



Connecticut
Landmarks

News Release

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Dinner at the Homestead



Connecticut Landmarks Connects History and Farm-Fresh Cuisine with Dinner at the Homestead an Open-air Celebration of Connecticut's Legendary Patriotic and Agrarian Heritage

Hartford, CT- Connecticut Landmarks will celebrate the rich agricultural heritage of the Nathan Hale Homestead, and the freshness of local food, with *Dinner at the Homestead*, prepared by River Tavern's Dinners-at-the-Farm team, headed by chef/owner Jonathan Rapp, on Saturday, September 11th beginning at 5 pm. The evening will commence with Open Homestead, which will include Colonial demonstrations and museum tours. A special cocktail hour will begin at 6 pm and dinner will be served at 7 pm. The Nathan Hale Homestead is located at 2299 South Street in Coventry, CT. Registration required, please call 860.247.8996 x 23 to register. Tickets are \$150 each, which includes a \$60 tax-deductible contribution to Connecticut Landmarks.

Dinner at the Homestead will treat guests to an exceptional, multi-course feast, featuring fresh, local food cooked from scratch on Jonathan Rapp's vintage Ford cherry-red cook truck.

"Our farm dinner team is excited about cooking a special dinner at the Homestead, the grounds and gardens are gorgeous and we'll be using local produce from nearby farms," says chef Jonathan Rapp. "I'm planning a menu that will incorporate some of the recipes that the Hale family may have cooked themselves using the fresh ingredients grown outside their kitchen. Everything will be cooked fresh that day. Recreating a sense of connection to farming, eating and our local heritage is what we hope people will take away from this event."

"History and cuisine go hand and hand here," says Sheryl Hack, Executive Director of Connecticut Landmarks. "Fresh, local, organic food graced the Hale family table and is a very sustainable way to eat. Hosting a farm dinner at the Homestead not only celebrates the rich agricultural and patriotic heritage of the site and of Nathan Hale's family, but also reminds people of the importance of supporting local farms, historic sites and our community."

Dinner at the Homestead will serve handcrafted, Connecticut-made wine from Sharpe Hill Vineyard in Pomfret, CT. Receiving more than 250 medals in International tastings, Sharpe Hill Vineyard is Connecticut's largest winery and is surrounded by more than 100 acres of historic Connecticut landscape. "We are thrilled to be partnering with one of Connecticut's oldest and most respected preservation organizations," says Catherine Vollweiler, owner of Sharpe Hill Vineyard. "The Homestead was one of my personal inspirations for the vineyard and this dinner will bring together the very best of what Connecticut has to offer – great food, wine and history."

Dinner at the Homestead will also be serving an assortment of beer from Willimantic Brewing Co. Located in the heart of rural Northeast Connecticut, Willimantic Brewing Co. brews over a dozen different handcrafted varieties of beer each month.

The agriculture heritage of the Nathan Hale Homestead is at the heart of its story. Richard Hale purchased 240 acres in Coventry in 1745 and moved his family into the Georgian house that still exists on the property in October of 1776. The family's move occurred just as they learned that their son Nathan was hanged as a spy on September 22, 1776, and when most of the Hale sons were away serving in the American army during the Revolution.

Primarily livestock producers of pigs, sheep, cattle and geese, the Hale family farm also included an orchard, woodlot, vegetable garden, kitchen garden, several barns and pasture. The new house was strategically positioned to face the road to Norwich, which served as a major route for sending livestock to market. The Hales also produced items such as butter, cheese, tallow, soap, cider and raw wool for export. By 1798, the Hale farm was the largest and most valuable farm in Coventry with 450 acres.

The house was sold out of the Hale family in 1838 and used as rental property. New Haven attorney George Dudley Seymour purchased the Hale farm in 1914. His original intention was to restore the farm to what existed during Nathan Hale's boyhood, but soon realized that stopping the fields from reverting back to forest was a daunting task. During the 1930s, his interests changed to managing the forest for timber products and wildlife. To carry on this goal, Seymour donated the land surrounding the Homestead to the state of Connecticut in 1945, and the property became the Nathan Hale State Forest which now encompasses 1500 acres. Also in 1945, Seymour bequeathed the house to Connecticut Landmarks following his death. Today, the Homestead is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is Connecticut Landmarks' most visited museum property.

Dinner at the Homestead is Connecticut Landmarks' signature fundraiser for the 2010 season. Proceeds will be directed to the preservation and promotion of not only the Nathan Hale Homestead, but also to the 11 other significantly historic properties owned and operated by Connecticut Landmarks.

For more information, please visit www.dinnersthefarm.com, or www.rivertavern.com.

About Connecticut Landmarks

Founded in 1936, Connecticut Landmarks, formerly known as the Antiquarian & Landmarks Society, is the largest state-wide heritage museum organization in Connecticut. The historic landmark properties include: the Amasa Day House, Moodus; the Amos Bull House, Hartford; the Bellamy-Ferriday House & Garden, Bethlehem; the Butler-McCook House & Garden and Main Street History Center, Hartford; the Buttolph-Williams House, Wethersfield; the Hempsted Houses, New London; the Isham-Terry House, Hartford; the Nathan Hale Homestead, Coventry; and the Phelps-Hatheway House & Garden, Suffield. Connecticut Landmarks' mission is to inspire appreciation for the Connecticut experience by preserving, presenting and promoting outstanding historic properties, collections and stories. For more information, please visit www.ctlandmarks.org.

Photos: Dinner at the Homestead. Photos by Nick Lacy.

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