

A. Leo Pitassi (1886-1947)

Angelo Leopardo Pitassi was born in Pacentro, Abruzzo, Italy, in 1886. He arrived in New York on December 19, 1903, sailing on the "Vincenzo Florio" from Naples. Immigration records give his age as 17.

He first appears in the Pittsburgh city directories in 1909; his occupation is listed as "draughtsman" and he boards at 826 Inwood Street in what is now Pittsburgh's Homewood neighborhood. This is the home of Mina L. Connick and her family. Her son Charles moved from Pittsburgh in late 1907 and is living in Boston in 1909, although he will return to visit his family (whom he eventually moves to Boston). Pitassi lived at this address until c. 1915—approximately six years.¹ Although the 1910 city directory gives his occupation as "clerk," his occupation in the 1910 Federal census is "draughtsman" and his employer is [American] "Steel & Wire Co." Between 1911 and 1914, city directories list his occupation as "artist."

In 1910, A. E. L. Pitassi exhibited "Design for Stair Landing Window" at the Pittsburgh Architectural Club's Annual Exhibition. In 1913, Leopardo Pitassi exhibited "The Knight" and "The Elements" and joined the organization. He appears on the list of PAC members in 1914 and 1915 (residing at 826 Inwood), but there are no lists of exhibitors for those years and his work is not illustrated in the catalogue.

He is not listed in the 1915, 1916, or 1917 Pittsburgh city directories. In 1916 Pitassi is listed in the Philadelphia city directory, living at 1919 Arch Street, and almost certainly working for a Philadelphia glass shop.² In The Petgen Co. entry at the 1916-1917 exhibition, held December 19, 1916 through January 1, 1917, Leo Pitassi (3507 Campus Street, N.S., Pittsburgh) and George W. Sotter jointly exhibited "Design for Aisle Windows, St. Agnes R. C. Church, Pittsburgh, Pa." and Pitassi exhibited "Design for Windows in St. Leo's R. C. Church, Pittsburgh, Pa." and "Design for Windows in St. Mark's R. C. Church, Pittsburgh, Pa."

In 1918 Pitassi is listed in the city directory as an "artist" boarding at 6332 Howe Street in Shadyside; this information is repeated in the 1920 census and in the 1920-22 city directories.³ From 1923 through 1926 he worked for The Petgen Co. In 1927 he established his own shop at 5345 Penn Ave.⁴ In 1930 (the latest census available) Leo Pitassi, his wife Hazel, and daughter Louise were living at 6027 Walnut Street in Shadyside.

Sources:

www.ancestry.com (Federal census records 1910, 1920, 1930; Immigration records)
Historic Pittsburgh: [http:// digital.library.pitt.edu/Pittsburgh](http://digital.library.pitt.edu/Pittsburgh)
Pittsburgh City Directories
Pittsburgh Architectural Club Annual Exhibition catalogues 1910-17
Brady, Darlene, and William Serban. *Stained Glass Index 1906-1977*. SGAA, 1979.
Connick Studio Records, Fine Arts Department, Boston Public Library
Philadelphia City Directories, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia

¹ His obituary in *Stained Glass* states: "He attended night classes at Carnegie Tech Art School for five or six years. His first experience in stained glass was in the Rudy brothers' studio. Later he worked in the Pitgin [sic] studio and was with Charles J. Connick in Boston for some time." Pitassi is not listed among the craftsmen who worked for the Connick Studio prior to 1960.

² *Boyd's Philadelphia City Directory*. Philadelphia: C. E. Howe Co., 1916: 1336. According to Bruce Lavery, the D'Ascenzo studio at 1608 Ludlow was a few blocks away. Pitassi is not listed among the employees of Willet Studio.

³ He is not listed in the 1919 directory, however.

⁴ A. F. Link designed the studio which was described in *The Charette* (January 1927): "One story shop and office art glass studio. Location: Penn Avenue, E. E. Pittsburgh. Approximate cost: \$10,000. Plans finished, ready for bids in about three weeks. Bids will be taken by owner. Brick and steel construction; fireproof and wood floors." [21]

Files on St. Leo, St. Mark, St. Stephen, and St. Anselm in the Diocese of Pittsburgh Archives.

Publications:

- Saint, Lawrence, *Stained Glass Exhibition: Original Windows, Designs, Cartoons, Drawings of Medieval Windows*. Catalog. Carnegie Museum of Art, 1922.
"Stained Glass Exhibit." *Stained Glass* 16:11 (December 1922): 11.
"Architect's Building Bulletin." *The Charette* 7:1 (January 1927): 21.
McInerney, Michael. "Stained Glass Windows." *Stained Glass* 42:1 (Spring 1947): 20-21.
"A. Leo Pitassi 1886-1947." *Stained Glass* 42:4 (Winter 1947), 126-126.
Lewis, Virginia. "Stained Glass from Pittsburgh." *Stained Glass* 43:2 (Summer 1948): 35-46.
Wilbert, Katherine. "Stained Glass in Pittsburgh." *Carnegie Magazine* 42:10 (December 1968): 333-337.
Cheetham, Rev. William J., ed. *The Windows of St. Anselm Church, Swissvale, Pennsylvania* (1993).
Wilson, Thomas R., Rev. *St. Bernard Church, Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania*. Mt. Lebanon: Oceanic Graphic Printing, Inc. for St. Bernard Church, 1995.

Partial Works List :

Pittsburgh:

- St. Agnes R. C. Church, John T. Comes, architect (windows by George W. Sotter and Leo Pitassi), now the chapel of Carlow University
St. Leo R. C. Church, 3113 Brighton Rd. (demolished 2001)⁵
St. Mark R. C. Church, 326 Munson Ave., McKees Rocks
St. Stephen R. C. Church, 2nd Ave. and Elizabeth Street, Hazelwood⁶
St. Anselm R. C. Church, A. F. Link, architect, 7446 McClure Avenue, Swissvale⁷
St. Bernard R. C. Church, 311 Washington Road, Mt. Lebanon, Clairvaux Hall and convent chapel windows, William R. Perry, architect, 1933-47.

Elsewhere⁸:

- St. Gregory the Great, 5533 North Paulina Street, Chicago, Illinois, 1924-26, Comes, Perry & McMullen, architects
Cathedral of the Queen of the Holy Rosary, Collingwood Blvd at Islington, Toledo, Ohio, 1925-31, Comes, Perry & McMullen, architects
St. Benedict, Baltimore, Maryland
St. Mark's R. C. Church, St. Paul, Minnesota (with George Sotter)
Sacred Heart, Massena, New York
Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, New York City (with George Sotter)
Myers Park Methodist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina
St. Leo, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Church of St. Paul the Apostle, Spartanburg, South Carolina
St. Anne, Bristol, Virginia
St. Benedict, Richmond, Virginia

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⁵ Architect unknown; the building was dedicated August 12, 1917. Newspaper accounts at the time of demolition stated that some stained glass windows "will be used when Risen Lord Church is renovated."

⁶ Listed in *Stained Glass* (Winter 1947), 126. Architect unknown; church erected 1902; interior rebuilt after a fire in 1925. See *Pittsburgh Catholic* 17 December 1925; 24 December 1925.

⁷ The building was dedicated July 19, 1925. See *Pittsburgh Catholic* 23 July 1925. According to *The Windows of St. Anselm's Church* (1993) the stained glass windows were made and installed 1930s through 1950s; Pitassi designed and made 10 nave windows; the clerestory windows were completed by Louise Pitassi Ellis.

⁸ Listed in *Stained Glass* (Winter 1947), 126.