

# Norman Rockwell Writings Collection ST.1976.20031

Finding aid prepared by Jessika Drmacich

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Norman Rockwell Museum Archival Collections

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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

NORMAN  
ROCKWELL  
MUSEUM

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## Descriptive Summary

### Title

Norman Rockwell Writings Collection

### Collection Number

ST.1976.20031

### Repository

Norman Rockwell Museum Archival Collections

**Language**

English (eng)

**Physical Description**

4.0 Cubic feet

**Date**

circa 1940-1978

**Contact**

Norman Rockwell Museum Archives 9 Glendale Road Stockbridge, Massachusetts 01262

**Abstract**

The Norman Rockwell Writings Collection is collected notes and transcripts created by Norman Rockwell for his numerous speaking engagements. Donated to the Norman Rockwell Museum Archives in 1976, this collection's material is predominantly handwritten in Norman Rockwell's personal script.

**creator**

Norman Rockwell, 1894-1978

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**Biographical/ Historical Note**

Born in NYC in 1894, Norman Rockwell always wanted to be an artist. At the age of fourteen, Rockwell enrolled in art classes at the New York School of Art. In 1910, at the age of 16, he left high school to study at the National Academy of Design. He soon transferred to the Arts Student League, where he studied with Thomas Fogarty and George Bridgman. Fogarty's instruction in illustration prepared Rockwell for his first commercial commissions. From Bridgman, Rockwell learned the technical skills on which he relied throughout his long career.

Rockwell found successes early. He painted his first commission of four Christmas cards before his sixteenth birthday. While still in his teens, he was hired as art director for Boy's Life, the official publication of the Boy Scouts of America, and began a successful freelance career illustrating a variety of young peoples publications.

At age twenty- one, Rockwell and his family moved to New Rochelle, New York, a community whose residents included such famous illustrators as J.C. and Frank Leyendecker and Howard Chandler Christy. There, Rockwell set up a studio with cartoonist Clyde Forsythe and produced work for such magazines as Life, Literary Digest, and Country Gentleman. In 1916, the twenty-two year old painted his first cover for the Saturday Evening Post, the magazine considered by Rockwell to be the "greatest show window in America." Over the next forty-seven years, 321 Rockwell covers appear on the cover of the Post. Also in 1916, Rockwell married Irene O'Connor, to be divorced in 1930.

Generally, the 1930s and 1940s are considered the most fruitful decades of Rockwell's career. In 1930, he married school teacher, Mary Barstow. The couple had three sons: Jarvis, Thomas, and Peter. In 1939, the family moved to Arlington, Vermont and Rockwell's work began to

reflect, more consistently, small town American life.

Inspired by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1943 address to Congress, Rockwell painted the Four Freedoms paintings. Reproduced in four consecutive issues of the Saturday Evening Post, the pictures were accompanied by essays from contemporary writers. Entitled Freedom of Speech, Freedom to Worship, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear proved to be enormously popular. The works toured the United States as an exhibition, jointly sponsored by the United States treasury and the Post, The sale of war bonds in conjunction with the exhibit raised more than 130 million for the war effort.

Timeline:

1894- Norman Perceval Rockwell born February 3, 1894 to Waring and Nancy Hill Rockwell in New York City.

1903- NR and family move to Mamaroneck, New York.

1909- NR leaves Mamaroneck High School to attend National Academy of Design in New York City.

1912- First Works are published in C.H. Claudy's Tell-Me-Why Stories about Mother Nature and Gabrielle Jackson's Maid of Middie's.

1913- Receives Major position as art editor of Boy's Life magazine; publishes his own illustrations prolifically in Boy's Life and other children's publications.

1916- First Saturday Evening Post cover published May 20, 1916, launching a forty-seven year career with the prominent publication. Published work in several major publications including Life, Literary Digest, and Country Gentleman. Marries Maureen O'Connor.

1918- Enlists in Navy and is stationed at Charleston, South Carolina, Naval Reserve Base during World War I. Is art editor for Base publication, Afloat & Ashore.

1924- NR illustrates Boy Scouts of America Calendar, the first of a fifty-year long tradition.

1927- Travels to Europe with friends Dean Parmalee and Bill Backer.

1929- Travels to Europe with friends. Upon return divorced by Irene O'Connor.

1930- Journeys to California to visit Clyde Forsythe. Meets and marries Mary Barstow in California.

1931- Jarvis Waring Rockwell born to Norman and Mary Rockwell.

1932- NR travels with family to Europe.

1933- Thomas Rhodes Rockwell born to Norman and Mary Rockwell.

1935- Receives commission from George Macy of Heritage Press to illustrate Mark Twain's classics The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1936) and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn(1940).

1936- Peter Barstow Rockwell born to Norman and Mary Rockwell.

1939- Family moves to Arlington, Vermont.

1943- Paints the Four Freedoms during World War II and numerous wartime pictures. Fire burns NR's studio to the ground. NR loses costumes, prop collection, and unknown number of paintings in fire.

1946- Arthur L. Gupatil's treatise "Norman Rockwell: Illustrator" published.

1949- Creates new calendar series for Brown and Bigelow which starts tradition of seventeen years of Four Seasons calendars.

1953- Rockwell family moves to Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

1956- NR travels around the world on 'clipper ship cruise' for Pan Am advertising series.

1959- Mary Barstow Rockwell dies.

1960- Publishes autobiography My Adventures as an Illustrator in collaboration with son Thomas. NR paints his self portrait for the February 13, 1960 Post cover. Participates in Peggy Worthington best sketch class in Stockbridge. Meets Mary Punderson in poetry reading class

1961- Mary (Molly) Punderson becomes Mrs. Norman Rockwell.

1963- Paints last Post cover.

1964- Publishes first Look magazine illustrations; works for Look until next decade. Accepts contract to illustrate Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richards Almanacks with the Heritage Press. Travels extensively for the next ten years with Molly.

1965- Chronicles man's travels to the moon for Look.

1966- Travels to Hollywood for Stagecoach promotion.

1967- Collaborates with Molly to produce children's book, "Willie Was Different."

1970- "Norman Rockwell: Artist & Illustrator" published by Harry N. Abrams, New York.

1972- Bernard Danenberg Galleries, New York City, hosts a major sixty year retrospective exhibition.

1973- NR establishes an art trust to preserve his art collection and place it under the custodianship of the Old Corner House in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

1976- NR makes his last trip to Rome to visit his son, Peter. Bicentennial celebrations honor the eighty-two year old Rockwell. NR paints cover for American Artist magazine, publishes final Boy Scouts of America calendar, and is honored in a Stockbridge parade.

1977- NR is awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his "vivid and affectionate portraits of our country" by President Gerald R. Ford.

1978- NR dies peacefully at his home in Stockbridge on November 8, 1978. He is survived by his widow, Mary Punderson Rockwell, by sons Jarvis, Thomas, and Peter, and by seven grandchildren.

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## Scope and Content

The Norman Rockwell Writings collection is mostly speech related manuscripts, which are divided into two series: series I- Speeches: manuscripts and notes and series II- Addendum.

Norman Rockwell's original organization and titles are kept in place. The first series, consists of notes and manuscripts of speeches that Rockwell presented or planned to present including: Monday Evening Club, Arlington High School, Boy Scouts, Lotus Club, and the tongue and cheek "Bed of Proustes." The second series are collected papers of Norman Rockwell including material and correspondence from the Archives of American Art. Also, included in this series is the manuscript, "Willie Was Different."

Originally, part of Norman Rockwell's studio collection, the Norman Rockwell Writings Collection was donated by Molly Rockwell to the Norman Rockwell Museum in 1976. The contents of the collection are scripted by Norman Rockwell and include storage envelopes with Rockwell's personal title for the speeches or manuscripts. Often there are notes and comments written by Rockwell in the margins.

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## Arrangement

Series I: Transcripts and Notes Series II: Addendum

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## Separated Materials

There is no information about materials that are associated by provenance to the described materials that have been physically separated or removed.

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## Access Points

Rockwell, Norman (American illustrator, 1894-1978)

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## Provenance

Materials donated by Rockwell Family in 1976, considered part of the Norman Rockwell Trust Collection.

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## Administrative History

The collection was originally stored in Norman Rockwell's studio in Arlington, Vermont.

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## Preferred Citation

Norman Rockwell Writings Collection, 1940-1978. Norman Rockwell Museum Archival Collections, Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge,

MA.

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## Access

This collection is open to researchers by appointment.

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## Copyright

Norman Rockwell Museum abides by US copyright law. Even though Norman Rockwell personally contributed his paintings and archival materials to the Museum, a not-for-profit 501(C)(3), publicity/personality rights to his name and likeness belong to the Rockwell family, managed by the Norman Rockwell Licensing Company. Some materials in both collections created prior to 1923 are considered to be in the public domain.

The collections are in the legal care and custody of the Museum and its staff, and are governed by an independent Board of Trustees. There is no legal affiliation between the Museum and various intellectual property rights holders of materials kept by the Museum or with Rockwell's family.

Regarding copies or other reproductions, NRM reserves the right to refuse a copying request if in its judgment fulfilling that request will violate copyright law (Title 17, United States Code). It is the legal responsibility of the researcher to secure permission to publish from the institution with custody of the material as well as the owner of copyright.

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## Indexing Terms

- Art
  - Celebrity
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## Collection Contents

### Speeches: manuscripts and notes, 1948- 1969

#### Text 1

st.1976.20031.SERIES1

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Box</u>
Monday Evening Club	circa 1969	st.1976.20031.1.01	1
Sherrod, Bob: speech about	unknown	st.1976.20031.1.02	1
Bed of Procastes	unknown	st.1976.20031.1.03	1

Lunacy	unknown	st.1976.20031.1.04	1
Tuesday Evening Club: speech re: art directors	unknown	st.1976.20031.1.05	1
Arlington High School	1948	st.1976.20031.1.06	1
Lotus Club and various trials for talks on art	unknown	st.1976.20031.1.07	1
Discussion Group Tonight	unknown	st.1976.20031.1.08	1
Which Way?	unknown	st.1976.20031.1.09	1
Monday Evening Discussion Group Paper	Mar 24 1969	st.1976.20031.2.01	2
Biography Type Speech	1965	st.1976.20031.2.02	2
Plagarism and Modern versus Conservative (1 of 3)	unknown	st.1976.20031.2.03	2
Plagarism and Modern versus Conservative (2 of 3)	unknown	st.1976.20031.2.04	2
Plagarism and Modern versus Conservative (3 of 3)	unknown	st.1976.20031.3.01	3
Boy Scout Speech	unknown	st.1976.20031.3.02	3
I Paint the Leader	unknown	st.1976.20031.3.03	3
Kempton, Oliver: speech about	unknown	st.1976.20031.3.04	3
Study, Study, Study	unknown	st.1976.20031.3.05	3
Delighted Heart- Humor	unknown	st.1976.20031.3.06	3
Nurses: speech to	unknown	st.1976.20031.3.07	3
Church Club	unknown	st.1976.20031.3.08	3
Berkshire Art Association	unknown	st.1976.20031.3.09	3
Health	unknown	st.1976.20031.3.010	3

## Addendum, 1968-1978

st1976.20031.SERIES2

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Box</u>
Archives of American Art: correspondence re: Norman Rockwell Papers, possible donation	1978	st.1976.20031.4.01	4
Willie Was Different: manuscript, galley, photos	1968	st.1976.20031.4.02	4