

Connick Windows

Thoughts, news and comment concerning the art and craft of Connick stained glass, published periodically by...

The Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation, Ltd.

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Orin Skinner: Recollections

Orin E. Skinner joined Charles Connick in 1921, was President of the Connick Studio from 1945 to 1986, and has been President of the Foundation from 1985 to the present.

(The following is taken from the article written for *Stained Glass Quarterly* for its winter 1977-1978 issue. The complete article is available from the Foundation on request.)

Prologue:

"They tell me in order to see Connick you first have to talk with Skinner". "That's right," answered Connick as he left the elevator and headed for his private studio. "He called me his left-handed right-hand man, and our lives were so intermingled that it is difficult to consider them separately."

Charles J. Connick was born in the small town of Springboro, Pennsylvania in 1875. I came to light in the same state, and about the same latitude, some 120 miles to the East and seventeen years later in an even smaller community called Sweden Valley, situated at the headwaters of the Allegheny.*

...I joined Connick in 1921, first as a painter and gradually working into other places where I might be useful. ...Connick's death in 1945 brought added responsibilities and sciatica. I got over the latter. He wanted us to continue his work which, as he said in his will, was only incidentally a business. He had trained us well in his philosophy of glass which became a mutual, driving force. We function almost as one, with one mind and a single pair of hands. We are in the truest sense, a co-operative.

(Please turn to overleaf)

Heinz Chapel Article: "Glassmates"

April 19, '92 a fine article by Patricia Lowry with photographs by Herb Ferguson appeared in *The Pittsburgh Press Sunday Magazine*. Lowry writes, "Heinz Chapel gave Connick the irresistible opportunity to completely control the amount of light entering the chapel, and thus the conditions under which his windows would be viewed. With no extraneous light striking the interior of the windows, they achieve maximum brightness and luminosity. As the sun moves across the south elevations of the chapel, it gives each window in turn a sparkling radiance that seems to set the saints and secular figures dancing." (Ed. note: Please send the Foundation any articles that are devoted to Connick windows in your community.)

In Rememberence

In the past year and a half we have lost four members of the Connick group. Ralf Nickelsen, December 1990; Jack (Reverend John) Wallace, November 1991; Harald Nickelsen, March 1992; and Henryk Twardzik, July 1992.



Ceramic Boxes will Recognize Donations

Orin Skinner has designed a dogwood decoration for the lid of a handthrown ceramic box. Twenty boxes have been donated to the Foundation. This design will be used only on these twenty pieces, which will be sent to the first twenty contributors of \$150 or more to the Connick Foundation. All donations are happily and gratefully accepted.



Orin E. Skinner, President, presiding at the Connick Foundation annual meeting last April.

Connick News

- Jonathan Fairbanks, curator of the American Decorative Arts & Sculpture Department, has purchased a small Connick panel with central figure for the Museum of Fine Arts. The panel was originally made for Boston sculpture Frederick W. Allen in exchange for a wooden bust of Connick, which is now in the Connick Collection at the Boston Public Library.
- Vanessa Barth of CYCLOPS Video Productions, Brunswick, Maine plans to produce a short video piece on early Connick windows in the Boston area.
- Eugene L. Weeks has recently sent us his little book *A Connick Window By-The-Sea*. He begins: "So you thought Boston's Charles J. Connick's stained glass windows were only in the eastern part of the United States. Here is a superb example in Pacific Grove, California...". Colonel Weeks is author and photographer of *Hymns in Colored Lights*, a documentation of the Church Street Church windows in Knoxville, Tennessee.
- Keep in mind Orin E. Skinner's lecture "History and Practice of Stained Glass", available from the Foundation for \$150 (\$100 is tax deductible).

One of the definitions of Window is "a means of obtaining information". Our newsletter will keep you informed of the Foundation's activities, the Connick Collection in the Fine Arts Department of the Boston Public Library; and Connick news around the country.

Recollections: (Continued from page one)

We believe that good stained glass is not fundamentally a question of style or period, but is related to inherent qualities of the material itself and its use in architecture. Color and light come first in our thought of windows. We deal in terms of glass and lead, painting lightly, heavily or not at all but always preserving the natural integrity and character of the material to pattern and enrich it.

Our designs are built on geometric and rhythmic foundations much as music is written, the basic

structure supporting even the most complicated forms. Subjects are contained within forms avoiding truncated figures or objects cut off in midair. Forms fill their allotted space and line flows from form to form. Our work is symbolic rather than realistic, but not to the extent of becoming grotesque. As great music does not copy the actual sounds of nature, we do not follow her actual forms, but interpret her pattern and significance in terms of symbolism.

* Editor's note: My map shows the population of Springboro at 583 and that of Sweden Valley at an even 100 people.

Golden Eggs

Many years ago Miss Ruth Hunter, Connick Studio secretary, compiled a lovely little book of Connick's telephone drawings, doodlings and clever things Connick said. The book is called *Golden Eggs*. (Connick used to say, "I'm the goose

that lays the golden eggs".) If you have seen or know where to find this little treasure, please contact Orin Skinner at the Foundation. He would love to see it again.