



The Barnard Bulletin

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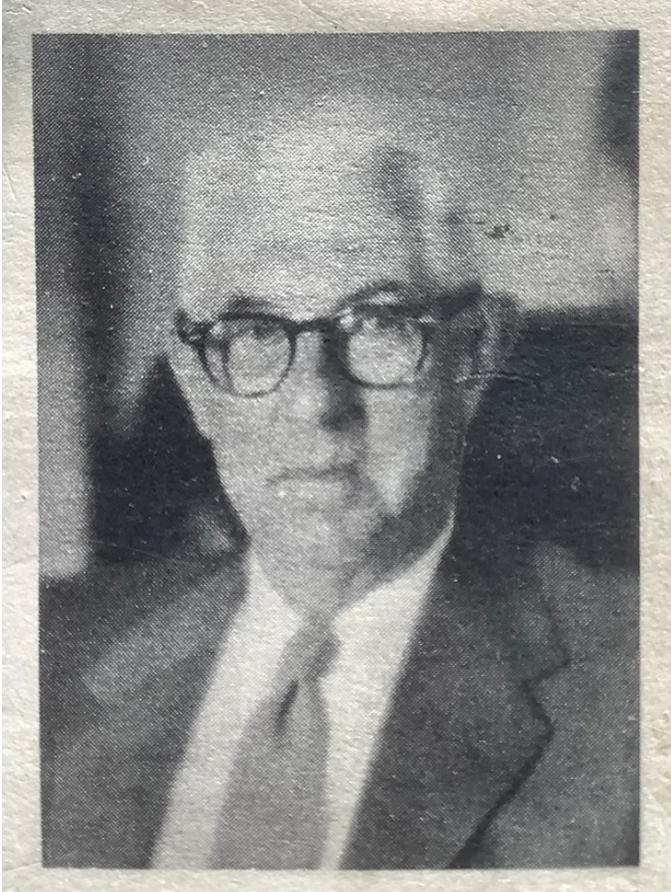
A VERMONT WRITER

BY MARGARET EDWARDS

This column is an offering of The Danforth Library in Barnard and a chance to introduce a Vermont writer who deserves wider renown.

Walter Hard

1882–1966



Walter Rice Hard, Sr., in 1958

The abrupt call to come home must have been a cruel disappointment for young Walter Hard, a native Vermonter. He was down in Massachusetts, in the midst of enjoying his studies and friendships at Williams College, but he was sorely needed by his family. His father's health was failing. Walter would have to take over and run their Manchester drugstore, crucial to the family's livelihood. The year was 1903. Walter had almost completed his third college year, but his college days were done.

Walter never warmed to storekeeping, and somehow, during his days of routine drudgery, he managed to devise a writing career. In the 1920s, he began creating weekly newspaper columns for both *The Manchester Journal* and *The Rutland Herald*. He was a prolific, careful writer. His contributions often featured a local story about some aspect of rural Vermont. They were sentimental, direct, and heartfelt—and he had a knack for capturing character, an ear for reproducing dialect, and a

talent for setting a scene. He also took up breaking the lines of his prose sketches in such a way to make them seem like poems. Since “free verse” was becoming the rage, why not? And it sounded better, and it certainly seemed more distinguished, to be known as Vermont's “storekeeper poet” rather than its “storekeeper journalist.” When he gathered and published his local sketches in books, his reputation soared.

Often Hard's observations rest on creating a local character, then giving that character a role in a confrontation that requires a snappy comeback. In “Deep Enough” we meet Jake who “often referred to himself/ As ‘Jackass of all trades’” and who gets along well enough for most of his life by doing odd jobs, never working steadily. At one point, when Jake is busy digging town graves, he gets criticized for laziness. He's told he's digging the graves “shallower and shallower”—to which he responds in the last lines: “Ain't heered of anybody gittin' out of 'em/ Hev yu?”

But here is a sample that does not rely on an extended joke or a sassy and unrepentant rural laborer. The description of place is deft, measured, and eloquent:

June Comes to Tinmouth Valley

*From the road the hill fell away to the valley.
There were fields marked off by bush-lined walls,
Warped barns, and weathered houses,
And twisting roads that made them neighbors.
Peaks of mountains banking another valley,
And the sharp wooded ridge that divided it from ours.
Above the road, green fields
Where the new grass, just grown high enough,
Bent to the soft sliding breeze.
Higher up the brown earth of a field just planted—
Rolled tight and smooth, and waiting.
And looking down on all the rest
The white farmhouse almost hidden by the maples.
Ahead the four points of the church tower
Pricked through the green leaves.
On the hill beyond, an old iron fence
Enclosed the rows of white stones.
Cloud shadows drifted across the fields.
A white-throat sang three notes, stopped, and began
again.
The wind brought the sound of running water.
The new leaves stirred—
Leaves only lately grown large enough
To give the wind a voice.
June had come to Tinmouth Valley.*

Should this sample be called a poem? Astute observers could point out that in Hard's squibs there are no other poetic devices than the line breaks to make them recognizable as poems. Certainly there are no conventional end rhymes, few internal rhymes, and no regular meters

Cont. next page - Hard

Hard - Cont. from front page

or flights of alliteration. The analogies Hard uses are smooth and clever, but simile and metaphor often occur in good prose. Even so, Hard insisted he was writing poems with their meters tuned to his own ear. He didn't have to add the obvious: they were highly effective as entertainment.

One of Hard's book jacket blurbs puts it this way: "Hard fans are prone to recite his stories, tell the punch lines, [and] read them aloud..." This was an author who generated a devoted following, and he published numerous books to keep them happy. *Some Vermonters* came out in 1928, followed by *Salt of Vermont* (1931) and *Mountain Township* (1933). His *Vermont Vintage* was published in 1937. And with his wife Margaret (a poet in her own right), he wrote *This Is Vermont* (1937). His last book, entitled *Vermont Valley*, appeared in 1958.

To be a *regionalist* isn't usually an aspiration among the most ambitious writers. They aim for universal appeal and for not just national, but international, acclaim. Walter Hard, by contrast, wore the regionalist label proudly. There were astonishing variations on the theme, but his theme was always Vermont, Vermonters, and the rural folkways and attitudes that were standing steadfast despite all the push and pull of urban modernity. His contemporary, the poet Carl Sandburg—who was a household name and nationally famous—avowed he admired Walter Hard's work without reservation: "I find his Yankees fascinating. I treasure and re-read his volumes."

The accent in the voices of dyed-in-the-wool Vermonters is not easily captured or imitated. And perhaps the accent is fainter now in 2021, or it's rare and further to seek. But Walter Hard was determined to give it a permanent home in what he wrote. In "Lampson's Descent," we meet Lampson, a logger by trade. He climbs almost far enough, but then slips and slides down the steep grade of a slope "near Table Rock." After he has made his ascent all over again, he sits on a stump to catch his breath and says to his companion, who has been waiting for him:

*"They say the Creator made th' earth in six days
And rested on th' seventh.
Same old story as we hear now:
Time limit set for labor
No matter whether the job's done er only half.
... I'm inclined t' think it might 'a' ben as well
If the Creator had worked another day mebbe
On this section o' V'mont
And leveled it off a little mite, in spots."*

Anyone who lives in Vermont—now, in the present—can find in the works of Walter Hard so many recognizable moments and familiar people and treasured casts of mind. If you were here in 2011 during the "hurricane" or "tropical storm" (take your pick) that was called IRENE, these lines from "Roaring Branch Takes the Road" have force:

*The brook, which years on years
Had cut its own highway to the river,
Has taken back its valley...
Down each shallow gully the water poured—
Down and down to join other torrents in wider gorges,
Until a mob of waters rolled ton boulders before it,
And ripped century-old trees from their rootholds,
Tossing them on the muddy foam like twigs.*

Anyone who has come to Vermont from elsewhere and has encountered intelligence and perseverance that, if harnessed in a city, could bring riches and even renown, has marveled at what Hard is describing here in "They Also Serve":

*When you are calling the roll
Of men who have gone out from these farms
And done the nation service,
Don't forget the others—
Those who had the brains
To know brains when they saw them;
Those who were big enough
Not to amount to much.*

Anyone from out of state who hoped to purchase a run-down Vermont hill farm with a great view has probably encountered Sam Parker and his wife of "The Mountain Farm." The couple was stunned by the price being offered them (many thousands more than they ever thought they'd see). And they knew their land was poor and "... never should have been divorced from the forest/ Which hovered on its flanks." They spent an evening (as soon as their children were asleep) talking of such riches, but then Sam "went out for his nightly inspection of the barns" and confronted on the porch "A full moon brooding over the sleeping valley."

*He called his wife.
They stood together
Awestruck at the mystery which is night among the
mountains.
A horse pounded in its stall.
A calf bleated and its mother answered.
A dog barked,
And then the silence of the moonlit valley*

Of course, this Mr. and Mrs. Parker didn't sell.

Walter Hard's son was Walter Hard, Jr. (1915-2000), who became the editor of *Vermont Life* magazine from 1950 to 1972. He took over from the magazine's founder, Earle Newton, and established that influential publication's high standards of excellence. Like his dad, he was unflappable and soft-spoken, with a wry sense of humor; but *unlike* his dad, he had a sharp business sense, as well. He wrote in his Dartmouth application that his most "important educational experience" had been watching his father in the drugstore being "always patient and courteous to impatient and discourteous people" and carrying on "pleasant conversations for as much as ten minutes about absolutely nothing."

Cont. next page - Hard

Hard - Cont. from previous page

No doubt, it was all those conversations that gave Walter, Sr., his great fund of material. In 1935, however, he sold the drugstore and, with his wife, took over ownership of the Johnny Appleseed Bookshop in Manchester, an enterprise that had been founded by their daughter. This was storekeeping much more congenial to the couple, an establishment that served their interests. Walter, Sr. also represented Manchester for one term in the Vermont House and for four terms in the Senate.

As an old man, Vermont's "storekeeper poet" had been practicing for the role. He had honed that sense of humor by the time he reached a venerable age. Here are the final lines taken from his portrait of "Uncle Billy":

*One afternoon he was sitting in his chair dozing
When a Salvation Army man came along.
He walked briskly up the steps and touched his cap.
"Have you fifty cents to give to the Lord?" he asked.
Uncle Billy smiled at him with his blue eyes.
"How old are you, young man?"
"I'm twenty-seven."
Uncle Billy hitched himself up in his chair.
"I guess you'd better give me your fifty cents for the Lord.
I'll be seeing Him sooner than you will."*

All of the quotations for this article have been taken from *Vermont Valley* by Walter Hard, a book dedicated to his wife Margaret Hard and published by Vermont Books of Middlebury in 1958. This book is owned by the Danforth Library and available for readers to check out and enjoy.

DANFORTH LIBRARY NEWS

StoryWalk

Looking for a fun and different activity with the kids? Check out *StoryWalk*, at Silver Lake State Park during the month of June.

The Charles Danforth Library is partnering with the State Park to offer Kate Messner's beautiful childrens' book, *Over and Under the Pond* - in a whole new form! Each page is laminated and attached to a stake, so that reading the book will take you on a meandering walk through nature.

The *StoryWalk*® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg Hubbard Library. It has appeared all over the United States and in 13 other countries, in cities, towns, and parks.

Don't forget that the Danforth Library has a State Parks pass available to borrow, which allows free entry to not only our own Silver Lake State Park but to every State Park in Vermont!

June Reopening

We plan to reopen our Book Room in June, and we look forward to welcoming you all back inside once again. Stay tuned for details. Until then, curbside pickup is available: Wed. 3-5 p.m. & Sat 10 a.m.-Noon. Please call ahead with your requests: 802-234-9408

New:

Wildlife and Habitats: A Collection of Tracking and Natural History Essays with Photographs, by naturalist and Keeping Track founder Susan C. Morse. This new, expanded, 2021 edition is a collection of articles that she wrote for *Northern Woodlands* magazine. Based on her field work, she describes common traits and quirks for over 25 species mostly native to our area. This edition includes new articles and expands on earlier content. *Free copies were offered to Vermont and New Hampshire libraries by Keeping Track through the generosity of the Cornelia and Michael Bessie Foundation.*

Danforth Trustees: Margaret Edwards, Judy Maynes, Ellen Miles, Susan McNulty, and Edythe Wright.

LOCAL CRYPTOGRAM

A cryptogram is a code in which one letter is substituted for another. For example, the word "Church" could be written BWMSBW. The letter B would be the letter C and would be so throughout the entire message. In this message C = N. The solution is found by trial and error. The CRYPTOGRAM answer is on the last page.

"G ERQMOGDC CDO
GH OFURMFQM MGCI,
GH UDMQM SDBV OFQ BGU;
KQZDCV LZ FQBUO
G CQQV CDO UQBAF
XFQC BSS GM MRLLU OFQUQ."
-PDFC TBCAQ AFQCQZ

GLAD RAGS INDOOR YARD SALE
SATURDAY JUNE 12, 2021 - 9:00AM - 3:00PM

Masonic Lodge - 30 Pleasant St - Woodstock, VT 05091
CASH ONLY and there will be NO Dressing Rooms. Tables will be spread apart to encourage social distancing. A limited number of shoppers will be allowed inside at one time

Masks will be required and you should bring your own bags. Parking is behind Masonic Lodge. For info visit <http://www.gladrags.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/145529065206/>. No donations of clothing or other items will be excepted in the days before the sale.

SILVER LAKE PROGRESSIVE CLUB NEWS

SUBMITTED BY JUDY MAYNES

Barnard Matters: Silver Lake Progressive Club Scholarship 2021

The Silver Lake Progressive Club is pleased to announce that we have awarded four \$1,000 scholarships to the following graduates who are continuing their education beyond high school: Orion Beardsley, Natalie Carr, Ava Dodson, and Eliza Dodson.

The club has awarded thousands of dollars to deserving students since 1986, and this year's multiple awards raises the total number of scholarships given to 46 students. Historically, the main fundraiser for the scholarship has been a lunch on town meeting day. This year, because of the pandemic, lunch was not possible. Instead, we created an online GoFundMe campaign called "Barnard Matters," and put an article in the Vermont Standard. Due to the extraordinary generosity of this community, we were able to award an unprecedented four scholarships in this year alone. We thank Sabra Field for permission to feature one of her prints on our GoFundMe site.

Thank you all for your continued support of our students.

RACE AROUND THE LAKE

5K RUN/WALK, 10K RUN

Live/In-Person May 23 Adults: \$40, 12 & under: \$20

[Register on-line](#) through 7pm on Saturday Day-of registration (cash/check) begins at 9am on Sunday at Silver Lake State Park.

10K Race begins at 10:30am. 5K Race begins at 11am.

Interval Starts will be used to space out competitors.

Masks are required in the start/finish line area

5K/10K Virtual Through May 28

Adults: \$25. 12 and Under: \$10.

Race anytime, anywhere! Clock yourself and post your race time to our website by May 28th

Consider racing our course after the in-person race - we will leave the course marked and provide virtual maps to our virtual participants.

More info and Registration through [RunSignUp](#). Thank you for supporting BarnArts!

All funds raised directly support our Youth Programming and make this year's Fiddler on the Roof Summer Youth Theater camp possible!

BarnArts Center for the Arts info@barnarts.org
PO Box 41 802-234-1645 (voice mail)
Barnard, VT 05031 www.barnarts.org

BARNARD INN REOPENS

The Barnard Inn will reopen Memorial Day weekend, Saturday, May 29, 2021.

Open Tuesday - Saturday, with freshly prepared and seasonally inspired meals.

Fine Dining Prix-fixe Menu (starting June 1st in time for Graduation). Call 802-234-9961 for reservations, as seating is limited.

Max's Tavern To Go & Outside Menu No reservations necessary. Live Music Saturday May 29th. at 5:30pm with musical talent Jack Snyder

Contact [Corinna Dodson](#) or visit, www.barnardinn.com.

LISTER NOTES (FINAL ENTRY)

As those of you that attended Barnard's rescheduled Town Meeting on May 15, 2021, know, Article 3 passed on a voice vote. With the passing of Article 3, the Barnard Board of Listers is to be replaced by a professional appraisal company, contracted to provide municipal appraisal services to the Town.

It is expected that the Selectmen will sign an appraisal contract before the end of the Fiscal Year. Until then the funds remaining in the Listers Budget will be used to pay the current consulting company, New England Municipal Consultants, to lodge the 2021 Grand List abstract and perform other required duties, until a formal contract is executed.

In the revised budget stipulated by Article 3, the Selectmen may appoint someone to the position of Selectboard Liaison (to the Appraisers Office). Although the description of the position is to be determined by the Selectmen, it is likely that the job will be an advisory position to both the Selectman and the Appraisers office.

Although there will be no official "Listers Grievance", State law requires that landowners have the right to appeal their property valuations. It is expected that the Change of Value Notices will be sent out by the end of next week and that Grievance Hearings will be held some time after June 10, 2021.

Any landowner may file a Grievance. If you want to know what the 2021 valuation for your property is, the Grand List Abstract will be available in the Town Clerk's Office once it has been lodged. You may also call the Appraisers office or email the Appraisers office at Listers@BarnardVT.us. You can mail, or email, your Grievance to the Appraisers, but Grievance must be received before the end of the Grievance Hearing period.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:00pm at the Town offices.

BARNARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION meets the second Monday of the month, 7:00pm, Town Hall.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR zoning@barnardvt.us, 234-9211. By appointment only, no standing hours during due to the COVID-19 restrictions. After hours cell 603-762-5280.

BEES MEETINGS are held at 6:30pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the library at the school.

DANFORTH LIBRARY HOURS: Wed 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. and Sat 10:00 - Noon. Curbside only. Please call 802-234-9408 with requests. Mask required for pick up. Wi-Fi access available from outside the building.

SELECTBOARD meets the first and third Wednesday of the month at the Town offices at 7:00pm.

SELECTBOARD ASSISTANT, Rob Ramrath, select-board@barnardvt.us, 234-2911 x 2, Cell 603-762-5280. By phone at any time, in person by appointment.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, Rob Ramrath, zoning@barnardvt.us, 234-2911 x 2, Cell 603-762-5280. By phone at any time, in person by appointment.

TOWN CLERK office hours are Monday & Tuesday, 8:00am-3:30pm. Public access is restricted. Call 234-9211 for an appointment.

THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:00pm at the Barnard Town Hall as necessary.

THE BARNARD ENERGY COMMITTEE meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00pm at the Town Hall

YOGA CLASSES offered at Danforth Library, Mondays 9:00am - 10:30am with Amanda Anderson. Classes are by donation; for more information contact Amanda@innerliftyoga.com. Yoga Classes are also offered on Thursdays from 9-10:30 with Beth Umba. Contact Beth at: bethumba@gmail.com.

BARNARD GENERAL STORE, Monday-Saturday: 7am-7pm, Sundays: 8am-6pm. <https://www.facebook.com/barnardgeneralstore>

BARNARD LISTSERV: to subscribe please send an email to: barnard-subscribe@lists.vitalcommunities.org

RECYCLING Click [here](#) for Hours and Regulations

THE BARNARD INN is running a "Feeding Neighbors & Sustaining Community" campaign. Purchase an e-Gift Card and in turn the chefs will feed neighbors. Whole chicken dinners (serves 4-6) and individual sized meals to help feed Vermonters in need. Thank you and please stay safe. E-Gift Cards are available at www.barnardinn.com.

ECFIBER Governing Board meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7pm in 012 Oakes Hall, Vermont Law School. More information at <https://www.ecfiber.net/>

HISTORICAL SOCIETY Programs to be announced. Questions? Email: historicalbarnard1761@gmail.com

CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

"I question not if thrushes sing,
If roses load the air;
Beyond my heart I need not reach
When all is summer there."
- John Vance Cheney

A TIME TO SPEAK OF MANY THINGS

MUSINGS OF A CURMUDGEON

Like a number of Towns in Vermont, Barnard, at Town Meeting elected to do away with the Board of Listers. How this will play out is unknown, but it is just one of the steady stream of changes that I have seen during my time in Barnard

I have lived in Barnard for more than 67 years and have been a registered voter for more than 49. Compared to a few "Old Timers" I am still a spring chicken, and some do not even consider me to be a true Vermonter, being only a second generation resident and not being born in Vermont. Hanover is not the same as Randolph, Hanover is overseas, so I was born in a foreign land.

Still, I have attended every Town Meeting I could. I missed a couple due to my desire to become a learned man. I am not sure which is worse, missing a class you paid for, or missing Town Meeting. I might have learned more at Town Meeting.

Town Meeting is history in the making, the backbone of our democracy. The fact that more than 40 voters (my quick estimate) turned out for the 2021 Town Meeting, under pandemic restrictions, most of them standing, is a testament to our stoic support of grass roots democracy.

At Town Meeting local residents are elected to public office, just as they were over 200 years ago. Others are appointed to positions that need to be filled in order to do the work of the Town, or to represent the Town when needed. Although a number of elected and appointed positions have become things of the past, there are still a number of "Barnard Residents" involved with the business of running the Town.

This "local control" is something that many people never experience. It is a gift of our forefathers, who had the foresight to give us the tools that allow us considerable influence over our lives. From the Town, to the State, to the Federal level, we have influence through our "Right" to vote.

It is a right not guaranteed by nature, it is a vulnerable social construct that is only useful if we exercise it, and defend its existence. Vermonters have stubbornly stuck by this right. Unlike other states, we are not trying to limit the right to vote. Let us remember what a treasure Town Meeting is. Let us continue to support the right for local control. Let us continue to vote—because we can.