

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

---

Summer 2000

**Review of *Charles M. Russell, Legacy: Printed and Published Works of Monwna's Cowboy Artist* Text by Larry Len Peterson**

Martha H. Kennedy

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

Kennedy, Martha H., "Review of *Charles M. Russell, Legacy: Printed and Published Works of Monwna's Cowboy Artist* Text by Larry Len Peterson" (2000). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 2148.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/2148>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

*Charles M. Russell, Legacy: Printed and Published Works of Montana's Cowboy Artist.* Text by Larry Len Peterson. Helena and Great Falls, MT: Twodot Books and the C. M. Russell Museum, 1999. Illustrations, index. xvii + 438 pp. \$95.00.

Larry L. Peterson has for many years collected art by Charles M. Russell (1865-1926) as well as printed and published works of the "cowboy artist." A native of Montana where the artist lived most of his life, Peterson is

highly knowledgeable about Russell's work and has published numerous articles on the subject in *Russell's West*, a periodical of the C. M. Russell Museum in Great Falls, Montana. As Peterson traces examples of the printed appearances of Russell's work in varied forms, he underscores how the artist's vision of the American West was not limited in its appeal to an elite collecting only original art, but engaged a wide audience across the United States and abroad. He also gives an illuminating account of Russell's artistic development, drawing upon his own collection as well as many other public and private ones in this beautifully illustrated and thoroughly researched volume.

Broader and more ambitious in scope than Karl Yost's and Frederic Renner's *A Bibliography of the Published Work of Charles M. Russell* (1971), Peterson's work systematically examines examples of the huge number of images by Russell in printed and published form, placing logical groups of them into the overall context of Russell's artistic career and lasting reputation. The author successfully organizes this abundant material into eight chapters based on chronological periods of Russell's output. He incorporates historical photographs and a few reproduced examples of Russell's art into each chapter's text, ending each with a large section of illustrations reproducing key works among those discussed. The informative, engaging text and 1,038 images—more than 550 in color—form a coherent book that gives great visual pleasure.

Peterson discusses significant examples of the many publications that featured Russell's art. These encompass portfolios of prints, illustrations for periodicals such as *Harper's Weekly*, *Scribner's*, *Outing*, *Field and Stream*, *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, *Recreation*, *Sports Afield*, and a profusion of books. The last category includes multiple titles by notable authors such as B. M. Bower and Frank M. Linderman, and editions of Emerson Hough's *The Story of a Cowboy*, Bret Harte's *Three Partners*, and Owen Wister's *The Virginian*. Peterson also carefully chronicles the reproduction of

Russell's work on materials commonly designated as ephemera—calendars, letterheads, menus, business cards, postcards, cigar boxes, and the like. As he reconstructs the appearances of the artist's imagery in these amazingly varied forms, he draws attention to pieces marking advances in Russell's artistic growth. Some of these, such as *Scattering the Riders* (1900), *When Sioux and Blackfeet Meet* (1908), and *The Piegans* (1918), are reproduced on calendars, postcards, and stamps. In these and other numerous examples, Russell took great pains to depict varied Plains Indian peoples, cowboys, and wildlife as accurately as he could.

In *Legacy* Peterson also explores the critical role of the artist's wife Nancy as business manager and the importance of Russell's friendships, many of which evolved into collecting or business relationships. He characterizes the artist, who was unusually admired and beloved during his life, as "a man for all times. Charlie's love of animals, the Indian, the Indian way of life, conservation, and equality for women are virtues that will always be appreciated and are an important part of his legacy." To Peterson's credit, many themes of Russell's art seen in the illustrations and mentioned in the text support this tribute.

*Legacy* takes its place as a worthy companion to Rick Stewart's *Charles M. Russell, Sculptor* (1994) and *Charles M. Russell, Word-Painter* (1993), a collection of the artist's illustrated letters edited by Brian W. Dippie.

MARTHA H. KENNEDY  
Great Plains Art Collection  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln