

Charles M. Russell: The Life and Legend of America's Cowboy Artist

John Taliaferro



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This first comprehensive biography of Charles M. Russell examines the colorful life and times of Montana's famed Cowboy Artist. Born to an affluent St. Louis family in 1864, young Russell read thrilling tales of the West and filled sketchbooks with imagined frontier scenes. At sixteen he left home and headed west to become a cowboy. In Montana Territory he consorted with cowpunchers, Indians, preachers, saloon keepers, and prostitutes, while celebrating the waning American frontier's glory days in some 4,000 paintings, watercolors, drawings, and sculptures. Before his death in 1926, Russell saw the world change dramatically, and the West he loved passed into legend. By then he was revered as one of the country's ranking Western artist with works displayed in the finest galleries, his romantic vision of the Old West forever shaping our own.

Taliaferro reveals the man behind the myth in his multifaceted complexity: extraordinarily gifted, self-effacing, charming, mischievous, and playful, a friend to rough frontier denizens and Hollywood stars alike. The author also explores Russell's controversial partnership with his fiery young wife, Nancy, whose ambition and business savvy helped establish Russell as one of America's most popular artists.



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