

Woods Hole Historical Museum Archives  
P.O. Box 185  
Woods Hole, MA 02543

REGISTER  
Charles R. Knight  
1874 – 2012  
Acc. No. 2003-17

1 box

## **HISTORY – BIOGRAPHY**

Charles Robert Knight was born in Brooklyn, NY October 21, 1874 and died April 15, 1953 in Manhattan (New York, NY). He was legally blind because of astigmatism and a further injury to his right eye. He was able to be an artist with the wearing of special glasses. He went to the Metropolitan Art School to learn to be a commercial artist and pursue his fascination with animals, anatomy and prehistoric creatures.

His first work was for the American Museum of Natural History in New York where later his enormous paintings filled the backgrounds of display cases and hallways to illustrate the prehistoric world. Eventually other natural history museums hired him as well. Zoos also employed his artistic talents to portray their living animals.

He worked at doing illustrations for National Geographic as well as other publications and wrote books as well with his own illustration.

Charles Robert Knight's summer residence was in the Barnabas Hatch house in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The current address is 3 Quissett Avenue. The house is probably the second oldest house in Woods Hole, c. 1700 – a two-story Colonial with a bee-hive oven in the kitchen wing. Knight was responsible for moving the house further up the hill and away from the intersection of School and Millfield Streets.

It was here that he spent his later years with his grandchildren. Rhoda Knight Kalt was one of these grandchildren and has obviously devoted her life to his work and reputation.

## **SCOPE**

This collection is made up largely of material donated by Knight's granddaughter, Rhoda Knight Kalt up to the 1980s. She seems to have donated similar material multiple times.

Material from the internet has been added in order to have some biographical information to explain Knight's life and work.

## CHARLES R. KNIGHT COLLECTION

1 -1. Typewritten manuscript. "Status Report, Charles R. Knight, Current projects involving his life and works." September 15, 1980, Rhoda Knight Kalt, 80 East End Avenue, New York City, 10028, (212) 628-8039. Contains some biographical material and books proposed for publication.

*One book, listed as Project #1 in this 1980 manuscript, titled THE PREHISTORIC VISION OF CHARLES R. KNIGHT, to be published by E.P. Dutton, was actually published in 2012 by Harry N. Abrams as CHARLES R. KNIGHT: THE ARTIST WHO SAW THROUGH TIME by Richard Milner with a preface by Rhoda Knight Kalt.*

1-2. Print-out of information from Amazon on book *CHARLES R. KNIGHT: THE ARTIST WHO SAW THROUGH TIME* by Richard Milner with a preface by Rhoda Knight Kalt.

1-3. Wikipedia entry. Charles R. Knight (biography, legacy, works)

1-4. Material donated by Rhoda Knight Kalt

- a. Handwritten note. Note to Elsa Sichel (former archivist of the Woods Hole Historical Collection), September 27 (year unknown).
- b. Handwritten note to Cynthia, with the donation of another copy of "Topy and Me" for the Woods Hole Public Library
- c. Photograph. B/W photo, 8 x 10 inches, of the Charles R. Knight house, Woods Hole. Annotated on reverse: "House – Quissett Avenue owned by the C.R. Knights (Now owned by Mrs. Ralph Wheeler), Jan 1981)
- d. Photograph. B/W photo, 4 x 5 inches, of the Charles R. Knight house, Woods Hole. Duplicate of 1-4.c. Annotated on reverse "House the Knights lived in on Quissett Avenue – see Manuscript "Topy and Me". Now owned by Mrs. Ralph Wheeler, Jan '81."
- e. Photograph. Color photo (8 x 10) of painting of white church with steeple. Annotated on reverse: "Painting of "First Church of Christ". Painting by Charles R. Knight (see "Sandwiches at Sandwich") Chapter "Topy and Me" manuscript."
- f. Photograph. B/W photo (5 x 7 inches) of painting of Lightship at Woods Hole Lighthouse Service dock, Little Harbor. Annotated on reverse: "The Relief Lightship at Woods Hole, 1926. Painted by C.R. Knight." 2 copies.
- g. Photograph. Color photo (5 x 3 3/8 inches) of Lightship at Woods Hole Lighthouse Service dock, Little Harbor. Annotated on reverse: "The Relief Lightship at Woods Hole, 1926. Painted by C.R. Knight." 2 copies.
- h. Photograph. B/W photo (5 x 3 1/2 inches) of woman. Annotated on reverse: "Annie Hardcastle Knight (wife of Charles R. Knight). Known as "Nonnie" by her Grandchildren - . 2 copies.

1-5. Typewritten manuscript in binder. "Topy and Me" by Rhoda Knight Steel/Rhoda Knight Kalt.

- 1-6. Typewritten manuscript in binder (annotated 2003).
  - a. Timeline for Charles R. Knight
  - b. Biographical sketch of Charles R. Knight.
  - c. Nonnie and Topsy: An Affectionate Memoir by Rhoda Knight Kalt, Childhood memories of my grandfather, the artist Charles R. Knight
  
- 1-7. Typewritten manuscript in binder (annotated 2003). Autobiography of an Artist by Charles R. Knight.
  
- 1-8. Booklet. Charles R. Knight Sketchbook, Written and Selected by William Stout. 3 copies.