

Connick Windows

Thoughts, news and comments concerning the art and craft of Connick stained glass, published periodically by...
The Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation, Ltd., Orin E. Skinner, Founder Marilyn B. Justice, President Fall, 2008
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Dear Harriet . . .

Albert M. Tannler

Charles J. Connick and Harriet Louise Shrom (1876-1965) were close friends in Pittsburgh in the late 1890s. Harriet was one of the four daughters and two sons of the Rev. Dr. William P. Shrom, pastor of Fourth Presbyterian Church, and his wife Laura. Harriet may have met Charlie Connick at Liberty Elementary School; years later he referred to her as an "old schoolmate."

Charlie gave Harriet inscribed copies of James L. Allen's *A Kentucky Cardinal for Christmas* 1898 and *Red Letter Poems by English Men and Women* for her birthday in 1899. He also gave her one of his drawings and photographs of his stained glass. In 1900 Connick left Pittsburgh for Boston. Harriet Shrom married George W. Provost on June 16, 1902. Connick returned to Pittsburgh in 1903 and worked there until late 1907, but there is no evidence of a continuing friendship.

The Provosts received Connick's wedding announcement in 1920, but the families seem to have lost touch until 1944 when Connick asked a Pittsburgh friend for the Provosts' address. Charles Connick wrote to Harriet Provost on February 17, 1944:

Dear Harriet,

Growing old is rather good fun, I find, on the whole, but I object to the way old fellows' like *me* seem to forget good friends like *you*. You notice that I say "seem" for the truth is that you are a very real part of my days of struggle in Pittsburgh and I shall never forget you. So I asked Anne Stolzenbach to get your address for me and here I come with hearty good will to ask for news from your "world" and to send you word from mine.

The friendship resumed and Harriet received photographs of the Connick family and clippings and articles about Connick's work. She kept them in a folder, together with the items Charlie had given her in the 1890s.

Charles Connick died December 28, 1945. In January, Harriet received the following letter:

Dear Harriet,

Thank you for your kind letter of sympathy. Charlie's death was a severe blow, especially so soon after Grace's. They both have been my standbys, always, and I miss them both, so much, and wonder why, that I was left. Not so long ago, when Charlie was driving me home and we were talking about old times, and incidentally, talked about you, and some experience, long ago. I was glad to hear from you. Charlie was a good friend to everybody, and so was Grace. Charlie was known by many, and every where he went, he left many friends. Thank you for writing to me.

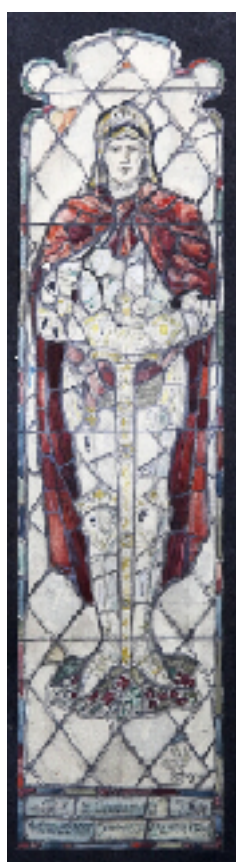
Sincerely, Mother Connick

Parts of this article are adapted from Albert M. Tannler, *Charles J. Connick: His Education and His Windows in and near Pittsburgh*, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, 2008. Harriet Shrom Provost's file of Connick material was inherited by her grand-daughter Susan Shrom Hopkins Martin, a member of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, who shared them with the author.

Albert M. Tannler gave the 2005 Orin E. Skinner Annual Lecture and has written occasionally for Connick Windows. In 2007 he spoke on "Charles J. Connick: The Education of a Stained Glass Master" and led a tour of Connick windows at Calvary Episcopal Church during the annual symposium of the Decorative Arts Trust.

Charles J. Connick: His Education and His Windows in and near Pittsburgh contains a superb understanding of Connick stained glass and of the Connick spirit of exploration and invention in a modern world. Mr. Tannler is at ease and conversant with Pittsburgh architecture during the Arts and Crafts period of American Art. We at the Connick Foundation encourage all of you to purchase this outstanding treatise on Charles J. Connick.

Charles J. Connick: His Education and His Windows in and near Pittsburgh by Albert M. Tannler, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, 2008. 176 pp., 116 illustrations (84 color and 32 b/w). ISBN 978-0-9788284-3-1. \$19.95 plus shipping and handling; trade discount available. The book may be ordered online at www.phlf.org or by contacting Frank Stroker at 412-471-5808, ext. 525; frank@phlf.org



Design for Captain Simpkins Memorial Window
St. John's Church, Beverly Farms, MA
Ian Justice Photography

Connick Windows

"I want to make beautiful interiors for both churches and souls
I want...[all people] to hear my windows singing..."

Charles J. Connick

The 2008 Orin E. Skinner annual lecture entitled *Transatlantic Gothic: Aspects of Anglo-American Medievalism* will be given by Peter Cormack on November 17, 2008 at 6:30 pm in the Daniel L. Marsh Chapel, Boston University, 735 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston.

From the 1890s until the inter-war period, a group of American architects, designers and craftworkers embarked upon a richly creative exploration of the medieval tradition, thereby transforming parts of the visual culture of the USA. Although quintessentially a 'post-medieval' nation born in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, America increasingly responded to the resonance of the Middle Ages - paradoxically - at the very moment of emerging Modernism. This illustrated lecture focuses on the work of Ralph Adams Cram, Charles J. Connick and others who recognised the potential of 'Gothic' as an expressive language for modern America. In particular, it will trace the transatlantic links with the Gothic Revival and the Arts & Crafts Movement in Britain, and will briefly examine the impact in this field of the USA's involvement in the Great War.

Peter Cormack, art historian and writer (and occasional stained glass artist), is an Honorary Director of the Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and is the Society's Honorary Curator of Kelmscott Manor, William Morris's country home.

The Connick Foundation Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation Collection will be transferred in the near future to MIT's Rotch Library of Architecture and Planning. Details about the move and future access to the collection will be further described in 2009 issues of this newsletter.