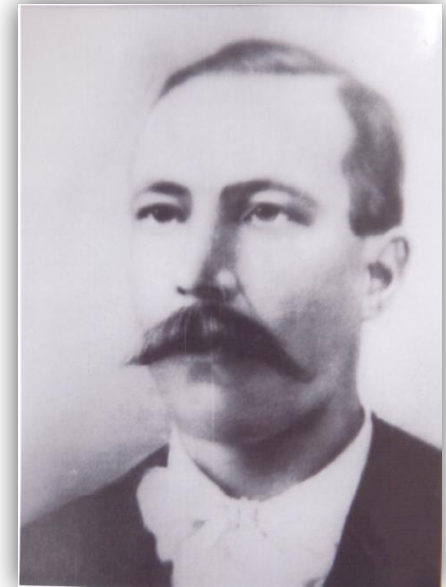


On May 4, 1917, August "Gus" Baker, one of hundreds of construction workers hired to perform finish work on the newly-built Missouri State Capitol, died as a result of a fall from scaffolding in the upper rotunda.

The story of Gus Baker is one similar to that of many of the workers who came to Jefferson City to help build the new Capitol. He was a German-born immigrant who settled in Callaway County in the 1890s. He was in his early 50s when the Capitol was under construction, and was hired as a day laborer, to fill in and assist the construction crews as needed. He lived several miles north of Jefferson City on Highway 94, which required that he "hop the train" (the MKT; now known as the Katy Trail) or hitchhike to North Jefferson City (then known as Cedar City) where he would cross the Missouri River bridge and head to the work site.



August "Gus" Baker, ca. late 1880s



August Baker, near the time of his death, ca. 1917

Roger Baker, the Grandson of Gus, describes his late grandfather as "a bit 'goosey,'" an old term that implies that he might have been a nervous fellow. On the day of his death, Gus was working on removing scaffolding in an "upper rotunda" (probably the third-floor rotunda), where it is thought that a loud noise startled him, causing him to lose his balance and fall to the first floor. He was taken to St. Mary's Hospital, where he lived for a few hours, but died later in the night.

In memory of his grandfather, a memorial wreath, donated by the family of August "Gus" Baker will be displayed in the first-floor rotunda on the one-hundredth anniversary his death. The display will also memorialize all of the workers who died on the jobsite during the Capitol's construction.

Following is an excerpt from the 1919 report of the original State Capitol Commission Board, which lists the workers who lost their lives during the construction of this Capitol. Also included are some unique photos of several unnamed workers who helped construct this great building. Most of these photos were taken circa 1922, during the installation of the artwork commissioned by the Capitol Decoration Commission.

### IN MEMORIAM.

It was scarcely possible that an enterprise of this magnitude could be carried to completion without the sacrifice of human life. Over a thousand persons were employed upon the building during its construction.

Prior to the erection of the superstructure, A. Anderson of St. Louis, contractor for the power house and tunnel, died as the result of a pulmonary trouble, the fatality of which may have been hastened by the strenuous work incident to his contract.

During the erection of the building the following were killed as the result of accidents:

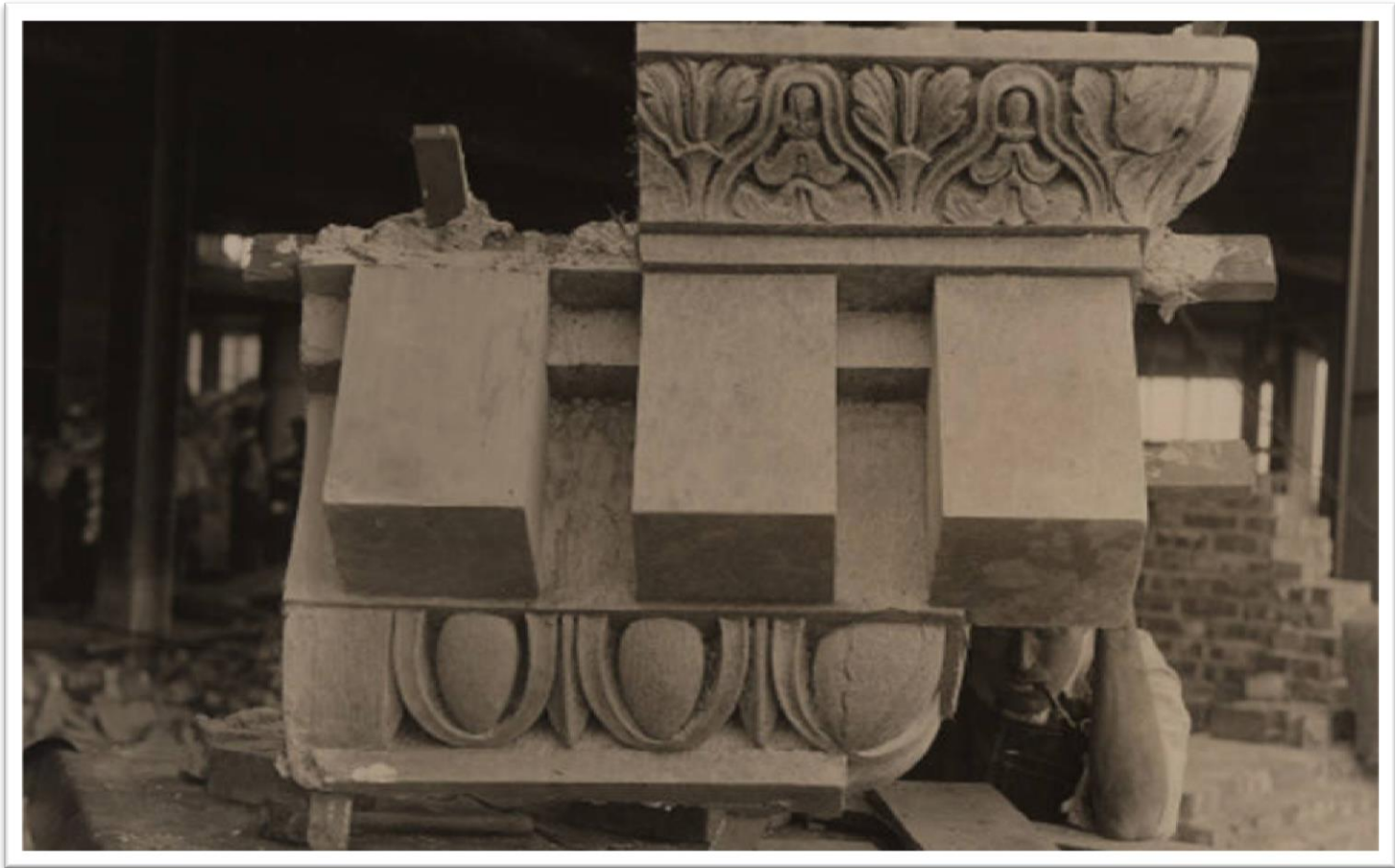
S. C. HYDE, September 13, 1913.

HENRY GREEN, September 25, 1913.

SAMUEL RITCHIE, August 10, 1914.

AUGUST BAKER, May 4, 1917.

These men, all workmen, gave up their lives at the post of duty and deserve to be remembered for their fidelity and patriotism as much as though they had died upon the field of battle.



Worker peeking through stone architectural dentil; lower right corner (*Missouri State Archives*)



Worker on scaffolding holding rope attached to pulley  
(Lester Parker Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri)





A stoneworker chiseling the central portion of the north frieze by Hermon Atkins MacNeil (*Lester Parker Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri*)





Workers on scaffolding near Corinthian columns, under north portico  
(Lester Parker Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri)





Worker on scaffolding with drop cloth  
(Lester Parker Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri)



Scaffolding and detail of Frank Brangwyn's upper rotunda mural *The Builders*, shortly after installation, ca. 1923 (*Lester Parker Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri*)





*August "Gus" Baker  
December 12, 1865 – May 4, 1917*