

THE STOCKADE SPY

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THE HISTORICAL HOME

Buying a historical home in the Stockade, with the idea of restoring or remodeling it, can be one of the most rewarding projects a young person or couple can take on, especially if they plan to do some or all of the work themselves. With this in mind, the *SPY* asked us to share with its readers some of the "tricks of the trade" we have learned in the remodeling and restoration of older homes. In the months ahead, we shall be looking at many aspects of restoration — plumbing, electrical, carpentry, and cosmetics such as papering and painting. Whether you are contemplating acquiring a home in the Stockade, or are doing work on a home you now own, we hope these suggestions will help you decide what work you can do yourself, and explain how to do it.

As a starting point, let's examine the basic structural soundness of the house. By this we mean that the wooden structural members (floor joists, supporting timbers or beams, and wall studs) are sound and strong, capable of continuing to bear the weights and stresses asked of them. Three factors which might contribute to weakness are dry-rot, termites (fortunately not too much of a problem in this area), and splits or cracks. The first two problems are easy to check for by simply pushing a flat screwdriver into the wood in several places. If it will penetrate over $\frac{1}{4}$ " or so easily, one of these two problems may exist. If the problem is extensive, the repairs necessitated could prove both costly and well beyond the range of skills of the average homeowner.

The third problem — cracking or splitting — like the first two, is most likely to be found in the cellar, and should be easily detected visually. A satisfactory repair may often be effected by jacking or otherwise drawing together the broken pieces (with bolts or lag-screws of adequate size), and applying a "scab" to each side of the broken member. This consists of two pieces of lumber, approximately the same width as the broken piece (i.e., 2" x 6", 2" x 8", etc.), long enough to span the length of the crack plus a foot or so at each end. The two pieces, when applied, form a "sandwich" with the broken piece, and are either nailed, or, better yet, bolted together with $\frac{3}{8}$ " bolts and washers. The resulting "sandwich" is easier to apply than would be the alternative of replacing the entire floor joist.

Once you have satisfied yourself that your house is structurally sound (or can be made so with a minimum of expense), other work may then be considered with a fair degree of confidence that the supporting members will be strong enough to carry the new work without further shifting or sagging.

Next time, we'll talk about how the homeowner can tackle the problem of sagging floors — a problem common to many older homes. In the meantime, we welcome comments and suggestions from our readers on problems and solutions they would like to share with their neighbors. All topics are welcome, and your suggestions (with full credit given you) will be incorporated into future articles at the appropriate time. Please send your suggestions to the *SPY*, or to Merriam and Novinger, 5½ Washington Avenue.


LOCAL PASTORS ATTENDED ENTHRONEMENT

The Reverend Darwin Kirby, Jr., Rector of St. George's Episcopal Church, and The Reverend Alan D. Jupin, Pastor of the Church of St. John the Baptist, will leave this week to attend the Enthronement of the 101st Archbishop of Canterbury at Canterbury Cathedral, England. At the ceremonies on January twenty-fourth, The Most Reverend and Right Honorable Frederick Donald Coggan will succeed The Most Reverend and Right Honorable Arthur Michael Ramsey, D.D., who has reached retirement age.

Father Kirby will represent the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, and Father Jupin the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany. In London, they will present at Services at Westminster Abbey and All Saints, Margaret Street. They will then attend ceremonies and observances of the Holy Year in Rome, of which the Parish of St. John the Baptist is the Holy Year Church for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany. While there, they will also be at the North American College and the American Academy.

Last February second (1974), the two Parishes in Schenectady, now represented at the Enthronement, established a Covenant relationship in the presence of His Grace, Archbishop Ramsey.





THE STOCKADE SPY

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Susie Shanklin has been accepted at Niagara University.

Mr. Robert Moore is now home from the hospital and feeling fine.

St. George's vestry entertained the church council of St. John's Church on February 10.

Mr. and Mrs. Burt Lamont were visited by Mrs. Lamont's father, Frederick Wells of Cumberland, R.I.

Before the Roosevelt Apartments were built on the corner of Union and Ferry, some charming buildings stood between the Old County Court House at 108 Union and the corner. There was concern among the old timers when these were razed, some of which was due to the fact that the store on the corner would go. Oh well, there were others around the corner on Ferry to serve us. Although everything was not under one roof like at Mercer's you certainly could find variety and you didn't have to go much past Liberty Street. The Stockade had its own little shopping center right there. Of course, if you wanted dry goods, thread or a new dress, you would have to go up Liberty to Barney's back door but no further. Virtually the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker and all the rest were there. Just what do you need? Hanson's "Pink Pills for Pale People," fresh fish, a roast of beef, fresh baked buns, an extra key, your stiff collars cleaned and starched? You name it. We've got it.

On the corner where Dr. Senn now has his office, there was Ball's, the Cleaner; next door was the Chinaman, who did your stiff shirts and collars so beautifully and who sent you Lichee Nuts every Christmas in appreciation of your trade. Across the street was Keller, the Druggist. Opposite him was Rosenfelt, the Tailor, and Mr. Sitterly, the Butcher. Of course Krueger's has always stood there on the corner of Liberty and where Liberty now cuts through to Church stood Mr. Swatling's Fish Market. There was the Shoemaker and Mr. Wesson, the Keyman. There was the Bakery and if you needed a haircut there was Bozzi's.

I know I have forgotten some who have come and gone or who have remained there over the decades. However, I think I have given you some idea of our little shopping center.

You name it! We have it!

Giles Y. van der Bogert

TIDINGS

by Suzy Sherwood

Home from the hospital; Ernie Cohen of Front Street and Jessica Squires of North Street.

Jane Binzer of Union Street and Emily Sherwood of Front Street are in the Linton High School Plaza Players production of "The Haunting of Hill House".

Mrs. W. A. Kitts of Front Street is visiting her sons in New Mexico and Oklahoma. She plans also to go to California to visit a granddaughter.

In the hospital: George Staffa of Front Street and Kenneth Wilkins of Ingersoll Avenue.

Many thanks to Dawson Van Eps of 119 Front Street for brightening our day with the wonderful snow sculpture of an owl.

The *SPY* welcomes Mr. and Mrs. Sherburne Barber (parents of John Barber) to 112 Front Street.

Nancy and Norman Walbek of 146 Front Street will be leaving the Stockade for their new home on Randolph Road.

Sandy and Harry Willis, formerly of Washington Avenue, now living in New Hampshire, were here visiting friends.

The *SPY* welcomes Jennifer and Dennis Salahub, originally from Canada, to number 8 Washington Avenue.



LET'S GO SHOPPING

Back around 1787 if you wanted to buy something you probably went to Mercer's Variety Store at 10 North Church Street. This is an interesting building being a fine example of late Dutch Architecture carefully modernized to become Greek Revival.

I don't know what Mercer sold in this building but I suspect from the name that he sold almost everything you desired probably varying from a spool of thread to a jug of rum. That's what I call "Variety" and may the super markets take note! Of course, the old store had long since gone and now this splendid building is converted to a residence. I will tell you more of this story some other time. Right now I am only using Mercer's as a theme for shopping. We're going to shop over on Ferry Street in much more recent times, say five or six decades ago.



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FLAGS WE FLY IN THE STOCKADE



1661 to 1664

The Great West India Company Flag is composed of the Tri-Color of Holland with the Company's monogram "G.W.C." superimposed. It was raised when the Mohawk Indians deeded the land to Arent Van Curler.



1777 to 1795

The Betsy Ross Flag — under this flag the United States of America was formally recognized as a new Republic. The flag received its first salute from an Admiral in the French fleet.



1664 to 1775

The British Flag was raised when Dutch Governor Peter Stuyvesant surrendered to the British expedition which sailed into Manhattan harbor September 8, 1664. Stuyvesant was unprepared and no shot was fired.



1795 to 1818

The Star Spangled Banner was the inspiration for our National Anthem. It has 15 stars and 15 stripes, reflecting the addition of Vermont and Kentucky to the Union of the original 13 states.



1775 to 1777

The Grand Union, the first truly American flag, reflects the unity of the colonies and the hope for reconciliation with the Mother Country. It was first raised by John Paul Jones on December 3, 1775.



1818 to date

Old Glory returned to the thirteen alternating red and white stripes representing the Thirteen Original Colonies. A new star is added with the entrance of each new state to the Union. The first Old Glory had 20 stars and was raised on July 4, 1818.

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Mailbag

The Editor, Stockade SPY

The feature article of your December SPY, "Zoning: Preservation or Deprivation", by Mr. Sauer, somehow links a disregard for the Historic District Commission (HDC) with speeding at 80 mph down Union Street. I could link those who support the HDC right or wrong, to those superpatriots who got us no-knock drug raids and some Watergate horrors — unfair, no doubt, but one may perhaps oppose policies of the HDC without suspicion of drag-racing, too.

What policies? Nothing I know is in writing, beyond the Zoning Act, City Ordinance 14221, 1962, and individual decisions. For instance, section 9 of the Act says, "Nothing in this article shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance and repair of any structure." "Repair means the replacement of existing work with equivalent materials for the purpose of its maintenance," says the National Building Code, section 200. But just try to replace a rotting window without submitting a \$15 fee and a plan, if a Commissioner is watching you!

For another example, from a Certificate of Approval granted by the HDC in July, 1974: "The work to be done will not be seen from the public way; therefore, the issuance of a building permit is a determination of the Building Inspector. It is suggested the structural soundness of the structure and this construction be carefully investigated." If you are about to buy property in this district, and your friendly real estate agent reassures you that the HDC passes only on the exterior features of a renovation, remember that the HDC does not let the words of the Act limit its view.

A well-placed source tells me the HDC discourages owner-executed repairs and improvements, because these often are poorly conceived. Now a current brochure from Troy lists the things an owner can do *without* seeking a building permit. This list includes repair or replacement of exterior trim, existing brick and stone work and fencing, repair of porches, steps, sidewalks and driveways, adding gutters and downspouts, exterior lighting and awnings, storm windows and doors. Troy, after foolishly tearing down blocks of old buildings, has a new interest in those that remain, and by this list encourages homeowners to make their own property

improvements. This is how Mr. Giles van der Bogert and others started the Stockade revival. I wish Schenectady would publish a similar list, even if need be, in spite of the HDC, which acts mainly through its control over permits.

If, in these examples, the HDC stretches the Act, it reflects the hopes and pressure of its Stockade supporters like Mr. Sauer. But this stretching invites opposition; worldly-wise and influential owners like the Mohawk Club or St. George's Parish know where they can ignore or appeal the HDC successfully — and no one likes to discover he was stopped by a paper tiger.

Sincerely,
John Bradshaw
223 Green St.
Schenectady



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FENCE AROUND STOCKADE INDIAN FIXED IN A HURRY BY CITY

The iron fence around the Stockade Indian must be magnetic as it has the peculiar quality of attracting automobiles. It is hit by vehicles on an average of four times a year.

Last fall two alert individuals took the license number of a car that backed into the fence. The driver's insurance company paid for the repair work. The Stockade Association previously had taken care of such repairs.

The most recent incident occurred when a 1969 white Mustang hit the fence at about two a.m. on February 3rd. The damage was reported directly to City Manager Peter Caputo who agreed that inasmuch as the Stockade Indian (Lawrence) stands in the center of Schenectady's smallest park, the fence was the responsibility of the City. No one dreamed that the repair work would be completed two days later, but it was.

The service on the part of the City was excellent and is much appreciated by residents of the Stockade.

J. Dawson Van Eps