

Charles Marion Russell

Charles Marion Russell came to Montana at the age of sixteen and worked as a cowhand throughout the 1880s. By the early 1890s, Russell quit cowboying to devote his full attention to art. He had no formal training— “nature has been my teacher,” he explained. In 1896 he married Nancy Cooper who brought not only stability to the artist’s life but great acumen as a business manager and promoter of Russell’s work. By the time of his death in 1926, Russell’s art, and his colorful personality, had earned him national renown and the admiration of the people of his adopted home state.

Featured Collections

Presentations from Montana Historical Society on YouTube

Search *Charles Russell Montana Historical Society* on YouTube. Results include records from “Montana’s Charlie Russell: 21st Century Perspectives on the Cowboy Artist” in Helena, Montana, June 18-20, 2015.

Charles Marion Russell and Nancy Cooper Russell papers, 1897-1939 (SC 705)

Collection includes general correspondence (1918, 1929, 1936) from and to Nancy Russell about the sale of paintings, a memorial statue of C.M. Russell, and memories of his early experiences; a photocopy of a contract (1897) with Western Field and Stream for twenty black and white oil paintings and twenty pen sketches "composing a pictorial history of western life"; and a photocopy of the last will and testament (1939) of Nancy Russell.

James Brownlee Rankin research collection: Charles M. Russell, 1910-1962 (MC 162) *Finding aid available online.*

James Brownlee Rankin, a New York and California teacher and historian, collected information concerning Montana artist Charles M. Russell in preparation for a Russell biography and an illustrated catalog of his work. The collection consists primarily of correspondence concerning Russell's life and work as remembered by his friends, acquaintances, and art owners. The collection also contains photographs, clippings, and research notes.

For more resources, follow the link located at the bottom of the online version of this guide.



Charles M. Russell in his studio, Great Falls, Montana. He is posed with the painting “Lewis & Clark Meeting Indians at Ross’ Hole”, [1912].
944-703

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Suggested SEARCH TERMS

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

Charles Russell

Charlie Russell

Western art Charles Russell

Charles Russell paintings

Charles Russel sculpture

Charles Russell correspondence

Charles Russell papers