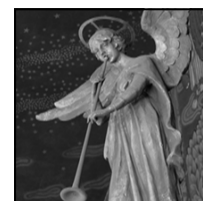




Friends of Historic Second Church

THE HERALD



Volume VII, Number 3

Winter 2013

BEAUTY IN STONE: THE STORY OF THE BAPTISMAL FONT *by William Tyre*

One of the most artistic features of the sanctuary is the elaborate baptismal font. Carved from a single block of limestone, the delicate and deeply carved lilies complement the other natural motifs found throughout Shaw's arts and crafts interior. In this article, we will examine the life of the donor – Norman Williams, and the career of the carver – Frederick A. Purdy.



NORMAN WILLIAMS

Norman Williams was born in 1835 in Woodstock, Vermont; his ancestors included a governor of New Hampshire. After completing his education at the Albany Law School, he arrived in Chicago in October 1858 to establish his practice. Following

the Civil War, he formed a partnership with General John L. Thompson under the firm name of Williams & Thompson. The firm survives today as Sidley Austin LLP and is now the six largest corporate law firm in the United States.

In 1867, Norman Williams married Caroline Caton, a daughter of Judge John Dean Caton, Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. The young couple spent the early years of their married life in the Caton home at 1900 S. Calumet Avenue. Five children were born to them, including a daughter Caroline Caton Williams in whose memory they would later donate the baptismal font. In 1879, Judge Caton gave his daughter a parcel of land north of his home on Calumet, and the Williamses engaged architects Treat & Foltz to design their 2-1/2 story brick house in the Queen Anne style. The broad two-story porch afforded beautiful views of Lake Michigan directly across the street. It formed part of a Caton "compound" along Calumet that included houses for Caroline's sister Laura, and her brother Arthur (whose widow became the second Mrs. Marshall Field).

Caroline Williams joined Second Presbyterian Church in 1870. Her husband joined in 1877, and their children were all baptized and confirmed in the church as well. Following the death of his good friend George Armour, Norman Williams oversaw the construction of the bell tower at the church. A plaque, placed in the north narthex vestibule of the church by the Armour family, reads: "Thine own friend and thy Father's friend forsake not – The family of George Armour places this tablet here to thankfully perpetuate the untiring attention, the painstaking care and the loving labour which their esteemed friend Norman Williams gave to the completion of this tower, 1884." At the same time, Williams donated a carved stone head of Christ which was placed over the front entrance of the church. Four years later, Williams was elected a trustee.

Norman Williams became one of the most successful and respected attorneys in the city of Chicago. He was one of the organizers of the Pullman Palace Car Company, was a founder of the Chicago Telephone Company, and helped to organize the Western Electric

Company. He served as president of the prestigious Chicago Club, and was a charter member of the Calumet Club, whose clubhouse stood directly across Michigan Avenue from the church.

Williams contracted Bright's disease in 1896 and succumbed to that illness in 1899 while at his summer home in New Hampshire. The funeral and burial took place in Woodstock, Vermont; Robert Todd Lincoln served as a pall bearer. A memorial service was later held at Second Presbyterian Church. Caroline Williams moved to Washington DC in 1907, where she hired Wyeth & Cresson to design a Beaux-Arts style mansion on Sixteenth Street, N.W., just a few blocks from the White House. She became a prominent member of DC society and died there in 1927.

FREDERICK A. PURDY

Frederick Purdy, a protégé of Sir Gilbert Scott, was born in Kent, England in 1857. It was under Scott that Purdy was educated as a carver in the cathedral towns of England and Ireland. He arrived in Chicago in 1886 and quickly established a reputation that earned him commissions with Chicago's leading residents including Franklin MacVeagh, Martin Ryerson, Harlow Higinbotham, and Clem Studebaker. He formed a partnership with William J. Hutcheson known as Purdy & Hutcheson and opened a studio at 2206 S. South Park Avenue (now King Drive). The firm's letterhead stated that their work included "busts, monuments,

altars, tombs and fonts in bronze, marble, granite, stone, wood and plaster." The firm was hired by architect Cass Gilbert to do the stone carving at the Minnesota State Capitol, based on the designs of Daniel Chester French. During the construction of the present combination County Building-City Hall in Chicago from 1907 to 1912, Purdy directed the carving of the series of relief panels that adorn the exterior of the building.

THE FONT

In 1888, as part of a major redecorating program at Second Presbyterian Church, Norman and Caroline Williams donated a marble baptismal font as a memorial to their daughter. The design consisted of intertwined Easter lilies and lilies of the valley with an inscription that read "In Memoriam Caroline Caton Williams 1875-1876." That font was destroyed in the fire that gutted the church in March 1900. Frederick Purdy was paid \$300 to create an exact copy of the original. The current font is made of limestone, and sits atop an unpolished granite base. The change in material was probably a choice of Shaw, who may have felt limestone was more compatible with the natural materials and motifs in his redesigned interior.

Today the font, which is still used for baptisms, continues to impress visitors with its delicate beauty and intricate detail.



Photo Credit: Stephen Schnurr

Second Presbyterian Public Tour Schedule:

Wednesdays
1:00-3:00pm, Free

Saturdays
1:00-3:00pm
Suggested donation \$5.00

Sundays (after worship service)
12:15pm, Free

Mission Statement

*The mission of
Friends of Historic Second Church
is to preserve and restore the
art and architecture of
Chicago's landmark
Second Presbyterian Church,
educate a worldwide audience about its
historical and cultural significance,
and share those resources
with the community.*

LIBRARY DOOR REPAINTED

In September, Friends completed the restoration of the church's exterior library door. Following repairs undertaken by the Second Presbyterian congregation, Friends sought the assistance of architectural conservator Bob Furhoff, who conducted paint analysis to determine the paint color originally used on the exterior doors in 1874. Shamrock Decorating completed the project by painting the door its original grey-green color, returning it to its historic appearance.



DOCENT TRAINING

Six docent trainees, Cathy Acosta, James Barnes, Bill Denis, Chris-Ellyn Johanson, Mark Mandle and Todd Protzman Davis, recently completed five nights of training. Currently they are shadowing tours and preparing their own tour as steps on the path to becoming fully certified docents of Friends of Historic Second Church. New trainers this year included architect and docent Nate Lielasus and Arts and Crafts specialist Dr. Debra Mancoff. Anyone interested in sharing their love of art, architecture and Chicago history is invited to become a docent. Visit

www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org and click "Become a Docent" under Get Involved and download the application form. Completed applications can be emailed to historic2ndchurch@yahoo.com for the 2014 training program.

SOUNDS OF THE SOUTH LOOP

Sing-Along *Messiah*
Dec. 8, 2013, 2:00pm

Awea Duo - Winter Dreams
Jan. 22, 2014, 6:00pm

Gospel Chorus
Feb. 9, 2014, 2:00pm

Tria - Sound Impressions
Feb. 19, 2014, 6:00pm

Presenting - Rupert Boyd
March 9, 2014, 2:00pm

Cellist Kira Saltman and
Friends!
March 19, 2014, 6:00pm

Tickets by donation can be obtained at the door or online at <http://soundsofthesouthloop.com>

Friends of Historic Second Church is supporting the program by offering free tours beginning 45 minutes before every concert.



Photo credit: Martin Cheung

DRIEHAUS MUSEUM COLLABORATION

A stunning new exhibit "Louis Comfort Tiffany: Treasures from the Driehaus Collection" has opened at the Driehaus Museum in the Gilded Age Nickerson mansion at 40 E. Erie Street. Sixty Tiffany pieces culled from the more than 1,500 collected by Richard H. Driehaus are on display in this opulent setting. In order to give Tiffany enthusiasts a more complete sense of Tiffany's artistry, guests can also view the nine Tiffany windows in situ at Second Presbyterian Church in a joint tour "Around Town With Tiffany" on selected Saturday mornings and afternoons (for tickets visit <http://www.driehausmuseum.org/events/view/tiffany-travel-tour-mastery-in-glass>). The monumental windows at Second Presbyterian provide guests with an opportunity to closely examine many of the creative new glass techniques pioneered by Tiffany in creating a distinctly American stained glass aesthetic. Specially trained docents from Friends of Historic Second Church conduct the in-depth glass tours at the church. Friends welcomes this opportunity to partner with the Driehaus Museum to showcase a broad sampling of Tiffany works in Chicago.

TYRE TO GIVE CAF LECTURE ON CHURCH'S NHL DESIGNATION

On December 11, 2013, William Tyre, Executive Director and Curator of Glessner House Museum and Treasurer of Friends of Historic Second Church will deliver one of the Chicago Architecture Foundation's "LunchTalks@CAF." Mr. Tyre will discuss the recent designation of Second Presbyterian Church as a National Historic Landmark and how the elaborate interior of Second Presbyterian Church designed by Howard Van Doren Shaw contributed to this prestigious recognition of the church by the Department of the Interior.

The lecture will provide an overview of the history of the congregation of Second Presbyterian Church and focus on the wealth of decorative art found in the church, most notably, the nine stained glass windows by Tiffany Studios, and the two rare examples of the work of Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones. In addition to his discussion of the windows, Mr. Tyre will include the work of the Chicago-based firms and craftsmen who contributed to Second Presbyterian's Arts and Crafts interior, such as Frederic Clay Bartlett, Giannini & Hilgart, Frederick A. Purdy, and Willy Lau.

This Chicago Architecture Foundation's "LunchTalks@CAF" lecture will take place on December 11 at 12:15pm in the Lecture Hall Gallery at the Chicago Architecture Foundation, 224 S. Michigan Ave. The lecture is free, open to the public, and no registration is required. Seating is limited, however, so guests are advised to arrive early and are welcome to bring a bag lunch.

NORTHWEST CORNER CONSERVATION COMPLETE

After a successful fundraising campaign begun in 2012, Friends completed the plaster repairs to the northwest corner of the sanctuary. Water had been discovered leaking from a radiator pipe, but not before the water had caused extensive damage to the plaster on the ceiling below, including the ornamental pomegranate trim and crown molding, as well as to the window pockets.

Kelly Plastering conducted a preliminary investigation of the damage and determined the scope of the repair required to restore the plaster to its original appearance. The project began by applying a solvent to dissolve the efflorescence that had accumulated on the plaster due to water infiltration. The next step was to remove the plaster that was damaged beyond repair. This included the removal of one section of ornamental pomegranate trim from the ceiling and two sections of crown molding over two of the windows. Kelly Plastering made a custom mold from an undamaged section of pomegranate trim and created a replica for the section of severely damaged plaster that had been removed. Following the completion of the project, Kelly provided Friends with the mold for use when necessary in the future.



Architectural conservator Bob Furhoff conducted paint analysis on all the wall and ceiling surfaces in the northwest corner and discovered five historic paint colors. Using this color scheme, Shamrock Decorating painted this corner. This is the first step in returning the entire sanctuary interior to its original decorative scheme. Friends would like to thank all of the generous members and donors who contributed to the fundraising campaign for this project. Special thanks are owed to Landmarks Illinois, who awarded Friends a \$1,000 Heritage Fund Grant to assist with completing this project.

ANNUAL APPEAL

Friends of Historic Second Church invites all readers to contribute to the 2013 Annual Appeal. Your gift will support the preservation of Chicago's only National Historic Landmark church. Preservation projects in 2014 may include the repair and conservation of the Bartlett murals, plaster, and paint. Your gift will also help to expand the scope of Friends' tours and educational programming. Be a part of the restoration history of this "crown jewel" of fine art and architecture. Donations can be sent to the address listed at the bottom of the page or donations can be made online at:

<http://www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org/support/donate.html>

MEMBERSHIP FORM

All members receive the newsletter *The Herald* and are recognized as donors in the newsletter.

Tiffany Circle: \$40 Individual; \$55 Family; \$25 Student/Senior (62 yrs.+)

Benefits include: Free tours during regular tour hours, 25% discount on Friends' merchandise.

Arts & Crafts Circle: \$100 and above

Benefits include: Free tours during regular tour hours, 25% discount on Friends' merchandise, and invitations to special members-only tours and programs.

I/we wish to become a member of Friends of Historic Second Church or renew a current membership.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Enclosed is my check for \$_____ for membership at the following level:

____ **Tiffany Circle:** \$40 Individual; \$55 Family; \$25 Student/Senior (62 yrs.+)

____ **Art & Crafts Circle:** \$100 and above

____ Yes ____ No You may acknowledge my contribution in Friends' publications.

____ Yes ____ No I prefer to receive my newsletter by e-mail.

____ Yes ____ No I am interested in volunteering for Friends' activities.

If you wish to discuss sponsoring a restoration project, contact Friends of Historic Second Church at 1-800-657-0687.

Please return completed form with check made payable to:

Friends of Historic Second Church 1936 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60616.

Or renew online at www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org.



Friends of Historic Second Church

1936 S. Michigan Ave.

Chicago, IL 60616

Phone: 1-800-657-0687

E-mail: historic2ndchurch@yahoo.com

Web: www.2ndpresbyterianfriends.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Linda Miller, *President*

A. Gerald Erickson, *Vice President*

Ann Belletire, *Secretary*

William Tyre, *Treasurer*

Rowena Balogun

James T. Barnes

Susan Baldwin Burian

Jeff Case

Kurt Hyzy

Ruth Sharpe

Michael Shawgo

Jane Tiffen

Rev. David Neff, *ex-officio*

Lisa Napoles, *Historic Preservation Manager*

Graphic Designer: Lisa Napoles

Contributors: Bill Tyre, Ann Belletire, Lisa Napoles, and Linda Miller.

***Friends of Historic Second
Church gratefully acknowledges
the following memberships,
donations, and contributions
from September 1 -
November 25, 2013.***

\$25,000-\$49,999

Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust

\$5,000-\$9,999

Anonymous

BMO Harris Bank

The Donnelley Foundation
(for the Peace Window)

\$2,500-\$4,999

Landmarks Illinois, Donnelley Fund

Linda Miller

\$1,000-\$2,499

Ann Belletire

\$500-\$999

Barbara C. Donnelley

Darlene Pollard

\$100-\$499

Ross C. Anderson

James T. Barnes

Michael & Ann Belletire

Patricia Cassidy & Andrew Wycislak

Patricia Jones Fortine

Donna L. Gabanski

Greater Chicago Chapter,
Victorian Society in America

Elizabeth R. Greene

Chris-Ellyn Johanson

Virginia M. Kerr

Sandra Lancaster

Betty Launer

Dr. Sharon Kobak

William J. Ragen

Deven & Sandra Rand

Anita J. Rogers

Gary A. Schuetz

Under \$100

John & Elaine Aranza

Todd Protzman-Davis

Patricia Kilduff

Hana Manal & Jerrad Yaw

Mark Mandle

Beverly Offen

Constance Scanlan

Miss Sprite

In Kind

Robert Furhoff

Dr. Debra Mancoff

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