

During his travels, Farny collected numerous Indian artifacts and photographs, while producing several sketches of his own. Returning to his Cincinnati studio, Farny worked from his own illustrations and memory, relied on his collection of artifacts, and occasionally employed live models to create his unique style of Western art.



Henry F. Farny *Something Stirring* gouache, 1899.

Despite this method of production, Farny's Indian paintings are considered some of the most accurate of the genre. While his paintings of Native Americans were highly sought after during Farny's lifetime, his work disappeared into near obscurity in the years following his death. Collectors rediscovered Farny in the 1960s because of increasing interest in the "true West."



Henry F. Farny *Big Game in Sight*, 1902.



Henry F. Farny *The Old Buffalo Trail* gouache, 1900.



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GEORGE A. RENTSCHLER ROOM

The American Heritage Center's George A. Rentschler Room is home to significant western paintings, including thirteen by Henry Farny and one by Frederic Remington. These paintings appear as they did in the library of George Adam Rentschler, New York businessman and western enthusiast.

George A. Rentschler, 1892-1972





The George A. Rentschler Room is located on the main floor of the American Heritage Center.

George A. Rentschler

George Rentschler was born in Fairfield, Ohio, in 1892. The family had owned a foundry business since before the Civil War and the Princeton-educated George made a priority of expanding the family's interest to include railroad equipment, engine manufacturing, and machine tools.

In 1936 George married Rita Rend Mitchell and they had three sons. George Rentschler had a great passion for the landscape and legends of the West. He spent many hunting seasons in Wyoming's Powder River basin, thus perhaps explaining his choice of artwork for his personal library.

In 1957 the director of the American Heritage Center, Dr. Gene Gressley, came across a footnote by an art historian referencing George Rentschler's collection of western art. Impressed with the scope of the artwork, Dr. Gressley contacted the family and inquired about the paintings.

Upon the death of George Rentschler in 1972, his widow, Rita Cushman, donated this room and ten of the Farny paintings and the one Remington to the American Heritage Center in his memory, with an additional four artworks being given to her son, Frederick Rentschler during his lifetime. The family requested that the artwork at the AHC appear as it had in Rentschler's library at One Sutton Place in New York. Work began on the room in 1976, with

Henry F. Farny, *Pere Marquette*, oil on canvas, 1910.

architects taking careful measurements of the original room and noting details of the woodwork.

The George A. Rentschler Room

The George A. Rentschler Room opened in 1980 in the American Heritage Center on the fifth floor of the William Robertson Coe Library at the University of Wyoming, complete with a raised ceiling identical to that in the original library. Upon completion of the Centennial complex in 1993, the Rentschler Room moved to its present location. The rug and curtains are originals.

In the years since the donation of these paintings, the AHC has focused much more closely on its archives and rare books expertise, and the University of Wyoming Art Museum has rightly become the principal collector, curator, and exhibitor of fine arts. In fact, the Center has transferred most of the artworks it had previously acquired to the Art Museum. The Rentschler paintings, along with the collection of paintings by Alfred Jacob Miller that hang in the AHC's Loggia and on the 3rd floor, remain at the Center because of specific agreements with their donors. Indeed, in 2011 Pamela Rentschler, widow of Fred, donated the remaining four Farny paintings to the Center to be hung in the Rentschler room.



Henry F. Farny *On The Home Trail*, oil on canvas, 1909.

Together, the Rentschler and Miller collections are now identified by the Art Museum and the AHC as "The University of Wyoming Collection of Western Art" because, to quote from an Art Museum informational brochure, "The premier collection of western art at UW is on permanent display in the AHC Loggia and Rentschler Room." The two collections are not only a draw to visitors to the Centennial Complex (the building that houses both the AHC and the Art Museum), they are also important educational tools, being introduced regularly by Center faculty to UW students in art history and Western history.

On occasion, one or more of the Rentschler paintings will be missing from the Rentschler Room for a short while. This is either because the work was requested by another museum for a special exhibit or because the work is undergoing conservation treatment. Museums from across the US and from as far as Japan and Italy have borrowed Rentschler paintings because of their importance in the genre of Western art.

Frederic Remington

Frederic Remington was born in Canton, New York, in October, 1861, and became one of America's best



Frederic Remington *Arizona Territory 1888*, oil on canvas.

known and financially successful artists. Remington's frequent trips to the Southwest prior to 1900 served as a reservoir of subject matter throughout his career. *Arizona Territory 1888* is a monochrome oil on canvas. It was one of twelve illustrations that accompanied his article "A Scout with the Buffalo Soldiers" published in *Century Magazine* in 1889. The soldiers in the painting represented the group Remington joined as they traveled hundreds of miles from Fort Grand to Fort Thomas to the San Carlos Indian Agency and back. Captain Powhatan H. Clarke is at the head of the troop, followed by Remington, who wears a standard army summer pith helmet.

Henry Farny

Henry Farny was born in France in 1847 and as a child moved with his family to Cincinnati, Ohio. After studying art in Europe during the 1860s and working as an illustrator for children's books in the United States, Farny took several trips to the American West in the 1880s.