THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies

MARIST

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From the Editors

We've looked forward to presenting an issue on the Hudson River Valley's landscape legacy for a long time, both to share information about some of its treasures and to honor those who have dedicated their lives to preserving them. The region holds a unique place in the history of our nation's landscape architecture: it's where the art was first imported from Europe and where it began to evolve—alongside the works of Hudson River School painters and Transcendentalist writers—into something distinctly American. An excerpt from Robert Toole's new book, *Landscape Gardens on the Hudson: A History*, provides a succinct overview of this evolution and its far-reaching impacts. Peter Manning illustrates how these concepts were translated by the Smiley family to create the carriage roads and other popular plein air amenities so popular today in the Shawangunks. Following the further development of the country's outdoor ethic, we republish Benton MacKaye's 1921 call for an Appalachian Trail. Returning to the domestic landscape, Robert Toole also offers an article on Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove, discussing the relationship between painting and landscape architecture at the artist's Catskill home. Thom Johnson's photo essay on Bannerman's Castle presents another legacy, tracing the history and precarious present circumstances of the iconic structures on Pollopel Island. Our History Forum introduces the South Road History Trail, which will serve to connect many important landscapes in Poughkeepsie, and continues with essays on Kykuit and Wilderstein before arriving at the Bard Arboretum, a curatorial landscape architecture project encompassing the grounds of several historic estates on the college campus.

We're especially pleased that this issue coincides with the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area's celebration of landscape architecture at eleven nationally significant sites across our region, the first in a series of events to celebrate and elaborate the Heritage Area's themes of Nature and Culture.

In J. Michael Smith's article in issue 26.2, the Bill of Sale on page 71 includes a transcription error; the name of 1st signer Minsam (carried over from an earlier translation) should be Ninham. On page 75, Figure 1 appears courtesy of the FDR Presidential Library and Museum. In the lower right corner of Figure 3 on page 83, in the South Precinct, the two "Gorelands Patented 1761" tract labels were reversed; the smaller tract is 221 acres, the larger 4,402. Lastly, in Figure 4 on page 89, Nimham the Grandfather's dates were transposed; his correct dates are 1696-1744.

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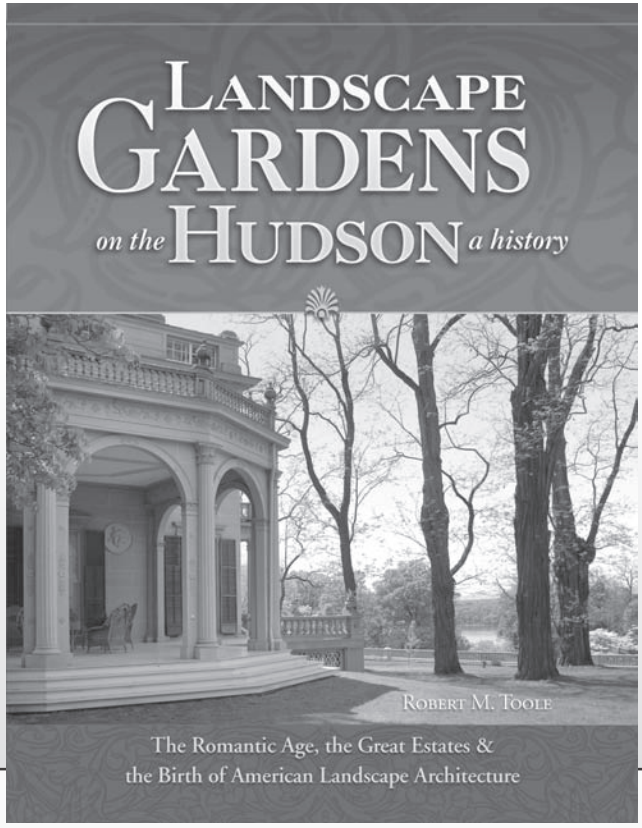
This issue of *The Hudson River Valley Review* is dedicated to

H. TODD BRINCKERHOFF

Founding Chairman of the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College, whose inspiration and vision not only made HRVI a reality but helped to develop it into one of the premier regional study centers in the United States.



Landscape Gardens on the Hudson — a history

The Romantic Age, the Great Estates &
the Birth of American Landscape Architecture

Robert M. Toole

- "A feat of garden archaeology, bringing to light the many-layered landscapes of these historic Hudson River places." ***Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, President, Foundation for Landscape Studies***
- "Upon putting down this volume, no reader will be in doubt as to why these gardens are a supreme legacy to our civilization and one of the foundations stones of the environmental movement. This book is a marvel." ***J. Winthrop Aldrich, Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation, NYSOPRHP***
- "Landscape architect Robert Toole, with his specialty in Hudson Valley historic landscape study and restoration, has the professional perspective and the onsite experience to guide us on this journey." ***Waddell Stillman, President, Historic Hudson Valley***

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For more information visit www.hudsonrivervalley.com

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To contact the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area:
Mark Castiglione, Acting Director
Capitol Building, Room 254
Albany, NY 12224
Phone: 518-473-3835

Call for Essays

The Hudson River Valley Review is anxious to consider essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its prehistory, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself. All articles in *The Hudson River Valley Review* undergo peer analysis.

Submission of Essays and Other Materials

HRVR prefers that essays and other written materials be submitted as two double-spaced typescripts, generally no more than thirty pages long with endnotes, along with a computer disk with a clear indication of the operating system, the name and version of the word-processing program, and the names of documents on the disk. Illustrations or photographs that are germane to the writing should accompany the hard copy. Otherwise, the submission of visual materials should be cleared with the editors beforehand. Illustrations and photographs are the responsibility of the authors. Scanned photos or digital art must be 300 pixels per inch (or greater) at 8 in. x 10 in. (between 7 and 20 mb). No responsibility is assumed for the loss of materials. An e-mail address should be included whenever possible.

HRVR will accept materials submitted as an e-mail attachment (*hrvi@marist.edu*) once they have been announced and cleared beforehand.

Since HRVR is interdisciplinary in its approach to the region and to regionalism, it will honor the forms of citation appropriate to a particular discipline, provided these are applied consistently and supply full information. Endnotes rather than footnotes are preferred. In matters of style and form, HRVR follows *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Contributors

Mary M. Flad has worked as planning consultant and advisor with historic sites and non-profit organizations throughout the Hudson Valley for three decades, and was a founder of the Maple Grove Restoration Project. She lives in the City of Poughkeepsie.

Thom Johnson is an artist, photographer, educator, and lifetime resident of the Hudson Valley. He is one of the founders of the Bannerman Castle Trust, one of its first tour guides, and coauthor of *Bannerman Castle*. In addition to his ongoing documentation of the castle, he is working on a second book that will present the story of Francis Bannerman VI, the man behind the castle ruins.

Benton MacKaye (March 6, 1879–Dec. 11, 1975) was a forester, planner, and conservationist. A graduate of Harvard University (B.A., 1900; M.A. School of Forestry, 1905), he worked for the U.S. Forest Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the U.S. Department of Labor. MacKaye was the author of *The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning* and *Expedition Nine: A Return to a Region* as well as the originator of the Appalachian Trail.

Peter Manning is the Regional Planner at the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development. He is a graduate of SUNY New Paltz (Geography) and Cornell University (Master of Landscape Architecture). He is a volunteer trail-maintainer and writes a column about place in a weekly newspaper.

Amy Parrella is the Arboretum Director and Horticulture Supervisor at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson. She has a certificate in professional ornamental horticulture from Longwood Gardens and a B.A. in community, regional, and environmental studies from Bard College. She co-founded the Landscape and Arboretum Program at Bard in 2007.

Robert M. Toole is a landscape architect practicing in Saratoga Springs since 1975. He has completed landscape studies for numerous historic sites and has written extensively on the topic. He is the author of *Landscape Gardens on the Hudson—a History: The Romantic Age*, *The Great Estates* and the *Birth of American Landscape Architecture* (Black Dome Press, 2010).

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

Vol. 27, No. 1, Autumn 2010

Regional History Forum:

Book Reviews

On the cover: Henry Gritten, English 1818-1873
Springside: Center Circle, 1852
Oil on canvas, 25½ x 37 in.
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York
Promised gift of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Evans, Jr. (Tania Goss, class of 1959)

THE PICTURESQUE

BEAUTIFUL DESIGN

Engravings illustrating the Picturesque and Beautiful Design Modes, *from Landscape Gardening* by A.J. Downing (1844). The Picturesque (at top) emphasized an appearance in harmony with mid-nineteenth-century conditions along the Hudson. A Gothic-style cottage, a rustic garden shelter (far right), and indigenous woodland surroundings dominate the scene. A man with a gun, accompanied by a dog, introduced a decidedly New World domesticity. The Beautiful design mode (at bottom) contrasted a woman and child standing before a classical (Federal-style) house flanked by urns and a fountain, creating a refined and formal appearance.

Excerpted from Landscape Gardens on the Hudson, *published by Black Dome Press.*

The Romantic Hudson

by Robert M. Toole

By 1825 the Hudson River Valley had awakened from the aftermath of the Revolutionary War with great vigor. New York City grew from a postwar population of about 25,000 to a metropolis of 125,000 people. Americans migrated from New England, and new immigrants arrived from Europe; commerce and farming flourished. At the end of the era, the Erie Canal opened the West to settlement, and New York State prospered. After 200 years of lackluster colonialism, New York City and its river valley to the north settled into the domestic life of a nascent republic.

Americans still recognized the excellence of European models, but they began to look to their own country for local inspirations. Writing led the way, with the imported works of Englishmen such as Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), quickly augmented by locals such as James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) and Washington Irving (1783-1859), who recounted revolutionary heroics and glorified the sublimity of the American wilderness.

Notably, Americans of romantic persuasion began to appreciate the greatness of their vast and varied land. In 1825, Thomas Cole (1801-1848) commenced the Hudson River School of landscape painters. He was "discovered" after exhibiting three modest oil paintings of identifiable Hudson Valley scenes. Championing the "genius of the place," an indigenous focus developed in all the arts, and a Romantic period blossomed. In the Hudson River Valley, the Romantic period was a golden age. This was a distinct regional phenomenon of place and people where, for a time, popular culture celebrated human emotions and feelings over purely intellectual and practical judgments. The romantics valued above all else the affections of the heart. While persons of romantic persuasion have lived in many periods, and romantic thought remains important today, its historic expression in America was noteworthy because it coincided with the earliest manifestation of cultural ambition in the United States. For the focus here, American romanticism provided a context that influenced landscape gardening on the Hudson.

American romanticism had its particular themes. The idea that "all men are created equal" was its political manifesto; for the arts, freedom of imagination and freedom of expression were the message. Individual freedoms were essential to romantic stimulation. Romanticism in the arts represented not the choice of

subject or objective fact, but individual sensibilities. By asserting that the emotions of each individual mattered, it was assumed that an individual had natural rights that made them so. Now, in America, a new nation was to be governed on these values. It took time for these lofty, revolutionary thoughts to filter down, but when they did, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the depth of idealism provided heady substance for would-be romantics and the arts.

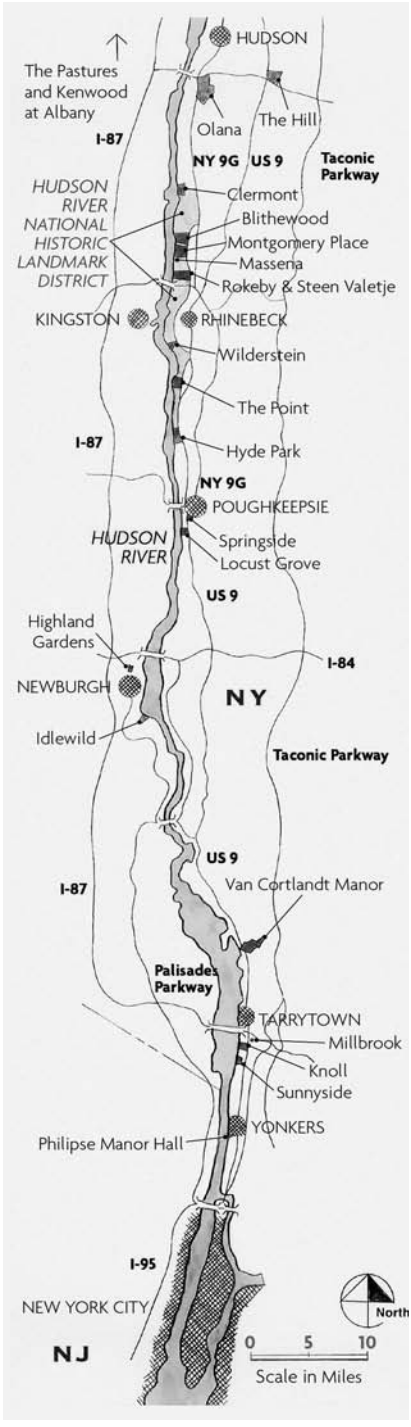
In turn, American religious life in the Romantic period supported romantic sensibilities. Modesty, restraint and chasteness, born of Puritanism and mercantile thrift, were common values. Simple and spontaneous reflections, pleasurable sensations of awe, delight, contentment, and even melancholy, were deeply felt. This pleasure was spiritual, transient, and illusive, yet sustained not only by the formal churches, but by a national philosophy epitomized by the Transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

The sense of America as "Nature's Nation" was a central theme for romanticism in the early republic. Europeans knew the natural world was important, but in America, wild nature was an essential component of the "genius of the place." America was seen as special, distinguished by its wilderness condition. "In the beginning," wrote the English philosopher John Locke, "all the world was America."

The Gardens

Added to the expressions of romantic thought in the Hudson River Valley in the region's golden age are its historic designed landscapes. During the pre-Civil War decades, the Hudson Valley saw extensive developments in landscape gardening as nowhere else in America. Today, many of the largely unaltered grounds of numerous riverfront properties are preserved as historic sites, open to the public. Some of the region's premier historic attractions are, in fact, landscape garden compositions, where architecture is but a part of the holistic historic artifact.

From the south, these museum properties include **Knoll** (today called Lyndhurst) and **Sunnyside**, close to one another on the Tappan Zee in Tarrytown. Moving north to Poughkeepsie, **Locust Grove** and **Springside** are nationally significant examples. **Hyde Park** (the so-called Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site) is further north toward Rhinebeck, as is **The Point**, often called the Hoyt House property, now part of the Mills-Norrie State Park in Staatsburg. Beyond Rhinebeck, dozens of residential landscapes glorify a continuous string of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century estates. These expansive designed landscapes constitute today's **Hudson River National Historic Landmark District**, at thirty-two square miles, it is the largest such district in the United States. This is "Livingston Country," named for its most prominent family. On nearly all



Map of the Hudson River Valley Showing Sites, by R.M. Toole. "There is no part of the Union where the taste in Landscape Gardening is so far advanced, as on the middle portion of the Hudson," was the claim in 1844. In the Hudson River Valley there remains a string of nineteenth-century landscape gardens representing a unique heritage and historic resource. Many of these designed landscapes are preserved at today's historic sites. This map also illustrates the concentration of estate properties in the Hudson River National Historic Landmark District. Many of these properties preserve documented, nineteenth-century designed landscapes, notably Clermont near the northern end and Hyde Park on the extreme south. In between are Blithewood, Montgomery Place, and dozens of others, all fronting on the river.

these sites, landscape gardening influenced the historic arrangements. **Clermont** and **Montgomery Place** were significant Livingston family homes, not so much for their links to any one historic person, but as indicative of the valley's long residential and landscape garden heritage. Other properties in the landmark district, with lesser pedigrees, remain in private ownership, such as **Rokeby**, **Steen Valetje**, and **Wilderstein**. A few homes have largely disappeared—most regrettably **Blithewood**.

Millbrook at Tarrytown, **Idlewild** at Cornwall, **Highland Garden** at Newburgh, and **Kenwood** at Albany have succumbed to changing circumstances. While these last cannot now be visited, their importance dictates that they be included in the story of Hudson Valley landscape gardening. Several others will be mentioned here in passing. Finally, one of the most popular museum properties in the Hudson Valley, and very

well preserved, lies just south of the city of Hudson in Columbia County. This is **Olana**, the aesthetic crescendo of American landscape gardening, unique and famed for its creation by a renowned landscape painter, Frederic Edwin Church. Olana has been rightly called by a recent commentator "one of the most perfectly realized Romantic landscape gardens in the world."

The Landscape Garden Deconstructed

The general characteristics of the Romantic-period landscape garden can be concisely described. All these landscapes were associated with gentleman farming and, with a few exceptions, amateur designers—the property owners themselves. Unlike a building or formal garden where the design is semi-permanent, a naturalistic landscape garden requires season-to-season adjustments with the growth and decline of vegetation in a largely organic composition. Owners lived with their landscapes. Then too, the expertise of the landscape gardener was gained primarily from broad-based academics and exposure to artistic principles, an education seldom found in the lower status of a gardener. The few professionals available did impact local examples, and their writings (and imported written advice from England) offered comprehensive coverage of landscape gardening as the art form it was then considered to be, at least for the inquisitive and literary-minded.

Sometimes the designed landscape, or "pleasure grounds" as it was called, were separate from the farmland, but often the two landscapes melded. Turning a profit was not the point of a gentleman's farm, but farming was part of an idealized rural lifestyle. In the nineteenth century, farming remained integral to residential life and to the heightened landscape design aesthetics required of romantic taste. The emphasis was on a purely ornamental purpose.

The acreage of the era's gentleman farms varied widely, from less than twenty to hundreds. The house was the central focus, but in the landscape it was not the only important component. Some of the house sites discussed here predated the practice of nineteenth-century landscape gardening. Other houses were constructed when the Romantic period landscapes were designed, so that the results were a set piece that can be attributed to one owner at one moment in time. The earlier houses were classical designs, but after the mid-1830s a variety of eclectic styles emerged. These "picturesque" house designs often complemented the landscape gardening, so that an Italianate house might have a more formal and grand landscape, while a Gothic cottage would be associated with more casual and intricate grounds.

In general there were no large scale restructurings of the landscapes in the

Romantic period designs because the idea was to work harmoniously with the natural "lay of the land"—the *genius loci*—with its opportunities and constraints, rather than imposing an intrusive overlay. This has meant that some designed landscapes have been dismissed as indistinguishable from nature, with only the use of native or long-introduced plantings, and in layouts that can appear to be unconscious and haphazard. For some Hudson Valley house museums, the landscape is now reduced, in thought, to mowed lawns and trees, a consequence of naturalistic design, changing use, and a loss of subtleties inherent to modern maintenance practices. Originally all these properties were farms, an activity no longer practiced at modern museum properties. One consequence is that many of these landscapes are severely overgrown, with detrimental aesthetic impact.

Carriage drives and their pedestrian cousins, footpaths, played the single most important role in determining how the designed landscape was experienced. Drives were especially critical in defining the arrival experience, i.e., how one was brought from the property's gateway to the house. This was always a carefully contrived route, and the resulting visual sequence fixed the landscape's personality, and largely defined the visual experience and the property's sense of place. Footpaths were almost always present so that visitors and owners could stroll the grounds at leisure and take in the landscape's features and scenery.

Water was always a prime component of these designs. This began with the unequaled splendor of the Hudson River, the era's grandest and most scenic river. As the vast majority of the residential properties lay on the east bank of the Hudson (because of historic land grants and the evolving infrastructure), the relatively undeveloped western shoreline, punctuated by the Palisades, Highlands, and Catskills, offered highly scenic and distinctive backdrops. In addition, the numerous small streams that joined the Hudson offered very different watery pleasures. These tributaries often descended to the river over waterfalls and rapids, and elsewhere were formed into decorative pools set into small valleys and glens, all enhanced by the practice of landscape gardening.

Trees formed the fabric of the landscape garden, and these were almost always indigenous varieties or long-established imports. Such native stalwarts as red, white, and chestnut oaks (*Quercus rubra, Q. alba,* and *Q. prinus*); sugar, red, and silver maples (*Acer saccharum, A. rubrum,* and *A. saccharinum*); and beloved natives such as the American elm (*Ulmus americana*) and basswood (*Tilia americana*) were valued landscape trees. Some of the smaller native trees also gained favor beginning in this era, including the white birch (*Betula papyrifera*), redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), and black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). Evergreens were represented by white pines (*Pinus strobus*) and

hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*), both common on the Hudson, as well as balsam fir and spruce. Shrubs were used sparingly, given the scale of the average landscape, but there were a few designed botanic collections that earned the title "shrubbery." Flowers, per se, were not an integral part of the landscape garden, but flowers were almost always incorporated as features, often on a small scale, typically arranged in separate, well-defined enclosures or in "lawn beds," where seasonal bedding-out flowers enlivened areas close to the house. The informal mingled flower garden, precursor to our modern perennial borders, was popular.

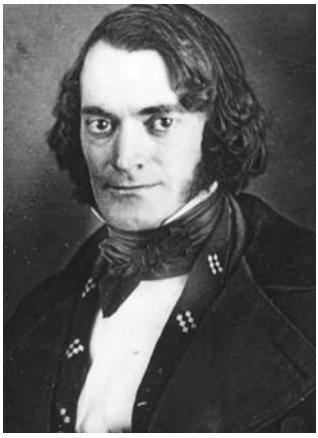
Finally, the landscape garden was embellished with built features. Although these played a secondary role at most properties, they were numerous at others. Uniquely, estate outbuildings, such as farmers' cottages, gatehouses, barns, and stable buildings, were set up as landscape features. In addition, icehouses, mausoleums, water towers, and dovecotes were given ornamental roles beyond their practical usefulness. Purely decorative buildings varied widely, from sizable pavilions and summer houses to small individual seats. They provided shelter and rest for those touring the grounds, and were also landmarks and artistic highlights in the garden. Urns and sundials, planters and commemorative constructions were also inserted as features. One owner excavated and propped up an old tree stump and presented it on his front lawn for all to see. Pride in a sculptural tree stump was a design conceit peculiar to the Romantic period.

But then the Romantic period was a proud time in America. There was enthusiasm and optimism, if innocent and naïve. Romantic sensibilities were upbeat. There was an ease in New York's social, economic, and political life that was seldom bitter, but rather prideful, optimistic, and irrepressibly vital.

"Can there be a country in the world better calculated than ours to exercise and to exalt the imagination?" asked New York Governor DeWitt Clinton in 1816, going on to find his muse in the American landscape, "this wild, romantic and awful scenery…calculated to produce a correspondent impression in the imagination—to elevate all the faculties of the mind, and to exalt all the feelings of the heart."

Fueled by sympathetic political, religious, and nationalistic principles, after a period of assimilation, America's cultural aspirations joined with the nation's physical assets—the landscape—to achieve a distinctive artistic expression. This garden design work stands at the center of historic events that decisively shaped the concept of scenic beauty in America. It was undeniably indigenous, because it reflected America's "genius of the place"—the *genius loci* of the Hudson River Valley.

Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852)



COURTESY OF GEORGE TATUM

Andrew Jackson Downing

A.J. Downing (as he was often called) was a native of Newburgh-on-Hudson. He was a nurseryman and horticulturist by training, had a knack for writing, and a curiosity for sophisticated culture (and a handsome and suave personality according to those who knew him). Downing became America's most prominent landscape gardener in the mid-nineteenth century, known for his early important books, *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America*, with three editions in Downing's lifetime (1841, '44, and '49) and *Cottage Residences*, with four editions (1842, '44, '47, and '52), and as editor of the periodical, *The Horticulturist,* from July 1846.

For social historians, Downing is probably most important for his influence on domestic architecture as a prominent proponent of America's earliest picturesque house designs. Still, in considering historic landscape gardening on the Hudson, no one is a better guide. In the first and subsequent editions of his *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening,* Downing commented that "nothing is more instructive than a personal inspection of country seats, where the grounds are laid out in a tasteful manner." It is this role as guide to the Romantic-period properties that most interests us as we go off touring historic sites today. Downing knew the Hudson Valley intimately, and as he put it, "There is no part of the Union where the taste in Landscape Gardening is so far advanced, as on the middle portion of the Hudson."

A.J. Downing was no fan of older colonial designs, such as the Hudson's old-fashioned Anglo-Dutch gardens, which he chided as "the Ancient or Geometric Style" for their "regularity, symmetry and the display of labored art," and "a fertility of odd conceits." Instead, Downing made himself a champion and student of landscape gardening as it had evolved in England over the previous century, and where he felt "Landscape Gardening was first raised to the rank of a fine art." Downing sought out and read the standard works on the topic, so that he understood the century-long evolution of English landscape gardening. He had the intellectual inquisitiveness, and connections, to visit the Hudson Valley's premier estate properties, and he had the design background to evaluate the situation in

mid-century America, vis-à-vis what had gone before. As such, Downing was the most important chronicler of antebellum landscape gardening in America, and his focus on the Hudson River Valley is of great benefit to a regional study.

In addition to Downing's studied background in landscape gardening, he was also influenced by more contemporary ideas, notably the prolific writings of John Claudius (J.C.) Loudon (1783-1843). Loudon was England's most prominent garden authority during Downing's lifetime. Downing appreciated Loudon's professional success and modeled his own career accordingly. As befit his English audience, Loudon covered all varieties of garden and landscape design in his works, providing a shopping list of eclectic ideas in contrast to the more consistent, dogmatic tenets of eighteenth-century landscape gardening in the age of Capability Brown. A modern, Loudon ushered in the plethora of stylistic approaches that characterize international landscape design to this day.

In 1832, Loudon coined the term "Gardenesque," a design philosophy that emphasized individual plants placed in the landscape to show their particular attributes. The garden was now an arboretum. Loudon pointedly suggested that the Gardenesque, as its name implies, elevated what he called "the botany of trees and shrubs" above wild nature. For Loudon, domestic grounds modeled on picturesque themes weren't much of a garden. He proclaimed:

> Mere picturesque improvement is not enough in these enlightened times: it is necessary to understand that there is such a character of art, as the gardenesque, as well as the picturesque… Any creation to be recognized as a work of art, must be such as can never be mistaken for a work of nature.

While admitting Loudon's influence, Downing was understandably concerned that the American situation was an awkward fit with pretentious Gardenesque goals. In later editions of *Landscape Gardening,* Downing called Loudon too scientific, labeling him "somewhat deficient as an artist in imagination," preferring "mere artistical beauty to that of expression," and the Gardenesque style suited to "artificial planting only." In a review of Downing's book, *Landscape Gardening,* that appeared in the periodical *The Cultivator*, Loudon was cited as "extensively read in America with a corresponding influence on this art [i.e., landscape gardening]," but the reviewer added that Loudon presented "far less appreciation of the picturesque than is contained in the work before us [i.e., *Landscape Gardening*]."

Related closely to this comparison of the Gardenesque to the earlier picturesque, the most important design reference provided in Downing's writings was the distinction he made between "Beautiful" and "Picturesque" design. Downing grounded this discussion in the history of English landscape gardening, and he

explained the difference simply, but in great detail and without bias.

The "Beautiful design mode" (sometimes he used the term "Graceful") took inspiration from nature, but sought a refined polish that resulted in a man-made appearance. A "Beautiful" landscape garden would be clearly artificial, with a tidy and unnatural look, often using exotic plants and formal placements. Beautiful landscape gardens, wrote Downing, were "characterized by curving and flowing lines" and "an idea of beauty calmly and harmoniously expressed." Maintenance was increased by the need for "grass mown into a softness like velvet, gravel walks scrupulously firm, dry and clean; and the most perfect order and neatness should reign throughout."

Downing did not dismiss the Beautiful approach, which he knew well from recent English fashion. The Beautiful was J.C. Loudon's taste, and Downing, in *Landscape Gardening,* called the Gardenesque "but another word for what we term the Graceful [i.e., Beautiful] school." The Beautiful style also incorporated French influences popular in America in Downing's time. For Downing, the Beautiful was an amalgam going back to English precedence, both old and new, from Capability Brown to Loudon. In a sense, the Beautiful was everything in landscape gardening, except the Picturesque.

The "Picturesque design mode" was for Downing the legacy of the English picturesque. A Picturesque approach, said Downing, produced "outlines of a certain spirited irregularity, surfaces comparatively abrupt and broken, and growth of a somewhat wild and bold character." The Picturesque is:

> An idea of beauty…strongly and irregularly expressed, [where] every object should group with another; trees and shrubs are often planted closely together; and intricacy and variety—thickets—glades—and underwood—as in wild nature, are indispensable. Walks and roads are more abrupt in their windings, turning off frequently at sudden angles… In water, all the wildness of romantic spots in nature… The keeping [i.e., maintenance] of such a landscape will of course be less careful than in the graceful [i.e., Beautiful] school… The lawn may be less frequently mown, the edge of the walks less carefully trimmed, where the Picturesque prevails.

In short, a Picturesque landscape garden would be modeled on natural occurrences and be of a natural appearance. Still, the Picturesque design was not wilderness. Man's presence was benign. The term "vernacular" had design implications, modeled on the ideal of yeomen farmers working agrarian pursuits in settled but primitive landscapes. A wilderness landscape garden that embraced connections to common and pioneer life. Downing suggested that the appeal of

the Picturesque was not for everyone:

> Artists, we imagine, find somewhat of the same pleasure in studying wild landscape, where the very rocks and trees seem to struggle with the elements for foothold, that they do in contemplating the phases of the passion and instincts of human and animal life. The manifestation of [nature's] power is to many minds far more captivating than that of beauty.

While the Beautiful mode was often employed in the pre-Civil War era, and increasingly thereafter in the stampede to Victorian excess, it is the Picturesque that distinguished landscape gardening in the Hudson River Valley's Romantic period. Initially, A.J. Downing felt only one in a thousand would prefer the Picturesque, but by 1844 he claimed it was "beginning to be preferred." Even if public acceptance of the Beautiful was widespread, Downing called the Picturesque "appropriate" in the setting of the Hudson Valley, and as it was more practical to maintain, he thought the Picturesque should appeal to Americans.

Today the Romantic-period appeal of the picturesque aesthetic and Picturesque landscape gardening are recognized as precursors of other cultural achievements. Notably, the development of America's urban parks, beginning with Central Park in New York City (1858), was directly related to the earlier practice of landscape gardening in the Hudson River Valley. As an urban park, Central Park had its appropriate Beautiful components, but the inspiration behind its plan was Nature and the appeal of the picturesque aesthetic. Central Park, it was said, brought the Catskill Mountains to New York City. Picturesque design sensibilities were also factors in the early history of the American national and state park systems of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In turn, today's typical suburban home, with its reliance on mown lawns and shade trees overhanging a swing chair or a sundial or birdbath, owes its aesthetic foundation to Downing's definition of the Picturesque design mode.

Today, scholars have an easier time evaluating many of the Hudson Valley's historic landscape compositions because of Downing's period descriptions. Touring the valley ahead of the second edition of *Landscape Gardening*, published in 1844, Downing provided expert analysis and made the point again that it was "important and instructive…to examine, personally, country seats of a highly tasteful character." He visited numerous sites, "newly laid out, or greatly improved within a few years." Downing was often accompanied by the property owners, seeing the landscapes as they were intended. This was key to understanding the historical character of so ephemeral an art as landscape gardening. Downing understood the Hudson Valley's *genius loci,* describing it in intimate terms:

> The natural scenery is of the finest character, and the places but a mile or two apart often possess, from the constantly varying forms of the water, shores, and distant hills, widely different kinds of home landscape and distant view. Standing in the grounds of some of the finest of these seats, the eye beholds only the soft foreground of smooth lawn, the rich groups of trees shutting out all neighboring tracts, the lake-like expanse of water, and, closing the distance, a fine range of wooded mountain. A residence here of but a hundred acres, so fortunately are these disposed by nature, seems to appropriate the whole scenery round, and to be a thousand in extent.

Downing's role was as a reporter and a critic, and to a lesser extent as a designer. He designed a number of landscapes, but in an age of limited media coverage, his actual works were little known to the public. Owing to the loss of Downing's office files and records, attribution of his work has been difficult. Even the facts of his professional life—his clients' names and billings for example—are fragmentary. Fortunately, one of Downing's best landscape garden designs is preserved at Springside in Poughkeepsie, a strikingly well-crafted design responsive to the owner's needs and the site's innate *genius loci*.

Downing's reporting and his few discernable design efforts enrich the study of landscape gardening on the Hudson. His writings outlined his interpretation of the basic elements and design tenets. These presentations were often broadly sketched, speaking of the universal design principles of form and expression, of unity, harmony, and variety. On the specifics of how to lay out grounds and select plantings, Downing recited a varied agenda, often influenced by his distant mentor, J.C. Loudon. In these recitations, the particularities of a site and the varied needs of owners were identified as critical factors. Myriad circumstances led to idiosyncratic results. This eclectic approach did not generate rigid design guidelines likely to inspire a "fashion" or amount to a "Downingesque style," as is sometimes claimed. Downing called his landscape gardening advice "my hints," representing much less than dogma. Typically in the nineteenth century, professional landscape gardeners worked as part of a long organic process, where the owner's myriad decisions decisively influenced the design scheme. In this way landscape gardening was an art reflective of varied owners and aspirations and influenced by the dynamics of broadly felt fashion, where professionals took on bit parts in the drama of man's interface with nature and design in the outdoors.

COURTESY OF CEDAR GROVE

Figure 1: Painting by Charles H. Moore (c. 1862) showing the house and flower garden. This painting is the earliest pictorial record of the garden south of the house. The design was arranged along a gravel walk centered on the house. Note the honeylocust tree on the west, already a large specimen 150 years ago.

"Quiet Harbor:" Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove

Robert M. Toole

> "A man must not be a vagabond, and roam all the days of his life.
> He ought to cast anchor in some quiet harbor."
>
> —Thomas Cole, 1843

Introduction

Abandoning the known for the unknown, seeing the future with anxiety and expectation, the artistically inclined teenager, Thomas Cole (1801-1848), cajoled his parents to leave England and their modest lives for the romantically charged promise of America. Setting off in the spring of 1818, Cole's artistic sensibilities found little sympathy in establishment Philadelphia, where the family first landed, or on the rough and tumble frontier west of the Alleghenies where they fitfully settled. For years, Thomas Cole wandered across Pennsylvania and Ohio, following his well-intentioned father's futile attempts at woolens, dry-goods, wall-

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Figure 2
Portrait of Thomas Cole by Frederic Church, c. 1845. Then age 19, Church was under Cole's artistic tutelage when he drew this likeness

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Figure 3
Portrait of John Thomson by Frederic Church, c. 1845. This sketch shows John Thomson, "Uncle Sandy," about a year before his death. Thomson was the owner and master of Cedar Grove during Cole's lifetime.

paper, and floor coverings. Thomas nurtured his art, sketching, doing portraits, and even setting off for awhile as an itinerant artist. He also pursued a modest livelihood preparing woodcuts and working on some of his father's projects. Cole longed for success as an artist and eventually he returned from western isolation, first for a destitute period alone in Philadelphia before moving with his parents to New York City in the spring of 1825.[1]

New York was then on the cusp of an explosive period of laissez-faire expansion, mightily symbolized by the completion of the Erie Canal. Thomas Cole was also on the cusp of his long-sought recognition. Late in the summer, he sailed up the Hudson River to the Village of Catskill and visited for the first time the scenery of the Catskill Mountains. He experienced the juxtaposition of dramatic, true wilderness and the pastoral splendor of the Hudson Valley's romantic idyll, in its golden age. Returning to the city, enthralled, Cole fervently painted several compositions. Interestingly these were all identifiable landscapes that together represented the Hudson Valley's genus loci of wilderness (*Lake with Dead Trees*), sublime wonder (*The Falls of the Katterskill*), and historical reflections (*A View of Fort Putnam*). These three paintings, $25 each, were purchased by leading lights—John Trumbull, William Dunlap, and Asher B. Durand—who spread the word of the genius they had discovered. It was an iconic moment in the history of American art, the genesis of the Hudson River School.[2]

For Thomas Cole, Catskill thereafter became a second home, at first for summer visits. Early on he made the acquaintance of John Thomson (1776-1846),

a dry-goods merchant whose business on Main Street Cole would have walked by on his way to the mountains. Years later, Cole became a valued member of John Thomson's household when he married Thomson's niece, Maria Bartow (1813-1884). This connection resulted from Cole's rental of studio space at Thomson's farm property, Cedar Grove, located above the village, fronting on the Hudson River. This property and its family members were to be an important part of Cole's life from this point forward, and that story will interest us here. Cedar Grove, Thomas Cole's "quiet harbor," his place of refuge. It is today one of the Hudson Valley's premier national historic sites.

The History of the Thomson Farm "on the Hill" (17th Century to 1825)

The origins of Cedar Grove are closely linked with the history of the Catskill community. In 1684, a Dutch frontiersman named Gysbert uyt den Bogaert purchased from Native Americans 460 acres on the Hudson River at the mouth of Catskill Creek. He lived creek side for several decades but after his death the property went back to the public domain. In 1738, a land speculator named John Lindsey obtained a patent to the old Bogaert property. Over many decades "Catskill Landing" developed slowly as a river port and Bogaert's land was methodically subdivided.[3]

The Thomson family's origins at Catskill date from the arrival of John Thomson's father, Dr. Thomas Thomson, originally from New England, who established himself there after the Revolutionary War.[4] When he died in 1805, John and his six siblings inherited their father's estate. This included an old house in the village, possibly Bogaert's original dwelling, and a modest twenty-four-acre lot from the Lindsey subdivision located "on the Hill," as it was often described, above the village. Dr. Thomson also held long-term leases on several nearby lots. The hilltop property included a modest farmhouse (called the "cottage"), a barn, and several outbuildings. Thomson's mini-farm was long and narrow, extending all the way over the hill to Catskill Creek. The parcel was only 300 feet wide but ¾ of a mile (3,700 feet) long. Crossing through the property near the top of the hill was the Albany-Greene turnpike road, today's Spring Street. The hilltop property seemed to have been used by Dr. Thomas Thomson to serve the family's agrarian needs, their village home being too small for draft and farm animals, or crop cultivation. An inventory of Dr. Thomson's estate included two "old cows," three horses, and one pig, kept "on the Hill." It is not clear who lived in the cottage/farmhouse, but it could have pre-dated Thomson's ownership. In later years it was rented, eventually to Thomas Cole.[5]

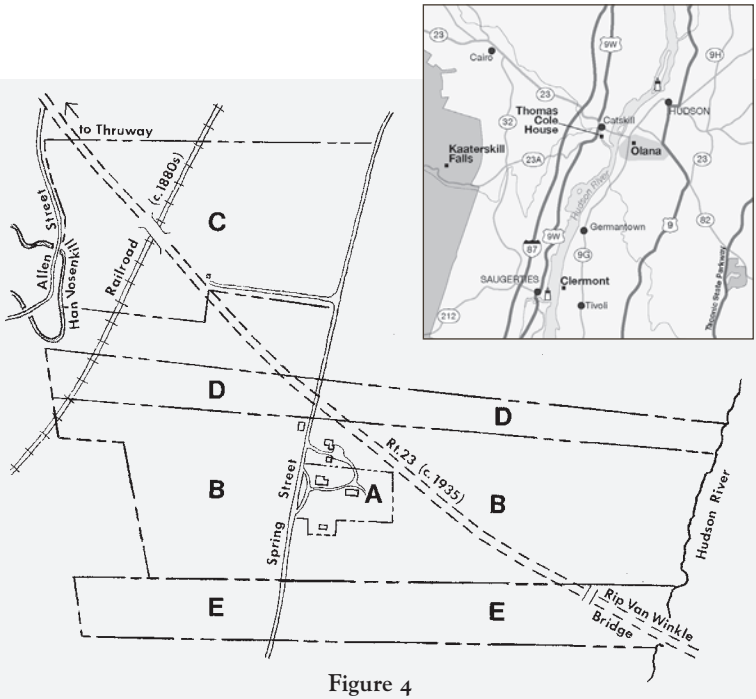


Figure 4

Plan Showing Cedar Grove property (1848), by R. M. Toole. The Route 23 approach to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, built in the 1930s, is shown cutting diagonally through the historic Cedar Grove farm. Note also the intrusion of the railroad (c. 1880s). The boundary of today's 3½-acre National Historic Landmark is highlighted (A). This was part of the core farm property totaling 75 acres (B). Included were the house grounds, older cottage and barns, and all of Cole's studios. This was also the venue for agriculture, including crop cultivation and grazing fields, kitchen gardens, and orchards. The somewhat isolated Vault Lot—35 acres (C) was habitually rented, but its spectacular views of the mountains prompted development of the family burial vault on this parcel. Finally, two adjoining lots, a total of about 45 acres, (D and E) were under long-term lease to the Thomson family. These parcels were typically rented to others, primarily for grazing. In total, Cedar Grove totaled about 155 acres.

Dr. Thomas Thomson's modest estate, divided by seven siblings after his death in 1805, might easily have led to its disbursal. However, John Thomson evolved as the amiable family's leader, due to the good will and the pitfalls of his siblings, and sheer luck. Most importantly, in 1815, one brother, Thomas T. Thomson (1778-1821), returned from South America, as he wrote his sister, in "flourishing circumstances having realized my full expectations as far as regards the accumulation of wealth."[6] Thomas's mercantile profits, teamed with his brother John's consolidation of the family's Catskill properties, led to the purchase of additional land adjacent to their father's hilltop farm (Figure 4). On one of these new lots, just 200 feet south of the cottage, the Thomson brothers constructed the

COURTESY OF CEDAR GROVE.

Figure 5
Photograph looking west from the house, c. 1900. In this somewhat blurry, spliced image, note the lilac shrubs in the foreground, and the large spruce tree on the right. Orchard trees are visible on the grounds west of Spring Street. In the hazy distance is the Catskills' "Wall of Manitou."

Federal-style main house in 1815. The modest twenty-four acres had been enlarged to about seventy-five acres, and the Thomson family had achieved the landscape and infrastructure of a gentleman's farm.[7]

The house grounds were entered from the turnpike off a looping access drive that led to a handsome gateway, flanked by tall brick piers topped with urn finials and a substantial white picket fence. The veranda-wrapped house was oriented south but uniquely arranged to exploit the western prospect of the Catskill escarpment, the great "Wall of Manitou," laid out from the western façade (Figure 5). The mountain views and sunsets were later described as "wonderful" and "magnificent… lovely with rounded hills, little bits of the village peeping out here and there from behind clustering foliage, and scattered groups of old apple trees."[8] The house and street-front picket fence formed an ensemble. To the east, complementing the harmonious whole was a fancy, Federal-styled privy, topped by a weathervane. A formal flower garden was arranged to the south, laid out on the center line of the house. It was, and remains, overhung by a thorny honeylocust tree (*Gladitea triacanthos*) which records indicate may have been purchased by the Thomsons in 1817, with the house completed.[9] It survives, today about 200 years old (Figure 1).

In 1818, the Thomsons acquired a separate but nearby lot. This was a thirty-five acre parcel located north, on the west side of Spring Street at today's busy intersection of Spring Street and the Rip Van Winkle Bridge approach (Rt. 23). In 1821, Thomas T. Thomson died and was buried in a vault built on that parcel at the edge of the slope oriented west toward the mountains. The parcel was

thereafter known as the "Vault Lot" (Figure 4). After Thomas's death, his brother John consolidated the whole property under his sole ownership. Thomson's farm was about 110 acres with an additional forty-five acres under long-term lease.[10]

A couple of years after the house was completed, in 1819, John's and Thomas's older sister, Maria Thomson Bartow, was widowed, leaving seven children in need of support. Her brothers came to the rescue and over the next several years four unmarried Bartow daughters came to live at the Catskill homestead. One of these women, Maria, would later marry Thomas Cole. The other sisters, Emily, Harriet, and Frances, affectionately called "the girls" even into middle age, were all spinster residents at Cedar Grove in Thomas Cole's lifetime. Working with hired help and servants, the Bartow women provided much of the domestic comforts enjoyed by the men.

By 1830, John Thomson (age 54) had retired from the dry-goods business and turned solely to gentleman farming, and to the loving attention of his numerous nieces. Thomas Cole was by then familiar with the household and he may have been influential in suggesting the property's name. The first recorded use was on the heading of an undated letter written before June 1830.[11] There is no evidence that John Thomson habitually used the term "Cedar Grove," but Cole conjured it up on numerous occasions, notably in his poetry. "Cedar Grove," of course, does not refer to the Federal-style main house alone, as we sometime see it used today, but rather to the entire 155-acre farm estate. In fact, the name closely related to the actual landscape, referring to a venerable stand of old eastern red cedars *(Juniperus virginiana)* located about a hundred feet east of the house. If coined by Thomas Cole, the name is emblematic of the infusion of picturesque sensibilities which Cole's presence at Cedar Grove engendered. With an evocative name, Thomson's earlier, formal Federal-era landscape was transformed on the strength of Cole's romantic persuasion.

"Very Comfortable" Thomas Cole's Early Years at Cedar Grove (1825-1836)

Cole knew the Cedar Grove household before May 1827, when he witnessed an agreement involving Alfred Bartow, John Thomson's nephew, who was living at Cedar Grove in this period.[12] This documentation suggests that Cole was already acquainted with the family at least from the summer of 1826, or even from his initial, brief visit in 1825. In a magazine article written before Maria Bartow Cole's death, it was asserted that Cole knew his future wife "first as a child during his earlier visits to the mountains."[13] Maria was 12 years old in the summer of 1825. Cole returned to Catskill in 1828 and probably stopped there briefly in

1829 before he sailed to Europe in June. He did not return to America until the autumn of 1832. After spending the winter in New York City he went to Catskill in the spring of 1833. It had been a four-year absence. Maria Bartow was about to celebrate her twentieth birthday. That summer, Cole rented a portion of the cottage located north of Cedar Grove's Federal-style main house. In the autumn he retreated again to New York City, but by April 1834 he wrote a friend, "it is my custom to spend the summer at Catskill." [14]

In November 1834, two summers after his return from Europe, Cole had still not admitted an attraction to Maria Bartow. However his affection for the Thomson/Bartow household was obvious in a poem he penned as he left following the summer season:

> Oh Cedar Grove! Whene'er I think to part
> From thine all peaceful shades my aching heart
> Is like to his who leaves some blessed shore
> A weeping exile ne'er to see it more.[15]

Perhaps not one of Cole's best poems, but the sentiment is clear. In the spring of 1835, Cole again set out for Catskill, calling it his "favorite haunt," and vowing to stay there through the following winter in order to concentrate on his art and reduce the expense of wintering over in New York City.[16] The commitment to stay over the winter indicates Cole's heightened interest in Catskill. Again, Maria Cole's romantic role in that interest got little overt attention in Cole's correspondence and notations, at least in the documentation that survives and has been studied. Still, in the summer of 1835, one visitor hinted at a romantic link, reminiscing that Maria had arranged flowers in Cole's private rooms (in the cottage), and speculated that this would be Cole's future wife well over a year before the actual marriage.[17] For Cole, all this may have been secondary to his work. In this period he spent long hours on his masterpiece, *The Course of Empire* series, five large canvases which were completed at the cottage in 1836.

Despite increasing reliance on Cedar Grove as a base for his activities, and basking in the hospitality of the Thomson/Bartow family, Cole was quite ambivalent about stepping into married life. He was a dedicated bachelor and celebrated his wanderlust as essential to his art. In fact, Cole expressed unease with his growing involvement in the Thomson/Bartow family's domestic affairs and, more generally, with provincial life in Catskill. At one point, he described in his diary a party he attended with the Bartow women, and others, complaining of "giggling girls and idealess men," wishing "the ladies strive more to please by true refinement and accomplishments than by chattering nonsense everlastingly, but,"

he continued, "the men are worse than they!"[18] Cole also complained of being interrupted at his work:

> I am most happy when I can escape most from the world. The longer I live in it, the more its common cares and troubles seem to claim me. Nothing makes me so melancholy as that which prevents me from the pursuit of my art. [19]

While settling down caused anxiety, Cole was now past his mid-thirties and, as he later wrote a friend, "a man must not be a vagabond."[20] In turn, Cole's sister, Sarah Cole, who was friendly with the Bartow women, urged him on, writing her brother in July 1836: "I think Maria would make you very comfortable. I do not see that you need to be much troubled with her family affairs."[21] Late in 1836, with *The Course of Empire* series completed and exhibited successfully in New York City, Thomas Cole, for the moment financially secure, married Maria Bartow.

"The spot of earth that living I have loved" Married Life at Cedar Grove (1837-1848)

For twelve years Cole was an intimate member of the Cedar Grove household and the Catskill community. This is not to say that he was much involved with the day-to-day operations of the farm property, nor inclined to stay at home. The farm continued to be the sole responsibility of John Thomson. "Uncle Sandy," as the family called him (his middle name was Alexander), worked with a salaried farmer and seasonal help to accomplish an array of domestic and agricultural activities. After his marriage, Cole did not just hole-up in Catskill. On the contrary, he spent significant time away from Cedar Grove, including the entire winter of 1838-39, when he and Maria lived in New York City.[22] More commonly Cole was away on numerous occasions on sketching trips and to attend exhibitions. In June 1837, Cole and Maria traveled with fellow artist Asher B. Durand and his wife to the Adirondack Mountains, one of many such journeys Cole participated in. Often Cole traveled without Maria, who generally remained with the family after Cole's first child, Theodore, was born on January 1, 1838.

Cole's finances varied with the ebb and flow of his career, but in these early years of his marriage he was quite secure, flush with the earnings from *The Course of Empire* series. Then, in March 1839, Cole signed a contract for the then princely sum of $5,000 to paint *The Voyage of Life* series. Even before his marriage, Cole's extra cash inspired him to consider investing in Catskill real estate. This does not seem to have happened, but as early as 1836 it prompted one friend to remark: "Who would have thought a quiet painter, accustomed to the contemplation of

COURTESY OF CEDAR GROVE

Figure 7: Painting by Charles H. Moore (c. 1862) showing the store-house from the south. This view shows the western (studio) end of the 1839 structure, with a glimpse north that includes the grove of eastern red cedars that may have inspired the name "Cedar Grove."

nature, would have so suddenly become so sanguine [for the potential of land speculation]."[23]

Cole's relative prosperity was not shared by John Thomson, who was adversely affected by legal problems with the estate of his brother, Thomas T. Thomson, and from investment setbacks in the so-called Panic of 1837, an economic recession that lasted into 1839. In 1838, Thomson was forced to mortgage portions of the Cedar Grove property for the first time. Uncle Sandy also began to borrow cash from other family members, including Thomas Cole. Fortunately Cole was in a good position to accommodate these financial imperatives. Most basically, he paid board for his family, as well as rent on their living space, all of which contributed to the household's day-to-day upkeep.

With *The Voyage of Life* series on his easel, Cole realized he needed larger studio space than the cottage could provide. The six-foot+ by four-foot+ canvases were even larger than those of *The Course of Empire* series. He quickly entered into an agreement with John Thomson to help pay for the construction of what was called a "store-house," (possibly for fruit), a portion of which Cole reserved, and no doubt designed, as a large studio[24] (Figure 7). In addition, or perhaps as part of their agreement on the store-house, Cole purchased about 2 1/2 acres of Cedar Grove laying south of the main house in what seems to have been an

orchard. Cole immediately planned to build a separate house and studio on his lot, possibly motivated by the birth of a second child, Mary, in September 1839. Despite these plans there was a quick change of heart, no doubt due to the death, in November 1839, of Cole's patron on *The Voyage of Life* series, Samuel Ward. Ward's heirs quickly made it clear they felt no desire or responsibility to continue Cole's lucrative commission and this likely prompted cancellation of his plans for house construction.

While the house was never built, Cole's interest in having his own home preceded this incident and continued for several years. Indeed his interest in architecture predated his marriage. At least one of Cole's house designs survives, and he was in this same period working informally with others on a competition to design the Ohio statehouse.[25] Also it may be presumed that he contributed his design thoughts to the 1839 store-house construction. The store-house was a highly picturesque structure. Later artists found it irresistible (Figure 7). One reporter called it "picturesque without an effort."[26] The low-slung structure included a covered outdoor work space and a decidedly barn-like appearace. It was carefully fitted between two large oak trees, each being left only a few feet from the north and south façades. Surrounding the store-house were other mature trees. This was a dramatic and romantic siting and suggests Cole's influence over the design.

While Cole mused on the idea of building a house in this period, he also commented to a friend that "fools build houses while wise men live in them," indicating some detachment from the responsibilities of house planning and construction, an attitude befitting his peripatetic personality.[27] In light of John Thomson's financial downturn, the uncertainty of *The Voyage of Life* commission, and the needs of Cole's extended family, there was every reason to economize. As it turned out, instead of building a house, Cole sailed for Europe in August 1841, returning a year later. His contribution to the construction of the store-house, generous room and board payments, the within-the-family land purchase, and assorted loans were convenient ways for Cole to contribute to the relief of John Thomson's ill fortune, while he dreamed whatever dreams he felt comfortable with on the topic of house architecture and retired to Europe with his art, leaving Maria and two young children behind.

From our perspective studying the Cedar Grove property, Cole's purchase of 2 1/2 acres was a harbinger; the earliest subdivision of Thomson's farm, a process then just beginning that would eventually reduce Cedar Grove to the 3 1/2 acre parcel around the 1815 house that remains today. John Thomson owned land, but was cash poor, a condition that hounded the Thomson/Bartow/Cole family long

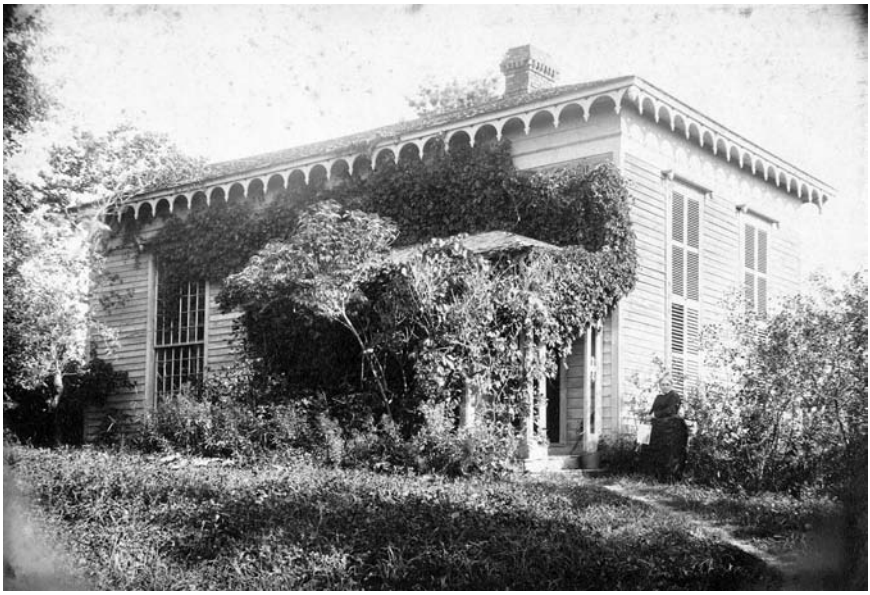
after Thomas Cole's death and right into the modern period.

After Cole's return from Europe in August 1842, he expressed great affection for Cedar Grove: "I am once more at home, and have learned to value more highly than ever my own fireside."[28] By August 1842, any thoughts of building a separate house at Cedar Grove had languished and Cole focused instead almost exclusively on his art. In his first year back, he completed over a dozen elaborate canvases, much of it from his European sketches. He lectured to audiences in Catskill, and attended exhibitions in Boston, and then, again alone, spent the winter in New York City, where he stayed until March 1843 in order to attend an exhibition of his work. In correspondence with Maria, there were only occasional hints of interest in life at the Thomson farm. At one point, Cole expressed concern that Uncle Sandy would find another "farmer," after the current farmer, a "Mr. Witbeck," decided to leave John Thomson's employ. This was one of the few direct references to a hired farmer serving on the property, although John Thomson's account book shows he hired much seasonal help in the 1830s, a situation that is thought to have been typical throughout his ownership.[29] In all these Cedar Grove matters, Thomas Cole was on the sidelines. He occasionally mentioned the grove of trees east of the Thomson house and he referred several times to the flower garden that occupied the grounds south of the house. From Europe in the spring of 1842, he hoped "Harriet [Bartow] has good luck with her flower-bed," suggesting that his sister-in-law, then age 34, had primary responsibility for the flower garden in that period.[30]

For her part, Maria Cole wrote to her "deary" of the activities at Cedar Grove. So, for example, in 1841, Maria reported that "Uncle Sandy was busy setting out grape vines and current [sic] bushes," while in autumn 1843, she was "working in the yard about the whole day, having the dahlias taken up, etc. If it were not wishing time away, I could wish it spring that I might attend to the flowers." A few days later she wrote: "Uncle Sandy has sent off the apples, etc., this morning to the City."[31]

For two years, 1844-45, Thomas Cole received a modest retainer to serve as artistic tutor to Frederic Church (1826-1900), who would soon thereafter mature into an acclaimed member of the Hudson River School. Initially Church may not have resided at Cedar Grove (renting elsewhere in the village), but in time he became a close friend of the family's and remained so throughout his lifetime, as we shall see.

In 1846, in the early summer, John Thomson died, aged 70. Cole commented that the event "has brought upon me new duties and cares and will probably influence my whole life," a comment that both confirmed John Thomson's



COURTESY OF THE ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY AND ART

Figure 8: Photograph of Cole's 1848 "New" Studio, c. 1915. The view shows the path that led to the northwestern corner entrance of the studio. The ground surface is rough, indicative of the "studio in an orchard" that seems to have been the original setting.

primary role at Cedar Grove and Cole's previous detachment. In commenting on his uncle-in-law's death, Cole lamented that Thomson had not been

> . . spared to see a little longer the luxuriant growth of the vines and fruit which he had planted and pruned with so much skill and pleasure. He had a passion for Horticulture, and was skilled above most men and it was amusing to hear him [converse] on a peach or apple, a pear or a strawberry. The gardens and orchards for weeks past have shown evidences that their master's hand is no longer there. Useless shoots disfigure the [orchard] trees and weeds riot over the beds and the grape-vines with their redundant foliage and curling tendrils trailing over the ground.[32]

Despite his concerns, Thomas Cole is not thought to have become directly involved in Cedar Grove's operation after Uncle Sandy's death. He did serve as a co-trustee of John Thomson's estate and this role elicited his comment that "the business of the estate is very distasteful to me."[33] The farm operations seemed to have continued under the management of a paid farmer, as had been the case for Thomson, but with slackened family supervision. The status quo was perpetuated and fruit production remained the property's most important cash crop.

Late in 1846, Cole finished construction of a separate studio building (but not a house) of his own design on the land he had purchased from John Thomson seven years earlier. The Italianate structure—a forty-four-foot by twenty-foot rectangular building, was erected on open ground that allowed unencumbered views to the west, mirroring those from the main house (Figure 8). Cole went to work there in December 1846, and in his last year completed several important works, most notably the studies for *The Cross of the World* series, unfinished at his death.

Only two years after John Thomson's passing, Cole died suddenly of severe congestion and pleurisy in February 1848. His last words, "I want to be quiet," echoed the many tributes made after his death, "…having finished his own pilgrimage here on earth."[34] Cole was buried in the family tomb at the Vault Lot. A newspaper tribute noted "his lonely tomb, which lies on a sequestered hillock on his domain upon the banks of the Hudson."[35] It is a spot Cole had known well, and favored. He had written of the Vault Lot:

> To be sepulchered here—to rest upon
> The spot of earth that living I have lov'd
> Where yon far mountains steep; would constant look
> Upon the grave of one who lov'd to gaze on them.[36]

Today, Cole is buried close-by, off Spring Street in Catskill's public cemetery. His remains were moved there along with several other Thomson/Bartow family members in 1858. Except for the overgrowth of trees along the cemetery's western edges, his grave remains within the Catskill Mountain's "constant look."

Cedar Grove during Cole's Residence

> It is here that taste, which is the perception of the beautiful and the knowledge of the principles on which nature works, can be applied and our dwelling places made fitting for refined and intellectual beings.
>
> —Thomas Cole, *Essay on American Scenery*, 1835

From its formation in 1815 until the time of Thomas Cole's marriage—about twenty years—Cedar Grove was a gentleman's farm, although its earnest owner, John Thomson, might never have agreed with that title. In fairness, the records of Thomson's agricultural activities are fragmented and understudied, and no doubt his goals and labors varied over the years of his residence. Critically, after his financial problems in the mid-1830s, Thomson increasingly relied on the farm's output, and so there was less idle time for the more gentlemanly aspects of farming. Indeed, Thomson always took his agriculture seriously, and personally,

calling the property "My Farm." In a typical year his paid farmer hired numerous farm laborers, whose numbers increased in the summer months and into the autumn harvest. All of these employees answered directly to John Thomson. In addition to his own farm activities, Thomson rented substantial acreage to others, primarily as pastureland. This was apparently the common use of forty-five acres held in long-term leases, and of the separate, thirty-five-acre Vault Lot. These rentals provided cash for the family's upkeep. As to his own operations, Thomson specialized in fruit production and also raised vegetables, notably potatoes, in which he took special interest. In addition, bush fruit, such as strawberries, currants, raspberries, and grapes were raised in significant quantities. One historian called John Thomson "an important New York State horticulturist."[37]

Inventories at Thomson's death show that livestock, including a pair of oxen for plowing, horses, cows, pigs, and beef cattle, were kept at Cedar Grove. There was a large flock of chickens and other fowl. Grain production, for example of barley, rye, and corn, also was pursued. Several acres were mowed for hay.[38] A portion of the property was kept as woodland, significantly an area of old oaks, hemlocks, chestnuts, and pines located east of the house. Thomas Cole occasionally mentioned this area, calling it the "grove." As such, a simple woodlot was given picturesque connotations, deemed "a forest rank with its woodsy smell, its ferns and wild flowers."[39] The store-house was snuggled into the western side of the grove, which effectively separated the house grounds from the open land above the Hudson River. The river front was used for pasturage and for cultivating crops. The steep river bluff was left heavily wooded. Much of the land west of Spring Street was planted in orchards. Uncle Sandy's interest in fruit cultivation and the resulting orchards played a character-defining role in Cedar Grove's landscape. A later newspaper article reported: "Surrounding the Cole dwelling on three sides are orchards which are gardens of bloom in spring."[40] One early nursery order survives that included fifteen varieties of apples, four varieties of plums, five of peaches, five of pears, and three different cherries. In total, this order, possibly an initial planting after the main house was completed, included eighty trees.[41]

Even a cursory investigation of the apples listed on the nursery order shows a wide-ranging variety for eating, desserts, canning, and laying down for winter use, far more than would be ample for the Cedar Grove household. Interestingly, many of the apples were antique varieties. Nearly all had been in commerce since the Colonial period and some represented varieties popular in the seventeenth century, such as Rhode Island Greening, one of the oldest of American apples, dating to the 1650s, and the Spitzenbergs, very old Hudson Valley apples dating from the early 1700s and a Dutch settler by that name. Others had European

origins, for example Golden Rennet, a French apple (spelled Reinette). It was known for its dry and sharp taste, and for its ability to keep late into winter. Also on the list were Pippins, old English types, and three different Sweetings, whose name so obviously give away their presumed chief asset. Finally, there were crab apples, Siberian crab *(Malus baccata)*. Crab apples were used for jellies and preserves, and were also added to cider. This analysis can help in understanding the role of fruit trees at Cedar Grove, but it is only a glimpse as other fruit trees are thought to have been planted by Thomson over the years.

It seems that for John Thomson, farming Cedar Grove for a livelihood was an uncertain activity. Initially there were other sources of income, but after 1837 Thomson appears to have been cash poor, in debt and with a farm that did not provide ample income. Still, despite the household's financial difficulties and uncertainties, the early 1840s were good years at Cedar Grove, with John Thomson still active and his nieces, aided by hired hands, handling much of the domestic chores. Thomas Cole was free to pursue his art in what by his accounts were near idyllic if modest circumstances. At times the artist consciously shied away from domestic rigors and responsibilities, and he did not care too much for the long and harsh winters in Catskill, nor its provincial ways. In the winter of 1843, Cole wrote to a friend whose company he had enjoyed in Rome the previous winter:

> There is little of real art in our atmosphere, and to me but few congenial minds. I languish, sometimes, for the intercourse I enjoyed last winter and feel that there is little to hold me here but my family and my own dear Catskills.[42]

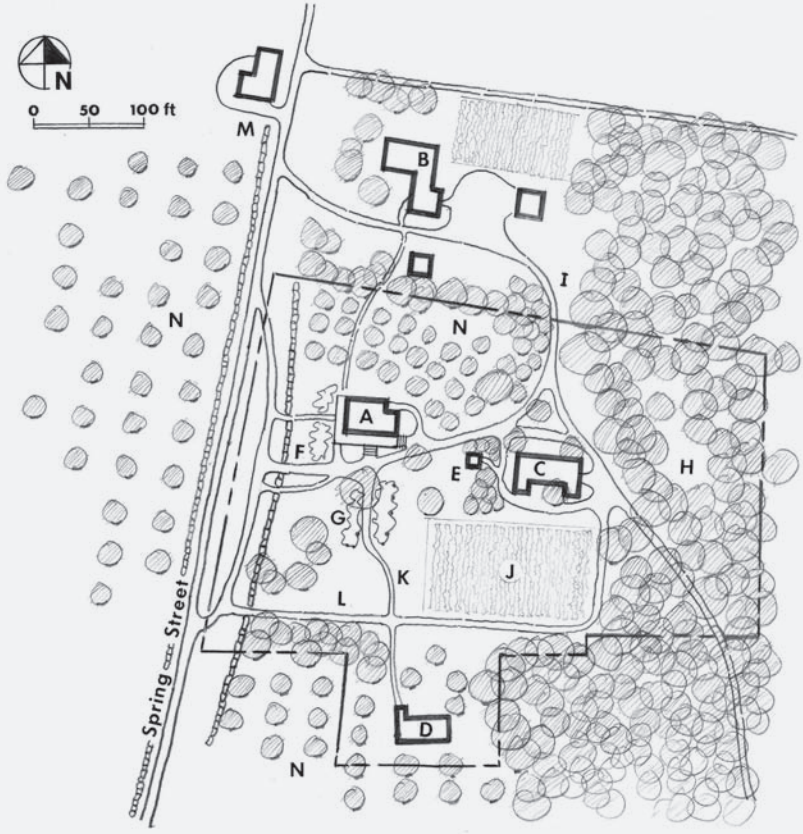
Cedar Grove to the Present Day (1848-2009)

After Thomas Cole's death, his widow Maria, the three unmarried sisters, Emily, Harriet, and Frances Bartow, and the Cole children, Theodore, Mary, Emily, and Thomas II, remained at Cedar Grove. Over the next six decades, little changed at the property, which was maintained consistently by the family into the twentieth century, as one reporter described it, "like a shrine"[43]. This situation preserved the buildings and grounds into the era of popular photography, which has helped inform scholarship and aid restoration efforts at today's historic site. Only in the twentieth century did the house grounds receive notable alterations that would have been unfamiliar to Thomas Cole.

After Cole, the Thomson's farm continued to operate, but for a long period there were no immediate family members available to be actively involved in its

Figure 9

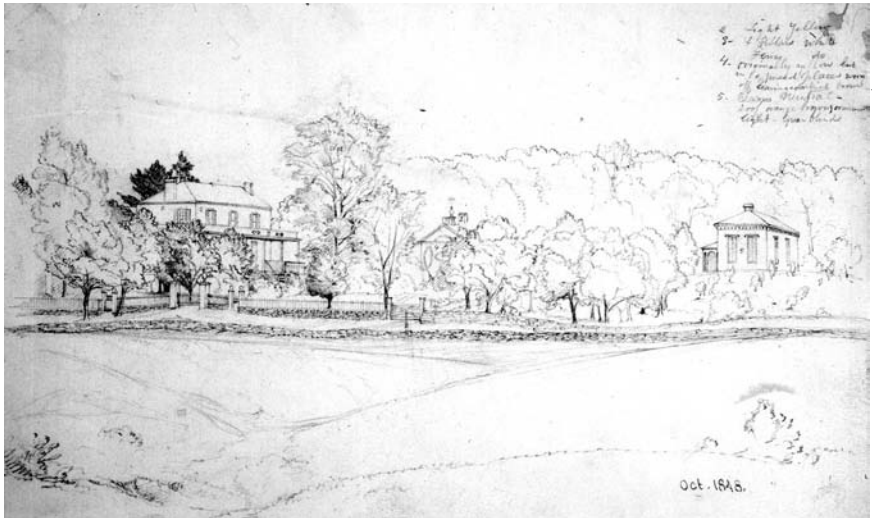
Plan Showing the House Grounds, Cedar Grove (1848), by R. M. Toole. This plan illustrates the house grounds as they are thought to have appeared in 1848. The boundary of today's 3 1/2-acre National Historic Landmark is highlighted. Thomas Cole originally rented studio space at the old "Cottage" (today's Temple Israel and parking lot). He lived and died at the "Main House." Cole also financed and probably helped design the "Store-house/Studio" (1839) and, later, he designed and had built the "New Studio" (1846). Many of the historic landscape elements, including roads, paths, walls and fences, plantings, and other landscape features were preserved or have been restored since 1999.



A Main House
B Cottage (w/ chicken house and shed)
C Store-house/Studio
D New Studio
E Privy
F Entrance gate and wall/fence line on Spring Street
G Flower garden (and old honeylocust tree)
H Woodlot (The "Grove")
I Cedar grove on path from the Cottage (today's entrance path from parking lot)
J Kitchen gardens
K Path to New Studio
L Secondary farm access roads
M Old barns
N Orchards

management, indicating that a paid farmer remained on the site, hiring seasonal help as needed to operate the modest agrarian enterprise. The family's financial affairs, always precarious, grew worse. They were managed by trustees. Eventually, Frederic Church and others set up a trust fund for Mrs. Cole, indicating that the situation was dire late in her life. These circumstances evolved with the coming of age of Theodore A. Cole (1838-1928), Thomas Cole's oldest son. Theo (as the family called him) grew up on the farm, but initially may have had ambitions to professional life. His bucolic vocation emerged in 1860, when, at age twenty-two, he was hired by Frederic Church to superintend the early development of Church's property, Olana, located just across the Hudson River in Columbia County.[44] Theodore no doubt benefited from his association and responsibilities under Church, which lasted into the 1870s, and this experience must have enhanced his efforts at Cedar Grove, where he became increasingly involved in managing the property. Frederic Church encouraged him. In 1865, he wrote: "I trust that your farm [Cedar Grove] will produce abundantly this year and heavy crops of all kinds reward your care and skill."[45]

"Care and skill" aside, at Cedar Grove the agricultural cards were stacked. The land and its operations were not easily suited to profit-making pursuits, and



COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION, TACONIC REGION

Figure 10
Drawing showing Cedar Grove from the west, by Frederic Church, October 1848. This sketch was made about eight months after Thomas Cole's death. It is an accurate depiction of the house (left), 1846 "new studio" (right) and privy (center, background), as well as the landscape elements, down to individual trees and shrubs. Spring Street is seen between the flanking stone walls across the foreground. The main gateway was framed by two large brick piers topped by classical finials

Theo does not seem to have been up to the challenge, although he had himself regularly listed as a "farmer" in the local census.[46] A later family member recited Theo's reputation as "not an efficient farmer … more imaginative than practical." It seems that Theo was his father's son, more interested in "poetry and sketching" than profitable farming.[47] Frederic Church seems to have grown increasingly concerned with what he called the family's "embarrassments," warning Theodore at one point of the "urgent nature of your family affairs."[48] In 1867, Cedar Grove's accountant wrote: "It does not seem probable that you can get a surplus from your farm above what you require to live in any considerable amount."[49] It was an understatement. One typical year's income, mostly from fruit production, totaled about $5,470, against expenses in labor, fertilizer, animals and interest on the farm's debt totaling $5,630, representing a small loss, but without consideration for the family's domestic expenses.[50] In this situation, the land itself became Cedar Grove's only ready asset. After first mortgaging the property, outright sale of lots became an option.

With the Village of Catskill slowly expanding, subdivision of its outskirts—"on the Hill"—picked up, first along Spring Street and then on High Street, Cedar Grove's southern boundary, which came up from the village on an older road and was opened for development by the Bartow/Cole owners after 1869. In these years, there seemed almost a dreamy, far-away detachment to the correspondence and reporting, as a post-romantic melancholy descended over Cedar Grove. The landscape, especially the grounds around the house, remained largely unchanged, but it was also overgrown and somewhat dilapidated due to Theodore Cole's reverence for the picturesque aesthetic, but also his slack maintenance, threadbare resources, and informal approach. One report, late in the nineteenth century, described the entrance from Spring Street as "most picturesque, with lilac bushes massed on either side and pressing lovingly against the old house."[51] The "little, old-fashioned flower garden," as it was described,[52] was a "wilderness of garden sweets,"[53] being a composition of antique varieties, including "poppies, roses, lemon lilies, fraxinella, larkspur, hollyhocks, valerian, …"[54] Several commentators who visited the site commented on its "old fashioned" character, and noted that Mrs. Cole, especially, protected the site's status quo. Thomas Cole's studio was, one reporter noted, "regarded by his devoted widow as a place too sacred for the common gaze. The stranger never enters it."[55]

Close to the house, today's historic site was altered after 1914 under the influence of Mrs. Florence Cole Vincent (1876-1861), Theodore Cole's oldest child, who was widowed that year. Mrs. Vincent lived at Cedar Grove and went about sprucing the place up. These moves did not result in wholesale changes,

but rather refurbished the landscape to a tidier, more polished "Colonial Revival" scheme that was then popular. Mrs. Vincent's landscape activities extended past Theodore Cole's death in 1928. After that, Cedar Grove was inherited by Florence and her two siblings, Mary Cole and Thomas Cole III, who were of a mind to divest of their holdings. But with Florence living at the property, where she ran an antiques shop for many years, the matter was not soon resolved.

Then, in 1933, New York State decided that the planned Rip Van Winkle Bridge approach should be located south of its present alignment, right on top of the Cedar Grove grounds. The house would have to be destroyed. Florence offered the property to the state for $100,000, but was offered $15,000. She declined, and after a spirited fight, and some support from academics (despite the fact that the Hudson River School was all but forgotten in this period), the state engineers found a way to site the bridge somewhat to the north, cutting a diagonal swath through the historic Cedar Grove farm, but sparing the immediate house grounds (Figure 4). Extensive earth excavation was required on the altered bridge approach road, as can be seen when coming to the toll booth on the western end. The resulting fill from the excavation formed the artificial land to the west that was later developed to commercial clutter along Route 23.[56]

In the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, with the remnants of Cedar Grove owned by three siblings, most of what remained of the former farm acreage was sold, leaving today's diminutive historic site. The cottage site, where Thomas Cole had painted *The Course of Empire* series, was sold in the 1960s to Temple Israel and its buildings dismantled to make way for the new. In the 1970s, Cole's 1846 Italianate studio was sold as a summer home, but was then deemed unsuitable for conversion and was summarily torn down. After Florence Cole Vincent died in the early 1960s, the main house and its immediate landscape of a few acres was left to her niece, Edith Cole Silberstein.

Over a thirty-year period, Mrs. Silberstein orchestrated, as best she could, the site's transfer to the public domain, a celebrated event that occurred in 1998 when the property was acquired by the Greene County Historical Society. After initial stabilization and restoration, the house was opened for visits in 1999. The store-house, Thomas Cole's second studio on the property, was restored (but inexplicably painted white) in the spring of 2001. There are plans to reconstruct the 1846 Italianate studio using the original drawings and old photographs. In the landscape, a "Cultural Landscape Report" was prepared, and a "Landscape Restoration Plan" followed in 2006.[57] Restoration of historic landscape elements, such as the entry gateway, flanking picket fence, old paths and carriage drives, and many of the original plantings—including the "cedar grove"—are ongoing.

Epilogue

"If we would triumph, we must live in Nature"

—*Thomas Cole*

The rescue and ongoing restoration at Cedar Grove may be the most important preservation story in the Hudson River Valley so far in this twenty-first century. If so, this would be due to the significance of Thomas Cole and the American Romantic period, which came early in the history of the United States, and which is increasingly recognized as a landmark in the history of American art. In turn, the Romantic period was a golden age in the Hudson River Valley, an important part of regional heritage and, with its positive imagery and uplifting ideals. it is a very appealing tourism theme. Basic to these evaluations were the paintings of the Hudson River School. In all this, the supremacy of "Nature" (commonly spelled with a capital "N" by Cole and his contemporaries), and the landscape, were central conceits. As such, understanding the historic landscape at Cedar Grove is especially appropriate.

Today, only a few acres constitute the Cedar Grove National Historic Site, but the modest picturesque residential grounds reflect Thomas Cole's period and are to be restored to their period condition. Artist Jasper Cropsey said Cedar Grove "did not give off an atmosphere of luxury and wealth."[58] Instead, there was a rural and even rustic air to the property when Cole knew it, even while the classical elegance of the Federal-era architecture and its complements in the landscape were harmonious and unifying factors. Importantly, the panoramic views to the Catskill Mountains, experienced daily by Cole, can still be enjoyed from today's house museum. The entry driveway coming from Springs Street can still be traced, and the replanted lilac shrubs and adjacent garden flowers bloom each summer with renewed care. Close by, a stand of cedar trees will grow again, testimony to Thomas Cole's poetic sentiment that these trees reminded him of his "evergreen," never-fading affection for Cedar Grove and its residents: "O may their friendship as enduring be / As thine unfading foliage."[59] With its scenic attributes and authentic rural amenities, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, and its related "Art Trail," are living memorials to the artistry of its famous resident and the world of romanticism in the Hudson River Valley.

This article is dedicated to the memory of Raymond Beecher, the preservationist extraordinaire who saved Cedar Grove as a national historic site, and whose research on aspects of the property's history, as cited in the endnotes, has enriched this study.

Endnotes

1. For a modern review of Cole's early history in America, see Ellwood C. Parry III, "Thomas Cole's Early Career: 1818-1829," in Edward J. Nygren and Bruce Robertson, eds., *Views and Visions, American Landscape Before 1850* (Washington DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art), 1986. Also, Louis L. Noble, *The Life and Works of Thomas Cole* (1853), reprint: (Hensonville, NY: Black Dome Press), 1997. Noble's detailed, period account of Thomas Cole's early history is unique and despite a lack of source documentation and several mistakes accurately sketches Cole's history before 1825. For background on Thomas Cole, see: Ellwood C. Parry III, *The Art of Thomas Cole: Ambition and Imagination* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1988; and William H. Truettner and Alan Wallach, eds., *Thomas Cole: Landscape into History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press and Washington DC: National Museum of American Art), 1994.
2. Earl A. Powell, *Thomas Cole* (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.), 1990, 18-19.
3. J. B. Beers & Co., *History of Greene County, New York, 1884*, 86-87. Under discussion of "Old Catskill," this county history provides the earliest source of information on early Catskill (although the narrative does not source the information conveyed). Owners and acquisitions in the Lindsey Patent are cited from unidentified, undated newspaper article that include a map of the disbursements [Vedder Research Library, Coxsackie, New York (hereafter cited as VL)]. For background on Catskill Landing and the early history of the area, see: Field Horne, *The Greene County Catskills*, (Hensonville, NY: Black Dome Press), 1994, 10, 34-36.
4. For background on Dr. Thomson, see: Raymond Beecher, "The Thomsons of Catskill Landing: An In-Depth Study," (2 vols.), *Greene County Historical Journal* (Coxsackie, NY: Greene County Historical Society, Inc.—hereafter cited as *GCHS Journal*), 23: 2 and 3, Summer-Fall 1999. Dr. Thomas Thomson may have originated in Connecticut and lived in the Clermont, New York, area before moving to Catskill as part of the notable immigration to New York State and westward by New Englanders following the 1783 conclusion of the Revolutionary War.
5. In 1787 Dr. Thomson (who, in addition to medicine, dabbled in land speculation), leased the 24-acre hilltop. Then, in 1792, he purchased the property outright. Copies of the relevant rental agreements, deeds and inventories are in the collection of the Vedder Library. All deeds, wills, inventories and agreements related to Cedar Grove are compiled in Heritage Partners and The Office of R. M. Toole, "Cultural Landscape Report," Thomas Cole National Historic Site (hereafter cited as CLR), March 29, 2004.
6. Letter: Thomas T. Thomson to Maria Thomson Bartow, 5/17/1815 [Albany Institute of History and Art (hereafter cited as AIHA)]. For background on Thomas T. Thomson, see: Raymond Beecher, "Thomas T. Thomson—Pinckney's Enigma," *GCHS Journal*, 4:3, Fall 1980. Thomas T. Thomson was a merchant and realized considerable profit during a ten-year long (1804-1814) trading operation based in British Guiana.
7. For details of these transactions, see: CLR, 8-9 and notes 34 and 39. For a discussion of gentleman farming in the Hudson Valley, see: Robert M. Toole, "The Role of Agriculture at Hudson Valley Historic Sites," *The Hudson Valley Regional Review*, Bard College, 17:2 (September 2000) 1-15. Gentleman farming was described in the nineteenth century as "amateur farming," practiced by "men who depend for a livelihood upon other pursuits" (Richard L. Allen, *New American Farm Book*, 1869).
8. N. M. Russel, "Cedar Grove," *Greene County Examiner*, c. 1896 [VL].
9. Letter: John A. Thomson to Elyah Janes, 9/29/1817 (old ledger entitled "Copies of Letters Sent") [VL].
10. For details of these transactions, see: CLR, 9 and notes 40 and 41.
11. Letter: Maria Thomson Bartow to her children, 5/15/? [VL]. Maria T. Bartow died in 1830.
12. John Thomson's account book, 8/1/1837 (notations on an agreement dated May 1827). [AIHA].

13. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, c. 1879 [VL].
14. Letter: Thomas Cole (hereafter cited as TC) to William A. Adams, 4/23/1834 [New York State Library, Thomas Cole Papers (hereafter cited as NYSL)].
15. "O Cedar Grove," by Thomas Cole, 11/1834 [NYSL]. For Thomas Cole's poetry, see: Marshall B. Tymn, ed., *Thomas Cole's Poetry* (York, PA: Liberty Cap Books), 1972.
16. TC journal entry, 4/17/1835 [NYSL].
17. Noble, 156.
18. TC, journal entry, 8/16/1835 [NYSL].
19. Ibid, 9/6/1835 [NYSL].
20. Letter: TC to G. W. Greene, not dated (1843), as quoted in Noble, 253.
21. Letter: Sarah Cole to TC, 7/3/1836 [NYSL].
22. Miscellaneous account book records, the Thomas Cole Papers [NYSL].
23. Letter: George Ackerley to TC, 8/24/1836 [AIHA].
24. TC account notations, 1840 [AIHA]. "This year having given up my old painting room for which I paid $2 per week, and taken the one in the new building . . . having paid in part for its building."
25. There are numerous letters related to the Ohio statehouse project in the New York State Library's Thomas Cole Papers, box 3, folder 2.
26. C. G. Hine, "The West Bank of the Hudson River—Albany to Tappan" (private printing), 1906, 50 [VL]
27. Letter: TC to William A. Adams, 4/8/1841, as quoted in Noble, 219.
28. Ibid., 11/27/1842, as quoted in Noble, 250.
29. Letter: TC to Maria Cole, 2/12/1844 [NYSL].
30. Ibid., 3/26/1842, as quoted in Noble, 241.
31. Letters: Maria Cole to TC, 1841 [NYSL], MC to TC, 10/30/1843 and 11/3/1843 [AIHA].
32. TC, journal entry: 7/1/1846 [NYSL].
33. Ibid., 2/1/1848, as quoted in Noble, 285.
34. "Tribute of Respect," Jacob Haight, Chairman (ad hoc Village of Catskill Committee commenting on the death of Thomas Cole, February 15, 1848) [VL].
35. *New York Tribune*, 2/21/1848 [VL].
36. Thomas Cole, "The Burial Ground at Catskill" (poem) [NYSL].
37. Raymond Beecher, "John A. Thomson (1778-1846) Catskill Merchant," *GCHS Journal*, 7:2, Summer 1883.
38. Inventory, estate of John Thomson (1846) [VL].
39. N. M. Russell, "Cedar Grove," c. 1896. *The Greene County Examiner.* The grove was an old stand of virgin forest left when the lots on Spring Street were subdivided and cleared for development before 1815. The Thomsons left the wooded area undisturbed after that date.
40. "The Garden at Cedar Grove," unidentified newspaper article, November 27, 1922 [VL].
41. Letter: John Thomson to Elyah Janes, 9/29/1817 [VL].
42. Letter: TC to G. W. Greene, not dated (winter 1843), as quoted in Noble, 253.
43. "The Kaatskills, Their Attractions Enthusiastically Set Forth," unidentified newspaper/magazine article, c. 1871 [VL].
44. For background on Olana, see Robert M. Toole, "The Art of the Landscape Gardener: Frederic Church at Olana," *Hudson River Valley Review*, Poughkeepsie, NY: Marist College, 21:1, 2004 38-63. For details of Theodore Cole's work for Frederic Church, see: The Office of R. M. Toole,

Landscape Architect, "Olana Historic Landscape Report," The Olana Partnership and New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, 1996, 36-51.

45. Letter: Frederic E. Church to Theodore Cole, 7/28/1865 [VL].
46. See Raymond Beecher, "The 1875 Census, Bartows, Coles and Even a Cawthorne," *GCHS Journal*, 23:3, Fall 1999.
47. Edith Cole Silberstein, "Our Lovable Eccentrics," unpublished manuscript, n.d., (c. 1990s) [copy, VL].
48. Frederic E. Church to Theodore Cole, 2/16/1882 [VL].
49. Letter: J. A. Taylor to Theodore Cole, 5/22/1867 [VL].
50. Letter: Theodore Cole to J. R. Taylor, 4/1884 [VL].
51. N. M. Russel, "Cedar Grove" c. 1896.
52. Ibid.
53. "The Kaatskills, Their Attractions…" (c. 1871) [VL].
54. "The Garden at Cedar Grove," November 27, 1922 [VL].
55. Benson J. Lossing, "The Hudson, from the Wilderness to the Sea," *Arts Journal*, 1860-61.
56. See: Raymond Beecher, "Rip's Hudson River Bridge," *GCHS Journal*, 9:3, Fall 1985.
57. The Office of R. M. Toole, Landscape Architect, "Cedar Grove Landscape Restoration Plan," Greene County Historical Society and The National Park Service, February 15, 2006.
58. Letter: Jasper Cropsey to his wife, c. 1853 [VL].
59. TC, *To Cedar Grove—Catskill. The Residence of J. A. Thomson*, not dated (c. 1834).

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