



Norman Rockwell

The New Rochelle Years

Born in Manhattan in 1894, Rockwell spent his childhood in a variety of boarding houses in the New York area, including Mamaroneck. By the age of 17 Rockwell had illustrated his first children's book, *Tell Me Why Stories*. The same year his family moved to Brown Lodge, at 39 Prospect Street, New Rochelle.

The family's new community was the consummate location for the budding illustrator. New Rochelle was, at the time, home to many of the country's leading illustrators who supplied the essential covers for the popular magazines of the day. He would live and work in New Rochelle for the next 25 years, in various homes and studios from the south end of the town to the north.

Rockwell achieved tremendous popularity during his New Rochelle years. His detailed renderings affectionately captured typical, homespun America and its people which struck a mighty chord that resounded across the country. Not only did he become one of the best-known illustrators of the day—he was also a familiar and beloved figure around New Rochelle. With great admiration for his friends and neighbors, Rockwell was forever scouring the city for ideas, models and props to compose his pictorial vignettes.

"Some of my happiest years were spent in New Rochelle," Rockwell told a *Standard Star* reporter when he returned to New Rochelle for a visit in 1972. He died six years later, on November 9, 1978, at the age of 84.

Norman Rockwell's New Rochelle Years, was part of the inaugural exhibit at the Museum of Arts & Culture, a program of the New Rochelle Fund for Educational Excellence.

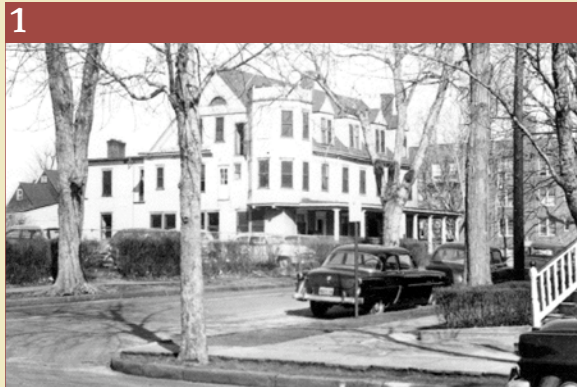
ROCKWELL CHRONOLOGY

1894	Norman Rockwell is born on Amsterdam Ave. & 103rd Street, New York City.
1904/05	Norman, his father, mother and brother Jarvis move to Mamaroneck
1913	The Rockwell family moves to Brown Lodge, 39 Prospect Street, New Rochelle. Norman rents his first studio on second floor of Covelly Building, above a dry cleaners (now Schmuckler's Cleaners) 360 North Ave. Rockwell and artist Clyde Forsythe rent Frederic Remington's former studio on Webster Ave.
1915 or 1916	Norman and his family move to Edgewood Hall, off Webster Ave. where he meets, then marries, Irene O'Connor
1916	At the age of 21, Rockwell sells his first cover to The Saturday Evening Post.
1921 to 1926	Norman rents the top of a garage owned by George Lishke at 40 Prospect Street. At some point, after renting an apartment in a house at 218 Centre Avenue, he buys a cottage on Premium Point.
1926	Rockwell and his wife Irene "buy" a house at 24 Lord Kitchener Road from Irving Hansen. He later builds a studio next to the house.
1929	Norman and Irene divorce.
1930	Norman marries Mary Barstow and they start a family while living in the house at 24 Lord Kitchener Road.
1939	Rockwell and wife and three sons move to Arlington, VT.

*Text and images: Barbara Davis, New Rochelle Public Library
Designed by: Harquin Creative Group*

Norman Rockwell's Years in New Rochelle...

1 "Brown Lodge was a reputable boarding house, clean, neat, and inhabited mostly by school teachers."



Brown Lodge, Prospect Street.

2

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NEW ROCHELLE DIRECTORY, 1919

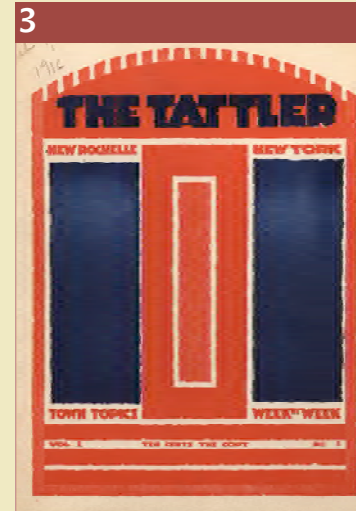
Robinson George E., grocer, 97 Union av, h do
Robinson Grace F., christian science practitioner, Main, h 120 Warren
Robinson Henry, clk, h 61 River
Robinson Howard H., mov picture opr, h 68 Wood
Robinson Israel P., mgr Swift & Co., salesman, Boston Post rd
Robinson John J., carpenter, h 42 Bayard
Robinson Laurena Mrs., (Robinson Studio), h 327
Robinson Margaret, wid Joseph, h 27 Cedar
Robinson Maude A., teacher, h 42 Guion pl
Robinson Rae, h 33 Jackson
Robinson Studio, (Mrs. Laurena Robinson), 327
Robinson Thomas H., dress goods, (NY), h 8 Oa
Robinson William, driver, h 143 Washington av
Robison Lucius, com mer., (NY), h 29 Webster te
Rocco Salvatore, laborer, h Villus av
Roche J. Maginnis, h 256 Pelham rd
Rochelle Apartments, 126 North av
ROCHELLE SHOE REPAIRING CO., first-class leather repairing while you wait, 9 Lawton, tel 4077, Salani, propr
Rock Edwin M., silk, (NY), h 274 Broadway
Rockefeller Lillian M. Mrs., clk, h Dillon Pl
Rockwell J., Waring, drygoods, (NY), h 29 Prospe
Rockwell Norman, artist, 78 North av, h 218 Cent
Roddia Joseph Rev., h 109 Main
Roddie William, propr The Orchids, 82 North av, h
Rodden Jane, masseuse, h 43 North av
Rodger Elizabeth, wid James, h 19 Premium Poin
Rodney Archer N., investments, (NY), h 152 Clo
Roehrig William H., lineman, h 34 Drake av
Roestel Paul, h 51 Washington av
Roether Anna, wid John, h 97 Walnut
Roether M. Elizabeth, nurse, 97 Walnut
Rosen Alfred M., dressgoods, (NY), h Carlton ter

1919 Directory for New Rochelle.

2 "My studio was in the Clovelly building at 360 North Avenue in New Rochelle. There were stores on the first floor (the proprietor of the dry-cleaning establishment owned the building) and five offices on the second floor. I rented an office in the middle of the building."



Clovelly Building, 360 North Avenue.



The New Rochelle Tattler, February 9, 1916.



Norman Rockwell's first known interview: The Tattler, February 9, 1916.

3 "Adelaide Klenke, a blonde, husky, beautiful Brunhild of a woman, published the *Tattler*, a monthly society magazine in the office beside mine."

4 "The kids were easier to pose than the dogs, chickens, or turkey, but it was just as difficult to get them to stay put... girls were much less trouble than boys. Quieter, more polite. But more expensive: besides paying the model I had to pay a chaperone, the mother or some other lady. Artists were considered a pretty dangerous lot in those days."

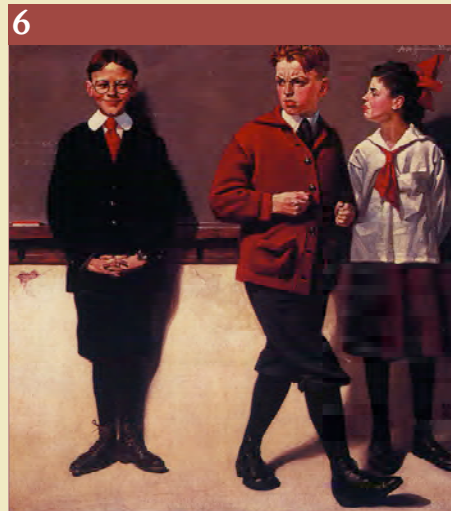
as described by Norman Rockwell...

5 "After about two years at Brown Lodge my family and I moved to Edgewood Hall, which was even more respectable."



"Puppy Love" illustration by Norman Rockwell, Saturday Eve Post, April 24, 1926.

6 "At Edgewood Hall I discovered three of the best models I've ever had: Billy Paine, Eddie Carson, and Lambert, a mongrel pup. Billy and Eddie, who were about eight years old when I started to use them, could act; if I wanted a sad expression, a belly laugh, disdain, or sneer, they could give it to me. And hold it all morning. Lambert was the thoughtful type. I'd place him on the stand and he'd just sit there with his head cocked to one side, thinking, hour after hour."



"Cousin Reginald Spells Peloponnesus" illustration by Norman Rockwell, 1918.

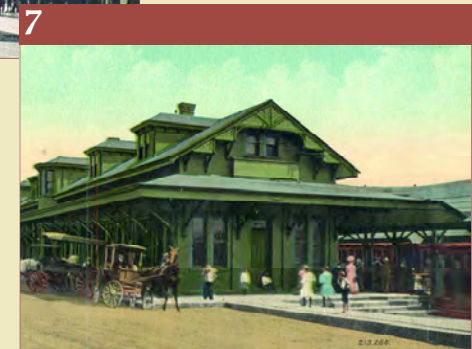
7 "In New Rochelle I was surrounded by success. Men of affairs, commuters lodged at Edgewood Hall. Downtown I often saw Coles Phillips, the celebrated pretty-girl artist, or Claire Briggs, the well-known cartoonist. Almost every day on my way to work I'd pass J.C. Leyendecker, the famous Saturday Evening Post illustrator, walking to the railroad station to catch a train for New York, where he had his studio."



Main Street, New Rochelle, 1915.



Main Street, New Rochelle, c. 1915.



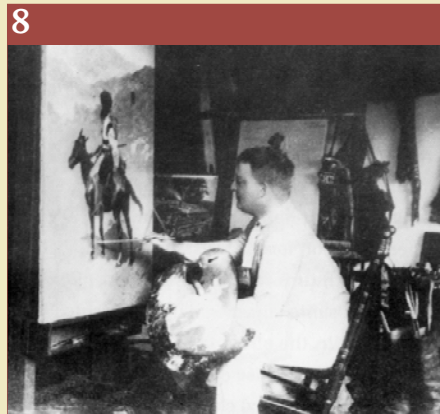
New Rochelle Train Station, c. 1910.

from: *Norman Rockwell: My Life as an Illustrator...*



Clyde ("Vic") Forsythe, portrait by Norman Rockwell.

8 "After I'd interrupted his (Clyde Forsythe's) lunch and supper ten or twelve times and we'd become good friends, Clyde suggested we rent Frederic Remington's old studio together. It was a corrugated iron barn which Remington had built so he could do life-size statues, principally the "Bronco Buster" which stands in Fairmount park in San Francisco now."



Frederic Remington at work in his New Rochelle studio



Frederic Remington's house on Webster Avenue



"Mother's Day Off" — Rockwell's first Saturday Evening Post cover, May 20, 1916 Billy Paine is the model for all three boys.

9 "In those days the cover of the *Post* was (it still is, by the way) the greatest window in America for an illustrator. If you did a cover for the *Post* you had arrived."

10 "I went down on the *passenger* elevator and strode like a conquering hero across the marble steps. I was elated. A cover on the *Post*! Two covers on the *Post*. Seventy-five dollars for one painting. An audience of two million. I had arrived. All my problems were solved; I would live in ease, comfort, and distinction for the rest of my life."

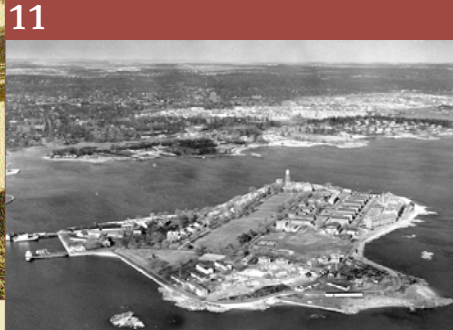
by Norman Rockwell: Doubleday & Co., New York, 1960

11



Fort Slocum Barracks during World War I.

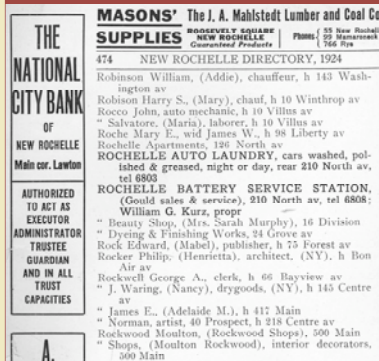
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Fort Slocum, Davids Island, New Rochelle, c. 1920s.

11 "When the first draft call of World War I was sent out I was declared exempt. I don't remember why... But I didn't object: I wasn't a fire-eater... Still, I felt a bit guilty so when the authorities organized a harbor patrol in New Rochelle to guard the approaches to Fort Slocum, a big enlistment center, Clyde and I joined up... The Fort was on an island just south of New Rochelle harbor and there was a great deal of talk about German poisoning the water supply or sabotaging communications."

12



1924 Directory for New Rochelle.

12 "After marrying Irene I'd moved my paints, easel, etc., out of Remington's former studio and into our apartment. But it was no good... I couldn't get any work done. So I rented the top of a garage on Prospect Street. I worked in this studio until about 1926."

13



Norman Rockwell's studio on Prospect Street.

13 "I rented my studio from George Lischke. He was a slim bedraggled-looking man... His wife was small and plump. They had two sons, George and Franklin. ...Franklin, a narrow-shouldered, stringy adolescent with a round head, used to pose for me a lot."

13



"No Swimming" Saturday Evening Post, June 4, 1921
Franklin Lischke is the boy in the middle.

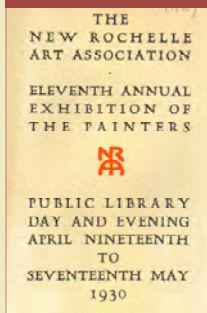
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"Painting the Little House" 1921. Franklin Lischke is the model for the advertisement.

Archival Photographs and Postcards from...

14



14 "Not long after this I received what I thought was a real indication that I was sitting in the world's eye. The New Rochelle Art Association invited me to a banquet to raise funds for a statue commemorating the soldiers who had fought in World War I. The invitation read: "A seat has reserved for you at the 'speakers' table."

14



NRAA Approach sign created by Norman Rockwell, Eastchester Road and Pelhamdale Avenue, 1926.

14



World War I Monument, Main Street and Huguenot Street

14



Members of New Rochelle Art Association (NRAA) who created the community's approach signs. Norman Rockwell is standing in the back, leaning against the stone wall.

15



Wykagyl Country Club, North Avenue, 1910

15



Wykagyl Country Club, North Avenue. c/ 1915.

16 "If there wasn't a deadline or pressure, Joe (Joseph Leyendecker) worked with agonizing slowness. The town of New Rochelle published a brochure illustrated with reproductions of paintings by all the famous artists who lived in the town. Joe worked on his painting for months and months, starting it over five or six times. I thought he'd never finish it."

15 "Charles Dana Gibson was to be the toast master at the banquet. The Wykagyl Country Club, a posh place, had been rented for the night. All the famous artist and illustrators who lived in New Rochelle were to be present."

16



Joseph Leyendecker.

16



"School Days" illustration by Norman Rockwell for "New Rochelle, the City of Huguenots" Booklet for the New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce, 1926.

16



Cover of "New Rochelle, the City of Huguenots", illustration by Joseph Leyendecker for New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce booklet, 1926.

the Collection of the New Rochelle Public Library

17 "James K. Van Brunt, one of my regulars models during the twenties, used to suggest a cover almost everytime I saw him. I'd look at him and right off I'd want to paint him."



"Gilding the Eagle" illustration by Norman Rockwell, Saturday Evening Post, May 26, 1928 James Van Brunt is the model.



Illustration by Coles Phillips.

18 "Coles Phillips, another illustrator, and I used to use the same girl as a model. She was attractive, almost beautiful. But in his paintings Coles Phillips made her sexy, sophisticated, and wickedly beautiful. When I painted her she became a nice sensible girl, wholesome and rather drab."

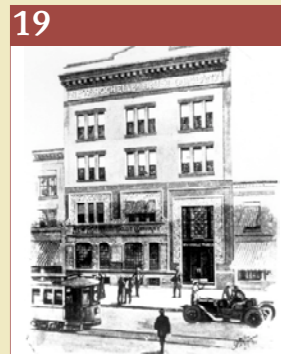
20 "Irving Hansen, who owned a fine house way up on the other side of town at 24 Lord Kitchener Road, offered to trade houses with me. I was flabbergasted. "I couldn't do that to you," I said. "You know what my house is like." "I know," he said, "but my mother lives in the next house on Lord Kitchener Road and I'd like a good neighbor for her. You pay me a little and we'll trade houses." I objected again (halfheartedly), he overcame my objections (easily) and we completed the deal. I immediately made plans to build a studio onto the garage beside my new house. Dean Parmalee, a friendly architect, or rather a friend who was an architect, and I decided that the studio should be early American in design."



Norman Rockwell's house, 24 Lord Kitchener Road.



Roosevelt School, North Avenue. Rockwell's son attended Roosevelt School (now a residential complex) in the 1930s.



New Rochelle Trust Company, 542 Main Street. c. 1910.



St. John's Wilmot Church, Wilmot Road and North Avenue The Rockwell family attended services here when they lived at 24 Lord Kitchener Road.

19 "After the war Irene and I opened a savings account at the New Rochelle Trust Company. I don't think either of us had any idea what we were saving for, but it seemed the thing for a young married couple to do."