

## The Charles M. Russell–Malcolm Mackay Collaboration



*Bronc to Breakfast* (1908, watercolor, 20" x 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ "). Between 1911 and 1932, New York stockbroker and Montana rancher Malcolm Mackay amassed one of the finest collections of works by cowboy artist Charles M. Russell. As this patron-artist relationship grew, so did a personal friendship between the two men and their families. One of Mackay's first acquisitions, *Bronc to Breakfast*, was exhibited in St. Louis in March 1910 and offered for sale at a price of five hundred dollars.

# ‘I Want It Real Bad’

by *Brian W. Dippie*

*N*early a century ago a twenty-nine-year-old Wall Street broker took a gamble on an artist whose work he admired. When Malcolm Mackay bought his first Charles M. Russell paintings in 1911, Charlie Russell was not quite Charlie Russell yet. He was undeniably famous. His work had appeared in national magazines and as illustrations in a number of books. A major calendar company was reproducing his paintings in color. He had been awarded an important commission by the State of Montana to paint a mural—of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, as it turned out—for the State Capitol in Helena. And that very year he had been honored with a major one-man exhibition in a New York gallery. But in 1911 Charlie Russell was not yet a monument, nor a myth. He was a working artist, and selling his art was how the Russells made their living. Nancy Russell, his wife of nearly fifteen years, was the business end of their partnership and in matters of business the mandatory go-between.

The relationship between Charlie Russell and Malcolm Mackay eventually evolved into a full-blown friendship. The superb collection of Russells that Mackay formed was the result of something more than a good eye, which Mackay had. It was the result of a thriving collaboration between artist and patron. The happy circumstances that brought Malcolm S. Mackay’s collection to the Montana Historical Society in 1952 need not be repeated here. That story has already been well told by Vivian Paladin and Kirby Lambert. My focus is on the collaboration between patron and artist that produced the Mackay Collection of Russell art.<sup>1</sup>



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

**M**alcolm S. Mackay was born in 1881, the year after Russell came to Montana as a sixteen-year-old. Mackay's father held a seat on the New York stock exchange, and Malcolm as a young man went to work as a stockbroker in his father's Wall Street firm. He devoted his summers to a lifelong passion—bird and game hunting—that eventually took him west. He first visited Red Lodge, Montana, in 1901 and acquired a small ranch near Roscoe with a partner. He added to it substantially after he assumed sole ownership, running cattle under the Lazy EL brand on what was eventually a seventeen-thousand-acre spread. He met his future wife, Helen Raynor, in Montana, and they married in 1907. For the rest of his days, he divided his time between Wall Street, the



Malcolm S. Mackay, *Cow Range and Hunting Trail* (New York, 1929), opp. p. 78



MHS Photograph Archives, Helena

While hunting in the West, Malcolm Mackay (top) fell in love with Montana and the cowboy life. In 1901, with a partner, Charlie Wright, he acquired a ranch near Roscoe. Six years later Mackay married Wright's niece, Helen Raynor (above). For the rest of their lives, Helena and Malcolm Mackay divided their time between the family home in Tenafly, New Jersey, and the Montana ranch.

family home in Tenafly, New Jersey, and his Montana ranch, which provided a natural bond between artist and future patron.<sup>2</sup>

The Mackay family could never quite recall when Malcolm first met Charlie Russell. They had not yet met in February 1908 when Mackay exchanged letters with Nancy Russell. "I have heard my friend Bob Leavens of Billings speak of your husband so often that I feel as if I am not exactly a stranger to you all—I have ridden the range a good deal with Bob and he and I both think that Charley Russell's drawings of Cow boy life are in a class all by themselves—I would like to get a few of Mr Russells originals—As regards subject why I liked the one of 'Cowboy's roping a silvertip'—'A Bad Hoss' 'The Trail Boss' Stringing out on the circle—The strenuous life." All the subjects named had been reproduced as postcards and color prints, indicating that Mackay had not seen a Russell original in 1908, as his letter proceeds to make clear: "I would like any picture of puncher's in action—I dont suppose any of the above could be bought but any thing similar to these is what I want—In regard [to] size I dont want too big a picture something about medium—How about oil's does Mr Russell do any thing in colors I would like a painting best." Having asked for a price, Mackay concluded: "If you ever hit the East again I would be pleased to meet you and your husband."<sup>3</sup>

What followed was unalloyed Nancy Russell. She responded immediately, scenting a sale. She had two oils on hand—*The Smoke of a .45* and another, just returned by the calendar company that would be reproducing it, that "will suit you without doubt," she told Mackay:

This picture is called "Jerked Down." It is a cow-puncher riding a green bronk. He has roped a cow that has got a side pull on him and jerked his horse down. A young steer has one hind leg over the rope that holds the cow. Another puncher is trying to get his rope on

1. Vivian A. Paladin, "Origins and Odyssey of a Collection," in *C M Russell: The Mackay Collection* (Helena, Mont., 1979); Kirby Lambert, "Montana's Last Best Chance: The Malcolm S. Mackay Collection of Charles M. Russell Art," *Russell's West*, 5, no. 2 (1997), 3-9. The literature on patronage and western art continues to grow, understandably where artists had individual patrons (Karl Bodmer, Alfred Jacob Miller), but also where institutional patrons, from the federal government to private corporations, played an important role in commissioning art. Similarly, useful studies about the formation of the collections of some of the leading western art museums now exist. Patrons' concerns and the part they played in shaping the content of western art highlight the interaction between art and commerce.

2. See Malcolm S. Mackay, *Cow Range and Hunting Trail* (New York, 1925); and, for a recent attempt to place Mackay in a western/mythic context, Bonnie Christensen, *Red Lodge and the Mythic West: Coal Miners to Cowboys* (Lawrence, Kans., 2002), chap. 4.

3. "His Paintings Were All Truthful": 'Bud' Mackay Recalls Personality of 'CMR,' *Hoofprints*, 4 (Spring-Summer, 1974), 6; Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, February 13, 1908, Helen E. and Homer E. Britzman Collection (hereafter Britzman Collection), Taylor Museum for Southwestern Studies of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado (hereafter Taylor Museum).

the cow and there are seven or eight head of cattle crowding up a cut bank getting away from the excitement. There is a third puncher coming up swinging his rope. The country is rough and everything is in motion. It sure is a bad mix up. There is more get up and go in this picture than any you have mentioned as liking. It is a two by three foot canvas, oil, in color.

The price for either painting was eight hundred dollars, but Nancy was confident that *Jerked Down* “will suit you best.”<sup>4</sup>

Mackay was intrigued—hooked, as Nancy sometimes said. He replied at once, noting, “I would sure like to have ‘Jerked Down.’” But business was becalmed in the East and so on. Would she accept five hundred dollars for the painting, one hundred dollars upon receipt, and one hundred dollars every three months until it was paid in full? Malcolm Mackay was about to learn Nancy Russell rule number one. She might bargain and offer a discount when she knew a client or when a client bought several paintings and bronzes at once. But Russells were rarely individually discounted, especially on an installment plan. “I regret to say that we cannot let you have the picture ‘Jerked Down’ at your terms,” she replied. “When the money world does right itself and if you then want a picture we will be glad to hear from you.” Nancy was as good as her word. Mackay did not buy, and she did not yield. She outwaited him. Russell paintings were one of a kind, and the hook had been set. All that was required was patience.<sup>5</sup>

Nancy’s business files are incomplete. Consequently, it is unknown if she kept up a correspondence with Mackay. Their next recorded exchange occurred in 1912. The couples had met by then, on the Russells’ trip to New York in spring 1911, and an acquaintance had been struck.

As for *Jerked Down*, after the exchange of letters between Mackay and Nancy in 1908, it hit the exhibition circuit. The first exhibition record for the painting dates from St. Louis in March 1910. *Jerked Down* was priced at one thousand dollars. Only *At Rope’s End* and *The Smoke of a .45* were as expensive. There was a watercolor listed at half that price, the incomparable *Bronc to Breakfast*, which also attracted attention. When the two paintings were next exhibited, in Helena in September, *Bronc to Breakfast*’s



Helena E. and Homer E. Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum for Southwestern Studies of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Although Charlie Russell and Malcolm Mackay eventually became friends, their acquaintance began as a business relationship directed by Nancy Russell, who oversaw all transactions related to her husband’s career. Malcolm first corresponded with Nancy in February 1908 about purchasing “a few of Mr Russells originals.” His letter concluded, “If you ever hit the East again I would be pleased to meet you and your husband.”

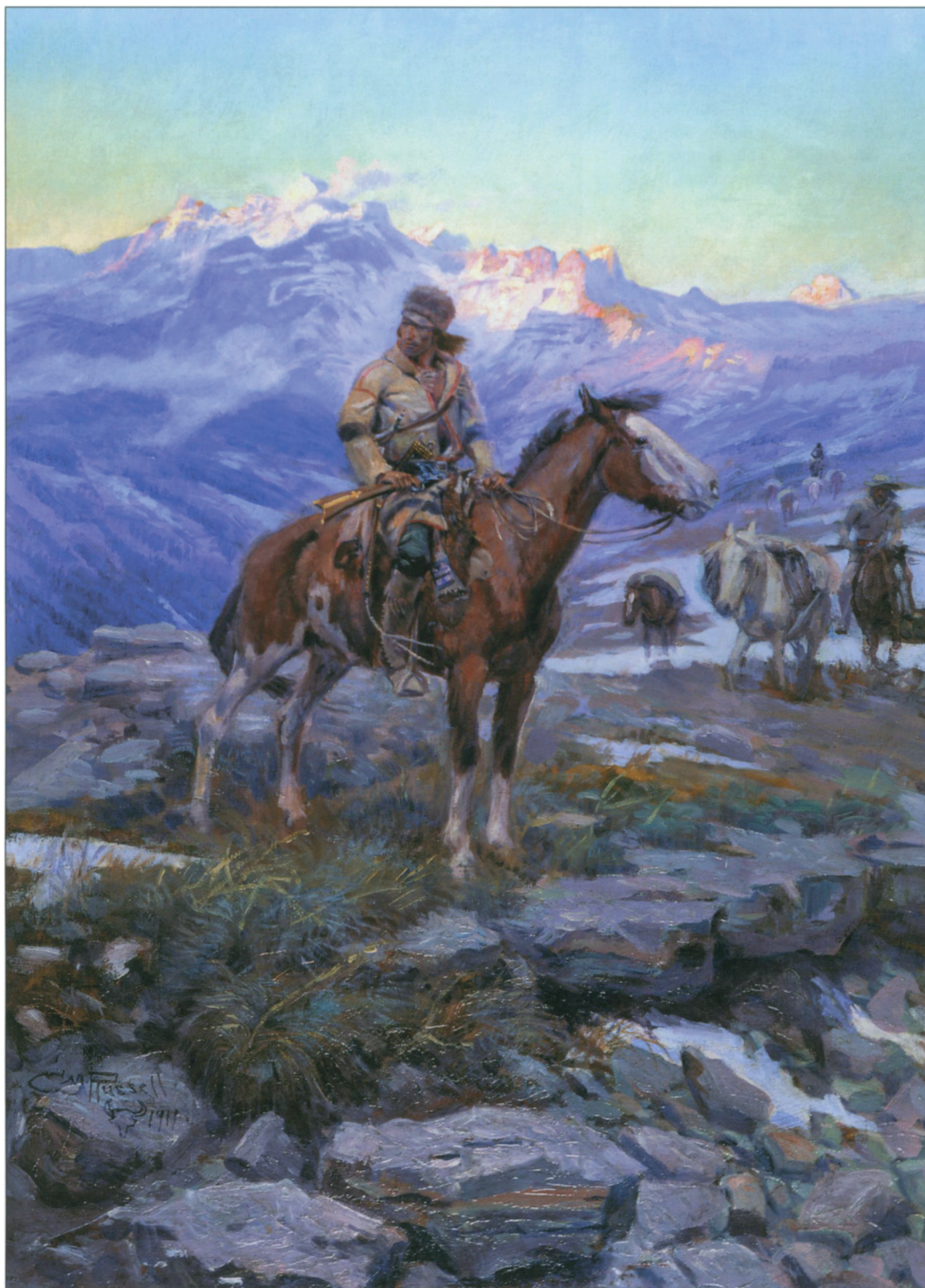
price remained unchanged, but *Jerked Down* had reverted to Nancy’s original asking price of eight hundred dollars. It continued to swing between the two figures over the next few months.<sup>6</sup>

Nancy was no sentimentalist when it came to selling art. She always said that she and Charlie would have starved had they relied exclusively on sales at home. The next year they headed east for Russell’s most important exhibition to date, a one-man show at New York City’s Folsom Galleries running through April 1911. The publicity was extensive and effective. *The New York Times* devoted a page to Russell, and *World’s Work* carried a well-illustrated feature article by Arthur Hoeber. Both reproduced *Jerked Down*. Hoeber also provided an introduction to the catalog for Russell’s exhibition, the first to be called *The West That Has Passed*. *Jerked Down* joined an impressive group of oils, *The Medicine Man*, *The Wagon Boss*, and *In Without Knocking* among them. *Bronc to Breakfast* headed the group of watercolors, which included *A Disputed Trail*, *Rainy Morning*, and *First Wagon Trail*. The terms upon which Nancy Russell and Malcolm

4. Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, February 18, 1908, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum.

5. Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, February 25, 1908, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, March 9, 1908, *ibid.*

6. *Paintings by C. M. Russell* (St. Louis, [1910]); “The West That Is No More,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Sunday Magazine*, March 13, 1910; *Art Department* (Helena, Mont., 1910). *Bronc to Breakfast*, the subject of a photo postcard by 1910, was exhibited at Charles Schatzlein’s paint store in Butte that December according to an article in the *Butte (Mont.) Evening News*, December 12, 1910, and, along with *Jerked Down* (at a thousand dollars), was listed in the catalog for Russell’s exhibit, *Paintings by C. M. Russell* ([Helena, Mont., 1911?]).



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma

*Free Trapper* (1911, oil on canvas, 33" x 24"). Two paintings purchased in 1912, *Free Trapper* and *A Doubtful Handshake*, established Mackay in the ranks of major Russell collectors.



*Jerked Down* (1907, oil on canvas, 23" x 36¾"). In 1908 Mackay tendered an offer to buy the painting *Jerked Down* for the reduced price of five hundred dollars, paid in installments, but Nancy refused his terms, replying, "When the money world does right itself and if you then want a picture we will be glad to hear from you." Mackay bought *Jerked Down* and *Bronc to Breakfast* in 1911.

Mackay settled are unknown. Perhaps Mackay got *Jerked Down* for the original asking price. This much is certain: he acquired both *Jerked Down* and *Bronc to Breakfast* within days of the exhibition's opening.<sup>7</sup>

*Bronc to Breakfast* is still a highlight of the Montana Historical Society's Russell collection. But *Jerked Down*, once the pride of Mackay's collection, is gone. When a major illustrated article on Charles M. Russell appeared in *Country Life* in August 1926, just a few months before Russell died, *Jerked Down* held a place of honor along with *Laugh Kills Lonesome* and *Men of the Open Range*—all of them reproduced in color "courtesy of Malcolm MacKay,

Esq." When Russell's inimitable western yarns were published the next year as *Trails Plowed Under*, *Laugh Kills Lonesome* and *Men of the Open Range* appeared as color plates still credited to Malcolm Mackay, but *Jerked Down*, the first plate in the book and its dust jacket illustration, had a new credit line: "Courtesy of Dr. Philip G. Cole."<sup>8</sup>

How had this famous painting—a calendar and color print perennial since 1908, a key element in the publicity for Russell's breakthrough exhibition in New York in 1911, and an image featured on the 1964 stamp commemorating the centenary of the artist's birth—escaped into the hands of a different collector? Today *Jerked Down* ornaments the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Why did Mackay discard a crown jewel of his collection? Bear with me; I promise to tell.

If Mackay's acquisition of *Jerked Down* and *Bronc to Breakfast* depleted the ranks of great Russells for sale in 1911, there were plenty more to come. Russell was at his artistic prime. At his Folsom Galleries show in New York the next spring, a luminous new oil—*Free Trapper*—was on

7. "Cowboy Vividly Paints the Passing Life of the Plains," *New York Times Magazine*, March 19, 1911, p. 5; Arthur Hoeber, "The Painter of the West That Has Passed," *World's Work*, 22 (July 1911), 14631; *Exhibition of Paintings—"The West That Has Passed"—Charles M. Russell* (New York, [1911]); Charles M. Russell to Joseph Keppler, April 14 [1911], in Swann Galleries Public Auction Sale 2004, *Autographs* (New York, 2004), lot 185. Nancy hired Hoeber to generate publicity for the Folsom Galleries exhibition and was delighted when he planted the article in the *New York Times*. For their arrangement, see Arthur Hoeber to Charles M. Russell, amended to Mrs. Nancy Russell, March 25, 1911, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum. Hoeber continued to provide publicity for Russell. See, for example, *New York Globe and Commercial Advertiser*, February 26, 1915; and "Painters of Western Life," *The Mentor*, no. 85 (June 15, 1915), 5-6.

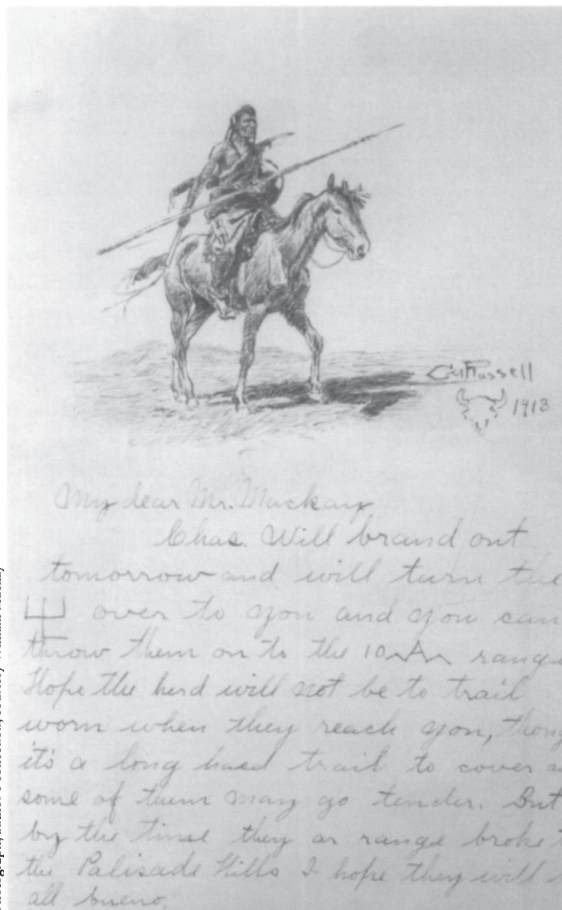
8. Frank M. Chapman Jr., "The Man Behind the Brush," *Country Life*, 50 (August 1926), 34-40; Charles M. Russell, *Trails Plowed Under* (Garden City, N.Y., 1927).

hand to tempt the discriminating buyer and among the watercolors was *A Doubtful Handshake*. When Russell exhibited at the Ridgley Calendar Company in Great Falls that December, neither painting was listed. Malcolm Mackay had already added them to his holdings.<sup>9</sup>

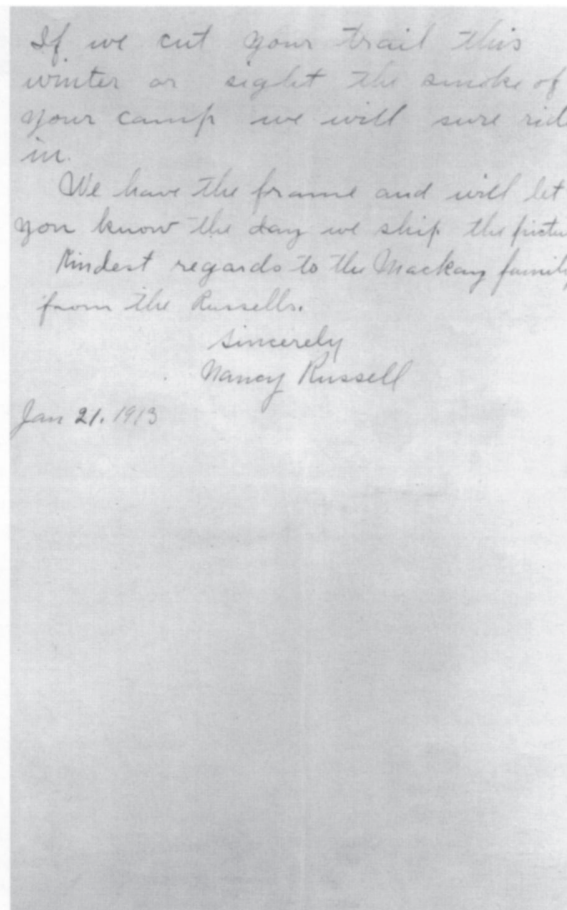
By 1912 Mackay had established himself as a major Russell collector. It was time for a shift in the relationship between artist and patron. Probably during a leisurely visit at the Mackay home in Tenafly in March, Malcolm commissioned a painting by Russell. Charlie promised to send him a sketch and let him look it over. Having heard nothing by mid-July, Mackay wrote to Nancy, who replied immediately from their summer home at Lake McDonald: "Chas. has not forgotten about the picture he is to paint for you but he has been so busy with the big decoration for the state [the Capitol mural, *Lewis and Clark Meeting Indians at Ross' Hole*] which is now finished and in place that he has done nothing else since we came home. But now once more he can breath[e] so will sketch out some ideas and send them to you for approval before he starts on the canvas."<sup>10</sup>

The painting in question was *The Roundup*, a subject near to Mackay's heart. At the beginning of their relationship, he had asked Nancy for any painting showing "puncher's in action." Now, as an experienced rancher, he wanted something at once documentary and romantic—a realistic rendering of a spring roundup that paid tribute to the old days of the open range. As Russell explained in *Trails Plowed Under*: "In old times when they branded on the prairie, separate herds were held to the side of the main herd—these were called 'cuts.' A fire was built nearby, where they kept the irons hot. These punchers roped calves from the cut and dragged them to the fire where two men afoot, called 'rustlers,' took them off the rope, and the 'iron man' branded and ear-marked them." This exactly is what Russell would portray.<sup>11</sup>

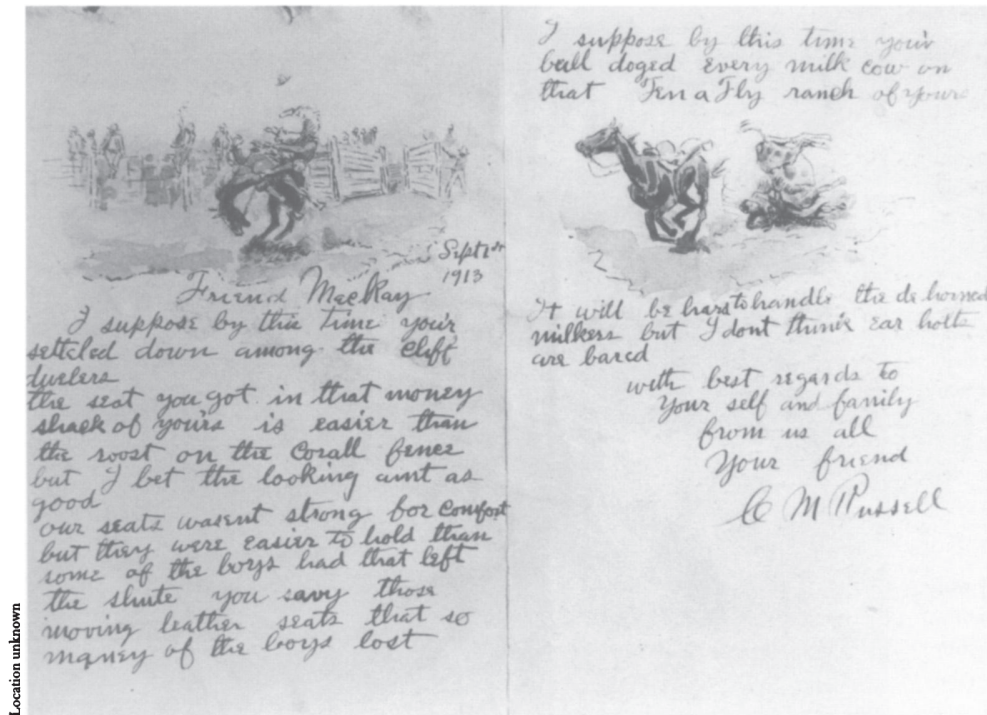
Despite Mackay's prodding, Charlie did not forward a sketch until late September, after the Russells' return from the lake. "I am inclosing a very rough idea of working a herd," Nancy wrote. "It may convey to you some notion of the composition but Chas. creates as he goes so would probably change things around to better advantage when



Photograph, author's collection, courtesy William Mackay



On January 21, 1913, Nancy answered an impatient Mackay regarding *The Roundup*, the painting that he had commissioned the year before, with the assurance that "Chas will brand out tomorrow and will turn the U over to you and you can throw them on to the 10A range."



Location unknown

actually working on the picture.” Mackay was pleased enough with the preliminary drawing to proceed with the commission, though the hard bargaining was now at hand. The painting with frame (matching that of *Jerked Down*) could not exceed 3 by 5 feet, and he wanted it delivered for a thousand dollars.<sup>12</sup>

Nancy must have smiled when she received Mackay’s letter. She set the terms, not the client, and “the best Chas. can do that painting for is \$1800.00”: “You see the canvas will be nearly five feet long and there will be a great number of figures. As you have some of Chas.’ paintings you will know the amount of work on that canvas with that subject, and you can realize the tremendous amount of work necessary to portray almost every phase of the old round up.” She did throw in a sweetener at the end: “Naturally Chas. is very much interested in that subject and if you decide to have him do the painting for you I know he will send you a work that will make you want to start west at once: only you would not find that here now.” The West that had passed, indeed—and only Charlie Russell could

recapture it for a man like Mackay. In his reply, Mackay graciously conceded the point: “As there is but one C. M. Russell in the world, why I suppose what he says must go, but I really did not figure on going so high, but then I know there is a world of work to it, and as I want it real bad I must stretch a point and tell you to go ahead—So tell him to get out his oil’s and fly at it, I know that it will be a dandy and I am going to leave all the details of it to Chas.”<sup>13</sup>

Whereas in 1908 everything had been “Sincerely Yours” and Malcolm began with “My Dear Mrs. Russell,” Nancy stuck to “Dear Sir.” By 1912 she was following his salutation—“My dear Mr. Mackay”—and though she did not duplicate his occasional “Your friend,” both began to close their letters with “Kindest regards to you all.” Eventually the families would be exchanging their love for one another. But in 1912 some formality remained. Nancy required that Charlie’s working sketch be returned “for reference,” and Mackay provided information on the Lazy EL brands, noting “We do not use any ear mark.” That done, everything was a go.<sup>14</sup>

By mid-January 1913 Mackay was impatient to see his painting. “How is the calf roundup coming along—I hope that before long the last calf will have bawled and taken his medicine and that the herd will be ready to turn loose again to graze on my wall for the rest of their days—” At last on

9. *List for Catalogue* (New York, 1912), Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; priced copy, in Larry Len Peterson, *Charles M. Russell, Legacy: Printed and Published Works of Montana’s Cowboy Artist* (Helena, Mont., 1999), 256; *Art Exhibition: Paintings, Models and Pen Sketches by Charles M. Russell, Great Falls, Montana* (Great Falls, Mont., 1912).

10. Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, July 16, [1912], Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, draft letter, July 1912, *ibid.*

11. Russell, “The Open Range,” in *Trails Plowed Under*, 164.

12. Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, September 24, 1912, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, October 3, 1912, *ibid.*

13. Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, October 15, 1912, *ibid.*; Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, October 18, 1912, *ibid.*

14. Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, undated pencil draft [October–November 1912], *ibid.*; Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, November 19, 1912, *ibid.*

A lighthearted letter received after the Mackays returned home from meeting the Russells at the Winnipeg Stampede in 1912 seems to illustrate that the business relationship had developed into a friendship. “I suppose by this time you’ve bull dogged every milk cow on that Ten a Fly ranch of yours. It will be hard to handle the dehorned milkers but I dont think ear holt are bar[r]ed,” wrote Charlie.

*The Roundup* (1913, oil on canvas, 25" x 49"). The subject of cowpunchers in action was near to Mackay's heart, and he commissioned Russell to render a spring roundup that paid tribute to the old days of the open range. Upon receiving *The Roundup*, Malcolm wrote, "To an old cow man, how much it would mean to him, he could gaze at it all day and each moment would see some new reminder of those happy days on the range. . . . I am more than pleased. . . . I consider it his very best yet."

the twenty-first Nancy was able to report triumphantly, "Chas will brand out tomorrow and will turn the 4 over to you and you can throw them on to the 10A range. Hope the herd will not be to trail worn when they reach you, though it's a long hard trail to cover and some of them may go tender. But by the time they are range broke to the Palisade Hills I hope they will be all bueno."<sup>15</sup>

It took another ten days to actually ship the painting, but the wait was worth it. As Mackay replied in a thank-you letter on February 6: "It sure is a wonder, I am pleased and satisfied with it in every way, I only regret that it is to be seen in the East where people have eyes and see not, to them (the average easterner) it means very little, to an old cow man, how much it would mean to him, he could gaze at it all day and each moment would see some new reminder of those happy days on the range—Congratulate Charlie for me, tell him I am more than pleased and that I consider it his very best yet." Nancy, no doubt delighted with the check he enclosed for the full eighteen hundred dollars, responded that Charlie was especially pleased Mackay liked it because he had taken "such an interest in

15. Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, January 15, 1913, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, January 21, 1913, *ibid.*; photograph courtesy of William Mackay Sr., 1996. Nancy's pencil draft indicates that Charlie dictated its text; thus when he said "bueno," Nancy originally transcribed it as "waino." Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, pencil draft, January 21, 1913, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum.



*A great acquisition only feeds the hunger for more.*



it knowing you would savy the lay-out—a number of old Cow-Men saw the painting while Chas was working on it and it sure brought up old times to them."<sup>16</sup>

As every collector knows, a great acquisition only feeds the hunger for more. That August the Mackays joined the Russells in Winnipeg for the Russells' second Canadian stampede in a year. Charlie's paintings had sold so well at the Calgary Stampede in 1912 that Nancy could not resist a return visit to Canada. Both families obviously had a good time. Shortly after returning home, Russell sent Mackay an illustrated letter. The tone indicated that a business relationship had become something more, a personal friendship. "Friend MacKay," Russell began, "I suppose by this time you'r setteled down among the cliff dwellers the seat you got in that money shack of your's is easier than the

16. Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, February 6, 1913, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, February 10, 1913, *ibid.*

17. Charles M. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, September 1, 1913, in *Charles M. Russell, Word Painter: Letters 1887–1926*, ed. Brian W. Dippie (Fort Worth, Tex., 1993), 179.

18. John Clayton, "At Home on the Range," *Williams Alumni Review* (Fall 1991), 44.

19. *Special Exhibition: Paintings by Charles M. Russell* (Winnipeg, 1913); *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 12, 1913.



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

roost on the corall fence [at the Winnipeg Stampede] but I bet the looking aint as good our seats wasent strong for comfort but they were easier to hold than some of the boys had that left the shute.” Russell closed with the suggestion that Mackay, inspired by the cowboys at the stampede, had probably returned home and bulldogged “every milk cow on that Ten a Fly ranch of yours It will be hard to handle the dehorned milkers but I dont think ear holts are bar[r]ed.”<sup>17</sup>

The kidding showed the easy familiarity that had grown up between the two men. Mackay’s sons Bud and Bill both recalled how Charlie, seeking escape from New York City when he was in the east, would visit the Mackays’ twenty-acre spread in New Jersey. “Dad always kept a couple of Montana cow ponies there,” Bill

*Toll Collectors* (1913, oil on canvas, 24" x 36"). First exhibited at the Winnipeg Stampede, *Toll Collectors* was hailed as “one of the best pictures” on display. Thereafter it graced the Mackays’ walls in Tenafly.

recalled years later, “and he always had a couple of Jersey milk cows. Dad and Charlie would go out and saddle up those two cow ponies and just ride around that 10-acre pasture. Well, they had ropes on the saddle and they liked to take down the ropes and chase after those Jersey milk cows. They’d whoop and holler and rope and have a hel-luva time.”<sup>18</sup>

It is unlikely that Mackay left Winnipeg empty handed. One of the paintings listed in Russell’s *Special Exhibition* catalog at the stampede was a masterpiece of range-country landscape full of tension but not a whit of violence. Titled *Toll Collectors*, it only made that one exhibition appearance. The local art critic hailed it as “one of the best pictures” on display. Thereafter it graced the Mackays’ walls in Tenafly.<sup>19</sup>

Such a stalwart patron merited something special, and Charlie painted one of his finest Christmas greetings for the Mackays in 1914:

Best wishes for your Christmas  
Is all you get from me,  
'Cause I aint no Santa Claus—  
Don't own no Christmas tree.

But if wishes was health and money,  
I'd fill your buck-skin poke,  
Your doctor would go hungry  
An' you never would be broke.

The next February 1915 another Russell rangeland classic, *When Horses Talk War There's Slim Chance for Truce* went on exhibition at the W. Scott Thurber Art Galleries in Chicago. It did not sell there, nor at the Folsom Galleries in New York City where it hung for a two-week exhibition ending in early March. But a local critic praised it as “eloquent in color as well as spirited,” and its subject



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

naturally attracted Mackay's admiring attention. *When Horses Talk War* portrays an early morning contest of wills between man and animal, witnessed by a Greek chorus of cowboys anticipating what is bound to follow when the puncher tries to mount. It serves as a prelude to *Bronc to Breakfast*, understated but fully realized. Its theme is expectation, and it shows an artist infinitely wise in the ways of horses. To this day, it is a painting dear to many a cowboy's heart.<sup>20</sup>

Mackay made no move on *When Horses Talk War* in New York, adopting a wait-and-see attitude. But when it exhibited in San Francisco that April, it was singled out as a star of the show. In the painting, the camp has been struck. An unwilling horse in the foreground is drawn as only one who has grown up on the ranch could conceive it. That horse is certainly talking war—the head is lifted high and tugging at the reins, the stiff forelegs and the slightly bent hind legs seem ready to back away. In the background is the campfire, and the effect of the fire gradually emerging into the smoke seems to bring the smell of burning fresh-cut wood to the onlooker. And the illusion of perspective of the limitless prairie has been rendered as only a great talent could paint it.

Malcolm Mackay could wait no longer. That June Nancy accepted his offer of a thousand dollars in one hundred dollar monthly installments for *When Horses Talk War*, asking only that he consider allowing the painting to be exhibited with other Russells at the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel in Yellowstone National Park over the sum-

mer. She had been asking twelve hundred dollars for the picture but made a special concession.<sup>21</sup>

A close relationship had developed between the two families, and while Nancy never let sentiment interfere with business, she was aware that Mackay owned a Russell collection second to none. That fact alone boosted Russell's stock in the East. "Mr. Russell does not know how many pictures he has painted, but he says there 'must be an awful lot of them,'" a journalist reported in 1919. "Surely they have now been scattered well over the world. In every important city of this country and Canada and in some European countries private owners now boast his pictures. The largest number in any private collection is owned by Malcolm S. MacKay, who has nine of the artist's best pictures." This was an endorsement of Charlie's work that could only enhance his reputation—and his sales. Mackay, in turn, knew what he had acquired with *When Horses Talk War*. "I think it is the best of them all," he wrote. "The whole thing vibrates with meaning to any one who has ridden the range."<sup>22</sup>

In December 1916 the Russells adopted an infant son, Jack Cooper Russell, and their rambling days came to a sudden halt. It would be 1919, when Jack was nearly three, before they hit the exhibition trail again. The enforced hiatus was an idyllic period for Charlie, who was never other than a reluctant traveler. Nancy was left to sell Russells directly, avoiding the gallery commission that she always resented but missing the exposure and probably the excitement exhibitions brought. When they started



MHS Photograph Archives, Helena

During the Russells' first visit to the Mackays' new house in Tenafly in 1918, the two families dedicated the Mackays' Russell room. Helen later remembered that Charlie "talked to us for over two hours in Indian sign language" while Nancy translated. Charlie and Malcolm then heated branding irons and "burned as many brands as they could remember" on the log walls.

Malcolm reserved the space over the fireplace in the Russell room for a new creation, writing Nancy, "I would prefer something of cowboy life—Tell Charley to give his imagination a slack rope."



MHS Photograph Archives, Helena

traveling again in 1919, she was raring to go. The Great War had ended, and people were spending. They traveled north to Calgary for a Victory Stampede, then on to Saskatoon where the prince of Wales attended an exhibition of Russell paintings and bronzes. Minneapolis was next on their itinerary, and the publicity was gratifying. But as for New York—five years passed without a visit.

The Russells were never out of touch with the Mackays during that time, however. In 1918 Malcolm recommended the Babcock Galleries in New York City to them, noting that "It might be a better bet than the Folsom—its a higher toned gallery—No elevator to bother with—and better personal service—enough said." Charlie's reluctance to travel east delayed matters, but in December 1920 Nancy finally committed to a January exhibition at the Babcock Galleries. She had an ulterior motive. Charlie was to model several subjects for casting in bronze during their time in New York. Thus Nancy declined the Mackays' offer to host them in Tenafly: "It sounds good to us to know that you would like to have us make our camp in your tepee, and we will sure spend all the spare time we can with you, but this old man of mine has got to work, so I think we will have to

stay in New York and go to you on week ends or whenever it is possible to get away."<sup>23</sup>

In inviting the Russells, Malcolm had an ulterior motive, too. The family had moved to a new house "just south of the old one," and "We have saved a space on the fire place in the *Russell* room where we want Charley to do some sort of a design—A relief, in plaster, colored if possible—I would say the space is about 3 x 5 ft—I would prefer something of cowboy life—Tell Charley to give his imagination a slack rope."<sup>24</sup>

Slack was the right word. Charlie Russell could never be hurried. "If the sands of old Dad time were as slow as I am the rocky mountians wouldnt be foot hills yet," he had told another friend earlier that year. He demurred about doing anything in plaster, Nancy reported. It would not be permanent, would be difficult to repair, and could not be moved. Perhaps a relief in bronze would be the answer. He would think on it. Malcolm fired back to Charlie directly with a sketch of the area in question—3' 7" high and 6' 6" long—and his request for "some phase of Cowboy life—

20. *Paintings "The West That Has Passed" by Charles M. Russell* ([Chicago, 1915]); *Paintings "The West That Has Passed" by Charles M. Russell* ([New York, 1915]); *Brooklyn (N.Y.) Eagle*, March 2, 1915.

21. *Paintings of The West by Charles M. Russell (of Great Falls, Montana)* (San Francisco, [1915]); "Cowboy Artist Displays Work," San Francisco newspaper clipping, April 25, 1915, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, June 19, 1915, Helen Raynor Mackay Family Papers, Small Collection 1983, Montana Historical Society Library and Archives, Helena (hereafter MHS); *Great Falls (Mont.) Tribune*, July 2, 1915.

22. *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, December 14, 1919; Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, October 1, 1915, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum. Mackay paid off the balance owing at this time. For the importance of Mackay's patronage, see Nancy Russell's note to Joe De Yong: "Mr Mackay of New York . . . has 9 of Chas pictures He has a ranch in

southern Montana but is a wall street Banker He has three little boys and sais he wonts them to know what Montana used to be like." This figure of nine paintings entrenched itself in newspaper stories and was still being reported—along with the observation that Mackay had the "finest collection" of Russell originals in existence—at the time of Russell's death. Nancy C. Russell to Joe De Yong, c. 1916, document 975-12-776, De Yong Papers, C.M. Russell Museum, Great Falls, Montana (hereafter C.M. Russell Museum); "State of Montana Owns One of C. M. Russell's Finest Works," newspaper clipping, October 1926, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum.

23. Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, February 2, 1918, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, December 14, 1920, *ibid.*

24. Malcolm S. Mackay to the Russells, December 8, 1920, *ibid.*



*Charles M. Russell and His Friends* (1922, oil on canvas, 42" x 81"). Nancy sent the "poster" that Russell painted for the Russell room rolled up in a mailing tube with a note: "It is not exactly a poster, but there will be no chance that anyone will doubt who the man is on the 'hoss.'"

modeled in color if possible." Nancy counseled patience. They would "have the big medicine talk" after she and Charlie arrived in the East.<sup>25</sup>

Their first visit to the Mackays' new house provided the occasion. Years later Helen Mackay recalled the ceremony they conjured up to dedicate the Russell room. Nancy, Charlie, two Mackay family friends, and Malcolm sat on the left of the still-unlit fireplace. Helen sat on the right and "with great ceremony . . . made a fire and lighted it. Then the Medicine Man [Russell] talked to us for over two hours in Indian sign language." Nancy translated. "I can never forget the pleasure and the magic of that evening," Helen wrote. "We were completely transported into the past. Later Charley and my husband heated branding irons and burned as many brands as they could remember all over the logs."<sup>26</sup>

That night artist and patron agreed on the kind of decoration to fill the space above the fireplace—a poster instead of a plaster—but they did not decide on the subject. After

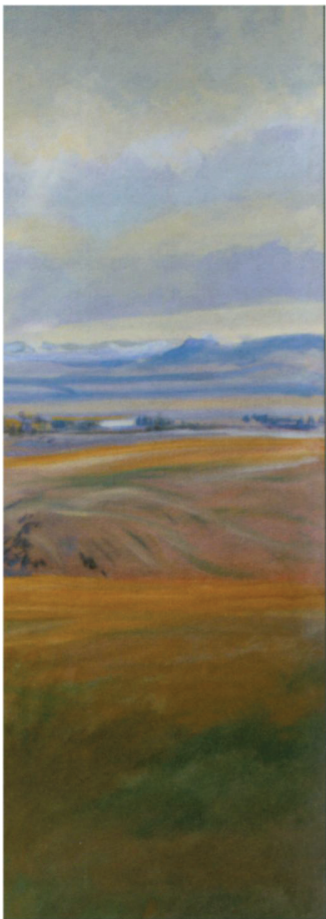
25. Charles M. Russell to Berners B. Kelly, February 22, 1920, in Dippie, ed., *Word Painter*, 288; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, December 14, 1920, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Malcolm S. Mackay to Charles M. Russell, December 19, 1920, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, December 30, 1920, *ibid.*

26. Helen Raynor Mackay, "Good Medicine," *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, 7 (April 1957), 37–38, which closely follows her earlier "Charles M. Russell," *The Cattleman*, 35 (March 1949), 33–36.

their visit Malcolm had a suggestion: "How would it be to paint a poster of your postcard 'Here's how to me and my friends, the same to you and yours, I savvy these folks' I think that would work out great." He also invited the Russells down for a visit to the Lazy EL that summer, and threw in a little something for Nancy: he had been spreading the gospel of Charles M. Russell among the art dealers on Fifth Avenue, and they were beginning to get the message. Nancy was all business when she wrote back. "I am most ashamed to tell you Chas has not had an inspiration for your fire-place picture, but it will come in time," she began. That out of the way, Nancy turned to Mackay for help finding a foundry to cast Russell's bronzes "where there would be a little more money in it for Chas." She bragged on a recent record-setting sale of an oil at ten thousand dollars, mentioned Charlie's most recent paintings, and thanked Mackay for talking him up on Fifth Avenue.<sup>27</sup>

Malcolm was not to be deterred. He returned to his idea for "a poster on canvas copying as near as possible Charlie's post card picture. . . . This would suit me to death." The Russells had not made it down to the Lazy

27. Malcolm S. Mackay to Charles M. Russell, May 6, 1921, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to the Mac[k]ays, October 14, 1921, *ibid.*

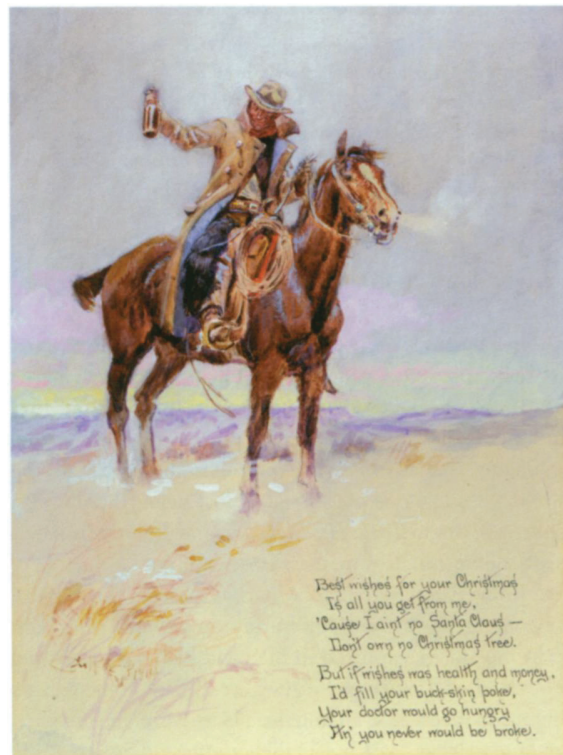


Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena



Postcard courtesy the author

The postcard *Here's how to me and my friends* (above) served as the inspiration, at Mackay's suggestion, for *Charles M. Russell and His Friends*. Russell's friendship with Mackay engendered another personal work that has become a western art classic. *Best Wishes for Your Christmas* (1914, watercolor, gouache, and ink, 12½" x 9"), at right, a card Russell created for the Mackays, enjoys wide popularity as a seasonal greeting.



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

EL that summer, so he extended an invitation for the next year, then concluded on a plaintive note: "I do wish Charly could get this poster done before Christmas time as the room need's that space filled up badly." Nancy made no promises because Charlie had left on his annual fall hunt—really a camping trip for him since he no longer hunted himself—and with a Colorado exhibition looming before Christmas, sometime early in 1922 was a more realistic completion date for the poster. Nancy also floated "an iron clad promise that we will see each other next summer" at the Mackays' ranch or the Russells' cabin on Lake McDonald. "We don't expect to be East this winter."<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps sensing some hesitancy in the long delay in getting the poster to him, Mackay raised the issue of money in a letter directed to Charlie himself. "I want to pay you whats right, according to the time you spent on it, but I want it to be a poster and not a finished picture—Dont you think that the colors should be fairly vivid so that they will show up well, the room is pretty dark." The poster was actually in the works when Nancy wrote back. "Don't be

too discouraged," she said. "It should be ready to ship in two weeks." Mackay's relief was obvious. No frame was required. Just send the picture and he would have it stretched to fill the available space. "Will sure be glad to see it there," he added, "for that blank space is like an empty chair at a dining room table, it dont look just right." With the poster at last about to materialize, Mackay was feeling frisky: "You all better travel east again and pay us another visit it seems years since we said Howdy—If you dont come now I sure am going to ride up to your cabin next summer and laso you by the left hind leg and drag you

28. Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, October 29, 1921, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell to the Mackays, November 4, 1921, *ibid.*



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

*Quick Shooting Saves Our Lives* (1925, watercolor and gouache, 10½" x 13¼"). In 1925 Mackay persuaded Russell to create a black-and-white watercolor and two pen-and-ink drawings to illustrate *Cow Range and Hunting Trail*, Mackay's book recounting his ranching and hunting experiences in the West. *Quick Shooting Saves Our Lives* served as the frontispiece. The two pen-and-ink drawings are reproduced on page 47.

straight down to the  $\perp$  Ranch and keep you there for about a month."<sup>29</sup>

On January twenty-fourth Nancy sent the picture by express, apparently rolled up in a mailing tube. "Charlie and I want the McKay family to accept this with our love and friendship. It is not exactly a poster, but there will be no chance that anyone will doubt who the man is on the 'hoss.'" And so one of Russell's most beloved paintings, *Charles M. Russell and His Friends*, came home to roost. It is, of course, much more than a poster. It is an evocation of everything Russell stood for. Charlie Russell is the maestro welcoming viewers into his world—an old man now, with vivid memories, captured in the vivid colors Mackay had requested, of a vanished West where Indians and cowboys might still race across an unfenced land. Montana has been restored to what it was in Charlie's youth, and Square Butte rules over an unspoiled domain.<sup>30</sup>

29. Malcolm S. Mackay to Charles M. Russell, November 29, 1921, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell to the Mackays, January 5, 1922, *ibid.*; Malcolm S. Mackay to Charles M. Russell, January 17, 1922, *ibid.*

30. "His Paintings Were All Truthful," 6; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, January 24, 1922, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum. Worthy of note is that *Charles M. Russell and His Friends* was considered for the 1964 Russell commemorative stamp; it lost out to *Jerked Down*, though some might think that as a self-portrait it was the better choice to honor the artist's birth. See Belmont Faries, "Charles M. Russell, American Artist," *S.P.A. Journal*, 26 (March 1964), 485-91. A detail from *Charles M. Russell and His Friends* did appear on the 1989 stamp commemorating the centennial of Montana's statehood, the third time Russell artwork has been featured on a commemorative stamp.

It would be 1925 before the Russells saw the poster mounted at Tenafly, indicating how completely their focus had turned from the East Coast. Immediately following the exhibition at the Babcock Galleries in New York in 1921, Charlie's paintings and bronzes went on display at the Kanst Galleries in Los Angeles. This signaled a sea change. The Russells had spent the previous spring in southern California, and Nancy soon had her heart set on moving there permanently. California was booming, and it was now her market of choice. While Russell would exhibit in other cities in the West and Midwest, extended annual visits to the Los Angeles area made the shift from East to West Coast official.<sup>31</sup>

Reports from the Los Angeles press in March 1923 claimed that Russell's exhibition at the Stendahl Art Gallery in the Ambassador Hotel had nearly sold out in one week. Five oils and a watercolor commanded twenty thousand dollars, "setting a new record for Los Angeles, according to [Earl] Stendahl, both as to money involved and number of paintings disposed of—of any one artist's work in any one week." Prospects of the Russells getting back to New York any time soon dimmed. But after Russell's latest cowboy masterpiece, *Men of the Open Range*, went on display at the Biltmore Salon in Los Angeles the next year, it journeyed east, accompanied by the Russells themselves and a substantial group of paintings and bronzes, for an exhibition at New York's Arthur H. Harlow & Company Galleries in January 1925. Malcolm Mackay, having urged the Russells to "give little old New York a look in once in a while," played a role in organizing the exhibition. West Coast success had substantially escalated prices. Two oils were listed at ten thousand dollars and *Men of the Open Range* at six thousand dollars.<sup>32</sup>

It was the Russells' first trip east in four years. They visited at Tenafly, saw the "poster" in its place of honor, and, by their presence, persuaded Malcolm he needed to add something new to his Russell room. It was probably

31. *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1921; Dippie, ed., *Word Painter*, 288-98, 306-15; Brian W. Dippie, "Charlie Russell Meets California," *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, 34 (Summer 1984), 62-79; Kanst Art Galleries exhibition invitation, March 19, 1922, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; *Santa Barbara (Calif.) Daily News*, April 22, 1922; *Special Exhibition: Paintings and Bronzes by Charles M. Russell, Great Falls, Montana* (Santa Barbara, Calif., [1923]).

32. *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 1923; *Special Exhibition of Paintings and Bronzes by Charles M. Russell* (Los Angeles, 1924); Malcolm S. Mackay to the Russells, August 30, [1924], Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy Russell's priced copy of *Special Exhibition: Paintings and Bronzes by Charles M. Russell* (New York 1925), *ibid.* On their previous trip east, in 1921, Nancy had warned Malcolm ahead of time about the escalation in Russell prices, with paintings ranging from eighteen hundred to ten thousand dollars. For the 1925 exhibition Mackay inspected the Harlow Galleries on their behalf and wired his approval; Nancy concluded arrangements for the exhibition on the strength of his recommendation. Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, December 14, 1920, *ibid.*; Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, telegram, October 15, 1924, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, November 4, 1924, *ibid.*

an easy sell. As a Wall Street broker Mackay had to be impressed by the rising value of his paintings and his wisdom in building a collection when they were still relatively affordable. His past investment in Russells had increased handsomely, and there was no reason to hesitate now. By the time the exhibition closed, Nancy had the satisfaction of writing “Sold” next to *Men of the Open Range* in her copy of the catalog. This was Malcolm’s first purchase of a painting directly from the Russells since he acquired *When Horses Talk War* in 1915. It would not be his last.<sup>33</sup>

Charlie’s health had deteriorated in 1923 with a crippling bout of sciatica, and he had not regained full mobility until the following spring. Age was humbling the cowboy artist, and he found the eastern swing in 1925 exhausting. Nancy was unsympathetic. “Chas has a very sad face because we are not bound for home,” she reported from the train between New York and their next exhibition stop in Washington, D.C., “but I cant help that. . . I have kept quite well in deed when I think of the things I have done in the past four weeks with so little rest, success is the tonic.” But after their return to Great Falls, she let Charlie beg out of their usual trip to California. Instead, she went on her own, staking a major commission and exhibiting a collection of watercolors.<sup>34</sup>

“Happy to be back in his studio and at work,” Charlie completed a small commission for Mackay within weeks of returning home. They had likely talked it over in January. Mackay wanted Charlie to illustrate a book recounting his ranching and hunting experiences in the West. The precedent he had in mind predated his first contact with the Russells. In 1905 Charlie illustrated the memoirs of an old-timer who was Mackay’s close friend, W. T. “Bill” Hamilton. When *My Sixty Years on the Plains* appeared in 1905, it boasted six fine full-page illustrations by Russell. Mackay wanted nothing that elaborate. Two pen-and-ink drawings and one black-and-white watercolor to serve as the frontispiece were sufficient. Only friendship would have induced Russell to accept even this small assignment. He was not, as Nancy frequently emphasized, an illustrator. Though he had done illustrating in the past, he was in fact an artist working out of his own inspiration. The two pen-and-inks he prepared for Mackay’s book, published that year as *Cow Range and Hunting Trail*, were cowboy subjects, and Mackay’s response—check enclosed—was muted:

33. Nancy Russell’s priced copy of *Special Exhibition: Paintings and Bronzes by Charles M. Russell*, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum.

34. Nancy C. Russell to Mary and Joe De Yong, February 1, 1925, De Yong Papers, C.M. Russell Museum. See also *Special Exhibition of Paintings and Sculptures by Charles M. Russell* (Washington, D.C., 1925).

35. Nancy C. Russell to the Mackays, March 31, 1925, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; E. T. Sieber to Charles M. Russell, June 9, 1905, *ibid.* (Russell noted the six incidents he would illustrate on the back of Sieber’s letter); W. T. Hamilton, *My Sixty Years on the Plains: Trapping, Trading, and Indian Fighting*, ed. E. T. Sieber (New York, 1905); Malcolm S. Mackay to Charles M. Russell, March 26, 1925, Britzman



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

*The Odds Looked About Even* (1925, pen and ink, 11<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" x 18")



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

*Like a Flash They Turned* (1925, pen and ink, 13" x 21")

“The sketches came through in good shape and I like them fine.” Nancy replied that Charlie was “glad” since he “was afraid he had not gotten your ideas.”<sup>35</sup>

That December, with Charlie’s breathing labored and his goiter condition worsening, the Russells made their last trip east together. Nancy sprang it on him by enlisting

Collection, Taylor Museum. The pen-and-ink drawings Russell did for Mackay’s book are only two of nineteen in the Mackay Collection. Most of the others were done late in Russell’s life for *More Rawhides* (1925) and *Trails Plowed Under* (1927). It seems probable that they were acquired subsequent to Charlie’s death—much like the seven bronzes in the collection, of which three were cast posthumously and one was bought in 1929. Photographs of Mackay’s Tenafly Russell room show that he also owned a set of *Indian Family* bookends, acquired in the artist’s lifetime, that are not part of the Montana Historical Society’s Mackay Collection. An indispensable book on the Russell bronzes is Rick Stewart, *Charles M. Russell, Sculptor* (Fort Worth, Tex., and New York, 1994).

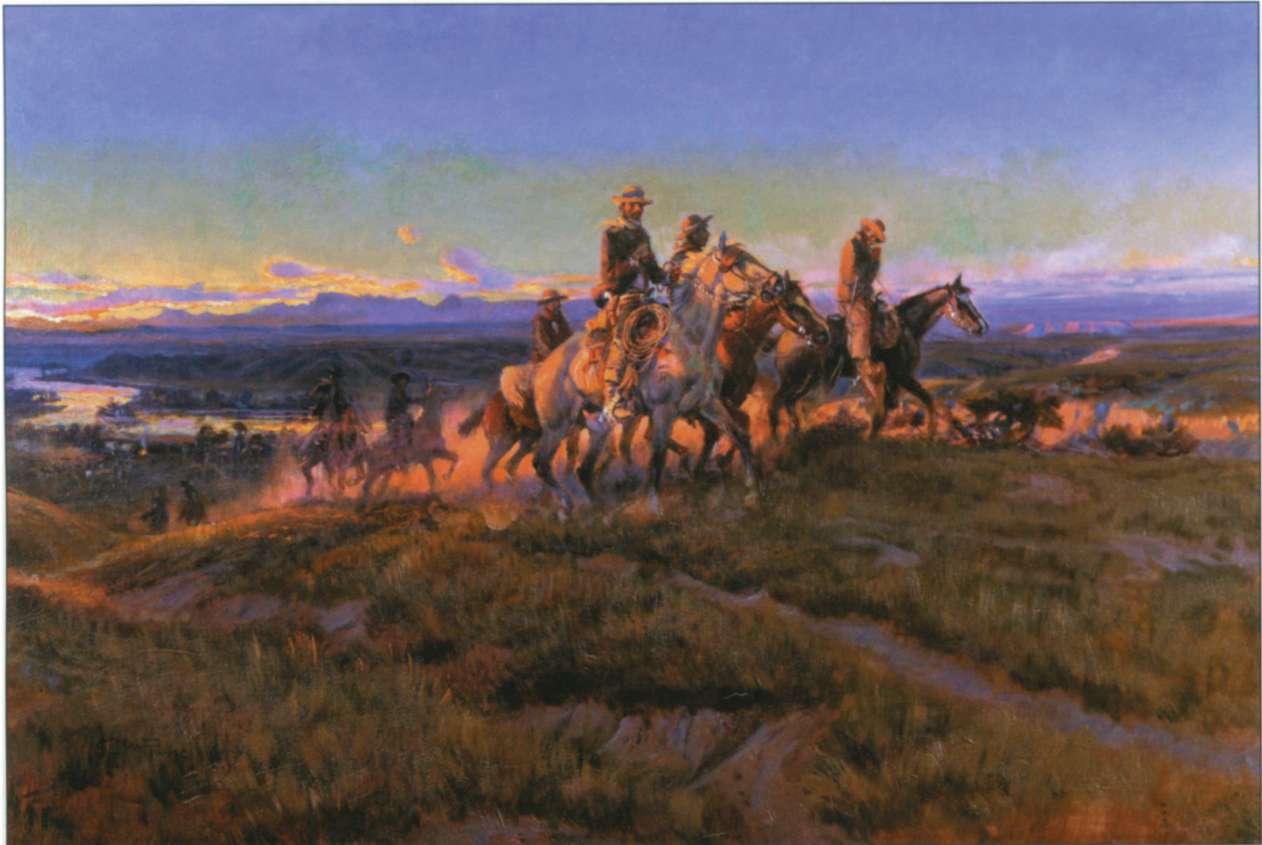
Malcolm to help her organize an “apartment exhibition” in New York City while Charlie was away on his fall hunt. She would eliminate the galleries and their commissions by running her “own show” out of their hotel rooms. And she would see that her reluctant husband met with physicians for a medical consultation.<sup>36</sup>

The exhibition attracted notice because of the brilliant palette Russell had recently adopted. As a visitor put it: “On a certain afternoon in the winter of 1925, I left behind the sensuous grayness of . . . [one] exhibition and walked a block down the Avenue into an amazing experience—the exhibition of the paintings and bronzes of Charles M. Russell. . . . This entry into the midst of a riot of blue and gold and green and red was overwhelming. A fresh breeze seemed to be in that room.” An earlier gallery-goer recalled another Russell nocturne that had “all of the overwhelming spirit of the great spaces—the blue-black night under the stars, with high lights of glowing orange color.” It was a different painting he had in mind, but his words perfectly describe the most vibrant, and touching, night scene Russell ever painted. Known today as *Laugh Kills Lonesome*, it was simply titled *The Cow Camp at Night* when

Nancy sent it to Malcolm Mackay, unframed, the week before she and Charlie arrived in New York City.<sup>37</sup>

Whether Mackay actually commissioned the oil is unknown, but it, like *Charles M. Russell and His Friends*, perfectly expresses Russell’s commanding theme, “the West that has passed.” And it expresses as well his introspective mood one year before he died. A photograph taken at Tenafly that December shows the artist as an old man, tired and unwell, sitting in Mackay’s Russell room. *The Roundup* hangs behind him while *Laugh Kills Lonesome*, still unframed, is propped against the wall. *Laugh Kills Lonesome* recalled with unabashed nostalgia a world “long ago and far away.” The wrangler stepping into that welcoming circle of firelight is Kid Russell himself, young again in memory. The painting is not only a sentimental joy; it is the capstone of Mackay’s Russell collection.<sup>38</sup>

By now, one of the most interesting features of the Mackay Collection should be apparent. Malcolm Mackay bought seven cowboy subjects and *Free Trapper* directly from the artist, and every one is a first-rate Russell. But what about Indian subjects? Indians figure in works such as *Toll Collectors*, and there are, of course, Indian pictures



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

*Men of the Open Range* (1923, oil on canvas, 24" x 36"). After exhibiting in New York from 1907 to 1921, the Russells turned their attention to the Midwest and West, particularly Los Angeles, to which they made extended annual visits.

Not until 1925 did they return to New York for an exhibit at Arthur H. Harlow & Company Galleries. That exhibit persuaded Mackay to add *Men of the Open Range* to his collection.



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

*Indian Hunters' Return* (1900, oil on canvas, 23<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" x 35<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"). While Mackay collected primarily paintings with cowboy subjects, he also acquired several early Russell Indian pictures, including the masterful *Indian Hunters' Return*.

in the Mackay Collection. But apart from one indisputable masterpiece, the 1900 oil *Indian Hunters' Return*, they are not its highlights. Mackay had seen some brilliant Russell Indian paintings on exhibition, but those he acquired were early works: *Caught in the Act* (c. 1888), *Portrait of an Indian* (c. 1888), *Indian Camp* (1891), *Indians and Scouts Talking* (1895), *Indians Discovering Lewis and Clark* (1896), and *The Surprise Attack* (1898). This is not to demean Russell's early paintings, which are undervalued today. *Indian Hunters' Return* is exceptional in both senses of the word: there is no other Russell remotely like it in terms of its subject matter, and it exemplifies the very best work he was doing in oils before regular trips east beginning in 1904 exposed him to other painters and their tricks. The point is simply that all of Mackay's Indian pictures predated his personal relationship with the artist. When Mackay acquired them, and why, remain something of a mystery.

36. Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, October 27, 1925, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to W. S. Risley, copy of telegram, November 14, 1925, Miscellaneous Items, Flood Collection, C.M. Russell Museum; Nancy C. Russell to Irvin S. Cobb, copy of telegram, November 14, 1925, *ibid*.

37. Chapman, "The Man Behind the Brush," 35; V. A. C. James, "Charles Russell: Artist and Range Rider," *Saturday Night*, 5 (June 28, 1924), 7; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, November 25, 1925, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum. The painting to which James referred was *When Guns Speak, Death Settles Disputes* (1921). At the time Philip Cole acquired it, Nancy was simply stating a fact when she said that Charlie "painted so few moonlight pictures that it was the opportunity of a lifetime to get one." Nancy C. Russell to Philip G. Cole, January 27, 1932, *ibid*.

38. This photograph is the basis for the Russell portrait drawn by Emil Pollak Ottendorff that illustrates Mackay, "Charles M. Russell," 33.

*Indian Hunters' Return* and *The Surprise Attack* are both visible in photographs of Mackay's Russell room taken before Russell's poster was put in place, which means before 1922. They also establish that Mackay once owned *A Doubtful Handshake*. Like most informed collectors, he pruned his collection. Perhaps he reasoned that this large watercolor was too close in theme to *Toll Collectors*—and, for that matter, to *Caught in the Act*—since all three record uneasy encounters between cowboys and Indians. Or perhaps he simply exchanged *A Doubtful Handshake* for credit on something he wanted more. This much we know: *A Doubtful Handshake* was back in Nancy Russell's possession by January 1927, when she held the *First Memorial Exhibition* of Charlie's work in Santa Barbara, and it was quickly snapped up by Mackay's chief rival among Russell collectors, Dr. Philip G. Cole of Tarrytown, New York.<sup>39</sup>

Cole was a man with his own roots in Montana, inherited money, and a bank balance to accommodate what can only be described as a collecting frenzy. Getting more Russells became one of his obsessions after the artist's death. When a Russell memorial exhibition was held in New York City in November 1927, Mackay lent six of his choicest works; Cole lent twenty-one paintings and four bronzes. No one had to ask who owned the most Russells now.

39. *First Memorial Exhibition of the Works of Charles Marion Russell, "Painter of the West"* (Santa Barbara, Calif., 1927); Philip G. Cole to Nancy C. Russell, January [February] 3, February 17, March 9, 1927, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum. Other photographs of the Russell room show most of the Indian paintings in place but cannot really be dated since the poster is installed, permitting a range of 1922 to 1932 (Malcolm's death that year precluding additions to the collection). Most likely all the paintings were acquired well before that date.

Helen E. and Homer E. Britzman Collection,  
Taylor Museum for Southwestern Studies of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado



A photograph taken of Charlie Russell in December 1925 shows the artist as an old man, tired and unwell, sitting in the Mackays' Russell room below *The Roundup* and next to the unframed *Laugh Kills Lonesome*. Despite his declining health, in spring 1926 Charlie agreed to paint a replacement for *Jerked Down*, which Malcolm had sold after it was damaged.

Today *A Doubtful Handshake* adorns the Gilcrease Museum, where Cole's matchless collection of western art reposes. And there on the wall is the missing piece of the Mackay puzzle with which I began, the famous roping scene *Jerked Down*.<sup>40</sup>

How *Jerked Down* ended up in Tulsa constitutes a story all its own, since it is a painting with a past—not a purpled

40. *Memorial Exhibition: Charles Marion Russell, "Painter of the West," 1865-1926* (New York, [1927]). Philip Cole, whose resources were such that he was Depression-proof, continued to acquire many great western paintings at bargain prices through the first half of the 1930s. Nancy found him a difficult but indispensable client. He had money, always liked a deal, bought and swapped and requested discounts, paid promptly—and was insatiable. Cole knew what he liked and what he did not like, rejected many early Russells as inferior, and was ever in the hunt (while pleading straitened circumstances) for paintings and bronzes to add to his collection. See Nancy C. Russell to Josephine Trigg, June 2, 1938, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; David C. Hunt, "The Old West Revisited: The Private World of Doctor Philip Cole," *American Scene*, 8, no. 4 (1967). For revealing insights into Cole's character, Frank B. Linderman to Frederic F. Van de Water, September 18, 1933, box 5, Frank Bird Linderman Collection, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula; and Frederic F. Van de Water to Frank B. Linderman, December 5, 1934, *ibid.*

past, but certainly a checkered one. And like any good story this one comes with an unexpected twist.

Harry E. Maule, an editor with Doubleday, Page & Company in Garden City, New York, met Russell briefly in 1924 at an exhibition of his paintings in the Lewis Hotel at the head of Lake McDonald in Glacier Park. Maule was editing one of the Doubleday magazines, a new title to be called *West*, and in 1925 wondered if Russell might be willing to have some of his pictures reproduced. Nancy invited Maule to pop by their "apartment exhibition" that December, and he came away so impressed with Russell's vibrant colors that he passed the baton to the editor of Doubleday's elegant monthly magazine *Country Life*, which, unlike *West*, would be able to do justice to Russell's recent paintings with full-color reproductions.<sup>41</sup>

Things went swimmingly at first. An admiring article on Russell's work by Frank M. Chapman Jr., a friend of Malcolm Mackay, met editorial expectations, and the quest for appropriate illustrations was immediately directed to Mackay, who had been instrumental in introducing Chapman to Russell. Mackay agreed to lend three of his paintings—*Jerked Down*, *Laugh Kills Lonesome*, and *Men of the Open Range*—to *Country Life* so that color plates could be made.<sup>42</sup>

But when the paintings were returned in late spring 1926, Mackay noticed that *Jerked Down* had been damaged. He demanded compensation, and *Country Life* offered him three hundred dollars to cover repairs to the canvas. Mackay would not consider the offer nor would he accept the damaged picture. Instead, he asked Nancy about the cost of a replacement. She replied that Charlie would "duplicate Jerked down as near as possible" for six thousand dollars. That became Malcolm's bottom line in subsequent negotiations with *Country Life*. By the end of August, the magazine capitulated, and Malcolm laid matters out in full for Nancy:

After considerable wrangling, Doubleday Page & Co have consented to reimburse me \$6000 for the damage they did to "Jerked Down" but they in turn propose to fix it up and resell it—

Now the question I am putting up to you is—Am I foolish to let "Jerked Down" get out of my hands even if it has to be rebacked and pasted and probably repainted a bit by Charlie—to my mind it is one of Charlies masterpieces—in some ways I like it better than some of Charlies later works where he has used a

41. Harry E. Maule to Charles M. Russell, June 4, 1925, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Harry E. Maule to Nancy C. Russell, November 9, December 7, 1925, *ibid.* *West*, the magazine Maule represented, was originally called *The Frontier*.

42. Frank M. Chapman to James B. Rankin, October 6, 1936, James Brownlee Rankin Papers, Major Collection 162, MHS; [Reginald T. Townsend] to Nancy C. Russell, telegram, April 1, [1926], Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to Reginald T. Townsend, April 8, 1926, *ibid.*; Reginald T. Townsend to Nancy C. Russell, April 26, 1926, *ibid.*

somewhat free-er brush—the canvas has no holes through it but has four bad cracks right through the middle. . . .

The original canvas seems of poor quality, that is it is thin dry and brittle—but if it is rebacked and fixed up by experts and touched up a bit by Charlie it will be pretty good—

On the other hand if you think Charlie can create another picture with as much action and as much beauty of detail and possibly a better one (not necessarily a copy, in fact I would rather have it an entirely new subject) why of course I would prefer it—What is your honest to goodness opinion?<sup>43</sup>

It was appropriate that Mackay agonized over his decision. Charlie Russell had been in poor health for three years by then, and though he had finally had his goiter removed at the Mayo Clinic in July, he was far from well. Mackay was taking a real gamble. From Nancy's perspective, there was nothing in it for them if Mackay accepted the return of *Jerked Down*, but six thousand dollars to be gained if he commissioned a replacement picture. Consequently, her response is revealing in its even-handedness:

Charlie and I have talked about your picture "Jerked Down." . . . In our minds we don't think that any picture Charlie could paint could take the place of "Jerked Down" in your heart.

Charlie says he can do a picture for you and in his mind a better one but that will be a question whether it will appeal to you as being as good as your first love. Charlie would take pleasure and do his best to make a picture for you, but if your picture can be restored until the cracks do not trouble your eyes you had better keep it.

I don't see how Doubleday Page Company hope to sell a damaged picture for anything like six thousand dollars so I think if it can be restored to that point of perfection that they want to keep it and resell it, it would be alright for you.

43. Helen Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, August 6, 1926, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, undated draft for a telegram [June 1926], *ibid.*; Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, August 25, 1926, *ibid.*

44. Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, [September 1926], *ibid.* *Country Life's* editor wrote Nancy on September 16 noting that Mackay's painting had been "slightly damaged. We have had this repaired and rebacked so that the canvas is as good or almost better than it was when we got the painting. But Mr. MacKay is far from satisfied and insists that we send him a check for \$6,000, which he notifies us is the price that Mr. Russell is charging him for making a new painting of the subject 'Jerked Down.'" Not knowing Nancy well, he wondered if she might get Charlie to do the replacement for less, since "it would be a great help to us for the margin of profit on a magazine such as ours is not very large." Nancy, of course, turned him down. Reginald T. Townsend to Nancy C. Russell, September 16, 1926, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell to Reginald T. Townsend, September 24, 1926, *ibid.*

45. Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, September 28, 1926, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum.

If you desire to accept their offer and want Charlie to do a picture for you let us know so Charlie will have plenty of time as he does not work as rapidly as he use[d] to and he has a good deal of work ahead of him.<sup>44</sup>

Malcolm Mackay had been forewarned. Nancy was ever on the lookout for sales, and he knew this. For her to write such a balanced letter was fair warning that he should not let his painting go. But Mackay was feeling bloody-minded, and with satisfaction he announced on September twenty-eighth that he had received the settlement from *Country Life* and was "handing it on" to the Russells "with the request that Charley turn himself loose" on a new painting. He specified what he wanted, something "the same size as 'Jerked Down,' But an entirely different picture—I would

like it to be a roping picture, with at least one man Just throwing (I mean at the exact second the rope is to leave his fingers) I would like him roping a full size steer—I would like him to be riding at top speed—down hill." What he wanted, in short, was a prelude to *Jerked Down* featuring one of its secondary figures.<sup>45</sup>

Nancy had Mackay deposit the check in her investment account with his company, not wanting to "touch" the

### Mackay agonized over his decision.



Courtesy John S. Mackay

Nancy and Charlie first saw *Charles M. Russell and His Friends* in its place above the Mackays' Russell room fireplace in 1925.

Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena



*Caught in the Act* (1888, oil on canvas, 20½" x 28¼")

Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena



*The Surprise Attack* (1898, watercolor, 15" x 21¼")

money "until the painting is finished." She was, as always, smart when it came to business. Charlie died on October 24. Two weeks later Nancy refunded Malcolm's six thousand dollars. Charlie never got the replacement painting started, she wrote, "he just talked about it." At Malcolm's insistence, Nancy tried to come up with an alternative. She suggested the 1920 roping picture *A Tight Dally and a Loose Latigo*. Since it was larger than Mackay wanted, and since Nancy was asking twelve thousand dollars for it (noting that with Charlie's death the value of his paintings was "going to go on and on now"), discussion ended. Mackay

was more interested in a 1901 oil, *The Strenuous Life*, a painting his rival Philip Cole dismissed as not belonging in the same room with Russell's better paintings—*Jerked Down*, for instance.<sup>46</sup>

Cole could afford to condescend. He had added *Jerked Down* to his collection before Russell died. "I have had a most interesting year with pictures," he crowed in a letter to the artist:

Have certainly blown a large hole in my bank account, but could not resist falling for some of the great things that have come my way. . . . Last and by all means best, I last week picked up "Jerked Down" by you. As you may have heard, Doubleday Page & Co. when they had it in their possession for reproducing in "Country Life" this Summer cut it in some way, and I bought it at the sale by the Insurance Company. It has been so cleverly repaired that I am yet unable to discover where it is patched together. Personally I think it one of your best, and I imagine you will agree with me in this.

Mackay had to live with a gamble that had backfired. The next year Cole gleefully reported to Nancy that "Mr. Mackay seems to feel that I ought to sell him 'Jerked Down.' Of course, there is no reason in this at all, and I have replied that it is simply not for sale." From Cole's perspective, all's fair in love and war, and collecting art was war.<sup>47</sup>

So far, this adds up to a classic fishing tale about the one that got away: how *Jerked Down* escaped the Mackay Collection to end in the possession of Philip Cole. But there is a twist to this tale.

*Jerked Down* was sent to Brown & Bigelow, the famous calendar company, for reproduction in fall 1907. They liked the

painting, as did Nancy, who called it "mighty good." She sold reproduction rights only and required that the Russell original be returned. Brown & Bigelow thought they could

46. Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, October 2, 1926, *ibid.*; Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, telegram, November 11, 1926, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell to Malcolm S. Mackay, November 10, 20, 1926, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell to Philip G. Cole, April 26, 1927, *ibid.*; Philip G. Cole to Nancy C. Russell, May 3, 1927, *ibid.* Cole might dismiss *The Strenuous Life*, but Mackay's appreciation for it got Cole's competitive juices flowing, and he acquired the painting in 1928 awaiting something better. Philip G. Cole to Nancy C. Russell, September 26, 1928, *ibid.* Today *The Strenuous Life*, too, is part of the Gilcrease Museum collection.



Mackay Collection, MHS Museum, Helena

*Laugh Kills Lonesome* (1925, oil on canvas, 18" x 30"). In a rare night scene painted a year before his death, Russell again depicted himself in a world "long ago and far away." The painting is not only a sentimental joy; it is the capstone of Mackay's Russell collection.

sell *Jerked Down* for her, but by February the next year she was pressing to get it back. She had "an opportunity to sell it" herself, she claimed. The prospective buyer, of course, was Malcolm Mackay. When Nancy wrote him on February 18, 1908, that *Jerked Down* "will suit you without doubt," she failed to mention some pertinent facts. That same day she wrote a letter of complaint to Brown & Bigelow:

The painting "Jerked Down" was duly received but was in the worst condition of any picture that has ever come back to us. I have no doubt you knew nothing of the condition of the picture as it appears to have been in a warehouse or some shop with other canvases laid on top of it until the print was left right in the canvas. The box the picture was shipped in was in two pieces, over half of the picture was exposed and there was a scratch the full width of the canvas until you could see the threads through the paint. . . . Mr. Russell is obliged

47. Philip G. Cole to Charles M. Russell, October 8, 1926, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Philip G. Cole to Nancy C. Russell, May 3, 1927, *ibid.* *Jerked Down* appeared in the Grand Central Gallery Russell memorial exhibition courtesy of Cole, of course, and he often told the story of how he had "acquired one of my very best Russell paintings" through Mackay's misfortune. Philip G. Cole to Harry E. Maule, September 25, 1928, copy to Nancy C. Russell, *ibid.*

to put an entire new sky in and part of the back ground work has to be done over. Fortunately the figures were not injured to speak of. I am telling you all this so that next time there will be more care taken with the pictures.<sup>48</sup>

No wonder Nancy was so scrupulously balanced in her response eighteen years later when Malcolm Mackay asked her if he should hang on to *Jerked Down*. It had been damaged before she ever sold it to him. Had she leveled with him in 1926, he might have decided to keep the painting. That would have saved *Country Life* the outlay of six thousand dollars. And it might have meant that *Jerked Down* today would be hanging in Helena.

IN THE END, how close were the Russells and the Mackays?

If Nancy comes across as too mercenary, her situation must be understood. It was Nancy who explained to Russell's only protégé, Joe De Yong, the facts of life: *art is a business*. She "showed me how the art game goes on

48. Nancy C. Russell to C. W. Lawrence, October 14, 1907, February 8, 18, 1908, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum. Nancy had written Mackay on February 8 as well. See Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, February 13, 1908, *ibid.*



Anon. Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

*A Tight Dally and a Loose Latigo* (1920, oil on canvas, 30¼" x 48¼"). Charlie Russell died on October 24, 1926, without painting Mackay's replacement for *Jerked Down*, which had been acquired by rival collector Philip Cole. Nancy suggested *A Tight Dally* as a substitute, but Mackay decided against it.



Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma

*A Doubtful Handshake* (1910, watercolor, 27" x 30"). Although *A Doubtful Handshake* was not among the paintings donated by the Mackays to the Montana Historical Society, the photograph of the Russell room on page 43 shows it hanging to the right of the fireplace

behind the scenes," he wrote. "It is a real business, and not left to chance as some people suppose." Certainly Nancy left nothing to chance where the marketing and selling of Russell art was concerned. She set her prices and she got them. Why not? Other business people expected to be well paid for their work. In 1919 when an executive with the First National Bank of New York countered her price of thirty-five hundred dollars for a Russell oil with an offer of twenty-five hundred dollars, Nancy dickered. She and Charlie had been selling direct since 1916 and thus there were no gallery commissions to pay. Her price was net, but she would make a special concession. Since the client was willing to allow her to exhibit the painting in question before she shipped it to him, she could let him have it for

thirty-two hundred dollars. He stuck to his price, and Nancy brushed him off with this explanation: "Strange as it may seem, we, in our line of endeavor, are trying to operate our business affairs upon a business basis and . . . a very definite scale of price has been established."<sup>49</sup>

If there was always a business element to Nancy's relationship with those outside their close circle of Montana friends, so be it. She and Malcolm formed a real bond based on mutual respect. She regularly solicited his opinion on selling art in the East. In 1920, for example, he passed on the advice of a gallery owner that most of the Russell pictures intended for exhibition in New York "be of moderate or small size with possibly one or two large ones—As you know, there are many more people to buy the smaller and less expensive pictures—many more—its like selling the Ford Auto." Her confidence in Mackay's advice extended to her financial affairs; he managed her investment portfolio. From her perspective this showed absolute trust in a man she had come to regard as a friend and who made her feel he took "a personal interest in my little affairs."<sup>50</sup>



Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma

*The Strenuous Life* (1901, oil on canvas, 23" x 36")

49. Joe De Yong to Guy Weadick, January 8, 1935, box 1, Guy Weadick Papers, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta; Nancy C. Russell to George F. Baker Jr., November 28, 1919, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum. Weadick drew heavily on De Yong's long autobiographical letter in writing "Cowboys I Have Known: Joe De Yong, Protege of Charlie Russell," *West*, 43 (June 1937), 97-102, and included the quoted passage in his article.

50. Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, December 8, 1920, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to Hugh Peters, October 10, 1932, *ibid.*

Naturally, Malcolm was named among the honorary pallbearers at Charlie's funeral, and the families stayed in close touch after he was gone. In 1929 the Mackays spent a week with Nancy and Jack in Pasadena, and the next year a week at Lake McDonald. In turn, Nancy and Jack finally made the visit to the Lazy EL Ranch that Charlie never did. When Nancy was struggling with her Russell biography (a project unfinished at the time of her death), a letter from Malcolm buoyed her spirits. "*Nobody*," he said, "can ever write a biography of Charley as it should be written but *you*—Just sit down, as if you were conversing with a couple of particularly close friends, and chat along." Recalling his own feelings about the man, Mackay summed up, "Charley was a great soul." "It is wonderful to have such friends as you people are,"

Nancy replied. "Sometimes, I feel so very far away and alone down here [in Pasadena] where I haven't old friends and when I'm just about the lowest down in the mud, that I can get, something like this letter comes and the sun shines through again." Lest this seems too sweet, Nancy began her letter by crisply acknowledging the check Malcolm had enclosed for a Russell bronze.<sup>51</sup>

What had begun as an artist and patron relationship had ripened into a friendship that spanned the miles and the years. The families celebrated good fortune together, enjoyed each other's company when they could meet, and, together, they mourned the tragedies life brings. When

Russell died, Helen Mackay wrote: "Forgive my intrusion. We feel so close to you and Charley." Malcolm added, "How happy it must make you feel to know what a large part you had in making Charley what he was when he left this world." And when Malcolm died unexpectedly in 1932, at the age of fifty-one, Nancy confessed, "It was a terrible shock to me. He was too young and was needed here so much." To Helen she wrote, "No kinder man ever lived."<sup>52</sup>


But the last word belongs to Charlie Russell. Almost a year to the day after Nancy happily announced that the Russell room poster was finally on its way to New Jersey, the Mackays suffered a devastating loss. Their daughter Edith hit her head against a tree in a sledding accident. She seemed to be recovering, but failed, then died. A heartbroken Malcolm wrote the Russells on

February 7, 1923: "It just seems as if the sun has gone out of our lives altogether. Oh God how we all loved her—and oh what a terrible void her going has left in our family—Pray, that we may have the courage to 'carry on.'"

Here are the words of comfort Charlie Russell offered:

In this life of shadows Children are sunshine and when death blots out one of these bright spots we must not look to long at the shadow but cast our eyes in places where the sun still shines and other little sunbeams will heal your heart.

The Angel of Death is only awful to those who stay behind. Your little one waits for you.

That was a "great soul" speaking to the true meaning of friendship.<sup>53</sup> 

*"It is wonderful to have such friends as you people are."*



MHS Photograph Archives, Helena

What had begun as an artist-patron relationship ripened into a friendship between the two families that spanned miles and years. The Mackay family, circa 1918, left to right: Malcolm Jr. "Bud," Donald "Pete," Malcolm, Edith, Helen, and William R. "Bill."

51. *Great Falls (Mont.) Tribune*, October 27, 1926; Nancy C. Russell to Philip G. Cole, November 25, 1930, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Bull Head Lodge guest register, August 1930, collection of Larry and LeAnne Peterson, Portland, Oregon; Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, March 28, 1928, April 22, 1929, Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Nancy C. Russell to Helen Mackay, April 29, 1929, *ibid.*

52. Helen Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, Monday [October 25, 1926], Britzman Collection, Taylor Museum; Malcolm S. Mackay to Nancy C. Russell, October 25, 1926, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell to Philip G. Cole, October 31, 1932, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell to Helen Mackay, n.d., [June 1932], *ibid.*

53. Malcolm S. Mackay to the Russells, February 7, 1923, *ibid.*; Nancy C. Russell, copy of Charles M. Russell to the Mackays, February 19, 1923, *ibid.*

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