



A VERMONT WRITER

BY MARGARET EDWARDS

This column is an offering of the Danforth Library in Barnard that aims to introduce a Vermont writer who deserves wider renown. The quotation from "Brattleboro's Snow Angel," by Vermont journalist and essayist Charles Edward Crane, is taken from his book Winter in Vermont published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1941.

Charles Edward Crane (1884 – 1960)



A snow sculpture on the Dartmouth College campus, circa 1941.

A full profile of Charles Edward Crane appeared in *The Barnard Bulletin* of February 2021, and a shorter sketch of his life appeared in the September 2025 *Bulletin*. His return to these pages means he's now building an identity, not receiving a stranger's welcome.

Crane was the son of Clarence Crane, a New England journalist. When Charles Edward was still a boy, his father moved the family from New Hampshire to Ludlow, Vermont, and began to edit a newspaper he had purchased, *The Vermont Tribune*.

Becoming a journalist like his father became the sole ambition of young Crane. After his graduation from Dartmouth College, he educated himself in the trade as a cub reporter in New York City. There he married and, eventually returning to Vermont with his wife and their two children, followed paternal footsteps by editing a newspaper that he had purchased, *The Middlebury Register*.

This new venture didn't last long. The *Register* had to be sold. Next the family moved to Brattleboro, where Crane, somewhat humbled, wrote copy for *The Brattleboro Reformer*.

The year 1931 brought a boost to Crane's finances—never mind that America's Great Depression was in full swing. The National Life Insurance Company of Vermont hired him to write publicity features aimed at Vermonters. This sort of writing suited Crane's talents. He relaxed into steady work, earning an excellent salary. For the rest of his working life until his retirement, he seems to have followed his own interests, topic to topic, discovering many aspects of the state to praise and admire. His well-liked and various Vermont essays became chapters he later collected and published in books, and his highly readable prose still retains a charm that seems not only effortless but timeless.

Below is a reconstruction—part quotation, part summation—of a chapter introduced as "a wholly true tale," from Crane's 1941 collection *Vermont in Winter*.

Brattleboro's Snow Angel

... Dartmouth College boys who cap the climax of their winter by unveiling a dazzling exhibit of snow sculpture on the campus during carnival week should learn here, if they do not already know, that the best efforts in snow sculpture at Dartmouth were matched, and I'm inclined to think I'm warranted in saying eclipsed, right in their own Connecticut Valley eighty-five years ago. It happened in Brattleboro [Vermont], less than fifty miles down the river from Hanover, on the eve of the new year, 1857, and as I lived ten winters in Brattleboro, I came to know the story from many tellings there...

I should judge that the last night of December 1856 (and mind you, that was before the Civil War) was not ideal for the purpose of shaping snow men—or angels, either. It was bitter cold, and though the snow must have had some plastic qualities, it apparently wasn't just the moist medium that ordinarily tempts us Vermonters to mold it into snowballs, forts, or figures of men with hunks of anthracite coal for eyes. However, young Larkin Goldsmith Mead had the urge that last night of '56 to mark the end of the year by fashioning an angel in the village street, in a little flatiron-shaped piece of ground formed by the junction of two streets in front of the present site of Brattleboro High School.

Mead was the son of a Brattleboro lawyer, and his mother was a sister of John Humphry Noyes, who started the famous Oneida community in New York.

Being a lad of resolution and a genius, young Mead created his angel, notwithstanding the unfavorable conditions, and on that New Year's Eve (which was almost the eve of his twenty-second birthday, January 3), he took one of his first steps to world fame.

Larkin was one of nine Mead children, born across the Connecticut River in Chesterfield, New Hampshire, but at the age of nineteen he began clerking in William & Tyler's hardware store in Brattleboro, and when he wasn't weighing nails or doing other store jobs, he amused himself behind the counter, cutting a pig in white marble. This particular object of art attracted the attention of a "watercure" guest—for Brattleboro then drew many cultured people to its famous Wesselhoeft hydropathic institute; and in accordance with the advice of this gentleman and with the help of friends, the young clerk forsook hardware to study sculpture in New York, in the studio of Henry K. Brown. He assisted Brown in making the equestrian statue of [George] Washington for Union Square in New York.

At the time of the snow angel story, two years later, young Mead was back in Brattleboro teaching drawing classes which met in the town hall. He decided to try snow as another medium of art and chose as his subject the recording angel, closing the record of the year. He enlisted as his aides two close companions, the Burnham brothers, Edward and Henry, whose father was proprietor of an iron foundry nearby.

In a snowdrift, with the air bitter cold, Mead and Edward Burnham labored for hours, while Henry kept a hot fire burning in the foundry. It was so cold they had to take the snow inside the foundry and partly melt it, wet it, and mold it; and as the various details of the angelic figure, wings and all, took form, Henry poured on water, which almost instantly froze and gave the figure a sort of adamantine covering. It was as glossy as if wrapped in cellophane.

Finally, by lantern-light Mead surveyed his work—and like most artists, including the Creator, he decided it was good. But how good he did not dimly imagine.

The New Year dawned bright and clear, and not long after the sun cast its dazzling rays over Mount Wantastiquet, the inhabitants of Brattleboro discovered the magic light of genius flashing from the ice-coated image. A report was: "Transcendentally beautiful stood the Snow Angel in the prismatic glow of the morning sun's reflection. The early risers and pedestrians about town were amazed, when they drew near, to see a statue of such exquisite contour and grace of form, with such delicate moldings and dimplings in detail as to suggest the use of a chisel, and that only in a master hand."

There was truly a serious, angelic face, hair, rounded arms, neck and bust, wings and waving drapery.

The weekly Vermont Phoenix chronicled the result as follows: "The denizens of Toad Hill [the slight rise of ground on North Main Street] were agreeably surprised when coming down from breakfast New Year's morning to

find a beautiful statue at the fork of the roads opposite the schoolhouse. It was about eight feet in height and represented the Recording Angel that may be supposed to wait upon Time, making up her record at the close of the year. In her right hand was a stylus, while in her left she held the tablet on which events were recorded. It was modeled in snow the previous evening by Larkin G. Mead, and in a manner that was of itself sufficient evidence of his superior claims as an artist. It was visited by hundreds of people, all of whom were more than pleased by this novel specimen of home talent."

Protected by the cold weather and the respect accorded it (for the schoolchildren were too awed by this work of genius to want to harm it), the image stood until the January thaw set in, to which it naturally succumbed. During a fortnight, however, many people came from surrounding towns and some from more distant places to view it. The New York Tribune and the Springfield Republican had interesting descriptions of the twice seven days' wonder, and the account, in part, was widely reprinted, even in foreign lands. What followed was this:

Nicholas Longworth of Cincinnati, a patron of art, paid Mead liberally to make a replica of the Snow Angel in Vermont marble, and it was duly executed by the young artist. Still another replica in marble stands today in All Souls' Church, Brattleboro; another in a cemetery at Westminster.

The Angel which Mr. Longworth bought was sold by him, so he could indulge further in the encouragement of Mead; and the Angel later found a place in the Hall of Statuary in the Capitol at Washington. I do not recall seeing it there of late years... I'm curious to know where this Snow Angel is, for I'd like to have it brought back to Vermont and enshrined in some niche high up on Mount Mansfield.

On the wings of this angel, as it were, young Mead rose to fame. From doing angels he took a great jump and sculptured that old swashbuckling hero of Vermont, Ethan Allen. He did two statues of him, one of which went into the Hall of Statuary at Washington, and the other, now in a somewhat scrofulous state, holds its upraised arm at the main portal of the Vermont State House—an elbow permanently bent for the past seventy-five years, but I believe it was a habit of Ethan's to bend an elbow.

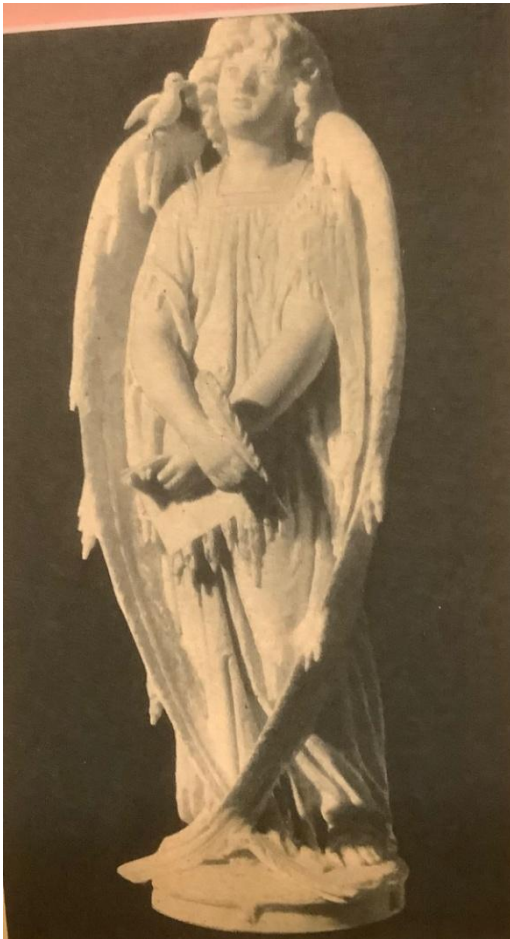
When the Civil War broke out, Mead went to the front as an artist for Harper's Weekly, and while [he was] sketching a Rebel fort, a sharpshooter's bullet all but clipped his ear. Probably one of his best-known works was his statue of Abraham Lincoln at Springfield, Illinois.

After the Civil War, Mead went to Italy and received a cordial welcome there from another Vermont sculptor, Hiram Powers. For a time, Mead lived in Venice as an

attaché of the American consulate, the consul being the celebrated William Dean Howells, novelist and early editor of the Atlantic Monthly. Mead's sister Elinor (also an artist) married Howells; and Mead's brother, William Rutherford Mead, became one of the world's most distinguished architects, central partner in the firm McKim, Mead & White, who designed the Boston Public Library and a score of other memorable buildings in the country.

Charles Edward Crane's description goes on to report how the talented young Larkin Mead began living in Florence where he established a studio and how he ventured back to Venice where he had chanced to meet "a beautiful Italian girl" while strolling in the piazza of San Marco. That young lady, Crane archly assures us readers, "wasn't made of snow." Marietta di Benvenuti belonged to "a noble but impoverished Venetian family," and her love for Mead was as "instantaneous" as his for her. They married—though neither, at first, spoke the other's language.

Should we be surprised that, brought to Vermont, the young Mrs. Mead didn't like the winter? The couple abruptly returned to Florence, which became "their permanent home." It's where Mead died decades later, in 1910.



The Snow Angel carved in marble, 1856.

Crane concludes his chapter by calling Mead's Snow Angel "the first great achievement" of snow sculpture.

It's unfortunate that the single illustrative photo of Mead's stunning angel, provided by Crane, is the one below—a damaged image, with the very top of the figure's head clipped off. Furthermore, the photo is not of the original snow version, but of a marble version that Mead later carved.

Despite the photo's shortcomings, Crane doesn't feel a need to apologize. The story itself must suffice. He confesses: "I have been led to spin out quite a tale of both the man and his art, hoping that, of a windy winter night, you may find it good fireside reading, all relevant to Winter in Vermont."

Barnard's Danforth Library can provide copies of two books by Charles Edward Crane: *Let Me Show You Vermont* (1937) and *Winter in Vermont* (1941). Both are in good condition and available to be checked out. Look for them on the Vermont shelf, each with a green NF (non-fiction) label on its spine.

Charles B. Danforth Library News

March 2026



Think Spring!

Open Hours

2-4 p.m. Monday

2-4 p.m. Wednesday

10 a.m. – Noon – Saturday

On the afternoon of Sunday, February 8, the Danforth Library hosted a panel to discuss the rise of fascism in Holland and Dutch Indonesia during the late 1930s and the years of World War II. The four panelists were two couples originally from Holland but for decades U.S. citizens: Abraham and Bineke Oort of White River Junction, Vermont, and Robert and Mariet Jaarsma of Cornish, New Hampshire. Their fascinating opening remarks were followed by a lively discussion with the audience. About 32 people attended.



Margaret Edwards (middle) with our four panelists

Charles B. Danforth Library, P.O. Box 204, Barnard, VT 05031

6208 VT Route 12

Phone: 802-234-9408

Email: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com

Trustees: Paula Audsley, Margaret Edwards, Judy Maynes, Adelaide McCracken, and Susan Salter Reynolds

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARNING
TOWN OF BARNARD MARCH 3, 2026**

The legal voters of the Town of Barnard are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Barnard Town Hall, 115 North Road in Barnard, Vermont on Tuesday March 3, 2026, at 10:00 A.M. to transact the following business from the floor:

ARTICLES

1. To elect a Town Moderator.
2. To hear the reports of the Town Officers.
3. To elect the following Town Officers by ballot: a Town Clerk for three years, one Selectboard Member for one year (to finish Bob Edmunds’s term), one Selectboard Member for three years, a Treasurer for three years, a Delinquent Tax Collector for one year, one Auditor for three years, one Auditor for two years (to finish Tom Morse’s term), a First Constable for one year, a Second Constable for one year, one Trustee of Public Funds for three years, one Library Trustee for two years (to finish Susan McNulty’s term), one Library Trustee for five years, one Cemetery Commissioner for five years, and all other officers as made necessary by law.
4. Shall the voters authorize the Treasurer to collect current taxes?
5. To authorize the Treasurer to collect property taxes due for the ensuing year in two equal payments. The first payment to be due on or after August 18, 2026, with the due date being set by the Treasurer, and the second payment to be due

- on February 16, 2027. Such payments are to be made in United States funds, to be physically received by the Town on or before the due date, or if mailed, legibly postmarked on or before the due date, with interest and penalties to be applied to past due payments as allowed by law.
6. To authorize the Selectboard to reconcile any FY25 General Fund or Highway surplus and/or deficit, and in the event of a surplus, the amount is to be carried forward to the next fiscal year.
7. To vote a FY27 Highway budget of \$1,781,820.54 of which \$1,633,693.13 shall be raised by taxes, and a FY27 General budget of \$1,068,640.47 of which \$763,725.47 shall be raised by taxes.
8. To do any other business which may come legally before this meeting.

Eligible residents can register to vote at the town clerk’s office during normal business hours prior to town meeting and at the town hall during town meeting.

Early or absentee ballots are not available for votes “from the floor” at town meeting.

Voters must be present to be counted.

Dated this 28th day of January 2026.

Barnard Selectboard:

Rock Webster, Chair Kurt Lessard Richard Lancaster

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

“UFPLK WI SKAG ZEM

DWGFCCZ LEGQWGLA

ZEMPIACD WX’I XWUA XE IXER

SAFPWGN XKA KAFQZ LEFX,

EGCZ XE VA RPEQAG SPEGN

XKA GATX JFZ.”

–FMXKEP MGHGESG

BILLINGS FARM AND MUSEUM

Magic of Maple at Billings Farm
Now thru Sunday, February 22
10:00AM - 4:00PM

Explore Vermont's rich maple history and discover maple syrup traditions during Magic of Maple. Sample sugar on snow, learn about maple trees and why they produce their sweet sap, take a sleigh ride, and more! Find all the maple-y sweetness at Billings Farm!

Horse-Drawn Sleigh Rides
February 22 & 28, March 7 & 8, 15, 21 & 28
11:00AM - 3:00PM

Take a horse-drawn sleigh ride at Billings Farm before winter ends. On February 22 and 28 and select dates in March from 11:00AM - 3:00PM, visitors can take a horse-drawn sleigh ride - conditions permitting, of course. Tickets are \$5/person (ages 2 and up) in addition to admission, so gallop don't trot to Billings early - these rides sell out!! Private sleigh rides are available for booking with advance registration through March.

No horsing around - all the sleigh ride info can be found here: [Horse-Drawn Rides - Billings Farm](#)

Vermont Film Series - Folktales

Woodstock Vermont Film Series: Folktales, Saturday, February 28 & Sunday, March 1 at 3PM. Take a journey to Arctic Norway where students at Pasvik Folk High School embark on a life-changing gap year navigating the wilderness, learning to dog sled, and discovering strength within themselves. Folktales captures their adventures in this exhilarating film.

For tickets and more info, sled on over to: [Woodstock VT Film Series - Billings Farm and Museum, Woodstock, VT](#)

Looking for something to do during the long month of March? Billings has the cure for the March winter blues! Starting March 6, Billings will be open Friday thru Monday 10AM - 4PM. Stop by for some farm fun! [Billings Farm and Museum - Billings Farm Woodstock, Vermont](#)

OUR WORKING LANDS PHOTOGRAPHY BY CALEB KENNA NOW - JUNE 14

Experience breathtaking aerial imagery of Vermont's working landscapes alongside intimate portraiture of the people who steward the land. This thought-provoking exhibit invites the viewer to reconsider familiar landscapes and asks us to examine the evolving relationship between people and the natural world. <https://billingsfarm.org/our-working-lands-photography-by-caleb-kenna/>

Billings Farm & Museum
Woodstock, VT
info@billingsfarm.org

FOOD SELF COLLECTION AT NWPL

The Norman Williams Public Library is collecting non-perishable food for the Woodstock Community Food Shelf. Please help your neighbors in need! Drop off non-perishable food in the box in the lobby any time during library hours: Mon, Wed, Thur, Fri, 10-6, Tues, 10-8 & Sat 10-4.

We'll deliver your donation to the Woodstock Community Food Shelf during their operating hours.

Norman Williams Public Library
10 The Green, Woodstock, VT 05091, 802-457-2295
NormanWilliams.org

NEWS FROM BARNARTS

RACE AROUND THE LAKE

Dreaming of spring? Sign up today for Race Around the Lake! A Fundraiser for BarnArts Youth Programming

"The most beautiful race in Vermont", Sunday, May 17, 2026 at the Silver Lake State Park in Barnard, VT.

Events: 10K Run, 5K Run/Walk, Virtual 10k & 5k.

Early Registration Fees:

10K Adults: \$50, 12 & under: \$25

5K Adults: \$40, 12 & under: \$25

Virtual 10K & 5K: \$25 & \$15.

10K Race begins at 10:30am. 5K Race begins at 11am. Sign-up by April 30 to receive a free Race Around the Lake T-shirt! The Race begins and ends at Silver Lake State Park, with courses encircling Silver Lake on town roads, dirt roads and single-track wooded trails with intermittent views of the lake. The challenging 10K route pops out of the woods on Royalton Turnpike and loops back to the state park via Tower Rd.

After-Race activities along Silver Lake include a Chef's Table lunch free to all racers, live music and an award ceremony.

Can't attend but still want to participate? Sign up to Race Virtually wherever! Go to our RACE PAGE for more info and to sign up:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/VT/Barnard/BarnArtsRaceARoundtheLake>

Is your business interested in being a race sponsor? Please contact us at info@barnarts.org for information!

802-234-1645 (BarnArts voicemail)

BarnArts Center for the Arts
PO Box 41
Barnard, VT 05031

www.barnarts.org
info@barnarts.org
802-234-1645 (voicemail)

THE PLANNING COMMISSION meets on the second Monday 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.

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

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.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, Kassie Hull,
<mailto:selectboard@barnardvt.us>, 802-234-9211 x 4.
Office hours: By chance or by appointment.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, Robert Ramrath,
<mailto:zoning@barnardvt.us>, 802-234-9211 x 2.
Available by email and phone during business hours Monday through Friday. In person meetings at the Town Office available by appointment only.

TOWN CLERK office hours are Monday and Tuesday, 8:00am—3:30pm. 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

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

AT ARTISTREE!

VACATION CAMPS

Last call for February break fun! Sign your kids up for vacation camps at Artistree!

If you're still looking for a way to keep the kids engaged, creative, and off screens, there's still time to grab a spot in Artistree's "Puzzles and Games Galore!" vacation camp, running Tuesday, February 24 through Thursday, February 26 (9AM – 3PM).

Designed for ages 5–13, this hands-on camp invites kids to design their own jigsaw puzzles, invent board games, and create custom dice and playing pieces — with plenty of outdoor nature exploration and classic group games like Pictionary and Charades mixed in for extra fun.

Please pack a peanut-free lunch, snacks, water bottle, and winter gear for outdoor play — and don't wait, spaces are filling fast!

You can find more info and register here: <https://artistreevt.org/vacation-camps>

Artistree Community Arts Center & Gallery
2095 Pomfret Road/PO Box 158
South Pomfret, VT 05067
802.457.3500 ext. 129

CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

"March is when you finally convince yourself it's time to stop wearing the heavy coat, only to be proven wrong the next day."

– Author Unknown

THE GLAD RAGS SALE

UPCOMING SALE AND COLLECTION DATES

The Spring 2026 Sale dates are: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, April 24, 25 and 26.

The Saturday Collection dates for the 2026 Spring sales are: 3/14, 3/28, & 4/11 - Hours are 10-1.

The 2026 Fall Sale dates are: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday September 18, 19 and 20.

The 2026 Fall donation dates are: 7/18, 8/1, 8/15, & 8/29.

For more info about the sales and what donations we accept please visit - <http://www.gladrags.org>

The Glad Rags Sale Association, Inc. supports agencies that provide health and welfare services to the greater Woodstock Community.