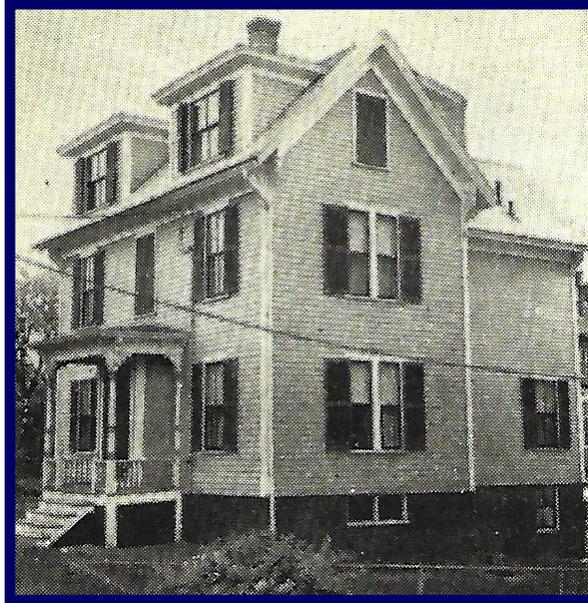


The exhibit of the Sisters of Notre Dame was highly commended and at the close of the Fair, which lasted six months, a diploma and medal were awarded to fifteen of our houses in Massachusetts, Lowell's parish and day schools being among the favored ones. Leo XIII., Columbus, Queen Isabella, and

Annals from the Archives

St. Michael's, Hudson, MA



February 2019

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The first St. Michael's Convent
Hudson, MA
1918
SND New England Archives
2017.17

—When four Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur were sent to St. Michael's Parish in Hudson, MA to found a new school in 1918, little did they know that they had begun a new mission at a monumental time in history. The Influenza Pandemic was just about to begin in Massachusetts and the *Great War* would end in a little over two months. Sr. Marie Pauline Hurley, Sr. Berchmans of the Blessed Sacrament Gilrain, Sr. Josepha of the Sacred Heart McLellan, and Sr. Emily of the Sacred Heart Heath arrived at St. Michael's Parish on August 30, 1918. The condition of the convent and the school seemed to reflect those turbulent times. Not only was the convent in disarray, but the school was still unfinished.

According to their annals, the sisters "*readily saw that the workmen had recently taken their departure [from the convent] leaving things as such people generally do.*" The clutter and dust did not last long, not with the four sisters and eight women from the parish on hand. This first convent in Hudson had seven rooms. The chapel, refectory and kitchen were on the first floor; the second floor included the Holy Family [community room] and two small bedrooms with two beds each. In the attic was another room with two more beds.

School opened on September 3rd and because the building was not finished, the Knights of Columbus offered their hall as a temporary school. That day, 113 children registered and were placed into three primary grades. The next day, Sr. Marie Ambrose Molloy arrived to complete the community. Those first two weeks were routine until the governor of Massachusetts called for all public buildings to close because of the Epidemic sweeping through the state. The sisters closed St. Michael's on September 25th and were unable to resume classes until October 21st.

Three weeks later, the Armistice was signed and World War I ended. Along with the rest of the country, the people of St. Michael's parish rejoiced, but they had yet another reason to celebrate—St. Michael's school was finally finished. On November 13th, 1918, the sisters and students moved into the newly finished building. The following year, the school added a fourth grade, with Sr. Agnes Denise Kelley as teacher. Every year after, the sisters added another grade until in 1924, there were eight grades. That fall a new high school was completed.

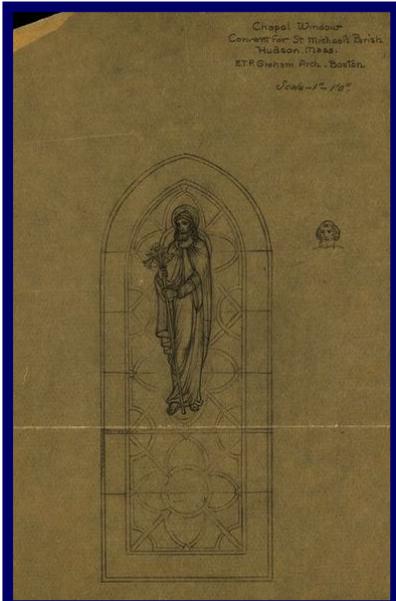
With such a rapid increase in students, the tiny convent that was the original home for the sisters would no longer do. The parish hired architect Edward T. P. Graham to design a new and larger convent for the sisters, as well as Charles J. Connick to create the stained glass windows for the convent's chapel. Land next to the church was bought from the Scally family and the sale was completed on January 2, 1924. Construction began later that month and was finished by the end of the year.

Because the Sisters of Notre Dame's motherhouse was in Belgium, Graham sought to bring some European design to the convent by including Dutch gables and a red tile roof. The new convent held living rooms, classrooms, bedrooms, and a

community room. The convent's new chapel had a Gothic styled altar and walls with high oak wainscoting to hold panels for the stations of the cross. The stained glass windows designed by Connick were created in a manner similar to that of Trinity College's newly built chapel in Washington, DC.

Edward T. P. Graham (1872-1964) was a Boston native who went on to become well known for church design in New England, as well as across the Midwest. In addition to churches, he also designed hospitals, schools and other public buildings. His most well known works in Massachusetts were the Church of the Holy Name in West Roxbury, Our Lady of Lourdes in Jamaica Plain, St. John Prep's Chapel in Danvers, St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Brighton, St. Anthony by the Sea in Gloucester, and St. Paul's Church in Hamilton. He was also known for Our Lady of Peace Church in Cleveland, Ohio, Church of the Annunciation in Cincinnati, Ohio and St. Malachy's Church in Chicago, Illinois.

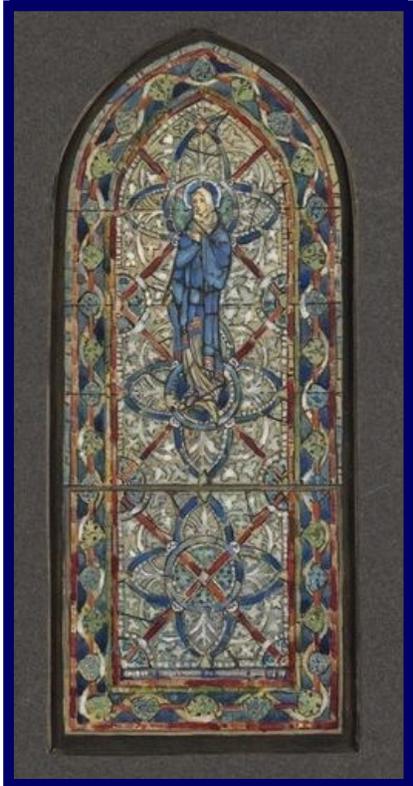
Charles J. Connick (1875-1945) was a well known muralist and painter, but was most famous for his stained glass windows. He was born in Pennsylvania. After studying in Europe, he returned to the U.S. and settled in Boston, opening a studio for stained glass in 1913. His first major work was the First Baptist Church in Pittsburgh, PA in 1912. From there, he went on to design and produce stained glass windows for St. Patrick's and St. John the Divine Cathedrals in New York City, Princeton University Chapel and Boston University Chapel.



On left:
Design by
Charles J.
Connick for
stained glass
window for
St. Michael's
Convent
From digitalcom-
monwealth.org

On right:
St. Michael's
Convent in 1924

Below:
Drawing of
Stained Glass
window for St.
Michael's
Convent by
Charles J.
Connick
From digitalcom-
monwealth.org



Sources consulted for this article

- ◆ St. Michael's Convent Annals, Hudson, MA, 1918-1959. SND New England Archives, 2017.14.
- ◆ Boston Globe Archives, 1872-2019, bpl.org.
- ◆ Digital Commonwealth, digitalcommonwealth.org
- ◆ Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Golden Anniversary, 1918-1968, Hudson, MA. SND New England Archives, 2017.14.