



MG 482 - Robert Newton Hurley Collection

Dates: 1894-1978 (inclusive); 1938-1978 (predominant).

Dates: .5 m of textual documents and artwork, including 525 slides and roughly 46 photographs.

Biography: 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.

Provenance: In 1966 the University Library's Special Collections began to acquire materials from Robert Hurley and these accruals continued until Hurley's death. In 1991 the Library acquired a folder of correspondence from Ruth Miller, the daughter of Percy Wright (a prominent Saskatchewan horticulturist), containing letters written by Hurley and this was added to the collection. In items originally donated to the Kenderdine/University Art Collection by Dr. W.A. Follow were transferred to the University Library Special Collections.

Scope and content: The 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. It also includes his diaries and "memories" or memoirs.

The Hurley Collection contains many pieces of finished and unfinished artwork by Hurley, particularly landscapes as well as other sketches and experimental works. It contains his diaries and memoirs as well as correspondence which discusses his life and his artwork.

Arrangement: This collection has been organized into eight series:

- I. Correspondence
- II. Diaries
- III. Memoirs
- IV. Original Sketches and Watercolours
- V. Colour Slides
- VI. Photographs
- VII. Addresses, Newspaper Clippings, Articles
- VIII. Miscellaneous
- IX. Addendum

Restrictions: There are no restrictions on access.

See also: Westcott/Hurley; Russell Walker Hurley; Percy Wright fonds

Originally ordered by Glen Makahonuk in 1978. Finding aid retyped by Amy Chillog in 2015.

Box 1

I. Correspondence. – 1959-1978. – 6 cm. – 7 folders.

See below (IX. Addendum) for more correspondence.

- a) Correspondence with A. Anstensen and Mrs. Appelt. – 1959-1967.
Relating to the Library's acquisition of the Hurley material.
- b) Correspondence with Stan Obodiac to R. Hurley. – 1957-1958.
Relating to Stan Obodiac's research and writing of an unpublished Hurley biography.
- c) Correspondence with Lorna Sills to R. Hurley. – 1959-1962.
- d) Correspondence with Mrs. Ruth Russell Walker. – 1962-1969.
- e) General Correspondence. – 1945-1978.
- f) Correspondence from R. Hurley to Percy Wright. – 1963-1968.
This folder donated to the collection by Ruth Miller, daughter of Percy Wright. See also the Percy Wright fonds.
- g) Correspondence with R.H. Macdonald. – 1975-1978.

II. Diaries. – 1938-1958. – 6 cm. – 2 folders.

- a) Diaries of Robert Hurley (Typewritten). – 1938-1952.
- b) Diaries of Robert Hurley (Handwritten). – 1950-1958. – 19 books. – 2 folders.

Box 2

III. Memoirs. – 1894-[?]. – 2 folders.

- a) Memoirs by Robert Hurley (Handwritten). – nd., 1894-1924; nd. – 4 books.
- b) Memoirs by Robert Hurley (Typewritten). – nd.

IV. Original Sketches and Watercolours. – nd. – 3 cm. – 8 folders. (2 oversize)

Contents of this series are divided up by subject. The first file (a) is actually an oversize box containing a variety of works too large to be included in the regular boxes. See IX. Addendum for more sketches.

- a) Sketches and Watercolours by Robert Hurley. – 1907-1967. – 2 folders (oversize)

Folder 1 has 10 images of experimental and abstract watercolours sketches mounted on cardstock. Dated and described by Hurley.

Folder 2 has 12 images of experimental and abstract works as well as some pencil sketches of landscapes mounted on cardboard and cardstock. Some notable inclusions are

“Sketch for a nocturne later presented to Princess Elizabeth” and “Sketch of lab store” with photo of plant lab staff.

- b) Pen and pencil studies: Plants and Animals. – Robert Hurley. – 50 pages. – nd.

Includes pen, pencil, and watercolour sketches of animals, insects, and flora. Some abstract sketches and portraits included. “University Barns. Saskatoon” pulled from folder and mounted for exhibition and can be found in OS box.

- c) Pen and Pencil Studies: Various Subjects, Landscapes. – Robert Hurley. – 96 pages. – nd.

“Early morning sketch. 5am at Shepley’s Island...” and “Sketch of boats. Near Saskatoon water works on Ave H. West” pulled from folder and mounted for exhibition and can be found in OS box.

- d) Studies for Design, Composition. – Robert Hurley. – 65 pages. – nd.

- e) Live Model Sketches. – Robert Hurley. – 27 pages. – nd.

“Sketch of old Captain Parker” as well as other untitled nude figure sketches pulled from folder and mounted for exhibition and can be found in OS box.

- f) Water Colour Sketches. – Robert Hurley. – 20 pages. – nd.

- g) Ideas and Sketches for an Illustrated Bible and Archeological Dictionary. – Robert Hurley. – 15 pages. – nd.

- h) Studies, Ideas and Sketches of plants, toys, designs, etc. – Robert Hurley. – 19 pages. – nd.

V. Slides. – 10 cm. – 3 folders. See Box 4

- a) Kodachrome Colour Slides. – 10 cm. - 548 slides
Held in oversize binder.

VI. Photographs. – 1945-1973. – 6 cm. – 2 folders.

See IX. Addendum for more photographs.

- a) Photos of Robert Hurley and others. – 1944-1973. – 35 photographs.
Primarily photos of Hurley and his family.

Box 3

- b) Mounted photos and pictures of R. Hurley and his Paintings. – nd.

Includes photos of Hurley, newspaper clippings, and examples of his art in published materials.

VII. Addresses, etc. – nd. – 3 cm. – 2 folders.

- a) Addresses, Newspaper clippings and Articles about Hurley. – nd.

VIII. Miscellaneous. – 1934-1967. – 1 cm. – 2 folders.

- a) Publications. – 1958-1966.
 - i. Rotunda. – 1966-67.
 - ii. “How I Became a Painter” by Reverend R.P.D. Dicks. – nd.
 - iii. Canadian Agriculture Research Laboratory. – Pamphlet. – 1958. – 2 copies
 - iv. A Glance at 60 Years of Progress, Potash Capital Saskatoon, Your Convention City. – Program. – 1966.

- b) Awards – Saskatoon Industrial Exhibition – 1934-1937 – 7 awards.

IX. Addendum. – 1946-1977. – 9 folders.

*Appears to have been donated the Kenderdine and in turn donated to the University Library by W.A. Follow, according to notes made in the bibliographic records for these items.

- a) Correspondence, Hurley to Snelgrove. – 1946-1977.
- b) Photographs of R.N. Hurley. – 3 photographs. – nd.
- c) Memoirs: The Hurley Story. – nd.
- d) Correspondence, R. Hurley to W. Follow [B. Fowlow?]. – 1967-1974.
- e) 2 Sketches. – Robert Hurley. – nd.
- f) Colour plates from Sky Painter. – nd.
- g) 9 photographs. – nd.
- h) Sun Life Review. – July 1966.
Hurley painting featured on the cover.
- i) From Saskatchewan elevators to B.C. coastlines. – Newspaper clipping. – nd.

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Prairie scene - water colour on panel. - nd.

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Artworks by Hurley – 3 paintings – n.d., 1949.

3 Cards – n.d.

Greeting cards with artwork by Hurley as well as Ernst Linder.

Box 4

V. Slides. – 10 cm. – 3 folders.

- a) Kodachrome Colour Slides. – 10 cm. - 548 slides
Held in oversize binder.