

Table of Contents

- [Collection Summary](#)
- [Biographical Note](#)
- [Scope and Content Note](#)
- [Subject Headings](#)
- [Related Material](#)
- [Administrative Information](#)
- [Access and Use](#)
- [Encoding Information](#)
- [Arrangement](#)
- [Series List](#)
- [Container List](#)

Collection Summary

Repository: Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries

Creator: McKenna, Rosalie Thorne

Title: Rosalie Thorne McKenna Papers

Dates: 1948-1983

Quantity: 1.5 cubic feet (6 boxes)

Abstract: The collection consists primarily of photographs taken by American photographer Rosalie Thorne "Rollie" McKenna (1918-2003) that document life and events at Vassar College during the 1950s and 1960s, including contact sheets, negatives, and prints. It also includes photographs taken by McKenna of Springside National Historic Site, Matthew Vassar's former estate in Poughkeepsie, as well as correspondence with the National Park Service.

[Top](#)

Biographical Note

Rosalie Thorne "Rollie" McKenna was an American photographer, best known for her portraits of notable poets, authors, and artists. Born in 1918 in Houston, Texas, McKenna spent the majority of her childhood and adolescence moving around the United States to stay with different relatives. In 1936, she began attending Vassar College, where she graduated in 1940 with a degree in history. She served in the U.S. Navy for several years during World War II and afterwards returned to Vassar in 1948 to pursue a Master's in Art History. She spent the subsequent decades as an independent photographer specializing in architectural and portrait photography. As a photographer, McKenna is best known for her portraits of writers and artists, including poets T.S. Eliot and Elizabeth Bishop, artists Laura Gilpin and John Minton, as well as conductor Leonard Bernstein and actor James Earl Jones. Exhibitions of her work were featured at the National Portrait Galleries in Washington, D.C. and London. McKenna eventually settled down in Stonington, Connecticut in the 1980s and died in Northampton, Massachusetts in 2003 at the age of 84.

[Top](#)

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists primarily of photographs taken by American photographer Rosalie Thorne "Rollie" McKenna (1918-2003) that document life and events at Vassar College during the 1950s and 1960s, including contact sheets, negatives, and prints. McKenna also photographed "Springside," Matthew Vassar's former estate

in Poughkeepsie, New York, in cooperation with the National Park Service. These photographs are included with Springside's entry in the National Register of Historic Places.

[Top](#)

Arrangement

The collection is organized into two series: Series I. Poughkeepsie, New York, 1948-1969; and Series II. Vassar College, 1948-1983. [Top](#)

Access and Use

Access

This collection is open for research according to the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#) without any additional restrictions.

Restrictions on Use

Permission to quote (publish) from unpublished or previously published material must be obtained as described in the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#).

[Top](#)

Related Material

Related Materials

- [The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Museum at Vassar College possesses a collection of McKenna's photographic prints.](#)
- [The largest collection of McKenna's work is the Rosalie Thorne McKenna Collection \(AG 228\) at the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona.](#)
- [Springside Landscape Restoration Records, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.](#)

[Top](#)

Subject Headings

Organizations:

- National Historic Landmarks Program (U.S.)
- Vassar College

Subjects:

- Photographers--United States
- Women photographers--United States

Places:

- Poughkeepsie (N.Y.)

Document Types:

- Contact sheets
- Correspondence
- Negatives (photographs)
- Photographs

VCL Categories:

- Art and Artists
- Local History
- Vassar College

[Top](#)**Encoding Information**

Encoded by Emma Gronbeck, September 2024.

[Top](#)**Administrative Information****Preferred Citation**

Rosalie Thorne McKenna Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

Processed by Emma Gronbeck, September 2024.

Acquisition Information

Acquired from the Rosalie Thorne McKenna Foundation via Hemenway and Barnes LLP. (M2012-009)

[Top](#)**Series List****[Series I.](#) Poughkeepsie, New York, 1948-1969**

This series contains correspondence and photographic materials related to "Springside"--Matthew Vassar's estate--and its designation as a National Historic Site, as well as photographic materials and writings related to Poughkeepsie's Waterfront Park.

This series is arranged alphabetically by title.

Series II. Vassar College, 1948-1983

This series contains negatives, contact sheets, and photographic prints related to Vassar College, including campus architecture, events, students, classes, faculty, and alumnae. Some printed materials related to McKenna's work are also included.

This series is organized into three subseries by format, and sub-arranged alphabetically by title.

Container List

Series I. Poughkeepsie, New York, 1948-1969

Folder 1.1	Springside National Historic Landmark - Correspondence and clippings, 1967-1969
Folder 1.2	Springside National Historic Landmark - Contact sheets, 1968
Folder 1.3	Springside National Historic Landmark - Negatives, 1968
Folder 1.4	Springside National Historic Landmark - Photographs (black-and-white), 1968
Folder 1.5	Springside National Historic Landmark - Photographs (color), 1968 May
Folder 1.6	Waterfront, contact sheets, 1948
Folder 1.7	"Waterfront Park, Poughkeepsie, NY" by Rollie McKenna - Proposal and correspondence, 1949-1952

Series II. Vassar College, 1948-1983

Negatives and Contact Sheets

Folder 1.8	100th Anniversary Day (VAD6.1161), 1961 Jan [contact sheets only]
Folder 4.1	100th Anniversary Day (VAD6.1161), 1961 Jan [negatives only]
Folder 4.2	Alumnae, 1954
Folder 1.9	Alumnae: Quinn / Sanford / Thornton, undated
Folder 1.10	Alumnae / Professors, undated
Folder 1.11	Alumnae, reunion (?), graduation (?) (#8225), undated
Folder 1.12	Alumnae House, undated [contact sheets only]
Folder 1.13	Alumnae House; students playing cards in Main, 1955
Folder 1.14	Alumnae Reunion (#5899), undated [contact sheets only]
Folder 4.3	Alumnae Reunion (#73482), undated [contact sheets only]
Folder 1.15	[Alumnae Reunion?], undated [contact sheets only]
Folder 1.16	[Alumnae Reunion?] (VC1.1361), undated [contact sheets only]
Folder 1.17	Art Class, 1956 Feb [negatives only]
Folder 4.4	Art Class (VC101463), 1963 Oct 14
Folder 4.5	Art Class / Art Opening (VC42964), 1964 Apr 29
Folder 4.6	Art Conference Class with Barbara Knowles, 1955 Nov
Folder 1.18	Breukelmann, Anne (VC 1958; taken for article "Anne Goes to Vassar"), 1954 [contact sheets only]

Folder 1.19	Campbell, [Mildred] (History Professor), undated
Folder 1.20	Campus (VC101463), 1963 Oct 14
Folder 1.21	Campus and students, undated
Folder 1.22	Campus and students / Art Class / Library / Tennis (#7892), undated
Folder 1.23	Chadwick, [John B.] (Physiology Professor), undated [negatives only]
Folder 1.24	Chapel, 1956 Sep
Folder 1.25	Chemistry Class, 1955 Nov
Folder 4.6	Chemistry Class / Ferry House Sitting Room / Applied Sculpture Class, 1955 Nov
Folder 4.7	Chicago House, 1959, 1963
Folder 4.8	Class with Ted Evck / Campus Pub, 1955 Jun
Folder 1.26	Class with Ted Evck / Main Interior, 1955 Sep
Folder 1.27	Classes, undated [negatives only]
Folder 1.28	Conservation Work, undated [contact sheets only]
Folder 1.29	"Co-Op Kids", undated
Folder 5.1	Couch, Helen (VC 1924), undated
Folder 1.30	Davies, Mary, undated
Folder 1.31	Dickenson, George S. "Dickey" (Music Professor), undated
Folder 5.2	Dining Hall / Coed gathering / Musical performance, undated
Folder 1.32	Downer, Henry E. (College Horticulturist), undated
Folder 1.33	Drama (Founder's Day?) (#7511), undated
Folder 1.34	Drama - Junior Party Rehearsal, 1955 Nov
Folder 5.3	Drama and Dance, 1956, undated
Folder 1.35	[Education program?], undated
Folder 5.4	Education Program with Children, 1954 Jan
Folder 1.36	Egan, Patricia (VC 1939, Art Faculty), 1960 [negatives only]
Folder 1.37	Egerton, Judy (in London), 1960
Folder 1.38	Foster, [Frances Allen] (English Professor), undated
Folder 2.1	[Founder's Day?] (#7660), undated
Folder 2.2	Founder's Day / Matthew Vassar's grave / campus / art class (#7511), undated
Folder 5.1	Fuller, Roy, 1969
Folder 5.5	Graduation (#7511, #8224, #8225), undated
Folder 5.6	Graduation - Commencement (VAG I-VII), 1959 Jun
Folder 2.3	Graduation - Daisy chain girls (#8095), 1953 [contact sheets only]
Folder 5.1	Grief-Mann Wedding, undated
Folder 2.4	Holmes, John (Administrator), undated
Folder 5.7	Inauguration (President Blanding) and Graduation (VC101664), 1964 Oct 16 [negatives only]
Folder 2.5	Inauguration (President Blanding) and Graduation, with caption list (VC101664), 1964 Oct 16 [contact sheets only]
Folder 2.6	Kitchens, 1956 Feb 3 [negatives only]
Folder 2.7	Library, 1963 Oct
Folder 2.8	Library / Chapel / Bicycles (#7511), circa 1956 [negatives only]
Folder 2.9	Lotz, Wolfgang (Art Professor), undated
Folder 2.10	Main Building, 1948 [contact sheets only]
Folder 2.11	Masters, Marcia Lee, 1969

Folder 2.12	Meade, Elizabeth "Betty" (VC 1924; Art Professor), undated [negatives only]
Folder 2.13	Miller, [Maria Tastevin?] (French Professor), undated
Folder 5.8	Observatory / Library, 1963 Oct, undated
Folder 2.14	Professors, 1955
Folder 5.1	Professors, 1961 Jan
Folder 2.15	Professors, undated
Folder 2.16	Professors, undated [contact sheets only]
Folder 2.17	Sague, Mary Landon (Chemistry Professor), undated
Folder 2.18	Science Class (VCS10.362), 1962 Mar 10
Folder 5.4	Seminar with Lillian Smith, 1955 Nov
Folder 5.9	Sophomore Conference (VC9-54), 1954 Sep
Folder 2.19	Stewart, Edith (Administrator), undated
Folder 2.20	Student Athletics (V2.960), undated [contact sheets only]
Folder 2.21	Student Candy Smith studying in Library, 1955 Nov
Folder 2.22	Vassar Brothers Hospital, child patients, 1954
Folder 2.23	Vassar Girls / Hotel Lexington, undated [negatives only]
Folder 2.24	Wedding preparations, undated [negatives only]
Folder 2.25	Williams, [Hermine Weigel?] (Music Professor), undated
Folder 2.26	Wimpfheimer Nursery School, 1955 Nov
Folder 2.27	Unidentified individual (#8023), 1953

Photographic Prints

Folder 2.28	100th Anniversary Day (VAD6.1161), 1961 Jan
Folder 6.1	100th Anniversary Day, 1961 Jan [11 x 14 prints]
Folder 2.29	Alumnae House, undated
Folder 2.30	Alumnae Reunion, 1953
Folders 2.31-2.32	Alumnae Reunion, [1953?]
Folder 2.33	Alumnae Reunion - Class of 1940, undated
Folder 2.34	Art Classes / Art Conference, 1955, undated
Folder 2.35	Breukelmann, Anne (for <i>Seventeen Magazine</i> story, "Anne goes to Vassar"), 1954
Folder 2.36	Campus buildings, undated
Folder 6.2	Campus buildings, 1951, undated [11 x 14 prints]
Folder 2.37	Chapel, 1956 Sep
Folder 2.38	Chemistry Class, 1955 Nov
Folder 2.39	Chicago House (Foreign Language Class?), 1959 Apr
Folder 2.40	Classes, undated
Folder 3.1	Conservation Work, undated
Folder 3.2	Co-Op / Kitchen / Housekeeping, undated
Folder 3.3	Drama and Dance, 1955-1956, undated
Folder 3.4	Foster, [Frances Allen] (English Professor), undated
Folder 3.5	[Founder's Day?] (#7660), undated
Folder 3.6	Graduation, 1953

Folder 3.7	Graduation, 1959
Folder 3.8	Graduation, undated
Folder 3.9	Graduation - Daisy chain girls (#8095), 1953
Folder 6.3	Graduation - Daisy chain girls - Olivia Maldonado (VC 1955), 1953 [11 x 14 print]
Folder 3.10	Library, undated
Folder 3.11	Main Building, 1955, undated
Folder 3.12	Professors, 1951, undated
Folder 3.13	Science Class (VCS10.362), 1962 Mar 10
Folder 3.14	Student Athletics, undated
Folder 3.15	Students - Classes of 1955 and 1956, 1952
Folder 3.16	Students Around Campus, undated
Folder 3.17	Students cycling, undated
Folders 3.18-3.19	Vassar Brothers Hospital, child patients, 1954
Folder 6.3	Vassar Brothers Hospital, child patient, 1954 [11 x 14 print]
Folder 3.20	Wimpfheimer Nursery School / Education Program, 1954-1955

Printed Material

Folder 6.4	"Anne Goes to Vassar," <i>Seventeen Magazine</i> , clipping, 1955 Mar
Folder 3.21	"Photo-collecting at Vassar: 100 years + 10," catalogue, 1983
Folder 3.22	<i>Vassar College Alumnae Magazine</i> , 1950 Jun

[Return to the Table of Contents](#)