

James Brownlee Rankin photograph collection: Charles M. Russell, circa 1875-1939

Overview of the Collection

Collector	Rankin, James Brownlee, 1900-1962
Title	James Brownlee Rankin photograph collection: Charles M. Russell
Dates	circa 1875-1939 (inclusive) 1875 1939
Quantity	1 box 138 photographic prints and 1 tintype 1 nitrate film negative 3 copy negatives (2 safety and 1 nitrate film)
Collection Number	Lot 009
Summary	James Brownlee Rankin, a New York and San Bernardino, California, teacher and historian, collected information concerning Montana artist Charles M. Russell in preparation for writing a Russell biography and an illustrated catalog of his work. The photograph collection includes a few views of Rankin, but primarily consists of photographs of Charles M. Russell, Russell's studio and residences, the Russell family and their friends, and people who knew Russell or collected his work.
Repository	Montana Historical Society, Research Center Archives Montana Historical Society Research Center Archives 225 North Roberts PO Box 201201 Helena MT 59620-1201 Telephone: 406-444-2681 Fax: 406-444-5297 mhslibrary@mt.gov
Access Restrictions	Collection is open for research.
Languages	English

Biographical Note

James Brownlee Rankin was born January 31, 1900, in Denver, Colorado, the son of Reverend James Doig Rankin and Daisy Meloy Rankin. In his college years, Rankin developed a great love for books. Later he also developed an interest in art, particularly western art. This avocation led him to begin the collection of books illustrated by western artists, notably Charles M. Russell and Frederic Remington.

By 1936 Rankin had developed a very strong interest in the work and life of Charles M. Russell. That summer, he decided to research and write a biography of the artist and produce an illustrated catalog of all of Russell's known works. This was his primary goal and the object of his free time until 1940.

Rankin took ads in national and regional newspapers as well as pertinent magazines. From this, he developed a wide range of contacts that had known Russell, knew of him, or owned works by the Montana artist. He made extensive trips to interview individuals and to catalog Russell's art.

Rankin moved to Pasadena, California, in 1939, to be closer to his father and to pursue his teaching and research interests. He married Josephine Crenshaw of New York City in 1940. He never lost his lifelong interest in Russell, but did not continue working on the biography/catalog after that year.

Ultimately he destroyed his manuscript after the publication of a Russell biography by a friend, who Rankin believed, had plagiarized much of his earlier work. The one piece Rankin did publish on Russell was a bibliography of published works illustrated by the artist which appeared in *American Book Illustrations* in 1938. James Brownlee Rankin died at San Bernardino, California, August 2, 1962.

Charles Marion Russell was born March 19, 1864, in St. Louis, Missouri, to Mary Elizabeth Mead (daughter of Edward Mead) and Charles Silas Russell. He had one sister, Susan Mead Russell (who married T.G. Portis) and brothers: Silas Bent, Edward, Guy, and Wolfert. Silas Bent Russell had a son and daughter, Austin and Isabel. Florence M.N. Russell was Charles M. Russell's stepmother.

At the age of sixteen, Russell's parents sent him to Montana under the guardianship of a sheepherder from who he soon parted. Working for some time as a cowboy in the West, he continued to sketch, spending his summers on the open range and his winters in various frontier towns, where he often painted pictures in exchange for food or lodging. He sent the original of "Last of the 5000" to Louis Stadler of the Stadler and Kaufman partnership.

In 1896 Russell married Nancy Cooper in Ben Roberts' home at Cascade, Montana. Under her influence and direction he developed from an itinerant cowboy into an artist who painted pictures for a living. The Russell's adopted a son, Jack Cooper Russell.

By 1920 Russell had achieved financial success and made frequent trips to New York, where he painted for such patrons as Malcomb MacKay and Phillip G. Cole. Russell seldom used models for his paintings or sculpture and took pride in the accuracy of his memory for the details depicted in his scenes of cowboy and Indian life in the West.

For more than a quarter of a century Russell produced works depicting the West as he had known it before the advent of barbed wire, the automobile, etc. He maintained a studio in Great Falls, Montana, and for a brief period in Pasadena, California. Charles M. Russell died October 24, 1926.

James W. Bollinger, William S. Hart, Harry Stanford, and Phil Weinard were among the collectors of works by Russell.

Content Description

The photographs in the James Brownlee Rankin photograph collection: Charles M. Russell span the years 1875-1939. The collection contains a few photographs of James Rankin, but the majority of the photographs are images of Charles M. Russell, Russell's family and friends, Russell's residences and studio, and people who knew Russell or collected his work. There are a few photographs of Russell's Native American friends and the Russells and their friends dressed in Indian costumes, and of the hearse at Russell's funeral. The collection contains 138 photographic prints arranged by subject.

Other Descriptive Information

Many of the photographs in this collection are attributed to specific photographers or photographic studios and lists of these photographers and/or studios follow. However, numerous photographs are unattributed and are not listed.

Photographs in the collection are the work of the following Montana photographers:

H.C. Eklund Studio, Great Falls and Fort Benton (3 photographs)

Leslie Lyle, Helena (1 photograph)

Pearl Thompson, Great Falls (1 photograph)

Thiri Aerial View Service (T.A.V.S.), Polson (1 photograph)

Yaw Photo Shop, Great Falls (3 photographs)

Photographs in the collection are the work of the following non-Montana photographers:

A.J. Fox, St. Louis (1 photograph)

Free Studio, Davenport, Iowa (1 photograph)

Gilbert and Bacon, Philadelphia (1 photograph)

Habenicht (1 photograph)

T.L. Rivers, St. Louis (1 photograph)

Scholten, St Louis, Missouri (1 photograph)

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

The Montana Historical Society is the owner of the materials in the Photograph Archives collections and makes available reproductions for research, publication, and other uses. Written permission must be obtained from the Photograph Archives before any reproduction use. The Society does not necessarily hold copyright to all of the materials in its collections. In some cases, permission for use may require seeking additional authorization from the copyright owners.

Preferred Citation

James Brownlee Rankin photograph collection: Charles M. Russell. Lot 009. Box and folder number. Montana Historical Society Photograph Archives, Helena, Montana.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The photographs are arranged by subject and organized into the following 18 subject-based series: Series I. Rankin Family, Series II. Russell Family, Series III. Russell Family Residences, Series IV. Russell Studios, Series V. Mead Family, Series VI. Portis Family, Series VII. Art, Series VIII. Artists,

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<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv27105>

Series IX. Campbell Family, Series X. Cities and Towns, Series XI. David Family, Series XII. Groups, Series XIII. Landscapes, Series XIV. Marchand Family, Series XV. Men, Series XVI. Native Americans, Series XVII. Roundups, and Series XVIII. Women.

Acquisition Information

Acquisition information available upon request.

Processing Note

The bulk of the photographs were transferred from the Archives, MC 162, in accession PAc 83-107. One photographic print was also transferred from each of the following accessions, PAc 99-68, PAc 2000-40, and PAc 2004-13. Images from these four accessions were combined to form this collection.

The collection was reprocessed by Rebecca Kohl in 1999.

Separated Materials

2 duplicates of photographs already cataloged in the Huffman photograph collection were separated from the collection.

Related Materials

See the James Brownlee Rankin research collection: Charles M. Russell, 1910-1962, MC 162. Biographical information was taken from MC 162 biography, biographical reference books, and vertical files.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Rankin Family

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 1	James Brownlee Rankin, alone and with unidentified women	undated

Series II: Russell Family

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 2	Charles M. Russell: portraits, undated; wearing Native American dress and holding gun, undated; seated on his horse Monte in front of the Park Hotel, Central Avenue, Great Falls,	undated; 1899

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	1899; in front of his studio, Great Falls, no date; at his mountain lodge, undated; and fishing, undated	
1 / 3	Charles M. Russell: portraits, undated; and view with horse Nena, Great Falls, May, 1913	undated; 1913
1 / 4	Charles M. Russell with Nancy Russell: circular Kodak card photograph of both of them taken circa 1896; horseback riding with Young-Hunter, 1915; seated with pistol and rifle, undated; with Austin and Isabel Russell and CMR and Isabel in Indian costume, circa 1910; with Fergus Mead while painting "In the Wake of the Buffalo Runners," circa 1911; with groups including J.W. Bollinger and the Charles Schlatzlein family at Bull Head Lodge, undated	circa 1896; circa 1910-1911; 1915; undated
1 / 5	Charles M. Russell with others: carte de visite of CMR and Archie Douglas in uniform at Burlington Military School in New Jersey, circa 1878; on horseback with Hank Warehime, Pete Vann, Henry L. Keeton, and Dan Martin, 1883; twirling rope with Albert Trigg in front of log cabin studio, undated; with Phil Weinard in Native American dress, Helena, 1888; with Weinard, Big Belly, and Charlie, Palliser Hotel, Calgary Stampede, 1919	undated; circa 1878; 1883; 1888; 1919
1 / 6	Charles M. Russell with others: William S. Hart; son Jack Russell; James W. Bollinger and John Lewis	undated
Oversized		
M—1	Charles M. Russell with Bill Rance	undated
Box/Folder		
1 / 7	Charles M. Russell's funeral: horse drawn hearse in front of Great Falls home and studio	1926
1 / 8	Florence M.N. Russell (CMR's stepmother): with Marion and Christmas tree, 1939; on the beach, undated; with Helen (in fur coat) and Homer Britzman, and Britzmans' dog in Pasadena, California, 1937-1938	undated; 1937-1938; 1939
1 / 9	Carte de visite portrait of James Russell (CMR's paternal grandfather); Mary Elizabeth Mead Russell and Charles Silas Russell (CMR's mother and father); Edward Russell, Guy Russell and Wolfert Russell (CMR's siblings)	undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1 / 10	Nancy Cooper Russell: portrait; and with Louise Fernald, Josephine Trigg, and Jack Russell)	undated
1 / 11	Silas Bent Russell (CMR's brother); Austin Russell (Silas's son) with Bill Kreighoff sitting in front of fireplace illustrated with CMR's art and autographed screens at Bull Head Lodge, Lake McDonald; and portrait of Silas's his daughter Isabel Russell Wenneis	undated

Series III: Russell Family Residences

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 12	Drawing of Charles S. Russell family residence, Oakhill Farm, 1875; Jake Hoover cabin, undated; Ben Roberts house and C.M. Russell cabin, Cascade, Montana, circa 1937; and gazebo at Bull Head Lodge, Lake MacDonald, no date)	undated; 1875; circa 1937

Series IV: Russell Studios

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 13	Charles M. Russell studio, Great Falls: exterior view showing stone wall in front with drawing of buffalo head, undated; and interior view when a museum showing display cases with artifacts, 1937)	undated; 1937

Series V: Mead Family

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 14	Portraits of Edward Mead (CMR's maternal grandfather) and his second wife	undated

Series VI: Portis Family

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 15	Susan Mead Russell Portis (CMR's sister) and her husband, T.G. Portis	undated

Series VII: Art

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 16	Sculptures: Indians and tepee, probably by C.M. Russell; plaster cast of Russell by Jessie Lincoln, selected for American Hall of Fame	undated

Series VIII: Artists

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 17	Erin Hoy standing with his pencil portrait of Charles M. Russell, circa 1939; portrait; and same portrait in the front window of THE MINT bar, Great Falls, circa 1939	circa 1939

Series IX: Campbell Family

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 18	Mr. and Mrs. Alex Campbell with Mina Mathey, and James B. Rankin, at the Campbell home in Great Falls, Montana	undated

Series X: Cities and Towns

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 19	Great Falls, Montana: public library	undated

Series XI: David Family

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 20	I. Finch David: sitting on bench with an unidentified man (an American flag is reflected in the window behind them), Kendall, MT, undated; standing with unidentified man, July 25, 1937; on horseback, undated; standing beside the grave of his wife, Grace, in Utica cemetery, July 26, 1937; with I.F. David Jr., W.A. Shaules, and automobile, September 6, 1938)	undated; 1937-1938

Series XII: Groups

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 21	Groups - Unidentified: includes people seated on a large rock formation and people standing in front of a house	undated

Series XIII: Landscapes

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 22	Giant Springs and Missouri River near Great Falls	undated

Series XIV: Marchand Family

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 23	John N. Marchand and Mrs. Marchand, wearing cowboy clothes; and posed in artists' studio	undated

Series XV: Men

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 24	Judge James W. Bollinger, undated; Will Crawford, New York illustrator, alone and with J.B. Rankin, undated; Pony Bill Davis, undated; Wallis Huidekoper, owner of American Ranch, Two Dot, MT, undated; Charles M. Joys on horseback, undated; Henry Keeton, undated; Frank B. Linderman and Harry P. Stanford, Kalispell, MT, July 16, 1937; and James W. Masterson, undated	undated; 1937
1 / 25	Ben Roberts standing in front of his home and shop in Helena, MT, July 23, 1937; Louis Stadler, Helena, MT, July 23, 1937; F.E. Stranahan, undated; Buck Taylor "King of the Cow-boys", undated; W.C. Tyler, St. Louis, undated; Robert Vaughn wearing buckskin coat and holding a gun, undated; and Phil Weinard dressed as an Indian and in a suit, undated	undated; 1937
1 / 26	Men: includes a tintype of unidentified men wearing Indian headdresses and unidentified portraits	undated

Series XVI: Native Americans

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 27	Mo-See-Ma-Ma-Mos (Young Boy), Cree Indian, portraits and standing by C.M. Russell's grave; and portrait of One Bull, Hunkpapa Sioux	undated

Series XVII: Roundups

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 28	Judith Basin roundup crew on horseback	1883

Series XVIII: Women

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 29	Cassandra O. Phelps standing next to hollyhocks in front of her cottage, July 26	1937

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Ethnic Costume.

Art, American -- Montana

Indians of North America

Women -- Montana.

Personal Names :

Russell, Charles M. (Charles Marion), 1864-1926.

Russell, Nancy Cooper, -1940.

Family Names :

Russell family.

Geographical Names :

Great Falls (Mont.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Kodak card photographs.

Photographic prints.

Finding aid prepared by Vivian Hayes, 1990.
2007



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