

THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF FREDERICK G. MARCHAM



By John Marcham

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Bait bucket, hat, and a
catch of the photographer,
a lifelong fisherman.

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By John Marcham



DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County
Ithaca, New York

Books edited by John Marcham

The Straight and Its Origins
Images of Rural Life: Photographs of Verne Morton
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Hospitality Leadership: The Cornell Hotel School
Sol Goldberg's Ithaca: The Journal Years
Lehigh Valley Memories: The Finger Lakes Region,
1941-1959
Sol Goldberg's Kids and Other Important People
Farmboy: Hard Work and Good Times on a Farm
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To Mary Cecelia Deacon and Frederick George Marcham

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Preface

FREDERICK GEORGE MARCHAM is remembered in Ithaca, New York, as a professor, teacher, and public official, hardly at all as a photographer. Some colleagues at Cornell University knew he collected prints and that in 1970 he brought out a handsome book of paintings by the Ithaca naturalist Louis Agassiz Fuertes, but—except for one notable picture—only his family and a few close friends saw his photographs.

After his wife died in 1977 and he moved from a house to an apartment, he stopped doing his own developing and printing, gave away his photographic equipment, and threw out his negatives. He did leave behind 2,000 pages of manuscript, mainly memoirs. As his son and executor of his estate, I organized and reproduced these soon after his death in 1992.

The story of his life, which is not a simple one, is written in the concluding section of this book. Briefly: he was born into a poor family in the Thames Valley of England, won a scholarship to private school, served in World War I, was graduated from university, came to the United States, and stayed on to teach for sixty-nine years at Cornell University in Ithaca.

After his death I began to gather the photos scattered among his possessions, some matted in pebbleboard, but few that any of us could recall seeing formally displayed.

After these pictures reached four dozen or so I thought they might make a good record for our family, and maybe more. I turned for advice to graphic designer Phil Wilson, with whom I have assembled several books recently. He pressed me to take their quality seriously, and thus this book.

Marcham's memoirs refer infrequently to his photography; one finds few clues about how he composed the vignettes of life and personality which he captured on film for nearly fifty years. What might have helped make F. G. Marcham a successful photographer could include an early attraction to fine paintings, the empathy with people that made him a successful teacher, and a lifelong love of nature. You be the judge.

Note: In text and captions, "Marcham" refers to F. G. Marcham. Relatives of his are referred to as son, daughter, nephew, etc. For example, "son John" is F. G. Marcham's son John, and similarly "friend" or "colleague" standing alone means "F. G. Marcham's friend," "F. G. Marcham's colleague."

LONDON FACES

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A visit of Marcham to England in the summer of 1951 coincided with the Festival of Britain, a celebration intended to be “a symbol of Britain’s abiding courage and vitality” after the bleak years the country endured and survived in World War II. This may account for the size of crowds on London streets waiting for ceremonial events.

Sisters eye a photographer warily as they await the morning Changing of the Horse Guards outside the Guards’ Parade on Whitehall in Central London.







**Spectators crowd
around the fence in
front of the Guards'
Parade.**



A guardsman's horse and a bus appear; a crowd presses in. Trafalgar Square and Nelson's Column loom at the end of Whitehall.







Time lapse: Crowds wait across Whitehall from the Horse Guards' Parade. They gather in front of the former War Office building, where

Marcham served as an army clerk after a bad heart hospitalized him during World War I.





People assemble and disperse.



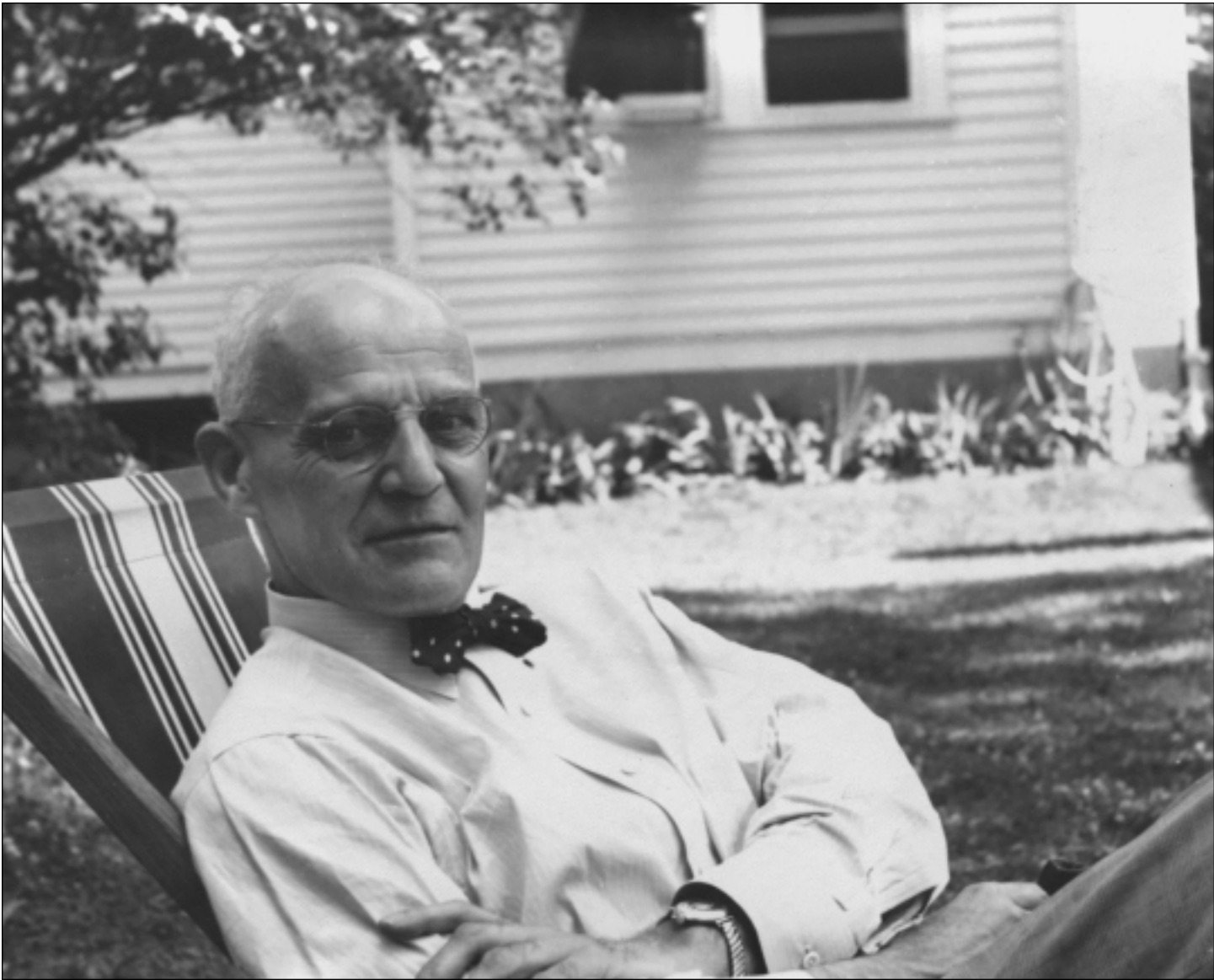
PORTRAITS

20

Informal portraits of family members, friends, students, and the families of friends were a large part of Marcham's photography. His close friends were often people with interests, including fishing and athletics, nearer to his working class roots than to the academic world in which he made his living.

Daughter-in-law Jane Haskins Marcham holds her son David soon after his birth in 1952, the photographer's first grandson.







Fellow history professor M. L. W. Laistner and his widowed mother, Lisette C. K. Laistner, in the garden of their home in Cornell Heights, near the Marchams' home in Cayuga Heights, Ithaca.



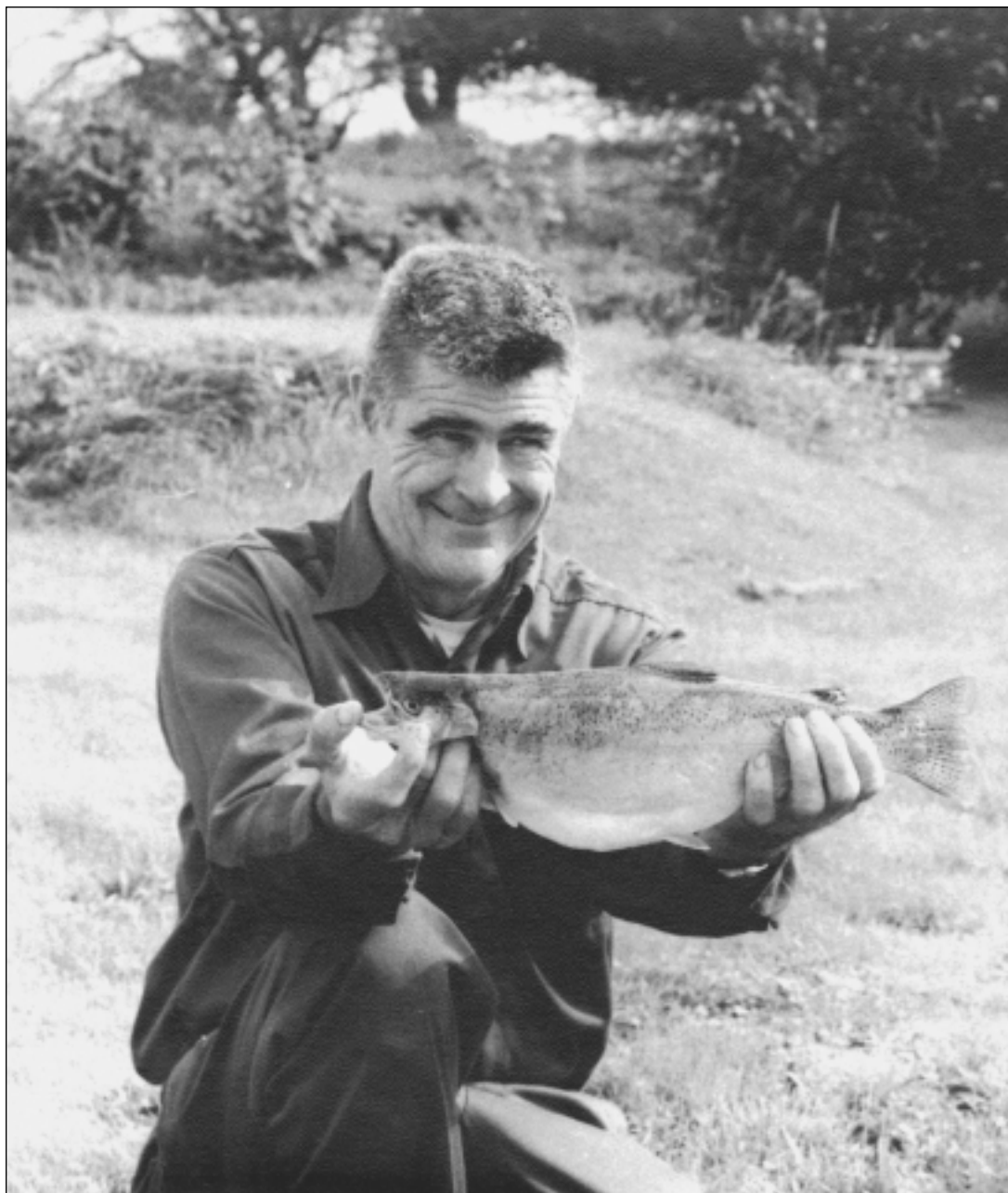
Granddaughter Sarah Marcham in her twenties, the daughter of Jane and John Marcham.



Mary Cecelia Deacon on Goring hill, England, in the summer of 1922, with the Thames River valley in the background. Both she and F. G. Marcham grew up nearby in Reading. They met at Reading Library where she worked and he studied while home from Oxford University. They were married in 1925.



John S. Conable and a prize catch at his farm in Warsaw, New York. He and Marcham began fishing together when he was a Cornell student before World War II. Conable returned to become a lawyer and widely respected county judge. The two men fished together at least once a year to within a year or two of Marcham's death.





Rudy Krantz of South Lansing, near Ithaca, friend, auto mechanic who took care of Marcham's car, and fellow fisherman. Marcham encouraged Krantz's son Wayne to enroll at Cornell, where he did well but died young, his achievements recalled in a widely published tribute by his professor-promoter.



Susan Harper Little of Ithaca, about 1966, a daughter of Barbara Woodford and Gordon “Scotty” Little. Little, the swimming coach at Cornell, was Marcham’s regular fishing companion for many years.



Wesley L. Hicks, a student of Marcham’s in the 1970s, friend, later a dentist and then a neurosurgeon in Buffalo, New York.



Daughter Ann, a high school student in the 1950s.



Son David, a Cornell student, in his room at home in the early 1950s.



Wife Mary at her desk in
the family living room in
Cayuga Heights, probably
in the 1950s.

ATHLETICS

After his heart weakened while he was a British soldier in World War I, Marcham built himself up and became a fine athlete, taught boxing, and was a faculty advocate of athletics at Cornell. He doubled as a physical education instructor during World War II, knew the varsity team coaches well, served as academic adviser to many student athletes, and attended many Cornell team events.

Football lineman John H. Gerdes on the sidelines across from the Schoellkopf Field crescent at Cornell, in the 1950s.





Cornell divers practice in the late 1940s in the swimming team's Old Armory pool. Respectively a back dive, inward

dive pike position, and the middle of a full twisting $1\frac{1}{2}$ somersault. Diver David H. Blauvelt at left, Ralph C. "Mike" Ware at right.



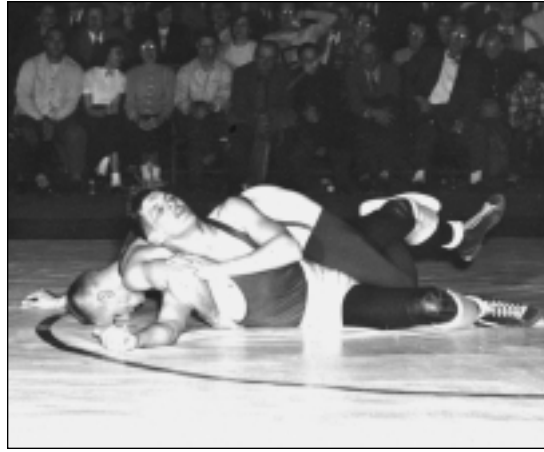


**C. Richard Corner
in a swan dive off
the three-meter
board in a new
Teagle Hall pool,
early 1950s.**

“Blauvelt in Half Twist” won an honorable mention in the 1952 competition sponsored by Graflex Inc., maker of the Speed Graphic camera, which was one of two cameras Marcham used during the 1940s and 1950s.

A magazine page showing the 1952 Graflex contest winners displayed the photo upside down. Upside down or not, the photo was apparently part of a display of winners supplied to Graflex dealers. Customers were encouraged to vote for their favorites. The story came back to Ithaca that two photos by amateurs, Marcham’s included, won out over two by professional photographers. The author’s recent efforts to corroborate the story of customer votes have been unavailing.





Cornell wrestlers in action on the mats at the university's Barton Hall.





The crowd in Schoellkopf Field's west stands at the moment the deciding point after touchdown is being kicked by Cornell in a 27-26 football win over Dartmouth in 1948.



A crowd in the bleachers and balcony follow the path of a pole vaulter during an intercollegiate track meet in Barton Hall.





A full stadium watches Cornell players pursue an opponent's running play on Schoellkopf Field.

End Harvey E. Sampson Jr. has a word with Cornell head football coach George K. "Lefty" James during a home game about 1950.





**Coach James and end
Richard T. Cliggott on
the sidelines.**

THE WORLD OF NATURE

44

Marcham bought an abandoned farm near Ithaca in 1941.

“Much of my life had been built around the appreciation of birds, flowers, and trees. . .

“I had been a fisherman since I was seven or eight. . .

“With the farm to stimulate me, my interest in photography renewed.”

Bare trees in the snow near his farm in West Dryden.



**His boat at the edge
of the mill pond on
the farm.**





**Fly fishing in the
plunge pool at
Taughannock Falls
State Park north of
Ithaca.**



**Marcham's creel, cap, fly rod,
and the best of a day's catch.**



Shocks of cornstalks in a field near Ithaca.



Lake Louise in western
Canada, 1967.

LONDON TOWN

52

In 1951 Marcham revisited London for the first time in two decades. His photographs recorded some scenes and buildings largely unchanged by time, and others vastly altered by the bombing of World War II.

The Thames River waterfront from Blackfriars Bridge, with St. Paul's Cathedral prominent on The City skyline.



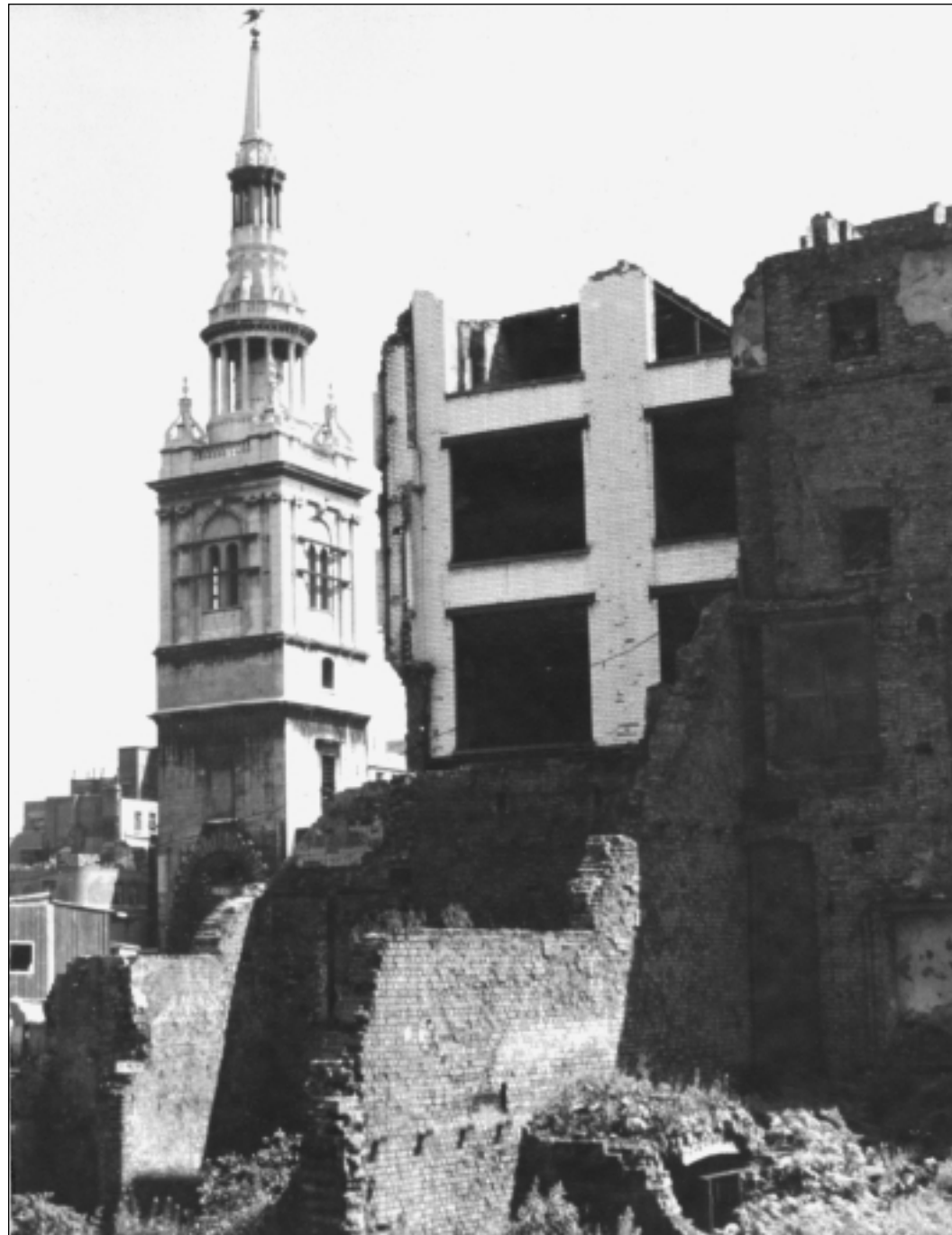


A crowd at Trafalgar Square watches passersby, a youngster, and a pigeon.



Paddington Station, gateway
to the west and Reading.

**Wren's St. Mary-
Le-Bow Church and
ruins left from World
War II bombing.**

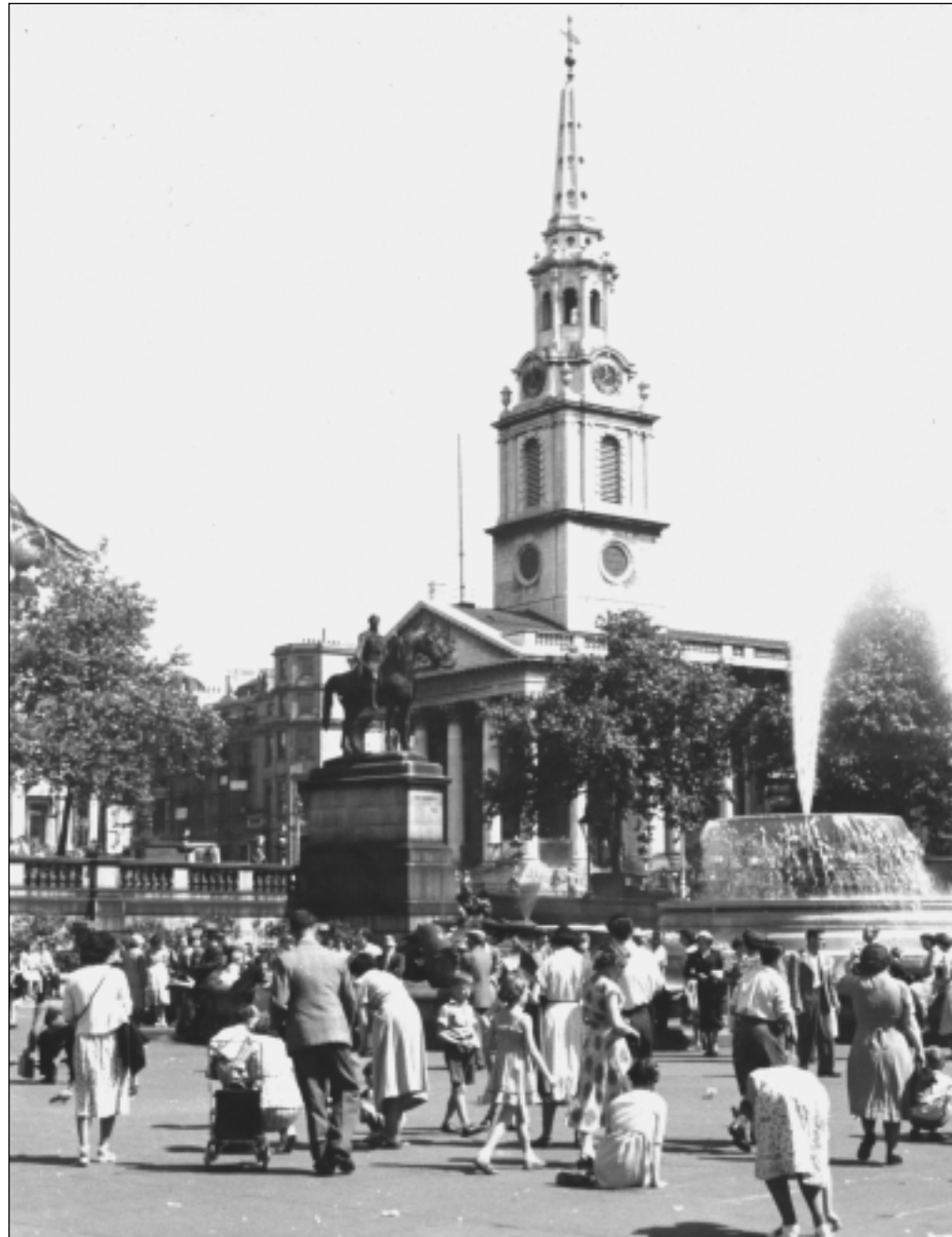




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Old walls and other evidence
of wartime bombing.

**Trafalgar Square and
the church of St. Mar-
tin in the Fields.**





St. Paul's Cathedral
from the east.

ENGLISH VILLAGES

60

Marcham photographed several rural villages in England during his visit in 1951. Two Sussex villages are near West Horsham where he attended Christ's Hospital school as a boy. Lavenham in Suffolk is 120 miles away, a wool center near the east coast of England, which preserved many of its medieval timber houses.

**Church Street in
Lavenham, Suffolk.**





High Street in East Grinstead,
Sussex, looking west.

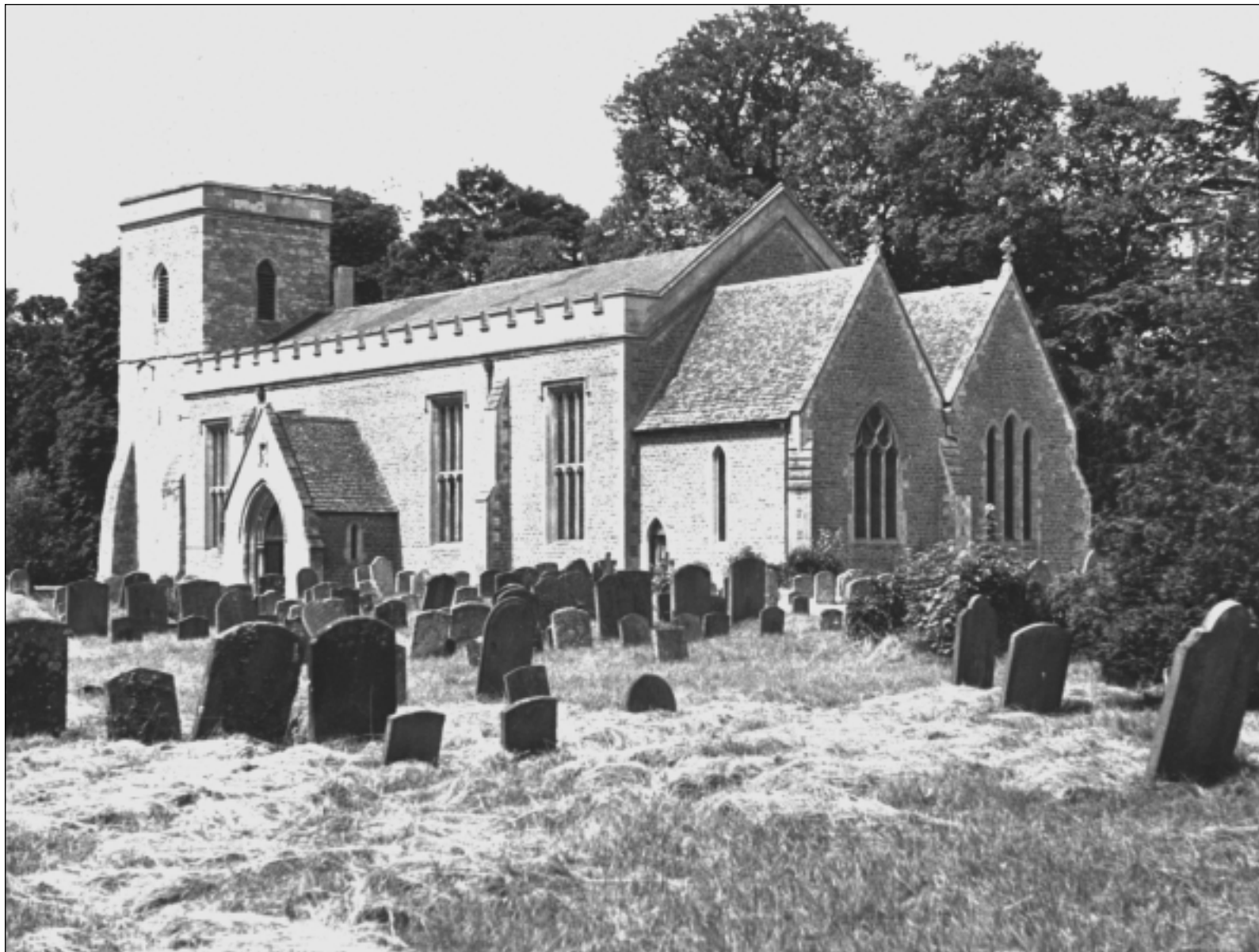


**Another view of
Lavenham, from
Church Street.**





**Two views of High Street
in East Grinstead, looking
east.**



All Saints Church in Marcham, Berkshire county, the hamlet from which comes F. G. Marcham's fam-

ily name. The story of his visit in 1951, "Marcham through the Ages," appears on page 98.



Two views from the 1920s of spectators gathered in punts to watch summer crew races on the Isis, a stretch of the Thames River near Oxford University.



A church in Billingshurst,
Sussex.



Lych gate to the church.

YOUNG PEOPLE

70

His photographs of children reflect Marcham's ability to relax his subjects, to capture them in moments of exuberance and of reflection.

Son John and wooden letters made by Uncle Edward Deacon and sent from England.





**A happy young man,
unidentified.**

**Diane Nordheimer of
Ithaca, friend of grand-
daughter Sarah Marcham.**



**Grandsons Bruce and David
Marcham, sons of Jane and
John Marcham, in the 1950s.**



A girl in Covent Garden in
1951, the London market

where Liza Doolittle of *My
Fair Lady* sold flowers.



**A boy in Covent
Garden.**

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

76

*Milestones in the lives of friends
and students and of his own family
account for the bulk of the pictures
Marcham took over five decades.*

**Son John and Jane Marcham
shake off confetti at their
wedding in 1951 in Ithaca.
College friend Alvin Fried-
man looks on.**



Wife Mary and two-month-old son John, 1927.





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Son John and grandson David, and daughter-in-law Jane and ten-month-old David in 1953.



**Son David in the backyard
at Oak Hill Road.**



**Son John in the garden on
Willard Way, Ithaca, about
1930.**



**Elsie Prince Little, daughter
of friends Barbara and Scotty
Little of Ithaca, summer 1955.**

Grandchildren (*clockwise, from top*): Bruce and David in the 1950s, and Sarah in a playpen, early 1960s—all children of Jane and John.





**An impish grandson David
in the 1950s.**



**Son David, a railroad fan,
later a career railroader,
watches a Lehigh Valley**

**locomotive at the Ithaca
passenger station in the
late 1940s.**



Neil Stockton, about age eleven, with the largest rainbow trout caught on this opening day at Ludlowville Falls, north of Ithaca, in the late 1940s.

**Grandsons David and
Bruce in their Sunday
go-to-church best in
the late 1950s.**





**Christopher and Jill Deacon
and a tortoise in their yard in
Reading in 1951. They are the
children of Elsie W. and
Edward Deacon, a brother of
the photographer's wife, Mary.**



Cornell students Sheila Rubow and Theodore G. Brichze and their daughter Sue in 1947. Brichze, a law student, helped Marcham as an instructor in boxing.



Susan Renee Rogers, Cornell student and daughter of Ann Mitchell and John B. Rogers III, friend and associate in

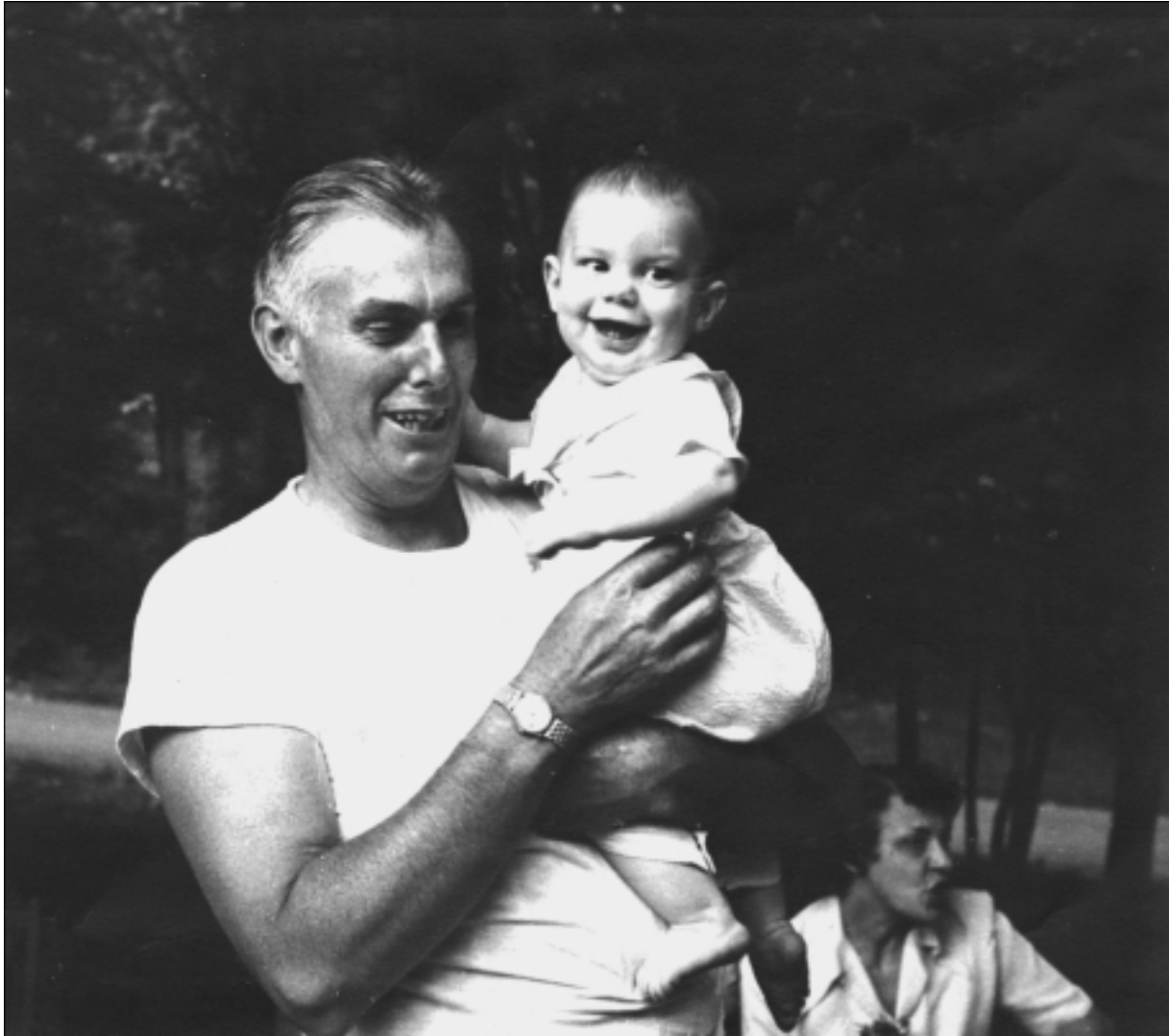
the Cayuga Heights village government of Marcham, who delivered a tribute to her following her death in 1981.



Daughter Ann in the living room on Oak Hill Road, about 1950.

**Alexander Deacon, brother
of Mary Marcham, in Eng-
land in 1951 with children
Paul and Mandy.**





Grandson David Marcham is held by Stuart C. Haskins Sr., the boy's other grandfather, in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1953.



Winton G. Rossiter, son of a Cornell colleague, stands with Marcham after the Cornell Commencement, 1978.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

FREDERICK GEORGE MARCHAM was born November 2, 1898, in a home on one of the poorest streets of Reading, an industrial city in the Thames Valley of England. He was the first child of Emma Jane Wheeler and Frederick Marcham, a barmaid and an ex-soldier now brewery laborer.

He admired his quiet, handsome father, who took little Freddy and a younger brother fishing and on walks in the country. Freddy attended a government elementary school in Reading and did well enough that teachers urged him to try for a scholarship at one of England's elite "public" schools, Christ's Hospital, southeast of London. In 1910, on his second try, he won one of three scholarships available countrywide.



An early portrait of
Frederick G. Marcham.

Until then he had only read in boys' magazines of the world of the upper class; now he entered it. His working-class accent ("I" sounded as "oi," as an example) marked him an outsider, and so he was made to feel. Except for success his first year, he did not do well in schoolwork. His memoirs do single out one teacher at Christ's Hospi-

tal who took students on walks in the country around the school. As a consequence, he and another pupil made a record of the birdlife in each shrub on the school's property.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, his father reenlisted in the British Army. Fred left school and returned home at age sixteen to help provide for his mother, brother, and a recently born sister. He tried to enlist for military service at age

With his father Frederick near London, 1910, proudly wearing the uniform of Christ's Hospital after his first term away at the private school.

Marching in London with Christ's Hospital boys; F. G. M. middle of front row. "The boys of Christ's Hospital were allowed by city ordinance to go to Guild Hall on Michelmass Day each year. There they received a newly minted shilling and a piece of veal pie from the Lord Mayor. The school was founded in 1552 by citizens of London."



In April 1917 Frederick G. Marcham, upper right, enlists in the Queen's Westminster Rifles with Charles Hollocks, upper left, H. J. Roberts and D. D. Carpenter. Hollocks and Marcham survived World War I, wrote to each other from 1945 to 1992, and met in England several times.



seventeen but the examining physician detected a bad heart, and he was rejected. A year later, in 1917, Marcham tried again, his heart condition was missed or overlooked, and Fred joined the Queen's Westminster Rifles.

After three months as an infantry trainee and instructor his heart weakened. He was assigned light duty as a clerk, then sent to a military hospital near London. There a kindly doctor lost his records in 1919 rather than discharge him back into an unpromising civilian life. He was suddenly given a year at the hospital, paid, free to spend his hours there or away as he wished.

A thankful nation gave its recovering hospitalized servicemen free rides on streetcars, admission to galleries and theaters. Fred Marcham took full advantage. He subscribed to the *Daily Telegraph*, where he learned of concerts and exhibits. He soon entered a world of arts, "and found almost at once the same sense of excitement that I had had as a child."

Next to opera, galleries attracted him most. "I knew nothing about pictures, yet suddenly I was aware that the great works of art were great for me. The colors, lines and forms, compositions stirred me. I saw some of Rembrandt's drawings and knew at once it was the hand of a master. . . . I had a sense that I could go on

learning in this way forever. . . could learn and understand anything."

By now, heart specialists suggested moderate exercise for patients with weak hearts, including running. Marcham began jogging along the Thames on a regular basis.

One day in early 1920 he saw a notice of financial aid for servicemen to attend college and applied. Parliament abolished the plan the next day, but not before Marcham had had his application notarized and thus to be honored. An Anglican priest, learning Marcham had attended a public school, encouraged him to enter seminary and consider the priesthood. He did so, then won admission to St. Edmund Hall, a small college at Oxford.

Each Oxford student was assigned a faculty member as tutor. F. G. Marcham drew A. M. Emden, a historian who demanded original research and thinking of his charges, as well as clear writing. Marcham found himself poorly prepared but under Emden's firm guidance took hold, gradually growing academically. He entered literary and debating clubs, slowly resumed sports, and later recalled that for the first time he felt accepted socially. His last year fellow students elected him president of the college undergraduate body.

Mary Cecilia Deacon, wife-to-be, on a wall.

F. G. M. as an Oxford student in the 1920s.

Oxford college in the mist.



He resumed interest in art at Oxford, particularly Italian paintings. One day his tutor invited Marcham to a lecture by a leading authority, Sir Arthur Hind, the keeper of prints (of art works) at the British Museum. "Prints of the kind Sir Arthur showed I had never seen before and yet by some magic I comprehended at once the distinctions he was making.... Of course this print was a generation later than that... Emden had helped me to uncover a new talent. I became an avid print collector. . . spending two shillings here and five shillings there." He went on to put together a study of the prints of St. Edmund Hall, the first such study of an Oxford or Cambridge college.

"Probably through Emden," Marcham writes, "Hind asked me to come to see him. . . . He wished to have two or three undergraduate assistants to stimulate student interest in prints and print collecting. . . . Before the year ended he suggested that I apply for a place on his staff at the British Museum."

Marcham was still collecting prints after he came to the United States in 1923 as a graduate student at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He used prints in his teaching, but he made his living as a historian and a teacher. His activities at Oxford were recognized when Marcham published *Louis Agassiz Fuertes & the singular beauty*

of birds in 1970. The foreword by Dean Amadon of the American Museum of Natural History in New York referred to him as "an authority on art and. . . a professional in that field before turning to history." Marcham earned his A.B. with second class honors in 1923, as good as he had hoped for, given his preparation before Oxford. Only the scholarly stars earned first class honors. Lesser students took thirds and fourths.

An American Rhodes scholar at St. Edmund Hall introduced Marcham to a Cornell professor of English history. The visitor invited the two men to do graduate work and be his assistants in America. Both accepted. Marcham, without funds, raised money for passage from his old public school and from a Reading philanthropist.

While at Oxford, he was appalled at one aspect of the teaching: "Almost all my lecturers read their lectures. They spent their vacations, it would seem, writing lectures that were in effect scholarly papers. When the appropriate bell rang in the appropriate college tower, the lecturer stepped through a door in the rear of the dining hall and read his lecture to us. Later, the bell sounded again; he closed his book and turned his back on us."

During one term Marcham attended lectures by A. L. Smith, a famous academic figure. "He came on to the stage in a relaxed and easy

MARCHAM THROUGH THE AGES

In his memoirs, Marcham twice mentions the hamlet that bears his family name, the first time in connection with his arrival as a student at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford in 1920:

I went from poverty and squalor to the solid unchangeable aristocratic security of Oxford. . . . True, St. Edmund Hall was the smallest and the least significant of the Oxford colleges, but that did not matter . . . [I]f we of the St. Edmund Hall had any second thoughts about our place in the university we called to our aid the fact that St. Edmund Hall was among the most ancient of Oxford's institutions, founded at latest in the 14th century, named after a famous English church official of the 13th century, St. Edmund of Abingdon.

I took special pride in the fact that Abingdon, a Berkshire village, stood within a mile or two away from another Berkshire village, Marcham, from which my family took its name. The villages faced one another across the Thames, ten miles or so downstream from Oxford. And here was I in Oxford, the first person of my name to be enrolled as an undergraduate there since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

Marcham is not a common surname, in England or elsewhere. In 1974 the London phone book listed only 13 Marchams. This is borne out further in F. G. Marcham's account of his visit to the hamlet of Marcham during the Festival of Britain:

I was in England from late June to mid August 1951. Of the bizarre events, the most striking was my visit to

Marcham, Berkshire. My father had in past years urged me to go to Marcham, a small village some ten miles southeast of Oxford. It was a village with an Anglo-Saxon name meaning a "ham," or hamlet, or settlement, on the mark or marc, or border, of an ancient kingdom.

Our family name derived from it and this suggested that in a period of perhaps twelve centuries some people called Marcham had moved from the village to my father's home in Bradfield about twenty miles to the southeast.

The only person outside my father who paid particular attention to the name was the distinguished English historian, Professor Helen Cam. When we met, as we did occasionally on her visits to the United States, she put an arm around me and said, "Ah, indeed, dear Mr. Marcham." Her father had been vicar of Abingdon, a small and ancient town across the Thames from Marcham.

I had told this story to my children who always replied, "Show us Marcham on a map." In a map of Berkshire in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* I showed them a tiny pinpoint with the name beside it, but this did not satisfy them. So now I would visit Marcham, take photographs of the parish church, the post office, or some other public building with the name "Marcham" displayed on it.

I caught a bus at Oxford that listed Marcham among its stopping places. I would not photograph any thing so trivial as the board with the list on it. At one stopping place I saw a sign post, "3 miles to Marcham." That was not good enough. And so I arrived in Marcham itself. I found it not to be the tranquil, rural, riverside village I had hoped it to be. The village church was a mixture

of every medieval style, all unhappily blended. Outside the church there was not the usual large sign in black and gold giving the name of the church, of the vicar, and listing the hours of services. I photographed the church and its neglected churchyard [page 66]. But I could find nothing else to photograph.

As I walked alongside a high brick wall I saw attached to it a poster listing a series of events to last through the current week. For this was a week of celebration nationwide, and Marcham was not to be left behind. The heading on the poster was Marcham Festival Week and below, among sporting events and baby shows, was “Marcham through the Ages, a Pageant.”

Here was the evidence I needed, and more. I found a gate in the wall, went in, and met a charming sophisticated young couple. Could they tell me where I could buy a copy of the poster, I asked. Why did I need one? “Well,” I said, “my name happens to be Marcham.” At this they gave a shout. “The very man we’ve been looking for!” They explained they searched high and low for a man named Marcham to take the leading part in their pageant. The lady had written the book of the pageant; the man, her husband—a nuclear physicist working at Oxford—was going to stage it. What a miracle: England could not supply a Marcham but the United States did.

I begged my way out of the pageant—what more phony than a beaten up professor from the United States playing the part of their hero, Mark, the pirate who, in their pageant, had founded the village. And by the way, I asked, surely you know that Mark was a boundary, a place, not a pirate. “Of course,” they replied, “but how

the hell do you personify a boundary.” They sold me a poster and a copy of the script for the pageant.

F. G. Marcham told his family the authorities did talk him into riding on a float in the festival parade. Ever since, when his American family holds a particularly important gathering, the Marcham Festival Week poster is stood up on a sideboard and the story of Marcham through the Ages toasted anew.



The poster Marcham brought from England in 1951 lists events planned by the hamlet of Marcham to celebrate the Festival of Britain.

Marcham, left, demonstrates boxing for students in Teagle Hall, Cornell, late 1950s.



As a young Cornell professor in the 1920s.



manner and began to talk informally and without a text . . . he was free to walk about. He was not lecturing on Aristototele's *Politics* but talking about the book. He assumed your interest and, though he did not invite you to join him, you had the sense that this was a conversation. I vowed that if ever speaking in public became part of my life, this was the manner I would adopt."

And indeed he did, earning a reputation from his first semester at Cornell as an able lecturer, discussion leader, and public speaker. During his second year as a graduate student at Cornell he was named an acting associate professor to substitute for a professor of ancient history, though this was not his field. Marcham earned a Ph.D. in English history at Cornell in 1926 and immediately joined the faculty; he taught English history until two months before he died in December 1992—during a span of sixty-nine years becoming something of a “Mr. Chips” at the institution.

While a student at Oxford he met Mary Cecelia Deacon at a library in Reading where she worked. Early evidence of his photography is found in family scrapbooks that show life and scenes of Oxford and the Thames, and of Mary and Fred in the Thames Valley and with members of her family. They were married near Reading in 1925, while he was still a graduate student. She worked as a secretary in the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell until she had the first of their three children in 1927.

They lived frugally but in the Depression were able to build a home in Cayuga Heights near the Cornell campus, and send money to both their families in England. Marcham kept in touch with the print market in Europe, buying for himself, occasional colleagues, and for the College of Arts

and Sciences to decorate the hallways of its classroom buildings. He worked prints into his lectures on English life and history, and prints hung in most rooms of the Marcham home. A robust peasant scene by Bruegel over the fireplace in the living room set a raffish tone in an otherwise fairly sober home.

In 1941 he bought an abandoned farm near Ithaca. “Much of my life since childhood had built around the appreciation of birds, flowers, and trees,” he explains in his memoirs. “I had been a fisherman since I was seven or eight. [The farm’s] 100 acres contained a stream. . . a swamp, woods, a ten-acre pasture-like field, and a four-acre pond. . . . With the farm to stimulate me, my interest in photography renewed. I ranged from photographs of the pond and of flowers to studies of the bark and trunks of trees.” Few black and white prints of these subjects appear to have survived. Some later color slides show other rural scenes. Most of the pictures in this book were taken in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Marcham had photographed his family over the years, and had the negatives developed and printed at Head’s Camera Shop in downtown Ithaca. His wife, little involved in university life and often lonely for England, kept extensive photo albums of their early years and subsequent



Mary and F. G. Marcham, who holds his Graflex camera.



With two alumni who established a Cornell scholarship in his name, and two scholarship recipients. L. William Kay II, left, and William D. Phillips are the alumni. Early 1990s.



With great-grandson Liam Frederick Lowe, 1992.

life in America. After World War II Marcham set up a darkroom in the basement of his home and began developing and printing his own shots.

The Marchams visited England several times before the Depression and World War II. F. G. Marcham returned alone in 1951 on a university grant and renewed acquaintance with his and his wife's family. Pictures of people in London streets, youngsters in Covent Garden, rural scenes, and a few of his relatives come from this trip.

Although he was active in teaching and the governance of Cornell as a faculty member and an elected faculty trustee, his closest friends were men he fished with, a mechanic who took care of his car, coaches he met while working out at the campus gym—men of nonacademic backgrounds closer to people he had grown up with in England. He taught boxing and played badminton actively, with a heart that had recovered enough to make him one of the finer adult athletes in the Ithaca community for many years. For thirty-two years he served as the elected mayor of the village of Cayuga Heights, adjacent to Ithaca and the Cornell campus.

After setting up a darkroom in his home, he began taking pictures of friends and their families, and students with whom he formed close ties, including an occasional fishing companion, a boxer or other athletes. Athletes in particular turned to

him for academic and other advice, many finding understanding in someone who shared their athletic and working-class backgrounds.

F. G. Marcham's study of paintings and their composition must have been one element that informed his picture taking. He seldom advised us as his children, but when I began taking pictures I recall his making me aware of planes receding from foreground to background and by implication that I include several, to give depth to a scene.

Another element must have been his empathy with people. Former students and public officials who knew him over the years remember him importantly as a good listener. He was known as a good, clear speaker, but also as someone who cared about a person he was with. This fits with my association with the fine Ithaca photojournalist Sol Goldberg, who captured so many human moments in his career. Goldberg made instant contact with a subject, relaxing and opening the person up to natural expression. Marcham's portraits suggest relaxed, open subjects as well.

L. Pearce Williams, a fellow professor of history at Cornell, said somewhat the same thing in an interview with the *Ithaca Journal* in 1971. The *Journal* quoted Williams as saying that Marcham's "love of photography is, in many ways, 'the key to Fred's mind. . . . He has a fantastic visual sense. . . .

Marcham listens, 1980.



This is why the Fuertes book puts it all together: it's scholarship, it's beautiful pictures, it's nature. It's Fred's real strength as a historian, his ability to understand people and see them absolutely as they are."

A third element that influenced his picture taking may well have been his love of nature. He was asked to explain it in 1974 for a Cornell summer Adult University program called "The Beauty of Nature." After saying how much he enjoyed the animals, fish, plants, and trees in the quiet of his farm near Ithaca, he spoke of daily walks to the bottom of Fall Creek Gorge next to the Cornell campus: "I . . . looked at the birds, the trees, and the ferns, listened to the water, sometimes a torrent, sometimes a gentle stream, and climbed back up again; about fifteen minutes of solitude before the day's work began. . . . I derived great pleasure and a sense of being a part of these surroundings, not an observer but a companion of the animals and plants and rocks among which I moved."

He went another step, telling the Adult University audience, "I combine the daily routine of my formal, social, regulated life with almost continuous use of my eyes and ears and hands. I spoke of stopping by a tree and feeling its bark or holding a leaf in my hand and looking intently at its form and color. From that I went on to explain that in

dealing with students I used my mind and my senses side by side, the senses to judge the student's mood, degree of interest, need for challenge or encouragement, the mind to move us to the next stage of discussion."

Finally he took the Adult University group outdoors and had them look at a shiny leaf, peer closely to see if a bright flower had one shade of blue or several, then kneel down and lay an open relaxed hand on the center of some flowering kale, a cabbage-like plant. "Press down firmly," he said, "then rotate your hand slowly and feel the soft rubbery fringes of the leaves." "Fancy that," said a lady, "fingers and the palm of the hand feel them differently."

He was open to nature and his surroundings in ways that must have helped him identify and compose the subjects, human and inanimate, that he photographed.

He wrote once that as a student at Oxford, the short stories of Chekhov "made a great impression on me not for his literary skill but for the skill with which he made a work of art out of a small scene or incident. From this point on in my observation, and in my fondness for Dutch rural scenes in the works of Van Ostade and others, I felt strongly the beauty of simple things."

Something of this feeling comes through in the photographs he captured and left for us.

MARCHAM'S PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT

The author has an incomplete record and recollection of the cameras and other photographic equipment F. G. Marcham used during his lifetime. The first photograph one can be sure he took is the 1922 view of his wife-to-be, page 25, and the last were of family and friends in the 1970s.

Because none of his own negatives survive, one cannot be sure which of several cameras he may have used for a particular photo, but negatives another family member made from what was likely Marcham's first camera do survive and provide clues.

It seems most likely his main or only camera from the 1920s through the late 1930s was—or was similar to—the Autographic Kodak Model 1A, which took 116 film, was manufactured between 1914 and 1924, and would have been available in England. Many of his photos from the 1920s, through the next decade, and maybe later are either the same size or same proportion as 116 film, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$. And he lent a son such a camera in 1946 and 1947, from which surviving negatives are 116 size. The bellows of this family camera eventually dried out, let in light, and the camera was abandoned.

He began using at least two other cameras in the 1940s, a 4x5 Speed Graphic and a 35 mm. Leica. Some time later he used a 35 mm. Pentax. He used black-and-white film exclusively before World War II, and color film for slides only sparingly from sometime around World War

II. His first slides were taken on a speaking trip to California about this time.

The Speed Graphic was the one shown in the photo on page 102, similar to the Pacemaker Speed Graphic made between 1947 and 1968. What lens it had is not clear. Marcham seems to have used this camera for action photos, for sure, and possibly for some landscapes and portraits. It took packs of cut film that came in holders, which one inserted into the back of the body.

The Leica survives, a Model III (F) with chrome body, No. 337,167, with a $\frac{1}{500}$ th-Z shutter and a 50 mm. Leitz Elmar lens, $f/1:3.5-18$. Ernst Leitz of Wetzlar, Germany, made this camera during the years 1933–39. His Leica was brought from Europe by a student before 1939. He has the camera around his neck in the photo on the back cover.

The Honeywell Pentax is a Spotmatic model, No. 1,160,432, with a $\frac{1}{1,000}$ th-B shutter and 55 mm. Super Takumar lens No. 1,620,543, $f/1:1.8-16$. The camera was built in the 1960s. He gave both 35 mm. cameras and his Weston Model 715 light meter to his granddaughter and her husband, Christopher Lowe.

His nephew Christopher Deacon comments on Marcham's equipment. "I remember quite clearly that Fred was using a Leica when he came to Reading in 1951. He spent some time showing me how it worked. I was enthralled by the coupled rangefinder: you looked through the viewer and twisted a knurled knob until two nearly superimposed images merged. This told you that the

subject was in focus and that the lens was automatically set for distance. . . .

“The Pentax Spotmatic, I remember, came out in the early 1960s. It was one of the first 35 mm. cameras to have a pentaprism and TTL metering. It was pretty well automatic. Spotmatics were often held to be one of the classic cameras, even in the 1980s.

“Clearly exact focus—exactitude—fascinated Fred. But I always felt it was the meditative aspect of his subjects which moved him most, even in children. I always admired the portrait of John Marcham with cut-out letters [page 71]. Something of the spiritual, you might say!”

(The pentaprism referred to by Deacon replaced viewfinders mounted on the camera separate from the lens. A pentaprism’s five reflecting surfaces provide a photographer the identical view cast onto the camera’s film. Similarly, through the lens (TTL) metering reads the light cast on the camera’s film, replacing side-mounted or handheld light meters.)

Marcham owned and used floodlights for some indoor action situations.

After World War II he created at least two different darkrooms in the basement of the family home at 112 Oak Hill Road, Ithaca. He printed almost all the photographs used in this book, and they have stood up extremely well over the decades.

Pictures he took through World War II appear to have been developed and printed at camera shops, with Head’s Camera of Ithaca doing his work for many years.



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Two models similar to Marcham’s first cameras, and his actual last two cameras:

At top, a 116 film camera from the early 1900s and a Graflex 4x5 model, from the Tompkins County Museum collection.

Below, Marcham’s Leica and Pentax 35 mm. cameras.



Carving over a doorway at Christ's Hospital, West Horsham, Sussex. "Boy wearing the 16th century dress which I wore for five years." 1951.



Acknowledgments

MANY PEOPLE HELPED bring this book into being, but its emphasis on Marcham's photography and not his full life is my stubborn choice. As mentioned earlier, at first I thought to publish a small book for family members. After I showed graphic designer Phil Wilson the full set of Marcham's pictures he instead encouraged a picture book for a general audience. Wilson selected and organized the pictures we use.

Several readers of the manuscript urged more detail on Marcham's distinguished career as a teacher, faculty member, and public official, but I resisted. The pictures tell a considerable story themselves and I don't feel in a position to deliver an unbiased account of his other work. I've been a journalist writing about the university for much of my life, but I am also his son.

Identifying many of the photographs was not easy. Few bore captions, particularly those taken

in England in 1951. My British cousins were especially helpful, particularly Clive and David Downs on my father's side and Christopher E. W. Deacon and Jill Mackay on my mother's. The rural village scenes were the last we pinned down, after Clive Downs reached Martin Andrews, conservation officer of the Wycombe District Council, High Wycombe, Bucks, to whom we owe special thanks for the Surrey and Suffolk village locations.

David Blauvelt, John B. Rogers III, and the late Lawrence Caldwell, former swim team members, named the Cornell divers. Rogers also helped identify footballer John Gerdes, and he and his wife lent the print of their daughter. Members of the Swayze and Argetsinger families of Lansing led me to Neil Stockton, the young boy with a big fish. Cornell historians Joel Silbey, Walter LaFeber, and L. Pearce Williams led me to Dr. Wesley Hicks. Sheila Brichze and Barbara Little identified members of their families.

The George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, helped pursue the outcome of the Graflex photo contest of 1952. My sister Ann, brother David, cousin Chris Deacon, and daughter Sarah Marcham knew about Dad's camera equipment.

Ann, my son Bruce, and Chris Deacon lent F. G. Marcham photos in their possession.

My thanks go also to the many other relatives and friends of Dad's and mine who served by telling what particular photos didn't show or steering me to better sources.

Finally, but not least, thanks go to Jane Marsh Dieckmann, Dora Flash Bourne, Carol U. Sisler, and Ellen Bonn, who reviewed the manuscript as members of the DeWitt Historical Society Publications Committee. The first three knew my father, Dieckmann as a neighbor and friend, Bourne's daughter was an admiring student, and Sisler a constituent and fellow Ithacan. Ed McKeown, Barbara Hall, and Barbara Rowan added their expertise.

My continuing thanks go as well to the society itself for the base it provides to produce and distribute books that record the life and look of our county in Upstate New York. This book will be the fifty-fourth published by the society since 1942.

*John Marcham
Ithaca, New York
February 2000*

Illustrations

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS ARE BY F. G. Marcham from the collection of Jane and John Marcham except as follows:

F. G. Marcham photos owned by others: pages 25, Ann Marcham, Ithaca; 50, Bruce Marcham, Syracuse, New York; 87, C. E. W. Deacon, Bristol, England; and 89 left, Ann Mitchell and John B. Rogers III, Ithaca.

Photos by other photographers, in the collection of Jane and John Marcham: pages 92, 100 right, and 104, by Sol Goldberg, Cornell University; 94 top, by John Freebody, uncle to F. G. M.; 94 bottom, by Alfred Barrett, London; 102 top, by Doug Hicks, Ithaca; 102 bottom, by John Marcham; 107, by Carl Koski, DeWitt Historical Society; and unknown: 94 right, 100 left, and 102 left.

Photo by Ann Marcham and in her collection, back cover.

Sources

MOST OF THE REFERENCES to the photographer's life come from memoirs duplicated and placed in the Rare and Manuscript Collections of the

Kroch Library at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, in 1993, among volumes of *The Papers of F. G. Marcham*, prepared by the author of this book, who is the executor of Marcham's estate.

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The L. P. Williams quotation on page 103 is from the *Ithaca Journal*, May 25, 1971.

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All books are soft cover except the last. New York State residents add 8% sales tax.

To order any of these books or to ask about other titles, call 607 273-8284 or mail orders to Tompkins County Museum, 401 East State Street, Ithaca NY 14850. Orders must be prepaid by check, money order, or MC/Visa. Allow 7-10 days for delivery.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF FREDERICK G. MARCHAM

THESE NINETY ENGAGING PHOTOGRAPHS OF AMERICAN AND English scenes and individuals are the work of a man well known in Upstate New York as a Cornell University professor and public official for more than six decades, but little known as a photographer.

The author, his son, is a retired magazine editor whose career began at *Life* in the 1950s. He speculates that F. G. Marcham's composition and choice of subjects often recall the work of classical painters, possibly reflecting the photographer's early study of prints at Oxford and the British Museum. Brief biographical notes invite readers to consider other aspects of the photographer's life that may also have influenced his work.

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Mary and F. G. Marcham and cameras in the Thousand Islands in the 1950s.



Front cover: Spectators wait on Whitehall, London, in 1951 for the Changing of the Horse Guards.

Cover design by Phil Wilson