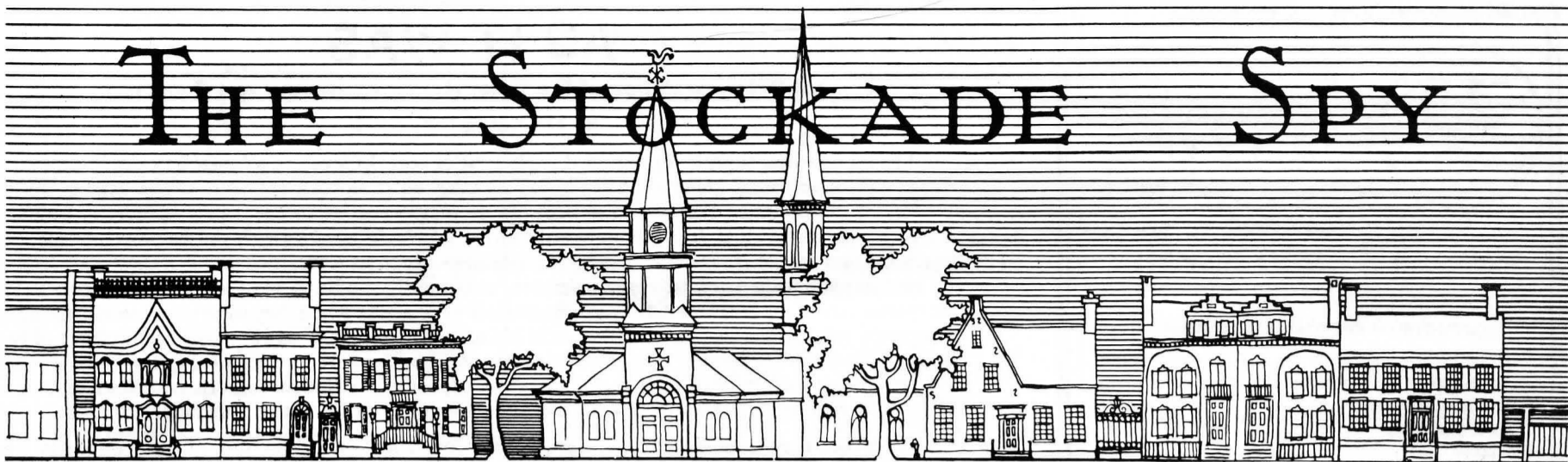


THE STOCKADE SPY



January-February 1979

Published by The Stockade Association

Vol. XIX, Number 4

Winter Parking

By Bill Moore
Sexton, St. George's Church

In regard to the impossible winter parking situation in the Stockade, St. George's Episcopal Church, in keeping with its tradition of Community understanding and helpful involvement, offers the use of its parking facilities on Green Street as follows:

1. Open any night except Saturday or when there is a Church function before which time there will be a sign posted.
2. In order to clear the lot of snow there will be no parking between the hours of 8 AM and 12 Noon after/during a snow fall of 3 inches or more.
3. Any person parking in lot during time of restrictions will be **towed at owner's expense!**

In order to make this an agreeable situation there must be total cooperation! We are the last open parking lot in the Stockade and hope we are not forced to adopt a policy of closing our gates — it is up to you!

Letter To Sol

The following letter was presented by the Board of Directors of the Stockade Association to Mr. Sol Goodman, butcher at Arthur's Market for 21 years, at a gala party in his honor in late January:

Dear Sol:

The Stockade is indeed poorer in 1979 as a consequence of your retirement from Arthur's Market. In our modern world of self-service stores and supermarkets, it is rare to find an individual who both expresses genuine concern for his customers and takes the time to listen to their needs.

During your many years of service to our neighborhood, you have become a friend to everyone. In all those years you have exhibited remarkable patience as you tolerated our many eccentricities!

The Board of Directors of the Stockade Association extends on behalf of the whole community our thanks for making the Stockade a better place to live and our best wishes for an enjoyable retirement.



Stockade illustrations in this issue of *The Spy* appeared on Christmas cards made for Stockade residents by students in Ms. Fay Tischler's class at Riverside Open School. Ms. Tischler, a former Stockader, who is assisted by Ms. Joanne Westervelt, welcomes visitors to their classroom.

"THINK SAFETY"

By B. Sauer

Street crime is a major concern in our large cities. This type of crime is particularly frightening because it not only threatens our property, but it also threatens our personal safety. Police records show that for urban settings, most incidents of violent street crime occur within several blocks of where we live. Fortunately, most violent street crimes occur in major cities like Washington, Houston and New York. Schenectady, unhappily, is experiencing an increasing number of these crimes and some of them have occurred right in the Stockade neighborhood.

The City police can and are doing more to help prevent these threatening crimes from occurring. However, we are the ones who can do the most to prevent these crimes. We can prevent them by observing several very simple precautions as we go about our daily business. Most of these precautions are merely common sense but to help us to "think safety" *The Spy* presents the following list of precautions:

1. Consider how you will act if attacked.
2. Avoid walking alone, particularly at night.
3. Don't walk the same route at the same time each day.
4. Be aware of other people walking around you.
5. Lock your car, especially while driving.
6. Check the back seat before you get into your car.
7. Avoid dark or isolated parking areas.
8. Don't run out of gas.

Crimes occurring in and around the home are very similar to street crimes and a number of similar precautions can help assure your safety.

1. Make sure you have good door locks.
2. Ground floor windows should have a window lock.
3. Don't let anyone in who you do not know.
4. In apartments, be careful of strangers in the hall.
5. A dog discourages most intruders.
6. Go outside and see if there is some way you can break in.

Help make the Stockade a safer neighborhood by observing these simple precautions.



What's Happening

ANNUAL STOCKADE FLOOD ALERT —
If you need help at flood time, call Jim Lane at 372-5006.

Proctor's Theatre is back in business! See local papers for details of the new schedule (Alvin Ailey Dancers appear in February).

Stockade Notepads — \$1 each — showing masthead of *The Spy*, are available at Arthur's Market.

Discovery Days — April 20 and 21 - sponsored by the Stockade Association in conjunction with the Schenectady Museum - Sotheby Parke Bernet of New York will appraise your heirlooms. Further details the next issue of *The Spy!*



Six Belts of Wampum

A guide to the Schenectady Stockade. Now in its 3rd printing. Available thru T. Gregory Sauer for \$2.00 each.



THE STOCKADE SPY

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The President's Column

By T. Gregory Sauer

Last Spring, a letter was printed in *The Spy* asking why Stockaders did not take as much pride in the appearance of their neighborhood as some other "historic districts". After that letter appeared, there was a distinct improvement in the appearance of the neighborhood. Unfortunately, as soon as the first snowflakes were seen over Schenectady, all thoughts of neighborhood appearance seemed to disappear. While this is distressing, a more serious and annual problem has again reared its ugly head. As a neighborhood, we persist in not cleaning the snow and ice from our sidewalks. This creates a safety hazard for all of us. Cleaning off our sidewalks is not only an act of kindness to our neighbors who must use them, it is also the law.

The City Council, at long last, is close to taking action on the revision to the Historic Zoning Ordinance which will go a long way toward assuring the continued existence of structures in Schenectady's two historic districts. The Council is now expected to act on the Ordinance on January 29th, which is also the date of the Association's next meeting.

I would like to thank all the people who worked to make the Christmas Tree Lighting and Party a success. A special thanks is due to our chairpersons, Ruth and Larry Naylor, who organized the ceremony, and Mary vander-Bogert, who organized the party, and also to Holy Cross Church and Father Clemente, who very generously provided the facilities for our party.

Lee Bowden is to be congratulated for his excellent film on the Stockade. He has successfully captured the past, present and future of our neighborhood. I would strongly urge anyone who has not seen the film to view it at their earliest opportunity.

Objective 2000

Ms. Mary Bee, who heads the Madison North Advertising Agency on Union Street in the Stockade and has been elected 1979 President of the Schenectady Chamber of Commerce said in a speech at the organization's annual meeting in January: "There is an old Schenectady spirit that seizes new opportunities with swift decisions and the support of the community . . . I believe we have recaptured that spirit once again . . . we are only 21 years away from the 21st century and must take up a new challenge, the challenge of Objective 2000 — a vision of Schenectady's future, the future of the whole community from child care and education, to transportation and the arts, from commerce and industry to government."

AS IT WAS

A Reinterpretation of the Teller House: Its History and People

By Dr. Susan Jane Staffa

The thought has repeatedly occurred to this writer that the study of a house without relation to its people can be seriously misleading. A house is, after all, a human creation and is usually built to accommodate a particular family and style of life. In fact, when we consider the historic houses of our Stockade, we see that they have all undergone an evolution directed by essential human concerns, both functional and aesthetic. Even those very old dwellings which have retained many of their early features are best explained as evolutionary structures, continually modified by a series of occupants. Past interpretations of ancient dwellings have frequently gone astray when they were based solely upon legal documents relating to origin and widely held but untested assumptions about the architecture of early periods. There is no substitute for the specific historical facts which surround the life of a given structure and the omission of the human element can, at worst, result in erroneous interpretations and, at least, rob us of a rich appreciation of our old houses as symbols of the life of our neighborhood.

The Teller House on the northwest corner of Front and North Streets, despite the publicity it has had in recent months, could well do with some reinterpretation in the light of the historical facts which surround it. There can be little doubt that the core of the house consisting of the framework of the central part and the eastern wing, was built during the early decades of the eighteenth century. On the other hand, comparison with several other very similar houses in the nearby Hudson Valley shows that the red brick gambrel-roofed structure that now stands on the lot could certainly not have been built prior to 1740 and very probably dates from the 1750s or 1760s. The gambrel roof is not a Dutch gambrel and the house itself is not "Dutch" in many aspects of its structure. Nor is it "one of the few remaining early houses with a gambrel roof" as has for years been claimed in the Stockade tour pamphlet. In fact, it represents quite a popular style of house for its day and many other representatives of the type still exist.

The house can more properly be described as a "Dutch Colonial" house, built by people of Dutch descent during the mid-eighteenth century when the blending of Dutch and English features had become common in architecture as well as social life. The New Netherland Dutch, after all, had lived under English rule for nearly a century by the time the house took on its present shape. (New Netherlands had become New York in 1664.) We will not here attempt a detailed discussion of "Dutch" versus "English" colonial architecture. Suffice it to say that, on the whole, during the 1600s and early 1700s, persons of Dutch descent continued to build houses which primarily echoed Dutch traditions, whereas by the 1740s, they were incorporating many more English features in their buildings. To properly understand the origins of a given building, we must consider the detailed, often inconspicuous, structural evidences of its evolution and the different stages of its use. Then we must interpret the specific assemblage of features with reference to available facts concerning the creative agents.

The Teller House bears a plaque ascribing it to a Johannes Teller and a date of ca. 1740. Now, how are we to properly understand this? The date of 1740 was assigned to the house on the basis of a deed of sale of a house and lot on the site in 1744 by a Johannes Teller. It was assumed when the plaque was put on that the apparent characteristics of the structure, that is, the brick building and the gambrel, also indicated a date close to mid-eighteenth century, and understandably, the committee felt that conservative estimates of age were preferable when claims of greater age could not be substantiated. But a detailed examination of the house in recent years has shown that the original structure, incorporated in the eastern two thirds of the building, represents a house which had several features which were prevalent during the first three decades of the century rather than the middle of the century. For one thing, the roof was not a gambrel roof but a high steep gable in the Dutch style. For another thing, there is definite evidence that the interior framework of the eastern two thirds of the house is older than the present brick structure as it is extended to the west, and the floor plan of that original structure is an early Dutch floor plan. It is even possible that in its first stage, the house was a frame, clapboard-covered building. There is no discernable difference between the bricks on the eastern and western portions and there is no line in the bricks on the outside to correspond to the joining of the two segments indicated by the interior framework. Therefore the brick walls as well as the gambrel roof may well postdate the early period. In the third place, there are strong indications that the house, before it was extended, had a jambless, "hooded" fireplace as opposed to a fireplace with jambs. (A jambless fireplace has open sides and is built up against the chimney wall, not recessed into the chimney as are the fireplaces with which we are not most familiar.) This latter trait certainly points to a date prior to 1740, as the Dutch tended to adopt the more practical fireplace with jambs rather universally as British influence became stronger in the colony. In sum, the house on the Teller lot originally appeared as a quite different species from the species into which it evolved. In the light of the above information, we can now turn to the historical facts concerning the human creators to arrive at more suitable conclusions about the date of the building.

Who first built the house which was sold in 1744? Actually, the first reference we have is to the lot only. In 1700 this parcel of land which then stretched all the way down to the river, was given by William Teller to his son, Johannes. It was at that time woodland or pasturage, as was most of the land between Front Street and the river. William Teller, the first of that family to have come from the Netherlands, had been one of the fifteen original proprietors of Schenectady. He never resided there, however, but lived for fifty years in Albany, as an officer of the Dutch West India Company and a successful trader. In 1692, a man of wealth and influence, he moved to New York with most of his sons. Only Johannes who had settled in Schenectady stayed behind and lived in a house belonging to his father on the northeast corner of Washington Avenue and Union Streets. During the Schenectady massacre of Feb. 8, 1690, Johannes was captured and subsequently taken to Canada by the French and Indians. Several months later he was ransomed and returned to Schenectady. It was then that his father granted him his *houwerie* (woodland) north of Front Street in consideration of the fact that he had sustained heavy losses in the destruction of the town.

Considering the character of the early house on the lot, there is no real reason why it could not have been this Johannes Teller who built it. However, it is true that we have no historical reference to a house prior to the deed of sale of 1744, and a deed of sale of the lot next door to Adam Vrooman in 1718 describes the Teller lot as pasture. The sequence of names on an assessment roll of 1720 strongly suggests that Johannes Teller was at that time living on the corner of Union Street and Washington Avenue. The seller of the house in 1744 could not have been the above Johannes, who died at the age of sixty-six in May of 1725. It must have been his eldest son, Johannes, mentioned in his will but otherwise

(Continued on Page 4)

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1978 Village Tree Lighting and Reception

By Jack Zegger

At about 7 p.m. on Friday, December 15, Stockaders were alerted by bellringers Henry Binzer, Richard Brown, and Robert Naylor to attend the annual tree lighting ceremony at the Indian. Earlier, a flyer, which Robert had designed and distributed, announced the event in the neighborhood.

As Stockaders gathered around the tree, the cold, crisp air carried the voices of the Holy Cross Church Choir, under the direction of Valerie Cironie. About 100 people were greeted by Larry Naylor, who, with his wife Ruth, coordinated the tree lighting. Larry introduced Larry Hart, guest speaker, and Father Michael Clemente, Pastor of Holy Cross Church, who dedicated the tree.

The beautiful blue spruce, provided and erected by the City, was lighted by four children of Riverside School: Cherie Burrows, Juliette Weinstein, Dean Rocissono, and Vinson Price.

Singing continued as people made their way to Holy Cross Church to a reception which followed the lighting. Many thanks again to all who participated. The tree was a cheerful sight throughout the holidays.

This festive occasion was made even more special since it was the first time that Holy Cross Church on North College Street was the setting. A good crowd turned out to greet old and new friends, and many "on the spot" volunteers helped to keep food and drink in good supply.

The Committee included: Father Clemente, Zoe Krasnowski, Helen and Steve Duggal, Elizabeth Perkins, Gladys Lange, Pat and Hank Binzer, Jim Lane, Paul Hiatt, Dorothy King, Susan Bokan, Elizabeth Joyce, Marie Nitchman, Richard Strain, Richard Henyan, Mary vanderBogert and Jean Zegger.

The hospitality of Father Clemente and his congregation was much appreciated, and the Committee wishes to thank once again all those who donated the delicious foods and helped financially.

Rich Anderson gives a cut above.

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Cold Szechuan Noodles

Since the Chinese Year of The Ram (4677) began at the end of January, it appears an appropriate time to print the ancient secrets of Lee Smith's cold but very hot (Spicy) Szechuan noodles, which helped warm up the Stockade's Annual Wine and Cheese Party in the Fall:

A. Chinese Rice Noodles	½ pound
B. Soy Sauce	4 Tablespoons
Peanut Butter Sauce	4 Tablespoons
Hot Oil	3 Tablespoons
Sesame Oil	2 teaspoons
Vinegar	2 Tablespoons
Sugar	2 teaspoons
Chopped Garlic	1 teaspoon
Chopped Scallions	1 teaspoon
Vegetable Oil	2 Tablespoons
Monosodium Glutamate	Optional

Boil noodles as directed on package, then put into ice water to cool off. Meantime mix all the sauces mentioned above. Put the mixed sesame sauce over the cold noodles, refrigerate for several hours, and serve.

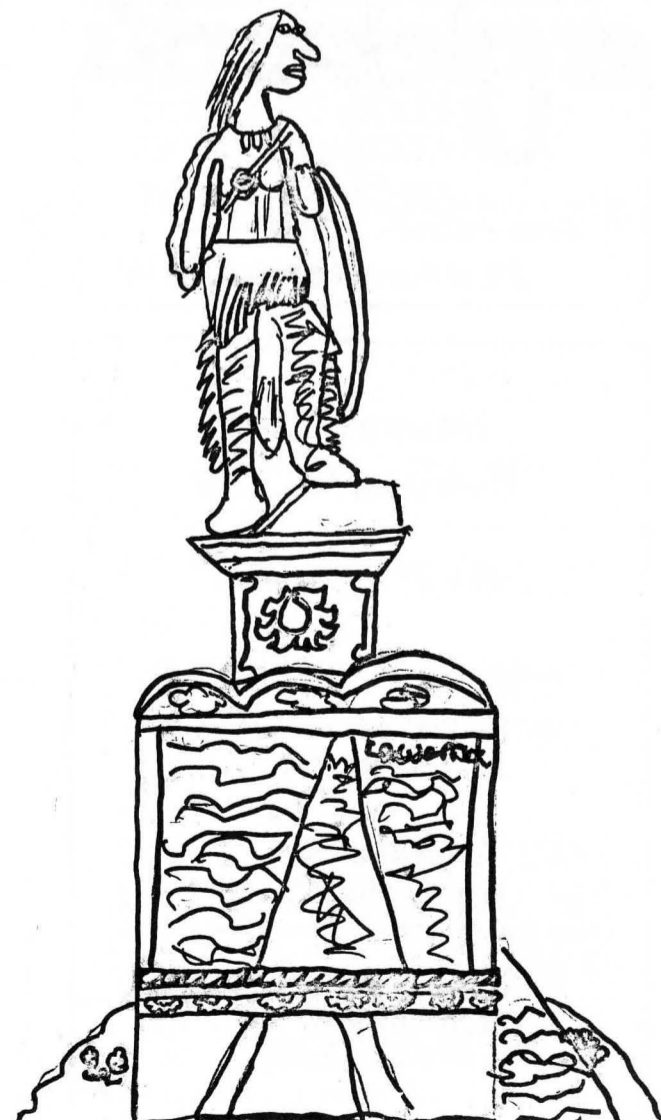
As an interesting and unusual taste contrast, Lee, who lives on College Street, suggests hot lettuce, which is prepared as follows:

Hot Lettuce

1 Tablespoon light salad oil	1 Tablespoon oyster sauce thinned with sherry
Sprinkling of salt and pepper	(available where Chinese groceries are sold)
Small piece of garlic	

Break lettuce into pieces as you would for a salad and pat dry. Heat oil in Wok.* Add salt, pepper and garlic. Stir quickly and remove garlic. Add lettuce and toss briskly for two minutes. Add oyster sauce, stir and cover. Cook one minute and serve at once.

*An advertisement appears in each issue of *The Spy* for Earthly Delights, which carries an attractive line of Chinese cooking equipment.



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The Spy extends condolences to the family of Mrs. Sadie Kranick, who died in January and was a longtime resident of College Street.

Dr. Louis and Mrs. Adele Navias of Front Street were honored by the congregation, including many Stockaders, for their extraordinary contributions as churchpersons at a regular Sunday service of the Unitarian Church in January.

In the so-called G.E. plot, the Realty Plot Association has elected Dr. Bruce Maston as its president; T. M. Linville, vice-president; Mrs. Linda Blugerman, secretary; C. M. Elston, treasurer; and Mrs. Patricia Mundy, Van D. Ladd and Donald Kerr to the Executive Committee. At the January meeting, the Association voted to maintain single-family zoning in Schenectady's second historic district after the Stockade.

In late January, Union College held an open house at the controversial Harman House on Wendell Avenue in the G.E. plot and instead of its proposed demolition this year is offering to rent the historic house to the highest bidder for 25 years.

A citywide meeting of the newly formed snow removal advisory committee was held in late January at the main branch of the public library. Mary vanderBogert of Ferry Street represented The Stockade Association.

Historic Albany Foundation (HAF) operates a parts warehouse at 206 North Pearl Street. The warehouse, which offers reusable, unduplicable building parts at low prices, is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from nine to noon.

In Atlantic City, New Jersey, the historic, domed, Bleinheim Hotel, built on the Boardwalk in 1906 under the direction of Thomas A. Edison, has been demolished to make way for a new hotel/casino complex. Although the National Historic Trust had urged retention of the rotunda and offered \$10,000 toward the cost of a feasibility study of incorporating the old hotel, which was developed a historic site last year, into a casino complex, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection officially certified the edifice as being structurally unsound and sanctioned its demolition. The building was destroyed in eleven seconds.

Decorations on the 1978 White House Christmas tree were toys, dolls and miniature furniture from the collection of the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum in Rochester, N.Y.

One hundred years ago Joseph Harris, an English immigrant who settled in the Genesee Valley near Rochester, New York, distributed his company's first seed catalog. To mark its centennial year the company is introducing several new vegetable varieties. The current seed catalog may be ordered by writing to Joseph Harris Company, Inc., Moreton Farms, Rochester, New York 14624.

(Continued from Page 2)

little known. When his father died, Johannes, Jr. was at least thirty-five years of age. It is probable that it was he who built the first house on the North Street corner sometime during the 1720s or 1730s. It is unlikely, however, that he built it as late as 1740, as indicated by the present plaque, as he would by then have been fifty years of age and stylistically, the original structure does not warrant such a late date.

So much for the original house. What about its mid-eighteenth century transformation, the picturesquely attractive brick structure that catches our eye on the corner of Front and North Streets? Several mid-nineteenth century sources indicate that a Jesse Van Slyck had owned and lived in the house from the early 1760s until his death in 1815. (This Jesse Van Slyck was the greatgrandson of Jacques Cornelise Van Slyck whose parents were Cornelis Van Slyck who had come from Holland and a Mohawk chieftain's daughter.) In 1863, an aged Mr. Nicholas Van Vranken recalled that:

"The old house on the corner of Front and North Streets belonged to Jesse Van Slyck one hundred years ago."

Harriet Paige, writing her neighborhood reminiscences in the 1850s, embellishes the picture thus:

"Old Jesse Van Slyck, who married Jacomynt je Groot, in 1762, built the old red brick gambeled roofed house on the corner of Front Street and North Lane. His wife was crazy and made so by his unkindness. He was a drinking man and very cross. The streets used to ring with his abuse of his poor wife. His old red house is still standing unaltered. He died in 1815 and must have lived there in 1795 and long before. He was Captain of a company in Col. Abraham Wemple's regiment in the Revolutionary War."

The bottle has ruined many a better man than Jesse Van Slyck, but we should note that he was a great patriot. He was at first a lieutenant in Capt. Ahasuerus Marselis' company in the county militia, and soon after became a captain. He served in upper Saratoga county where he and his men joined the Vermont troops in destroying a Tory fort, and later was dispatched to join the patriots facing Burgoyne, serving in the Saratoga area throughout the campaign. During the last five years of the war, Jesse and his men rushed from one place to another routing out bands of Tories. In July of 1781, after the burning of Warren's Bush, when he and his company pursued Major Ross and the notorious Tory, Walter Butler, they captured twenty-seven prisoners.

Following the war, Jesse Van Slyck played a prominent role in the life of the community, and it is interesting that at least in the 1780s, his cousin, Cornelius P. Van Slyck, lived in the old Adam Vrooman House next door. Jesse regularly attended political meetings to nominate candidates for public office and in 1796, was one of two persons selected to correspond with committees of other towns in the county to promote the election of Lawrence Vrooman to the New York State Assembly. In 1798 he was commissioner of highways. Apparently Jesse was successful in his occupation, although just what it was, we have been unable to determine. He owned several acres of land east of the city and, like many men of his day, probably derived some of his income from farming. When he died in 1815 at the age of seventy-one, he left considerable property to his five surviving children and another house in Green Street to his son, Martin. (His unhappy wife had died in 1809.)

It is interesting that up until 1799, when our streets were given permanent names, North Street was called "the street that leads from the house of Jesse Van Slyck to the Mohawk River." Thus it was that, although Johannes Teller, Jr., must have built the house in the beginning, in the minds of many persons who lived during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the dwelling became inseparable from the figure of Jesse Van Slyck which loomed large in the neighborhood during the formative period of our history.