

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

We traveled slowly, all night

An account of traveling from the historic property, now known as the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, in Catskill, New York to New York City

Sarah Cole (1805-1857) was a professional artist. She was also the sister of Thomas Cole. Two of her original paintings are in the collection and on view at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

Addressed to “Mr Thomas Cole Catskill New York”

February 13, 1836

My Dear Thomas,

I arrived her last evening after a very tedious & disagreeable [sic] journey. Mr. F. Thomas will have told you that we did not leave Hudson until late in the evening, as the shags of the red bird live more full, and we had to wait for the old line which proved to be very poor & full of passengers, not the most agreeable. Captain Mills had to sit quite in the opposite corner of the stage to me, and as there were two seats between us I could not speak a word to him. There was a Captain Newton and his wife & two children sat near me & made themselves as disagreeable as they possibly could. I was very sick all night, readily & actively sick & this Mrs. Newton though she sat next to me never spoke one word to me I might have died for what any one would have known or cared. I felt afraid & I should have to be left. We traveled slowly, all night, it was half past five when we arrived at Rhinebeck, there we had all to get out and the passengers called for breakfast, I for any part felt more like being sick, however I managed to swallow a cup of tea. I eat a little dry toast, after which I felt a little better. Captain Mills was passively kind & polite, but he is not a man of a sanguine temperament. I suffered very from warmth and close air in the stage for the poor shivering fellows would have every curtain trapped right down, and we were all very much oppressed for room. I could not move my knee and inch either one way or the other. I was very much annoyed with a young man sitting of the front seat he spoke and most pitifully but the rest seemed to be thinking for much of their own miseries to heed his, he said if he would only slow his leg around for one minute, he would not care)that was if a fellow should know his own leg)

We got to Poughkeepsie about half past ten where we changed horses I believe for the second time, or rather they brought on four skeletons with horses hides stretched over them., which had not rein many miles before the driver had to give them some whiskey to enable them to proceed, poor things they held up their parts for a short time. I could tell by their shadows & managed to drag us up the hills, and they sleigh helped to push them down the hills, until we arrived at Fishkill. Together with the help of the gentlemen passengers who had to get out when we passed any team and lifted us again out of the snow banks into the road, we broke one of our braces which detained us in the road a little while, at Fishkill. We had a better team of horses to cross the Highlands, which part of the journey I enjoyed very much for the afternoon was fine & the scenery beautiful, but as soon as the sun had gone down the passengers again would let down the curtain to my great mortification & annoyance, & when we arrived within three miles of Peekskill the lounge of the sleigh broke out. They said that if it had happened five minutes sooner we should have all be dashed to pieces as we were descending a very long steep hill, as it was we had all to get out and walk down the hills, and ride up, and where it was level, I thanked my good fortune that I was a tollerable [sic] walker. My disagreeable delicate companion Mrs. Newton fared badly she fell down twenty times. I felt really sorry for her. I thought it a pity that a human being should reach her stature be free she had learned the use of her limbs, however by dint of plodding and riding we at length reached Peekskill, we all were glad enough to enter the inn, and we had all taken off out cloaks hats &c and had been seated about half an hour when the landlady told us that we could not be accommodated with beds as they were going to have a ball there night, couseqwenth, we had to get into another sleigh& be taken to the Peekskill landing, a house that was not in the habit of accommodating travelers in winter season. However we were made very comfortable. There was an old Quaker lady there that was quite a comfort to me. The next morning Captain Newton took off his lady and children in a private conveyance & we had to wait for the sleigh being repaired which fortunately was done sooner than we expected. We proceeded to New York in the out [hole] accident & got in about half past five [hole] all out folks well, him in [??] with afterwards. I am happy to say, the Dr. has got [obscured] out, as you will see, as he has sent one up to you. I think it is very good, it has been noticed in many of the papers & this morning he has seen a very gratifying notice of it in the Abbion, I hope this will find you and all well. Give my love to the girls and respects to Mr. Thompson. What time did Thomas Thomson get home. I was sorry we had to detain him so long in Hudson, but there was some uncertainty about me no getting off from Hudson at all, we advised him to stay all night in Hudson as the roads were so bad between there & Catskill. I hope he got home safe and did not get blamed for being away so long. Our people have taken this house again as rents are raising. They thought they had better secure this for fear they might not be able to get one so good even for a greater price. They can rent it for more any day they choose if they cant suit themselves better. I believe Dr. means to continue as they were he sometimes speaks selling of his house (which he could to advantage) and going to board.

You can form no idea of spectacle this city presents for filth and snow. I should utterly despair if I were asked to describe it. They have much less snow on this side the highlands than the other.

Tell the girls that I shall go to see Harriet in a day or two. It has been rainy all night and this morning. My escpences [sic] down were \$8.75. Write to me soon and mention all the folks. They all join me in love to you

From your affechnionate [sic] sister Sarah Cole

Sarah Cole to Thomas Cole, February 13th, 1836 Transcription. Original at the New York State Library Archives, Albany NY. Thomas Cole Papers, box 4 folder 1.
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