



# Cedar Grove

*The Thomas Cole National Historic Site*

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## **George Inness: Paintings**

A New Exhibition at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site

Opening May 1, 2005



George Inness, *Morristown, N.J.*, 1869. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of the Glencairn Museum

CATSKILL, NY - The Thomas Cole National Historic Site opens its 2005 season with an exhibition of paintings by George Inness (1825-1894). On view from May 1 through October 30, 2005, the exhibition focuses on Inness's later work and is curated by Elizabeth Stevens, the Exhibitions Curator for the Thomas Cole Site, and the Director of Exhibitions at Salander O'Reilly Galleries in New York City.

Elizabeth Jacks, Director of The Thomas Cole National Historic Site, notes "As an institution committed to preserving the artistic legacy of Thomas Cole, we are pleased to present this exhibition of another great innovator in the American landscape tradition."

The Inness exhibition follows the Cole Site's 2004 exhibition "Ralph Albert Blakelock: Paintings and Drawings", which was also curated by Ms. Stevens. Inness was born in the Hudson Valley and at one point painted in the same New York City studio building as Blakelock. Both Blakelock and Inness were followers of Thomas Cole and emulated him in their early work. "Inness like Blakelock was a pivotal American artist, whose painting technique helped pave the way for many American artists from Impressionism to Post Modernism" said Stevens. "I have chosen pictures that are not what people are used to seeing from Inness. Several show a technique and palette that are surprisingly akin to his friend Ralph Albert Blakelock."



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Blakelock and Inness also shared a devotion to the beliefs of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). Swedenborg, a Swedish philosopher and religious writer popular with many artists and free-thinking individuals of the time, claimed to have a communion with the spiritual world after the opening of his spiritual senses in 1745. Inness was intrigued by Swedenborg's "Doctrine of Correspondences," which entailed the belief that, although the spiritual and temporal worlds were fundamentally different, they resembled one another in appearances.

## **Opening Event**

The public is invited to an opening event on May 1st at 2 pm, for which admission is free. Elizabeth Stevens, curator of the exhibition, speaks about the making of the show, followed by a talk by Adrienne Baxter Bell, PhD candidate in American art history at Columbia University, guest curator at the National Academy of Design, and author of *George Inness and the Visionary Landscape*, and *Painting Philosophy: George Inness, William James, and the Metaphysical Landscape*.

Lenders to the exhibition include the Glencairn Museum, Bryn Athyn, PA; the Mead Art Museum, Amherst, MA; the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Utica, NY; and the Smith College Museum of Art, North Hampton, MA.

## **About Thomas Cole**

Long regarded as the founder of America's first art movement, known as the Hudson River School, Thomas Cole (1801-1848) is a central figure in the development of American culture. When Cole made his first trip up the Hudson River in 1825, thought-leaders in America were searching for something distinctly American to establish the nation's own culture as separate from that of Europe. Thomas Cole found it in the Catskill Mountain wilderness, which came to symbolize the unspoiled character of the new nation. Lionized during his lifetime and celebrated by a generation of artists who followed in his footsteps, Cole is now widely regarded as the father of American landscape painting.

## **About Cedar Grove**

Cedar Grove is the site where the artist Thomas Cole lived, worked and was married, and where he died at the age of 47. Today the site consists of the Federal style brick home (c. 1815), as well as Thomas Cole's original studio building, on 5 landscaped acres with a magnificent view of the Catskill Mountains. In recent years the house has undergone a major restoration, and now contains both furnished rooms and gallery rooms with special exhibitions. The newly restored studio contains Cole's original easel and art-making tools, and offers a greater understanding of the artist and his working environment.