

Boylston History Through One Family's Papers and Photos

by Patricia Kelleher Bartram

Jennie Lind Flagg was the seventh child of eight children born in Boylston to Levi Lincoln Flagg (1818-1907) and his wife, Caroline Elizabeth Barnes (1823-1872). Jennie was born on 9 May 1859. She had four older brothers: Christopher Lincoln Flagg (1850-1906), Arthur Flagg (1851-1939), Joseph Walter Flagg (1853-1924), and George Augustus Flagg (1855-1928); two older sisters, Elinor Elizabeth Flagg (1849-1909), Alice Jane Flagg (1857-1895); and one younger sister, Mary Martha Flagg (1860-1958). Jennie was only 13 years old when her mother died.



Jennie Lind Flagg

Age 16 years

BHSM Photograph Collection

A Successful Family

The Flagg family grew up on their Boylston farm, with all of the children pitching in one way or another. They became very successful and her father was ultimately regarded as the wealthiest man in town. He started out working as a farm hand for neighboring farmers, saved his money and bought his father's homestead.

Thereafter, Levi divided his time between the farm and a livestock business (wholesale and retail slaughtering), both of which were successful financially. As evidence, as early as the 1870 federal census it was noted he had real estate valued at \$21,600 and a personal estate of \$6,400. In addition, Levi owned real estate in nearby towns, including building/owning many tenement houses and blocks in Worcester (near/on Piedmont St.). According to his obituary, he had resolved to amass \$100,000 during his lifetime and live to be a centenarian. Although he did not make it to 100 years, his estate when he died at age 88 years old in 1907 was reported to be in the neighborhood of \$150,000.



Levi Flagg Family Homestead

BHSM Photograph Collection

As a young woman Jennie made her way to Worcester, where in 1888 she worked as a corset maker while boarding at 54 Pleasant Street. But after the 1895 death of her sister, Alice Jane Flagg Hazard, who died just shy of 38 years old, Jennie moved back home to the farm to help care for Alice's two youngest children Otis Myron Hazard (age 11 years) and Alice Maud Hazard (age 7 years) who were in school and living with their Flagg grandfather. Alice's two older sons, Irving Lincoln Hazard and George Lambert Hazard, ages 16 and 13 years respectively, continued to live with their father, George Hazard. Alice had caused somewhat of a scandal when she married George Hazard, a man of color who had worked on her father's farm for three years during which they had apparently conducted a clandestine romance.

Jennie thereafter stayed at home and kept house for her father as well as looked after his business interests. She retained ownership of the family farm after her father's death in 1907.

Flagg Family Papers at BHSM

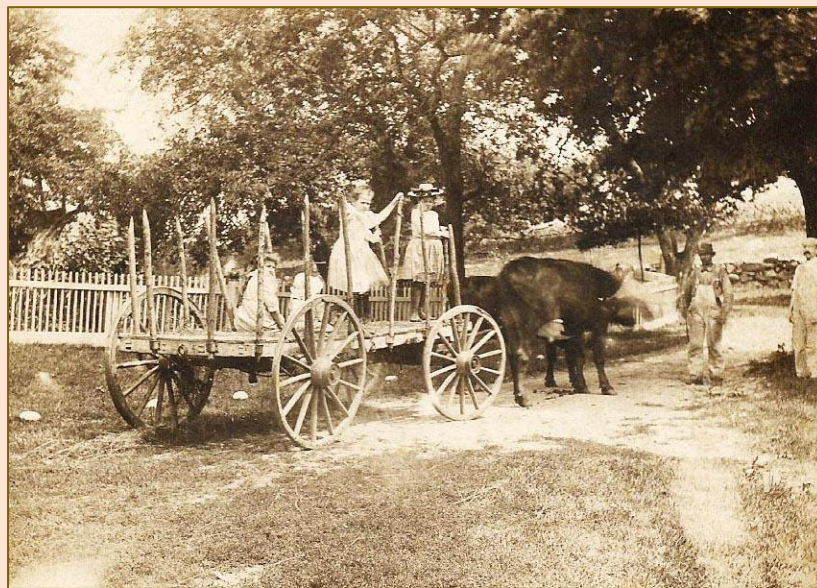
We know a lot about Jennie, the Flagg family and Boylston history from the letters, photographs and other materials that Jennie had the foresight to keep, which were ultimately donated in 1976 to the collections of the Boylston Historical Society and Museum by Henry Harlow of Shrewsbury who was connected to the Flagg family through marriage.

Some of the more interesting items are the letters from her younger sister Mary Martha Flagg Stewart, who wrote nearly every week during the 1880s-1890s from her marital home in Ridgewood, New Jersey, where Jennie periodically visited. When Mary wasn't bragging about her husband's job in New York City, she was forever complaining about the price of eggs (some things never change!), Sallie the horse who had been commandeered from her father's Boylston farm, or discussing fabrics and clothing and her children. Regarding the latter, she was often trying to learn about and compare her sister Alice's children to her own – although she was less than charitable in the way she spoke about Alice's children of mixed race.



Flagg Sisters' Letters

Mary (Flagg) Stewart, Jennie Flagg & Alice (Flagg) Hazard
BHSM Special Collections



Levi Lincoln Flagg Farm Wagon – 1903

Alice Maud Hazard (standing on wagon on right), John Lundgren (man standing on left)
Seeking identities of others
BHSM Photograph Collection



Alice Maud Hazard
niece raised by Jennie Flagg
BHSM Photograph Collection

By 1910 at the age of 50 years old, Jennie was living on the family farm she now owned on the Shrewsbury Road. Living with her was her niece, Alice Maud Hazard, age 17 years, an 81-year-old uncle George Flagg, and a Swedish hired farm hand, Lars Lundgren, who was also boarding there. She continued living on the farm until she was in her 80s, along with Lars John Lundgren the farm hand (maybe a beau?). (See *Then and Now* for Flagg homestead history @ <https://www.boylstonhistory.org/images/2023%20Apr%20FFF/Then%20and%20Now%2004292023%20Flagg%20Farm.pdf>)

But by the age of 90 years, Jennie, as an aunt by marriage, was living in the home of Hiram [Hiram] and Viola Harlow at 232 Gulf Street, Shrewsbury, next door to the aforementioned Henry Harlow, an antique dealer.

Jennie died at the great age of 91 years on 26 February 1951 and was interred in the family plot in Pine Grove Cemetery. She had outlived all of her siblings, except for Mary who died in 1958 at age 98 years at home in Long Island City, Queens, New York. Even Mary came home to eternal rest in Boylston, joining her family in Pine Grove Cemetery.

The Flagg Family Collection is a wonderful example of capturing more than a century of Boylston history through one longtime family. Hopefully, it may spark others who have similar family records, photographs or items of Boylston history to consider donating them to BHSM in the interests of posterity.

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