

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



Thomas Cole's Voice Narrative, Spring Lights

Last evening I took a walk, and dark masses of clouds moved across the sky like the heralds of an approaching storm. ¹

I reflected that the south wind would still blow and bring up its gloomy clouds for ages and ages after I am gone. ²

I have scarcely done anything, not finished a single picture. Indeed my mind has been occupied with so many cares and anxieties. ³

May my fears be foolish. ⁴

I have found no natural scenery which has affected me so powerfully as that which I have seen in the wilderness of America. ⁵

Here, I felt the sublimity of untamed wilderness and the majesty of the eternal mountains. ⁶

Painting is capable of imparting knowledge. Painting is capable of awakening the soul to the refining influences of beauty and sublimity. ⁷

Without Art Man would scarce be human. ⁸

I long for the time when I can paint whatever my imagination would dictate without fear of running into pecuniary difficulties. ⁹

I have determined to commence a series of pictures for which I have no commission. ¹⁰

There are many wanderings in the stream of life and in this idea I have proceeded. ¹¹

All nature *here* is new to art. ¹²

Year by year, the groves that adorn the banks of the Catskill—wasted away. ¹³

In this age, may we at times turn to the pure enjoyment of rural nature. ¹⁴

We are still in Eden. ¹⁵

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- ¹ Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry May 31, 1835, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.
- ² Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry May 31, 1835, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.
- ³ Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry April 17, 1835, 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 August 21, 1835, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.
- ⁵ Thomas Cole to Robert Gilmore, January 29, 1832, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Correspondence between Thomas Cole and Robert Gilmore 1826-1837, Box 3 Folder 8.
- 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, "A Letter to Critics on the Art of Painting" in *The Knickerbocker* 16 (September 1840): 230-233.
- ⁸ Thomas Cole, *Lecture [on Art]*, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Essays, Box 5, Folder 2.
- ⁹ Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry January 1, 1846, 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 January 1, 1846, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.
- ¹¹ Thomas Cole to Rev. J.F. Phillips, March 21, 1840, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Letters by Thomas Cole, 1839-1840, Box 1 Folder 4.
- ¹² Thomas Cole, "Thoughts and Occurrences," Journal Entry July 6, 1835, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Journals, Box 4a Folder 1.
- ¹³ Thomas Cole, Excerpt from "Lecture on American Scenery," (public lecture, Catskill Lyceum, Catskill, NY, April 1, 1841).
- ¹⁴ Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery" in *American Monthly Magazine* 1 (January 1836) 1-12.
- ¹⁵ Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery" in *American Monthly Magazine* 1 (January 1836) 1-12.