



*Friends of Historic Second Church*

## THE HERALD



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### Franklin Darius Gray - Donor of the Burne-Jones Windows

One of the greatest treasures at Second Presbyterian is the pair of windows in the narthex designed by Edward Burne-Jones and made by William Morris and Company. In this article, we will explore the life and career of the donor - Franklin Darius Gray.

Gray was born on May 19, 1818 on his father's farm near Sharon in northwest Connecticut. He received little formal schooling and at the age of 12 moved to nearby Goshen where he worked in a country store at a salary of \$25 per year, plus board and lodging. By age 21, he was earning \$1,000 per year and decided to head west.

In September 1839, Gray arrived in Chicago with two friends who opened a dry goods and grocery business on South Water Street, and he clerked in the store. On July 4, 1843 he married Ann Olive Phelps in Connecticut and they soon returned to Chicago where Franklin in time became a partner in the successful wholesale grocery business. The firm, known as Gray, Densmore & Phelps (later Gray Bros.) was aided by Franklin's brother Moses, who served as the buyer for the store in New York. When Moses died, Franklin closed the business and turned to banking.

During this same period, Gray served as a volunteer with Engine Company No. 1 and was elected clerk and treasurer. After the City took control of fire service, Gray assisted in establishing the Firemen's Insurance Company, the first of his financial services ventures.

The Grays joined Second Presbyterian Church of Chicago in 1846, just four years after its founding. In 1858, they transferred their membership to Olivet Presbyterian at 14th Street and Wabash Avenue, and two years

later their only child, a daughter Isabelle was born. They found themselves members of Second again in September 1871 when the two congregations merged and Gray went on to serve as a trustee for twenty years.

The First National Bank of Chicago was organized in 1863. Three years later Franklin Gray was elected to the board of directors and in 1867 he was made vice president when Samuel Nickerson was promoted to president. For the next thirty years, Nickerson and Gray were associated with the direction of the bank, Nickerson as executive head and Gray as his advisor, counselor, and friend. Together they "strove long and strenuously to advance the welfare of the corporation they so ardently cherished."

In June 1881, the National Safe Deposit Company was organized as a subsidiary of First National with initial capital of \$300,000 and Franklin Gray was appointed president. The Company's new building contained 46,000 safe deposit boxes, the largest such installation in the nation. Gray resigned in December 1899 along with his long-time friend Samuel Nickerson. Gray was 81 years old at the time and in July 1900, just four months after Second Presbyterian was ravaged by fire, he lost his wife of 57 years.

Two years later, Joseph Twyman opened the Morris Memorial Room at the Tobey Furniture Company. The room featured two spectacular leaded glass windows by Edward Burne-Jones: the St. Cecilia and St. Margaret windows now at Second Presbyterian. How Gray came to donate the windows is unknown



Photo by Martin Cheung.

although it seems plausible that Howard Van Doren Shaw wished to acquire the windows as part of his redesign of the church and approached Gray to finance their purchase. Gray and his daughter were formally thanked for their donation of the windows in December 1903. A memorial panel to Gray's wife Ann was added below the St. Cecilia window.

In November 1905, Franklin Gray died at the age of 87 at his long time residence, 2807 S. Prairie Avenue, having been an invalid for the last few years of his life, although his obituary indicated that he was serving as the president of Stearns Lime and Stone Company in Bridgeport at the time of his death. Gray was laid to rest in the family plot at Graceland Cemetery and his memorial panel was added below the St. Margaret window.

The Grays' only child, Isabelle, married Aram Papazian, and she spent the last years of her life in Hertford, England where she died suddenly at the age of 54 in 1914. Her ashes were returned to the United States and placed in the family plot. Although the family line ended with the death of Isabelle, Franklin Gray left an amazing legacy in the donation of the two Burne-Jones windows which have brought joy and peace to the many thousands of people who have enjoyed their beauty for more than 100 years.

## Art Nouveau and its Chicago Roots

Rolf Achilles drew a packed house on Thursday, September 15, 2011 to hear about the Chicago roots of Art Nouveau. Achilles launched the review of Art Nouveau's beginnings by illustrating early Chicago design from the period 1889-1893: from Stone and Kimball's Chapbook covers, other designs by Will Bradley, and ornamentation on Adler and Sullivan's Auditorium Building, Burnham and Root's The Rookery, and the Monadnock Building by Burnham and Root and Holabird and Roche. He traced the influence of Japonism on these works, as well. Achilles argued that the European artists who popularized Art Nouveau were inspired by the creativity of the art being produced in Chicago. The 1893 Great Columbian Exposition gave a world-wide audience an opportunity to view these Chicago designs. It was an evening to be proud to be a Chicagoan.

## Gearing up for Friends' New Website

As our loyal readers already know, Friends launched its inaugural website a few years ago in order to communicate with a larger public, to accept donations, and to maintain a presence on the internet. Friends is thrilled to announce the upcoming launch of our new and improved website that incorporates many features and increased functionality. Beyond the more sophisticated infrastructure, there will be a great deal of information available to the user. "Version 2.0" will feature a gallery of photographs of the church, news about past and current preservation projects, and specifics about the art and architecture. One will also be able to support Friends by becoming a docent, a member, or donating online. The new site, <http://www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org> will go live in November.

## "Sun" and "Moon" Globes Restored

Peter Janko of Lumenelle unveiled the newly repaired "sun" and "moon" globe light fixtures at the church on August 20th. This public event gave guests a rare opportunity to examine the globes close-up, and hear Janko speak about his restoration work and the potential origins of the fixtures.

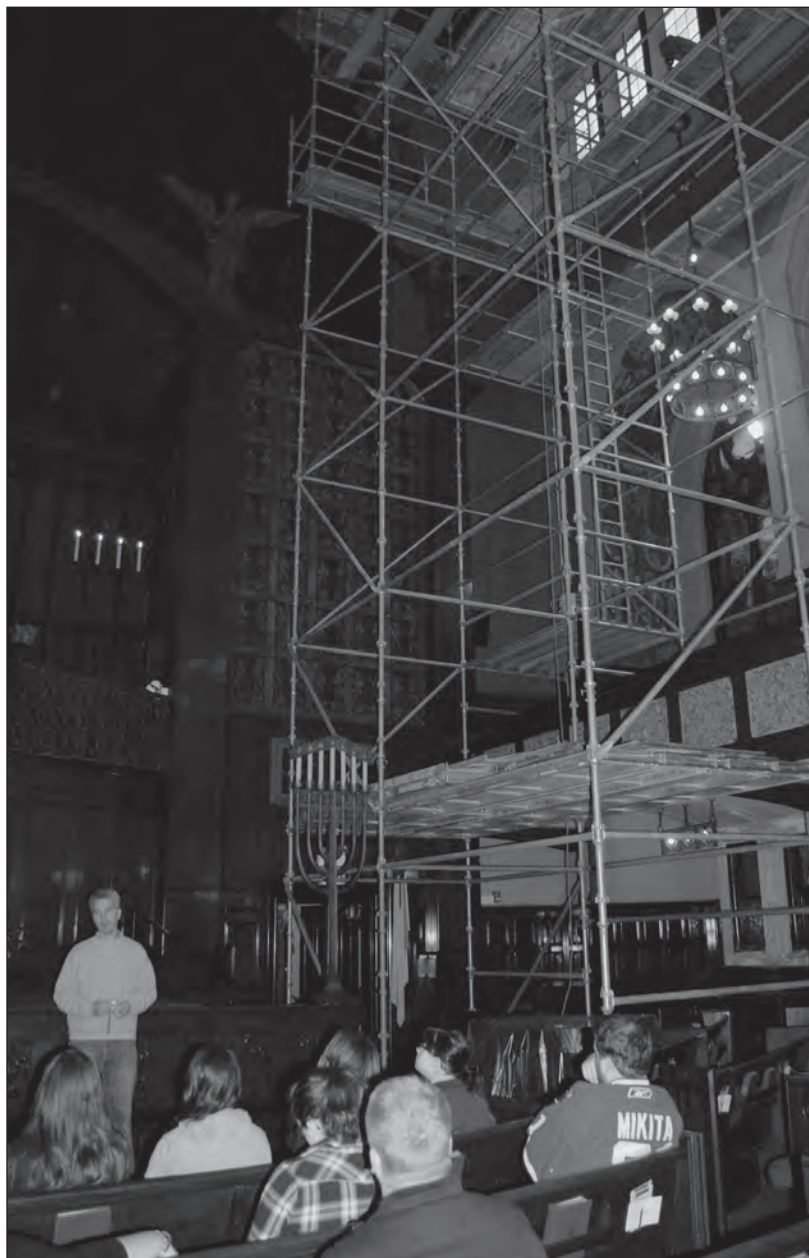
Covered in dust and grime, and hanging high above the choir loft, the exquisite details of these light fixtures have gone unappreciated for many years. Their removal revealed intricate bird and flower details, and striking butterfly clasps on the larger sun globe. Based on their patterns and details, Janko theorized that they are Japanese, while others have suggested a Turkish, Egyptian, or Indian origin.

Differences in the two fixtures also became apparent. The sun appears to have been crafted by hand, but the moon fixture's precise details suggest machine craft. Cleaning the fixtures further revealed two different brass colors; the original finish has not yet been determined.

The moon fixture was in good condition, although extremely dirty. There was no noticeable damage to the fixture, and the cloth lining though stained, was relatively intact. The sun fixture had not been illuminated for months and was in much poorer condition. The structure connecting the globe to the chain above had long ago broken, and the globe was being held in place only by a tiny piece of wire and the electrical wire. The three hinges connecting the top and bottom halves were all broken and in their place, wire was fed and twisted. A couple of the sections of metalwork had come apart, and there were some dents, apparently from an earlier fall. Janko made the necessary repairs and replaced the cloth lining. They were reinstalled by an electrician in early October.



The newly restored 'moon' globe. Photo by Martin Cheung.



Kartsonas describes the Finishes Analysis project to SAIC students.

## Finishes Analysis Underway

Visitors to the church observed scaffolding that reached nearly to the ceiling of the sanctuary in late September and throughout October.

The scaffolding was used for the Finishes Analysis project, which aims to uncover the original appearance of the church interior including wood, plaster, painted surfaces, and stenciled motifs. Tony Kartsonas of Historic Surfaces, LLC hopes to reveal lost 1901 Shaw finishes, as well as remnants of Renwick's 1874 design.

Kartsonas' findings will be added to the Preservation Plan prepared by Anne Sullivan of Sullivan Preservation in 2010 and will guide future preservation planning.



Shaw's Fernald House in Lake Forest, IL. Photo by Jon Miller/Hedrich Blessing.

## Howard Van Doren Shaw Lecture on November 3

Friends' 2011 lecture series concludes November 3rd with "The Architecture of Howard Van Doren Shaw: Reinventing the Traditional House." The lecture to be given by Stuart Cohen, FAIA, will take place at 7 PM with a reception preceding the lecture at 6 PM.

Shaw's houses will be reconsidered in relation to the progressive architectural ideas of his time, examining the idea of originality in his work. These concerns made him one of the most admired residential architects of his day.

Stuart Cohen is a practicing architect, educator, and author. He is professor emeritus at the University of Illinois, Chicago and the author of three books on the history of Chicago architecture, including his most recent work, *Great Houses of Chicago: 1871-1921*. A monograph on the residential architecture work of his award winning firm, *Transforming the Traditional: The Work of Cohen & Hacker Architects*, was published in 2009. He is currently working on a book on the houses of Howard Van Doren Shaw. This lecture is co-sponsored with Glessner House Museum. The suggested donation to attend the lecture is \$5. We hope to see you on Thursday, November 3!



## Visit to the House of the Four Winds

Bill and Lyn Redfield generously opened their Lake Forest home and garden to Friends of Historic Second Church for its annual Docent Recognition event held in September. The house is of particular interest to Friends because it was designed by Howard Van Doren Shaw (who also designed the 1900 Arts and Crafts interior of the church) for the Hugh J. McBirney family, donors of the “Beside the Still Waters” window at Second Presbyterian. “The House of the Four Winds” was built as a private North Shore summer estate for the McBirneys in 1909. It was purchased by the Redfields in the early 1970’s when it was vacant and had fallen into disrepair. The couple has spent almost forty years lovingly restoring the home as well as the gardens, which were designed by noted landscape architect Rose Standish Nichols. Docents and Board members particularly appreciated the ornamental plaster work, detailed carvings on the dining room ceiling beams, and the additional Arts and Crafts details throughout the home and garden. To read more about House of the Four Winds, visit <http://www.chicagomag.com/Radar/Deal-Estate/July-2011/Lake-Forests-House-and-Garden-of-the-Four-Winds/>. The home is now for sale as the Redfields prepare to move into Chicago.



**Top:** Garden designed by Rose Standish Nichols. **Bottom:** Interior view of house. Photos by Ann Fisher.

## SAIC Students Return to 2nd Pres

Friends was proud to host a reception for the in-coming class of Historic Preservation graduate students from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) in September.

Prints of the drawings of Second Presbyterian Church drafted by SAIC students last year were put on display in Fellowship Hall for the

event. All 23 framed drawings will stay on display until November 6th. The original drawings were submitted to the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress.

Under the instruction of SAIC Historic Preservation Director Anne Sullivan, students will return to Sec-

ond Presbyterian several times in the fall. They will be conducting condition assessments of the exterior facades and taking mortar samples. Students will also work with contractor Tony Kartsonas, Historic Surfaces LLC, to undertake a finishes analysis of the interior. Copies of the report containing the students’ findings will be given to the church and to Friends when they are complete.



The Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass.

## British Glass Experts Visit Church

The Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass from London recently visited Second Presbyterian Church to see its glass collection. While windows by English artists William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, such as those found in the narthex of Second Presbyterian, are extant throughout England, the American stained glass of Louis Comfort Tiffany, Louis J. Millet, and other American artists is not prevalent abroad and was of particular interest to the group.

The Worshipful Company (“worshipful” meaning “worthy of respect”) is one of the long-established City of London Livery Companies, which originated in

the medieval craft guilds. The existence of the Guild of Glaziers is first recorded in 1328. These guilds were vigorous organizations that were formed to look after the interests of skilled craftsmen, form rules, set high standards for their craft, regulate the training of apprentices, and keep out the unskilled. Each guild was governed, and still is today, by a Master, Wardens, and a Court of Assistants. Women were admitted as full members in 1981. The first Lady Master, Phillida Shaw, assumed office in 2004 and was among those visiting the church.

The Company today continues its tradition of encouraging the craft of stained and painted glass, but no longer

negotiates terms of employment or wages. It numbers amongst its Liverymen some of the country’s leading stained glass conservators. The Livery enjoys an extensive social program, which places special emphasis on learning about the art of stained glass in historic cities and overseas. A talk about Chicago stained glass delivered in London by stained glass expert Rolf Achilles resulted in the Glaziers’ five day trip to Chicago under the guidance of current Master of the Guild Colin Freeman. One member, upon first hearing about the extensive glass collection at Second Presbyterian Church, commented, “Quite a little gem, isn’t it!”

### Mission Statement

*The mission of Friends of Historic Second Church is to preserve and restore the internationally recognized art and architecture of Chicago’s landmark Second Presbyterian Church and to educate a worldwide audience about its historical and cultural significance.*



## Friends of Historic Second Church

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Friends of Historic Second Church is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation. All Donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Friends of Historic Second Church gratefully acknowledges the following memberships, gifts and in kind contributions from June 1 through September 30, 2011:

#### *In Kind:*

Paula D'Angelo

Meg Klinkow Hartmann

Ruth Sharpe

Jack Simmerling

#### *Arts and Crafts Circle*

(\$100 - \$249):

Mary Bucaro

Geraldine Jackson

Thomas & Lynn Ostberg

#### *Tiffany Circle (Under \$100)*

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Jim and Darleen Jackson

Virginia Kreger

Hosea L. Martin

## "Chicago's Storyteller" Gives Gift to Friends

Artist Jack Simmerling has long been a friend to Second Presbyterian Church and to Friends of Historic Second Church. He has captured the church and its various architectural features many times over the years. Recently he gave Friends of Historic Second Church two beautifully framed valuable works of art that he created: An original pen and ink sketch showing the front entrance of the church and a giclée print of the oriel window entitled "A Gothic Fortress."

Simmerling's talent was first

acclaimed as a high-school student when the Chicago Tribune featured him in a full-page article highlighting his unique perspective of Chicago architecture. As a teenager, he took summer jobs with demolition crews to preserve architectural artifacts of Prairie Avenue mansions that were being destroyed. For years, he has captured Chicago's dynamic skyline and historic landmarks in pen and ink as well as watercolors. Appropriately, Watercolor Magazine once called him "Chicago's Storyteller."

### Tour Schedule

Public tours of Second Presbyterian Church are at the following times:

Every Saturday from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., except holidays, Cost \$5

Every Sunday after church at approximately 12:05 p.m. Free

Every Wednesday from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Free