

**Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum  
Record Unit 20  
The Patricia Neal Collection**

By  
Anna Littlefield

**Descriptive Summary**

**Repository:** Martha's Vineyard Museum

**Call No.**

**Title:** The Patricia Neal Collection

**Creator:** Anna Littlefield

**Quantity:** .75 cubic feet

**Abstract:** The Patricia Neal Collection contains personal correspondence, copies of her speeches and a draft of her autobiography. In addition there are also several newspaper clippings about Ms. Neal, an acclaimed Broadway and Hollywood actress. Ms. Neal's secretary, Shirley K. Erickson Powers, donated the collection. It was not to be made public until after her death.

**Acquisition Information:** The Patricia Neal Collection was acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum in 1999 from Shirley K Erikson Powers. Accession # 99.39

**Processing Information:** Anna Littlefield

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Use Restrictions:** none

**Preferred citation for publication:** Martha's Vineyard Museum, The Patricia Neal Collection, Record Unit 20

**Index Terms**

Patricia Neal	Stroke Victim
Roald Dahl	Hollywood
Lillian Hellman	Broadway
Shirley K. Erickson	

**Series and Subseries Arrangement**

Series I: Text from Patricia Neal

Series II: Newspaper Clippings

Series III: The Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center

## **Biography/Historical Note:**

Patricia Neal was a famous Hollywood and Broadway actress. She was born on January 20, 1926 in Packard, Kentucky but grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee. She studied acting at Northwestern University for 2 years. She started her career on the stage and then moved to Hollywood to act in films. She made several movies including *The Fountainhead* (1949) and *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). She won an Academy Award for Best Actress for her role in the movie *Hud* (1963). She continued to act in plays including *The Children's Hour* in 1952. Patricia had a long affair with actor Gary Cooper. After that relationship ended, she married British writer, Roald Dahl (author of *James and the Giant Peach* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*) in 1953 and they had 5 children during their 30-year marriage. In 1966, Patricia Neal suffered a series of strokes that nearly killed her. She had brain surgery and went through an intense rehabilitation that was created by her husband, Roald. She made a remarkable recovery and opened the Patricia Neal Center for Rehabilitation in 1978, for patients rehabilitating from strokes, spinal cord and brain injuries. She even continued acting and was nominated for an Oscar for her role in *The Subject Was Roses* in 1968. Patricia vacationed in Martha's Vineyard and purchased a house in Edgartown. Patricia died on August 9, 2010 in her home in Edgartown. She was 84 years old.

## **Scope and Content Note:**

The Patricia Neal Collection was donated by Ms. Neal's Secretary, Shirley K. Erikson Powers on September 9, 1999. It was not allowed to be viewed by the public until after Patricia Neal's death. The collection contains documents from 1980s to early 1990s. The collection contains correspondences and speeches written by Ms. Neal. There are also several newspaper clippings about Patricia Neal. The collection also contains a copy of her unpublished auto-biography.

## **Series Descriptions:**

### **Series I: Texts by Patricia Neal**

Box 1 of 1

Folder 1: Correspondences; from Patricia Neal

Folder 2: Speeches; from 1984 and from the funeral of Lillian Hellman

Folder 3: Auto-Biographical Draft (53 pages)

### **Series II: Newspaper Clippings**

Folder 4: Newspaper Clippings 1981-1984

Folder 5: Newspaper Clippings- not dated

### **Series III: The Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center**

Folder 6: Documents from The Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center -including brochure and 1983 annual report

