

SPENCER PENROSE
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

June 17, 1937

Miss Laura Gilpin,
c/o LaFonda Hotel,
Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Dear Miss Gilpin:

Your letter of June 13th was received just as Mr. Penrose and I were leaving for Denver, so this will be a hasty answer to enclose the proofs of the pictures of Mr. Davey's murals which you left with Mr. Penrose.

I do not know whether we gave you Mr. Davey's descriptions of the murals, but I am enclosing a copy herewith and will ask Mr. Ralph C. Taylor, P.O. Box 1448, Pueblo, who is doing the publicity for our various interests, to send you the information about Will Rogers and the connection with the Tower, etc., etc.

However, on second thought, Mr. Taylor's information had better be sent to you in Colorado Springs for the reason I do not believe you will receive it as you say you will be home on June 21st. For some reason your letter of June 13th was just received by me this morning, probably due to the fact that you did not have my name or address correct.

When you return if there is any further information I can give you, kindly let me know.

Sincerely yours,

M. W. Boyart

MWB/G

Encls.

COPY

I would suggest to be included in your book an article or foreword by some prominent outsider about the frescoes. This is usually done on such occasions and is often helpful from an aesthetic standpoint. I might be able to get John Sloan to write it if you are agreeable to the idea.

I would also suggest that the reproductions be done in black and white, with only one reproduction in color, in order to give some idea of the general color appearance of the room, and also it might be interesting to reproduce a few of the details of the ceiling panels in addition to the complete reproduction of each wall.

COPY

Grand Rapids, Michigan,
May 12, 1937.

Dear Spec:

I trust the following explanation of the frescoes is what you desire.

The frescoes on the walls of the Will Rogers Memorial Shrine represent the phases of life in the Cheyenne Mountain area from the early Indian days, when that country was an Indian playground, and through the various stages of the white man's invasion, up to modern Broadmoor, where the Cheyenne Mountain area becomes the white man's playground.

In the entrance hall the early Indian life is indicated on the wall to the right going up the stairs, with buffalo and deer hunting as the motive.

On the stairs, to the left and lower landing, is a suggestion of the early invasion into Colorado by the Spaniards. The lower wall surrounding the circular window depicts Padre Sylvestre Escalante taking orders from the church in Santa Fe to proceed into Colorado. On the staircase wall is his journey into Colorado, attended by his group of followers. On the wall over the stairs is John Lane, who accompanied Escalante and, according to historical data, carved his name on a cottonwood tree in a cottonwood grove in 1776. This establishes the date of the first steps toward the occupation of Colorado by the white man.

In the large room to the left and adjoining the hall is painted the remaining frescoes and the scheme of decoration mentioned in the first paragraph, namely -- Upon entering the room, the first half of the wall to your left shows Captain Zebulon Pike on Cheyenne Mountain in 1806, followed by one of his men. Pike is shown leading a horse and hunting the mountains in search of game for his men, who, according to history, were in a desperate condition due to lack of food and insufficient clothing. In this episode the small figures standing over the fire indicate the temporary shelters Pike had constructed for them while engaged in exploring the mountains and hunting the deer to sustain the life of his men. At the top of this panel is shown the summit of Pikes Peak, which although discovered by Pike, was never actually attained by him. The second half of this wall describes the early Indian and white man's warfare at the time when the Indians, enraged at the invasion of their land by the white man, set fire to incoming caravans and fought to destroy the invaders. The next wall (which faces you upon entering)

represents the early gold discoveries in Colorado, with men digging and panning the gold reported to be in the Pikes Peak region. The narrow panel on the right of the same wall suggests the rush of men into the gold areas. On the left narrow panel is suggested the gold being carried out. The two triangular panels at the top of this wall are suggestions of historical facts connected with the early gold discoveries. The one on the left shows James Pursley, who, when a captive of the Indians, discovered gold. He is indicated with his hand tied, accompanied by a group of Indians. The right triangular panel records the incident of the massacre in Dead Mens Gulch, where eight prospectors were caught by the Indians and all but one were killed. The next wall shows General Palmer, President of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, whose energies in the building of Colorado Springs opened up the Colorado areas and assisted in developing a prosperous community in Colorado Springs. This episode occurred in the year of 1870. Above the portrait of General Palmer the decoration suggests the tunnels and railroad building in which General Palmer was engaged. The balance of this wall shows the next step in Colorado history - the Cripple Creek days. At the base of this panel is a gold extractor, in a measure indicating the theme of Cripple Creek history. Above this is portrayed a group of men prominent in those early days of mining in Cripple Creek: Spencer Penrose, Chas. Tutt, Jackling, Carlton, MacNeill - all in front of the offices of Tutt & Penrose. In the foreground is a sheriff arresting a drunkard, and above this group a saloon, with gambling and women, a suggestion of the social life of those colorful days.

The final wall shows modern Broadmoor, where the playground motive is again restored after the rapidly changing scene of the areas previously mentioned. Here the space is occupied with the design of the various activities and enterprises of Spencer Penrose, including the hotel and its activities, road construction, water systems, the menagerie and sports - polo, golf, tennis, swimming and automobile racing.

On the ceiling between the beams the subject matter pertains to the walls below them. For example, over the Zebulon Pike wall there is suggested in the three panels above the meeting between Captain Pike and Pursley, who first showed Pike some of the gold nuggets of his discovery. In the next is Pike's arrest by the Spaniards in the Cheyenne Mountain country, and lastly is the panel showing the funeral of Pike after the Battle of Toronto in the year of 1812. Over the Indian warfare wall appear in the panels of the ceiling above an Indian war dance. In the panels over General Palmer is a map of one of Palmer's railroads. The next panel suggests the building during the days of early building in Colorado Springs. Over the Cripple Creek episode is a sketch of Spencer Penrose's cabin and white horse of those early days in Cripple

Creek. The last two panels suggest the uprising of the miners and the quelling of the disturbances by the militia. The frescoes as a whole in design are a generalization of the history of the time.

Kindest regards,

(Signed) Randall Davey.