

A Wild Rose Vase

By Inga Milbauer

This hand painted pottery vase was donated to the Boylston Historical Society and Museum by the estate of Marian Ethel Brigham Newell. She was born in Medford, Massachusetts on 19 June 1896, the youngest of four children of Herbert Augustus Brigham, born in Boylston, Massachusetts and Alice Charlotte Gilman, born in St. Albans, Maine.¹

Marian grew up on the family farm on Green Street in Boylston. On 4 March 1916, she married Wilbur Kehoe Newell in Clinton, Massachusetts.² Wilbur Newell was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts on 6 August 1893.³



Weller Vase – circa 1930
Front view
BHSM Collection



Henry Brigham
Boylston Farmer – Driving Milk Wagon
BHSM Photograph Collection

The couple helped run the Brigham family farm while they lived with Marian's parents on Green Street until they moved to their residence on Main Street.⁴ They had three daughters, Alice, Velma and Ardelle.

Wilbur became an automobile mechanic for his father-in-law, Herbert Brigham, known as "Gramps" who ran the local gas station on Main Street just north of Diamond Hill Avenue.⁵ Wilbur died on 19 February 1970 and Marian died on 22 April 1982, and they were both interred in the Pine Grove Cemetery in Boylston.

The antique vase was made by the Weller Pottery company. The company was founded by Samuel Augustus Weller in 1872 in Fultonham, Ohio. Samuel Weller was born in Ohio on 12 April 1851. The business started out with one kiln in a small cabin, producing flower pots, bowls, crocks and vases.⁶



Gramps Brigham
Gasoline Station, Boylston, Massachusetts
BHSM Photograph Collection

Within 30 years, the company would have 500 employees and become one of the most well-known hand-painted art pottery in the United States.⁷ The term art pottery refers to "aesthetically distinctive hand-made ceramics in earthenware and stoneware from the period 1870-1950s."



Weller Vase – circa 1930
Back view
BHSM Collection

American art pottery was made by "...some 200 studios and small factories across the country, with especially strong centers of production in Ohio and Massachusetts."⁸ Samuel Weller employed several artisans such as William A. Long, Jacques Sicard and Frederick Hurten Rhead.⁹ The company had a vast display at the *Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, a major World's Fair held in St. Louis in 1904. Samuel Weller died on 4 October 1925. His nephew, Walter Weller took over as president of the firm until his death in 1932.¹⁰ By the 1930s, the hand-painted pottery production declined and by 1935 it produced only molded pieces. The company closed its doors in 1948. Over the years, the pieces made by Weller Pottery reflect the art movements of the times: Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, and Modernism.

The vase is part of the Wild Rose pottery line which was introduced in the early to mid-1930s. The background of this line is "either pale green or pale orange with large branches of white roses."¹¹ This pale green vase with a matte glaze is approximately 8.5 inches high and 4.25 inches wide, the rim measures 4.75 inches and the diameter of the base 4 inches. It has applied delicately curved handles and a footed base. The handles make it aesthetically pleasing to the eye and easy to move the vase around. Its pale green color is offset by the beautiful raised white wild rose floral design. The pottery mark on the base shows a faint engraved Weller inscription as well as the artisan's mark.



Weller Vase – circa 1930
Markings on base
BHSM Collection

It is just waiting to be filled with a bouquet of spring flowers!

Acknowledgements:

¹ <https://www.findagrave.com>

² Marriage Records, Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1916

³ Draft Registration, Wilbur Kehoe Newell, Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1917, digital image, ancestry.com

⁴ United States Federal Census, Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1920

⁵ United States Federal Census, Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1930 and 1940

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weller_Pottery

⁷ <https://www.collectorsweekly.com/pottery/weller>

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_art_pottery

⁹ <https://justartpottery.com/pages/about-weller-pottery>

¹⁰ <https://wisconsinpottery.org/weller-pottery/>

¹¹ <https://thekingsfortune.com/products/weller-pottery/vintage-weller-pottery-vase-green-wild-rose-1930-s>

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<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com>

<https://www.google.com/books>

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