

PLANNING YOUR VISIT TO ORCHARD HOUSE

We look forward to your visit! To make your experience as pleasant as possible, please review the following information. If you have any questions, special needs, or other issues, please do not hesitate to contact the Education Department at 978.369.4118 x106 or e-mail education@louisamayalcott.org.

- ◆ **Deposits:** A \$50 pre-payment is required to hold a reservation and *must be received at least two weeks prior to your visit*. Check/Money Order (*payable to "Orchard House"*) or MC/VISA/AMEX accepted. Pre-payments are applied to the total cost of your tour/program.
- ◆ **Balance Due:** Please have any balance due ready to present at the Admissions Desk upon your arrival (cash, check, money order, or credit card accepted).
- ◆ **Arrival Time:** If you will arrive more than 15 minutes earlier or later than your scheduled time, please notify us as soon as possible -- reservations cannot always be re-arranged or held indefinitely.
- ◆ **Cancellations:** Please provide 48 hours notice if you must cancel or postpone your visit. Deposits will only be refunded if cancellation is received within this time frame.
- ◆ **Inclement Weather:** In the event that Orchard House or your school is closed due to inclement weather, every effort will be made to re-schedule your program, with any pre-payment applied to a subsequent date.
- ◆ **Chaperones:** One Adult Chaperone for every 10 - 15 Students is required and admitted free. Chaperones are responsible for and must accompany groups at all times inside the House and on the grounds.
- ◆ **General Information:** Backpacks, gum, food, drink, and photography are not permitted in Orchard House. Picnicking is not permitted on the grounds. We also request that all electronic devices be turned off during your visit.
- ◆ **Parking:** If you are arriving via school bus or motor coach, please ask your driver to park in The Wayside Lot, diagonally across from Orchard House on Hawthorne Lane, and use the crosswalk to arrive safely!
- ◆ **Additional Time on Site:** Please allow at least an extra 15 minutes for comfort breaks, shopping, and browsing our grounds.

THE ALCOTTS & ORCHARD HOUSE: In Brief

Amos Bronson Alcott originally purchased two houses on 12 acres of pastoral land along the Lexington Road in 1857. He moved a smaller tenant house and joined it to the rear of the main structure, making many improvements to his “new” home, as he explains in his journal entries of 1857-58. Due to the presence of over 40 apple trees on the grounds at the time, Mr. Alcott, who considered apples the most perfect food, name his home “The Orchard House.”

Orchard House (*circa* 1690) was where the Alcott family resided for the longest time (1858-77). Second eldest daughter Louisa May Alcott wrote her beloved classic, *Little Women*, here in 1868 at a “shelf desk” built especially for her by her father. She also set *Little Women* in this home, causing many people to comment that “a visit to Orchard House is like a walk through the book!”

There have been no major structural changes to the home and landscape since the Alcotts’ time, and approximately 80% of the furnishings were owned by the Alcotts, making Orchard House one of the most authentically maintained historic homes in the United States. It has been open to the public since 1911.

Tours of Orchard House introduce visitors to the venerable house, objects that were important to the family, the family members themselves, and their *Little Women* counterparts:

A. Bronson Alcott - noted Transcendentalist philosopher, progressive educator; the model for “Mr. March” in *Little Women*

Abigail May Alcott - an independent 19th Century woman who was one of the first paid social workers in Massachusetts; revered as “Marmee” in the novel

Anna Alcott Pratt - the eldest daughter who had a talent for acting; depicted as “Meg March”

Louisa May Alcott - the well-known author and advocate for social reform; admired as the tomboyish “Jo March”

Elizabeth Sewall Alcott - the “Angel in the House” who died shortly before the family moved into the home in 1858; immortalized as “Beth March”

May Alcott Nieriker - a gifted and prolific artist; the prototype for “Amy March”



Circa 1865 photograph of Orchard House and the Alcotts (from l. to r.): Louisa May Alcott (seated on ground), Abigail May Alcott, Frederick Alcott Pratt (in baby carriage), Anna Alcott Pratt, A. Bronson Alcott

GETTING HERE

From Manchester, NH or other points NORTH:

Take Route 3 SOUTH. Take the Concord Road Exit (#27) toward Bedford and Billerica. At the fork in the road (in approximately 1.3 miles), bear left, continuing on Concord Road. As you come into Bedford Center, a Motor Inn and Bedford Farms Ice Cream will be at right. Shortly after these, bear right at the flagpole (a red house is at right on the corner). You are now on Route 62. Follow Route 62 approximately 2.1 miles until a fork in the road. Bear left at the fork onto Old Bedford Road. Follow Old Bedford Road approximately 1.4 miles until it ends at Lexington Road (this is called Meriam's Corner, with a brown house and large field at left, a yellow house at right). Bear right onto Lexington Road and continue approximately one-half mile. You will see The Wayside at right, the Hawthorne Lane parking lot at left, and finally Orchard House at right.

From Providence, RI or other points SOUTH:

Take I-95 NORTH (or Route 128 in Massachusetts) to the Route 2A Exit (#30B) toward Hanscom Air Force Base and Concord Centre. Follow Route 2A past Hanscom Air Force Base (on right after approximately 1.4 miles). In another mile, there will be a fork in the road with a flashing yellow light. Bear right at the fork onto Lexington Road. Follow Lexington Road approximately 1.4 miles. You will see The Wayside at right, the Hawthorne Lane parking lot at left, and finally Orchard House at right.

From Boston or other points EAST:

Take Route 2 WEST. At the intersection with several traffic lights and a Mobil gas station, continue straight across onto Cambridge Turnpike. Follow Cambridge Turnpike approximately 7/10 of a mile. Turn right onto Hawthorne Lane and follow it until it ends at Lexington Road, approximately 4/10 of a mile (*please go slowly – this is a residential area with many children*). Turn left onto Lexington Road; Orchard House will be at right.

From Amherst, MA or other points WEST:

Take Route 2 EAST. As you enter Concord, there will be a rotary (or traffic circle) with MCI-Concord (correctional facility) at right. Enter the rotary and continue on Route 2 in the left lane until you come to the first working traffic light. You will need to be in the left turning lane at the intersection. After turning left, bear right onto Elm Street. Follow Elm Street approximately 1.5 miles until you pass a small stone bridge and church on your right. At a slight fork in the road, bear left, continuing on Elm Street until it merges with Main Street (Concord Public Library will be at right). Bear left onto Main Street, following it into Concord Centre approximately 7/10 of a mile until it ends at the flagpole. Lexington Road will be directly in front of you. Turn right onto Lexington Road and follow it approximately one-half mile. Orchard House will be at left.

All parking is available either directly in front of Orchard House on Lexington Road, or one block across from Orchard House on Hawthorne Lane (crosswalk available)

Walking from the commuter rail in Concord (Fitchburg Line):

After debarking from the train, turn to face the long yellow building (Concord Depot). Walk to the right, through the parking lot toward Thoreau Street and the intersection with a traffic light, convenient market, Dunkin' Donuts, Mobil gas station, and Starbucks Coffeehouse. Turn left at this intersection onto Sudbury Road (you will now be walking *away* from the train tracks). Continue walking on Sudbury Road until it merges with Main Street (Concord Public Library will be at left). Follow driving directions from points West. Approximate walking time: 20 minutes.

Map of Concord on page following ...

