

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



Thomas Cole's Voice Narrative in the House Studio, Second Floor

HOUSE STUDIO ABOUT COLE'S TRIP TO SCHROON LAKE AREA

I have been looking over and over my sketches and got into a mountain fever, and nothing would do but that I must allay it by painting the sable pyramid from the sketch I made in the clearing, before we dashed on to the grisly pond.¹

On that glorious day² Maria + myself joined company with Mr. and Mrs. Durand with the intent to explore the scenery in the vicinity of Schroon Lake.³

The scene had a wild sort of beauty that approached the grand – quietness, solitude, the untamed, the unchanged aspect of Nature.⁴ Stretching into dim distance in the North, the peaks and ridges of the lofty Adirondack Mountains towered.⁵

Years! They are nought to a mountain, and centuries and centuries roll by harmlessly.⁶

One day I diverged from the road, once or twice turned round for the eastern view, and was rewarded. The little Lake lay below, a crystal in an ebony setting.⁷ He who looks on nature with a loving eye drinks pleasure from a purer cup than avarice or ambition have the power to give.⁸

But I could not linger long; my object was not yet attained. The cleared hills beyond promised such an opportunity for a more complete view of the Mountain that I could not resist the temptation. This would be glorious, I thought, + hope + enthusiasm drew me on. I dashed down the hill, toward the pond through the swampy forest, and arrived at the-clearing.⁹

I emerged + my eyes were blessed. The mountain rose in silent grandeur, its dark head clad in a dense forest of evergreens cleaving the sky a stary pointing pyramid. Here amid the blackened stumps and mutilated trees of the clearing I spent an hour endeavouring to have in my Sketch Book the features of the scene. It was still + solemn; yet at times I heard the sound of running waters ascend from the woods below – soft, but thrilling as midnight whisperings. Here I felt the sublimity of untamed wilderness and the majesty of the eternal mountains.¹⁰

SOURCES:

¹ Thomas Cole to Asher Brown Durand, January 4, 1838, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Letters by Thomas Cole, Box 1, Folder 3.

² Thomas Cole to Asher Brown Durand, January 4, 1838, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Letters by Thomas Cole, Box 1, Folder 3.

³ Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry July 8, 1837, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.

⁴ Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry July 8, 1837, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.

⁵ Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry July 8, 1837, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.

⁶ Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry July 8, 1837, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.

⁷ Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry July 8, 1837, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.

⁸ Thomas Cole, "Lecture on American Scenery: Delivered before the Catskill Lyceum, April 1, 1841" in *Northern Light* 1 (May 1841): 25-26.

⁹ Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry July 8, 1837, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.

¹⁰ Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry July 8, 1837, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.