The Barnard Bulletin

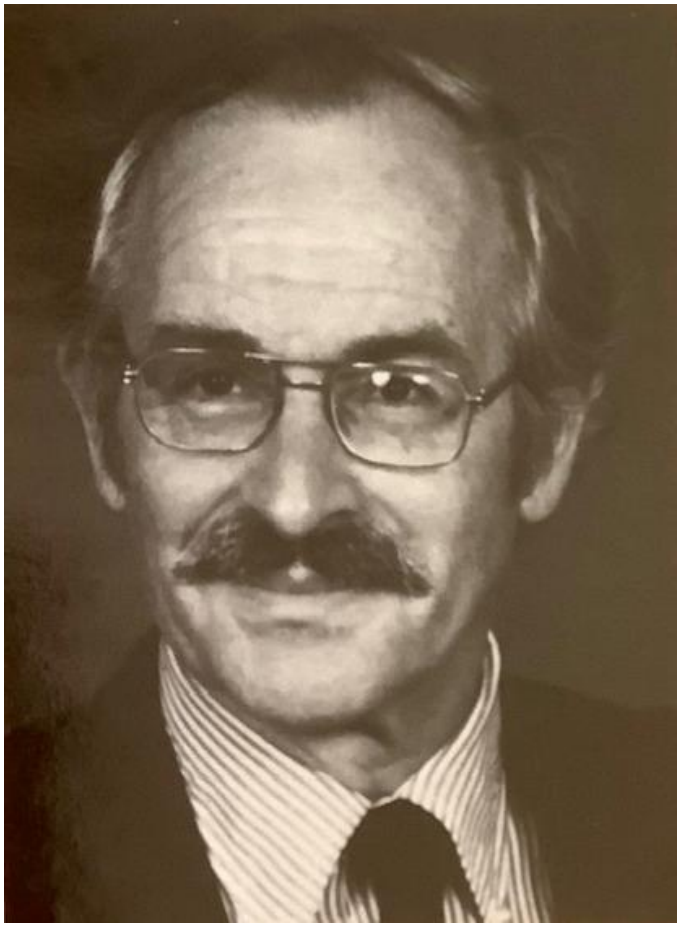
JUNE 2025 Vol. XL No. 6

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.

Scott E. Hastings, Jr. **1924 - 1990**



1988, Scott E. Hastings, Jr.

The person who urged Laurance Rockefeller to create our local Billings Farm and Museum, who put together a remarkable collection of farm implements and then saw to their authentic display, was native Vermonter Scott E. Hastings, Jr. He was born in the tiny village of McIndoe Falls, in what is called Vermont's "Northeast Kingdom," and he grew up first in East Ryegate, a few miles away, and then "in town" in the White River Junction area. He never knew his mother's parents—who had died fairly young, having immigrated from Italy and settled among the other Italian stonemasons in Barre, Vermont. But young Scott knew his father's parents very well. "Gram and Gramp" owned a farm in McIndoe Falls, and that's where the curious boy's firsthand knowledge of "rural folklife" took root, and where his eventual passion to preserve the memory of those folkways began.

In 1965, in his forties, Scott Hastings was tired of teaching high school. He decided to study anthropology. A Ford Foundation scholarship allowed him to take his wife and family from Taftsville, Vermont (where they had moved in 1953), to go out west. There he spent a year at the Research Center of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff. Quite soon it dawned on Hastings that, back east, he had been surrounded all his life by remarkable anthropological subject matter. He just hadn't recognized it for what it was.

Hastings' 1988 memoir entitled *Goodbye Highland Yankee* describes life in small villages and on hill farms in Vermont in the 1930s and 1940s (pre-World War II)—a way of life once common throughout the USA which had largely vanished by the mid-20th-century. It endured in Vermont, preserved almost as a relic. And Scott Hastings described it tenderly and in vivid detail. His grandparents owned "a good-sized farm" in McIndoe Falls—reached by a single road. "The farm buildings sat just inside the edge of the village. The front of the white house, with its fluted porch columns and ceiling-to-floor windows, was separated from Route 5 by a broad lawn."

Scott and his brother would visit the farm at intervals "four or five times a year"—and get caught up in the work of the farm, being extra hands to help Gramp, Dad and the hired man, Indian Joe.

> *The farm's square red barn lay behind the workshop close to the edge of the dooryard. A lane out back of the house brought the cows into the barnyard from the hill pastures to the south. In a bank of sand, up back of the barn at the edge of the woods, Gramp and Dad sometimes made "beanhole beans," just the way Gramp had seen them cooked on the log drives down the Connecticut [River]. Here, too, was the icehouse where the ice, cut by hand on the river each winter, was stored. We dug the heavy cakes from the sawdust and, with a kid on each handle of the tongs, staggered with them down to the milkhouse. After washing off the sawdust, we broke them up and dumped the pieces into the water tank where Gramp set the forty-quart cans of milk against train time next morning.*

Those two young boys "dug the heavy cakes" of ice, and then, working together, wrestled them into usefulness downhill in the milkhouse. Quite a different vision than two young boys today seated together on a couch intently playing a videogame! Reminiscence about farm life in the past is a portrait of unstinting human interdependence. The seasonal work that was hardest always required the strength, skill, purpose, and discipline of more than one

person. Only intense collective effort, *physical* effort, could make a farm prosper in those simpler days.

In that agrarian world, there was understandably little coddling, because the disciplined efforts of young children were valuable. In that bygone society, adult women and men had specific, traditional roles—inevitably shaped by the physical distinction between males and females, and between the young and the old. Such fierce differences back then appeared to form the very bedrock of consciousness; but now, all those old-time distinctions can seem greatly eased in the modern world—and even put to rout.

Illustration by Michael McCurdy
for *Goodbye Highland Yankee* by Scott E. Hastings, Jr.

For a complete account of Scott Hasting, Jr.'s life, you may turn to The *Barnard Bulletin's* November 2024 issue. In this current issue, there is room to examine the texture of his prose and the specifics of his intricate descriptions. What follows is a complete chapter, "Haying Time," quoted directly from Hastings' book *Goodbye Highland Yankee*:

> *In late May or early June, Gramp began to hay the farm…Haying called Dad home. Off we'd go, early on a Friday night, following the river north. The ride seemed to take forever, but at last we'd hit East Ryegate and know we were almost there. If the milking wasn't done, we'd go into the barn with Dad while he helped Gramp and Indian Joe finish up. Sometimes Uncle Bill would be there, too, perched on a three-legged milking stool, the jets of warm milk rattling off the bottom of his pail till it began to fill.*
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> *This was all hand milking, of course, and there'd always be a couple of farm cats sitting beside Gramp silently begging. He'd wink at us and then speak to the cats. They'd half rise up on their hind feet and open their jaws wide as Gramp squirted a stream from one of the teats straight into a mouth. Sometimes he'd let 'em have it right in the eyes to keep them on their toes, then he'd laugh.*
>
> *Next morning Uncle Rinx would show up with Aunt Louine who, because she was short and broad, he jokingly called "Stub." Our McIndoe Falls cousins, Sis, Lloyd, and Francis, came to help, and a large, lively crew sat down to breakfast after the milking and chores were done.*
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> *After breakfast, while the men hitched the team of Belgians to the hayrack, Gram made up a batch of cold switchel in a milk can. Her receipt was: one gallon of cold spring water, a quart of apple cider vinegar, two cups of molasses, four tablespoons of ground ginger, and two or three handfuls of raw oatmeal scattered on top.*
>
> *She multiplied this as many times as needed, never failing to add the oatmeal, which gave flavor and consistency to the drink and protected against heat prostration. The receipt varied from region to region, and many people never knew about the oatmeal, which was a trick of the local Scottish population.*
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> *Switchel was pleasant to drink and a great thirst quencher; in the intense heat of the hayfield we drank copiously from the sweating can. I must add that the men did not rely solely on Gram for their drink; they made various stealthy preparations on their own, which involved a stumpy stoneware jug sunk in the icy water of the milkhouse tub.*
>
> *When the back of the wagon was loaded with pitchforks, scythes, and a couple of bull rakes, and the front with men and kids, we were ready, and Gramp clucked to the team to go. His little cow dog, Laddie, came with us, lagging in the shade under the wagon. The way led along the main road for perhaps a half mile, then cut sharply to the left following a dirt farm road down to the gently rolling hayfield beside the river.*
>
> *Almost from the beginning of colonization, English and European grasses gained a foothold among progressive farmers in favored regions where they would grow. Among the ones Gramp cut were the red and white clovers, bluegrass, orchard grass, and native herdsgrass (timothy and foxtail). Herdsgrass and red clover, sown together, became a standby. As Dad once told me, "Timothy and red clover, that used to be a big crop. In the old days they'd have fields of nothing but timothy. There isn't any hay in the world that is better than timothy for a horse."*
>
> *Redtop was another grass that furnished grazing and a moderate amount of hay on the thin, sour soils of northern New England. There were some strictly*

local hay types, too. When Dad was a boy, a fine hay was cut on two big islands in the Connecticut River near McIndoes. "They used to call it island grass," Dad said. "Each island had a big barn on it, and they filled them with the hay. Then in the wintertime we'd go over there with a stationary baler and bale it and sled it across the river on the ice."

As soon as we reached the hayfield, my cousins took off their shoes and worked barefoot all day. Not to be outdone, my brother and I did the same. We paid for it; after a day running barefoot on the coarse hay stubble, our soles were so sore it hurt to walk. Gram knew it, and after we'd taken our bath that night, she got out her big red "medicine box." Opening it, she removed a round tin box of Rawleigh's Antiseptic Salve—a sovereign preparation sold door-to-door to farm and village wives. It was a product in which she placed great faith. On a mustard yellow background covered with gold scrollwork, a handsome circular red band bore the legend, HIGHLY MEDICATED. Within the red band, in a heavily ornamented circle, was a picture of Mr. Rawleigh, a calm, studious-looking man with a handsome white mustache, round collar, and tie. Through some trick of the printing, he stared with level gaze straight into the eyes of the user. "Here," he seemed to say, "is a medicament for all." Gram spread it thinly on our feet and made us rub it in well and wear socks to bed. Magically, the burning soreness vanished by morning.

Another of Gram's cures had to do with stepping on a nail. I remember the dull, throbbing ache to this day. On a farm, this was a serious injury due to the threat of lockjaw. If the nail had not penetrated too deeply, she bound a piece of salt pork, or a clean rag full of Fels Naptha soap well mixed with sugar, to the wound and let you go about your business. If the nail had gone well into the foot, she made up hot flaxseed poultices in cloth bags and you were out of action. You lay on Gramp's couch in a corner of the parlor and, whenever the poultice cooled, she'd apply a hot one from the supply in the kettle on the stove.

Haying the way Gramp did it in the 1930s was pretty old-fashioned. Though he drove a car, he would never allow a tractor on the farm. He let the hay down with a horse-drawn mowing machine and began to cut early in the season, because he wanted to cut a second crop called "rowen." Also, it was important to cut hay early before it became woody. The mowing machine saved considerable work. In Gramp's youth, hay was cut with the hand scythe. A line of men stepped off, one after the other, swinging their scythes in eight-foot arcs. Each man's cut lay flat, the stalks pointing in the same direction, in a layer called the "swath." We still use the word swath in describing hay downed by the mowing machine.

Once cut, hay was left to wilt in the swath. It had to be as dry as possible before being stored in the barn lest it burst into flame through the dreaded phenomenon of spontaneous combustion. As soon as some of the moisture had evaporated, the hay was shaken out and turned bottom uppermost to speed drying. Not owning a horse-drawn tedder, which did the job quickly and easily, Gramp did it by hand, using a hand rake or pitchfork to toss and upset the hay.

When the sun and wind had dried it, the hay was gathered into "windrows" stretching the width of the field. Gramp used a dump rake for this task. As the horse went along, the driver stepped on a foot pedal raising the rake's spring tines and releasing the hay. Dumping the hay at precisely the same spot each time left the field covered with even lines of fluffy windrows.

In a dark corner of Gramp's equipment shed hung an antique wooden rig he called a "shinbreaker" or "flopover rake." Up to the Civil War, and for a good while after, some local farmers raked their hay with this "machine." It was nothing more than a stout wooden bar with a wide handle fastened to it. The bar was pierced with rows of elongated wooden teeth and had a set of shafts for the horse that pulled it. When the teeth filled with hay, the farmer lifted the handle and the ends of the front teeth caught in the stubble, flipping the bar over and releasing the hay. The name "shinbreaker" came from the nasty propensity of the device to administer a smart crack across the farmer's shins as it flopped over.

Illustration by Michael McCurdy
for *Goodbye Highland Yanke*e by Scott E. Hastings, Jr.

Near fences, trees, and big stones, the mowing machine and dump rake couldn't work in close. Gramp always cut these out by hand and raked the hay onto the field with a bull rake, its teeth a good sixteen inches long. We also used the bull rake to clean up the hay scatterings left by the dump rake.

During the afternoon of that first day, we pitched the windrows into beehive-shaped piles called "haycocks," each covered with a light canvas "haycap" if it looked like rain. Farmers who had no haycaps raked out the top of the cock into a kind of thatch to shed water. Next morning, the haycocks were pitched out flat again and left to dry, with occasional shakings out, the rest of the day.

As soon as the hay "rattled" when handled, it was dry enough to load on the hayrack, a four-wheeled wooden wagon that carried loads of hay seemingly piled up to the sky. Gramp's wagon had a low rail fixed along both sides with pointed hardwood stakes set in it to help lock the load. One of our McIndoes cousins drove it around the field with a couple of the men on top to build the load. Some men could build a load of hay and some never caught the knack. Dad and Gramp were experts. They took each forkful as it was pitched up by the men on the ground and placed it on the load in such a way that it locked the load together as it was built.

The men on the ground separated the windrows into "tumbles," which they pitched up to the men making the load. A tumble was made by taking a pitchfork and separating a long rectangle of hay from the windrow. Its length depended on the mass, or heft, of hay. The men mentally divided the length into quarters, then folded the end ones back onto the middle. This reduced the length of the rectangle by half and doubled its thickness. One end of this piece was then folded back upon the other to form the tumble, a rough square four thicknesses deep. A pitchfork was thrust into its middle and it was pitched up to the men on the hayrack.

Haying was a time of intense, hurried work for "hay has to be made while the sun shines." A hint of rain sent everyone scurrying to load the dried hay and draw it to the barn; a heavy rain could ruin the crop as it lay in the field. At the end of the day, there were still the chores and milking to do.

The words—"…there were still the chores and milking to do"—could have composed the end of the chapter; but Scott Hastings had a gentleman's sense of fairness. There were no farm women in that hayfield, true; but he gave a nod their way, valuing their role, by ending instead with this flourish:

It was no easier for the women who carried on the regular work of the household and cooked as well for the extra helpers. Each summer haying came to an end, accompanied by a collective sigh of relief from all hands.

Illustration by Michael McCurdy
for *Goodbye Highland Yankee* by Scott E. Hastings, Jr.

Vermont author Howard Mosher greatly admired *Goodbye Highland Yankee*, calling it "the liveliest and most authentic New England memoir" with its "reminiscences" always "witty, thoughtful," and "written straight from the heart." He felt such "spare and tough and lovely" prose did credit to the hill farm, its subject. Vermont author Noel Perrin praised how "immensely readable" Scott Hastings' accounts of farm life were. And Judson Hale, for years the Editor-in-Chief of Yankee magazine, praised Hastings for having, "quite simply, preserved a certain long-ago culture of ours for all time."

In addition to the copy of *Goodbye Highland Yankee* by Scott E. Hastings, Jr.—from which all quotations in this article have been taken—the Danforth Library now owns two other books by this author: *The Last Yankees* and *Miss Mary Mack All Dressed in Black*. The Danforth wishes to thank Duncan Hastings for the gift of these books.

EDITORS NOTE

Due to Microsoft's planned "end-of-life" of Microsoft Publisher in October, the Bulletin is now being published using Microsoft Word. This has resulted in slight changes in the way this issue looks. Minor changes may show up in future issues as I get more familiar with Microsoft Word as a publishing application. This is the fourth time that the publishing software used to produce the Barnard Bulletin has changed, and I am hoping that I will not to have to change software again in the foreseeable future.

2005 FEAST & FIELD

BARNARTS MUSIC SERIES

May 29 Chad Hollister Band - rock & roll
June 5 Interplay Jazz w/Michael Zsoldos Quartet - jazz
June 12 Shady Rill - folk
June 19 Cate Great/Cold Chocolate - circus/folk & bluegrass
June 26 La Muchacha y el Propio Junte - Colombian folk rock
July 3 Lakou Mizik - Haitian roots
July 10 KeruBo - Afro-jazz & folk
July 17 Quincy Saul Research and Development Band - funk/soul
July 24 Khumariyaan Pakistani - hyperfoik & Pashtun
July 31 The Wormdogs - roots & Americana
Aug 7 Mal Maiz - psychedelic latin
Aug 14 Zikina - Afro-jazz & rock
Aug 21 Beecharmer - old timey/bluegrass
Aug 28 Bow Thayer's Choirs of Aether - improvisational rock
Sept 4 Timbermash - bluegrass/Americana
Sept 11 Queer Dance Party
Sept 18 Fabiola Mendez - Puerto Rican folk& jazz
Sept 25 Equinox Closing Festival

OTHER BARNARTS EVENTS

The Sound of Music by Rogers & Hammerstein, June 20-29, Outdoor Summer Theater

Roald Dahl's Matilda BarnArts Summer Youth Theater, August 1-3, Barnard Town Hall

Barnard Street Dance, August 23, Barnard Town Hall

Haunted Village Theater, October 18, Village of Barnard

Fall Global Music Residency, October and November, dates to be announced, at Various Schools & Venues

Holiday Cabaret dinner & dance, Wassail Weekend, December 13, Barnard Town Hall

Winter Carols December 19, First Universalist Church of Barnard

SILVER LAKE PROGRESSIVE CLUB NEWS

FROM THE BARNARD LIST

Django Farinas is a 2024 WUHS graduate who lived in Barnard his whole life. He received a SLPC scholarship toward his studies at Wheaton College in Norton, MA. When asked about it, Django said, *"receiving a Silver Lake Progressive Club scholarship* ***made me feel valued and seen*** *by the residents of Barnard, and the funds* ***helped pay my tuition expenses*** *for my second semester when my summer earnings were no longer. I'm studying International Relations and Politics, which is currently a very interesting field as the international system of diplomacy, especially in the US's case, is getting flipped on its head. I enjoy my classes and have made good friends in college but am looking forward to pounding nails in Barnard all summer!"*

Thank you to all who have donated time and money to our campaign to support the endeavors of Barnard students. **Our fundraising comes to an end this week, so please help us meet our goal by clicking here to donate today.**

THE PLANNING COMMISSION meets on the Monday prior to the first Wednesday of every month at 7 PM in the Town Office.

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

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

DANFORTH LIBRARY HOURS: Monday & Wednesdays 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.; and Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to Noon. ECFiber Wi-Fi. Phone: 802-234-9408. Email: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com.

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

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, selectboard@barnardvt.us, by phone: 234-9211 x 2. Office Hours: Tuesdays 9am-4pm, Thursdays 8am-noon, and by appointment.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, zoning@barnardvt.us, by phone: 234-9211 x 2. Office Hours: Tuesdays 9am-4pm, Thursdays 8am-noon, and by appointment.

TOWN CLERK office hours are Monday and 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

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 via. Zoom. Contact the clerk of the District. secretary@ecfiber.net, for meeting information or visit https://www.ecfiber.net/virtual-meetings/

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

LIME POND ROAD Closed, 05/27/2025 – 06/24/2023

Delectable Mountain Quilters (DMQ) meet the 1st Tuesday of every month at the Bethel Library from 1-3pm. Contact: Mary Croft 802-763-7074

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 J = E. The solution is found by trial and error. The CRYPTOGRAM answer is on the last page.

"U M H J H Q U J U J O,

Y C M F J B H Q U J T F R J;

T R B B S J V O M L' B Z J B Q U M R L O

F C P J B S J O Q L O J F C M L H O M."

- H F C D Q I U J H

THE BULLETIN BOARD

AT ARTRISTREE

Thursday, May 29th - June 8th - Three Tall Women

One life, three perspectives, towering heights of truth. A two-act play by Edward Albee. Three Tall Women by Edward Albee is a Pulitzer Prize-winning drama that offers a profound and introspective look at aging, memory, and identity.

Saturday, May 31st at 7pm - Allumé

Allumé is a collaborative project between Nashville's Miss Tess, Thomas Bryan Eaton (Miss Tess, Bertha), and Lafayette, Louisiana-based K.C. Jones (Feufollet, The Daiquiri Queens), and Trey Broudreaux (The Revelers). Tickets $30

Wednesdays Music on the Hill Summer Concert Series

Free Admission. Join us every Wednesday at 6:30PM from June 11th through September 24th for unforgettable evenings of live music and community.

Saturday, June 21st at 7pm,
Juan Nieves & Orquesta Legado

SALSA DANCE is back! A refreshing musical ensemble thanks to its Latin-American influences. Be ready to dance and have fun with Juan Nieves & Orquesta Legados. Tickets: $30

Learn more at: https://artistreevt.org/artistree-events

Artistree Community Arts Center & Gallery
2095 Pomfret Road
PO Box 158
South Pomfret, VT 05067
802.457.3500 ext. 129
Support Artistree at:
https://artistreecommunityartscenter-bloom.kindful.com/
Website: **www.artistreevt.org**

GLAD RAGS SALE

Sale Fall And Donation Dates

The Fall 2025 Sale dates are:
Friday, September 19 ~ 2 - 6 PM
Saturday, September 20, 9 AM - 2 PM
Sunday, September 21, 10 AM - 1 PM (when everything is half price)

- -

The Saturday collection dates for the Fall sale are 10 AM - 1 PM on: July 19, August 2, August 16, August 30

For more information, please visit our website at gladrags.org, or join our Facebook group for more up-to-date news.

MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE VERMONT TOUR REENACTMENT

The Barnard Historical Society is pleased to ask you to mark your calendar for a mid-day event on June 28, 2025

Two hundred years ago on that date Marquis de Lafayette was touring the United States as an honored guest. While traveling north on the Royalton Turnpike, he made a stop at the Aiken Stand for his coachmen to water the horses at mid-day. The Barnard selectmen of the time urged residents to gather there to welcome him during the brief stop. And they did! More than a thousand people turned out that day.

On June 28, 2025 a speaker representing Lafayette will be tracing his route though Vermont, making stops where Lafayette did.

We want to welcome this anniversary visit with the same enthusiasm our forebearers displayed. There won't be speeches, just an enthusiastic crowd, some music, some cider, and a cheer as LaFayette leaves to continue on to Royalton.

We invite attendees, if they can, to dress in period outfits (from 1776 to present) such as uniforms or family outfits from an old trunk.

Please mark your calendars for this fun event.

Paige Gibbs, Barnard Historical Society

AT FABLE FARM

Tasting Room Re-Opening for the Season Memorial Day Weekend and We Welcome a New Chef-in-Residence

Our tasting room reopens for the season on Saturday, May 24th, with an expanded menu, and will continue every Saturday through November, from 12–6pm, rain or shine, in our indoor/outdoor barn-orchard gathering space.

In addition to our rotating selection of artisanal pizzas, our expanded menu will continue celebrating seasonal vegetables and meats from the farm, with the new inspired offerings featuring fresh-ground masa from Nando at Moon and Stars in South Royalton, VT

Whether you're in the mood for a leisurely lunch, an early dinner, or small bites paired with curated flights from our full lineup of Fable's living wines and ciders, it's the perfect way to spend a Saturday afternoon.

And new this year: Keep an eye out for special Saturdays featuring private tasting dinners, educational experiences, and guided tours led by maestro Sycamore. Sign-ups will be available on our website soon.

Sycamore steps in as our Chef-in-Residence at Fable Farm for the summer season. Sycamore began his food journey 15 years ago by apprenticing on organic farms around the East Coast, which then inspired him to become a private chef, as the steward and translator between farmer and eater. After years of managing a small catering company in California, he expanded into teaching as a professor at the Culinary Institute of America. Now, he brings the full depth of that experience—gardener, chef, and teacher—to the kitchen at Fable Farm.

In addition to opening the tasting room this coming weekend and the start of Feast & Field on May 29th, we're also thrilled to soon announce the launch of Soil to Soul Suppers, a monthly gathering under the Fable orchard canopy, where food becomes prayer and sacrament, running June through September. Guests will be invited to gather in reverence, storytelling, and seasonal bounty.

Private event and catering inquiries are also welcome. Join us for a season of deep nourishment and grounded celebration.

Jon & Christopher

CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

"Roses are red, violets are blue;
But they don't get around, like the dandelions do."
- Slim Acres