

C Benton, Thomas Hart (1889-1975), Collection, 1962-2013  
4113 .2 cubic feet, 2 audio tapes, 1 compact disc

This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri](http://The State Historical Society of Missouri). If you would like more information, please contact us at [shsresearch@umsystem.edu](mailto:shsresearch@umsystem.edu).

#### INTRODUCTION

The Thomas Hart Benton Collection contains an interview of the artist and related materials. The interview took place at Benton's home in Kansas City, Missouri, on May 6, 1962, and was largely conducted by Homer Brown of Pittsburg State University (formerly Kansas State College of Pittsburg). Brown published a very small portion of the interview as an article in *The Midwest Quarterly*.

#### DONOR INFORMATION

The collection was donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Brent Schondelmeyer on 10 December 2011 (Accession No. 6282). An addition was made on 28 June 2012 by Charles Cagle, who was also one of the original interviewers.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thomas Hart Benton was born in Neosho, Missouri, on April 15, 1889. He was a major Missouri artist who helped to create an art movement called Regionalism that celebrated the spirit of the inhabitants of the American Midwest. He painted ordinary people in the context of their day to day lives. Benton is most famous for his public murals and defending realism in a time when contemporary artists were gravitating towards expressionist movements. He died on January 19, 1975.

#### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Thomas Hart Benton Collection has been arranged into the following two series: the **Interview Transcripts** series and the **Audio Recordings** series.

The **Interview Transcripts** series contains the printed materials and transcripts related to the May 6, 1962, interview of Thomas Hart Benton by Homer Brown. Others present for the interview include Jessie Benton, Rita Benton, Elizabeth Brown, Charles Cagle, and Walter Shear. The interview documents Benton's reflections on a diverse range of concepts including art theory, Abstract Expressionism, modern art, and Regionalism. The interview also focuses on Benton's insightful relationships with artists such as John Steuart Curry, Grant Wood, and Jackson Pollock. The series includes two transcripts, one rough transcript initially made after the interview in 1962 and an annotated transcript created later by the State Historical Society of Missouri. Also included in this series is a photograph taken by Charles Cagle of the artist with President Harry S. Truman taken in 1962, a personal reflection on the 1962 interview by participant Charles Cagle written in 2012, and a collection of newspaper clippings and correspondence regarding Benton's 1962 trip home to Neosho, Missouri.

The **Audio Recordings** series consists of the two original reel-to-reel recordings of the interview from 1962 and a digitized version of the recordings on CD.

## FOLDER LIST

**Interview Transcripts Series**

- f. 1-4            1962 Thomas Hart Benton interview, Transcript, c. 1962  
 f. 5              1962 Thomas Hart Benton interview, Transcript of questions, 1962  
 f. 6              1962 Thomas Hart Benton interview, Transcript—annotated, 2013  
 f. 7              *Midwest Quarterly Journal* article with abbreviated interview, 1963  
 f. 8              Charles Cagle ephemera, 1962-2012

**Audio Recordings Series**

- a.t. 1-2           Thomas Hart Benton interview, 1962  
 CD 1              Thomas Hart Benton interview, 1962

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