

# 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.

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## Connick Windows of the Twin Cities - Part II

In this second of two articles we feature some of the Connick windows in the city of St. Paul.

**H**ouse of Hope Presbyterian Church and St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church of St. Paul, Minnesota, both designed by Ralph Adams Cram, have early as well as a great number of Connick stained glass windows. The young Connick began work in *House of Hope* in 1913 under Cram's (sometimes very close) guidance. Cram writes to Connick October 3, 1913: "Can you prepare right away so that it will be ready by the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October a water color design for 'The Nativity' window ... This window will be one of the Nave windows ... Make it just as nice as you can, but I suggest that you follow more or less the Chartres type of color composition, i.e. with backgrounds of pure blue without architectural or landscape decorations, and with the few and pure colours characteristic of this work. Don't be archaic in your drawing but get more or less the Burne-Jones quality in your figures ...".

By 1918 a more confident Connick answers Cram's inquiries regarding a window's price which the donor felt was too high. "It seems to me that the difficulty in relation to price has been brought about largely through the fact that the first windows were made at too low a price. The present high cost of everything would naturally have some influence, but I submit that \$23.00 per foot has never been an excessive price for a window of the best quality."

Ten years after the Nativity window was made the West Transept window, devoted primarily to Old Testament figures, was installed in the House of Hope. It was dedicated to the memory of William Blake Dean and Mary Katherine Nicols Dean. A panel of this window illustrated here symbolizes Rebecca, Esther and Stephen (top to bottom).

Connick's last window for House of Hope was installed May, 1945. Connick died the following

December. House of Hope is a comprehensive representation of Charles J. Connick's stained glass work in his Boston, Harcourt Street studio.

Connick windows at *St. John the Evangelist Church* began in 1920 with the Te Deum chancel window. The studio's work in St. John's continued until 1976, over 20 years after Connick's death. In 1920 Connick, who was having union difficulties, wrote to Dr. Cross of St. John's, "We are now working on the Te Deum window in the hope that it may be finished in time, but, of course, I cannot be sure of it. Have a very talented young man from Cleveland who is helping me upon it, and it is progressing beautifully." (N.B. This talented young man from Cleveland is our Orin E. Skinner, whose creative energy infused the necessary enthusiasm and talent for Connick windows until the Studio closed in 1986). St. John's last Connick window was installed in 1976.

*The Cathedral of St. Paul and Nazareth Hall* of St. Paul, designed by Boston architects Maginnis and Walsh contain many brilliant Connick windows. In 1932 Father Lawrence F. Ryan writes to Connick of the rose window over the entrance of that Cathedral: "One of the loveliest of the many moods of this window is between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning. Some say it sings. At any rate its element of almost gaiety is at home in this building where one is never unaware of symphonies of space ..."

Many Old and New Testament stories are represented in *Nazareth Hall Chapel* windows. As in the medieval church windows the stories read from the bottom up. Joseph in Egypt and Miracle of Feeding the Five Thousand are just two of these light-filled windows.

Our wish to share with you much more always exceeds our space. If you would like more information about the Twin Cities Connick windows, please write or call the Foundation.



Above is a panel of the West Transept window at the House of Hope Presbyterian Church. Photograph was taken by the Connick Studio and is part of the Connick Foundation archives. The figures of Rebecca, Esther and Stephen are on a grisaille background. (See grisaille description in Connick Windows, October, 1995 issue.)

### Connick News

- *Grace Cathedral*, San Francisco recently suffered Connick stained glass window damage. In an August article for the San Francisco Examiner Kathryn Loosli Pritchett reports: "seventeen plate glass windows blew out of a nearby high rise apartment building and crashed down onto ... [the Cathedral windows]." Irmi Steding, Reflection Studio artist helping to repair the damage, comments: "Many times our work is somewhat tedious and mechanical, but this feels like art. It was inspiring."
- Colonel Eugene L. Week's recent pamphlet "*Stained Glass: Church Street United Methodist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee*" incorporates Mr. Skinner's article "How a stained glass window is made" from our February, 1994 newsletter. Church Street Church is filled with Connick windows dating from 1941 to 1959.
- The 1996 Orin E. Skinner Annual Lecture is to be held November 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM at the Rabb Lecture Hall, Boston Public Library. It will be given by Professor Madeline Harrison Caviness of Tufts University. See the article overleaf for more about this event.

One definition 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 Boston Public Library, and Connick news around the country.

## Brilliant Collectables: Medieval and Renaissance Stained Glass in the U.S.



A small 16th century panel which is part of the Connick Foundation stained glass collection.

**M**adeline Harrison Caviness, Mary Richardson Professor and Professor of History of Art at Tufts University, will speak at this year's Orin E. Skinner Lecture, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM at the Rabb Lecture Hall, Boston Public Library.

Quantities of stained glass were brought across the Atlantic in the early part of this century by buyers like William Randolph Hearst, Stanford White and Raymond Pitcairn. Most were installed in private homes, and often forgotten or lost after a generation or two. Professor Caviness will talk about some of the extraordinary "finds" made in recent years; twelfth century glass from the abbey of Saint-Denis in the gatehouse on a large estate, thirteenth century glass from Ahrweiler in Germany that had once graced the Gothic Room of the Marble House in Newport, and fifteenth and sixteenth century glass from Milan Cathedral bought by an architect on his European tour and given to MIT.

Professor Caviness studied archeology, anthropology and English Literature at Cambridge University, England. She received her Doctorate in Art History from Harvard and has published award winning books on medieval stained glass. Professor Caviness has served as President of the international Center of Medieval Art, of the Medieval Academy of America, and of the international stained glass project, the Corpus Vitrearum.

This lecture is free and open to the public.