

Guide to the Russell Cheney Papers

YCAL MSS 1534



by Brooke McManus

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 1534

CREATOR: Cheney, Russell, 1881-1945 , author

TITLE: Russell Cheney papers

DATES: 1881-2018

BULK DATES: 1916–1939

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 5.92 linear feet (8 boxes)

LANGUAGE: In English, with a small amount of material in French and German.

SUMMARY: The collection consists of correspondence, ephemera, artwork, photographs, and computer media by or relating to American painter Russell Cheney.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.cheney>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.cheney>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Carol Cheney, 2018.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Box 8 (computer media): Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Boxes 1-2: In-process material. Research use may require advance notice. For further information, consult Access Services.

Conditions Governing Use

The Russell Cheney Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Russell Cheney Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

Russell Cheney (1881-1945)

Russell Cheney was an American painter known for his still lifes and landscapes. He graduated from Yale University, where he was a member of Skull and Bones, in 1904. From 1904 to 1907, he studied at the Art Students League in New York City, after which he attended the Académie Julian in Paris from 1907 to 1910. Cheney returned to New York and briefly served as president of the Art Students League from 1910 to 1911. In 1912, he established a studio in Manchester, Connecticut. Cheney traveled to Maine, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and California to paint. His work was exhibited at the Babcock Gallery in New York, the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, Connecticut, the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, the Montross Gallery in New York, the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and the Grace Horne Gallery in Boston. Early in his career, Cheney was diagnosed with tuberculosis and received treatment from 1916 to 1918 at the Colorado Springs sanatorium where his Yale friend, poet Phelps Putnam, was also a patient. In 1924, he met historian and literary critic F. O. Matthiessen (Yale 1923), and they began a relationship that lasted over 20 years.

Cheney died in his home in Kittery, Maine, on July 12, 1945. After his death, Matthiessen organized several exhibitions of Cheney's work at institutions in New England and New York and in 1947, he published the biography *Russell Cheney 1881-1945: A Record of His Work*.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of correspondence, ephemera, artwork, photographs, and computer media by or relating to American painter Russell Cheney. Correspondents include Malcolm Forbes, Penelope Hyde and Louis Hyde, Helen Bayne Knapp and Farwell Knapp, F. O. Matthiessen, Phelps Putnam, and Henry Varnum Poor. Photographs feature Cheney and his family and friends, as well as scenes from Southern California, Colorado, and New Mexico and images of his paintings. Artwork includes "Christmas cat cartoons," with pen and wash drawings by Cheney and words by Matthiessen. Also included are three poems by May Sarton, two of which are signed, most likely gifted to the Hydes.

Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Correspondence and Other Papers, 1916-2018. II. Artwork, 1930s, undated. III. Photographs, 1881-1938, undated. IV. Computer Media, undated.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence and Other Papers, 1916–2018

2 linear feet (2 boxes)

This series consists of photocopies of correspondence, a small amount of ephemera, and materials related to Cheney's death, memorials, and posthumous exhibits and publications. Included are letters from Russell Cheney to Helen Bayne Knapp and Louis Hyde; letters to Cheney from Malcolm Forbes, F. O. Matthiessen, Henry Varnum Poor, and Putnam Phelps; and third party correspondence of Helen Bayne and Farwell Knapp and Penelope and Louis Hyde. The series also contains three printed poems by May Sarton, one of which is signed and addressed to the Hydys.

Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Correspondence		
b. 1, f. 1	"A-F" general	1926–1971
b. 1, f. 2-3	Cheney, Russell to Helen Bayne Knapp (including photographs)	1923–1941
b. 1, f. 4-5	Cheney, Russell to Louis Hyde (one letter from Hyde to Cheney)	1925–1933
b. 1, f. 6-13	Forbes, Malcolm	1919–1921
b. 1, f. 14	Graham, George Ross	1925–1932
b. 1, f. 15-17	Hyde, Louis third party correspondence [photocopies]	1923–1975
b. 1, f. 18-25	Hyde, Penelope to Louis Hyde (with a few from Louis) [photocopies]	1922–1933, 1966
b. 2, f. 26	Knapp, Farwell to Louis Hyde [photocopies]	1926–1927
b. 2, f. 27-29	Knapp, Helen Bayne third party correspondence (primarily to Penelope and Louis Hyde) [photocopies]	1924–1976
b. 2, f. 30	"M-S" general [photocopies]	1918–1935
b. 2, f. 31	Matthiessen, F. O. to Russell Cheney [photocopies]	1924
b. 2, f. 32	Melhorn, Burkhard [photocopies]	1931
b. 2, f. 33	Pelly, Bernard B. (including letter from F. O. Matthiessen) [photocopies]	1924, 1975
b. 2, f. 34-35	Poor, Henry Varnum [photocopies]	1916–1934
b. 2, f. 36-41	Putnam, Phelps [photocopies]	1919–1931
b. 2, f. 42	Unidentified and first name only [photocopies]	1920–1932
b. 2, f. 43	Ephemera, exhibition-related [photocopies]	1927, circa 2018
b. 2, f. 44	Ephemera, Santa Barbara Mission [photocopies]	1917
b. 2, f. 45	Exhibition list, typescript [photocopies]	undated
b. 2, f. 46	May Sarton printed poems (two signed) [photocopies]	1957–1963
b. 2, f. 47	Posthumous correspondence, clippings, lists, and other materials [photocopies]	1946–1947

Series II: Artwork, 1930s, undated*1.5 linear feet (1 box)*

This series consists of original artwork by Russell Cheney, including a group of "Christmas cat cartoons" he created with F. O. Matthieson, and an untitled painting.

Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

b. 7, f. 78-84	Christmas cat cartoons	1930s
b. 3, f. 48	Unidentified painting	undated

Series III: Photographs, 1881-1938, undated*2.21 linear feet (4 boxes)*

This series consists of photographs, photographic postcards, and photograph albums of Russell Cheney with family and friends including F. O. Matthiessen, Helen Bayne Knapp and Farwell Knapp, Phelps Putnam, and Malcolm Forbes. Also included are images of Cheney's artwork and photographs of mountains and other scenes in California, Colorado, and New Mexico.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 4, f. 61-65	Photograph album	circa 1900s
b. 6	Photograph album	circa 1900s-1910s
b. 3, f. 49-50	Family and friends, California and Colorado landscapes	1917-1918, undated
b. 3, f. 51	Russell Cheney painting a landscape	circa 1917-1918
b. 4, f. 66	Landscapes	1917-1918, undated
b. 3, f. 52-56	Family and friends ("miscellaneous photos from Betsy Packard")	1883-1919
b. 3, f. 57	Family and friends ("miscellaneous photos from Betsy Packard to Carol L. Cheney")	1910s-1920s
b. 3, f. 58-60	Family and friends ("photos from Betsy Packard to Carol L. Cheney")	1881-1923
b. 4, f. 67	Pueblo of Santa Clara, New Mexico, Tufelo Romero in Taos, and unidentified	undated
b. 4, f. 68-71	Artwork by Russell Cheney	1929-1938, undated
b. 5, f. 72-77	Artwork by Russell Cheney	1929-1938, undated
b. 7, f. 85	Russell Cheney "Kodak picture"	circa 1910s-1920s
b. 7, f. 86	Russell Cheney portraits	circa 1910s-1920s

Series IV: Computer Media, undated

0.21 linear feet (1 box)

This series consists of one DVD related to Russell Cheney.

b. 8	Computer media	undated
	Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Artists, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Cats -- Caricatures and cartoons
Gay artists -- United States
Landscape photography
Women poets, American -- 20th Century

Occupations

Artists -- United States -- 20th Century

Genres / Formats

Born digital
Cartoons (humorous images)
Oil paintings (visual works)
Pen and wash drawings
Photographs

Geographic Names

California, Southern -- Pictorial works
Colorado -- Pictorial works
New Mexico -- Pictorial works

Names

Cheney, Russell, 1881-1945
Forbes, Malcolm, 1897-1991
Hyde, L. K. (Louis K.)
Hyde, Penelope, 1903-1985
Knapp, Farwell, 1893-1942
Knapp, Helen Bayne, 1896-1984
Matthiessen, F. O. (Francis Otto), 1902-1950
Poor, Henry Varnum, 1887-1970
Putnam, Phelps, 1894-1948
Sarton, May, 1912-