

The Red Barn Grain Bin Restaurant

By Inga Milbauer



In the 1930s the old barn next to the Center Store in Boylston, Massachusetts, was converted into The Red Barn Grain Bin Restaurant. It was “a very, very unique and different place” according to Edith Kinnear Anderson who was a waitress, as a teenager in the summers, for about three years.



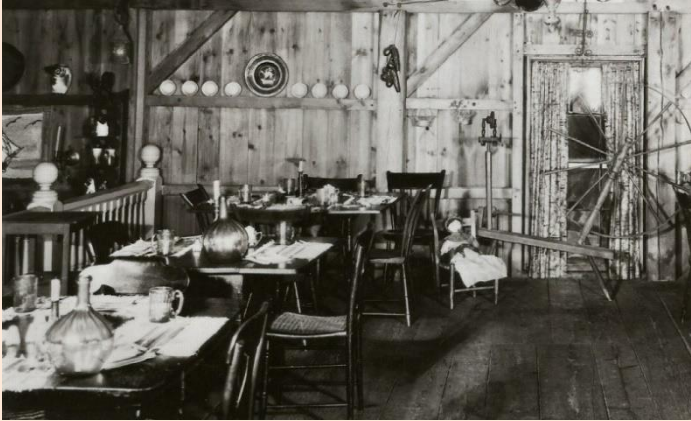
The Red Barn Grain Bin Restaurant – Circa 1940

The Red Barn Grain Bin was situated between the Boylston Center Store (now the Boylston Deli Café and Catering) and the Historic Town Hall (currently the home of the Historical Society and Museum).



The Red Barn Grain Bin Restaurant – Late 1930s

Since there was no heat in the barn, the restaurant was only open during the warmer weather from noon to 8 pm. daily, except Mondays. It served about 45-50 people. “The tables were set with place mats and napkins. The water bottles and glassware were made of Mexican glass. Edith and about six local girls, the waitresses, wore jumper style floral dresses with white blouses.”[1]



Interior of the restaurant – Circa 1934



“Each waitress served every table. One would serve the fruit cup, another serve the salad and so on. A seven course meal consisted of fruit cup, soup, salad, chicken, a second meat, potatoes, vegetables, fritters and a dessert, priced at a dollar and a half in 1934.”[2]



Interior of the Restaurant, Date & Name of Waitress Unknown

Edith Kinnear Anderson describes the setup of the restaurant during an interview with Judy Haynes for the *Boylston Historical Society Oral History Project* in 2004 as follows:

“As you went in the door you went up the stairs to go into the dining room. And then there was a door besides that and the restrooms were just as you went in the door. It was one big room. There was a lobby and there was an old organ in there that nobody ever played. And then you went up the ramp to go into the dining room. The kitchen was in the back and you went up a couple of stairs into the dining room and there was a ramp that they used to wheel the grain and things down and it had cleats on it. Sometimes we would go up there, but mostly we used the stairs.”

When asked if a lot of people from Boylston ate at the restaurant, Edith replied,

“Not as many as from out of town. They came for the chicken dinner. I told you that every waitress waited on every table. I think the way dinner was served was a novelty.”

Edith mentions that,

“Lena Hastings from town and a black lady from Worcester did most of the cooking, I think, and Ida Warren was a dishwasher, Alice Wheeler from Berlin, pastry cook.” [3]

Edith N. Kinnear, the daughter of Orris Bliss Kinnear and Anna Florence Maggs Kinnear, was born on November 3, 1916 in Worcester, Worcester County, Massachusetts. Edith married Frederick C. Anderson in 1940 in the garden of The Red Barn Grain Bin Restaurant. She died on

August 30, 2011 and is buried at Pine Grove Cemetery in Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts.



Garden of the Restaurant

Kate Souci Taylor owned and ran the restaurant. Marian “Kate” Souci was born in Jordan, Onondaga County, New York on November 20, 1882. She was the daughter of George O. Souci and Sarah Campbell. She married George Henry Taylor on September 16, 1902 in Boylston, Massachusetts. George Henry Taylor Jr., born on August 28, 1879 in Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts, was the son of George H. Taylor and Jennie W. Wood. The 1920 United States Census lists Kate Souci’s occupation as clerk at a grocery company.

Kate Souci Taylor bought the Boylston Center Store with the adjacent barn in the early 1930s from Frank B. Vinton, and ran the store together with her brother, Harry A. Souci.[4] She decided to turn the grain bin barn into a restaurant. The restaurant opened in 1933. Kate Souci Taylor became the acting U.S. Postmaster of the Boylston Centre Post Office on February 13, 1940 and was appointed U.S. Postmaster by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the President of the United States on August 26, 1944. She retired on January 31, 1955.[5] Kate died on October 19, 1967 and is buried in Pine Grove Cemetery in Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts. The Red Barn Restaurant officially closed its doors during World War II. The building remained empty for many years before being dismantled in the 1950s. The fond reminiscences of the lovely unique establishment remain a vital part of the cultural history of Boylston.

Acknowledgments:

[1] Boylston Historical Series by Bruce Filgate, 2012, p. 527

[2] Boylston Historical Series by Bruce Filgate, 2012, p. 527

[3] Interview of Edith Kinnear Anderson, Boylston Historical Society Oral History Project, 2004

[4] Boylston Historical Society and Museum Potpourri email Vol. 2, No. 11 - 1 May 2001

[5] U.S. Appointments of U.S. Postmasters, Vol 31, 1932-1971

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Boylston Historical Series by Bruce Filgate, 2012, Vol. XIII

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