



NOW!

119 Central Street

This farm was built circa 1742 by Daniel Whitney. Daniel previously came from Waltham, Massachusetts and settled for a time in the Bannister Place on Mill Road. In 1739, Daniel had married Thankful Allen and they had four children one of whom was Lieutenant Timothy Whitney who marched on the Alarm with Captain Andrews' Minuteman Company from Shrewsbury North Precinct (later known as Boylston) in 1775. Timothy, born October 25, 1743 married Catherine Davenport, the daughter of Nathaniel Davenport. Timothy and Catherine moved into the family home on Central Street where they had seven children. The property was eventually willed to Timothy by his father on July 2, 1780. Timothy served as Selectman, Assessor, and Town Treasurer. He died 24 September 1817. The house was subsequently sold to Peter Babcock, Moses Brigham, and on January 18, 1847 was acquired by the Town of Boylston.

From 1848 to 1921, the property was used as the Town Poor Farm and Almshouse. It was during this period of time that a grizzly discovery was made. In 1875, the Town of Boylston voted to build a barn on the Town Farm measuring 60' x 40' with a slate roof and a cupola and this project was completed July 1876 at a cost of \$2408.74. On April 5, 1880, the town then authorized major repairs to the old section of the house and also authorized the building of a new ell onto the existing dwelling. These renovations involved extensive repairs to the older section of the house and excavation of a new foundation. Charles Fuller and the Esterbrook Brothers were hired as stone masons for the foundation.

Sometime during the eleven months between April 1880 and March 1881, the laborers had occasion to remove a granite door step measuring 4' 5" x 2' 4" x 1'. Beneath the stone step which had been estimated to be in excess of 1500 lbs., a mass of bones buried under a shallow layer of dirt were discovered. These bones included small pieces of the skull plate, teeth, leg, arm and rib bones. Upon analysis, Dr. Franklin Brigham determined the remains were human and further analysis by the Harvard Medical School reported the remains to be that of a 20–25-year-old female who had apparently died approximately 80 years prior, hence circa 1795-1805. Who was this mystery woman? Was her death due to natural causes or was a crime committed and this young woman's body hidden beneath this 1500 lb slab? The intriguing possibilities can certainly stimulate one's imagination.

This mystery remains unsolved and in 1921, the property came into the hands of the Smith family and then the Rinker family. In 1953, its barn which had been part of an operating dairy, was refurbished and became The Bay Path Barn a favorite destination for square dancers and line dancers of the area for over a century. The Rinker's retired, but their love of the dance continues on through one of their students. Recent renovations include new hardwood floors and wagon wheel candelabras so the Bay Path Barn continues as a fun place for the locals to dance as well as receive dance classes!