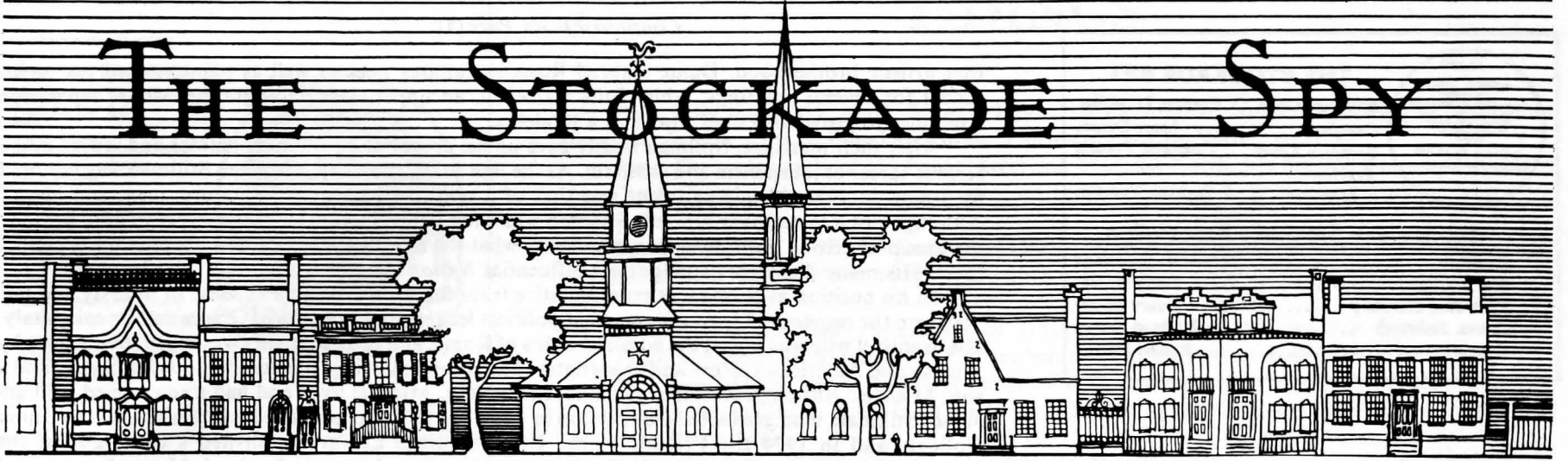


THE STOCKADE SPY



MAY 1980

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William James Stillman 1828-1901

Some people who are born in the Stockade find fame far away from Schenectady. Take William James Stillman, for example. In the late nineteenth century he represented the London *Times* in Italy and Greece. His knowledge of the volatile politics of Italy was so respected that the prime ministers of Great Britain consulted him, and socially the American expatriates judged him equal in importance to the British ambassador. In addition to achieving this particularized fame, Stillman in his varied career was a friend of many famous men, and his name is still known to scholars of nineteenth-century cultural history.

Stillman's father ran a small metal-working shop on the Stockade side of the Erie Canal. The family would have lived over the shop or very close by when their ninth and final child, William James Stillman, was born in 1828. Their oldest son, Thomas, was superintendent of the Novelty Iron Works in New York City that manufactured many of the inventions marketed by the ingenious President Eliphalet Nott of Union College. Young Stillman graduated from Union in 1848, wanting only to become a painter. He was not enthusiastic alumnus because the college had offered him no training in art, although he admitted that he had learned to think and write through his studies there. The fact that for most of his life he made a living with his pen rather than his brush did not prevent him from passing harsh judgment on Union when he wrote his autobiography just before he died in 1901.

With brother Thomas offering financial support for an artistic career, William studied one winter under landscapist Frederick Church (not yet of Olana). Then he went to Europe where he became a protegee of John Ruskin and met the Pre-Raphaelites. Stillman's real contribution to mid-nineteenth-century art was his editing of the first American art journal, *The Crayon*. Through its columns he educated American readers to the Pre-Raphaelite principles of intensity in art and devotion to truth. Thomas Stillman put up half the capital to start the periodical while John Durand, son of the Hudson River painter Asher B. Durand, supplied the other half. Although John and William are listed as the proprietors, Stillman worked almost exclusively as the editor from January 1855 to June 1856. He found the friends that contributed poems — Thomas Bailey Aldrich, William Cullen Bryant, and James Russell Lowell — or contributed letters — William Michael Rossetti and John Ruskin were two. What his friends didn't supply, Stillman himself wrote.

His youthful enthusiasm appealed to Lowell who was still depressed after the death of his first wife. Lowell not only supplied poems, but he introduced the young artist to Boston, Cambridge, and Concord intellectual leaders. In addition Lowell was a member of the famous group that followed Stillman into the Adirondack wilderness.

The Adirondack Club, or the Philosophers' Camp as outsiders have always called it, is the best documented passage in Stillman's life. He himself left a record in a painting of the camp, with giant trees towering over miniature men. Included among the campers were Lowell, Professor Louis Agassiz, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Holmes (the lovable, witty brother of Oliver Wendell Holmes), and Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar, who eventually gained fame as one of the few honest men in President Grant's cabinet. Emerson commemorated the camp in a long poem "The Adirondacks," and letters and journal entries by Emerson, Hoar, and Lowell have been published. These show the relaxed camaraderie that distinguished the experience and the almost naive enthusiasm that led Paul Jamieson to comment in *New York History* in 1958: "The Boston intellectuals took up the daily round of activities at Camp Maple with the zest of a troop of Boy Scouts." Stillman prized his memories of the Adirondacks and the White Mountains where he also camped and painted. After he retired to his final home in Surrey, Stillman tried to plant the trees and wild flowers of the Adirondacks in English soil.

In 1860 Stillman married Laura Mack of Boston and went to Rome to be the American consul, a job he received after President Nott had intervened on his behalf with another Union graduate, William Seward, Secretary of State under Lincoln. In 1865 they were transferred to Crete where the family suffered through the bloody insurrection and suppression of the Cretans. In 1868 a British ship carried them to safety in Athens, but Mrs. Stillman, who had endured the siege conditions courageously, collapsed into insanity and committed suicide in 1869. Left with three small children, Lisa, Bella, and Rusie (named after John Ruskin, his godfather), Stillman went to London, where the Greek consul-general was particularly kind to him. Two years later Stillman married one of the Spartali daughters. Marie Spartali was an aspiring painter who had been encouraged by Pre-Raphaelites Ford Madox Brown and Edward Burne-Jones. She was a tall beautiful woman with strong features admired by

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A REMINDER

The Stockade Walkabout will be held on Saturday, September 27th; the Art Show on Saturday, September 6th.

MARK THEM ON YOUR CALENDAR

THE 33rd ANNUAL HOUSE AND GARDEN TOUR AT CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, was presented on 25 days this spring by the Historic Charleston Foundation, from 20 March-14 April.

Sixty-five private homes and gardens were open for a series of seven walking tours. Volunteer hosts and hostesses at each location gave background information and answered questions. Monday evening receptions by candlelight with music and wine were held in the two house museums.


Restoration and rehabilitation of historic areas has been going on for many years in Charleston. The Historic Charleston Foundation was founded in 1947.

The Swordgate Inn on Tradd Street in the center of Old Charleston offers a change of pace for overnight accommodations. It has four rooms in an 18th century home with private entry from a brick courtyard plus all luxuries and conveniences. What more could you ask?

More information about next year's house tours can be obtained from Historic Charleston, 51 Meeting Street, Charleston, S.C. 29401.

A very big thank you to Ernie and Gloria Kahn for sharing their Charleston trip with us!

This will be the last issue of the *Spy* until the fall. The editors would like to wish you a pleasant summer.



THE STOCKADE SPY
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217 Seward Pl.
 Schenectady 12305
 April 7, 1980

Dear Frances:

After I had agreed to condense my original essay for the *Stockade Spy*, the March issue arrived with another attack on the name of Rotundo Park. That is a name I am proud to bear, and it is a name that has served Schenectady well in the last fifty years.

When my brother-in-law "Min" Rotundo died in 1949, he was supervisor of the Third Ward and probably the best-loved figure in public life in this area. Because he was an honest and unselfish man, many wanted to honor him, especially children who had a special feeling for him because of his diminutive stature caused by spinal curvature. The Third Ward was not lucky enough to contain a city park, so the leaders of the First Ward suggested renaming the park that happened to be within their boundaries after him.

Please do not use my work unless you can print this letter as an accompaniment to inform newcomers to the Stockade who do not realize the source of the name Rotundo Park.

Most sincerely,

Barbara Rotundo

Marilyn Taggart, an Open School parent, generously made her piano concert for her master's degree a benefit concert for Open School.

Marilyn is an accomplished concert pianist as well as a well-known piano teacher. Her concert was given at Union College Chapel, Wednesday, May 28th in the evening. The recital included music of Bach, Beethoven and Ravel. Donations for the recital will help with some of the extra expenses of Open School.

The Historic Albany Foundation's fifth annual awards were for the rehabilitation and adaptive use of the Argus Building at Broadway and Beaver Streets; restoration and rehabilitation of the chapel and crematorium of the Albany Rural Cemetery; preservation and continuing use of a clapboard commercial structure at 60-62 Robin Street.

that artistic brotherhood. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, famous poet as well as painter, used her as his model for several paintings, while Julia Cameron, an upper-class photographer whose reputation continues to grow, also used Marie as a model.

After their marriage, Stillman finally gave up his dream of becoming a painter and settled into a serious career of journalism and criticism. As the late John Bradbury said when Stillman was honored by Union in 1957, "His true talent was that of a sensitive barometer of nature, men, and ideas." Although not a tastemaker himself, Stillman was what Russell Lynes called an upper middle-brow — the group of critics, publishers, etc. who sense what the new tastes will be and unconsciously spread them. His many dispatches to Godkin's influential *Nation* exemplify this trait.

In his position as permanent representative from the *Times*, Stillman's sense of honesty and fair play won the respect and trust of important political leaders like Tricoupi of Greece and Crispi of Italy. His beautiful wife was one of the admired sights of Rome, and their company was much sought after by English and American visitors and expatriates. The second marriage produced another daughter and a son, Michael. Although Ruskin's godchild died young, Michael lived and had a son named William James Stillman, who graduated from Union in 1942. In 1959 Michael gave his father's papers to Union College, and in 1974 the Friends of the Union College Library published a catalogue of the correspondence and manuscripts in the Stillman collection. Living in England, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, Stillman descendants have not returned to Schenectady, but this account can end back in the Stockade because the editor of that *Catalogue of the William James Stillman Collection* is now the editor of the *Stockade Spy*, Frances Miller.

Remembrance

Today, an eternity later
 I walked out upon these streets
 which once in the beyond of a
 bygone sunset
 I had walked with you.

Then were your glances
 And the brush of your hand
 next to mine — Alive
 with the joy of a younger
 romance
 And with the freshness of an
 adventure
 Then at its threshold.


Yes, these are the sights and
 scenes
 Which I did so tremendously
 Share with you in that long
 remembered past
 And strangely there is something
 Of a gentleness in the recalling
 Of these streets, these shops,
 these houses
 Which once so happily we had
 viewed together.

And tho I am saddened muchly
 That you are not beside me now -
 today -
 I yield that it is not good
 To walk too far — too long —
 With the ghosts of a lovely
 yesteryear.


In Curacoa — Nov., 1965

Ernest A. R. Cohen

The poem is from Ernie Cohen's second privately printed and privately distributed book of verse.



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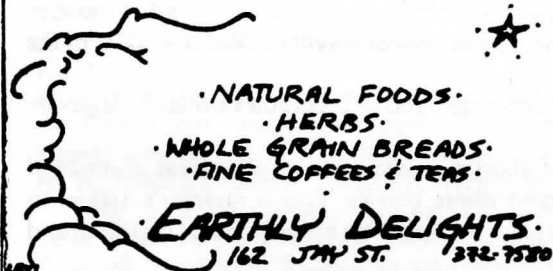
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Paul Mlodzianowski, Mark Snyder, Elliott Shanklin all of North Street and Bob Ritter of Ingersoll Avenue went to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, during the spring vacation.

Peggi Drum, formerly of 150 Front Street and Madison North, has been elected president of the New York City chapter of Women in Radio and Television. Peggi now lives and works in New York City.

Barbara Mungall and Frank Smith of 144 Front Street are the proud parents of a baby girl born on April 25 at Bellevue. Their new daughter is named Marion Brunn Smith and she weighed in at 5 lbs., 13 oz.

Arthur, Mag and Emily Polachek went to Gloucester, Mass., for a week in April. Piero and Paola Bonissone of 144 Front Street spent a weekend in Boston in April. The Troy Walkabout of Historical Homes was held on May 10. Did any Stockaders go? Rachel Armstrong is home from the hospital and recuperating nicely. She lives in the carriage house on Ferry Street.

Terry Calarco of College Street went to Batavia, New York to visit her sister for the spring recess. Barbara Greenberg and son Reed have just moved to North Street.

Sue Shanklin was home on North Street for a week in April during her vacation from her work at Duke University Medical Center in North Carolina.

Don't forget to watch "The Old Houseworks" on Saturdays at noon on Channel 17 if you are interested in old homes.

Erin Lane of 148 Front Street spent four days in Montreal and Quebec with the French classes from Linton High School.

Chet Lence and his Little League team have been practicing in Little Park, the little Front Street park next to the railroad tracks. It's always great to see Little Park used the right way.

The G.E. Plot is having their first Walkabout on June 14. Seven homes will be open. The \$5 ticket fee will go to the Cancer Society. More information can be obtained from Betty Milano.

The East Front Street Neighborhood Association sponsored a clean-up day on Saturday, May 10, from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. The city provided a truck to help with the clean-up.

David Ulrich, formerly of 150 Front Street, and his wife, Alison, are the new parents of baby Victoria Alison, born on April 20. The Ulrichs now live in San Jose, California.

Tom and Charlene Walker and their two children, Tommy and Chad, came to visit Tommy and Chad's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Buttino of 153 Front Street. The Walkers are from Gallion, Ohio and were visiting the Buttinos for four days in April.

Tony Musco, the son of Mrs. Theresa Musco of 147 Front Street, is engaged to be married to Sheila Sweet of Hoosick Falls. Sheila is a nurse at Ellis and a model. Tony is a senior at Albany SUNY and graduates in June.

New neighbors — Brenda Rieck and Colleen Chambers have just moved into 33 Ferry Street. Bill Cupo and Rose Bongiovanni are new Stockaders at 13 Washington Avenue.

June Graduates from Linton High School — Mike Ruchalski - Ferry St.; Anna Duggan - North Street; Terry Buonome - Ingersoll Avenue; Sue Farry - Front Street; Randy Olocki - Ingersoll Avenue. Congratulations to all of you!

A big welcome to Jubal Perrone Kerchner who was born in April. Jubal lives at 121 Ferry Street with his Mom, Felicia Perrone, and his Dad, Richard Kerchner.

Mr. and Mrs. Van Shanklin have sold their house on North Street and are now living in their new home at 111½ Union Street.

Mary Ivey of 1 Union Street has bought the house at 24 Ingersoll Avenue. She is doing quite a bit of work on the house and will be moving in around July 1.

Jacqueline Weinstein of 128 Front Street was in charge of the French Pavilion at the Festival of Nations at the Schenectady Museum on May 17th.

Tom and Susan Downing of 24 North Street have a new baby boy named Daniel Arnold who was born on April 17 at Bellevue Hospital. Welcome Daniel!!

Sgt. Ronald McCloskey of the Schenectady Police Dept. visited Riverside School on May 7. He talked with the children about home safety, crime prevention and how to burgler-proof homes and bicycles.

Lorie Lence, daughter of Irene and Chet Lence of 4 Ingersoll Avenue, graduates from SUNY at Plattsburgh in May, with a B.S. degree in Food and Nutrition. She will be married on September 6 to Kevin Hausner of Carthage, N.Y. who is a business major also graduating from Plattsburgh in May.

St. George's Cooperative Nursery School held Open House during the week of May 12. The school's sessions are Monday through Friday from 9 to 11:30 with 18 three and four year olds attending. Mrs. Joyce Schecter is the teacher and has been at St. George's for ten years. Call Jennifer Schmidt, 11 Front Street for information about the fall term.

Maltha Lavinia Cook was married to John Anthony Tiso on April 26 at the Episcopal Church in Rhinebeck, New York. A reception was held at the Amrita Club in Poughkeepsie, after which Molly and John left on a wedding trip to Bermuda. Sue Shanklin was a bridesmaid and Elliott Shanklin was an usher. Those attending from the Stockade were Mrs. John Clough and her daughter, Mrs. Philip Elsbach of Birmingham, Michigan, Mrs. Willard Kitts, Mrs. James Sherwood, Mrs. Giles Yates Vander Bogert, Mrs. Robert George, Mr. and Mrs. Vander Bogert Shanklin, Mrs. G. Bryan Shanklin. Molly is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lewis Cook, the granddaughter of Mrs. G. Bryan Shanklin, and the niece of Van Shanklin.

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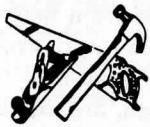


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TIDINGS

Continued

Sunday morning, May 11 at the First Reformed Church there was a very special service, one of many special services celebrating the Church's 300th anniversary. It began with a procession formed outside the church and led in by bagpipers and drummers; representatives of the city government and the two colleges followed. Ushers were dressed in colonial costumes and many of the congregation wore colonial or Dutch costumes. It was a beautiful and very moving service.

The new window boxes at 21 and 23 Front Street are lovely!

Many thanks to Barbara, Lillian, Jean, Arthur, Kay, and Tony B. for held with Tidings this month! If you have any information for Tidings, please call me at 372-5006.

Betty Lane

OLD-FASHIONED STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

(Serves 8)

- 2 cups flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 heaping tablespoon sugar

Mix together well in bowl of sufficient size to hold whole recipe

- 1/3 cup corn oil
- 3/4 cup milk, scant

Combine oil and milk and pour over dry ingredients. Mix only enough to moisten, just a few quick strokes. Too thorough mixing produces tough shortcake. (Miriam Lusk recommends a beaten egg added to wet ingredients, and Mary Morris says that a little grated nutmeg added to dry ingredients is a Nova Scotia trick, and makes the best shortcake ever. I'm inclined to agree with both suggestions, but give them as optional.) Now, turn the dough out onto a well-buttered cookie sheet, and, with buttered hands, coax the dough into the shape of your serving platter, or spoon out as separate biscuits, whichever you desire. Bake in preheated 450 degree oven for 10 to 12 minutes. When shortcake is cool enough to handle, split in half and butter generously. Shortcake should be a tiny bit warm when served, and only combined with berries at last minute. Shortcake may be made ahead and reheated before serving. Use 2 quarts of strawberries, hulled, washed, mashed slightly, sugared to taste, and allowed to come to room temperature. This is important. Ice cold berries are not as flavorful. Reserve a few of the handsomest berries for garnish, leaving stems on.

Whip 1/2 pint heavy cream. Sweeten with 1 tablespoon sugar and 1/2 teaspoon vanilla. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Spread the mashed berries between and on top of shortcake layers. Now plopp great mounds of whipped cream over all, and garnish cream with reserved whole berries. This is summer's dreamiest dessert! Serve only the lightest meal before the shortcake, so that appetites are still keen. (Just soup and shortcake makes a fine meal.)

I often cheat and use frozen berries, being sure they come to room temperature for the sun-ripened taste, and butter the platter on which the warm shortcake is placed, and use a blue platter for color interest, and combine at the last second, to achieve a crunchy rather than a soggy dessert.

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