

The next Claude Monet: Irving Taylor

by Chloe Nehme

Drawing and painting are hobbies many pick up in their livelihoods. Whether it be for relaxation after work, a desire to become an artist one day, or just for fun, capturing the environment around you onto a canvas or paper is something that remains timeless. For today’s Fascinating Find, the Boylston Historical Society has uncovered yet another artist who used Boylston as his source of inspiration. These pieces are signed by Irving Taylor. His colorful pieces of art give us a quaint brief look at our own Boylston Center.

Other than his name written on the painting, there is very little known of this artist. The possibilities at this point are endless. The name may be a pen name under which he painted or he might be related to the Taylors of Boylston who operated the businesses in the locations depicted, however these hypotheses cannot be proved at this point. If you know anything about our artist, please contact the Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc. Important for our historical museum collections are the paintings Irving Taylor has left behind.

Artistic Portrayal of Post 1930 Store

At some point in his life, around the early 20th century, Irving Taylor had come to learn of the buildings in Boylston Center. It is these buildings around the Boylston Common that he selected to paint. The first painting in our collection is a 14”x14.5” watercolor of a house with green shutters. The lush greenery implies spring-time, further enhanced by the green grass and the vivid red flowers. It depicts a sideview of what was once the location of the Bond Corner Store and has been identified as 700 Main Street, Boylston, Massachusetts.

While now serving as the beloved Boylston Deli, the original Bond Corner Store, the second store in the Town of Boylston, was built by Deacon Jonathan Bond, Sr. in 1811 who operated it as a store with his sons, Joseph and Eli Bond.¹ The store changed names as it was owned by the Tuckers, Hastings, and others over the years. It was under the ownership George Reed Hastings when the store was expanded by adding a new store front, as well as large grain sheds.² In 1929 the store was destroyed by fire, when it was under the ownership of Frank B. Vinton.



(above) **Boylston Deli**
Previously known as *The Center Store*
Photography by Chloe Nehme
2025

Artist Portrayal of The Center Store

*by Irving Taylor
c. 1930’s
Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc. Collections*

Store Ownership, 1930

The store was rebuilt in 1929 after the fire, and the property was sold by Frank B. Vinton to Harry A. Souci on 15 September 1930.³ Harry Augustus Souci, the son of George Souci and Sarah A. Campbell, was born 6 April 1886 in the Village of Weedsport, Town of Brutus, Cayuga County, New York.^{4,5,6} By 1917, Harry was residing on Central Street in Boylston Center, Massachusetts.⁷ According to the Federal Census for Boylston Center in 1920, Harry A. Souci, a bookkeeper in a steel mill, aged 32 years, and his father George O. Souci, were living with Harry’s brother-in-law George H. Taylor and his sister, Kate (Souci) Taylor. George Taylor was a shipper in an envelope company and his wife Kate at this time was a clerk in a grocery store! ⁸

Kate Taylor was born Marian Kate Souci in 1882, the daughter of George O. Souci and Sarah Campbell. On 16 September 1902, she and George Henry Taylor Jr., the son of George H. Taylor Sr. and Jennie Wood, were married by Rev. George S. Dodge, clergyman of Boylston.⁹ George H. Taylor Jr was born at Boylston on 28 August 1879.¹⁰

¹ Boylston Historical Series, Bruce Filgate, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc., 2012, p213

² Photograph collections, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc., Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts

³ Deeds, Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts Land Records, Book 2526, page 448

⁴ Birth Index, State of New York, New York State Department of Health, 1886, page 583

⁵ WWII Draft Registration, Harry A. Souci, Clinton Draft Board, 1942

⁶ Harry A. Souci Gravestone, Pine Grove Cemetery, Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts

⁷ WWI Draft Registration, Harry Augustus Souci, Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1917

⁸ Federal Census, Boylston Center, Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1920

⁹ Boylston Marriage Records, Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts,

¹⁰ World War I Draft Registration, George Henry Taylor, Boylston, Massachusetts, 1918

In 1933, the grain bins on the Souci property were converted into “The Red Barn Grain Bin Restaurant,” which was run by Kate Taylor.¹¹ The restaurant closed its doors during WWII. In 1940, George Taylor, a farmer worker and his wife Kate, acting postmaster resided with Kate’s brother, Harry A. Souci, a grocer, in the property he owned in Boylston. Mrs. Kate S. Taylor assumed charge of the Post Office on 1 February 1940, with the retirement of Frank B. Vinton on 31 January 1940. She was appointed by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt on 26 August 1944 to serve as the Postmaster of the Boylston Center Post Office. Kate retired as postmaster on 31 January 1955.¹² On 31 May 1956, Harry A. Souci sold the property to L.J. Hagstrom.¹³

Artistic Renditions of Barn

There are two additional Irving Taylor paintings in our collection that relate to the Corner Store and potentially Kate and George Taylor. These are both paintings of the Red Barn Restaurant. The Red Barn Restaurant, situated between the Corner Store and the Historic Town Hall, was opened by Kate Souci Taylor in 1933 and served as a quaint tourist attraction for the town. Edith Kinnear Anderson described it as “A very, very unique and different place”.¹⁴ Since the restaurant signage is absent from the paintings, they may be from a time before the barn was converted into a restaurant by Kate, however, they serve as lovely little snapshots of the town’s history.

The first one is framed. It is also watercolor, and depicts the Red Barn in autumn. One can once again note the bright red leaves on the outstandingly detailed tree. The trees are portrayed with very large leaves, clearly showing prominence in the scene.



Artist Portrayal of Red Grain Bin Barn
by Irving Taylor
Early 20th Century
Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc. Collections

The second one depicts the Red Barn in spring or summer. What is noteworthy here is that there is a figure in blue clothing laying underneath the towering tree. Could it be Irving himself?

Both of the Red Barn paintings were printed into postcards alongside paintings by [Charlotte Jones](#), and can be purchased at the Boylston Historical Society and Museum, Inc.



Note Cards of Red Grain Bin Barn
by Irving Taylor
Early 20th Century
Available for sale at the Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc.

Irving’s paintings, alongside those of the previously discussed Charlotte Jones, call us to remind ourselves of the impressionist and post-impressionist movements ranging from the 1800s to the early 20th century. The trees that Irving spent his time on in his work calls attention to the trees from nature scenes painted by Claude Monet or Camille Pissarro. The artistry of Irving Taylor memorializes the natural beauty of our cherished town of Boylston. Perhaps our anonymous artist can one day be identified, but for now, his memory lives on in the vibrant still lifes he left behind for each of us to enjoy.

¹¹ Restaurant licenses, Archives Collection, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc., Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts

¹² U.S. Appointments of U.S. Postmasters, Vol 31, 1932-1971

¹³ Deeds, Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts Land Records, Book 3775, page 510

¹⁴ Oral History, Interview of Edith Kinnear Anderson, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc. Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts, 2004

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