

# Copy from Thomas Hart Benton papers

(3) Area to right of door.

Immediately opposite armed Indian, also occupying just picture plane, is a trapper, mountain man, a Jim Baker, Bridger, Fitzpatrick, in the half Indian costume of his time. He rams a charge down his rifle-long rifle. He carries a pack of furs on his back. He could possibly see armed Indian opposite. Above him but in advance of pioneer group and opposite Indian with pipe is a figure with a broad axe. A felled tree is at his feet. This could be for repair work on the wagons or just for fire wood. His attention is on Indian offering pipe. He wears the stocking cap of the "Voyageur" and represents those Jean Baptistes of all work who accompanied so many western expeditions, who were, as a matter of fact, with the first on the western scene.

Historical justification for selection of subject matter involved in these three areas.

(A) Most important factor in opening of West was the permanent settler. He it was who tamed the country, held it and built its American future—made it culturally and politically part of the United States, that is. (This pioneer group is central position over door)

(B) But before the settler, exploring the land, opening the mountain passes and the trail ways to white penetration was the hunter and trapper—the breeds of mountain and plainsman, French and Anglo—and Irish-American. They made possible the operations of the great fur companies, the first business enterprises of the far West. They guided the official exploring parties. They learned to know the various Indian groups and how to live or fight with these. They comprised the vanguard for the opening of the West.

As before indicated the French "Voyageur" was always on the rivers but also everywhere—with the trappers in the mountains or the trails with the Mexican and Indian traders. And with the emigrant trains. A Jean Baptiste Troubode was with the ill fated Donner party. (account of Eliz P. Donner-Houghton).

(C) Before the hunter and settler however was the original occupant of the land with whom all westward trekking groups had to deal.

(4) Area back of and to left of Indians (far left portion under light slots)

Typical free trader displaying trinkets and colored cloths which he bargains for buffalo robes with far western Indians—Cheyennes, Arapahoes, or Comanches. Behind this another trader loading pack mules. On same plane to left a typical plains Indian show showing off horse. Behind him a group of wigwag (teepees), with squaws in front scraping

## Description

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

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