

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



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Two Major Paintings by Thomas Cole Donated to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site by Renowned Art Gallery Owner Alexander Acevedo

Catskill, NY – August 4, 2026 – The Thomas Cole National Historic Site announced today that two major paintings by Thomas Cole (1801-1848) have been gifted to the permanent collection of the historic site. Both paintings have been donated by Alexander Acevedo, founder of the renowned American art gallery Alexander Gallery in New York City. The two paintings are:

Thomas Cole, *Study for “The Voyage of Life: Manhood”*, ca. 1840, oil on canvas, 25½ x 39 in., Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Gift of Alexander Acevedo / Alexander Gallery, TC.2019.3 (photo at right);



Attributed to Thomas Cole, *Untitled (Cole Family Evening Gathering)*, ca. 1820, oil on canvas, 17 x 20 in. Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Gift of Alexander Acevedo / Alexander Gallery, TC.2025.4 (photo at lower right).



Both paintings are of great importance in totally different ways. The *Study for “The Voyage of Life: Manhood”* is an unusually large study for one of the most important series of paintings that Thomas Cole created: the four-painting series “The Voyage of Life.”

Cole painted two original versions of the series. The earlier series (1840), for which this painting is a study, is in the permanent collection of Munson Museum of Art in Utica, NY. The slightly later series (1842) is in the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

The portrait of the Cole family is one of the two earliest known paintings by Thomas Cole. It dates to ca. 1820, when the family was living in Steubenville, Ohio.

Though unsigned, it has been authenticated by Cole researcher Sylvia Hasenkopf, author of the forthcoming book *The Letters of Thomas Cole, 1820-1832, Volume One* (to be published in 2027 by Flint Mine Press). Hasenkopf identified a letter that Thomas Cole wrote to William Dunlap, then Vice President of the National Academy of Design, which resulted in the following account in Dunlap's book published in 1834, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*. Dunlap writes of Cole: "Now, 1820, he took up the palette to paint portraits. His father first submitted to the operation. It was pronounced like. Another and another succeeded." In 1820, Cole also took instruction from itinerant portrait painter "Mr. Stein," as recounted in the 2018 book *Thomas Cole's Journey: Atlantic Crossings*, published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Hasenkopf has identified the family members portrayed through analysis of letters and other known portraits (left to right): Sarah Cole (Thomas Cole's sister), James Cole (his father), Mary Holloway Cole (his mother, with her back to the viewer), Ann Cole (his sister, later Ann Ackerley) and Mary Cole Bayless (his sister).

The other earliest known painting (dated 1818-1820) by Thomas Cole is titled "Ruined Castle on a Rock" and is also in the permanent collection of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, having been donated previously by Richard T. Sharp, a leading benefactor of the Thomas Cole Site, for whom the Richard Sharp Gallery at the Thomas Cole Site is named.

"The two paintings by Thomas Cole gifted by Alex Acevedo are of enormous significance and are spectacular additions to the permanent collection of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site," said Maura O'Shea, Executive Director. "We are extremely grateful to Alex for donating them and are thrilled to share them with our visitors, whose number one request is to see original Thomas Cole paintings."

Alexander Acevedo founded the Alexander Gallery in 1971, having first entered the trade at the age of 12 when he began dealing in coins, stamps, and comic books. He opened his first Madison Avenue gallery in 1976 with American paintings, pre-Columbian and Indigenous American artifacts, and Japanese works of art. With landmark exhibitions on the Hudson River School, including such artists as Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, Sanford Gifford and Frederic Edwin Church, the gallery quickly became known for the high caliber of its inventory and its charismatic owner. The gallery has since been located in several prominent Madison Avenue settings, where it continued to mount important exhibitions and expand into and lead other genres. It continues to purchase important works in many genres and place them with museums and collectors throughout the globe.

Thomas Cole National Historic Site

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site showcases the life and work of Thomas Cole (1801-1848), whose American landscape painting defines an enduring visual identity for the nation. Inspired by the natural beauty that surrounds the site, Cole founded the influential Hudson River School art movement. The site's six-acre campus in Catskill, NY, includes Cole's home and two studio buildings; the Cole Center, a new visitor center designed by Architectural Digest 100 Stephen Shadley; gardens and grounds with panoramic views of the Catskill Mountains; and a scenic walkway over the Hudson River connecting the site with Olana, the historic home of artist and Cole student Frederic Church. The Thomas Cole Site hosts exhibitions as well as art-making activities and innovative school and public programs. Visitors experience first-hand the themes that Cole explored, from the power of art to landscape preservation to the restorative properties of nature. The Thomas Cole Site is a National Historic Landmark and an affiliated area of the National Park System, and it operates as an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization.

Visitor Information

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is open year-round, and hours vary by season. For details see: thomascole.org/visit. The grounds are open every day for free from dawn to dusk. Keep in touch on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube at [@thomascolesite](https://www.instagram.com/thomascolesite).