

# Connick Windows

An extra issue commemorating the 100th anniversary of the opening of Connick's Famous Stained Glass Studio, 21 April, 1913, at Nine Harcourt Street, Back Bay Boston.

April, 2013

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## The Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Studio: A Centennial Celebration

Albert M. Tannler

On April 21, 1913, Charles Jay Connick (1875-1945) opened his studio at 9 Harcourt Street in Boston's Back Bay. He had been designing and making stained glass windows for nineteen years.

### Apprenticeship 1894-1908

Connick apprenticed in studios in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for five years, then moved to Boston where he worked as a "general utility designer and artist" with the firm of Spence, Moakler & Bell at 90 Canal Street in the North End. After Connick's father died in 1902 he returned to Pittsburgh to help care for his widowed mother and siblings. In 1907 he left Pittsburgh for New York City and by summer 1908 had returned to Boston and his old employer, now Spence, Bell & Company.

### Boston 1909-1913

1909/10 was a momentous period for Charles Connick. He met and received his first commission from architect Ralph Adams Cram to design and make a memorial window at All Saints' Episcopal Church, Brookline. When Spence, Bell & Co. refused to give Connick a promised \$5.00 raise, he resigned and built the window in the studio of Arthur B. Cutter. The George Champlin Memorial, depicting Saints Stephen, Peter, Paul, and James in antique glass, was installed on April 17, 1910. Thus a fruitful life-long professional relationship was established between architect and glazer. Also during this period Connick was introduced to the work of Christopher Whall (1849-1924), the leading English Arts & Crafts stained glass artist. Five clerestory windows designed and made by Whall for Boston's Church of the Advent were installed between October 13, 1907 and December 26, 1909 and formally dedicated on March 20, 1910. The windows had been commissioned, together with a 1907 window at All Saints Episcopal Church, Ashmont, Boston, through the efforts of R. A. Cram. Connick read Whall's book *Stained Glass Work: A Text-book for Students and Workers in Glass* (London and New York 1905), in which Whall articulated the Arts & Crafts approach to the stained glass craft, and found it "so charming and enthusiastic that I became his convert over night."

Connick's fee for the George Champlin Memorial Window allowed him to travel to England and France for five months. He met Christopher Whall and visited his studio, which served as a model for Connick own studio some three years later. In August 1910, Connick visited Chartres Cathedral, the final epiphany in his artistic apprenticeship: "the windows in Chartres formed an active community of color and light—with shadowy settings—that justified and glorified the craft beyond all my dreams."

Prior to 1913, Connick had no studio of his own or trained staff. On Monday, July 10, 1912, he officially opened his own business office in a commercial building at 74 India Street; the building was located 5 blocks east of the US Customs House and demolished during construction of the John F. Kennedy Expressway. Connick may have rented this office from the beginning of July and would have needed some time to print the stationery that he began using on July 10. He continued to fabricate his windows at various Boston glass studios, such as A. B. Cutter & Company, Horace J. Phipps & Co., Vaughan, O'Neill & Co., and Murphy & Millson.

Connick moved from 74 India Street on Sunday, April 20, 1913, and opened his studio at 9 Harcourt Street on Monday, April 21 (His lease may have begun on April 1). He hired a team of craftsmen whom he considered collaborators as well as apprentices, and who inherited the studio when Charles Connick died in 1945. Connick's role in Boston's artistic pantheon is suggested by a charming albeit undated

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*Continued*

anecdote that appeared in the Boston Globe when the Connick Studio closed in 1986. One of Boston's great patrons-of-the-arts "Isabella Stewart Gardner scaled the steps [of 9 Harcourt Street] to survey a window on display in the studio and quickly told Connick, "Young man, you are going to be famous!" "

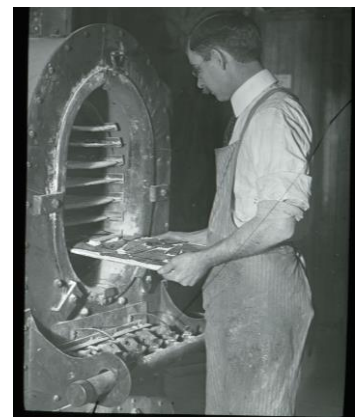
*Albert M. Tannler is a director the Connick Foundation and the author of Charles J. Connick: His Education and His Windows in and near Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, 2008.)*



Pattern cutting



Cartooning



Firing

*Images courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library, Arts Department, Connick Collection.*

### ***Of Interest***

Heinz Memorial Chapel, on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh, is one of Connick's great installations. The entire glazing scheme is a harmonious composition of color in light. April 21<sup>st</sup> (the actual anniversary date of Charles J. Connick opening his studio), Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation will co-sponsor an organ recital in the Chapel. *Light and Color in Stained Glass*, a booklet containing Charles Connick's April 19, 1941 speech in the Chapel, will be given to those who attend this program. Tickets are available through [www.pittsburghsymphony.org](http://www.pittsburghsymphony.org).

Stained glass consultant Julie Sloan and Gigi Wilmers will present a lecture on Federic Crowninshield Tuesday May 14<sup>th</sup>, 6 PM at Dominican Academy, 44 E. 68th St., New York, at, May 14. Admission is free and there will be a reception afterwards.

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Connick Foundation was held on April 6, 2013.

Tours, Lectures and Exhibitions are planned for the Fall. Please see our website for more details as they are confirmed.