

# THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jennifer Greim, [jgreim@thomascole.org](mailto:jgreim@thomascole.org)  
Director of Advancement and External Affairs

### The Thomas Cole National Historic Site Announces the Gift of a Significant Sarah Cole (1805–1857) Painting from Susan Clark Livingston.

**Sarah Cole was a Professional Artist and the Sister of Thomas Cole. The Painting Was Exhibited at the Cole Site in the Groundbreaking 2010 Exhibition, “Remember the Ladies,” the First Exhibition of 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Women Artists of the Hudson River School in the United States.**

**Catskill, NY – Tuesday, December 10** – The Thomas Cole National Historic Site announced today the gift of a significant Sarah Cole oil painting from Susan Clark Livingston. The painting, *Ancient Column Near Syracuse*, c. 1848, is a gift purchased from a recent auction of 19<sup>th</sup>-century American women artists at Hawthorne Fine Art in New York City. Sarah was a professional artist and the sister of Thomas Cole. The painting was previously exhibited at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site as part of the groundbreaking 2010 exhibition, *Remember the Ladies: Women of the Hudson River School*, the first exhibition of 19th-century women artists of the Hudson River School in the United States.



Sarah Cole, *Ancient Column Near Syracuse*, c. 1848, oil on canvas, 11 7/8 x 11 7/8 in., Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

Sarah Cole was an accomplished American artist known for her paintings and etchings. Like her brother Thomas, Sarah worked in the earliest years of the Hudson River School of American landscape painting art movement. She hiked and sketched with Thomas and studied with the artist Asher B. Durand. Her body of work includes both original and copied compositions. She exhibited and sold her paintings at the National Academy of Design, American Art-Union, Western Art Union in Cincinnati, and the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore. Her work was featured in the 19th-century publications, “Women Artists in all Ages and Countries,” 1859, and “Women Etchers of America,” 1888, where she was described as the first woman etcher in the United States. She lived periodically at the property known today as the Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

The painting *Ancient Column Near Syracuse*, completed in 1848, was likely inspired by Thomas Cole's painting *Column of Ancient Syracuse*, which was displayed after his death at the memorial exhibition also in 1848. Thanks to Susan Livingston's extraordinary gift, Sarah Cole's, *Ancient Column Near Syracuse*, is now on display in the Main House on the Cole Site campus. The painting measures 11 7/8 x 11 7/8 inches and is inscribed verso, "A Column Standing near Syracuse, Sicily copied from a picture by T. Cole by S. Cole." Visitors to the house today can also see another painting of columns by Thomas Cole entitled, *Study of Fallen Columns*, 1844-1848, which is currently on loan from the Bob and Carol Lockyer Collection.

Susan Clark Livingston is a collector of Hudson River School paintings since 1975. She is a Partner and serves as global ambassador and client liaison at Brown Brothers Harriman. Her board affiliations include: BBH Trust Board of Trustees, Investment Company Institute, Tufts University's Fletcher School Board of Advisors, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. She is also a member of the East India Marine Associates for the Peabody Essex Museum. In addition, she is on the President's Council of Advisors of Scenic Hudson, an Advisory Trustee of Friends of Clermont, and a Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy student mentor.

"This important gift from Susan Livingston allows us to share with our visitors one of the finest works ever completed by Sarah Cole and to tell the history of 19th-century American women artists that unfolded right here," said Elizabeth B. Jacks, Executive Director of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. "*Ancient Column Near Syracuse* is a painting of great artistic skill and vision as well as a tribute to Sarah's brother, Thomas Cole, who passed away the year she painted it. We are enormously grateful to Susan for gifting this beautiful work to our growing collection."

"Susan Livingston's generous gift provides a homecoming—reuniting a major painting by Sarah Cole with existing examples of her artistry in the collection of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site," said Nancy Siegel, Professor, Towson University, and National Council member of the Cole Site. Dr. Siegel curated the exhibitions *Remember the Ladies*, 2010, and *Women Reframe American Landscape*, 2023. "*Ancient Column Near Syracuse* complements and expands the mission of the Thomas Cole Site, invigorating the conversation between Sarah and Thomas, sister and brother, artist and artist. Here, the canon of the Hudson River School of artists is redefined, allowing for greater inclusivity and diversity. I was thrilled to include this painting in the *Remember the Ladies* exhibition and now it can be enjoyed where Sarah spent many days and weeks in the company of the extended Cole-Bartow family."

Susan Livingston's gift of *Ancient Column Near Syracuse* is the latest in a series of major gifts of artwork to the Thomas Cole Site's permanent collection. The gifts include, among others, the following (in reverse chronological order): Thomas Cole oil painting, *Jerusalem*, 2021 gift of Michael Altman Fine Art & Advisory Services; Thomas Cole oil painting, *Hunters in a Landscape*, 2020 gift of Susan G. A. Warner; Sarah Cole oil painting *Voyage of Life: Old Age, after Thomas Cole*, 2018 gift of E. W. Doucet and

Mary Hallock; original drop-leaf table from Thomas Cole's residency, 2018 gift of Stuart P. and Sue Feld; Thomas Cole oil painting *Tower by Moonlight*, 2014 gift of David and Laura Grey; Thomas Cole watercolor *Ruined Castle on a Rock*, Thomas Cole oil sketch *Reflection*, and Thomas Cole oil painting *Catskill Mountain Landscape*, all 2014 gifts of Richard Sharp; original painted door thought to have been used in Cole's Old Studio, 2012 Gift of Alexander Gallery; Thomas Cole oil sketch *Catskill Landscape*, 2011 gift of the Seattle Art Museum; Thomas Cole original guitar and case, 2010 gift of Richard Sharp; Thomas Cole original paint brushes, 2008 gift of St. Julian Fishburne and Arthur Anderson; Thomas Cole oil sketch *Study of a Man's Head*, 2007 gift of Irwin and Susan Richman; and Thomas Doughty oil painting and Albert Bierstadt oil painting, facilitated by Cynthia S.H. Bowers.

### **Thomas Cole National Historic Site**

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is an international destination presenting the original home and studios of the artist and early environmentalist Thomas Cole (1801-1848). Cole founded the influential art movement of the United States, now known as the Hudson River School of American landscape painting. Located on six acres in the Hudson Valley, the site includes the 1815 Main House where the artist lived; Cole's 1839 Old Studio; the reconstructed 1846 New Studio building, which now features a museum gallery of rotating exhibitions; a new visitors center called the Cole Center, designed by Stephen Shadley; and gardens and grounds with panoramic views of the Catskill Mountains. It is a National Historic Landmark and an affiliated area of the National Park System, operating as an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization. Activities include special exhibitions of both 19th-century and contemporary art, print publications, lectures, extensive online programs, school programs, the Cole Fellowship, free community events, and innovative public programs such as the Hudson River School Art Trail—a map and website that enable people to visit the places in nature that Cole painted—and the Hudson River Skywalk, a scenic walkway connecting the Thomas Cole Site with Frederic Church's Olana over the Hudson River. The goal of all programs at the Thomas Cole Site is to enable visitors to find meaning and inspiration in Thomas Cole's life and work. The themes that Cole explored in his art and writings—such as landscape preservation and our conception of nature as a restorative power—are both historic and timely, providing the opportunity to connect to audiences with insights that are highly relevant to their own lives.

### **Visitor Information**

The Thomas Cole Site is open year round. Hours vary by season. For details see: [thomascole.org/visit](http://thomascole.org/visit). The grounds are open every day for free as a public park from dawn to dusk. Keep in touch on Instagram and Facebook at @thomascolesite.