



THE PORTFOLIO

THE NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM AT THE OLD CORNER HOUSE, STOCKBRIDGE, MASS.

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1984 Attendance Shows Variety of Visitors

When 1984 drew to a close and the year-end reports were compiled it was found that for the third consecutive year slightly over 100,000 people had visited the Norman Rockwell Museum. This number is a far cry from the fewer than 5,000 who came the first year the museum was open in the late 1960s. Since that modest beginning there has been a steady increase in numbers each year until the period of the last three years, when it seems to have leveled off.

During those early years the beautiful Georgian-style house, circa 1800, which serves as the museum was very adequate. As the numbers climbed, however, it became increasingly evident that it was totally inadequate. During half of the year there is no problem, but during the peak season from late June until mid-October there may be anywhere from 500 to more than 1,000 visitors daily.

It has now become imperative that we have new quarters as soon as possible. Members of the staff, even though they work under very trying conditions, do an excellent job of taking care of visitors. The staff is composed of some 25 to 30 members, both full- and part-time, and all devoted to the spirit of the Norman Rockwell paintings and the museum.

Visitors come from all fifty states as well as from abroad: Europe, Latin America, Canada, the Orient. Nineteen eighty-four brought a number from Japan and Australia in particular. They range in age from babes in arms to octogenarians. They come in all shapes, sizes and colors. They

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Linwood House, early home of Butler family, to be site of new museum complex (drawing by Larry S. Wasiele).

Linwood, Charles Butler Estate, to Be Home of New Rockwell Museum

Linwood, the estate recently acquired by the Norman Rockwell Museum at the Old Corner House, is a forty-acre property located in the Glendale section of Stockbridge. Purchased in May of 1983 from Josephine Cary Musgrave, it is to be the home of the new museum gallery complex planned to be built upon the completion of a major capital fund drive initiated early in 1985.

Linwood is probably named for a novel by Catharine Maria Sedgwick (*The Linwoods*), and the house is a copy of an almost identical one at Cornwall-on-the-Hudson called "Idlewild." Built in 1859, the house was for many years the residence of Charles Edwards Butler, a New York lawyer and a member of the prestigious law firm of Butler, Evarts, Southmayd and Choate. Butler rose from being an office boy to become one of the most highly respected of nineteenth-century New York lawyers.

Charles Butler's second wife and the mistress of *Linwood* was Susan Ridley Sedgwick of Stockbridge, in whose memory St. Paul's Episcopal Church was erected by her husband. The Butlers therefore had close ties with the village for many years, and *Linwood* descended to Butler's heirs until it was purchased by the Museum.

It is an ideal site: It is situated at a bend of the Housatonic River with pleasant views of the surrounding countryside and hills. Though operated for a number of years as a dairy farm by Percy Musgrave, it is primarily a rural residence the atmosphere of which suggests quiet and undisturbed country life.

The house, built of unpolished marble probably from local quarries, is attractive and livable despite its large size. The Museum projects using the house after renovation for museum offices, archives and for special events and hospitality. A large Victorian carriage barn located on the property will also be refurbished and restored and will house, among other things, a caretaker's apartment. The Norman Rockwell studio, to be moved from its present South Street location, will occupy a site overlooking the river, in some ways much as it does in its present location.

The extensive gardens once existent at *Linwood* have long since been neglected, leaving only a large outdoor "room," walled in by a hedge of evergreen trees in some places as much as

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CURATOR'S CORNER by Laurie Norton Moffatt

Nineteen eighty-four was an exciting year for gifts to the museum's collection. We are pleased to honor the recent gift by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Schwartz of Los Angeles of Norman Rockwell's drawings for the Brown and Bigelow Four Seasons calendar of 1953. The four drawings are known as "Musicians," "No Swimming," "Fishing Dock," and "Square Dance."

Norman Rockwell created the Four Seasons calendar series, which was published through the Brown and Bigelow Company in St. Paul, Minnesota. He designed four seasonal scenes for seventeen years of calendars during the years 1948 through 1964.

Our drawings are the studies for the 1953 series, "Two Old Men and Dog." The drawings are excellent examples of NR's working procedure, whereby he sketched out his ideas prior to working them in oil on the final canvases. The "1950" dating indicates how far in advance the illustrations had to be worked in order to be published in time for each new year. The artist's personal inscription to the original recipient of the drawings can also be seen on each piece. The works possess great charm, and the group is a splendid addition to the museum collection.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Schwartzes, who chose this museum as the home for their Rockwell art. The drawings will go on display at the time of the annual exhibit change in January.



Musicians (Winter) Pencil on paper 13.75x13.125 inches

No Swimming (Spring) Pencil on paper 13.25x12.75 inches

Fishing Dock (Summer) Pencil on posterboard 13.5x12.75 in.

Square Dance (Autumn) Pencil on paper 13.6x13 inches



1984 Attendance *Continued from first page*

come as individuals, they come as families, they come in groups by bus. The bus groups may be school classes, they may be Scouts or youths from summer camps, which abound here. The adult groups range from senior citizens' clubs or antique car groups or social clubs; many are vacationers who are taking a New England tour offered by Tauck, Casser or one of the other commercial bus-tour companies.

We are always pleased to welcome school classes because we feel that the Rockwell Museum is an excellent place to introduce children to art and to museums. Even young children can understand some of Rockwell's paintings, can see the stories they tell. This summer, as for several years past, we welcomed several groups from the Boston public schools who were participating in a program of the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood called "Days in the Arts." The following was taken from the letter of appreciation sent to the museum by the administrator of that program: "Students and staff alike enjoyed

the visits to the museum not only for the timeless works displayed there, but also for the interesting way they were explained."

In addition to the children's groups, many corporations and industries in the Berkshire area often send adult groups. Mead Corporation and General Electric, for example, attract business people for conferences from all over the world. When they wish to show the visitors the best of the Berkshire area, these companies very often include the Norman Rockwell Museum.

As we closed our books on 1984 the staff took satisfaction in knowing that many people had spent time enjoying, remembering, laughing and crying as they related to the paintings of this remarkable artist who could depict so engagingly the everyday happenings in the lives of everyday people. Over and over we are told by tourists that the Rockwell Museum is the highlight of their trip. It is rewarding to the staff to feel that such a contribution has been made to the lives of the visitors.

Margaret L. Batty, Assistant Director

Dwight Collection of Early Stockbridge Material Comes to Old Corner House

Early in the summer of 1984 the Old Corner House received as a gift the Dwight Collection. Housed in a closet-sized safe, the collection is a priceless and unique assemblage of documents, records and artifacts pertaining to the early days of Stockbridge and Berkshire County. The collection was assembled by Richard Henry Winslow Dwight, who traced his family lineage back to earliest days and who, besides being a career person, was passionately devoted to the preservation of family historical records. Dwight was born in Albany on 18 January 1859 and died in Fitchburg in March of 1920. He directed that his collection pass to the oldest male heir in his family line of descent. It was, however, through the interest of a woman descendant, Mrs. Lois McDaniel, that the collection finally became the property of the Old Corner House.

Even a cursory examination of the material shows its unique quality. Here are land transfers, wills, letters, early prints, receipts, diaries. All the familiar Stockbridge names are here: Dwight, Sedgwick, Williams, Edwards, Woodbridge. There is a receipt from silversmith and patriot Paul Revere for jewelry purchased by a Stockbridge woman. There is a letter from Jonathan Edwards. There are early land plans of the village. R. H. W. Dwight organized his material exactly: the seven-foot safe is compartmented, each section containing a carefully indexed book or box of one aspect of the material. Earlier, one document box of Williams College material was given to the college. There are small artifacts: daguerreotypes, silhouettes, family mementos.

Early in 1985 the collection will again be indexed and collated, following which it will be examined by conservation experts to determine whether it is in need of any restoration measures. Sometime in the future and under conditions yet to be determined, the material will be made available for interested scholars and researchers.

The Museum owes a debt of gratitude to Mrs. Lois McDaniel of Virginia Beach for insuring the preservation of an invaluable collection.

Guests at Massachusetts Mutual reception at Old Corner House included, left to right, Mrs. Lois McDaniel, OCH Treasurer Henry H. Williams Jr., Dr. Thomas S. Morse, Development Director Julia A. Forster. Mrs. McDaniel was instrumental in donating the Dwight Historical Collection to the Old Corner House, former Dwight family homestead, earlier this year.



In November Curator Laurie Norton Moffatt and Director David H. Wood attended the formal opening of an outstanding exhibit of works by American illustrators at the Society of Illustrators in New York City, to mark the publication of *The Illustrator in America*, co-authored by Walt Reed and son Roger. The exhibition, a large and comprehensive one, included the wonderful *Dover Coach* painted by Norman Rockwell in 1935, now in the permanent collection of the Society of Illustrators. Though the exhibit will have closed by the time you read this, the Reeds' book is a superb one in its field and a most welcome and valued addition to any library.

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In 1982 a young Japanese artist, Seiji Utsu, visited Berkshire and was moved to do a book about his impressions of this area. Published in Japan, it is called *Stockbridge ("A Place Where Artists Live")*. Utsu's paintings of Stockbridge, the museum and local scenes are well reproduced in color and are accompanied by a text in both Japanese and English. The pictures have at once a primitive, flat quality about them and are charming and beautifully done in meticulous and colorful style.

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Prominently featured in Seiji Utsu's book is his account of a meeting with Stockbridge artist Franklin Jones. Jones executed the striking pencil portrait of Norman Rockwell which often hangs in the entrance hall to this museum. A member of the American Watercolor Society and a teacher of note, Franklin Jones works in several media, and his work reminds one at once of Winslow Homer and Andrew Wyeth though derivative from neither. A visit to the Jones home and studio, for visitors to Stockbridge, shows a contemporary artist at work in an environment which seems to couple an almost Shaker-like austerity of atmosphere with the artist's love of full and rich color in his paintings.

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At long last, the Old Corner House poster of the brilliant *Checkers* painting is actually on press and should be available both in the museum shop and by mail by the first of the year. Studley Press of Dalton has done a stunning reproduction, catching the electric reds as well as the luminescence of the tent in what has been a notably difficult painting to reproduce. The resulting poster is really a superior example of graphic art.

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Some of the best work in poster and book design is being done by Lance Hidy, a free-lance artist, an exhibition of whose works concludes late this month (January) at the Homer Babidge Library of the University of Connecticut at Storrs. Gracing the wall of our office at this museum are twin posters done by Hidy for Meriden-Stinehour. His work is forceful, colorful and spare. He is also the subject of a handsome small volume (*Lance Hidy's Posters*, published by the Alphabet Press). His work is the best of its kind we have seen, and if you do not know of him, you should become acquainted forthwith.

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Personnel:

Development officer Julia A. Forster has left the museum staff to pursue fund-raising and development work in the metropolitan New York area, of which she is a native. We are sorry to lose Julia, who was responsible during her year and a

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Linwood *Continued from first page*

eighty feet tall. It is within this rectangle that the proposed museum gallery will be built, a one-story building centering about an atrium and with all modern facilities such as climate control, security systems and adequate space for paintings storage as well as exhibition. Though plans are as yet tentative (the museum building has not been designed beyond a concept), the entire property seems an ideal location for the Norman Rockwell paintings and archives. Architect Warren Platner of New Haven was delighted with the property and envisions the finished museum complex as retaining the total atmosphere of the estate at *Linwood*, with its informal country air serving as a background for a pleasant day in the country for visitors.

The Board of the Old Corner House is presently working to establish conservation covenants on the riverfront part of *Linwood*, assuring that no building or development will ever take place on that land which affords a pleasant view of the winding river. Additionally, a four-acre parcel of the Butler property which directly fronts on the river and is separate from the estate proper will be deeded to a conservation group to insure its preservation in its present undeveloped state. Contact is being made with other property owners on and near the river to try to effect similar arrangements to extend the "green belt" along the Housatonic River.

The struggle to obtain permission for the Museum to use *Linwood* was a protracted one, but now that permission has been obtained by means of a zoning by-law amendment, the Board of the Old Corner House moves ahead with all due speed to make the new facility a reality within the needed three- to five-year period.

"I am delighted that many of my original paintings have found a permanent home in the Old Corner House," Norman Rockwell once wrote. The Museum hopes that he would have been equally pleased with their planned new housing at *Linwood* which will guarantee their safety and well-being for the foreseeable future.



The Norman Rockwell Museum at the Old Corner House

Stockbridge, Massachusetts 01262

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Mrs. John T. Batty	Assistant Director
Laurie Norton Moffatt	Curator
Linda S. Russell	Administrative Assistant

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half tenure with the museum for implementing and managing the Friends of the Norman Rockwell Museum program, production of the semi-annual *Portfolio*, and coordinator of the special Friends event last July in honor of the Massachusetts Mutual drawings gift. She was also instrumental in selecting our fund-raising counsel, Marts & Lundy, and in organizing the museum's constituency to prepare the groundwork for the capital campaign the museum will conduct in the year ahead.

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Hard upon the heels of Stella Kinne's departure as museum housekeeper after more than fifteen years' service comes the resignation of one of our faithful night-watch, Joseph LeBlanc. Joe used his wakeful night hours to write "the great American novel," which, so far, has not been appreciated (nor published). We shall miss Joe, a dependable and affable sort of watchman, punctilious in his duties and, when his weight-lifting equipment has departed, will wonder why this office looks so bare.

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Our congratulations to Ann and Gerald Kelly, our tenants and keepers at *Linwood* on the birth of a second child, their first son. Brendan was born on Sunday, December 9, weighing in at nine pounds, and his mother characterizes him as "handsome." We hope that the old rhyme about "the child that is born on the Sabbath day . . ." will prove to be true.

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Late in December the Old Corner House was saddened by the resignation of veteran museum guide Marie Raftery. Mrs. Raftery was one of the earliest of the guides to enlist, and she has been noted for the vigor, freshness and originality of her tours. She has been especially wonderful with groups of young people, since she herself is a mother of three, all of school age. Mrs. Raftery will be doing full-time teaching in the Richmond school system, and we are happy in her obtaining such a fine position. She will, however, be greatly missed at the Museum.