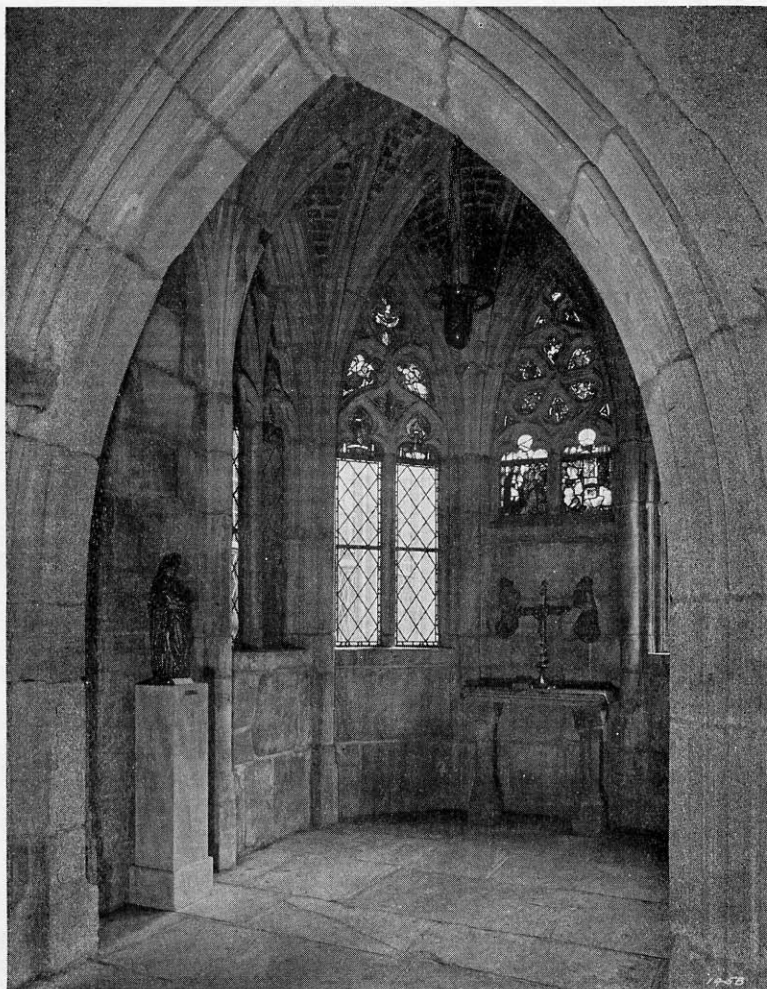


Bulletin of The Detroit Institute of Arts Of the City of Detroit

Vol. IX

OCTOBER, 1927

No. 1



FRENCH GOTHIC CHAPEL C. 1500
GIFT OF MR. RALPH H. BOOTH

FRENCH GOTHIC CHAPEL

In the short time that our new building has been open to the public, the French Gothic chapel, the dedication gift of Mr. Ralph H. Booth, has become one of the most popular spots in the Museum. Little wonder, indeed! This tiny structure, complete and original in all its parts, with its weathered but well-preserved old stone walls, pillars, and ribbed vaulting, its stained glass windows, its altar and holy water font, brings to the people of this young country something of the real atmosphere of past ages: an atmosphere which the most perfect reproduction of antique architecture somehow fails to give. In this little room one may dream of the noble and courtly people, long passed away, who prayed here; the very stones are alive and tell of the many hands which touched them, of the skirts which brushed them, and of the countless feet which trod them.

The chapel, originally a part of the Chateau de Lannoy in Herbéviller in Lorraine (eastern France), was dismantled, and stone for stone shipped to Detroit, where it was rebuilt into the Museum in connection with the Gothic Hall. The exact date of the castle, the records of which go back to the thirteenth century, has not come down to us. We only know that it acquired its present form while belonging to the Créhange family, who had bought or inherited the estate from Marguerite de Chambley, Dame de Parroy, late in the fifteenth century. Stylistic reasons lead us to suppose that our chapel was built in the first years of the sixteenth century. About the year 1525 the castle came into the posses-

sion of the Bannerot family, who held it until the eighteenth century, when René de Bouchard, husband of Anne de Lannoy, became the owner. In 1758 their daughter married Jean Pierre, Comte de Lignéville, in whose family the estate remained until the Revolution. Lignéville is the last noble name connected with the castle. Abandoned and maltreated during the Revolution, in the nineteenth century it became the home of several bourgeois families, and is today a farmhouse.

In style the chapel represents the very last phase of French Gothic art. Its general plan, ending in five sides of an octagon, still follows the scheme established for choirs and chapels in the first examples of Gothic architecture of the twelfth century. The vault, however, which in the High Gothic period was supported by single ribs ascending in a straight line from the pillars to the keystone, has here become an intricate starlike network of delicately moulded ribs. The capitals of the early period and the wreaths of scanty foliage which superseded them, marking the intersection of the engaged shafts and the vault, are here entirely eliminated. In the traceried windows we have the bows and "fishbladders" of the typical flamboyant manner, and finally, above the niche on the right wall, we observe a not conspicuous but significant detail: the relief decoration of dolphins and acanthus leaves, the first glimpse of the coming new style of the Italian Renaissance, a fact which definitely proves that our chapel stands on the boundary of two periods, or one might even say, between two worlds.

W. H.

DEDICATION EXERCISES

The new building of the Detroit Institute of Arts was dedicated to a life of inspiration and usefulness Friday evening, October 7, with an attendance estimated at ten thousand, many of whom were unable to get into the auditorium and had

to content themselves with a tour of the exhibition galleries. Within fifteen minutes after the doors were opened, the auditorium, seating twelve hundred, was filled to capacity, and it taxed the ingenuity of the guards and police officers to alleviate the



VIEW OF COURT, SHOWING EXTERIOR OF GOTHIC CHAPEL

disappointment of those who failed to obtain admittance. The charm of the program was in the short but felicitous addresses, followed by a program of music by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, with Ossip Gabrilowitsch conducting.

The dedication exercises were marked by simplicity. Mr. William J. Gray, Vice-President of the Arts Commission, acting as chairman, conducted the program with the graciousness and facility of one born to the task. An organ prelude by Dr. Francis L. York, Dean of the Michigan Chapter, American Guild of Organists, was followed by an invocation by Reverend Chester B. Emerson. In an address of welcome the secretary mentioned the cumulative forces that during the past fifteen years have put a solid foundation under the dream to give to Detroit a suitable Institute of Arts. After expressing the pleasure of the Arts

Commission in having so many distinguished museum workers and guests from other cities, and in the participation in the program of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, he welcomed to their new home the members of the Founders Society and the residents of Detroit.

Mr. Gray then introduced Mr. Medary, of the architectural firm of Paul P. Cret and Zantzing, Borie and Medary, who, in turning over the building, paid a glowing tribute to Dr. Paul P. Cret, to whom he gave the credit for the happy result.

In accepting the building from the architects, Mr. Ralph H. Booth, president of the Arts Commission, gave a high-minded dedication address. After paying a tribute to the integrity of those who had to do with the building, he said: "Even for a city so prosperous as Detroit, this building, its site and its collections, represent a

costly contribution of which even the greatest and richest community of the world need not be ashamed. . . .

"What is the message written in this book of marble for all of us Detroiters, rich and poor, high and low? To my mind, the message of a municipal art museum such as this is that the beauty of art and the spiritual and moral beauties which lie beyond and above the beauty of art alone, are as essential in the life of a community as are the material comforts and modern facilities and improvements which it is the pride of every prosperous, enlightened community of today to furnish to its citizens. . . .

"It is on such occasions as this that we should remember to give thanks to God and to our forefathers for the enduring legacy of a free government and the pursuit of happiness open to all. And in this spirit today, in behalf of the people of Detroit, let us dedicate this building to the lofty purpose for which it was conceived: 'The Knowledge and Enjoyment of Art,' believing that we have seen the completion of a building that will stand for centuries to come, because of the enduring character of art; and that if we cling to our spiritual ideals we shall best advance the high destiny of future generations."

The speaking program concluded with a scholarly and poetic address by the art director, Dr. W. R. Valentiner, dealing with the enjoyment of art and its influence on the lives of the individual: "Our ability to enjoy is increased by contrast," he said, in part. "Art cannot be enjoyed continually from morning until night, but only at inspired moments that overtake us like the sudden impulses of sympathy which we feel towards others, and at the most unexpected times, especially when we are most spent and worn with the realities of every-day life. We believe, therefore, that the museum, erected on the banks of the turbulent streams of traffic of this hurrying city, will afford a refuge to those who, tired by the battle for material gain, are half-unconsciously drawn within its walls. Enwrapped in the atmosphere that we

have endeavored to create in the various rooms, they cannot fail to imbibe something of the wealth of noble thought that has been stored for centuries in these works of art, and be moved by seeing how the masters were able to wrest mellifluous and bewitching tones from every aspect of life. There is no theme, not even the most tragic, that has not been transfigured by art and changed into an expression of life's beauty; there is no work of art that does not stand out more clearly because of that peculiar illumination brought about by the passage of time. Everywhere we find the dual influence of the masterpieces of the past: the ennobling influence of the original ideas of the artists, and their liberation by the hand of time from any unfortunate elements which may have beset them at their inception."

On Tuesday evening, October 11, in the lecture hall of the Detroit Institute of Arts, a program covering Detroit's art history was given under the joint auspices of the Detroit Historical Society and the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society. In this program Colonel Fred E. Farnsworth, the first Secretary of the Detroit Museum of Art, who served continuously from the time of the incorporation of the museum, March 25, 1885, until he left Detroit in 1907, read the principal historical sketch dealing with the establishment and early growth of the museum.

Of the forty original incorporators of the museum, only two remain, Colonel Fred E. Farnsworth and Mrs. E. G. Holden. Mrs. Holden could not be present at the dedication but sent a charming paper which was read by her son, James S. Holden, in which she vividly recalled each of the original group, picturing the character and paramount interests of each.

Mr. D. M. Ferry, Jr., President of the Founders Society, then took up the story of the development of the new art center, which culminated in the new building, and this was followed by discussions and reminiscences pertaining to Detroit's early art history.

C. H. B.