

# Copy of Thomas Hart Benton papers

## Description

Copy of page from the Thomas Hart Benton papers on the proposed mural for the Harry S. Truman Library.

## Date(s)

November 5, 1958

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buffalo robes. Behind these Bent's fort on the upper Arkansas to right of fort, a haystack, stock, carts, and winding back over plain, a mule train. Direction of this train toward Taos or Santa Fe indicated by Spanish Peaks on horizon.

Historical justification of subject matter in area.

(A) Although hunters preceded traders it was the latter who made the permanent trailways, just by trading with Indians and then with Mexicans. Earliest traders used pack horses and then mules which proved more durable. These preceded the ~~others~~ men of the later wagon period. A place for them must be had in mural.

(B) A great part of fur trade depended on Indian hunters. These bartered their catch knives, beads, bright cloths, etc. Bartering of the sort pictured often went on near established trading posts (Wah-To-Yah) (Garrard). Horses were often traded for and were "shown off" by their Indian owners. Buffalo robes were scraped thin before selling which explains operations in front of Weespee.

(C) Trading posts were most important factors in opening of W. st. Bent's fort represents these. Spanish Peaks, Southern Colorado, were important land marks for early southwestern trade.

(5) Area to right of and on a plane behind Mountain Man and Voyageur (This means to right of door.)

Blacksmith and wheelwright shop at or near Independence. Open shed. Bellows with boy pulling inflation cord in foreground. Negro blacksmith at fire hearth. Behind, to right, left wheelwright moving wagon wheel toward wagons in background. Behind, to right, blacksmith at anvil with horse shoe. Back of him man brings unruly mule for shoeing. Back of man with mule Prairie Schooner being loaded. To left pair of yoked oxen being driven toward wagon possibly for sale. Back of all this a line of covered wagons and cattle moving out over plains. Direction of movement indicated by Chimney Rock appearing on horizon.

Historical justification for area.

Independence was primarily an outfitting town. Blacksmiths, wagon makers, yoke fashioners were people of prime importance. "There was an incessant hammering and banging from a dozen blacksmiths sheds where the heavy wagons were being repaired and horses and oxen shod" Parkman-"Oregon Trail." "Independence was not only the principal outpost for the Santa Fe Trail, but also for the fur companies". Inman-"Old Santa

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8x10 inches (21x26 cm)      Black & White

**Keywords** Artists      Mural painting and decoration

**HST Keywords** Benton, Thomas Hart - Mural - Ref. to; Document

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