



# Maxfield Parrish: The Secret Letters

*Alma Gilbert*

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## **Maxfield Parrish: The Secret Letters** Alma Gilbert

This fascinating story is based on 323 previously unknown hand written letters that the artist wrote during the years of 1936 to 1941 to a young, intellectual, and beautiful woman with whom he fell madly in love late in his career. The identity of this lady had not appeared in the Parrish family papers and is disclosed here for the first time ever. The letters are romantic, poetic, and full of the descriptive beauty of the surrounding area. They depict life as it happened in the Cornish Colony of New Hampshire where Parrish lived and worked. The book is replete with beautiful full color photographs of Parrish's property, the local landscape, and of the major paintings he completed during this period when he was under the spell of this beautiful young woman. In one of his letters quoted in the book, Parrish tells her his love for her is inspirational and consequently, he's doing the best work of his career. "Can I ever give you the deep joy your letter gave me? Tears for me on a hilltop: I'd forgotten I had them too, 'til I read that first page....Topsy Turvy, M.P." -----Maxfield Parrish to N. L. R. Sept. 26, 1936 "Why is it there comes over me such loneliness and longing when great beauty is about? Golden sunlight in the afternoons is well nigh suffering now." -----Maxfield Parrish to N. L. R. Oct. 7, 1936 "Your dear letter flooded the place with happiness: I feel at one with the clear light outside, the quiet white hills in communion with the sun a perfect understanding one made for the other....." -----Maxfield Parrish to N. L. R. Jan. 6, 1937 The letters are tied to the historic happenings not only in Parrish's personal life, but also to the momentous local and world events, such as the great New England Hurricane of 1938, the outbreak of World War II in 1939, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's historic 1940 third term election. They are documented by over 78 photos of the Parrish diary entries involving the mysterious person only known as "N.R." Parrish was drawn to Nancy on many levels: intellectual, emotional and his eternal admiration for beauty found in their enjoyment of classical music, the landscape and his appreciation of beauty and youth in all its many components embodied in her.

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