

## Did You Know That...?

Excursions into Walpole People, Places & History with Ray Boas

### ...from 1872 to 1882, Louisa

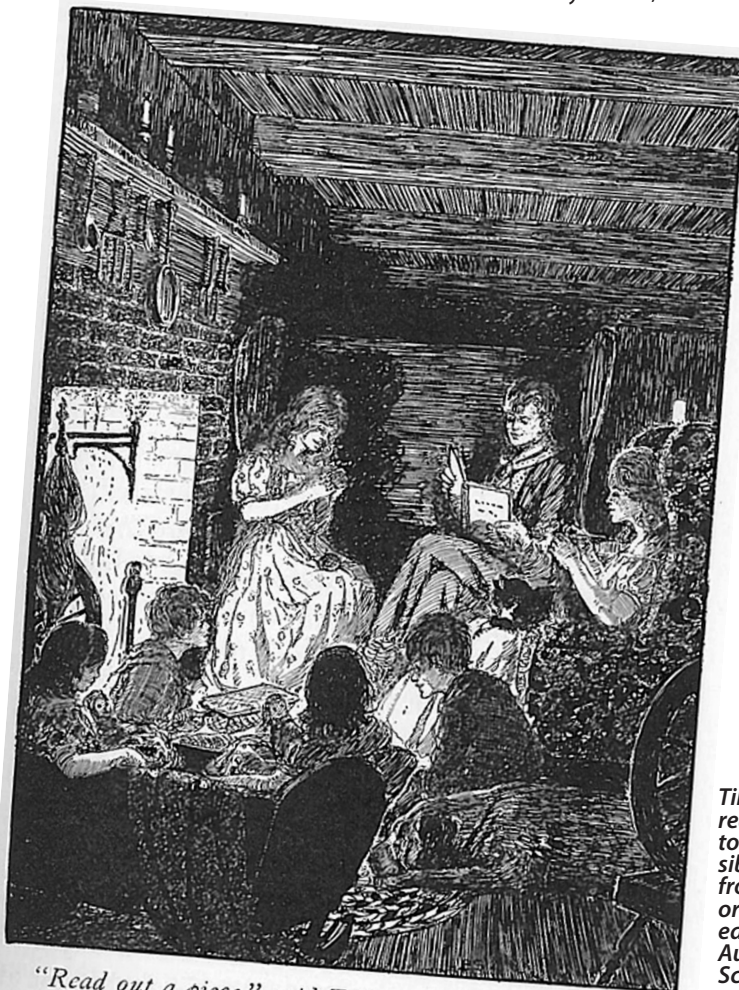
May Alcott wrote six volumes of Aunt Jo's Scrap Bag, and in Volume Six the lead story is "An Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving," about the Bassetts, who "sixty years ago, [lived] up among the New Hampshire hills... They were poor in money, but rich in land and love ..." The story, and setting, most likely developed from Alcott's time living in Walpole almost thirty years prior, during pre-Civil War America. A man came to the Bassett house saying "old Mr. Chadwick, down to Keene...", said Mrs. Bassett's mother was, "failin' fast, and she'd better come today." The eight children were left to prepare Thanksgiving Day dinner. "Gran'ma lived twenty miles away..." and with no railroad yet, Mr. Bassett hooked up their carriage "while the old mare shook her bells as if she preferred a trip to Keene to hauling wood all day."

Following the success of Little Women, written in 1868 and 1869, Aunt Jo is now the grown up Jo March from Alcott's successful tale. A very market savvy publisher capitalized on the success of Little Women, having Jo, who loved to read and write as a child, now the storyteller for the Scrap Bag stories.

The origin and evolution of our Thanksgiving Day feast follows many paths. Aunt Jo's descriptive writing, however, gives us a clear image of the Bassett holiday preparations. "The big kitchen was a jolly place just now, for in the great fireplace roared a cheerful fire; on the walls hung garlands of dried apples, onions, and corn; up aloft from the beams shone crooked squashes, juicy hams, and dried venison... Savory smells were in the air; on the crane hung steaming kettles, and down among the red embers copper saucepans simmered, all suggestive of some approaching feast."

But this year's holiday feast would be delayed with Mr. and Mrs. Bassett being called away. Tilly, the oldest daughter, said to her siblings, "Don't we always do it Sundays and Thanksgivings? ... Can I get up a nice dinner...? Come, now, if you want roast turkey and onions, plum-pudding and mince-pie, you'll have to do as I tell you, and be lively about it." However, not all steps and ingredients were properly remembered. The meal did not turn out as expected; but, we see a family truly happy, helping each other, and in love.

Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being..." Similar proclamations were made by states, and the federal



Tilly reading to her siblings, from the original edition of Aunt Jo's Scrap Bag

"Read out a piece," said Tilly, from Mother's chair.

In 1777, the Continental Congress made the first National Proclamation of Thanksgiving. George Washington created the first Thanksgiving Day by proclamation on October 3, 1789, stating: "...therefore I do recommend and assign

government, but not every year. In the early 19th century, Thanksgiving was celebrated at different times in New England.

## FLORENTINE FILMS

Making films in Walpole  
for 40 Years.

Sarah Josepha Hale, New Hampshire native and editor of Godey's Lady's Book, published *The Good Housekeeper*, a cookbook, in 1841. In her cookbook are all the recipes Alcott mentions in "An Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving", including: cider apple-sauce, hasty pudding, Indian pudding, brown bread, baked apples, and roast turkey. In 1846, Hale began her seventeen-year campaign to make Thanksgiving a national holiday. Finally,

her letter to Abraham Lincoln convinced him to support legislation establishing Thanksgiving as a national holiday in 1863. Succeeding presidents issued similar proclamations, holding the last Thursday of November as a national holiday. In 1939, with five Thursdays in November, FDR faced a dilemma. His solution was to declare the fourth Thursday to be Thanksgiving Day. Beginning in 1942, Congress resolved that Thanksgiving Day henceforth would be the fourth Thursday in November.

## Gleanings

### From the Town Minutes

**Select Board** - October 10 - The board approved and signed a congratulatory letter to Mr. Thomas Beaudry on being selected "Educator of the Year" by the Cheshire County Conservation District. Mrs. Pschirrer pointed out that Mr. Beaudry has always been a strong contributor in the Town of Walpole, serving on the Conservation Committee and chairing it for several years. Mr. Dalessio added that the Town of Walpole should be proud as this is the third "Educator of the Year" award. Previously Mrs. Eloise Clark and Mrs. Rebecca Whippie received this award.

**Select Board** - October 10 - Ruby Frithsen and Sidney Curven, students from Fall Mountain Regional High School, were present to talk about creating a Warrant Article for a plastic bag ban. They feel it is time to act on this by towns, cities and government groups. It is not up to individual people to make changes. Ms. Frithsen is the co-founder of the Fall Mountain Regional High School Green Group, and their group would be willing to help put this into action if they knew the steps involved to proceed with this request and to reach their goals.

**Planning Board** - October 8 - Greg Gay came in to discuss new office space at his site in North Walpole. Mr. Gay explained he wanted to build a one-story office building in the southwest corner of his property. The building will be 30 square-feet-by-70-square-feet. It would also have a basement and about six offices. Mr. Dalessio asked, "Wasn't there an office in the other building?" Mr. Gay said that the other building is too loud. The new space is better to transact business. "How many employees do you have?" Mr. Miller asked. Currently, just himself, Mr. Gay said. Mr. Miller asked if there would be people there just during week days. Mr. Gay said there could be people in there even on the weekend.

It was suggested Mr. Gay go before North Walpole Zoning and ask if zoning allows more than one building on one lot. "If you [come] back to the Planning Board, you will need a full set of site plans with lighting and landscaping," Mr. Dalessio said.

Mr. Donald Lennon, co-owner with his brother, Charlie, of Len-Tex Corp., said "...at first you told us you were going to build a house. You also told the Planning Board it would be a manufacturing business. There's nothing being built there. What is it? Are you telling the truth or not?" Mr. Donald Lennon said his concern is that Mr. Gay is going to have a residential building in the middle of all the industrial manufacturing buildings surrounding that property. He continued that he and his brother have a \$2,000,000 investment in Len-Tex, and anything that affects that investment is a problem. He said he didn't think Mr. Gay had any reason to build an office when you have no business going on. This business has not created any new jobs.

Mr. Miller addressed Mr. Donald Lennon saying he would get a chance to say all that at a Public Hearing next month. A motion was made and seconded to hold a Public Hearing for a site plan for Mr. Gay next month. The motion carried.

**Planning Board** - October 8 - Apartments in North Walpole: Jason Dunbar owns property in North Walpole and several years ago the 1.6 acre residential lot was approved for apartments. The property is 1134 Main Street. Four rental units of two apartments apiece was proposed. The layout was based on property lines. Is this something you will even entertain? Dunbar asked the Walpole Planning Board. Dunbar owns the abutting property, which is the former the former Dunning Office building. And he owns eight units on Kiniry Street that he's upgrading. This proposed rental units will be two-bedroom worker housing units - two in each building. He's not sure how many apartments this property can accommodate without being too cramped.

## You Need to Know That...

### Reynolds Wrap

Invented 1947

The aluminum foil was named after Richard S. Reynolds, Sr., founder of Reynolds Metals Company. Previously, he had worked for his uncle, tobacco king R. J. Reynolds, manufacturing the thin sheets of tin and lead foil then used to wrap cigarettes

#### Can be used to:

- **Clean pots and pans when camping**  
A crumpled-up piece of Reynolds Wrap makes an excellent pot scrubber.

- **Speed up your ironing**

Place a piece of aluminum foil under the ironing board cover to reflect the heat from the iron.

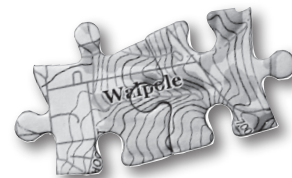
- **Polish chrome** - Use a piece of crumpled-up Reynolds Wrap to polish the chrome on strollers, high chairs, and playpens

- **Prevent steel wool from rusting**  
Wrap the pad in Reynolds Wrap and store it in the freezer

- **Clean starch off an iron** - Run the iron over a piece of Reynolds Wrap.

*Adapted from: MAGIC BRANDS - 1,185 Brand-New Uses for Brand-Name Products by Joey Green.*

He was advised by the Planning Board that the first thing is to get a permitted use under North Walpole's Zoning ordinances. He may need to get a variance for the number of units. The next thing is to talk to the North Walpole and Walpole Fire Departments about compliance. The property has town water and sewer. The property was never used for business. He will return at a later date.



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