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**MS 829
VAN RYDER, JACK, 1899-1967
PAPERS, 1927-1969****DESCRIPTION**

Jack Van Ryder lived in Arizona off and on from the time of his birth in Continental at the turn of the century until his death in 1967. He was a self-taught western artist, a rodeo cowboy, rancher, and political activist. This collection reflects all these many parts of his life. There is extensive correspondence from his fellow cowboy artists, many of the letters illustrated by the sender. He also kept in touch with his fellow members of the rodeo association according to letters contained herein. His anti-New Deal political viewpoint is reflected in the numerous letters to newspaper editors and columns he himself wrote for the *Arizona Nightingale*, *Tucson Times* and the *Brewery Gulch Gazette*.

3 boxes, 1.5 linear feet

DEACCESSIONS

Deaccessioned from this collection were photographs transferred to the portrait files of the photograph collection.

ACQUISITION

This collection was donated by Mr. Van Ryder to the Society in the early 1960's.

ACCESS

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

COPYRIGHT

Request for permission to publish material from this collection should be addressed to the Arizona Historical Society, Archives Department.

PROCESSING

This collection was partially processed in the 1960's. At the request of the donor, access to some of the correspondence files was restricted until 1992. In 1997, the total collection was consolidated and finally processed by Sue Conklin, Volunteer under the supervision of Riva Dean.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jackson Van Ryder (later known as Jack) was born July 7, 1899 in Continental, Arizona, and spent his early youth on his father's ranch near there. At age eleven he left home and worked in logging camps in the Northwest and salmon fisheries along the Tillamook and

Trash rivers in Washington. From 1914 -1917, Van Ryder rode for the Antler Ranch outfit in Montana. When World War I broke out, Van Ryder enlisted in the U.S.Army where he was assigned to the Cavalry. Van Ryder enlisted under the name John Remer and gave his birthplace as Canada, an action that was to cause him endless difficulties when he tried to reenlist in the armed forces during World War II. When World War I hostilities ceased, he was placed in the Regular Army Reserve from which he was honorably discharged when the Reserve was dissolved in July 1920. Van Ryder again enlisted in the army under the name John Remer in December 1922 but deserted in early 1923.

During the 1920's Van Ryder roamed the cattle country from Canada to Mexico. During this period, he met western artist Charles Russell who encouraged Van Ryder in his interest in art. In 1926 Van Ryder was in California (Hollywood) where he was hired to help make a huge relief map of California, a map which hung for many years in the old Ferry Building in San Francisco. This experience, plus his contacts with Russell and other painters, convinced Van Ryder to try to become an artist. He returned to Arizona and began painting seriously without any instruction. Bill Nicholson's ranch near Flagstaff was the setting for many of his early drawings and paintings. His first one-man show was held in New York at the Montross Gallery in 1928. He also continued his life as a cowboy and rider and in 1928 was recognized by the North American Rodeo Circuit as the North American Bareback Rodeo Champion.

In 1931 Van Ryder purchased a ranch at Cape Verde in partnership with Charles Steward Mott, a vice president of General Motors and one of the founders of the giant automobile corporation. For the next few years, Van Ryder usually painted in Arizona in the spring, spent summers in the East, and the fall and winter working on his ranch in Arizona. Exhibits of his work were held in Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Toledo, Ohio. He won the Guild Hall Prize in Easthampton, Long Island, in 1936. He became a member of the Illustrators Club and the National Arts Club of New York. Van Ryder completed some murals for the Museum of Natural History in New York City depicting the desert Southwest and provided the illustrations for Jack Weadock's book, *Dust of the Desert*, a collection of Southwestern stories. His works were twice chosen to be covers for *The Literary Digest* (2/10/29 and 2/28/31.)

During the period just prior to World War II Van Ryder lived in Tucson working as a lab technician and first aid man. He also became a pilot and joined the Civil Air Patrol. When war broke out he got a job as an airline mechanic at the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation plant in Tucson. He was prevented from joining the armed forces due to his earlier desertion from the army. Eventually, he did go back East to work at the Electric Boat Company in Groton, Conn., where they made submarines. He also joined the Civil Air Patrol there searching for submarines along the East Coast.

After World War II ended, Van Ryder again headed back for Arizona where he worked at the Valley Hospital in Willcox. He lived in Tombstone and wrote "Ryding on the Range", a popular column in the Brewery Gulch Gazette. In 1945 Van Ryder bought the Tucson Times, a weekly newspaper. He used that newspaper to formally oppose political candidates identified with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal.

Van Ryder was married numerous times including a 1932 marriage to Marjorie Swain, a niece of Walter Damrosch, the musical conductor. She was a sculptor and they had several shows together. Van Ryder spent the last years of his life alone and living near Arivaca where he died on March 23, 1967, of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of three boxes of manuscript material and twenty-two signed prints arranged in six series: (1) general correspondence, 1927-1954; (2) business correspondence, 1928-1960; (3) manuscripts, 1936-1953; (4) printed matter, 1934-1969; (5) legal documents, 1930-1960 and (6) art prints.

Series one, general correspondence, 1922-1954, reflects Van Ryder's life as cowboy and artist. Correspondence from early rodeo personalities such as Guy Wedick of the Calgary Stampede, 1927-1935, Foghorn Clancy of the Rodeo Fans of America Association, 1946, and Shorty Wallis, 1934, illustrate the rodeo lifestyle. Included are several letters from cowboy artist Will James and 11 letters from well-known western artist, Olaf Wieghorst. Often a cowboy would write to Van Ryder to suggest 'real' details for western paintings and drawings. Many of the correspondence items contain original drawings as part of the letters. Also included in this series is extensive correspondence with William Hodgeman covering the period 1946-1951 which gives a vivid picture of post-war Tucson.

Series two, business correspondence, 1928-1965, include letters to and from galleries and museums, literary editors, patrons and business associates. The correspondence of Richard Van Valkenburgh of the Arizona Nightingale is of particular interest. Van Ryder was an associate editor of the Nightingale in the 1940's and discussed his intentions to purchase the Tucson Times with Van Valkenburgh. Van Ryder's business correspondence with Jack Gardner and Timothy Nardelli also concerns Van Ryder's acquisition of the Tucson Times in 1946. He used the newspaper to run political advertisements of Republican Party candidates in the state. Correspondence (in a separate file) with Senator Carl Hayden, 1931-1950, relates largely to Van Ryder's military record and use of the alias 'John Remer.' Another file includes correspondence with Arizona's Governor George P. Hunt concerning Van Ryder's appointment to the state's commission for the Chicago World's Fair. Correspondence from Van Ryder's patrons includes a file of letters from Dudley S. Ingraham, President of E. Ingraham Company, Connecticut makers of clocks and watches, who was a friend and benefactor of Van Ryder's in the 1930's and another batch from Jane Ivancovich of Tucson who befriended and aided Van Ryder during the postwar period until his death. Finally, there is a file with letters from C. S. Mott, General Motors Vice President, who helped Van Ryder purchase the Cape Verde ranch in the early 1930's.

Series three, manuscripts, 1936-1954, consists of typescripts and carbons of editorials and articles for the Arizona Nightingale, Tucson Times and Brewery Gulch Gazette. Letters to the editors of the Arizona Daily Star and Arizona Republic are included. In general, these articles concern Van Ryder's opposition to the policies of President Franklin Roosevelt as in the lack of law enforcement in the country; the activities of the House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities in Hollywood; life on the rodeo circuit; social life in the East; and cattle ranching in the Southwest. This series also contains several drafts of short stories and plays.

Series four, printed matter, 1934-1969, consists of newspaper articles by Van Ryder from the Brewery Gulch Gazette and other unidentified newspapers. The series also includes brochures from exhibits by Van Ryder and his wife, Marjorie, and Charles Russell. An art catalogue and program from a horse show in Easthampton, New York, are included. Jacqueline Bouvier (Kennedy) was also entered in a number of events at this same show and is listed in the program. The series further consists of an article about the western artist,

Olaf Wieghorst, and a commercial map advertising Windsor Square, a housing development in Phoenix in the 1930's.

Series five, legal documents, 1930-1960, consists of appraisals and insurance policies for Van Ryder's paintings and drawings; cattle brand certificates; divorce judgements and decrees; property settlements; business agreements for artistic and literary works; employee records from the War Department during World War II and an affidavit documenting the birth and residence of Van Ryder in Arizona.'

Series six, art prints, consists of 22 signed Van Ryder prints, a self-portrait drawing and a portrait of an unidentified person.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

SERIES ONE GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1927-1954

BOX 1

Folder 1	Incoming Correspondence	A-D, 1928-1958
Folder 2	“ “	E-I, 1926-1953
Folder 3	“ “	J-R, 1928-1953
Folder 4	“ “	S-V, 1927-1952
Folder 5	“ “	W-Z, 1928-1954

BOX 2

Folder 6	Outgoing Correspondence	B-R, 1931-1953
Folder 7	“	S-W, 1946-1953

SERIES TWO BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE, 1928-1965

Folder 8	Incoming Correspondence	A-G, 1928-1951
Folder 9	“ “	H-M, 1929-1950
Folder 10	“ “	N-Y, 1929-1950
Folder 11	Outgoing Correspondence	A-V, 1930-1960
Folder 12	Correspondence - Senator Carl Hayden,	1931-1950
Folder 13	Correspondence - Governor George W.P.Hunt,	1930-1934
Folder 14	Correspondence - Dudley S. Ingraham,	1931-1939

BOX 3

Folder 15	Correspondence - Jane Ivancovitch,	1945-1965
Folder 16	Correspondence - Charles Stewart Mott,	1931-1932

SERIES THREE MANUSCRIPTS, 1936-1954

Folder 17	Copies of letters to the editors of various newspapers
Folder 18	<u>Brewery Gulch Gazette</u> untitled articles
Folder 19	<u>Brewery Gulch Gazette</u> untitled articles; notes on the Museum of Natural History murals; two page autobiography

SERIES FOUR	PRINTED MATTER, 1934-1969
Folder 20	Newspaper clippings, exhibition brochures and commercial map are included.
SERIES FIVE	LEGAL DOCUMENTS, 1930-1960
Folder 21	Insurance policies, 1930 Brand registrations, 1931 Divorce decrees, 1931-1947 Affadavit, 1960, attesting to Van Ryder's birthplace and identity
SERIES SIX	ART PRINTS
Folder 22	Signed prints and drawings