

John Vernia & Son Monuments

Founded: 1872

Location: 501 Pearl Street, New Albany (1871–)

John Vernia began cutting marble in the early 1870s. He had learned his trade as an apprentice under a Professor Brown in New Albany. After working on his own for a short time, he took his brother as a junior partner in a monument-making business. The firm purchased a building on the corner of Pearl and Elm Streets in New Albany.

John and Frank Vernia started the New Albany Marble Works during the nation's centennial year. Because the Vernias created monuments by hand, they used soft stone, such as marble and limestone. Later, however, they found these stones to be too soft. In time, headstones cracked, names faded, and ultimately no record remained. After technology made the cutting of granite and other hard stone possible, the Vernias turned to these materials and changed the name of the firm to John Vernia and Company Marble and Granite Works. The brothers continued as partners until Frank died in 1888.

By 1892 the firm had as many as twelve employees who worked with both Italian and American marble and granite. Around the turn of the century John's son, Charles L. Vernia, joined the firm, and the company's name became John Vernia & Son Monuments. After John died in 1918 Charles took over the business but kept his father's name on the shingle. Charles died near the end of World War II and was succeeded by his son, John J. Vernia.

In 1998 Charles C. Vernia headed his great-great-grandfather's company. The firm employed five people and expected sales of approximately \$500,000 for the fiscal year. The company continued to make granite monuments but also worked with bronze

and offered industrial sandblasting services. Other family members active in the operation of the organization were Mary Ann Vernia, a great-great-great-granddaughter of the firm's founder, and John F. Vernia, a great-great grandson.