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HISTORIC DOCUMENTS OF FREEDOM ON VIEW AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms Speech -- on museum view for the first time, Norman Rockwell’s iconic *Four Freedoms*, and illustrated edition of the Declaration of Independence

PHILADELPHIA—The **National Museum of American Jewish History** (NMAJH), located on Historic Independence Mall, is pleased to announce three extraordinary artifacts newly on view for July. These documents include a signed copy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms Speech on museum view for the first time, original poster printings of Norman Rockwell’s iconic *Four Freedoms*, and an 1819 illustrated print of the Declaration of Independence, produced by Philadelphia printer and newspaper publisher John Binns.

“I’m passionate about how these documents affected and informed the lives of real people. I’m thrilled – as always – to lend these incredible pieces of history to the National Museum of American Jewish History. Their unique lens onto American history and culture and their location on Historic Independence Mall create a poignant backdrop to the stories these objects tell,” says **Seth Kaller**, owner of Seth Kaller, Inc, a leading expert in acquiring, authenticating, appraising, and exhibiting American historic documents and artifacts.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s signed Four Freedoms Speech, his 1941 State of the Union Address, is on museum view for the first time. This copy belonged to Marguerite “Missy” LeHand, his private secretary. Two weeks before his inauguration for a historic third term, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt hoped to inspire a skeptical nation to support deeper involvement in preventing Nazi domination of Europe. He concluded this historic address with a vision for a just world sustained by four “essential human freedoms”: **freedom** of speech, **freedom** of religion, **freedom** from want, and **freedom** from fear.

Roosevelt's speech is displayed with original posters of **Norman Rockwell's iconic Four Freedoms**. President Roosevelt spoke the words, but Norman Rockwell made them personal. He created paintings in 1943 for the *Saturday Evening Post*, which put them on successive covers. The federal government organized a poster campaign and sixteen-city exhibition tour that raised \$133 million in support of America's war effort. According to a 1945 *New Yorker* article, these images were "received by the public with more enthusiasm, perhaps, than any other paintings in the history of American art."

The **Declaration of Independence** was produced in 1819 by a Philadelphia printer and newspaper publisher. Until then, Americans could read the Declaration in books, but most had not seen the famous signatures. John Binns began taking subscriptions for his illustrated version in 1816, and in 1819 he produced this print decorated with the 13 state seals and portraits of George Washington (after Gilbert Stuart), Thomas Jefferson (after Bass Otis), and John Hancock (after John Copley).

FDR's speech, and Rockwell's posters and the Declaration of Independence are on display on the Museum's first floor along with a visitor-centered interactive asking visitors to suggest what they believe should be a fifth freedom. "These documents and images vividly illustrate our nation's essential values," states **Dr. Josh Perelman**, Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions and Interpretation, "and remind us about our roles as ensuring they are extended to all, now and in the future."

Explaining why Kaller arranged the first museum loan of the signed Four Freedoms document to NMAJH, Kaller said "President Roosevelt learned from history, as all great leaders have. The roots of his Four Freedoms speech can be found in other original documents already on exhibit at NMAJH, especially George Washington's First Presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation and "to bigotry no sanction" letter. To me, this isn't just history. As FDR pointed out, our nation – and the whole world – would be safer and better off by embracing the ideals outlined in his speech."

These loans are courtesy of **Seth Kaller, Inc.**

Also regularly on view on the Museum's fourth floor are the two key documents signed by George Washington referenced by Kaller: **Washington's 1789 proclamation** establishing November 26 as a national day of thanksgiving and prayer, in which he celebrates the "tranquility, union, and plenty" that had accompanied the Constitution's ratification, highlighting "the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed." These words foreshadow **Washington's historic 1790 letter to the Jewish community of Newport** in which he bravely proclaimed that the nation's new government would "give to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance," and quoted the prophet Micah to assure "the Children of the Stock of Abraham" that all Americans "shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid."

Admission to NMAJH is free all month long, thanks to the support of Parkway Corporation. Free admission includes access to the Museum's Core Exhibition highlighting more than 360 years of life in America, told through a Jewish lens, plus complimentary access to the current special exhibition, **Sara Berman's Closet**. The Museum is open seven days a week, including late night hours on Thursdays.

For more information, visit nmajh.org/letfreedomring.

For high-res images and credit lines, [click here](#).

For more information on Seth Kaller and these documents, visit fdrfourfreedoms.com.

Free admission throughout the month of July is sponsored by **Parkway Corporation**.



Sara Berman's Closet, an exhibition by Maira and Alex Kalman, is supported by Amanda and Glenn Fuhrman. Major support provided by Hilarie and Mitchell Morgan, Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer and Joseph Neubauer, and Patti Askwith Kenner/Indian Trail Charitable Foundation, Erving and Joyce Wolf Foundation. Additional support provided by the Kraus Family Foundation; Boyds Philadelphia; Warby Parker; The Streisand Foundation; Jane and Leonard Korman; Sharon Pinkenson and Joseph Weiss; and Laurie Wagman in Memory of Irvin Borowsky.

About the National Museum of American Jewish History

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the more than 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

Through July, NMAJH is open and free Monday – Wednesday, and Friday 10am – 5pm, Thursday 10am – 7pm, and Saturday – Sunday 10am – 5:30pm. For information on hours and admission, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811. Stay connected with the Museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Pinterest](#).

About Seth Kaller, Inc.

Seth Kaller is a leading expert in acquiring, authenticating, and appraising American historic documents and artifacts. Kaller has built museum-quality collections for individuals and institutions, as well as legacy collections for philanthropists. Seth Kaller, Inc. invites you to experience the wonder of owning important historic documents. Our goal is to create a personal connection between you and your favorite historic event, figure, or idea. We specialize in finding rare items, with a particular focus on documents of significant content, which often are available for just a brief time and, once sold, may never come on the market again. For more, visit sethkaller.com.

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