

# Connick Windows

Winter, 2013

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*Thoughts, news and comments concerning the art and craft of stained glass, published periodically by....*  
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## The Society of Arts & Crafts, Boston, and Its Beginnings

Carl Close Jr.



*Seal of the Society of Arts and Crafts.  
Photo by Ian Justice.*

Everyone who has an affection for the arts and crafts movement has some idea of the beginnings which blossomed across the Atlantic in England. But not so many people know how the movement started in Boston and ignited a new way of thinking about handicraft in America.

In 1887 the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society was formed in London. The first president was artist/illustrator Walter Crane and the Society attracted such luminaries as artist, writer, and preservationist William Morris; metalworker/ jeweler Henry Wilson; bookbinder T.J. Cobden-Sanderson; architects W.R. Lethaby and J.D. Sedding; mural painter Ford Maddox Brown; and designer and author Lewis F. Day, to name a few. The Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, formed to promote design reform and the exhibition of decorative arts

alongside fine art, gave the arts and crafts movement its name.

The movement reached across the pond to America thanks to the writings of Gothic Revival architect Augustus Welby Pugin, critic John Ruskin, and William Morris. Like-minded artist-craftsmen, artists, critics, and architects sought to revitalize traditional artistic skills as a remedy to the ills of the Industrial Revolution which many believed had impaired the health and well-being of American society.

Because Boston was the center of printing in the United States it was natural that the craft of artistic book design was one of the first arts and crafts to really take off in popularity in the Boston area and pique the interest in artistic practitioners in forming a society similar to the one in London. A major proponent was the first professor of Fine Arts at Harvard University, Charles Eliot Norton, a close friend of John Ruskin. Norton, like Ruskin, looked to history for intellectual solutions on how to raise the quality of handicraft and return to straightforward design and the joys of working with the hand, head, and heart. As a result of his teachings, many of Norton's students and friends became enthusiastic about the movement and its ideals.

The first call for an exhibition of arts and crafts in Boston was from a young printer by the name of Henry Lewis Johnson. Johnson was an employee of the master bookmaker Carl Heintzemann, a close friend of Norton. It was Norton who said: "Printing will be the first great art in this country." Johnson was appointed to carry out plans for the arts and crafts exhibition, and he prepared a brochure promoting such an exhibition to artists and the public which appeared in December 1896. A second brochure—designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue—was published in May 1897 and included endorsements from newspapers and thirty-seven intellectual, artistic, social, and business leaders. The exhibition, the first held in this country, opened April 3, 1897 and continued through April 17th. It was held in conjunction with the Boston Architectural Club Exhibition in the Grundmann Studios Building on Clarendon Street in the Back Bay (demolished 1917).

The first exhibition contained 400 entries designed and made by over 100 artists and crafts people. A partial list included a very valuable jewelry collection by George Marcus; wrought ironwork by Eugene Kulinski Co. and William Jackson Co.; decorative bookbinding and stained glass by Sarah Wyman Whitman; hand-wrought silver by Barton Jenks, a relative of Joseph Jenks, the first blacksmith at Saugus Ironworks in 1650; book covers and bookplates by Amy Sacker; pen and ink designs by Theodore Brown Hapgood and Harry E. Goodhue; the *Altar Book of the Episcopal Church* with type designs, initials, and decorative borders by Bertram G. Goodhue; pottery executed by Hugh Robertson of Dedham Pottery; a set of hand-forged fire irons by Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr.; exquisite woodcarvings by Johannes Kirchmayer; stained glass designs by John and Bancel La Farge; and designs for hand-woven carpets by William Morris "to whom this and all arts and crafts exhibitions owe their existence more than any other man."

The exhibit was a sensation in Boston and gave craftsmen hope for a brighter future. The articles of incorporation for the Society of Arts & Crafts, Boston (SACB) were signed on June 18, 1897. The SACB was an organization that sought to revive the spirit and practice of the medieval guilds of Europe. This not only reflects its English roots, but equally its role in Boston's exploration of a modern American architecture based on late-medieval Gothic forms. Boston architectural firms such as Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, Allen & Collins, George Newton, and Maginnis & Walsh led this movement and consequently sought out and nurtured contemporary artist-craftsmen to do the craft work that their architecture and clients demanded. Ralph Adams Cram particularly took a

great interest in young upstart talent that had the sparkle and authenticity that his design work required. He was the leader of American Gothic building design from the 1890s through the 1930s. He and partner Bertram Goodhue designed churches and their interiors with intricate details that reflect a late medieval flavor, but also have an air of modernism.

Gothic architecture employs many types of handicraft. Carvers in stone John Evans, Domingo Mora, Hugh Cairns, and Lee Lawrie were all members of SACB and created masterful reredoses, altars, and entrance ways. Arthur Stone, George Germer, Goodow & Jenks, and George Gebelein worked in silver. Cram considered woodcarver Johannes Kirchmayer unexcelled in his ability at carving "gothic" in a modern style and they worked together from 1894 into the 1920s. Some of the other wood carvers who helped execute such wonderful work were Angelo Lualdi, Arcangelo Cascieri, and Adio DiBiccari. Arcangelo Cascieri was a student of Kirchmayer and became the dean of the Boston Architectural Center until his death in 1997. Wrought ironwork adds strength as well as security with its gates, grills, lighting fixtures, and door hardware. Two of the most notable artists in this material were German-born Bostonians Frank L Koralewsky and his brother Gustav. Their work was without peer in Boston and both created works that were compared to medieval master blacksmiths and goldsmiths. Cram also admired Philadelphia blacksmith Samuel Yellin. His studio created more wrought ironwork than any other firm in America. He employed over two hundred artists as well as designers and was a devoted Gothicist but worked in many styles and metals.



*From the Simpkins Memorial Window,  
St John's Episcopal Church,  
Beverly Farms MA.  
Photo by Julie Sloan.*

As the old saying goes "God is in the details" and I would have to say that the arts and crafts movement was all about detail. Charles J. Connick was a stained glassman who completely understood this. Ralph Adams Cram took full advantage of Connick's talent for creating some of the greatest works in modern medieval stained glass that the world has ever seen. His works seem like walls of jewels that delight everyone who sees them. Connick didn't copy old glass. He created the spirit of old glass with contemporary motifs and designs. This delighted the SACB so much so that Connick received the Master Craftsmen medal in 1920.

Thanks to Cram and his fellow American Gothic architects we have wonderful Connick windows to view and marvel at. As a practicing artist-craftsman who finds a never-ending source of inspiration from their work, I am forever in reverence for their efforts and fortitude and I am sure you are as well.

*Blacksmith Carl Close, Jr. owns and operates Hammersmith Studios in Concord, MA • [www.hammersmithstudio.com](http://www.hammersmithstudio.com)*

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The Connick Foundation's website has begun the New Year with a new look! [www.cjconnick.org](http://www.cjconnick.org). It is our hope to include a gallery to show even more images of the studio's work. If you have digital photos that you would like to share, please submit them to the Foundation for consideration.

### *Of Interest*

- American Friends of Chartres, the Standing Committee of Medieval Studies of Harvard University and the patronage of the Consul General of France in Boston, invite you to a lecture by Paul Crossley, Professor Emeritus of the Courtauld Institute of Art of London University on Chartres and the Rhetoric of Gothic Cathedrals, Tuesday March 12, 2013 at 5:30pm, at the Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The lecture will be preceded by a short presentation of American Friends of Chartres activities and projects (the website: [www.friendsofchartres.org](http://www.friendsofchartres.org) is being updated) and a photographic presentation by Art Sacré Photographers, Dennis Aubrey and PJ McKey.
- The Associates of the Boston Public Library recently received a generous grant of \$3,500 from The Boston Foundation for Architecture to digitize a subset of the Boston Public Library (BPL)'s collection of Charles J. Connick and Associates Archives. The project will focus on the nearly 1,000 gouaches for Massachusetts projects. If additional funding is secured, the Associates will look into expanding this project. *Please see our website for more information.*
- Coming Summer 2013: "Charles Connick in New Jersey," an exclusive series of articles for the Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation by architectural historian John Gomez. Mr. Gomez, who holds a Master of Science in Historic Preservation from Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, will feature obscure early-to-late Connick Studio windows in West Orange, Newark, Union City, Maplewood, Upper Montclair and other New Jersey municipalities and towns - as well as the firm's crowning commissions at Princeton University. Accessing Connick records at M.I.T., the Boston Public Library, and various parish archives, Mr. Gomez will, in written profiles and digital photographs, explore and share a lesser known corner of Connick's stained glass world.