



N.C. Wyeth

Title

Men of Concord, cover illustration

Medium

Oil on hardboard (Renaissance Panel)

Date

1936

Dimensions

38 3/4 × 32 in. (98.4 × 81.3 cm)

Catalogue Number

80.3.37

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Credit Line

Gift of Amanda K. Berls, 1980

Web Description

Wyeth designed the cover image of *Men of Concord and some others As Portrayed In the Journal of Henry David Thoreau* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1936) to capture the attention of a prospective reader. Using techniques he had learned from Howard Pyle and perfected decades earlier, he masterfully drew the reader into the discussion and thus into the book itself. By making two of the Concordians look directly at the viewer, the artist engaged the viewer/reader in the conversation. Before the reader opened the book, Wyeth conveyed an inclusionary tone born of his own conviction that Thoreau's writings were of pertinent and practical value for everyone. The scene is the only one of the *Men of Concord* illustrations that is not based on a journal entry, and only two of the figures can be identified with certainty: a young Thoreau, in brown jacket and black tie, looks directly at the viewer, while Ralph Waldo Emerson, wearing a tall hat, stands next to him. The doorway recalls Concord's architectural heritage but does not seem to have been drawn from a specific source.