

HOME TO THANKSGIVING!

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An exhibit sponsored by the
John Carver Inn & Hearth 'n Kettle Restaurants
November - December 1999

Home to Thanksgiving!

The words conjure up pictures: bright and frosty New England mornings, a white-steeped church set in rolling hills, the joyous arrival of a brother or sister home from school, eager children in the back seat of the family sedan asking "Are we there yet?", grandparents opening the door of the old homestead, beaming faces of all ages around a crowded dining room table.



This is Thanksgiving: images of New England, memories of family.

In addition to prints and posters, essays and poetry celebrating the New England Thanksgiving and family reunions through the years, we pay tribute to New England's Lydia Maria Child: writer, editor, gifted scholar, courageous early leader of the abolitionist movement, and the author of the unofficial Thanksgiving family reunion anthem "Over the river and through the wood to grandfather's house we go."

Home ...to New England!



"**Did you ever** make one of a thanksgiving party, in that section of the globe called the land of steady habits? New England is the place of all others for these festivals. There is no genuine, legitimate thanksgiving out of New England, unless it is imported by New England's sons and daughters. The festival originated there, and there you must go if you want to see it kept in the old-fashioned style."

Thanksgiving Festival in New England,
The Youth's Cabinet, 1846.

Home ...to the Family!



"**Thanksgiving ...** This is the great family festival of New England - the season of home gatherings. Sons and daughters, scattered far and wide, then turn instinctively toward the old homestead, and the fireside of their childhood

is again made glad by their presence and that of their little ones. Etiquette requires fat turkeys, well roasted, a plenty of pumpkin pies, unbounded hospitality, genuine friendliness, and cheerful and thankful hearts."

Samuel Robert Wells,
How to behave: a pocket manual of republican etiquette, 1853.

Old Thanksgiving' by Joe Lincoln, 1899



Oh, it's good ter be a child ag'in, if only once a year!
It's good ter have the children round the place,
It brings yer back the old sweet days in mem'ry allers dear,
and kinder smooths the wrinkles from yer face.
Our boys and gals are back at home with children of their own,
So let the fun and frolics now begin,
We old ones' hearts are cheery, though our eyes maybe, are
teary,
Fer it's blessed old Thanksgivin' come ag'in!

Home ...from School!



"**There was one day of joyful feasting in New England.** A day anticipated for one-half the year and remembered the other half. A day that brought together around the heavily laden table, in loving reunion, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, children and grandchildren; for that day the family circle must be unbroken. The day before. By stage, by homely vehicle of every description, by crowded, belated trains; from far and near, the loved ones come.

Oh, the laughter, tears, the chatter and confusion indoors and out; where to sleep and how it doesn't matter; time is short, and so much there is to say or hear."

Eugene W. Presbrey,
New England Folks, 1901

Home ...from War!



Thanksgiving World War II, as told by Ed Campbell, U.S. Marine Corps:

I arrived back home [from service in the Pacific] on Thanksgiving Day 1945... After my discharge, I got aboard a train on Wednesday afternoon and arrived in South Station, Boston, on Thursday morning, Thanksgiving morning. The city was absolutely quiet... I was able to pay for a cab to take me home [Quincy, Massachusetts] in style. Of course, we had a great Thanksgiving. My mother had all the relatives and old friends there -- I had called her to say that I would be home on Thanksgiving. It was a wonderful day to come home. It was literally the first day of the rest of my life.

Home ...the Journey!

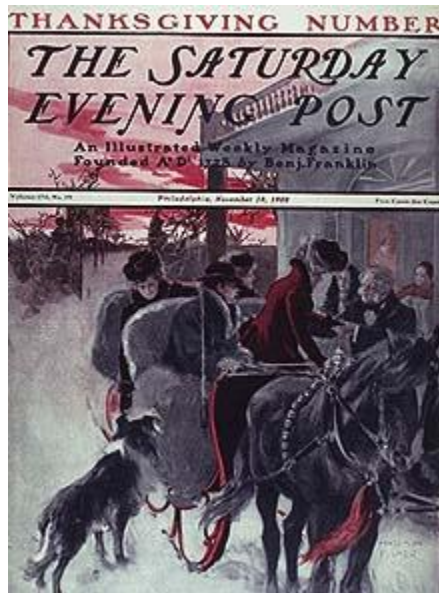


"Of course it was Thanksgiving. The snow was beating against the windows, sifting in under the door, and drifting across the roadway. At the rate it was falling and drifting, the railroads would be blocked before night. No matter, Uncle Peter and Aunt Susan had arrived by the morning train; Uncle Fred and Aunt Maria, with Cousin Will and the twins, had come over in the wagon; and everybody that was not wanted to cook the dinner had been to church and returned, stamping off the snow at the doorstep, as hungry as hunters."

The First New England Thanksgiving,
Our Young Folks, November 1869.



AAA estimates that (in 1998) over Thanksgiving alone, 27 million Americans travel in their cars, trucks and motor homes to visit friends and relatives.



Home ...
with
Lydia Maria Child!

Over the river and
through the woods,
to grandfather's house
we go!

Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880) was a native of Medford, Massachusetts. She first made her name as a popular author and then as editor of *The Juvenile Miscellany*, the first American children's magazine. In 1829, she published the best-selling *The American Frugal Housewife*, filled with recipes and practical hints.



Title page of *The Juvenile Miscellany*

In 1833, Lydia Maria Child wrote *An Appeal in favor of that class of Americans called Africans*, a strong and vigorous attack on slavery. The reaction against Child and her book was immediate. *Juvenile Miscellany* folded due to canceled subscriptions, her library privileges at the Boston Athenaeum were revoked, she was ostracized by New England society.

After ten years of sacrifice working for the abolitionist cause, Child became disillusioned by the movement's factionalism and worn down by the need to support herself and an impractical husband. While she never abandoned her passionate support of justice and equal rights, she withdrew from open involvement in the organized abolitionist movement and began, in the 1840s, to slowly revive her literary career by writing nonpolitical essays, poetry and children's literature.

In 1845, Lydia Maria Child wrote a poem titled "The New-England Boy's Song about Thanksgiving Day," best known for its opening lines "Over the river and through the wood, to grandfather's house we go." Her poem gained its lasting popularity in 1874 when her friend, the Quaker abolitionist poet John Greenleaf Whittier, included it in *Child Life*, an anthology of poetry for children.

