

Ethan Bates Stanley Memorial

In his 28 years as a regular member, Ethan Bates Stanley delivered 13 papers including budgets and his presidential address. He served as clerk from 1998 to 2005, was vice president then president during the 2006-07 season. Until his move to Maine, he was a life-long Cincinnati descendent from prominent Cincinnati businessmen. Ethan was a man of apparent contradictions; his quiet, one might say diffident, demeanor belied his sincerity and strength of character. He was, truly, a gentleman and a scholar. The bare facts of his life - born Cincinnati, Lawrenceville School, Yale, U.C. English Department, retired to Maine - can be read in his obituary. Who he was beneath those facts and dates can be informed by his contributions to the Literary Club.

In preparing this memorial I reflected on our friendship and read or reread his Literary Club contributions beginning with "Go East Young Man" (1984), a reminiscence of his time with the artillery in post-war Korea and concluding with "Anglican Anglers" (2012), about which more in a bit. They reveal a thoughtful, gentle-spirited man who produced polished prose informed by a love of scholarship infused with affection for his family and his Cincinnati roots. Ethan was a man of varied passions and interests, many of which he addressed in his papers.

Like most of ours, his papers were in some way autobiographical. He was proud of his mother's South Carolina heritage as revealed in "February March" (1996) and "The Press and the Politician" (1991). In the former he recounted an ancestor's experience with Sherman's bummers as they moved through South Carolina, and the latter described a dramatic episode in the political career of James Tillman, nephew of Senator "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman of Progressive Era notoriety. James engaged in a war of words with a local journalist and then shot and killed him in circumstances best described as 19th Century "stand your ground" violence. James was acquitted as having acted in accordance with Southern Honor Culture and was Ethan's maternal grandfather.

“Anglican Anglers” tells of Isaak Walton and his friend and fellow fisherman Charles Cotton. Cotton published a treatise on fly-fishing later appended to Walton’s *Compleat Angler*. He also lived in Beresford Hall, later home to Ethan’s Stanley ancestors. The similarity between Anglican and angler suggested in this paper leads to another Motif. Ethan was a thoroughgoing Anglophile as shown by his membership in and contributions to the English-Speaking Union and another of his papers, “His Enchantress of Numbers” (1999). Ada Lovelace, British upper class and Byron’s only legitimate child, had a mathematical genius and made important contributions to Babbage’s proto-computer, the Difference Machine.

Love of performance describes another theme in Ethan’s papers. “Bridges” (1993) relates his experiences singing with the Cincinnati International Chorale behind the Iron Curtain, “Break a Leg” (2001) his passion for performing in local theater, and “Shakespeare in the Parking Lot” (2004) stepdaughter Jennifer’s creation of summer Shakespeare in the unlikely venue of a Manhattan parking lot. Appreciation of visual arts figures in “Beaver Child” (1986) which presents the career of Winold Reiss, creator of the Union Terminal mosaics and the Native American portrait depicted on the buffalo nickel. The relationship between love of art and romantic passion forms the substance of “Quartet” (2009) which recounts the relationship among Francis Boott (1), his daughter Lizzie (2) who married Frank Duveneck (3), much to the dismay and against the advice of Henry James (4), a Boott family friend. Anyone who has thought much about James’ work will have no difficulty sharing Ethan’s judgment that love of art mattered more than love of actual humans for that author.

As president, Ethan led the club into the digital age by promoting the fraught prospect of a Lit Club web page, made fraught by the reluctance of some members to embrace a communication system they didn’t understand and the general desire never to change anything. During his term that nettle was grasped marking the second time we reluctantly crossed a

technological threshold, the first when club records were recorded by a typist rather than by hand in the 1890s. As a principal in the web page effort, I came to appreciate Ethan's quiet, steady leadership.

In his presidential address 15 years ago, he lauded the club as a place of light, each member finding his own light, not hiding it under a bushel, but as Vincentio, Duke of Vienna, observed in *Measure for Measure*, "Heaven doth with us as we with torches do, (n)ot light them for themselves, for if our virtues (d)id not go forth of us, 'twere...as if we had them not." There was Ethan at his best, a scholarly gentleman wielding verse to inspire the best in his Literary Club colleagues.

Prepared by David Edmundson with assistance from Steven Schweller and William Burleigh.