



## Swallow residence in Westford

When the talented young Ellen Swallow attended Westford Academy (1859-63), she lived in the home at right which stood near-

ly opposite the town hall. It was only a skip across the common to attend classes. Her father, Peter, operated a country store in the building on the left, later residence

of the Homer M. Seavey family for 60 years (1896-1956), where the author of the article below was born five days short of 75 years ago.

# A favorite daughter honored

By GORDON B. SEAVEY

WESTFORD — Peter Swallow wanted the best education possible for his precocious daughter, Ellen Henrietta.

But the year was 1859 and there were rumblings of a civil war. And, too, the Swallows lived in Dunstable where readin', writin' and 'rithmetic were about all the classes available in that small community's schools.

Not much of a challenge to an eager student, he believed.

Swallow brought his family to Westford, set up housekeeping in a Victorian house near the common, and entered Ellen in Westford Academy. For the young girl, this was an excellent start on a long career which brought her many honors before her death in 1911.

She was a graduate of Westford Academy, Class of 1863, and her fascinating career is highlighted even today, but in rather an unusual manner. Her picture, together with a sketch of her scientific record, is being printed on hundreds of thousands of Kleenex tissue boxes.

Kimberly-Clark Corporation, the manufacturers, have chosen her to be among those commemorated.

**THE FIRM SAYS:** "All women can be leaders. America needs their

influence, their initiative, their contribution." In the series entitled "Women Who Changed America," among others included are Molly Pitcher, who fought in the Revolution with her artilleryman husband; and Clara Barton, founder of the Red Cross.

"While a student at Vassar (Class of 1870)," say the tissue boxes, "Ellen Swallow Richards became seriously interested in science. After her graduation, she applied to and became the first woman admitted to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She graduated from M.I.T. in 1873, and that same year received a master's degree from Vassar.

"She married a young professor at M.I.T., Robert H. Richards, and throughout their lives the two supported each other's interest in science.

"As time passed, (she) focused her study on science and economics as they affected domestic conditions. She helped organize what was to become the Home Economics department at Simmons College and is considered the driving force behind Home Economics as a distinct field of study."

**THE WESTFORD ACADEMY** graduate wrote many articles and books on food materials. She was a

consultant for Manufacturers Mutual Fire Insurance Company and had much to do with oils, in reference to safety from spontaneous combustion, explosion, etc. She was a specialist in water analysis.

As a Westford student, Ellen and her family lived in a rambling set of buildings which stood opposite the Center fire station. The two-story building next to the J.V. Fletcher Library (not then built) was where Peter Swallow ran a country store. It was demolished in 1964. The house had been destroyed by fire 25 years previously.

Ellen had a series of teachers, not all at the same time. Jacob Abbot Cram was her first preceptor, followed the next year by Addison G. Smith and, soon after, by Richard Stone. The latter two were just fresh from Harvard College.

**DURING HER FOUR** years in the classical course, Ellen also had two fine female teachers, one of whom was Harriet B. Rogers. Rogers was the first in this country to introduce a system of lip-reading for deaf mutes, and later headed the Clarke Institution for the Deaf in Northampton. The other preceptress was Olive A. Prescott.

Dunstable remembered this favorite daughter by naming an elementary school after her.