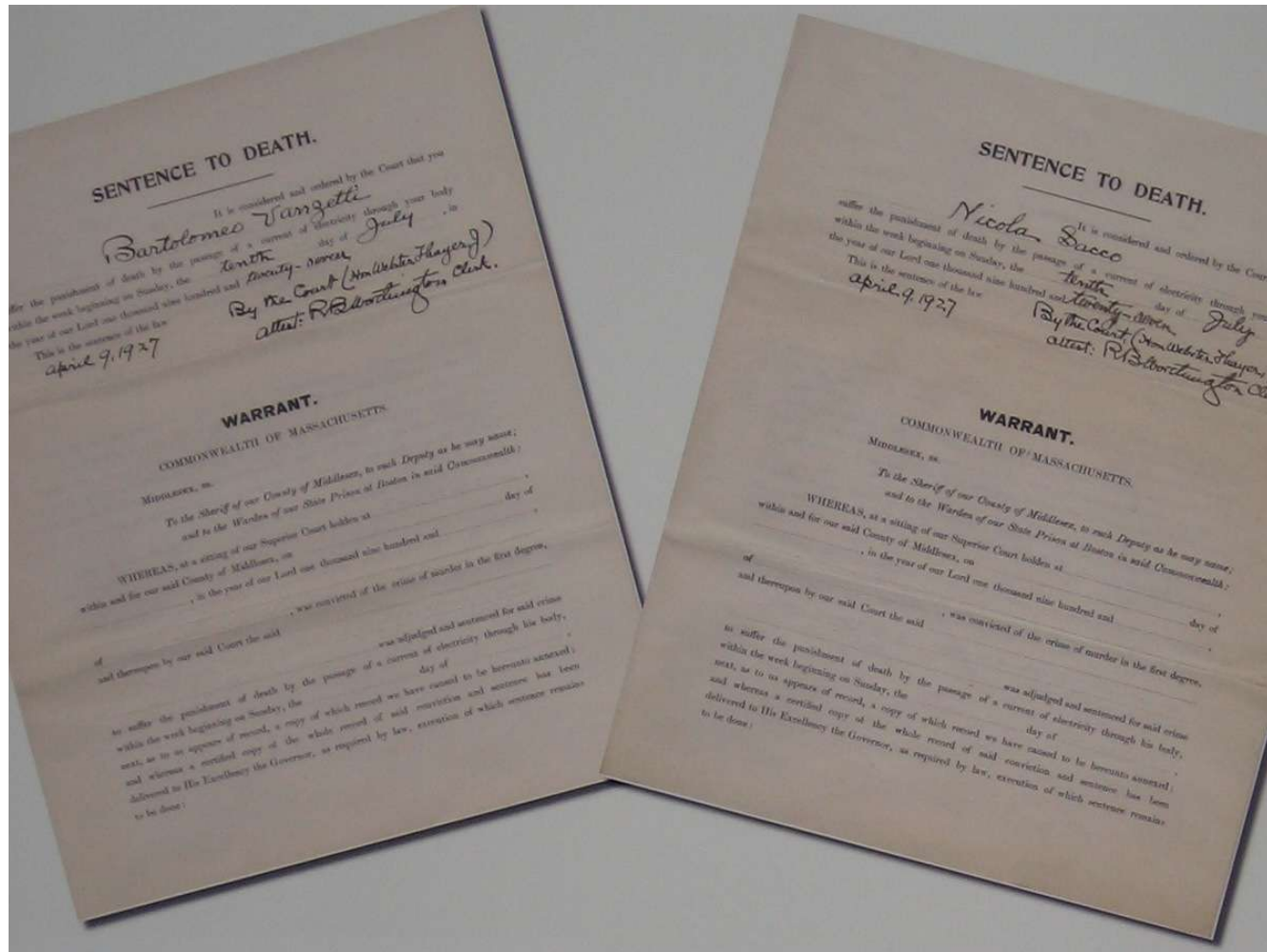


Author D. Hill and Michael Musmano, attorneys for Sacco and Vanzetti. [*News service photo, August, 17, 1927*]



William B. Thompson, a lawyer for Sacco and Vanzetti.  
[*Undated news service photo*]





On April 9, 1927, Judge Thayer sentenced Sacco and Vanzetti to death. The sentence was originally scheduled for the week of July 10<sup>th</sup>, but was not carried out until August 23<sup>rd</sup>. [John Adams Courthouse Exhibit]



Harvard students attempted a re-enactment at the scene of the crime before being stopped by the police. The shooting occurred in front of the fifth window from the right. *[News service photo, April 23, 1927]*

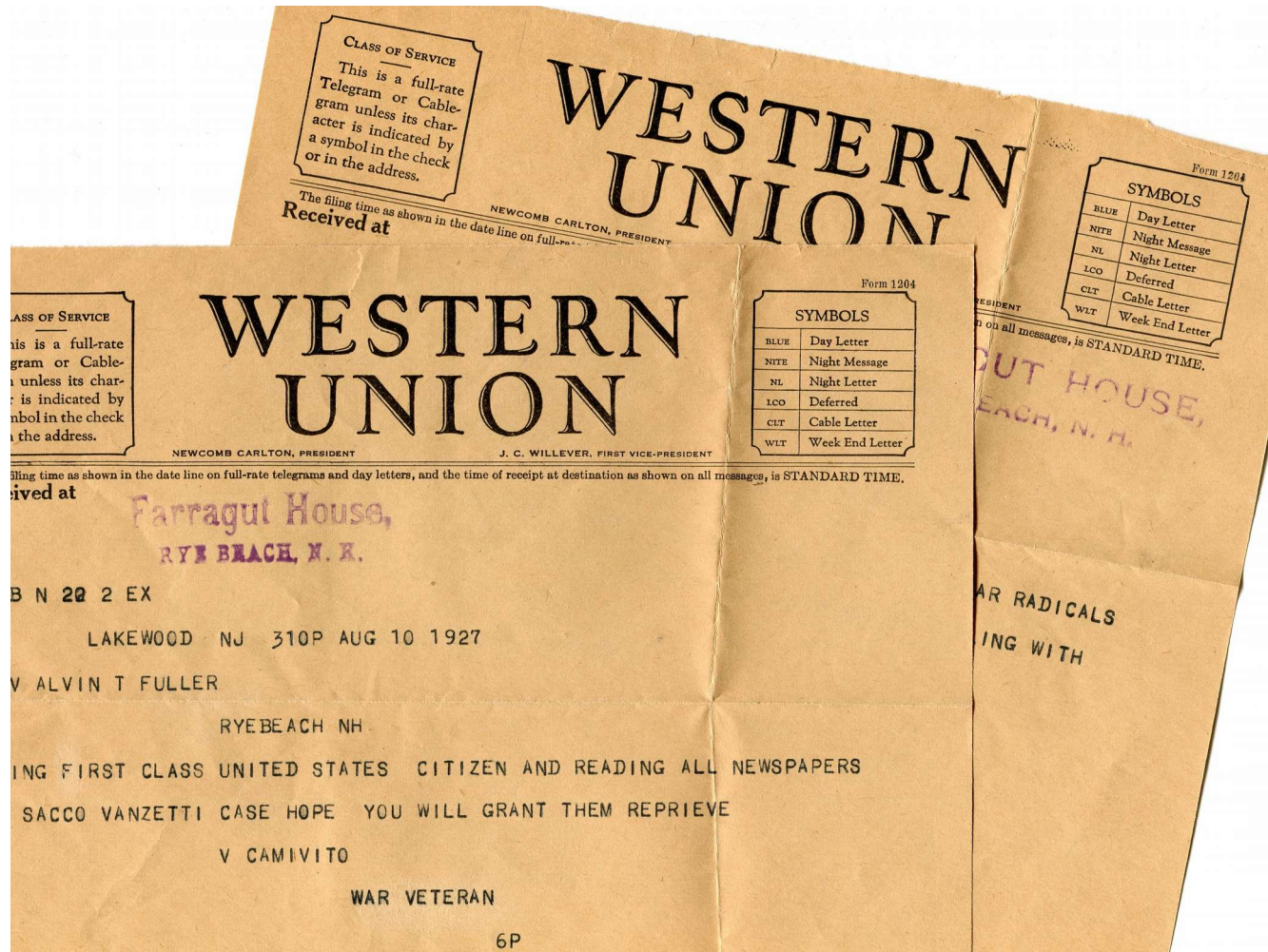


Mrs. Elizabeth Glendower Evans, a prominent Boston social activist and reformer and unidentified friend entering the Dedham Courthouse to attend a hearing on the case. Mrs. Evans took a personal interest in the case and provided significant financial support. [*News service photo, August 16, 1927*].





Mary Donovan, Recording Secretary for the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee at the committee's office. [*News service photo, August 1927*]



Two of the thousand of letters and telegrams sent to Governor Fuller in support of the two men. This one asks that the men be given a reprieve. [August 10, 1927].

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
CAMBRIDGE

5 Story Street.  
August 20, 1927.

To Governor Alvan T. Fuller,

AUG 22 1927

Your Excellency:

I earnestly beg you to commute the sentence of Sacco and Vanzetti to life imprisonment. I ask this as a matter of sound public policy.

Capital punishment can only be justified as a deterrent to crime; whenever, for any reason, execution will not serve this single purpose, a punishment so irrevocable and sensational becomes socially unwise.

Unfortunately, this case has ceased to be a simple question of the guilt or innocence of two men, and has become a grave aspect of class struggle. I believe all pleas for clemency must regard it in this light. If these men are executed they will become martyrs to their ideals in the eyes of a large social group, and to it, a bitter example of the persecution of the ruling classes. Their confidence in the judicial system, and indeed all organized popular government will be severely shaken. I do not believe the community can afford, rightly or wrongly, so to stir up class hatred. The deterrent element in the punishment has been completely lost.

There is widespread and honest doubt among intelligent and public-spirited citizens of the state and country at large as to whether these men are guilty. Justified or not, this

from them, which have forced your hand, believe for a  
citizens will commend you for your courage  
and wisdom.

Letter asking Governor Fuller to commute the sentence of Sacco and Vanzetti. [August 20, 1927]





Rosa Sacco, wife of Nicola Sacco. [*Undated news service photo*]



Rosa Sacco leaving the Charlestown State Prison after visiting her husband. [*New service photo, August 10, 1927*]

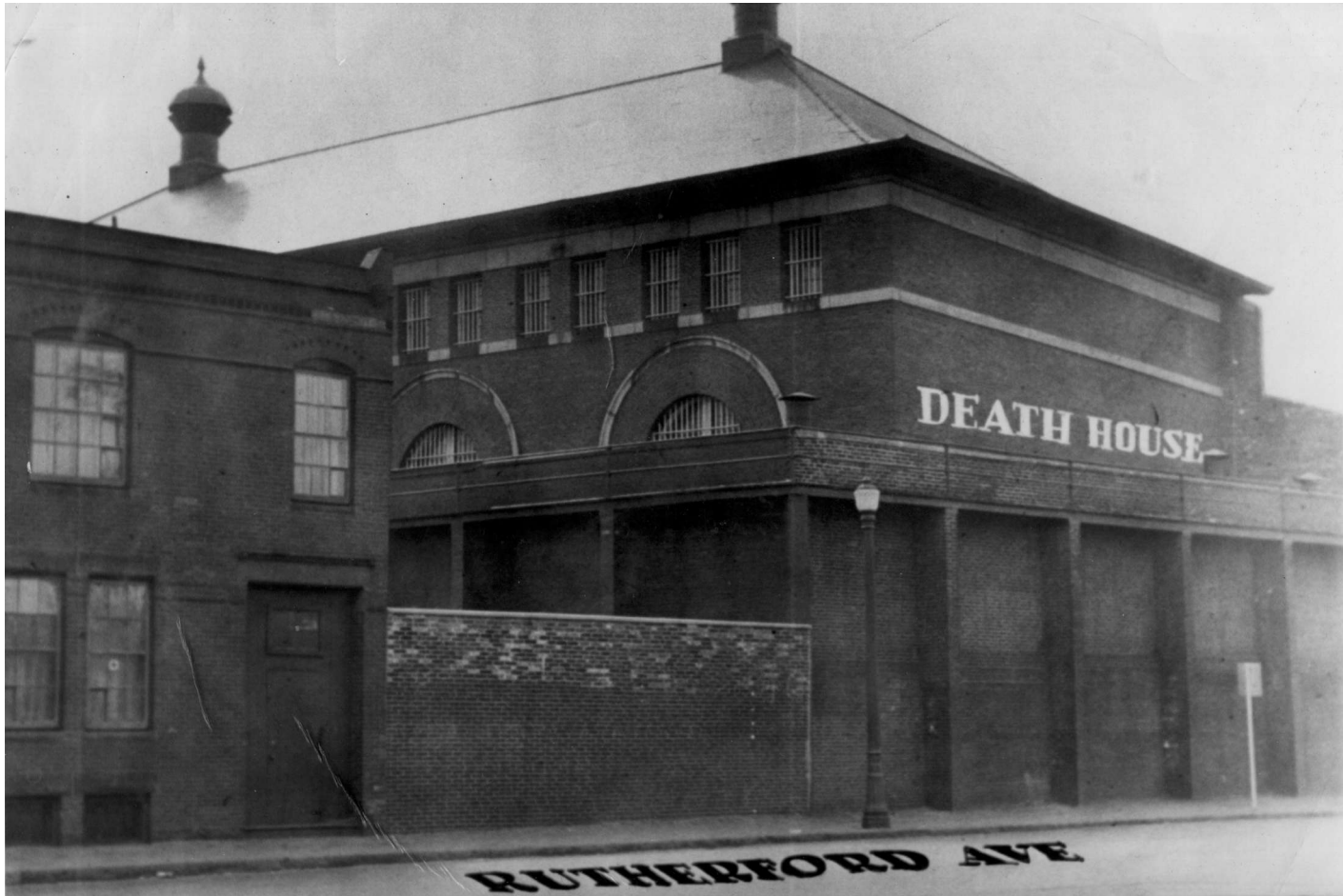


Luigia Vanzetti, sister of Bartolomeo Vanzetti (left), and Rosa Sacco leaving Charlestown State Prison after visiting the two condemned men. [*News service photo, August 21, 1927*]

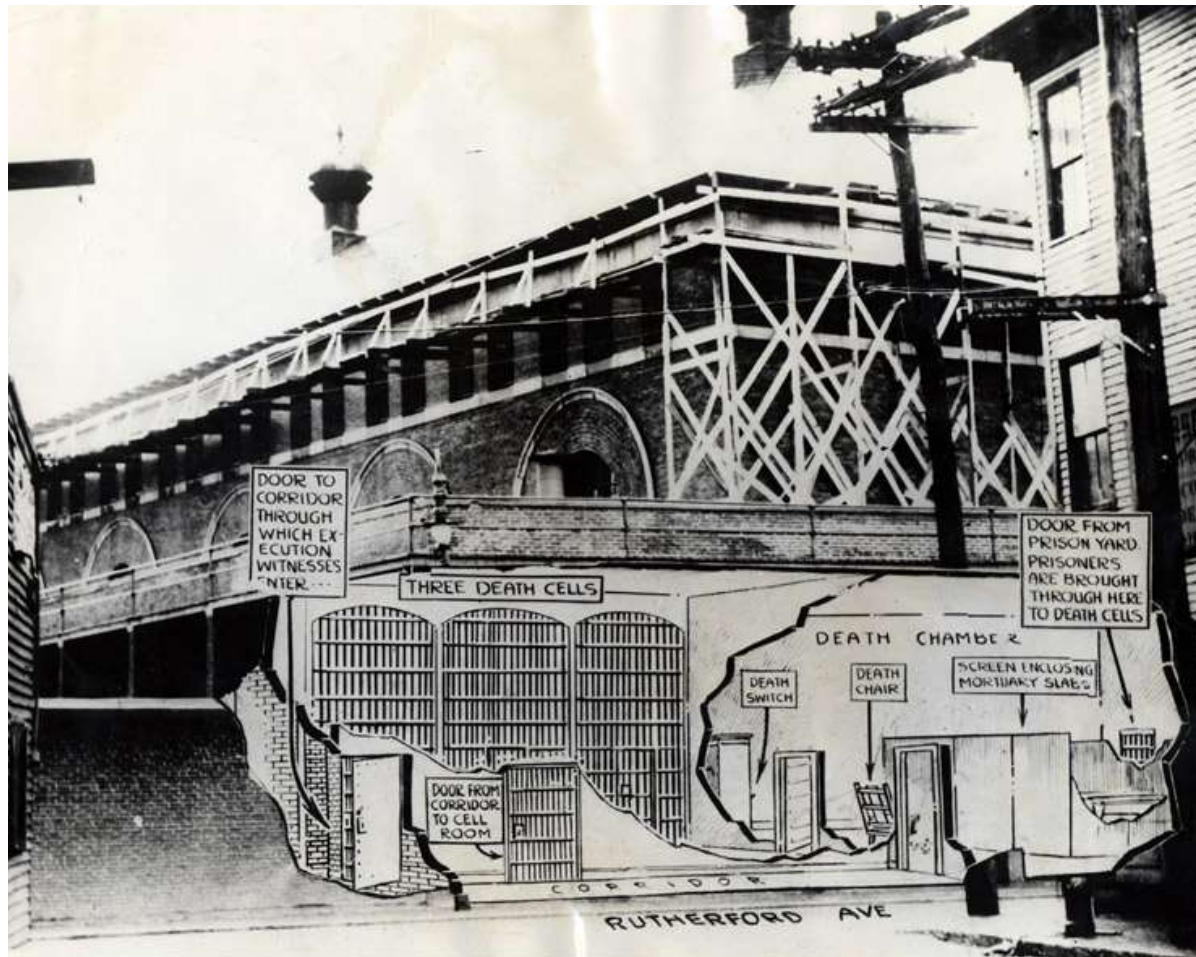




Anticipating “disorders and outbreaks” by radical sympathizers as the date set for the executions neared, members of the Boston Fire Department were sworn in as emergency members of the police to help guard the city. [News service photo, August 16, 1927]



Charlestown Prison showing location of execution chamber. [*Undated news service photo*]



Cutaway view of execution chamber at the Charlestown Prison. [Undated news service photo]





## CHARLESTOWN PRISON

Aerial view of the Charlestown Prison. Circle shows location of the execution chamber. The prison was torn down in the 1970s. Bunker Hill Community College now occupies the site. [*Undated news service photo*]



Satellite image of the area today. Bunker Hill Community College is on the left. The approximate location of the site of the execution chamber stood is circled.





Police and troopers armed with submachine guns and bayoneted rifles guard the immediate vicinity of the execution chamber, the so-called "death house." [*News service photo August (22), 1927*]





Mounted police hold back large crowd as the hour of Sacco and Vanzetti's executions approached. [*News service photo, August (22), 1927*]



Sacco and Vanzetti's Executioner, Robert Elliott Gaunt. His home in New York was bombed nine months after the men were put to death. No one was injured, but the front of the house was heavily damaged. [*News service photo, May 22, 1927*]

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Suffolk, ss.

State Prison, Boston, Mass.  
August 23, 1927.

In compliance with a warrant issued by the Superior Court holden at Dedham, Norfolk County, April 9, 1927

Nicola Sacco

was executed as required by section 46, chapter 279, General Laws, at 12:13:10 o'clock A. M. August 23, 1927, by causing a current of electricity to pass through his body until he was dead.

The subject was electrified 12 - 15 amperes for 12 seconds, the voltage being 1800 - 2000 after which the electrification was reduced to 250 volts for a period of 48 seconds, and repeated, when the said Nicola Sacco was pronounced dead by the legal witnesses.

*William Hendry*  
Warden, State Prison.

Legal Witnesses.

*Gregorius L. Loring, M.D.*  
Prison Physician.

*Frank B. Williams*  
Surgeon General of the Commonwealth.

*George Augustus Wright, M.D.*  
Medical Examiner of Suffolk County.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Suffolk, ss.

State Prison, Boston, Mass.  
August 23, 1927.

In compliance with a warrant issued by the Superior Court  
holden at Dedham, Norfolk County, April 9, 1927

Bartolomeo Vanzetti

was executed as required by section 46, chapter 27B, General Laws,  
at 12:21:33 o'clock A. M., August 23, 1927, by causing a  
current of electricity to pass through his body until he was dead.

The subject was electrified 9 - 11 amperes for 10  
seconds, the voltage being 1400 - 1950 after which the electrifi-  
cation was reduced to 250 volts for a period of  
50 seconds, and repeated, when the said Bartolomeo Vanzetti  
was pronounced dead by the legal witnesses.

*William Hendry*  
Warden, State Prison.

Legal Witnesses

*Joseph H. L. Perkins, M.D.*  
Prison Physician.

*Frank S. Williams*  
Surgeon General of the Commonwealth.

*George Burgess Drayton, M.D.*  
Medical Examiner of Suffolk County.

Warden's certificates of death for Sacco and Vanzetti,  
dated August 23, 1927. [*John Adams Courthouse Exhibit*]





Barred doorway to the committee's offices at 256 Hanover St. The landlord refused to allow the caskets to be brought into the building for public viewing. Note the absence of the committee's name from the list of the building's occupants. [News service photo, August 27, 1927]



Bodies of Sacco and Vanzetti being loaded into the hearses  
which carried them to the Forrest Hills Cemetery. [News  
service photo, August 27, 1927]



Crowd following the funeral cortege on Hanover Street.  
Hearses can be seen at the top right corner. [*News service  
photo, August 27, 1927*]

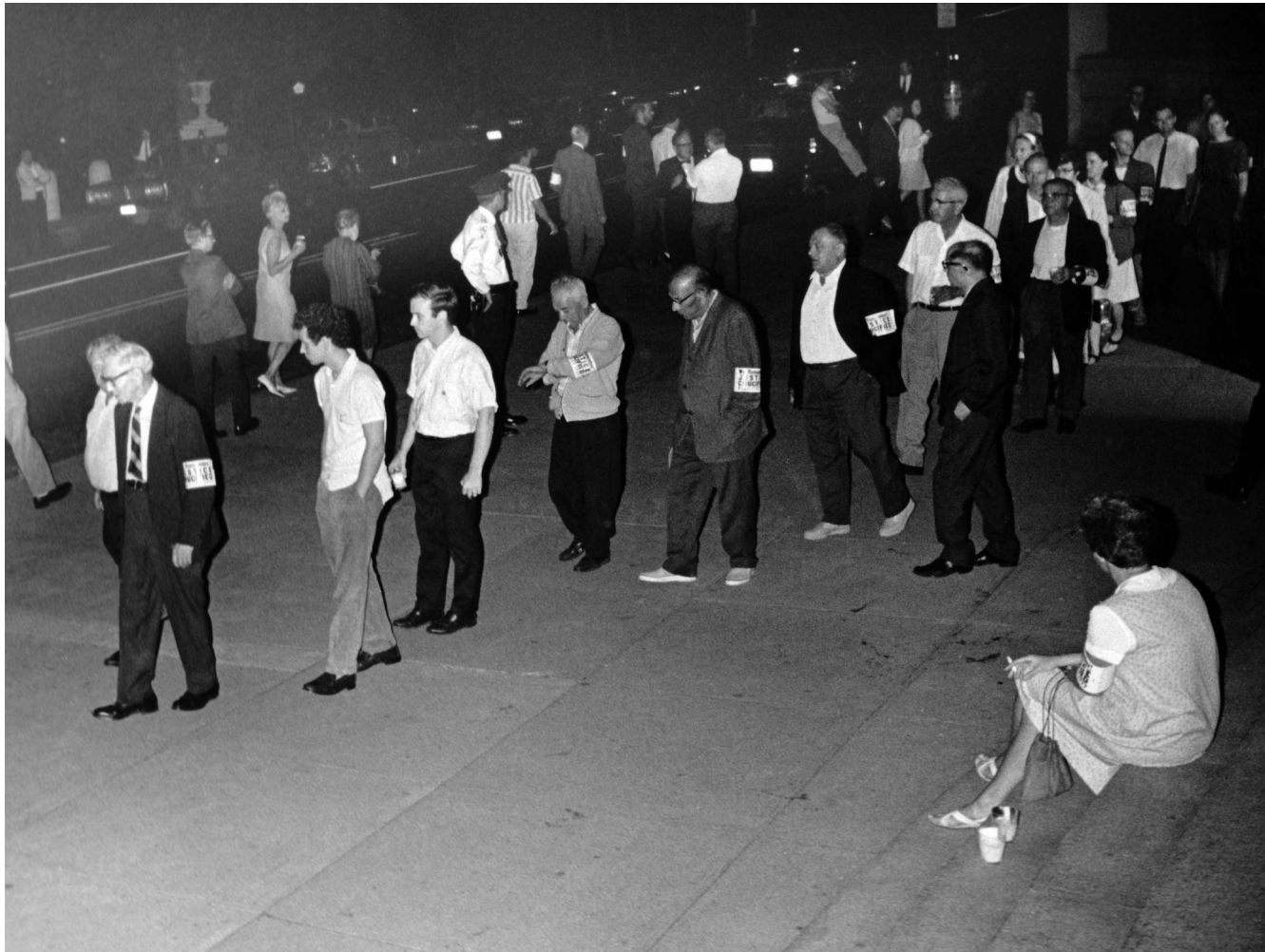


This bas relief by sculptor Gutzon Borglum was presented to the governors of Massachusetts and the Mayors of Boston in 1937, 1947, and 1957. It was refused each time. A plaster casting was formally accepted by Mayor Tom Menino and Governor Paul Cellucci in 1995. [News service photo, August 1937]





From left to right, Roger Baldwin, Powers Hapgood, Alfred Baker Lewis, and Gardner Jackson, members of the Memorial Committee for Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. They offered to erect the Borglum plaque in Boston Common. Both the Mayor and the Governor immediately opposed the plan. [*News service photo, August 23, 1937*]



Not forgotten. Former members of the defense committee and others at a vigil outside the State House on August 23, 1967 on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti. [*News service photo, August 23, 1967*]



Spencer Sacco, grandson of Nicola Sacco, at the State House with Gov. Dukakis after the signing of the proclamation which declared, in part, "any stigma and disgrace should forever be removed from the names of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti." [*News service photo, July 20, 1977*]

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

By His Excellency

MICHAEL S. DUKAKIS

Governor

## A PROCLAMATION

1977

WHEREAS: A half century ago next month, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were executed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts after being indicted, tried, and found guilty of murdering Alessandro Berardelli and Frederick A. Parmenter; and

WHEREAS: Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were Italian immigrants who lived and worked in Massachusetts while openly professing their beliefs in the doctrines of anarchism; and

WHEREAS: The atmosphere of their trial and appeals was permeated by prejudice against foreigners and hostility toward unorthodox political views; and

WHEREAS: The conduct of many of the officials involved in the case shed serious doubt on their willingness and ability to conduct the prosecution and trial of Sacco and Vanzetti fairly and impartially; and

WHEREAS: The limited scope of appellate review then in effect did not allow a new trial to be ordered based on the prejudicial effect of the proceedings as a whole; and

WHEREAS: This situation was later rectified as a direct result of their case by the adoption of Chapter 341 of the Acts of 1939, which permitted the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to order a new trial not merely because the verdict was contrary to the law, but also if it was against the weight of the evidence, contradicted by newly discovered evidence, or "for any other reason that justice may require"; and

WHEREAS: The people of Massachusetts today take pride in the strength and vitality of their governmental institutions, particularly in the high quality of their legal system; and

WHEREAS: They recognize that all human institutions are imperfect, that the possibility of injustice is ever-present, and that the acknowledgement of fault, combined with a resolve to do better, are signs of strength in a free society; and

WHEREAS: The trial and execution of Sacco and Vanzetti should serve to remind all civilized people of the constant need to guard against our susceptibility to prejudice, our intolerance of unorthodox ideas, and our failure to defend the rights of persons who are looked upon as strangers in our midst; and

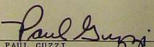
WHEREAS: Simple decency and compassion, as well as respect for truth and an enduring commitment to our nation's highest ideals, require that the fate of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti be pondered by all who cherish tolerance, justice and human understanding; and

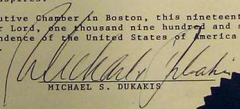
WHEREAS: Tuesday, August 23, 1977, will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Michael S. Dukakis, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by virtue of the authority conferred upon me as Supreme Executive Magistrate by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and by all other authority vested in me, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, August 23, 1977, "NICOLA SACCO AND BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI REMORIAL DAY"; and declare, further, that any stigma and disgrace should be forever removed from the names of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, from the names of their families and descendants, and so, from the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and I hereby call upon all the people of Massachusetts to pause in their daily endeavors to reflect upon these tragic events, and draw from their historic lessons the resolve to prevent the forces of intolerance, fear, and hatred from ever again uniting to overcome the rationality, wisdom, and fairness to which our legal system aspires.

Given at the Executive Chamber in Boston, this nineteenth day of July in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and seventy-seven and of the independence of the United States of America the two hundred and first.

By His Excellency the Governor

  
PAUL GUZZI  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

  
MICHAEL S. DUKAKIS

GOD SAVE THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

The 1977 proclamation signed by then Governor Michael S. Dukakis.





Banner announcing the second Sacco and Vanzetti Commemoration March and Rally and the first organized by the Sacco and Vanzetti Commemoration Society.  
[August 23, 2007]



Marching down Boylston Street to Boston's North End.  
[August 23, 2007]





Re-dedication of plaque at 256 Hanover street on December 1, 2007. The building housed the offices of the Sacco and Vanzetti Defense Committee. The plaque replaced an earlier one put up in 1976 which disappeared a few years later.



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# **Sacco and Vanzetti Defense Committee**

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In May 1920, two Italian immigrants were arrested for the murder of two payroll guards in South Braintree. A group of friends and fellow anarchists organized a defense committee for the accused men, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. For the next seven years The Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee struggled to free the two men, whose cause became a passionate controversy the world over. In 1925, the committee moved to an upstairs room at 256 Hanover Street in the North End, where the drama intensified as it drew to its close. Sacco and Vanzetti were executed in 1927, but theirs is "the case that will not die."

## **North End**



Boston 200

Sacco & Vanzetti Commemoration Society - August 23, 2007  
[www.saccoandvanzetti.org](http://www.saccoandvanzetti.org)



Permanent(?) public exhibit at the John Adams Courthouse in Boston. The exhibit is open Monday – Friday, 8:30 to 5:00 p.m.





Exhibit room at the Federal Courthouse.





Martedì 13 maggio 2014 - ore 21 - Palazzo Taffini - via Sant'Andrea 53 - Savigliano

# SACCO & VANZETTI NOVANT'ANNI DOPO

In occasione dei venti anni dalla morte di Vincenzina Vanzetti  
**LUIGI BOTTA**  
aggiorna la storia dei due italiani uccisi a Boston nel 1927



Intervengono

Maria Fernanda Sacco • Giovanni Vanzetti • Matteo Marolla



Verrà proiettato per la prima volta in Italia il film restaurato del funerale dei due anarchici

**BANCA CRS**  
Banca Cassa di Risparmio di Savigliano S.p.A.

Interest in the Sacco-Vanzetti case persists. This event in Italy was co-sponsored by the Sacco and Vanzetti Commemoration Society. [Luigi Botta, May 13, 2014]



Well attended talk on Sacco and Vanzetti in Italy. [*Federico Botta, May 13, 2014*]

**FIND OUT CITY**