

The Potpourri



1971 **BOYLSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM** 2021

"Preserving the Past for the Future"

March 2021

Curator's Corner	page 1
Can you identify?	page 1
Cultural Grant Approval	page 1
Veteran's Project	page 2
Sawyer's Mills Village	page 4
It Began with a Mill & a Bridge	page 6
Boylston in the News	page 8
The Worcester-Clinton Trolley	page 9
Walking Trails of Sawyer's Mills	page 10
The Conestoga Wagon	page 12
Vintage Recipes	
-Rhubarb Pie	page 17
- Daffodil Cake	page 17
Chastolites	page 18
Can you Identify *Answer*	page 19

Can you Identify the Current Location of this building?



Answer on page 19

Curator's Corner

We at the Boylston Historical Society and Museum are continuing to research artifacts and to add local histories, historical maps, genealogical resources, and articles to our website in an attempt to virtually share our stories and artifacts with the historians, genealogists, and the townspeople of Boylston. Although the museum remains closed to Public events and Museum visits, through a team of staff and remarkable volunteers we have been able to photograph and share research articles about our unique and precious artifacts. If you have not had the opportunity to read about our Boylston artifacts, go to our website: <https://www.boylstonhistory.org> and click on *Friday's Fascinating Finds* category to read about some of the awesome treasures and facts uncovered about our town or try the *Then and Now* link to simply have some fun! A thank you to the many researchers and members who are graciously supporting our mission and helping to implement this strategic vision!

~ Nancy Filgate

Cultural Grant Approval!

The Boylston Historical Society and Museum is very excited to announce that they have been approved for a Massachusetts Cultural Grant through the Boylston Cultural Council to support the publication of the research of the Veteran's and the Kendall Collaborative Projects. The Research Consortium was initially formed in September 2020 by the Boylston Historical Society & Museum, the Boylston Historical Commission and the Boylston Public Library to undertake to identify the names of individuals in Album #2 and Album #5 whose photographs date to the mid 1800's as well as uncover the genealogical and historical connection of these individuals to the Town of Boylston, Massachusetts.

Veteran's Project

Leah Withers, a Tahanto Regional junior is a researcher for the Boylston Historical Society- Veteran's Project. Her exceptional research skills have uncovered the fascinating details of the life of Walter Abel Brigham.

-Nancy Filgate

Walter Abel Brigham was born on 29 February 1844 in Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts, to Abel Brigham and Charity Brewer, and was the oldest of 4 siblings.¹ Walter was an only child for three years until his family briefly moved to Bolton, Worcester County, Massachusetts, where two of his siblings, Josephine and Leland, were born in 1847 and 1848, respectively. By 1850 the family had moved back to Boylston, where Orrison would soon be born in 1854, followed by Carrie Louisa in 1857.² Walter's father, Abel, was a farmer, who worked hard to support his growing family.³ Walter spent his early years with his family, attending school with his siblings and working on the family farm, which was worth \$2000, or almost \$67,000 in today's money.⁴



Figure 1 Walter Abel Brigham

1844-1919

BHSM Photograph Collection

At just 18 years of age, Walter enlisted to fight for the Union Army in the Civil War. He was mustered on 17 October 1861, where he was a private in Company D Massachusetts 25th regiment.^{5,6} During his three years of service he saw many battles, including the Battle of Cold Harbor and the Carolinas Campaign. Cold Harbor, which was fought in early June of 1864, is known as one of the bloodiest and most uneven battles of not only the Civil War, but also of American History. The Union forces were no match for the powerful Confederate forces and their fortified battle position. When the battle came to its conclusion, over 12,000 Union men were injured, captured, or killed, a staggeringly high number compared to the Confederacy's 5,000.⁷ Walter was one of the lucky soldiers to survive this horrible battle and live

¹ Birth Records, Boylston, Massachusetts

² Birth Records, Bolton, Massachusetts

³ U.S. Federal Census, Boylston, Massachusetts

⁴ U.S. Non-Population Census Records, Boylston, Massachusetts

⁵ Record of Soldiers and Officers, Boylston, Massachusetts

⁶ U.S. Civil War Pension Invalid and Widow Files, 1861-1934

⁷ The Civil War Battle Unit Details, National Park Service, www.nps.gov/

to see another fight. Walter's unit was also involved in the Carolinas Campaign, which was the final attempt to win the Western Theater that was such a decisive victory for the Union that it ultimately brought an end to the Civil War in 1865 after an unconditional surrender. However, before the war officially came to a close, Walter returned home to Massachusetts and his unit was mustered out on 20 October 1864.⁸

At the conclusion of his service, he moved back into the family home and began temporary work as a clerk.⁹ Soon after he found new work as a grocer and continued to work here when he married his wife, Julia Ann Andrews, on 13 October 1869 at Boylston.¹⁰ Julia was the daughter of Robert Andrews and Martha Ann Toombs. Soon after Walter began to settle down on a 100-acre farm of his own, where he primarily tended to livestock and grew Indian corn.¹¹ In 1870 he managed this farm and worked as a retail grocer, while his wife tended to the household. That same year their first son, Frederick Walter, was born on 23 December 1870 in Clinton, Worcester County, Massachusetts.¹² Lucy Josephine was born on 19 May 1872, but unfortunately she died in an accident on Christmas of 1873 at just one year old.^{13,14} A few years later the family moved to Worcester, Worcester County, Massachusetts where Walter worked briefly as a real estate agent.¹⁵ Their daughter Flora Gertrude was born 4 September 1875 in Worcester, and Robert A. on 17 November 1879.¹⁶ By 1880 Walter was working as a grocer again living with his wife, three kids and Julia's sister Angie, who worked as a servant for the family.¹⁷ This is how his life remained until just before the turn of the century when he had his final son Ralph Henry on 6 April 1886 in Worcester.¹⁸ Unfortunately, in 1903, Robert contracted Scarlett Fever which he battled for five



Figure 2 Gravestone
Pine Grove Cemetery
Photograph courtesy of Bruce D. Filgate

days before it led to heart failure, and he died on 11 May 1903. He was only 23 years old and unmarried at the time.¹⁹ After Robert's tragic passing, Walter spent the rest of his life with his family in Worcester until 1919 when he moved to 153 Highland Street in Clinton where he died of cerebral hemorrhage at the age of 75 years on 3 July 1919 and was buried just a few days later on 6 July 1919 in the Pine Grove Cemetery of Boylston, Massachusetts, where his wife, Julia, joined him in 1924.^{20,21}

⁸ Record of Soldiers and Officers, Boylston, Massachusetts

⁹ U.S. Federal Census Records, Boylston, Massachusetts

¹⁰ Marriage Records, Boylston, Massachusetts

¹¹ U.S. Federal Non-Population Census, Boylston, Massachusetts

¹² Birth Records, Clinton, Massachusetts

¹³ Birth Records, Boylston, Massachusetts

¹⁴ Death Records, Clinton, Massachusetts

¹⁵ U.S. Federal Census, Worcester, Massachusetts

¹⁶ Birth Records, Worcester, Massachusetts

¹⁷ U.S. Federal Census, Worcester, Massachusetts

¹⁸ Birth Records, Worcester, Massachusetts

¹⁹ Death Records, Worcester, Massachusetts

²⁰ Death Records, Clinton, Massachusetts

²¹ Brigham Memorial, Pine Grove Cemetery, www.findagrave.com

Sawyer's Mills Village

The Early Years

By Inga Milbauer

Before the Wachusett Reservoir was built, there were two distinct sections of Boylston, Massachusetts: 'Boylston Center' and the 'Village of Sawyer's Mills.' The village of Sawyer's Mills, was located about three miles north of Boylston Center and three miles south of the current dam.

Thomas Sawyer Jr. is often believed to be the first landowner as he acquired the land in the territory that would become Boylston in 1705. Thomas was a son of Thomas Sawyer, one of the first settlers of Lancaster, Massachusetts in 1647. In a raid on the British Colonies, Thomas Sawyer Jr., his son Elias, and John Bigelow of Marlboro were "taken and carried captive to Canada by the Indians in 1705, and for their ransom built a saw-mill (said to be the first saw-mill built in Canada), and then were detained for a time to learn the Canadians how to run their saw-mill."¹ Referring to the Sawyers who settled in America, Amory Carter writes in 1883 that "Every town, village, road and lane throughout New England bears witness of their skill and industry." He also writes "I have known them as millwrights, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, carpenters, cooperers and, in fact, interested in all the mechanical skill required in New England life."²

Thomas Sawyer Jr.'s second son, Joseph Sawyer built a dwelling, barn, cornmill and saw mill near the Nashua River in the area that was later called "Sawyer's Mills." Joseph, a blacksmith, acquired lands beginning with the 11 May 1721 deed transfer of a portion of the original George Tahanto land, in addition to the land he inherited from his father. Joseph, the son of Thomas Sawyer Jr. and Hannah Sawyer, had been born in Lancaster about 1683. Joseph's first marriage was to Sarah Rice, the daughter of John Rice, in 1703. They had six children. Sarah died at the age of 37 years, and Joseph married Abigail Beaman on November 10, 1718 at Lancaster.

When Joseph Sawyer acquired the land near the Nashua River it was still part of Lancaster, but the area would later become part of the Town of Boylston. He is considered to be one of the first settlers of Boylston. His son, Aaron, Sr. succeeded him. He built a home not far from the original site of his father's home. When Aaron Sr. died, his real estate included about 500 acres of land, a dwelling house and barns, an oil mill for the manufacture of neatsfoot oil, a saw and grist mill, and other out-buildings.³ Neatsfoot oil is a yellow oil rendered and purified from the shin bones and feet of cattle.

The term neat is old English for cattle. It is used for preserving and softening leather, and in the 18th century was also used for dry skin conditions.



Stone from Sawyer's House

Presented to the Sawyer Memorial Library

by Mrs. Thomas Todd. Great Granddaughter of Aaron Sawyer

Aaron Sawyer succeeded his father at Sawyer's Mills. He was a Revolutionary War soldier from Lancaster, and became the first Town Clerk of the Town of Boylston on March 13, 1786. He also served the town as Selectman, Assessor and was a Land Surveyor. At the time of Lieutenant Aaron

Sawyer's death on April 30, 1817, the property at Sawyer's Mills consisted of a saw mill, a grist mill, a clothier's mill, and a fulling mill for the manufacture of homespun cloth, an oil mill, a blacksmith shop, a country store, the dwelling house and farm, and farm buildings.⁴ It is estimated that the store served the residents of Boylston as early as 1787.

After the death of Lieutenant Aaron Sawyer, several members of his family managed the property. In 1822, the mills were sold, and James Lees and William Lees, of West Boylston, operated them until about 1830. Sawyer's Mills remained the center of industrial activity. The first United States Post Office in the Boylston area was opened in 1825 at Sawyer's Mills. The property at Sawyer's Mills was sold to



Sawyer's Mills Store & Post Office

the Clinton Company around 1845 and in 1862 to the Lancaster Mills Corporation owned by the brothers Horatio and Erastus Bigelow. By that time, it had become almost exclusively a textile enterprise.

The Sawyer's Mills complex included not only the mills, machine shops and other buildings related to the textile mill, but also housing for its workers. The Lancaster Mills Corporation built a new store in 1862. The United States Post Office was located in that store. The village was a classic "mill village," a settlement that develops around one or more mills.

Stay tuned for the upcoming articles with more detailed information about the Sawyer's Mills' developing area and its later years!

Acknowledgements:

¹*Sawyers in America, or A History of the immigrant Sawyers* by Amory Carter, Worcester 1883, p. 31

²*Sawyers in America, or A History of the immigrant Sawyers* by Amory Carter, Worcester 1883, p. 22

³Boylston Historical Series - Vol. III *Sawyer's Mills* by Norman H. French, A. Sc., p. 83

⁴Boylston Historical Series - Vol. III *Sawyer's Mills* by Norman H. French, A. Sc., p. 83

Boylston Historical Series by Bruce Filgate, 2012 Vol. I, II, III, XI, XII, XIII

Filgate, Nancy A., editor

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mill_town; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neatsfoot_oil

<https://www.archive.org/details/sawyersinamerica00cart>

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/boy.pdf>

Photographs from the BHSM archives

Photograph courtesy of Erica Hout, Director, Sawyer Memorial Library

Sawyers in America, or A History of the immigrant Sawyers by Amory Carter, Worcester 1883 – digital version

It Began with a Mill and a Bridge

The Beginning and End of Sawyer's Mills

by Carrie Crane

Sawyer's Mills, on the bank of the south branch of the Nashua River, in then Lancaster, Massachusetts would eventually become a small manufacturing village. It was first settled in 1721, when Joseph Sawyer entered into an agreement to build a sawmill there. (See more in *Sawyer's Mills Village, The Earlier Years* on Friday's Fantastic Finds) The mill and businesses expanded and were passed onto his wife and two sons Aaron Sr. and Abner. Aaron Sr. died in 1774 and his share passed onto his son Aaron Sawyer, Jr. At this time Aaron Jr. bought out the other heirs and became the sole owner of what was now established as Sawyer's Mills. The bridge at Sawyer's Mills was one of two in town that crossed the Nashua River which cut its way through Boylston limiting travel from east to west. The second bridge at Scar's crossed the river a few miles south. While Scar's bridge was an important crossing point, the establishment of a store, post office and school at Sawyer's Mills likely made it more of a thoroughfare connecting areas west, now West Boylston and Sterling to the eastern town of Berlin.

In Matthew Davenport's 1831 *History of Boylston*, he describes Boylston's roads by saying:

"The two principal roads are the county road from the west which passes through the northwest, north, and northeast parts of the town, a distance of about 3 1/2 miles, crossing the river at Sawyer's Mills, and thence on to Berlin. A stage now runs on this road from Boston three times a week; and the mail arrives three times every week from the east and the same number from the west."

It was as true in the 1800s as it is today, quality roads and bridges were a link to an area's economic success. Although Sawyer's Mills never developed into a major stagecoach hub, passengers, freight and mail did pass through there and surely added to its modest economy. The stagecoach era really boomed in New England between 1820 and 1840 and during that time, coaches and roads were much improved but the travel remained slow, uncomfortable and sometimes dangerous. By mid-century stagecoach lines were gradually but steadily being replaced by faster and comparatively luxurious railroads.



*Looking south at the bridge at Sawyer's Mills as it looked in 1899.
The school house is shown on the left and the store and post office on the right.*

In 1869 “Railroad Fever” was at its peak and every little hinterland village wanted the rail to pass through. A group of citizens from the eastern and central part of Massachusetts, inspired by the successful petition the previous year for a line from Wayland to Sudbury, brought forth their own petition to the state legislature for the charter of a railroad from Northampton to Boston. On May 10th of that year the legislature created the Massachusetts Central Railroad. No less than thirty-eight towns along the proposed route were invited to purchase stock in the company thus guaranteeing a station stop. Sawyer’s Mills, having established itself as a crossroads with stagecoach travel, was a logical location. As it turned out, Boylston ultimately was the home to two stops, one at Sawyer’s Mills known as Boylston Station, and one nearer the Clinton and Berlin boundaries, known as South Clinton Station.



On left, the Boylston Station of the Central Mass Railroad and on the right, the South Clinton Station, 1896.

Building of the rail began in 1871 under contract with Norman C. Munson of Shirley, Massachusetts. Unfortunately, Munson was already financially overextended when he took on the project and did not survive the financial panic of late 1873. He declared bankruptcy and all work on the rail was halted for a period of 5 years. Building finally resumed in 1879 under a new financial structure and the Massachusetts Central Railroad ran its first train from Boston to Hudson on October 1, 1881. The line opened westward to Jefferson the following year with three round-trip runs daily. Everything went well for about a year and a half but on May 16, 1883, financial catastrophe hit again. All trains were stopped and construction ceased as the railroad property was surrendered to the trustees of the first mortgage bond, Thomas H. Perkins, Henry Woods and the Honorable S. N. Aldrich.

The tracks lay silent for twenty-nine months but during that time, with faith in the success of the line, Aldrich reorganized the company, (subtly) renamed it the Central Massachusetts Railroad and agreed to have the Boston and Lowell Railroad take over operations. On September 28, 1885, the trains began to run again and for ten years they ran regularly with mishaps here and there, through Sawyer’s Mills carrying passengers and freight to this small but vital manufacturing village.

And then came the reservoir. In 1893, the Boston Water Board in response to the growing need for clean drinking water for the city and surrounding towns, requested that the mayor approve the expenditure of \$40,000 to investigate three potential options for meeting the water demand. Building a dam across the south branch of the Nashua River in Clinton, MA was the winning proposal. The result would be the flooding of 4,000 acres of land including parts of Clinton, West

Boylston, and Boylston, completely submerging the area known as Sawyer's Mills. Along with the many other homes and businesses that were taken down, so went the fate of the two Central Mass Railroad stations at Boylston and South Clinton. The project also forced the relocation of the rail detouring it north from Oakdale on the Worcester Nashua line towards Clinton and then east just north and down-stream of the dam.

The rerouting, which included the construction of a 917 ft. viaduct high over the river and the digging of a 1,110 ft. tunnel, was ready for its first train on June 2, 1903. And none too soon. While the dam would not be completed until 1905, it was already constricting the flow of water, so later that June, after an unusual period of heavy rain, the already abandoned track and village of Sawyer's Mills were partially submerged giving a somber hint of what was to come.

Ultimately, once the flood waters had cleared, all the mill buildings, the store, the post office, the station and tracks, the bridges, the chapel, the barns, and homes were all dismantled and taken away. By 1908, what had been the village of Sawyer's Mills was now under almost 90 feet of water and the stories left to the history.



*Looking south at Sawyer's Mills as seen at high water after the June 1903 deluge
These buildings were later removed before the final filling of the reservoir.*

Acknowledgements:

*Brief Historical Sketch of the Town of Boylston in the County of Worcester, Davenport, Matthew, 1831; Digitalcommonwealth.org., Image collection of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; Filgate, Nancy A., editor; Sawyers in America; or, A history of the immigrant Sawyers. Carter, Amory, 1883; Stagecoach Travel and Some Aspects of the Staging Business in New England, 1800-1850, Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 1973 The Central Mass. The Boston and Maine Railroad Historical Society Inc., 1975
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Massachusetts_Railroad#cite_note-14;*

Boylston in the News Worcester Telegram

Boylston 1882

Calf born without a tail at Mrs. C. Moore's of Straw Hollow.

Boylston 1886

"100 years after Boylston became a town, a celebration consisted of a procession of town leaders, field sports, a lecture of the history of the town by George Wright, the ringing of bells and firing of salutes at sunrise, and an unveiling of a memorial tablet of soldiers lost in the Civil War."

Boylston 1939

"Boylston has a new unattended dial [telephone] station. Boylston has eight pay stations and 190 telephone subscribers. Mary French ends 33 years of tending the phone switchboard in Boylston, but the 'unattended dial office' is on her land."

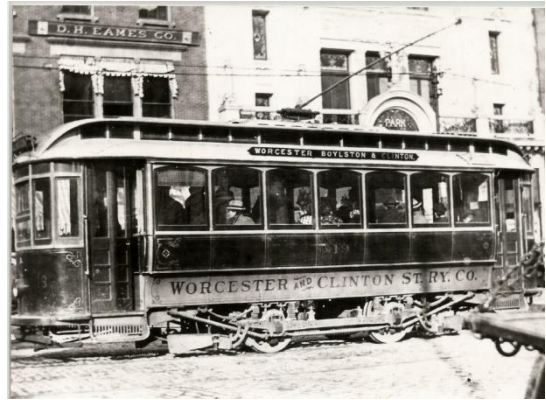


The Worcester-Clinton Trolley

By Inga Milbauer

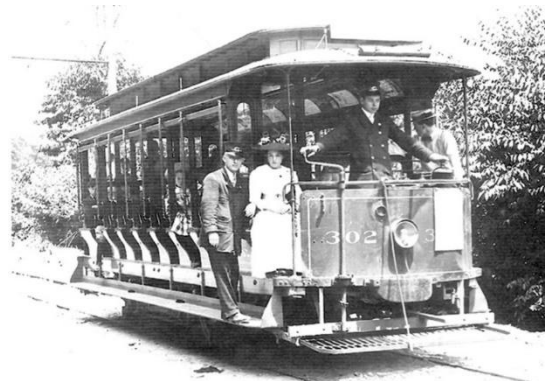
For 30 years, trolleys were a familiar site in Boylston. The trolley line from Worcester Union Station to Clinton, Massachusetts followed what is now Route 70, with stops in Morningdale and Boylston Center, and continued to Leominster and Fitchburg.

The electric streetcar or trolley in the United States was invented by American engineer and inventor Frank Julian Sprague. His spring-loaded trolley pole used a wheel to travel along the overhead electric wire which provided the power. Before his invention, many cities had a system of horse-drawn railcars. The rails allowed the horses to haul a greater load and provided a smoother ride than a horse-drawn bus. Like the horse-drawn railcars, trolleys ran along street tracks, but were cleaner and cheaper to operate. The first large trolley system was installed in Richmond, VA in late 1887-early 1888. The new technology was widely adopted. In 1893 there were more than 250 electric streetcar railways in the United States, operating on some 7,200 miles of track. By 1903 this number had increased to 29,000 miles and represented 98 percent of the nation's urban rail system.¹



The first electric trolleys came to Worcester in 1891. On December 10th, 1898 the Worcester & Clinton Electric Street Railway was officially opened. A trolley car barn to store and maintain the cars was located in Boylston, on what is now the intersection of Route 70 and French Drive.

The arrival of the electric trolley line made the commute to work much cheaper and easier. This led to a building boom in Boylston, especially in the Morningdale section of town. In 1899 several tenement houses were built by local residents to accommodate the workmen who wanted to be close to the car barn on French Drive.² This photograph, taken circa 1910, shows an open trolley car. The driver is George Lambert "Burt" Hazard, Jr., the son of George Hazard and Alice Flagg. He was born in Boylston in 1886 and died in 1984 in Worcester, Massachusetts. The trolley was able to attain speeds of 45-50 miles per hour on certain sections of the line.



In the 19th and early 20th centuries public transportation was run by for-profit companies and in the beginning many of the companies were small. The Worcester & Clinton Street Railway Company was absorbed into the Worcester Consolidated Street Railway Company in March 1901. By the mid-1920s, Worcester Consolidated was in financial trouble and several unprofitable trolley lines were discontinued. The Fitchburg Sentinel reports on October 1, 1925, that Supt. Burgess from Worcester Consolidated said that on certain trolley lines "buses and small autos are pushing trolleys out of business." According to the Boylston Historical Series Boylston's electric trolleys were discontinued in 1926 and replaced by buses a year later. "But who can forget the leisurely ride from Worcester to Boylston Center for the paltry sum of 5 cents!"³

Acknowledgements: BHSM Photograph Archives; ¹"Streetcars" Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History Carlson & el, Gale 1999, <https://go.gale.com>; Boylston Historical Series, Filgate, 2012; Fitchburg Sentinel, 1 Oct., 1925; <https://worcesterma/2016/08>; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horsecar>; <https://en.wikipedia.org>; <https://www.findagrave.com>



Growing Up in Boylston

The Conestoga Wagon

by Gordon Hastings

Another school year came to close and we found ourselves at Moore's rundown farmhouse hanging around with Jimmy Moore. The place hadn't been painted in years. Wrecks of old cars littered the field in back of the house

"There's an old hay wagon up in the field in back of the house," Kenny Ware said.

"So, what," I said.

Kenny's face had a familiar thoughtful expression.

"I've got an idea," Kenny said.

The long-ago abandoned hay wagon in Moore's field belonged to Jimmy's father. Old Man- Moore worked in Worcester from time to time but not on a regular basis. He always seemed unhappy, sitting in an old armchair with the stuffing coming out in the corner of the Moore's farmhouse kitchen. The Moore's had little money and their five boys contributed what they could earn from odd jobs and did all of the work around the hardscrabble farm.

Jimmy, Kenny's cousin was built like a block of wood with large protruding arms and short legs. He always had a smile and unlike, his father was good natured and easy going. Mrs. Moore looked old, wearing a badly worn and faded yellow housedress with her gray straggly hair fixed in a bun held in place by two hairpins. She was the exact opposite of her bitter husband. Amy Moore was always cheerful with a welcoming friendly smile. The Moore's had one cow, pigs, chickens and raised the rest of their food, mostly potatoes, in a rock-infested garden by the side of the house.

Amy Moore's pride and joy was homemade strawberry shortcake with whipped cream

that elevated her to universal acclaim. Often after we watched Jimmy milk the family cow, he would bring the bucket filled with warm fresh milk into the kitchen where it would be strained into a hand-cranked separator. As Amy Moore turned the handle with her calloused right hand, the raw milk flowed into one chamber, the heavier cream in to the other. Mrs. Moore took the fresh cream and dumped it into a big glass bowl and whipped it by hand into a mountain of whipped cream.

"It's ready," Mrs. Moore said, proudly handing out plates of short cake with fresh picked strawberries and whipped cream that had that morning been inside the Moore's cow.

Old Man Moore sat sullenly in his corner chair but he took a plate of shortcake.

"Can we use the old hay wagon up in the field?" Kenny asked.

"What the h*** for, you don't even have a horse to pull it," shouted Mr. Moore.

Kenny Ware spoke up.

"We want to make a Conestoga wagon."

"What the h*** is a Conestoga wagon?"

"A covered wagon, like the pioneers used to go out west," Kenny said.

"You kids should go to work and do something better with your time than fool around with that old wagon. Jimmy, you got important chores to do, better

en this foolishness," Old Man Moore shouted. Our dreams were vanishing before our eyes. Then unexpectedly everything changed.

"Listen here, you ain't used that wagon in ten years, been sayin your gonna fix it but never set foot in the field. The kids will make better use of it than you ever have," Amy Moore said.

I had never heard Mrs. Moore talk like that to Mr. Moore. There was silence from the stuffed chair.

"These kids have been hanging around this wreck of a place all summer long. For G*%* sake old man, they need something to cheer them up!"

There was a long silence in the Moore's kitchen.

"Go ahead, take the d*%* thing, get it out of my field and don't bring it back!"

With the large wooden wagon wheels creaking and groaning Kenny Ware, Jimmy Moore, Libbey and I pulled the old wagon out of Moore's field. We managed to get it rolling but, in a rush, it ended up at the bottom of the hill on Cross Street where Hastings Brook went under the road just below the Moore's barn.

Kenny's house was a mile away but the first obstacle was dragging the wagon up the steep hill to where the road leveled out on Linden Street. With appropriate shouts and groans we were unsuccessfully pushing and shoving when Harold Green who lived across the street from the Moore's came out of his yard driving his green 1938 Chevrolet pick-up.

"What are you doing with that old thing?" Mr. Green said.

"Gonna make a covered wagon!"

"What?" Mr. Green said. He was hard of hearing.

"Gonna make a Conestoga wagon," I said.

"Where you goin with it?" Mr. Green asked.

"Up the hill to Kenny's barn," I said.

"Hold on a minute."

He turned the truck around, went back to his yard, and a moment later came back and tossed Kenny a rope.

"Hitch that to the back of the shafts and then hitch the rope to the back bumper. Two of you kids hold the shafts up from hitting the road and we'll go slowly."

That's how we got the old hay wagon to Kenny Ware's house.

None of us had ever seen a Conestoga wagon but Kenny had an image in his mind he said was from an old *Life Magazine* article. Work began almost immediately with Kenny Ware directing the project. Kenny was a perfectionist. Every hint of old paint had to be scraped and sanded off every inch of the wagon bed, wheels, shafts, and whiffletree. Libbey and Kenny removed the wheels and put fresh grease on the axels. Within a week the wagon was nearing completion. With Kenny's skilled directions we added three-foot wooden sides all around the wagon bed and constructed a high seat up front, which ran the full width of the wagon. We painted the wagon dark blue because that was the color of two cans of leftover house paint in the Ware's barn.

"All we need now is the top," Kenny said.

Kenny remembered that there were some old pieces of iron water pipe lying off by the side of the road near the Moore's barn. Kenny figured the exact length the three pipes needed to be to create an arc over the wagon to hold up the cover. He had marked the pipes exactly where they needed to be bent. We recruited Jimmy Moore's two older brothers and we made those pipes into arcs by bending them around a big oak tree in Kenny's yard. The perfectly shaped arcs of

old pipe were placed over the wagon body and attached to the sides with clamps.

I begged my mother for four old white sheets to be used for the top, covering the Wagon. Kenny's mother agreed to sew them together with her foot treadle Singer Sewing Machine.

I found a half empty can of black paint that had been used on the Model A and in outlines drawn by Kenny I painted the wagon's nickname California or Bust. The Conestoga wagon had been completed in less than a month with not one dollar out of pocket.

Jimmy Moore wasn't much of a carpenter or an engineer but next to Kenny Ware he made the biggest contribution to our summer of '54.

"Bannister over on the Berlin Road said we could have him for the summer if we paid for a new set of shoes!" yelled Jimmy as he ran down the hill to Kenny's barn.

"What did you say?" I shouted.

Jimmy was referring to a 32 -year-old retired dappled grey gelding draft horse named "January." The horse was born in January 1922 and had spent his entire life working on the Bannister property until his retirement after the family quit farming. Jimmy, Kenny, Libbey and I walked the three miles to the Bannister farm.

"He's old you know so take it easy with him," said Mr. Bannister.

"We will," said Jimmy.

"Get him shod right away. Jimmy, you call Blombach." What you going do to with this wagon?"

"Hay rides." I said.

"Well, you make sure everybody gets out and walks up any steep hills. Wouldn't hurt to push."

Four giddy kids all wanting to hold the lead line walked January back to Moore's barn.

The Moore's had plenty of hay in the barn because they still had the whipped cream producing milking cow. I put the final piece of the puzzle in place after my Dad gave us the \$25 to have Johnnie Blombach, the local blacksmith put four new shoes on January's feet.

"H*** this old horse hasn't seen shoes for ten years. Don't you be working him hard now." Blombach lowered the last of January's newly shod feet to the barn floor.

The Moore's had once owned a horse so there was a dried-up draft horse harness, complete with a leather collar hanging in the barn. The harness hadn't been used for years but with much handwork and leather oil we had it back in usable shape in a day. The tubular Hames that sat atop the horse collar were adorned with two brass balls that now shone brightly.

From the first moment January came to the Moore's I could tell that the horse loved attention. January had been left pretty much alone for a couple of years but now he had a family of adoring kids anxious to please him every moment. From the mane to the tail his coat was brushed to sheen with all the burrs removed and his fetlocks trimmed. His feet were now perfectly shaped with Blombach's new horseshoes. Kenny and Jimmy didn't know anything about harnessing a horse but I did because of watching my Dad harness the Garfield's horse Molly when we cultivated the vegetable garden together.

With January fully in harness we proceeded up Cross Street to Kenny's barn to hitch up our new best friend to the Conestoga. Because Jimmy convinced Mr. Bannister to let us have January, he got the chance to drive first. With Jimmy holding the reins and Kenny and me next to him on the front seat, we headed down Cross Street and turned left onto Linden Street across from the Moore's House. Cars slowed and pulled

over the drivers hanging their head out the windows to take a look. Along came Mr. Green in his familiar pickup. He pulled over and shook his head smiling.

"Is that Bannister's old horse?"

"Yup, its January," Jimmy called out.

"You kids did it, good for you," said Mr. Green as he drove into his yard.

We headed for the center of town to show off.

January stepped out smartly with ears forward. The clip clop of her new shoes reverberated off the pavement. She broke into a loping trot as the three of us sat proudly on the front seat.

"We did this all ourselves!" I said.

"Not without Old Man Moore's wagon, Mr. Banister's horse and your Dad's \$25 for the shoes," Kenny said.

Bill Keck stood speechless with his wife Maude at his side in his front yard as we passed the intersection of Linden and Central Streets. They managed a restrained wave. The wagon rolled along Central Street toward Boylston Center. Howard Mahan slowed the green Town of Boylston truck to a crawl.

"What the h*%* are you kids doin?"

"Goin to Harry Souci's," I said.

"Where the h*%* did you get that rig?"

"Built it," Kenny said.

Amy Blood, the school nurse, was working in her Iris bed when we rounded the corner by her house.

"Dana, get out here and see this!" she screamed.

Dana was Amy's bachelor younger brother who made a career out of fixing up old power lawn mowers that were always strewn about their front yard.

At the bottom of the steep hill leading up to the common and the Town Hall we got out

of the wagon and all pushed to make the climb easier for January, and this became the custom all summer long. At the top of the hill eighty-year -old Town Treasurer Lillian Vickery sat on her front porch. Her office was in her house.

"My goodness that's Calvin's boy up there, what are you doing Butch, where did you get that?"



"We made it. We're going to Harry Souci's."

We pulled January and the covered wagon into the triangle by the Town Common, across from the ancient horse watering troth located in front of the old Hastings Tavern. Immediately cars coming in both directions screeched to a halt. Strangers came to see the spectacle of a Conestoga wagon pulled by a dapple-grey horse with three kids on the front seat parked at noontime in the center of town.

"His name is January." I kept repeating that to the folks patting January's large gray Roman nose.

From across the Boylston Common ran Reverend Cook and his wife Lillage. Harold French, the Town Clerk appeared from his house on Scar Hill Road and then Harry Souci himself came from his store.

"Now what do we have here? Oh, my goodness, Oh my goodness, how

wonderful!" Harry Souci bubbled over with enthusiasm because as a showman himself he immediately saw the theater in what we had accomplished.

"Get Arthur Flagg up here," he called back toward the store, "and tell him to bring the Brownie. We need a picture for the newspaper. What a story."

"Harold, you hold the horse I'm bringing the kids in for ice cream and a tonic." Tonic was what we called soda.

Harold French responded as ordered by Harry Souci. He stood in his customary short sleeve white shirt and tie with his large stomach overflowing his belt cautiously holding January while at the same time rubbing the horse's nose.

"G** here comes the bus."

The Worcester Street Railway 12:30 bus from Worcester to Clinton rolled to a halt. I am not sure that January had ever seen a bus. Much to my relief, the old horse didn't flinch as people hung out the bus window to catch a glimpse of what appeared as a mirage.

The covered wagon's fame spread quickly through town. Parents agreed. *If Cal and Elsa let their son do this, it must be OK.* Three nights a week during the summer of 1954 word passed that California Or Bust would be leaving from my house at 7:00 pm.

We placed hay bales in the back for the kids to sit upon and there was many a boy's arm around a girl's shoulder on those warm summer evenings. Everyone else pushed, helping January pull the wagon up Grandma Ware's Hill.

The rides usually lasted about an hour and a half. Occasionally the Owen Kennedy's would be by the road in front of their house with cider and donuts for everyone. On most nights' kids came back to our house for hot chocolate and lemonade in the kitchen.

Often my friend's parents visited with Mom and Dad while waiting for our return.

Remembering the excitement, we had caused in Boylston Center. Kenny suggested in early August that we take the covered wagon to Harriman's, a popular drive-in ice cream and foot-long hot dog stand in the neighboring town of Berlin. It would be the longest trip of the summer.

"We won't be back until nine, we're going to Harriman's. Tell everyone to bring some money," I said.

January clomped in a full trot down the Berlin Road and came into view of Harriman's. Kids ran across the road and in their excitement tried to climb aboard the wagon. Panicked parents followed.

"Everybody calms down, calm down," ordered Jimmy Moore.

"What the h*** do we have here?" said Police Chief Kip Wheeler.

He lived just up the hill from Harriman's.

It was pandemonium now with cars coming from both directions stopping to get a view of what must have seemed to them like an apparition. The California or Bust gang was not shown the same appreciation we had been offered by Harry Souci a week earlier in Boylston Center. Within minutes Arnold Wheeler's old blue Dodge appeared with a blinking blue light attached to the roof with a magnet. I watched Kip Wheeler and his son sort out the cars and get things in front of Harriman's quieted down.

"H*** that's Butch Hastings up there. Your father know you're here?" Kip Wheeler said.

"He does."

"Wish the h*** someone had told me."

"Sorry, Mr. Wheeler, we were just coming for ice-cream."

"Too late to ask questions now. Arnold, make a spot for the wagon in the parking lot to give the kids here a chance to look it over," Kip Wheeler said.

Everyone crowded around. January, as usual, was as big an attraction as the wagon.

"I think you and your friends ought to head back home before it gets too dark," Kip Wheeler said.

Much to everyone's disappointment we headed back up Linden Street toward home. Kenny lighted the kerosene railroad lanterns with red lenses that hung from the rear of the wagon.

"Thanks," said Irene Condon as she got into her Dad's waiting car.

She came on all the wagon rides. I was glad she did.



Rhubarb Pie



Pour boiling water over two teacups of chopped rhubarb, wait 5 minutes, then drain water off.

Mix rhubarb, one teacup of sugar, the yolk of egg, a piece of butter the size of a walnut, 1 T flour. Moisten with 3 T water

Bake with a lower crust only

When done beat the whites of two eggs and two T of sugar.

Spread over top and return to oven.

Citation: Baptist Ladies' Cookbook, 1893

Courtney's Vintage Recipes



Daffodil Cake

Beat

7 egg whites with ¼ tsp. salt until foamy

Add

1 tsp cream of tartar & beat until stiff

Add

*1 cup sugar, slowly
then add ½ cup flour
1tsp vanilla*

~~~~~

*In separate bowl*

*Beat*

*7 Eggs yolks until thick*

*Add & Beat*

*1/2 cup sugar*

*2 T cold water*

*½ tsp almond extract*

*Sifted ½ cup flour with ½ tsp baking powder*

*Pour alternately the white cake mixture, then the yellow cake mixture into an ungreased angel cake pan.*

*Stir quickly with knife to give a marbled effect.*

*Bake @ 300° for 60 minutes.*

*Cool in pan*

*Ice with lemon icing*

**ENJOY!**

*Citation: The Village Cookbook, 1965*



Fascinating  
Find !

## Chiastolites

*By Judy Haynes*

The beautiful stones in our Boylston Historical Society & Museum collection were discovered near the Wachusett Reservoir. This rare form of andalusite is known as a **Chiastolite** ( $\text{Al}_2\text{SiO}_5$ ) an aluminum nesosilicate mineral with cross shaped inclusions of black graphite and carbon. The chiastolite is a very rare variety of andalusite that was formed by a process called metamorphism, when high temperature and pressure formed the rock resulting in the interesting design. The stone must be broken open for a viewer to be treated to an image of a cross or a four-petaled flower. This special and beautiful mineral was first mentioned in a 1648 book titled "De Gemmis et Lapidibus," but was not officially recorded until 1754 by Jose' Torrubia, Spanish born paleontologist. It came to be known as the 'cross stone,' as the word chiastolite comes from the Greek 'chastos,' meaning arranged crosswise or diagonally in a pattern that resembled the Greek letter Chi, written as an X.



It is noted that there are only three active localities in the world with Lancaster and Sterling in Central Massachusetts as one of those three active sites, so we have a rare find. Asturias, Spain and the Bimbowrie Conservation Park in Olary Province, South Australia, are the other active locales. Chiastolites may be found in other places, but are not actively mined

In the earliest colonial days Boylston, Massachusetts was part of the Lancaster Land Grant. This geographical area is on the Clinton-Newbury fault line, and is the kind of landscape where chiastolites are found as the metamorphism of shale occurs in a vicinity where tectonic plates come together. When those early settlers near today's Lancaster were looking for iron ore, silver, and gold, they were fascinated by a stone that when split open displayed a cross; thus, they assumed it might hold special qualities. Samples were shipped to England for the Royals to see, and they supposedly were captivated by them. Mines were opened in Lancaster and neighboring Sterling so they might be extracted and sent to England and to Europe where many are still displayed in museums.

Though attractive to look at, they were dull, earthy crystals and not hard enough to be suitable as a true gem. It was the pattern, primarily, that lent its value and symbolism; thus, it was favored as an amulet, charm, and talisman. Many were found by archaeologists when digging in Native American (Nashaway) sites of this area. Those excavated stones were found to have been polished, leading one to believe they held special meaning to the Nashaway people. One historian wrote

that Native Americans believed heavily in the protective aspects this mineral provided and would have this stone talisman with them to ward off negative vibrations during rituals and ceremonies, but none of this has been verified by anthropologists studying the Nashaway. However, they were considered valuable and important enough to be traded with other tribes. Believers in crystals feel a chiastolite provides positive energy, mental clarity, inner peace, and connects their energies to that of Mother Earth. Some believed the stone bestowed strength, power, perseverance, and was extremely calming when held in one's hands.

Even into the 1980s there were people in the Lancaster, Massachusetts area looking for 'cross stones.' One person related that her mother found two in a stone wall near Blood Forest, Lancaster. She found round lumps in the rock and used a rock chisel to open and to expose the special symbol. The daughter noted "Sometimes beautiful things can be hiding in plain sight." She no longer has the stones, but wishes she had this special memory of her mother's and their forays to look for chiastolite stones.

When COVID-19 is history and we are once again open, come to the Boylston Historical Society and Museum and witness these rare stones first hand



695 Main Street

The original location of the Second Center Schoolhouse was on the site where Boylston's Public Library now stands. The students attended the Center school from the 1850's to 1904 at which time they moved to the Consolidated School for their education. As was typical in New England schools of the mid to late 1800's, each student carried his own school book which had been provided by his parents, and there was no concern about the subject or author or how old or out-of-date it was, as long as it was a school book. It was quite the challenge for the teacher!

The library cornerstone was laid Memorial Day 1904 and the Sawyer Memorial Library was officially presented to the Town of Boylston by William White on behalf of Salome White on 10 November 1904. This unique fieldstone building was designed by Worcester architects Fuller & Delano. The main part of the building is 22 feet deep and 60 feet wide. At the front is a large vestibule. On either side of the entrance are two rooms with fireplaces serving as a reference room and a reading room. The library contains a circular room towards the back. In addition to donating the building, Salome, furnished the interior with everything required for a state-of-the-art library. The gift of the Sawyer Memorial Library by Salome Elizabeth White was in memory of her mother, Harriet Sawyer White, the daughter of Oliver Sawyer and Harriet Goulding of Sawyers Mills, Boylston, Massachusetts. The library continues to service the townspeople of Boylston to this day through books, programs and digital collections.

*Acknowledgements:*

Arem, Joel, *Color Encyclopedia of Gemstones*, 1987, as noted in Hoffman, MacLeod and Smith; Geoscience News and Information, <https://geology.com>  
Lancaster Historical Society; Hoffman, MacLeod, and Smith, *Symbols in Stone: Chiastolites in New England Archaeology*, Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society, Vol 60(1), 1999; Kunz, George F., *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones: being a description of their sentiments and folk lore, superstitions, symbolism, mysticism, use in medicine, protection, prevention, religion, and divination, crystal gazing, birthstones, lucky stones and talismans, astral, zodiacal and planetary*, 1913, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001277254>;  
Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, <https://collection.maas.museum/object/3215>; Photography by Nancy Filgate, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, curator & director; Torrubia, Jose, *Aparato para la historia Natural de la Nueva Espana*, 1754;  
The Crystal Council.com; Wikipedia: chiastolites; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiastolite>

---

### ***Board of Directors***

*President – Timothy Houlihan*

*Vice President- Cynthia Rup*

*Secretary-Christina Stille*

*Treasurer- Judith Haynes*

*Curator- Nancy Filgate*

*Nadine Ekstrom*

*Marie Philips*

E-mail - [info@boylstonhistory.org](mailto:info@boylstonhistory.org)

<https://www.boylstonhistory.org>

Check us out on Facebook! [Facebook.com/BHS900](https://www.facebook.com/BHS900)

### **BHSM**

7 Central Street

P.O. Box 459

Boylston, MA 01505

508-869- 2720

