

Ice Cream, Anyone?

By Inga Milbauer



Sign from Vickery's Ice Cream Parlor

This sign, in the collection of the Boylston Historical Society and Museum, was used in the early 1900s by Vickery's Ice Cream Parlor near the Boylston Common.

As advertised, Vickery's carried ice cream from the H.P. Hood Milk Company, which was founded in 1846 in Charlestown, Massachusetts by Harvey Perley Hood. The company was originally a milk delivery business. Harvey bought a farm in Derry, New Hampshire in 1856 to expand his business. He was born on June 6, 1823 in Chelsea, Orange County, VT. His wife, Caroline L. Corwin, was born on March 1, 1829 in North Tunbridge, Orange County, VT. Their son, Charles Hood, joined the company in 1880 and the company's name became H.P. Hood & Son. In 1890, the company owned four wagons, nine horses, and operated three railroad cars daily.[1] When Harvey's son Gilbert Hood joined the company in 1890, the company was incorporated as HP Hood & Sons. Harvey Hood passed away on June, 17, 1900, and his three sons, Charles, Gilbert and Edward Hood took over the company. Over the years, the company expanded their business into other dairy products. One of their most iconic products, developed in 1947, is the Hoodsie Cup (also known as "Hoodsies"), a small cardboard cup with chocolate and vanilla ice cream and a small wooden spoon under the top cover. In 1972, the company became HP Hood, Inc.

The Vickery's Ice Cream Parlor was situated in the home of George and Lillian Vickery, just east of the Historic Town Hall, on Central Street in Boylston, Massachusetts.

In her interview with Judy Haynes for the Boylston Historical Society's Oral History Project, Edith Kinnear Anderson (1916-2011) describes the ice cream parlor as follows:

"When you went into their front hall, they sold ice cream and candy. And later they built a little tea room on the side of their house."

[QUESTION] *"Was it used a great deal? Was it visited a lot, the tea room?"*

Edith remarked

"Yes, we would go up and they also sold bread. I remember when Fred [her husband] and I were going together, Mrs. Vickery had the wooden jigsaw puzzles and we would rent those for 25 cents apiece and that's what we would spend our evenings doing, making jigsaw puzzles." [2]



Vickery's House on Central Street

Built c 1819 – destroyed by fire 1974 - subsequently dismantled

Mrs. Vickery was born Lillian Ethel Bruncker on February 5th, 1877 in Boston, Massachusetts, the daughter of James S. Bruncker and Effie P. Allen. She married George Albert Vickery on November 26, 1902 in Boston, Massachusetts and moved to Boylston, Massachusetts.

George Vickery was born in Boylston in 1881, the son of William H. Vickery and Camilla A. Allen. George Vickery was a contractor and builder. His father was the town's undertaker, and when the senior Mr. Vickery died

in 1904, George Vickery took over the business. The couple moved to his late father's home on Central Street. "On Memorial Day one year, the Vickery's were eating ice cream outdoors. They were the only family in Boylston to have the machine necessary to store it. Many of the neighbors came over and wanted to buy some. It became such a popular fad that the Vickery's began to store it all spring and summer." [3] This must have been what led to the establishment of the ice cream parlor described above.



Lillian A. Vickery at the age of 94
Boston Post Cane Recipient

The U.S. Federal Census lists Lillian Vickery's occupation as dressmaker in 1910 and "country store operator" in 1940. She became the first telephone operator in Boylston, Massachusetts in 1905 when telephone lines were installed and all phone calls had to be placed through an operator.[4] Her husband had installed the first switchboard in town and was instrumental in establishing the Boylston Light Department. George Vickery died unexpectedly while on a visit to New York State on April 13, 1930, and was buried in Pine Grove Cemetery in Boylston, Massachusetts.

Lillian Vickery served the town of Boylston in different capacities for more than 30 years: as clerk to the Board of Selectman and Highway Superintendent, as town treasurer for 21 years, and as clerk for the Pine Grove Cemetery.

In November 1972, at the age of 94 years, Lillian Vickery became the recipient of the Boston Post Cane; an honor bestowed on the eldest person in the Town of Boylston. She passed away on November 23, 1977 and is buried in Pine Grove Cemetery in Boylston, Massachusetts.

More information about Boylston's Boston Post Cane recipients will follow in the upcoming Friday's Fascinating Finds!

Acknowledgements:

[1] <http://thehoodplant.com/h-p-hood-plant-history/>

[2] Interview of Edith Kinnear Anderson by Judy Haynes, Boylston Historical Society Oral History Project, 2004

[3] Newspaper article by Robert Backus "Boylston's Oldest Resident Still Serves Town" 11/6/1972

[4] Newspaper article by Polly Pruneau of the Telegram Staff "Past Memories and Future Ambitions at Age 94" 04/2/1971

<https://www.dairyprocessing.com/articles/240-hp-hood-still-going-strong>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/25220138/harvey-perley-hood>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/59589473/lillian-ethel-vickery>

<https://www.ancestry.com>

<https://www.findagrave.com>

<https://newengland.com/today/food/new-england-made/hoodsie-cups>

Newspaper articles & photographs from the Boylston Historical Society Collection, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Boylston, Massachusetts

Photography by Nancy Filgate