

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

October, 1997

Directors & Officers: Theresa D. Cederholm Jonathan L. Fairbanks Elizabeth B. Johnson Robert G. Windsor Marilyn B. Justice, President

Connick Windows in Seattle



On one of his first visits to Chartres Cathedral Charles J. Connick remarked in studying the ancient window Notre Dame de la Belle Verriere: "there is a stained glass window that is the color of the weather. It is at the mercy of light and of all that happens in the path of light." What Connick said of this famous window might be said of the windows in *Florence Henry Memorial Chapel*, The Highlands, Seattle, Washington.

We find in the Connick records that in this small gray stone chapel, erected as a memorial to a young girl, "the sun will rarely shine on the south alter windows on account of the dense forest which grows within fifty feet of this group".

Mr. R.E. Nyson, Seattle glass man who installed many Connick windows, wrote: "Altogether I believe these windows have the most beautiful exterior conditions possible. Large fir trees swaying in the breeze filter and change the light in exotic motion even on dark days; especially is this true of the south window when the sunlight plays between the limbs of nearby trees producing an ever changing play of light which to say the least is entrancing.

The altar window changes from a predominating blue tone over all to gold and then to red and all this occurs in a few seconds time when wind and sun combine to show off. Some people state blue predominates, while others are certain that red is the strongest general tone and still others express an opinion of a gold overtone".



Mount Baker Community Presbyterian Church, "an early Christian architectural" design, had twelve rather plain stained glass windows. Each window had a plain center panel 13" x 42"; and it was in this dimension that the Connick Studio needed to create the stained glass memorial windows for Mount Baker. The Connick craftsmen developed a series of 12 panels depicting the significant events in the life of Christ with the Nativity and the Ascension windows nearest the chancel. On completion of this challenging adventure in 1958 Dr. Duncan, a church member, wrote: "The last windows in the series have been installed. They are fine examples of your usual good work and we are extremely well pleased."

One job number - 689 - represents sixty-two windows made for *Saint James Cathedral*, in the late teens. These were the first Connick windows in Seattle. They are essentially grisaille with colorful center figures and symbols. This scheme creates an active balance of color and light in a sustained harmony, for grisaille beautifully moderates the light of the Northwest.

Church of the Epiphany's first windows in 1951 were temporary glass - Tudor - cool gray in the fields with a few accenting spots of color throughout, and amber in the border to warm dull days. The enrichment of Church of the Epiphany's interior with full color stained glass began in 1955 and continued to completion in 1964 with the Old Testament figures of Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah in the main entrance.

These windows are represented in brilliant color against fields of very light tints. Abraham holds the brazier of fire suggesting his intended sacrifice; Moses, the Tablets of the Law; David is crowned and bears the harp as Sweet Singer of Israel; Elijah, triangle symbol of Jehovah; and Isaiah and Jeremiah bearing pens and scrolls as the major Writing Prophets.



Concerning the rose window above the reredos, Orin Skinner wrote to the architect Harold Whitehouse: "We have completed the design for this rose window much sooner than I would have thought possible. It must be because we like the subject [nativity] so much, and the design worked out so spontaneously. We have kept the color scheme rather dark, with a south light in mind."

Windows for *Acacia Memorial Park and Funeral Home* symbolize dawn and twilight; dogwood and azaleas. These windows represent some of the Connick Studio work in the 1970's.

St. John's Episcopal Church's only Connick window was enthusiastically received in 1950. "Agnus Dei", the Lamb of God bearing the cruciform banner, symbolizes John the Baptist. To control a strong eastern light, "fine pure ruby and blue are the basic colors, although the palette contains touches of both cool and warm greens and gold".

St. Theresa's Home's lancet and tracery windows with red and blue borders symbolize St. Theresa, sacred heart of St. Joseph and Blessed Virgin, and give maximum light.

Connick News

- Our director, Jessie B. Danielsen, passed on July 16th. Mrs. Danielsen joined The Connick Foundation board in 1989. Her interest in and support for the Connick ideals and tradition of stained glass was abundant.
- The Orin E. Skinner Annual Lecture will be presented by Peter Cormack, Deputy Curator of the William Morris Gallery, London, Thursday, November 20th at 6:30 PM, Rabb Lecture Hall, Boston Public Library. A reception in the Sargent Gallery will immediately follow the lecture. Connick materials will be displayed nearby. All are welcome.
- The Connick Foundation newsletters are prepared from papers found in the Connick archives in the Fine Arts Dept., Boston Public Library. Hundreds of letters and descriptions are distilled into a few sketchy words. Please contact The Connick Foundation with comments or questions raised by these articles.

Captions

Top left: One of choir of angels with trumpet heralding the coming of Christ; Florence Henry Memorial Chapel.

Bottom left: Gethsemane; Mt. Baker Community Presbyterian Church.

Right: Musical angel; Church of the Epiphany.

(These photographs from Connick Archives, Fine Arts Department., courtesy of Trustees, Boston Public Library.)

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.

The 1997 Orin E. Skinner Annual Lecture

Peter Cormack, Deputy Curator of the William Morris Gallery (housed in Morris' family home) in Walthamstow, London, will be the Orin E. Skinner Annual Lecturer. His topic is 'Aglow with brave resplendent colour': the stained glass of Christopher Whall (1849-1924). Mr. Cormack first became interested in 19th and 20th century stained glass as a student of Art History at Trinity College, Cambridge, and much of his subsequent career has been devoted to writing, lecturing and organizing exhibitions on the subject.

One of Charles J. Connick's first 'Adventures in Light and Color' (as recounted in his 1937 book) was the discovery of Christopher Whall's windows at the Church of the Advent, Boston in 1910. For Connick they were a true revelation of 'the charm of glassiness' and a formative experience as he embarked upon his independent career.

Mr. Cormack's illustrated lecture will give a comprehensive survey of Christopher Whall's work in stained glass. It will focus particularly on Whall's innovative approach to style and the craft's raw materials and on his collaborations with Arts & Crafts - influenced architects of the 1890s and 1900s.

The Orin E. Skinner Annual Lecture, sponsored by the Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation in cooperation with the Boston Public Library, is free and open to the public.

(Photograph: St John Chrysostom clerestory window at the Church of the Advent, Brimmer Street, Boston. Designed and made by Christopher Whall in 1909 - 1910. The photograph is from Whall's glass-plate negative and shows the window in his London studio prior to installation at Boston. Photograph courtesy of Peter Cormack.)

