



James A. Kirkpatrick (1898-1984)

James “Kirk” Kirkpatrick was born in 1898 on a farm near Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. In 1903, his family moved to a 160-acre ranch near what is now the town of Beach, North Dakota near the Montana border.

Kirkpatrick attended school in Beach and later studied painting at the School of Applied Art in Battle Creek, Michigan and at a school in Chicago.

When World War I broke out, he enlisted in the Army. When his service was up, he moved to Jamestown and established the Kirkpatrick Sign Company, through which he made his living making commercial art.

Although a commercial artist by trade, Kirkpatrick produced oil paintings on the side. He was exceptionally prolific, creating more than 3,000 original paintings over the course of his life. His work was often Western-themed and featured scenes of cowboys, ranchers, and American Indians. Obsessed with realistic detail, he filled his Jamestown studio with antique saddles, hats, chaps, tools and other items from the “cowboy era” that he would refer to when painting.

Almost all of his paintings have been sold or donated to individuals or organizations all over the country. His work has been exhibited throughout the United States and is part of the permanent art collection of the Smithsonian Institute and the U.S. Senate. He was inducted into the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City and in 1965, he was the subject of a feature article in *Parade* magazine.

In 1963, he and his wife Ila Beatrice established the Kirkpatrick Gallery of Art, where townspeople and tourists could watch him work. In 1983, one year before his death, they donated the gallery to the Jamestown Fine Arts Association. Today, it sits in the town’s Frontier Village and is used by the association as a gallery and sales space for local artists.