



THE PORTFOLIO

THE NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM AT STOCKBRIDGE, STOCKBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Volume 4 No. 1

Winter 1987



ABBY PRATT

Laurie Norton Moffatt, newly appointed Museum Director

Laurie Norton Moffatt Named Museum Director

The Board of Trustees of the Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge named Laurie Norton Moffatt Director of the Museum in November 1986. David H. Wood will be the Museum Historian.

President Lila W. Berle, in announcing the change, said, "Moffatt has shown herself to be an exceptionally well-qualified administrator and knowledgeable Rockwell leader through her fund-raising achievements, her program documents, her staff appointments and staff expansion, her direction of the studio move and her work with new building design."

Moffatt has been a member of the Museum staff since graduating from Connecticut College with a B. A. in art history. She has served the Museum as its curator and is the author and editor of *Norman Rockwell: A Definitive Catalogue* published by the Museum late last year. Extremely active in community affairs, Moffatt is a trustee of the Pittsfield Girls Club and the Stockbridge Library Association. She is treasurer of the Connecticut College Alumni Association.

Museum Education Program Launched

For the first time in its short history, the Norman Rockwell Museum will have a special education program for local grade-school students. Formulated and directed by Barbara Allen, the program will start early in March and run through late spring in its pilot stage. Ms Allen, a docent of the Museum and art teacher at St. Mary's School, Lee, has been working on the details of the educational program for several months.

Museum guides who have volunteered for a part in this exciting project are being trained to approach museum guiding in a totally different way. Up to this time student groups have been given regular Museum tours; in the new system the students will be shown illustration as a form of communication and as a way one learns with one's eyes.

Norman Rockwell's work is an excellent medium for this learning experience, Ms Allen has pointed out, since children relate to his paintings and their subjects without hesitation or fear. "We want to make a

Continued on Page 6

Linwood Carriage Barn Restored

An almost Cinderella-like transformation has successfully converted the carriage barn at Linwood into two apartments for staff members.

The Victorian structure, the building date of which has not yet been determined, had been allowed to deteriorate badly in the last few years. Early surveys debated whether the barn could be saved or should be demolished. Its transformation is due in large part to the enthusiasm and vision of Architect Warren Platner, who saw in its unique features a building which would be impossible to duplicate at the present.

During the years when Linwood was occupied by members of the Butler family, the carriage barn housed the estate horses and the carriages, as well as providing hayloft space for feed and small quarters for one of the farm employees. In later years it housed the truck and tractor during the time Linwood was being run as a dairy farm by Percy Musgrave a generation ago.

A small garage, built against the front of the structure, was demolished and extensive structural work had to be done since beams and posts had seen extensive decay. Probably the most difficult problem, however, arose when it was found that a huge boulder lay beneath the building, preventing the replacement of a badly skewed brick foundation.

Continued on Page 3



THE DAY I PAINTED IKE, oil on canvas, 10" x 18", Saturday Evening Post, October 11, 1952, p. 25. "The campaign? Instantly, he was deeply serious. No punch-pulling for him! He'd rather lose the election than not tell the people just what he thinks."

Norman Rockwell touched the lives of the ordinary and the famous, and, though famous in his own right, was not immune to a case of the jitters when faced with the prospect of meeting America's greatest citizens. During his prodigious career he executed several hundred portraits of friends and acquaintances in addition to well-known entertainers, politicians and other famous personalities.

The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge is fortunate to have in its collection a strong representation of political portraiture, including fine examples of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, and Presidential candidates Hubert Humphrey, Robert Kennedy, Barry Goldwater, Eugene McCarthy, and Nelson Rockefeller. Conspicuously absent from the Museum's collection were Presidential portraits of Ronald Reagan and Dwight David Eisenhower.

In 1986 the Museum purchased a 1952 portrait of President Eisenhower, used in the *POST*, depicting a serious expression and described by the accompanying caption, "The campaign? Instantly he was serious. No punch pulling for him! He'd rather lose the election than not tell people what he thinks." (*POST*, 11 October 1952, "The Day I Painted Ike," by Norman Rockwell, p. 25.) In all, Norman Rockwell painted seven portraits of President Eisenhower.

NR recalls in his autobiography his modeling session with "Ike": "It's the range of expressions that is so appealing . . . one moment sort of melancholy, and the next a radiant smile. And it's his wide mobile mouth and his expressive eyes that do it." The artist had occasion to visit with the President three times: twice at the White House, and once in a hotel room on the campaign trail in Denver.

From the Archive . . .

From time to time the Museum receives, as gifts from friends, a variety of interesting and significant additions of Rockwell material such as books, magazines, photos and other objects that become a part of the official Museum archive. Beginning with this issue, we plan to acknowledge these important gifts in the *PORTFOLIO*, expressing our thanks and appreciation to our donors who are, indeed, very special friends. New acquisitions will also be noted. Following is a listing of recent gifts:

—The family of Norman Rockwell has generously donated the Presidential Medal of Freedom awarded to NR on January 10, 1977, by President Gerald R. Ford.

—The family has also given a collection of candid photographs of Norman and his wife Molly, together with some original artwork by family friends. A pencil sketch of the Rockwell house in Arlington, attributed to Mary Rockwell, was also included.

—Larry and Katherine Alvord of Dauphin, Pennsylvania, continuing their long tradition of generous giving, have donated bound and complete issues of *YOUTH'S COMPANION* dating from July of 1915 through July of 1918 and representing a

complete collection of Rockwell illustrations for that magazine.

—Earl Williams of Amherst has donated a candid photograph of Norman Rockwell taken in 1945 and showing the artist standing outside his studio in Arlington, Vermont.

—Rick Wilcox, Board member and local history buff, has added to our Library a copy of *Stockbridge: 1739-1974* by Sarah Cabot Sedgwick and Christina Sedgwick Marquand, as well as a copy of *The Fields and the Law*, essays on the noted Stockbridge legal family. A complete copy of the 1978 *SATURDAY EVENING POST* Rockwell commemorative issue was included in Mr. Wilcox's gift.

—Louie Lamone has given the Museum a commemorative film made by the Franklin Mint to honor the centennial of the birth of poet Robert Frost. Entitled "Norman Rockwell, A Tribute to Robert Frost," the film was created at the same time the Franklin Mint commissioned Rockwell to illustrate twelve of Frost's poems for translation into sterling silver ingots issued in 1974.

—Financial Administrator Henry H. Williams, Jr., has put the crowning touch on the newly refurbished Rockwell studio, now in place at Linwood, with the gift of an eagle weathervane to replace the original one which disappeared some years ago.

Continued on Page 6

Linwood Carriage Barn Restored *Continued from Page 1*

Under the careful direction of Contractor David Tierney and his workmen, the structure was stripped down to its basic elements, rotted members replaced and new work done to match that already in the building.

When work was completed this past spring, the structure probably looked very much as it had when it was first built. But within its walls are now located two staff apartments: the larger contains a sizeable living room, dining/kitchen, solarium and four bedrooms with two baths. The smaller living quarters consist of a living/kitchen, bedroom and bath.

Grounds-keeper Gerald T. Kelly and his family moved into the building upon its completion and, when they leave this month, the larger apartment will become the home of new Grounds-keeper William Boyer and his wife Janet.



*From top to bottom:
Work starts on south end of carriage barn.
Carpenters install new window in carriage barn.
Front view of barn restoration in early stage.
Detail work was important in restoration.
Rear view of restoration showing new foundation.
Photographs by Doug Munson*

BOOK REVIEW

SKETCH BY NR



by Walt Reed

NORMAN ROCKWELL: A DEFINITIVE CATALOGUE

Catalogue and text: Laurie Norton Moffatt

Introduction: David H. Wood

1,200 pages in two volumes. Duotone frontispieces, 3,594 black and white illustrations. 96 color plates 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Published by The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, distributed by University Press of New England \$195.00

If the average American were asked to name two favorite artists, the answers would probably be "Norman Rockwell and Michelangelo" or "Norman Rockwell and Rembrandt" or even "Leonardo Da Vinci and Rockwell." Everyone, it seems, knows about Norman Rockwell and almost everyone loves his work.

Almost everyone, because there are also those who don't. Most notably it is some of the critics who have dismissed his pictures as "too photographic," as "narrative art" or as "overly sentimental." When abstract art was the newest "ism," Rockwell was often cited as how *not* to paint. Now that realism is again becoming acceptable and photo-realism is a new force on the art scene, Rockwell's realism no longer seems so objectionable. Narrative art has been with us since Neanderthal Man, and despite swings in and out of favor, pictures that tell a story have a valid niche in art. If an artist should be true to his principles in expressing himself, then Rockwell was entitled to paint pictures that reflected his own sentimentality. The fact that millions of Americans have responded to that sentimentality indicates that beneath our sophisticated exteriors is a common chord that resonates with it.

What Rockwell's critics almost never considered was the content of his pictures. In them he recorded an era of transition from rural to urban America, how we looked, dressed and acted. It was a period when our society was simpler, and our ideals were clearer. Perhaps we did not always live up to them, but Rockwell's work is like a family album composed of pictures of the way we wished we were. In them we can find a continuous pleasure in seeing how good he made us look.

And not all critics have been negative. Tom Buechner, former Director of the Brooklyn Museum, who compiled an earlier major book, *NORMAN ROCKWELL, ARTIST AND ILLUSTRATOR*, stated, "In successfully serving one of the largest audiences ever reached by an artist, his work reflects the tastes of his times to an unusually high degree." Increasingly, museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, are adding his works to their permanent collections. At auction, Rockwell's pictures consistently command high prices from dealers and private collectors, and in the years since his death in 1978, interest in his work has continued to grow.

In two volumes, this *catalogue raisonné* of all the known works of Norman Rockwell is the answer to the dreams of every fan and serious scholar of the artist. Despite the overabundance of Rockwell books, some clearly exploitive of the immense loyalty of Rockwell followers, never before has anyone successfully taken on the formidable task of recording this large body of work.

For an artist who painted his pictures so carefully, his output was surprisingly large. Counting all the preliminary drawings and compositional sketches, there are over 3,500 works recorded. Since so many of the latter were never published, or intended to be, this is a rich source of information about Rockwell's working methods and new subjects to be savored. That so many have survived at all is surprising, particularly since it was Rockwell's generous practice to give them away to almost anyone who asked, and they became dispersed all over the country. (Conversely, most were so highly prized by their recipients that they preserved what Rockwell himself might otherwise have destroyed.)

Of course, all the major works are also here: The Four Freedoms posters, the SATURDAY EVENING POST covers, and the Boy Scout subjects—many in full color along with the pertinent data about date and place of publication, medium, size, and present ownership or whereabouts, if known. Only someone in Laurie Norton Moffatt's position at the Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, serving as a conduit of such information, could have accumulated this mountain of data, and only someone as diligent and scholarly as she could have assembled it in such a clear, concise and attractive format. David Wood, Director, and the Board of Trustees of the Museum deserve credit for their initiative and underwriting of this ten-year project.

The volumes themselves are durably bound and boxed, well designed to be thumbed through repeatedly and to withstand library usage.

Norman Rockwell set high standards for himself in his work, and this catalogue succeeds in meeting equally high standards. He would have enjoyed it as much as readers will. — Walt Reed

Walt Reed is author of The Illustrator in American 1880-1980. He is a scholar and an expert in the field of American illustration and resides in South Norwalk, Connecticut.

New Exhibit Marks Museum Re-Opening

When the Norman Rockwell Museum re-opened after its annual two-week closing on February 4, visitors were treated to an almost totally new exhibition of Rockwell paintings.

The central theme around which the exhibition has been organized by Linda Russell, Dennis Carr and David Wood is the variety of works in the paintings and drawing collection, representing a wide spectrum of Rockwell's pictures.

One of the most interesting of the galleries features a popular *POST* cover, "The Art Critic," and shows not only the final oil painting but many of the preliminary studies in color and in charcoal, as well as a rare conceptual sketch for the picture, the sketch probably being the one shown by the artist to the Art Editor of the *POST* for final approval.

The Village Room now contains works all completed in Stockbridge after 1953, disparate works such as the *LOOK*-commissioned painting for *MURDER IN MISSISSIPPI*, a series of portraits done in the Peggy Best sketch class and *POST* covers from the 1950s.

On the other hand, the *FOUR FREEDOMS* are accompanied by other paintings done by Rockwell in Vermont in the 1940s and using Vermont models the artist often utilized in his work while living in Arlington.

A newly acquired Rockwell painting, done for a *LIFE* magazine cover in 1923, is featured in the room which houses early works by Rockwell.

Continued on Page 6

Gala Party Marks Completion of County Drive

Successful culmination of the Berkshire County phase of the capital drive was marked on the evening of October 22 by a gala celebration, held in the recently relocated Norman Rockwell studio.

Volunteers who had assisted in the campaign were hailed for their part in raising slightly more than the one million dollars set as the Berkshire fund goal.

On a warm fall evening guests proceeded to the new studio site overlooking the Housatonic River by walking down a torchlit driveway as dusk fell. This was the first time the studio had been open since its move; although restoration and site work had been completed, the studio was empty of its contents, still in storage and awaiting removal and replacement when the project is completed later in 1987. Now visitors thronged the empty room and admired its judicious renewal without disturbing its original look.

Visitors were entertained with a slide show entirely of the studio: views of it before its move were interspersed with pictures of the artist at work and with noted visitors. Narration was furnished by David Wood and Laurie Norton Moffatt. Displayed about the room were photos of the studio and its conversion from a carriage house.

Lila W. Berle, President of the Board of Trustees, welcomed the group and introduced Harry Stuart, Chairman of the Development Committee, and Henry H. Williams, Jr., Chairman of the Berkshire County Regional Campaign. Williams thanked the volunteers, especially commenting on the major part played by Jorja-Ann P. Marsden and Betsy Holtzinger, the former responsible for the extremely successful Stockbridge solicitation and the latter for an outstanding total realized from area innkeepers and restaurateurs. Both women were presented with special plaques made from salvaged siding from the studio mounted with an appropriate presentation plate.

Williams pointed out that campaign contributions came from Berkshire County businesses, industries and private citizens, many of whom had had personal contact with Norman Rockwell. The largest single gift was \$150,000 from the Red Lion Inn and its affiliated companies. A total of \$114,000 was given by the Berkshire County banking community and \$61,000 by county utilities. Other corporate gifts totaled \$175,800. Individual gifts of \$549,200 comprised the balance of the \$1,050,000 total.

Concluding the ceremonies Williams said, "We are extremely grateful for the strong support of this Museum in our home county. It bodes well for the success of the national campaign."



H. H. Williams presents plaque to Jorja Marsden as board member Harry Stuart watches.



It is good to welcome to the Museum "family" Bill and Janet Boyer. Bill will be the "jack of all trades" both at Linwood and at the Main Street property, taking the place of Gerry Kelly. Bill is no stranger to us: for years he was a familiar face at the Red Lion Inn, working under his father, Norm Boyer, for several years in charge of maintenance at the Inn. The first outdoor Christmas tree at The Old Corner House was erected by Bill and one of his helpers when it became evident that the fourteen-foot tree would not stand upright without some kind of help.

During the annual Museum close-down, the last two weeks of January, new wall-to-wall carpeting was laid in the six Museum rooms. A gift from General Electric in Pittsfield, the carpet will help delay wear on the softwood floors of the old house, floors which have begun to splinter badly from the thousands of feet treading on them daily. Office changes also took place during the shutdown, as did the creation of a new staff room for guides and guards, a badly needed facility heretofore relegated to a small and cramped room on the first floor. Assistant Director Margaret L. Batty has, for the first time, a spacious office of her own.

Also during the January "break" the Rockwell collection was rehung, with some paintings being retired to the vault and others, many not seen for a while, taking their place. Under the direction of David Wood, Linda Russell and Dennis Carr, the look of the Museum changed. One of the features of the new exhibit is the appearance of a number of sketches and preliminary drawings done by Rockwell, as well as the finished paintings for which these were done. Later in the summer the final room of the exhibit area will be changed to house representative art works by Rockwell which were hanging in his own home, many of which have not been seen by the public.

While the Museum was closed during the last two weeks of January, a young visitor had made a special appointment to study the Rockwell works more exhaustively than is possible when the Museum is open. Kevyn Smythe, a young illustrator and art student from California, spent several days intently studying Norman Rockwell's painting techniques and making copious notes, claiming that "Mr. Rockwell is my best teacher; I keep learning from him all the time." Smythe's work does not copy Rockwell but has the same regard for technique that the latter had. We hope that he will go far in his chosen field of work.

The resignation of Ruth M. Young from the Museum ends a long period of association. Miss Young, a Stockbridge native, taught for many years in Massapequa, New York, and became school principal there. After her retirement she came back "home" and, in 1973, joined the group of guides at what was then The Old Corner House. It would be impossible to describe Ruth's facility at giving tours: the meek and the mighty were treated alike, were invigorated by Ruth's totally individualistic approach and left feeling that they had somehow had "an experience," as evidenced by many comments and letters received long

Continued on Page 6

Museum Education Program Launched

visit to the Museum an enjoyable rather than a dull or frightening experience," she said. Since Rockwell painted the events in the world around him over a six-decade period in this century, there is a tremendous amount of social and cultural history in his work. Emphasis will be placed on what life was like for an average ten-year-old over the early years of this century and on how history can become more personal when seen through illustration. Classroom visits by docents will precede students' trips to the Museum.

Next spring the educational program will be expanded to include grades 2, 3, 7 and 8, with presentations to be tailored to their age levels and their interests and needs. Ultimately the Museum hopes to reach at least 3,000 children throughout Berkshire County and its environs. This program is unique to the area and already has received most enthusiastic support from local school personnel.

New Exhibit Marks Museum Re-Opening

While many of the most familiar and popular works may be missing from this exhibition, the Museum feels that a far greater representation of Rockwell's work is being shown and, later in the season, when part of the family art collection is shown, that the "new look" should draw considerable interest from the visiting public.

From the Archive

—Steven Lomazow has just sent the Museum the September 1923 issue of *INTERNATIONAL STUDIO*, which contains a biographical article on Norman Rockwell and an advertisement for Devoe Artists' material depicting a dapper NR in his 20's at his easel.

—The Archive benefited from the auction of Rockwell household items after the sale of the South Street home when David H. Wood successfully bid on a painted wood model of Willie the Thrush and a twelve-inch commemorative gold-tone medallion of Willie from the *Willie Was Different* story written by Molly Rockwell and illustrated by Norman.

—Also obtained at the same auction was a 10-inch engraved Revere-type silver bowl presented to Norman Rockwell by Governor Francis W. Sargent on June 28, 1973, in recognition of the artist's contributions to "Massachusetts, the Nation and the World."

—David also acquired a rare 1890 map of the Glendale-Housatonic River mill area of Stockbridge that includes in the upper right corner a view of Linwood Farm with Linwood house just peeking through.

LSR

Sketches

after their visit. Ruth's leaving marks the end of a period in the Museum's history, and her service has been more appreciated than it is possible to acknowledge.



The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge

STOCKBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 01262

413/298-3822

Board of Directors

of the Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge

Lila W. Berle	President of the Board
David L. Klausmeyer	First Vice-President
Harry J. Stuart	Second Vice-President
William J. Napolitano	Treasurer
Jane Fitzpatrick	Clerk
Brian J. Quinn	Legal Counsel

George P. Adams	Stephen R. Lett
Patricia Barrett	Jorja-Ann Marsden
David S. Brooke	Norma G. Ogden
Linda Day	Dorothy B. Perkins
John M. Deely, Jr.	Mark L. Selkowitz
Patricia Deely	Beurt SerVaas
Donna K. Gray	Rosamond E. Sherwood
Henry Holt	Richard B. Wilcox
Paul W. Ivory	

Staff

Laurie Norton Moffatt	Director
Mrs. John T. Barry	Assistant Director
John S. Sterrett	Director of Development
Henry H. Williams, Jr.	Financial Administrator
David H. Wood	Historian

Copyright © 1987 The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge. All Rights Reserved.