



**Cedar Grove**

*The Thomas Cole National Historic Site*

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## **New Exhibition of Hudson River Views at Thomas Cole Historic Site**

Celebrating Quadricentennial with Paintings of the Hudson River School



Alfred T. Bricher, *Up the Hudson*, 1864. oil on canvas, 12 x 20 in. Private collection

CATSKILL NY - The Thomas Cole Historic Site is delighted to present a new exhibition entitled ***River Views of the Hudson River School*** exploring the subject of the Hudson River in the landscape paintings of major figures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century including Thomas Cole, Sanford Gifford, and Jasper Cropsey. The exhibition launches on May 2, 2009, and is the sixth annual presentation of Hudson River School masterpieces at the Thomas Cole Site.

The exhibition, focusing on the Hudson River, coincides with the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Henry Hudson's 1609 voyage. The Hudson River held and continues to hold deep symbolism as America's first river. The inclusion of the Hudson River in a 19th-century painting was therefore often resonant with meaning. This 2009 exhibition of 19th-century views of the Hudson River will explore the artists' choices regarding depictions of the river and its related tributaries, especially in the region of Catskill where Thomas Cole made his home. It will also tie in with the multitude of celebrations planned all along the river as part of the Quadricentennial.

218 Spring Street, PO Box 426, Catskill, NY 12414 518-943-7465 [www.thomascole.org](http://www.thomascole.org)



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“Part of the magic of this exhibition is that the landscapes just outside the gallery walls are, in many cases, very much the same as they were 150 years ago,” said Elizabeth Jacks, Executive Director of the Thomas Cole Historic Site. “In the year when people will be rediscovering the Hudson River, I can think of no better way to visit it than through the eyes of the Hudson River School artists.”

The exhibition of approximately fifteen Hudson River paintings presents a unique opportunity to display the works of major 19<sup>th</sup> century landscape artists in a venue located in the midst of the sites that inspired them. To enhance the connection between the paintings and the surrounding landscapes, a series of guided hikes will be offered to the scenes in the paintings, some mere minutes away from the Thomas Cole Historic Site.

Among the highlights of the ***River Views of the Hudson River School***:

- Thomas Cole, *Indians Viewing Landscape*. An unusual small painting by the founder of the Hudson River School depicting two Native Americans overlooking what could be the Hudson Valley from a perch high up in the Catskills.
- Arthur Parton, *Mount Merino*. A window into the Hudson River of the past, when the City of Hudson still had a harbor called South Bay, here shown in tranquil beauty before the railroad closed over the mouth of the port.
- Regis Francis Gignoux, *On the Upper Hudson*. An overtly Romantic vision of the Hudson, this major work was included in the legendary exhibition "American Paradise" at the Metropolitan Museum that launched so much interest in the Hudson River School. The curator of that show, John K. Howat, is the opening day speaker at the Thomas Cole House on May 2.

The exhibition will remain on view, loaned from private collectors, through October 11, 2009.

The exhibition is curated by Dr. Nancy Siegel, Associate Professor of Art History at Towson University in Towson, MD. Curator of "Along the Juniata: Thomas Cole and the Dissemination of American Landscape Imagery" and "The Morans: The Artistry of a Nineteenth-Century Family of Painter-Etchers," both at the Phillips Museum of Art and other institutions. Scholarly publications include "Within the Landscape: Essays on Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture." Dr. Siegel will write the essay for the exhibition catalogue.

### **Special Event: Dr. John Howat Opening Day Speaker on May 2, 2009**

To launch the opening of the 2009 season and the exhibition, Thomas Cole Historic Site is pleased to welcome opening day speaker, Dr. John Howat, the world-renowned curator who retired in 2001 after 33 years at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, during which time he spearheaded the expansion of the museum's American Wing. Dr. Howat is credited with catapulting the Hudson River School into the public eye with his 1972 book *The Hudson River and Its Painters*, and the 1987 blockbuster exhibition and catalogue *American Paradise*. One of his last exhibitions at the Met was the ambitious *Art and the Empire City: New York, 1825-1861* (2000). The opening day event will include a free preview of the exhibition from 12 to 1:30 pm, followed by Dr. Howat's talk at 2pm. Admission to the talk is \$9 or \$6 for members. First-come-first-served.



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## **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, American cultural leaders 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, was married, and where he died at the age of 47. Today the site consists of the Federal style brick home (c. 1815) in which Thomas Cole resided with his family, as well as the artist's original studio building, on five landscaped acres with a magnificent view of the Catskill Mountains.

## **Directions:**

Cedar Grove is located at 218 Spring Street in Catskill, New York, near the western entrance to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, with easy access from the New York State Thruway, Exit 21.