



MG 554 – Westcott / Hurley Collection

Dates: 1937-1980 (inclusive); 1971-1980 (predominant).

Extent: 8 cm of textual records, 57 photographs, and slide positives.

Biography: Jim Westcott was an undergraduate student in psychology at the University of Saskatchewan when he met Robert Hurley in 1949. It was the beginning of a friendship which continued until Hurley's death in 1980. Westcott moved to Montreal where he earned an MA in psychology; and after briefly beginning studies for his PhD, switched disciplines and earned an MBA at the University of Pennsylvania. He worked in human relations throughout his career, eventually settling in Toronto. There, Westcott became active in promoting and selling Hurley's artwork and came to own many pieces himself. He described himself as "an art collector, go between and the keeper of the Hurley Archives" (*Novum in Libris*, University of Saskatchewan Library, Spring 2009).

Born in London, England on 26 March 1894, Robert Hurley trained as an apprentice printer-compositor before serving in the Suffolk Regiment (1917-1920). In 1923, Hurley immigrated to Canada and moved to Saskatoon in 1930. Finding himself unemployed at the age of forty during the Depression, Hurley began to paint with berry juices and a toothbrush. Largely self-taught with only a few classes from Ernie Linder, he quickly became well known in Saskatchewan and other parts of Canada for his treatment of the prairie landscape. His first showing was at a 1935 exhibition with the Manitoba Society of Artists in Winnipeg. He remained in Saskatchewan until retiring to Victoria, British Columbia, in 1963, where he remained until his death in 1980.

Custodial History: This collection contains materials created by Robert Hurley, and sent to (or, in the case of some paintings, purchased from Hurley by) Jim Westcott over the course of their friendship. The OS paintings were acquired from the Kenderdine, who acquired them from Westcott.

Scope and content: The Westcott-Hurley Collection contains many finished paintings, sketches, and experimental artworks by Hurley as well as correspondence, newspaper clippings, slides and photographs of Hurley, as well as his family, friends, and things that interested him.

See also the Russell/Walker/Hurley fonds, the Robert N. Hurley fonds, and the J.A.E Child fonds.

Restrictions: No restrictions on access.

Finding aid created by Amy Putnam, 2016. Edited for formatting by Amy Putnam 2018.

1. Correspondence. - Misc. – n.d.
2. Correspondence. - 1971-1973.
3. Correspondence. - 1974-1976.
4. Correspondence. - 1977-1980.
5. Cricks Farm. Langham [pencil drawing]. – 1 pencil sketch. – 1932.
6. Illustrated Letter from R.N. Hurley to Mary Young. – 10 pages. – 1960.
7. “Hurley Experiments”. – 16 pages. – 1940-1967.
Experimental and abstract.
8. “Hurley Sketches”. – 7 images. – 1943-1944.
Includes nudes, still life, and rough drafts of landscapes.
9. Hurley Lab Drawings. – 7 pages. – n.d.
Mainly sketches of plants and animals.
10. “Copies of Printed Material Sent to J.W. Westcott by Hurley”. - 39 pages. -1950-62.
Newspaper articles, and various other publications featuring Hurley’s art. Includes 9 photos.
11. “R.N. Hurley Memorabilia, Sent by Hurley to J.W. Westcott.” – 1 cm. – 1937-1971.
12. Letters and Photographs – 3 cm. – 1963-1979. – 16 photographs
Mainly letters from Hurley to Jim Westcott, but also some from various persons who received paintings from Hurley and have written to thank him, including Tommy Douglas.
13. “Slides taken by R.N. Hurley”. – 40 slides.
Mostly landscapes, some family photos.
14. Box of slides. – 22 slides.
Mostly landscapes, some family.
15. Artwork. – 4 paintings. **OS**
Queen Elizabeth Station – Across the Bay. - 1973. – 12 x 17” watercolour.
Contented Cows. - 1974. – 12 x 16” watercolour.
Light House and Drift Wood. – 1978. – 9 x 14.5” watercolour.
Forest Scene. – nd. – 6 x 8.5” watercolour, 6” x 8.5”.