

Farms in Boylston

A Peek into the Historical Society Photograph Archives

By Inga Milbauer

At the time of its incorporation in 1786 the town of Boylston was an agricultural community. Farms produced beef, pork, butter, cheese and grains in large quantities. According to William O. Dupuis,

“In 1806, 3000 bushels each of rye, corn, and oats were grown locally, and it was possible for farmers to sell large quantities of rye meal in Boston at \$1.25 bushel. In 1805, the town saw the revitalization of orchard growing, especially apples, plums, peaches, and quince. By 1806, there were 30 cider mills in town, and we were known for the quality of that frothy beverage, so that neighboring towns sent for our cider when they wanted the best.”¹

Business continued to flourish as the following list of agricultural production in 1875 indicates:

20,930 barrels of apples valued at \$8,100
4,639 bushels of corn valued at \$4,706
18,689 bushels of potatoes valued at \$11,847
2240 tons of hay valued at \$37,053
148,415 gallons of milk valued at \$22,211
43,500 pounds of pork valued at \$4,521
49,425 pounds of beef valued at \$3,876 ²

During the twentieth century the character of the town changed from an agricultural to a rural suburban community. The following photographs from the archives of the Boylston Historical Society & Museum give an impression of past farms in the town of Boylston, Massachusetts.

The two postcard photographs below are views of farms which are now under the Wachusett Reservoir.

The note on the back of this postcard reads “Farm of Charles Bray on road from Sawyers Mills to Clinton, now under water in the Metropolitan Water Basin [Wachusett Reservoir].”



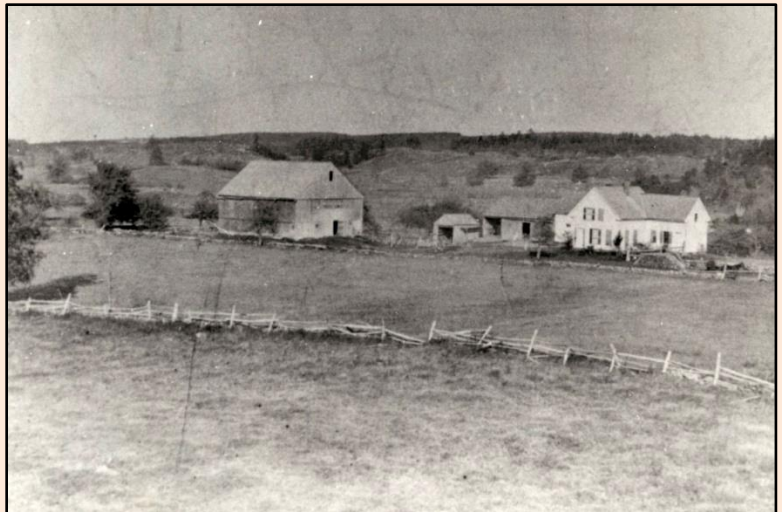
Charles Bray Farm
Postcard from 1901-1914
BHSM Photograph Collection



Willard Andrews Farm
Postcard from 1901-1914
BHSM Photograph Collection

This postcard photograph is a view of the Willard Andrews Farm. The note on the back mentions “Scar Hill Road, turn at Kendall Place beyond is where the farm used to be, it is now in the reservoir. Was home of Robert Andrews.”

Photograph of the Robert Hudson Farm on Cross Street. This property was owned during the early settlement years by Amasa Keyes.³ According to the note on the back of the photograph it was “bought by Robert Hudson in 1813 and farm built soon after. In c. 1840 the house was remodeled and became part of the woodshed, the house now standing dates from that time.”



Robert Hudson Farm
Date Unknown
BHSM Photograph Collection

¹ Boylston Historical Series by Bruce Filgate, 2012, p. 415

² Ibid p. 472

³ Boylston Historical Series by Bruce Filgate, 2012, p. 207

This photograph is a view of the farm on Linden Street owned by Lyman S. & Edward J. Walker. It was named “Maple Shade Farm”. It became part of the Mount Pleasant Country Club, established in Boylston in 1955, and was renamed The Haven Country Club in 2014.



Lyman Walker Farm
 Circa 1890
BHSM Photograph Collection

The John Bartlett farm was located on Shrewsbury Street, Boylston, Massachusetts.



(on left) **Bartlett Farm**
 Circa 1903
BHSM Photograph Collection



(on right) **Cattle at Bartlett Farm**
 Circa 1903
BHSM Photograph Collection

The following photographs were both taken at the Brigham Farm located on Ball Hill. The young child is Alice Wilberta Newell (20 months old) according to the note on the back of the photograph. She was born 12 June 1916, the daughter of Wilbur K. Newell and his wife, Marion Brigham. The people on the hay wagon are not identified.



(on left) **Alice Newell at Brigham Farm**
 1918
BHSM Photograph Collection



(on right) **Brigham Farm Hay Wagon**
 Date Unknown
BHSM Photograph Collection

The ‘Straw Hollow’ part of town was one area where farms and related businesses thrived. One example is the farm of David T. Moore, located off Stiles Road. He inherited the estate of his grandfather Joseph Tilton, and developed it into a dairy farm and apple orchard. He built a 150-foot-long barn, built a large steam cider mill and refinery, and established offices in Boston.⁴ “In 1878, David T’s farm housed 60 head of cattle, and 5 horses. His dairy business was thriving, and in his creamery, equipped with the latest Cooley apparatus, he processed 55,224 quarts of milk and 17,603 quarts of cream, which he sold in Boston for \$6,165.13. His orchards yielded 19,801 bushels of apples, and his presses 866 barrels of cider.”⁵ The Cooley Creamer, to separate cream from milk, was invented by William Cooley of Waterbury, Vermont. The appliance was patented in 1877 and produced by the Vermont Farm Machine Company in Bellows Falls, Vermont. One of David’s sons, William A. Moore acquired a farm adjacent to his father with apple orchards as well. After the death of David Moore, the Moore farms declined rapidly. Part of the property was

⁴ Boylston Historical Series by Bruce Filgate, 2012, p. 501
⁵ Ibid

purchased by Eubert F. Laws of Boston who used the milk from his Jersey cattle on this farm for his ice cream business. Known as the 'Philadelphia Ice Cream Company of Boston', it lasted until the early twentieth century.⁶



William A. Moore Farm
Date Unknown
BHSM Photograph Collection

View of the house at Prouty Farm on Central Street.



Prouty Farm
Date 1931
BHSM Photograph Collection

The photographs below are various scenes of Maplewood Farm which was located on Central Street, near Cross Street and the current The Haven Country Club.



(on left) **Maplewood Farm**
Date Unknown
BHSM Photograph Collection

(on right) **Maplewood Farm – Barn Front**
Date Unknown
BHSM Photograph Collection



(on left) **Maplewood Farm – Barn Interior**
Date Unknown
BHSM Photograph Collection

(on right) **Maplewood Farm**
Date Unknown
BHSM Photograph Collection



⁶ Ibid, p. 502

If you have a photograph of another farm from the early days of Boylston, please contact us at information@boylstonhistory.org or stop by the Historical Society located in our Historic Town Hall on 7 Central Street, so we can preserve your vintage photograph for our future residents and researchers.

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<https://www.findagrave.com>
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<https://vermonthistory.org/freedom-unity-holy-cow>
Images of America Boylston by William O. Dupuis, 2000, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, SC