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Thomas Cole



Suitability/Feasibility Study

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**National Park Service
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15 State Street
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I. Executive Summary

The Thomas Cole Suitability/Feasibility Study was prepared by the North Atlantic Regional Office of the National Park Service (NPS) as a case study of a site proposed for inclusion into the National Park System. The material in the report will be used as background information by NPS researchers charged with recommending how the National Park Service should be addressing sites associated with American artists.

The study evaluates the Thomas Cole National Historic Landmark and the nearby historic landscape which inspired his work, against NPS criteria for suitability and feasibility and presents several management options for preserving and interpreting sites associated with Thomas Cole (1801-1848), one of the nation's most important artists.

The study demonstrates why the Cole site has been determined to be nationally significant, and provides additional information beyond the 1965 National Historic Landmark nomination forms and the 1980 NPS *Thomas Cole House Reconnaissance Study*. The original significance determination emphasized the importance of Cole as an artist and as the source of inspiration for the Hudson River school, stating that: "Thomas Cole, pioneer interpreter of the romantic beauty of the American landscape, is one of America's notable landscape and allegorical painters of the first half of the nineteenth century, and the finest landscape painter of his time." The current report notes that, in addition, the subject matter of Cole's paintings — the cultural landscape within 15 miles of the site should also be considered in the development of a preservation and interpretation strategy for the site. The report presents three management alternatives:

Alternative A: Cole National Historic Site, under which the NPS would own and manage the site at a projected annual cost of \$300,000 and with development costs of \$3 million. Planned programs would include preservation of the Cole House and identification and interpretation of painting sites within a 15-mile radius of the property. It could be managed by a private/NPS partnership.

Alternative B: Cole Interpretive Center, which would make the site a satellite of Olana State Historic Site with emphasis on Cole-related regional interpretive programs, possibly allowing the house itself to be sold to an unrelated user. The projected annual cost is \$150,000 which will be generated by a trust fund established by the Cole Foundation. Development costs are estimated at \$2.15 million. It could be managed as a partnership with or without the NPS.

Alternative C: Status Quo, an entirely private nonprofit operation, which would probably result in the site eventually being closed to the public and sold for an unrelated use.

The report concludes that the Thomas Cole National Historic Landmark site, with the nearby painting sites, meets the criteria of national significance, suitability, and feasibility for inclusion in the National Park System. The study also notes that other options also exist for its management and that these should be further explored in the context of partnership approaches with organizations in the region.

Hudson River School Sites

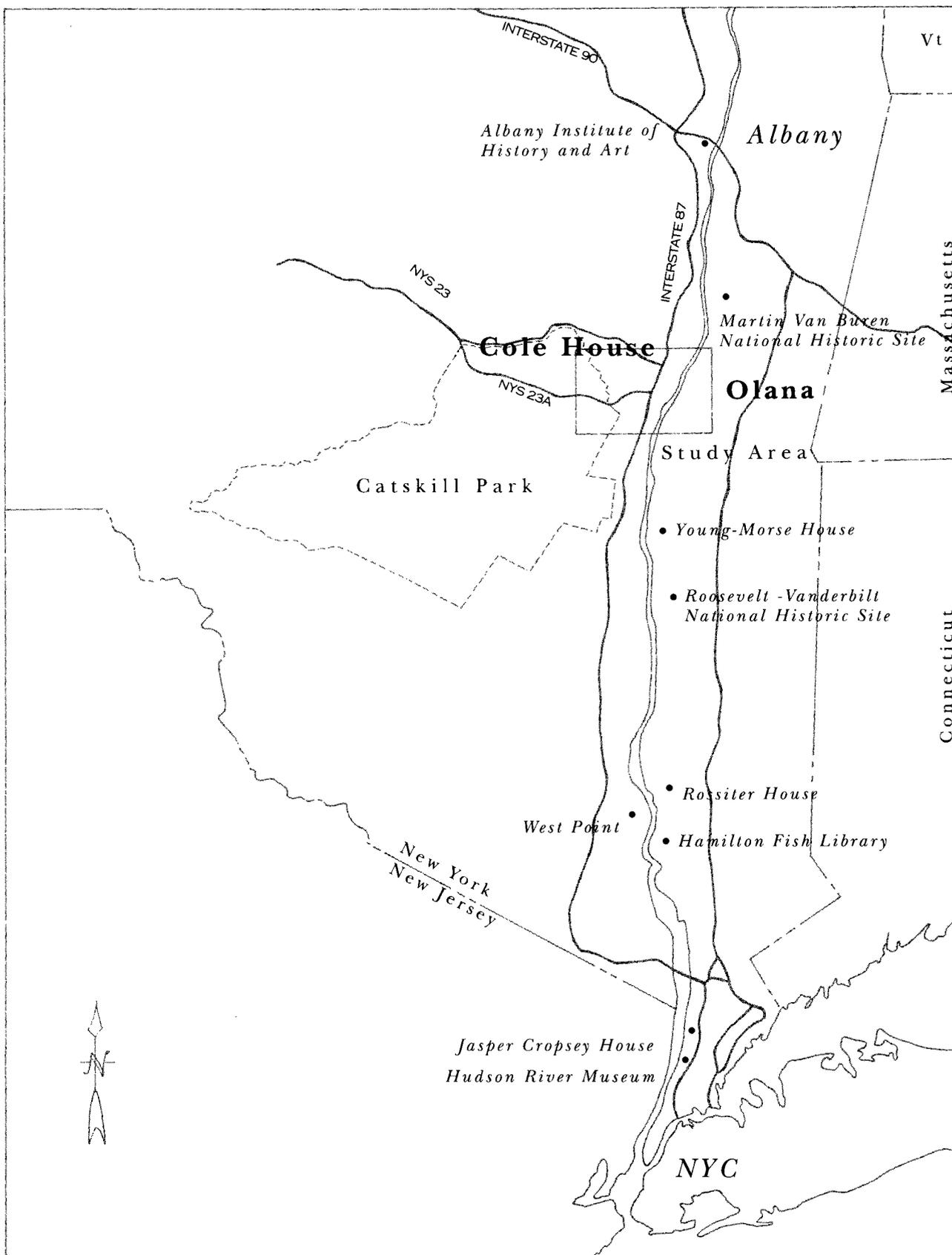


FIGURE 1.

II. Purpose

The Thomas Cole House was evaluated by the National Park Service in 1980 with the publication of a report entitled *Thomas Cole House Reconnaissance Study*. Reconnaissance studies typically involve brief investigations of a site to evaluate significance, and to determine whether further NPS involvement is warranted or necessary. At that time, the study concluded that although the site was nationally significant, it could not recommend “full scale creation of a national historic site” until several management options involving little or no NPS involvement had been explored.

In the ten years since publication of the *Reconnaissance Study* there have been many changes at the Thomas Cole National Historic Landmark. The exterior of the main house has been stabilized and partially preserved, and passersby are alerted to the site’s importance by attractive new signs. A scholar in residence now lives in the studio building and serves as an on-site representative of the site’s new owners, the Thomas Cole Foundation. The foundation, a nonprofit organization, bought the site in 1984 after it was saved from demolition by the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development.

Despite these positive steps, the site is in need of much attention if it is to be open to the public on a regular basis, and if it is to fulfill its potential for interpreting the life and work of America’s first great landscape painter, Thomas Cole, and his followers in the Hudson River school. Recognizing the challenges and responsibilities associated with managing the site, the Cole Foundation enlisted the support of several local and national organizations. In light of current conditions and to explore more fully new management alternatives for the site, these groups coordinated by the National Parks and Conservation Association, offered to defray some of the costs for National Park Service technical experts to reevaluate the findings of the 1980 *Reconnaissance Study*.

While much of the background information contained in the 1980 study is still useful, circumstances have changed so greatly that many of its recommendations are no longer applicable. This is particularly noticeable when the report’s “Options for the Preservation of the Thomas Cole House” are reevaluated. Organizations are discussed which are no longer active (Arts Institute of the Hudson) or which no longer wish to be involved actively with management at the site (Catskill Center for the Conservation and Development, the interim owner, sold the property to the Cole Foundation). Even the National Park Service alternative suggests a mode of operation no longer considered appropriate for its historic properties — NPS ownership and site development with management and operation entirely performed by another entity.

Other important factors which have changed are the growing public and scholarly interest in Cole and the Hudson River school, and the increasing recognition of cultural landscapes as an important category of historic sites. Cultural landscape is defined by the National Park Service as: “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources, including the wildlife or domestic animals therein, that has been influenced by or reflects human activity or was the background for an event or person significant in human history.”¹ Recent publications such as National Register Bulletin #30, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*, offer further information on identification of cultural landscapes, and reflect the growing interest in this topic within the National Park Service.

¹ National Park Service, *Guideline NPS - 28 Cultural Resource Management*, August, 1985.

The earlier evaluation of Thomas Cole's home in Catskill placed emphasis on the historic structures — the house and outbuildings Cole used— rather than on how and where he painted in the surrounding countryside. Identification and preservation of the historic landscape which inspired Cole and his followers were mentioned only in passing. Nor did it address Cole's importance to the development of the wilderness conservation ethic in the United States.

The recent exhibition and catalogue entitled *Charmed Places*² focused attention both on the high quality of landscapes in the Hudson River Valley and Catskill Mountains, and on the unique role artists have played in finding, appreciating, and recording those landscapes. Museum shows like this and recent Frederic Church exhibitions at the National Gallery have been extremely popular and influential, increasing public appreciation both for the artists and for the landscapes they loved. Open space protection is a serious concern for residents of the Hudson River Valley, where several exemplary projects are underway to protect and expand parklands, trails, preserves, and public access to riverbanks. The images created by Thomas Cole and his nineteenth-century followers continue to provide inspiration to conservationists and are often used to help communicate with others who might find a term like "visual quality" abstract and impersonal, yet be very moved by a view of nearby Catskill Creek at dawn without the parking lots, flashing signs, and industrial debris to which they have become accustomed.

There is currently only one National Park Service site dedicated to interpreting American painters or painting: Weir Farm National Historic Site, which was added to the system on October 31, 1990 and which will become operational within the next few years.³ In response to proposals that several other sites be included in the system, a national theme study has been initiated to provide a comprehensive evaluation of these sites as well as a reexamination of Theme XII "Painting and Sculpture" used by NPS professionals in the administration of the National Historic Landmarks program. Three cases are being used to identify important issues for the theme study: Thomas Cole, Weir Farm, and the Georgia O'Keeffe Study of Alternatives. Information developed for the three cases will be available for comparative purposes.

The management alternatives prepared for the Thomas Cole House attempt to provide realistic ways of preserving and interpreting this very important site, within the context of a series of goals identified during the study process. It is important to note that while the alternatives are not automatically transferable to another site or to a different set of circumstances, the approaches under consideration to interpret Thomas Cole provide a framework for preservation of other sites where the associations between an artist's home, studio and significant landscapes can be closely and clearly demonstrated. The purpose of this report is not to select any one approach as a "preferred alternative" but to present options for further consideration by site owners, and by the organizations interested in interpreting and preserving the landscapes associated with Thomas Cole.

² Sandra S. Phillips and Linda Weintraub, *Charmed Places: Hudson River Artists and their Houses, Studios and Vistas*, (New York: Edith Blum Institute, Bard College and Vassar College Art Gallery; Harry N. Abrahms, Inc., 1988).

³ See National Park Service/North Atlantic Regional Office, *Weir Farm Suitability/Feasibility Study*, (Boston: NPS, 1990).

III. Significance

To evaluate the national significance of a site, the National Park Service applies criteria listed in its Management Policies⁴ which state that a resource will be considered nationally significant if it meets all of the following:

1. It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
2. It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
3. It offers superlative opportunities for recreation, public use, and enjoyment or for scientific study.
4. It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of resources.

The guidelines further state that: "Nationally significant cultural resources include districts, sites, buildings, structures, or objects that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting our heritage and that possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association." Though worded slightly differently, these are the same criteria which must be met for sites to be designated as National Historic Landmarks.

Recent directives clarifying the preparation of significance statements for special resource studies note that: "Areas that have been designated as NHLs [National Historic Landmarks] or NNLs [National Natural Landmarks] have been determined to be nationally significant and require no further analysis of significance if being studied for potential addition to the National Park System."⁵ The Thomas Cole site has been designated a National Historic Landmark and, as such, it meets the basic criteria for national significance. Nevertheless, the bibliographical references cited in the NHL form contain no references after 1965, the date of S. Sydney Bradford's entry on the Cole House from the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. Since that time there has been considerable scholarship in the field of American art, which reaffirms Cole's stature as one of the nation's seminal artists and cultural figures. This recognition has, in turn, prompted a great deal of public interest in the site, which even in Cole's day was treated almost as a shrine by his student Frederic Church and artistic followers like Jasper Cropsey who came to contemplate it, recording their observations in sketchbooks and letters. The NHL nomination form included the following statement of significance:

Thomas Cole, pioneer interpreter of the romantic beauty of the American landscape, is one of America's notable landscape and allegorical painters of the first half of the nineteenth century, and the finest landscape painter of his time. The Hudson River school, which is receiving renewed attention today, sprang up largely because of Cole's work, and his landscapes remain outstanding examples of that school.

The Cole House, in Catskill, New York is an attractive brick building that has been little altered since its construction in 1812 - 1814. To the east of the house is the two-story clapboard studio which Cole used until 1846.

⁴ National Park Service, *Management Policies*, 1988.

⁵ Memorandum to Regional Directors from Director James Ridenour, "National Significance Determinations in Special Resource Studies," 1989.

The Thomas Cole House was identified in the National Park System Plan of 1972 as a National Historic Landmark representing "Romanticism in American Art, 1800 - 1840." With the revision of the thematic structure in 1987, the Cole property was listed under the theme "Painting and Sculpture: Romanticism" along with the homes of six other painters which have been designated as National Historic Landmarks. Of the seven, there is no question that Cole as an artist is considered the most important to scholars of American art.⁶ And while a comprehensive assessment has not been done of all the sites, the Cole property certainly has a similar or higher level of integrity to those that have been visited recently (homes of Thomas Moran and Chester Harding) or investigated through document review and telephone calls (to current owners of homes of Thomas Sully, Benjamin West, and William Sydney Mount).

Assessing the relative integrity of Cole's home to that of Frederic Church is difficult, as the two properties bear little resemblance to each other, despite their physical proximity on opposite hillsides by the Hudson River. Church's Olana is a 126-acre estate with an elaborate Persian-influenced house and extensive collections of the artist's work and belongings. The Cole property is much reduced in acreage from the size of the original estate, contains only a few artifacts, and was never a magnificent mansion. But in one critical respect they are comparable: both allow the contemporary visitor to experience the landscape of most interest to that particular artist. For Church, this meant the views he framed from the windows of a magnificent house he had built for himself; for Cole it was found in the far off vistas he could enjoy from a place he called home, but never owned. The difficulty of comparison is further enhanced by Church's preference for painting views from on high, perceived from an elevation like Olana's. While on the contrary, in a characteristic Cole landscape the foreground seems to include the viewer, and we feel we are deep in the wild forest rather than looking down upon it. This effect has much to do with Cole's manner of working. He would hike into the forest with his sketchbook, recording detailed notes and drawings which he later turned into finished works in one of several studios he used over the years.

Within the Painting and Sculpture theme, there is one site owned and operated by the National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire, which preserves and interprets the home of sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848 - 1907). The sole site dedicated to a painter is the recently designated Weir Farm National Historic Site in Branchville (Ridgefield and Wilton), Connecticut. When fully activated, this site will interpret the life and work of J. Alden Weir (1852 - 1919), an American Impressionist whose style of painting and sense of landscape contrast markedly with that of Thomas Cole. Weir Farm provided the subject matter and setting for a great deal of the artist's work, which, like that of the French Impressionists, is characterized by the use of pure unmixed colors adjacent to each other to convey light and form when seen at a distance by the viewer. But like his American colleagues Childe Hassam and John Twachtman, Weir typically used quieter tones and was more interested in the specific place than the French Impressionists like Monet or Renoir. Impressionist landscapes were radically different from those of the earlier Hudson River school, which tended to portray broad vistas including mountains, sky, water and forest in a single painting with a heavy emphasis on the didactic nature of the subject matter. While Hudson River painters used more realistic techniques to portray landscapes their paintings were more than just an exploration of the characteristics of a given site, they were intended to convey important messages and religious allegories as well.

⁶ See report of the Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop held in June, 1991.

The original Cole nomination form made reference to standard critical analyses in use at that time, but predated such works as *Nature and Culture* (Novak, 1980) and the *Fine Arts in America* (Taylor, 1979) which established him as a pivotal figure in American art. For example, Joshua C. Taylor, former director of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, noted:

It was Cole who made it clear to the New York circle that American landscape was a potent source for artistic expression...Cole had not simply called their attention to Hudson River scenery; he had raised it to the level of art...Probably drawn to landscape by the generalized theories of sublime nature that had come down from the eighteenth century, with his fiery sense of drama and his great skill in projecting his own energy into natural scenery he gave his painting a sense of both universal and personal vision...Thought of in this way, the wild scenery of the Catskills and the White Mountains took on a quality that the more domesticated European scenery could not provide; although such scenery proclaimed a message from the primeval past, its voice had not yet been heard in the realm of art.⁷

Barbara Novak's studies describe Cole as "a transitional figure" and "the leading landscapist of his time" and she quotes his "Essay on American Scenery" of 1835 describing how America's wildness was its most distinctive feature:

...because in civilized Europe the primitive features of scenery have long since been destroyed or modified...And to this cultivated state our western world is fast approaching; but nature is still predominant, and there are those who regret that with the improvements of cultivation the sublimity of the wilderness should pass away; for those scenes of solitude from which the hand of nature has never been lifted, affect the mind with a more deep toned emotion than aught which the hand of man has touched. Amid them the consequent associations are of God the creator — they are his undefiled works, and the mind is cast into the contemplation of eternal things.⁸

Cole and the Hudson River school have been the subject of many important museum exhibitions in the past 25 years. These shows have increased popular interest in the field, both through the exhibitions themselves and from several notable publications which have resulted such as *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987) and *Charmed Places: Hudson River Artists and Their Houses, Studios, and Vistas* (Bard College, Vassar College et al., 1988). The definitive monograph on Cole was completed in 1988 (Ellwood C. Parry III, *The Art of Thomas Cole: Ambition and Imagination*, Newark: University of Delaware Press). Cole has also been included in every major recent retrospective of American art, an example being an exhibition organized in 1983 by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Louvre, Paris, entitled *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting 1760 - 1910*. In the catalogue for that show Theodore Stebbins noted:

⁷ Joshua C. Taylor, *Fine Arts in America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 85.

⁸ Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture*, (Oxford University Press, 1980), 4.

Cole was quite simply the ablest landscape painter of his time....He exulted in nature's variety, and identified with her changing moods. He was a poet, a gifted essayist, prolific letter-writer, theorist, and traveler; he drew constantly and well, and he was not afraid to use his paints quickly and exuberantly. He was also much more than a landscape painter; he was a teacher and in a sense also a history painter in his every work. As such, he was too sophisticated for his patrons, and he engaged in a constant struggle to combat and modify their taste for simple and recognizable American views.⁹

The Thomas Cole National Historic Landmark must be evaluated as more than an architecturally interesting group of structures within a reasonably intact landscape. For the significance of Cole lies not in the stateliness of his home — his was a modest life, and he did not live here in the grand manner. The absence of his possessions, even the story of the destruction of the studio he designed and built on the site, tell a poignant tale of a great man who was barely able to earn a living from his art, and whose memory came perilously close to being forgotten. The juxtaposition between this very modest life and that of his pupil Frederic Church who built the fabulous Olana just across the river, suggests rich opportunities for interpretation.

The Thomas Cole site also offers a unique opportunity to interpret a figure for whom the regional landscape was of the utmost importance. And though not evaluated either in the NHL nomination or in the 1980 *Reconnaissance Study*, that landscape is surprisingly intact today, much of it within the boundaries of the Catskill Forest Preserve, which is administered by the State of New York, Department of Environmental Conservation.

Many of Cole's masterpieces depict scenes easily recognizable and accessible today within a 15-minute drive of the site. Several of his most noted works *View on the Catskill - Early Autumn, 1837*, for example, are based on views of the nearby escarpment with its well known peaks of Round Top and High Peak. Visitors could easily retrace Cole's steps, and hike through his beloved Kaaterskill Clove with its distinctive two level falls, one of the most painted landscapes of the nineteenth century. (See cover and figure 4.) Abundant information exists about the artist's treks into the mountains, which he described in journals, sketchbooks, and essays. Typically, he walked from the village of Catskill along what is now Route 23A, taking one of many trails to vantage points from where he would stop to sketch and make notes for paintings to be created later in his studio. He is known to have camped in the region to allow for extended sketching trips, and also to have boarded in the village of Palenville before he assumed permanent residence at Cedar Grove in 1836. The trails and view points remain today, although they are not identified or interpreted for their associations with the artist.

Cole did not present these places exactly as he saw them. Even while he delighted in the sheer beauty of his natural surroundings, he was using them to convey messages which are still relevant today. Within a 15-mile radius of the Cole House scores of classic river and mountain settings can

⁹ Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., *Painter and Poet in the Land, A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting 1760-1910*, (Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1983), 65.

be found which are quite often close to contemporary landscape intrusions — just as they were during Cole’s era. The paradoxes of an accessible wilderness are readily apparent here. It was a wilderness that could be reached in two hours by train from New York City, but that was being tamed by the arrival of that very train and the new industrialized way of life it represented. Roderick Nash makes note of this very American view of wilderness that Cole understood, stating that: “Our national ego is fed by both preserving and conquering wilderness. As a consequence, we tend as individuals to be ambivalent toward it. Ancient assumptions rooted in primitive man’s perilous situation compel us to fear and fight wilderness. Appreciation has only recently challenged this unfavorable bias, and the change in attitude is incomplete.”¹⁰

Cole and his followers may or may not have been the first proponents of a conservation ethic in the United States, but the landscape they used to warn us of the danger of destroying nature still exists today. Perhaps we might wish to teach slightly different lessons from that landscape than he — of threats to clean air or water or other more quantifiable matters than the destruction of the sublime — but there can be no disagreement that these places offer unmatched opportunities for interpretation. Their easy accessibility from major metropolitan areas is still an important factor, and their location in the midst of a region with a long-standing commitment to cultural tourism is another.

In summary, the Cole National Historic Landmark and the nearby historic landscapes associated with him, together represent an outstanding example of places associated with this artist and possess exceptional value and quality in illustrating the cultural themes of our nation’s heritage. They offer opportunities for public use and enjoyment and with appropriate interpretation would enhance related resources of the Hudson River region in which they are located, such as Olana State Historic Site. While the twentieth century has brought great change to that region, the site and nearby landscapes retain a high degree of integrity as the relatively unspoiled home, workplace, and source of inspiration for the father of American landscape painting, Thomas Cole. Together, there is no question that these resources meet the criteria for national significance.

¹⁰ Roderick Nash, “The Cultural Significance of the American Wilderness,” *Wilderness and the Quality of Life*, (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1979), 72.

Nearby Painting Sites

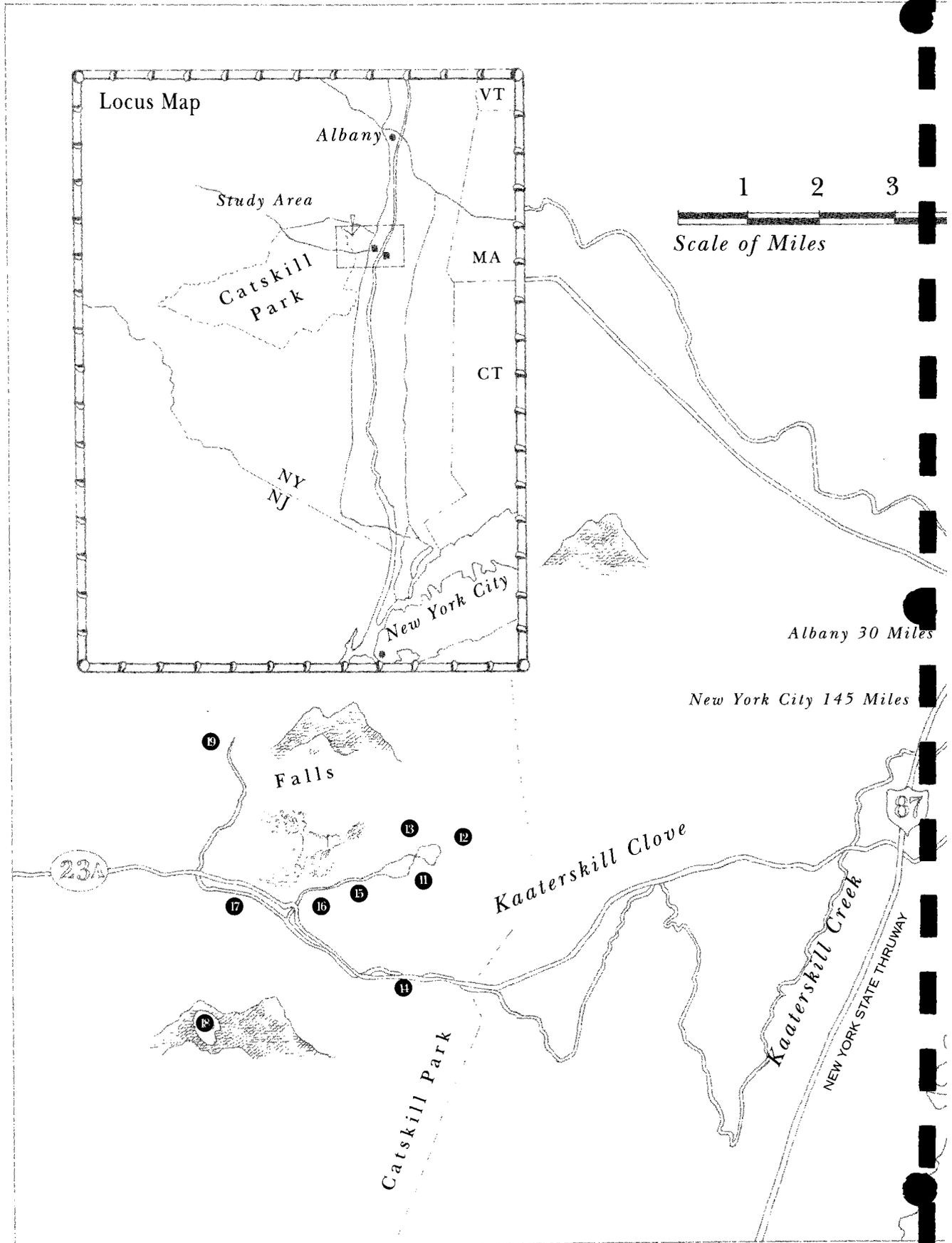
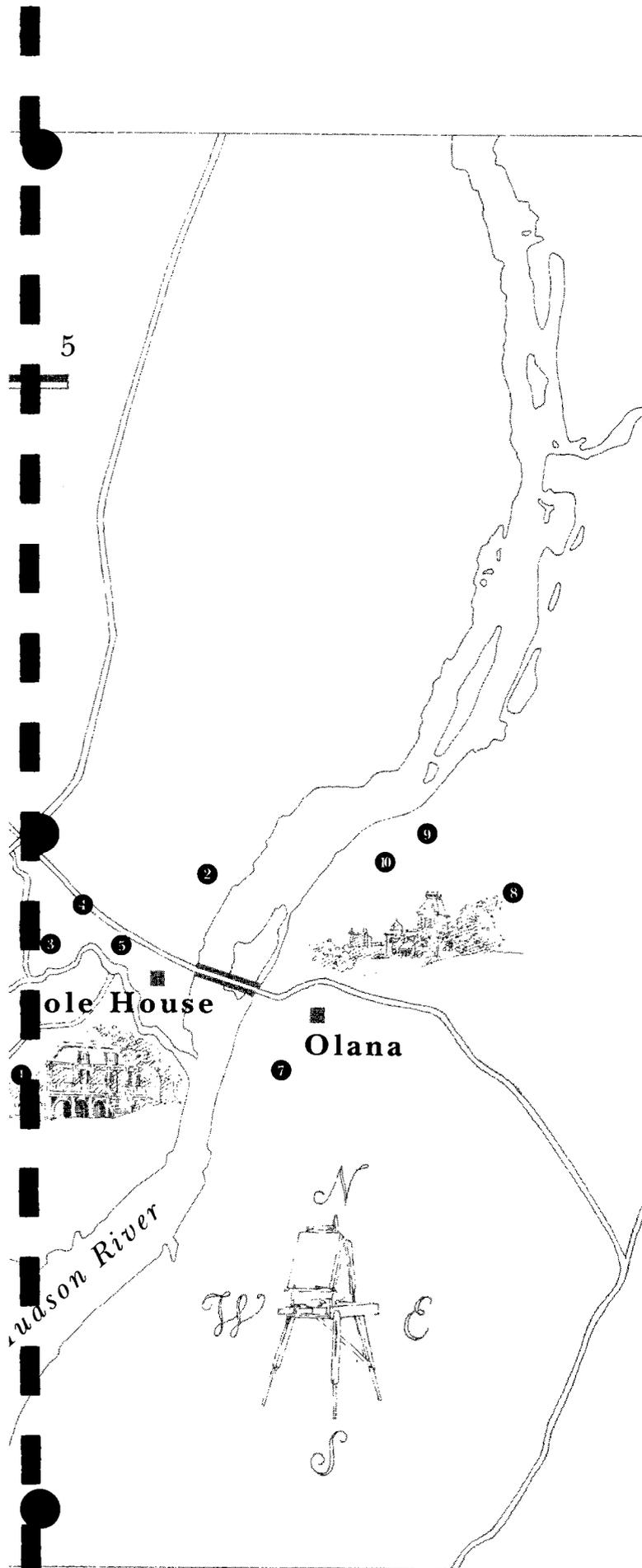


FIGURE 2.



- ① Church, *The Alexander Thompson House, Outbuildings and Thomas Cole Studio*, (pencil), 1848; Cropsey, *Thomas Cole's Studio, Catskill, N.Y.*, (pencil), 1850; Moore, "Cedar Grove," 1868; Stone, *A Peep at the Hudson at the Home of Thomas Cole*, 1896.
- ② Cole, *Long Dock, Catskill Landing on the Hudson River*, (pencil), 1847; *Point Merino*, 1837; Farrar, *Buckwheat Field on Thomas Cole's Farm*, 1863.
- ③ Cole, *North Mountain and Catskill Creek*, undated; *River in the Catskills*, 1843; *Sunset in the Catskills*, 1841.
- ④ Cole, *Catskill Creek*, 1845.
- ⑤ Cole, *View on the Catskill, Early Autumn*, 1837; Moore, *The Catskills in Spring*, 1861.
- ⑥ Church, *Scene on the Catskill Creek, New York*, 1847.
- ⑦ Church, *Autumn View from Olana*, undated; *Oil Sketch, View of the Catskills from Olana*, undated; *Winter Sunset from Olana*, 1870-72; *Winter Twilight from Olana*, 1871-72.
- ⑧ Cole, *Mount Merino, Near Hudson*, 1835.
- ⑨ Gifford, *Mt. Merino*, 1859.
- ⑩ Wall, *Hudson New York*, undated.
- ⑪ Church, *Above the Clouds at Sunrise*, 1849; Smilie, *Catskill Mountain House*, (engraving), 1845.
- ⑫ Cole, *Catskill Mountain House*, undated; *View of the Two Lakes and the Mountain House*, 1855; Gifford, *Catskill Mountain House*, 1862.
- ⑬ Cole, *Lake with Dead Trees*, 1825.
- ⑭ Durand, *Kindred Spirits*, 1849; Hill, *Fawn's Leap*, 1868.
- ⑮ Gifford, *Kaaterskill Clove*, 1862.
- ⑯ Cole, *Falls of the Kaaterskill*, 1826.
- ⑰ Cole, *The Clove, Catskills*, 1827.
- ⑱ Cole, *Sunny Morning on the Hudson River*, 1827.
- ⑲ Durand, *Kaaterskill Clove*, 1866; Gifford, *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*, 1866.

IV. Suitability

Adequacy of Representation in the System

While the previous chapter discussed Thomas Cole and the Hudson River school and concluded that they were of national significance, National Park Service management policies also require that sites under consideration for inclusion in the National Park System be evaluated for their suitability. The guidelines for suitability state that proposed new sites should represent a cultural theme or type of recreational resource that is not already adequately represented in the system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another land-managing entity. Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the proposed area to other units in the system for differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resources, and opportunities for public enjoyment.¹¹

The National Park Service will soon operate two sites dedicated to interpreting the life and work of American artists. Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire was the home and workplace of sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848 - 1907) and has been managed by the National Park Service since 1964. Congress has recently enacted legislation creating a new National Historic Site at Weir Farm in Branchville, Connecticut where the American Impressionist painter J. Alden Weir (1852 - 1919) lived and worked from 1882 to 1919, but as this site is not yet fully operational, caution must be used in making comparisons.

Saint-Gaudens NHS and Weir Farm NHS, though representing very different artists, are both fairly traditional NPS sites. Both sites include the historic homes, studios, and outbuildings extant during the lives of their respective late nineteenth century artist owners, and both are surrounded by substantial open space corresponding roughly to lands owned by Weir and Saint-Gaudens. Saint-Gaudens NHS owns and maintains substantial collections of the artist's work, including both preliminary plasters from which his monumental public works were cast, and finished pieces such as the figure of *Diana* (1883), numerous portrait busts, and a second casting of the central figure from the well-known *Adams Memorial* (1886 - 91) in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C. These collections continue to grow as items become available, and this task is made easier because his work included coins and medallions and larger pieces from which multiple castings were made. Acquiring representative works for painters is usually more difficult, as paintings are more typically one of a kind. Weir Farm will start without a large collection, but through private fundraising initiatives, expects to obtain items from several private collections in time.

The Painting and Sculpture theme is broken down into eleven subthemes, representing the chronological development of American art from "Early American Provincial Painting 1676 - 1726" through "World War II to the Present, 1939 - ." Except for Weir Farm which falls under the subtheme "European Influences, 1876 - 1920" there are no National Historic Sites where painting, as opposed to sculpture, is the primary purpose. The only listing under "Romanticism" where the Thomas Cole House would be classified, is the National Capital Parks system in Washington, D.C., for its sculptural monuments.

¹¹ National Park Service, *Management Policies*, 1988.

Only a handful of artist's homes are open to the public in the United States, and few are fully interpreted except to tell of the life and work of their former owners. Olana State Historic Site, for example, perhaps the most outstanding of this type, offers excellent interpretive programs on Frederic Church, but does not attempt to present the origins and development of the Hudson River school or broader topics such as the development of American landscape painting, or the influence of artists on the cultural development of the nation. While several homes of the great Hudson River school artists are still extant, only Olana and the Jasper Cropsey House in Hastings-on-Hudson are preserved and interpreted as historic sites. The Cropsey House is operated by a private foundation and is open to the public only on an extremely limited basis. Olana, too, limits visitation in order to protect its fragile historic fabric from deterioration. Although the grounds are used by some 160,000 people per year, visitation to the house has been cut back from 50,000 per year to 21,000. Large groups can only be accommodated if they are willing to separate into smaller groups of 12 people, the standard size per tour.

In seeking sites to interpret the development and importance of American painting, one must be careful not to look only at the homes of individual artists. For some, like Church and Weir, the houses and surrounding grounds were shaped by the artists themselves and are strongly associated with their painting. Church designed his highly idiosyncratic house himself, with windows located to frame carefully planned views. Many of these vistas also appeared in his art. Weir shaped the land as he built stone walls and a large pond which then began to appear in his paintings after 1896, just as they did in the work of his French contemporary Monet, who constructed his well known water lily pond at Giverny in 1895.

Important American landscape painters, Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, and Georgia O'Keeffe, to name just a few, are not necessarily best interpreted through the houses in which they lived. This is not to say that these houses and studios, where extant, are not of value, but that they do not always provide sufficient information about the source of the artist's inspiration — the landscape itself. Many artists never lived in or shaped the landscapes they depicted in their work — Moran created his magnificent *Chasm of the Colorado* in his studio in East Hampton, Long Island from field sketches and photographs.

The Thomas Cole site, situated where it is in close proximity to his landscape source material and to Olana, the creation of his former student, represents an unusual combination of resources which appear to have great potential for public enjoyment.

Location

The Thomas Cole National Historic Landmark is located at 218 Spring Street in Catskill, New York, a community of 16,000 on the western bank of the Hudson River, 32 miles south of Albany and 143 miles north of New York City. The site is about one-half mile from the village center, just a few hundred feet from the access road to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, the major Hudson River crossing providing access to the Catskill Park and Forest Preserve from the east. Two interstate highways, I-

87 (the New York State Thruway) and I-90, which becomes the Massachusetts Turnpike, and State Routes 9W and 23, make the site easy to reach from all directions.

The site is located in a region where tourism is strong and growing. Popular visitor routes intersect in this vicinity, making it accessible to those traveling north or south along the Hudson River or west into the Catskill Mountains and Park. Its proximity to the major population centers of New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, would make it a natural destination for visitors seeking high quality experiences within a few hours of their homes.

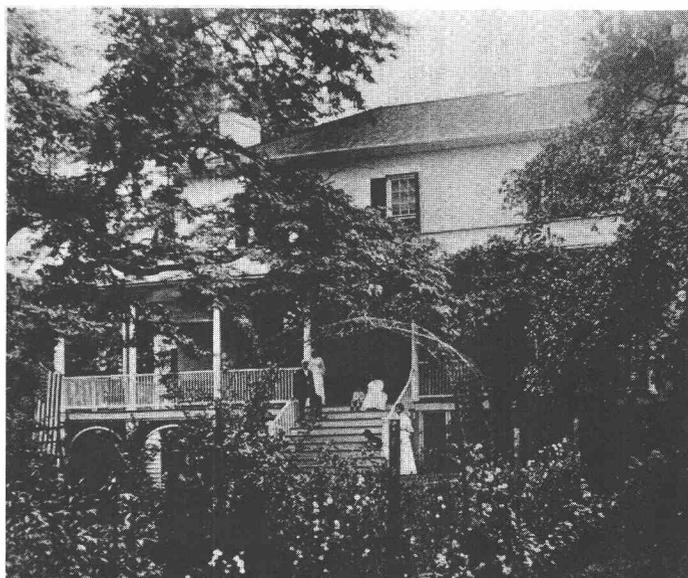
Immediately across the river from Cole's house is Olana State Historic Site, perhaps the best known painter's home in the United States, where the life and work of Cole's former student, Frederic Church, is interpreted. Olana, like the Cole House, is a National Historic Landmark listed under the theme of "Painting and Sculpture: Romanticism" in the 1987 listing,¹² but contrasts markedly with it. While Olana typifies Church's wealth and flamboyance in its Victorian/Persian style, the simplicity of Cole's property was far more typical for artists of their era. Other nearby cultural institutions include the Bronck Museum operated by the Greene County Historical Society in Coxsackie, and Martin Van Buren National Historic Site in Kinderhook. The nearest major Cole collections are in Albany, where the Albany Institute of History and Art has significant paintings and works on paper and the New York State Library has journals, sketchbooks, correspondence, and essay manuscripts.

The site lies on the back crest of the Hudson River's lateral highlands and has a sweeping view of the Catskill Mountains, some ten miles distant. The Catskill Park and Forest Preserve, an area administered by the State of New York, Department of Environmental Conservation, is reached by Route 23A, and is entered through the adjacent towns of Palenville and Haines Falls, well known nineteenth century artists' destinations. Just within the park are found countless sites which inspired Hudson River school masterpieces, such as *The Clove Catskills*, Cole's interpretation of Kaaterskill Clove (Figures 5 and 6); *A View of the Two Lakes and Mountain House* which shows North and South Lake (Figures 7 and 8); and *Falls of Kaaterskill* (Cover and Figure 4). Their location on state-owned preserve lands within the Catskill Park has insured the preservation of these historic landscapes, although their associations with the great landscape painters Cole, Durand, Gifford, and their peers are not interpreted at present.

Recent research and exhibitions on the region's history have focused renewed attention on its significance as the most accessible wilderness for important American authors of the mid-nineteenth century such as James Fenimore Cooper and William Cullen Bryant. Cooper's *The Pioneers* (1823), the first of the Leatherstocking Tales, contains vivid descriptions of the wild mountainous scenes Cole experienced on his treks. An immensely popular novel, it was widely read in Europe and the United States. Pilgrimages to these sites were mandatory for tourists and intellectuals alike, and guests included Washington Irving, Presidents Chester Arthur and Ulysses S. Grant, and Henry David Thoreau.¹³

¹² National Park Service, *History and Prehistory in the National Park System and the National Historic Landmark Program*, 1987.

¹³ Kenneth Myers, *The Catskills: Painters, Writers, and Tourists in the Mountains 1820-1895*, (Hudson River Museum of Westchester, 1987), 69.



Site Description

Thomas Cole's house, studio, and 3.4-acre site, also known as Cedar Grove, are now surrounded by a neighborhood of well-maintained, modest single family homes, most dating from the 1920s to the 1950s. While the Cole House is visible from these private residences, and from the intersection of Routes 23 and 385, mature plantings and adequate setbacks serve to screen it from the twentieth century scene which also includes several one-story commercial buildings and their associated parking lots. The closest abutter, and the only non-residential structure bordering the site is Temple Israel of Catskill, a synagogue built in 1977 on a

parcel of land once part of the Cole estate. A small one-story structure, it is attractively landscaped and has a parking lot that is now used by visitors to the Cole House under an informal arrangement. The President of Temple Israel has indicated that the congregation would be amenable to discussing more formal terms, such as a lease or easement, under which visitor parking could be guaranteed, as it rarely uses the entire lot.

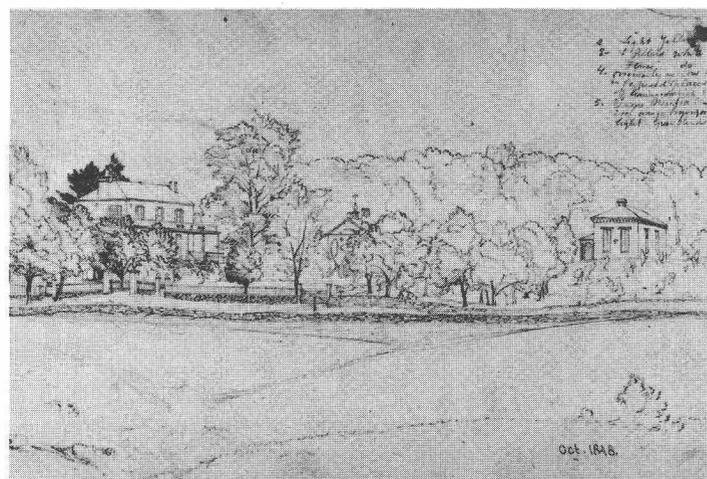
The Thomas Cole site includes three historic structures — the Cole House, a studio/barn, and a privy. A contemporary garage, screened by trees and opposite the studio/barn, also stands at the site. The original semi-circular drive which would have brought Cole from Spring Street to his front door, though not in use, is still extant. Arriving by that route today, the visitor looks up a fairly steep hillside to see a substantial two-story brick house, painted pale yellow, with a broad welcoming porch along its entire southern facade. Built in 1815 it was the home of Maria Bartow whom Cole married in 1836, and where Cole had first resided as a boarder. Cole joined his new bride's extended family, living with them at the house from 1836 until his death in 1848. Although Cole never owned the house, it was eventually inherited by his wife and children and occupied by Cole heirs until the 1970s.

(See photograph above, ca. 1885).

Several artists' renditions exist of the site, the best known from the hand of Cole's student Frederic Church who sketched it in 1848.

(See illustration at right).

Except for the missing 1846 second studio which Cole designed and built on the southern edge of the property, and which was demolished in 1973, the site appears very much as shown in these representations. The second studio site is still part of the property (see Figure 3). The paintings show a loosely clustered group of buildings at the crest of a gentle hill, with a rough hewn wooden fence



Thomas Cole Site

Catskill, New York

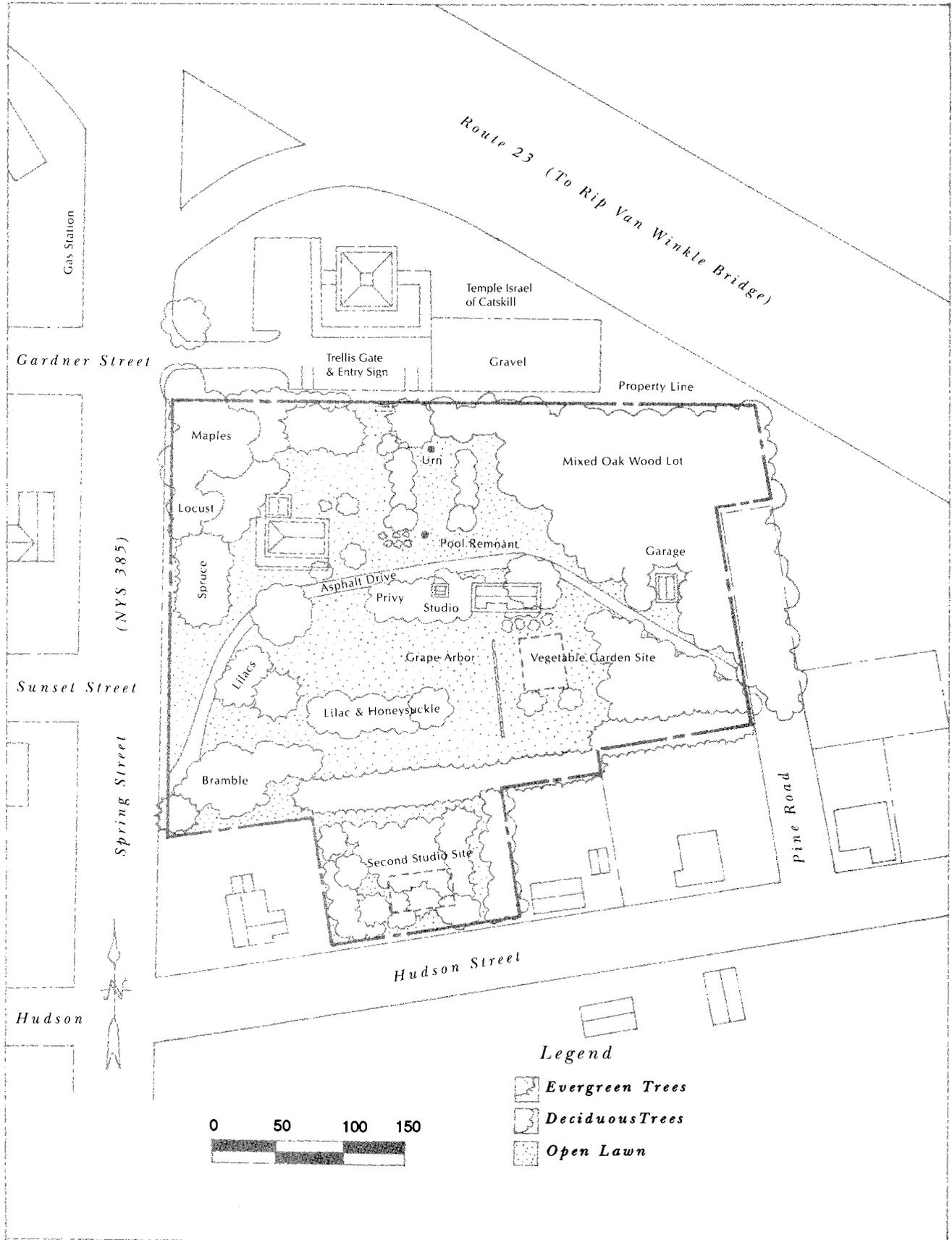


FIGURE 3.

set on stone walls at its base. The fence and its gate mounted on brick piers at either side of the drive are no longer extant, but are documented in several period views of the site. Landforms surrounding the house have remained unchanged, except that the elevation of Spring Street is known to have been lowered somewhat. Trees and plantings have, of course, matured and been replaced in the 140 years since Cole's tenure, but several of the basic landscape features such as hedges, garden beds, and large specimen trees remain as he would have known them. Detailed descriptions of the site exist in the Cole family papers, providing source material for further investigation should additional research on the landscape be desired.

The most noticeable change is the loss of acreage historically part of the Cedar Grove estate, which once extended east from the main house to the banks of the Hudson River. Once totalling 88 acres, the property was gradually sold for house lots and for the approach roads to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. Although the reduction in size to 3.4 acres does affect the integrity of the site, the changed use of this land does not completely destroy its interpretive value. Unlike Weir and Church, Cole rarely sketched or painted the domesticated landscape around his house. He much preferred the mountainous settings of his beloved Kaaterskill Clove.

The historic structures are situated on a hilltop and command a fine view westward towards the clove. The Hudson River bank where the estate once terminated is also easily accessible on foot or by automobile and is maintained as a public park adjacent to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge toll booth and administrative offices. The park features an outstanding view of Olana on the opposing river bank, and long flights of stairs set into the embankment making the former "Cole's Landing" one of the few sections of publicly accessible riverfront in this vicinity.

The House

The Cole House is a two-story brick structure which the NHL nomination form describes as "ostensibly unchanged since the days of Cole's occupancy, the only major changes being an external chimney which has been added to the east end of the house, and the one-story frame addition on the northwest end of the house (ca. 1890) which houses the kitchen. Other salient external features are the porches. A one-story porch runs the length of the south and west facades and a two-tiered porch covers the eastern half of the north (rear) facade...There is also a raised basement, which can be entered (at grade) through a door under the south porch."¹⁴

The house has recently undergone some historic preservation and stabilization which have improved the exterior appearance and arrested deterioration of the main porch, an important architectural feature. With the exception of the rear porches, which are in need of major repair, the exterior structure of the house was found to be sound by the NPS historic architects investigating it in 1990.

The interior of the house is organized symmetrically around a central hall, and is simply ornamented with Federal and Greek Revival period details. The rooms on the first floor have high ceilings and correspondingly high windows. From the west-facing, second floor window in what

¹⁴ Thomas Cole House NHL Nomination Form, Prepared 1965.

was the artist's bedroom, one can see the view to the Catskill Mountains. The house is not furnished, except for some simple interpretive displays installed by the Thomas Cole Foundation which include some Cole artifacts, works on paper, and four large oil copies of Cole's well-known "Voyage of Life" series by DeWitt Clinton Boutelle (1820 - 1884).¹⁵

While the condition of the interior is stable, like comparable historic properties, it will require a good deal of attention to be fully functional as an interpreted historic site, open to the public. Issues such as accessibility for the disabled, public rest rooms, and level of restoration will be addressed by the management entities selected for the site. All the alternatives assume a basic level of historic preservation to the building interior and upgrading of heating, electrical and plumbing systems. See the management alternatives section of this report for more information.

The Studio

Cole's studio, which he used from 1836 to 1846, was located in an outbuilding that stands to the southeast of the house. It is a one-and-a-half-story wood frame structure with a gable roof which sweeps asymmetrically over the projecting southern facade. The western end of the building where Cole had his studio, is presently used as an apartment for the scholar in residence/site manager. Its basic configuration and architectural features do not appear to have been irreversibly altered since Cole's era, but this should be verified through further research. A north-facing dormer with a large window fills the second story loft with the bright, even light artists prefer. The eastern end of the building contains several rooms in the half-timbered construction style fairly common among similar nearby buildings of the ca. 1840 era; its facade was altered when the building was used as an antique shop in the twentieth century.

Other Structures

Other structures on the site include a white frame privy with exterior Federal period details, and a twentieth century garage opposite the studio, approached by a private way (Pine Road) off Hudson Street which allows service vehicles to enter the site without disturbing the historic setting.

The Landscape

The landscape immediately surrounding the Cole House is characterized by open lawns accented with ornamental plantings, many of which appear to be remnants of those described in the Cole papers and which appear in the nineteenth century sketches and paintings of the site by Church, Cropsey, and Moore. The papers include correspondence between Cole and his wife about gardening and refer to botanical specimens which he collected. Further analysis would reveal the extent of his involvement with maintenance of the grounds surrounding the house, although currently it does not appear that he played a major role in their management. As Cropsey noted in a letter written shortly after Cole's death, nothing about the house suggested "luxurie and wealth;"¹⁶ the grounds were not elegant but attractive with a flower and vegetable garden, fruit trees and vines though somewhat overgrown, the site contains large clusters of lilacs, honeysuckle, and forsythia. Borders of hydrangea outline a garden of which an urn and a small marble pool are

¹⁵ Cole completed two "Voyage of Life" series, one now owned by the National Gallery of Art and the other by the Munson-Williams-Proctor Museum, Utica, NY.

¹⁶ Quoted by William B. Rhoads, "The Artist's House and Studio in the Nineteenth Century Hudson Valley and Catskills," Phillips and Weintraub, *Op Cit.*, 79.

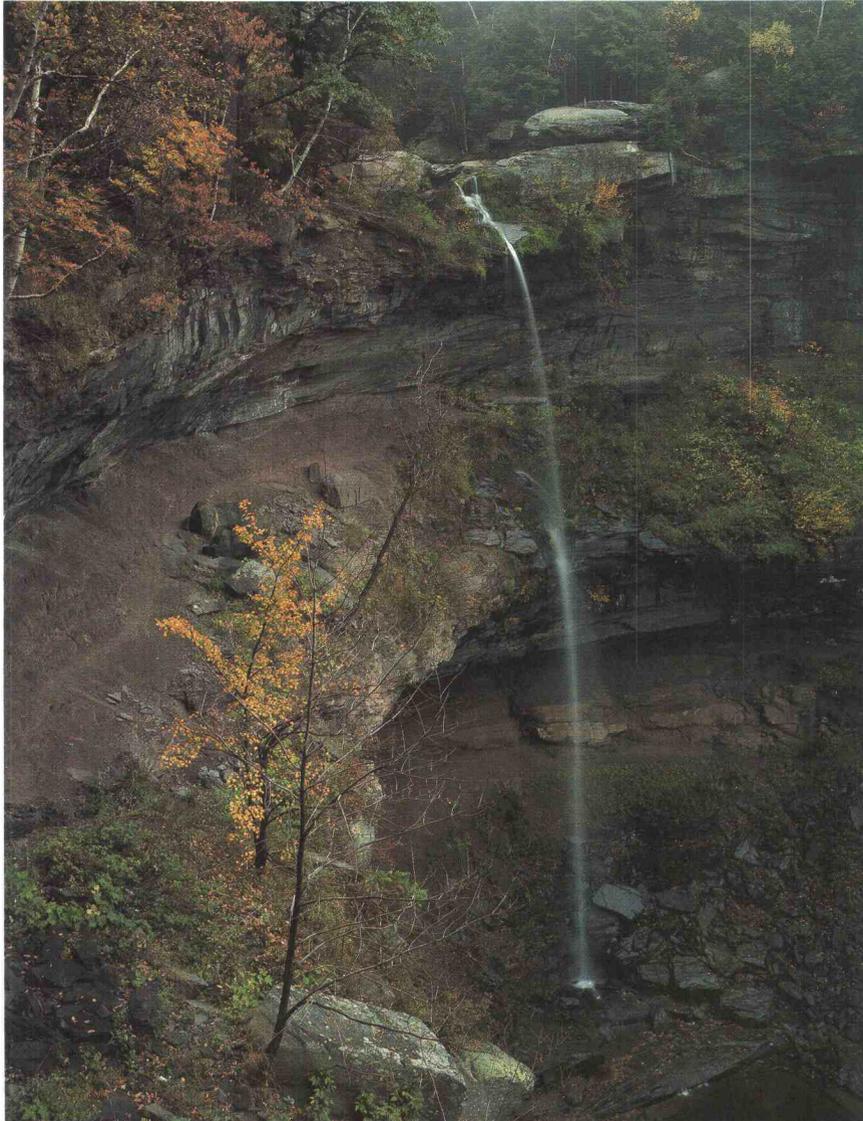


FIGURE 4.
Upper Kaaterskill Falls, Catskill Preserve, New York. © Hardie Truesdale, 1986.



FIGURE 5.
Thomas Cole, *The Clove, Catskills*, ca. 1827. Courtesy the New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut. Charles F. Smith Fund.

FIGURE 6.
Cole's View, Kaaterskill Clove, Catskill Preserve, New York. © Hardie Truesdale, 1991.

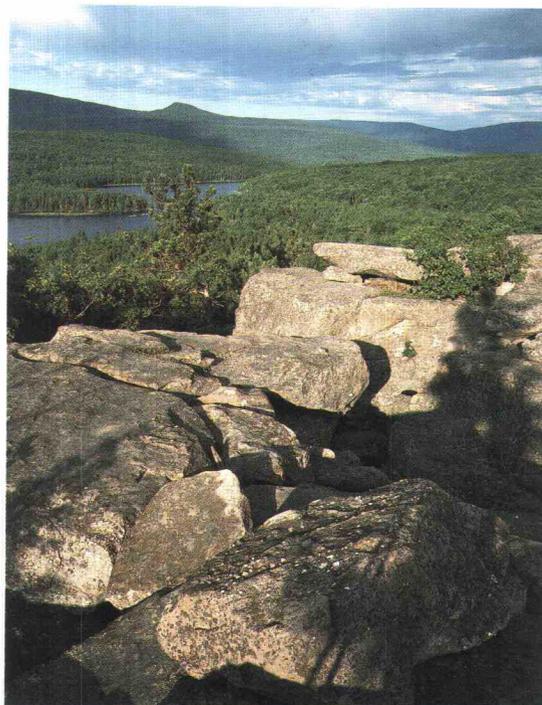
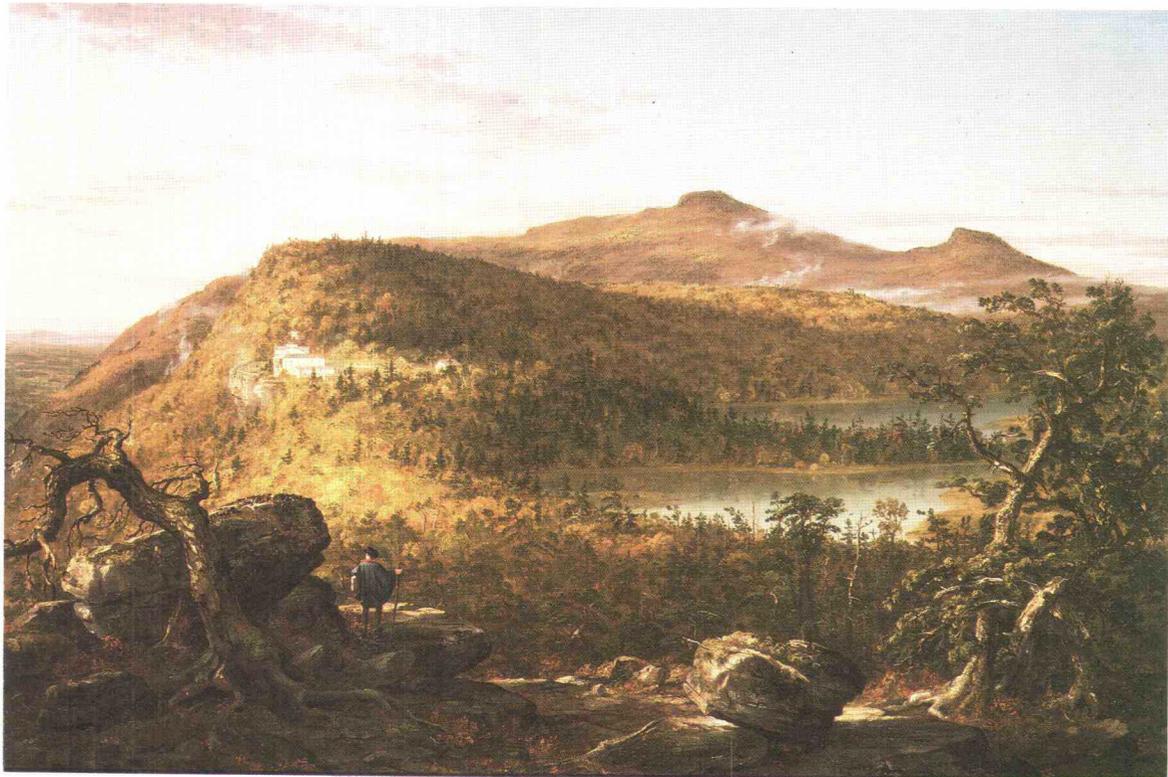


FIGURE 7.
Thomas Cole, *A View of the Two Lakes and Mountain House, Morning*, 1844. Courtesy the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York. Dick S. Ramsay Fund.

FIGURE 8.
North Lake, South Lake, Sunset Rock, Catskill Preserve, New York. © Hardie Truesdale, 1991.



FIGURE 9.
The Thomas Cole House, 1990.

FIGURE 10.
Olana, Home of Frederick Church, 1990.

the only remaining elements. Ancient wysteria vines have been trimmed back, but would quickly return to frame the front entrance, if allowed to grow once again on trellises placed against the front porch columns. Other vines include climbing roses and grape vine grown on arbors. Mature deciduous trees remaining from the woodlot behind the house include oaks, maples, and black cherry. One remaining fruit tree also recalls the modest orchards which once provided fruit for the household. Closer to the main house are mature honey locust, white pine, and spruce. Views of the Catskills are somewhat obstructed by a row of large spruce near the top of the slope along Spring Street.

In his 1867 *Book of the Artists*, Henry T. Tuckerman noted: "We can imagine no more desirable home in the country for a landscape-painter. The variety of mountain, stream, foliage, and sky ever offered to his observation, furnish[es] exhaustless materials for study; and he is doubtless indebted in no small measure for his acknowledged fidelity to nature, to these familiar opportunities."¹⁷

The Regional Landscape

Although the region surrounding Thomas Cole's home in Catskill has certainly changed in the 155 years since he first explored it, the critical landscape components of most importance to him are intact and accessible from the National Landmark Site. To begin his rambles into the mountains which appear so often in his work, he proceeded up what is now Route 23A, and used the network of trails which even in his day were frequented by tourists. Because he chose to depict the region in its pristine state, unaltered by humans, he purposely omitted guardrails, staircases, and viewing platforms which made the area around Kaaterskill Clove more accessible to visitors of the 1830s than to those of today. Many of the scenes which inspired his masterpieces are easily identifiable in the immediate region. A few are illustrated on the map at Figure 2 *Nearby Painting Sites*.

It should perhaps be noted that despite his place in the history of art as the source of inspiration for the Hudson River school, Cole painted few views of the Hudson River itself. In fact, the school's name was not used by Cole himself, but employed later as a descriptive term for artists such as Asher B. Durand, Frederic E. Church, Albert Bierstadt, Sanford R. Gifford, T. Worthington Whittredge, and Jasper F. Cropsey, "who worked and socialized in New York, the Hudson's port city, and had painted the river and its shores with varying frequency. Most important, perhaps, was that they had all maintained with a certain fidelity a manner of technique and composition consistent with those of America's first popular landscape artist, Thomas Cole, who built a career painting the Catskill Mountain scenery bordering the Hudson River."¹⁸

The landscape features which appear most often in Cole's work are the Catskill escarpment with its distinctive profile of Round Top and High Peak, water bodies such as North and South Lakes and Catskill Creek, the two-tiered Kaaterskill Falls, and the views at various points along its steep course culminating in the vista of Kaaterskill Clove portrayed in his 1827 painting entitled *The Clove, Catskills* (Figure 5). All of these sites lie within the Catskill Park and are, for the most part, perma-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁸ Kevin J. Avery. "A Historiography of the Hudson River School," *American Paradise, The World of the Hudson River School*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), 3.

nently protected from intrusive land development by the State of New York. The map shows a number of the most readily identifiable sites associated with Cole's work. Additional Cole sites as well as sites painted by other Hudson River artists can be found throughout the region. These should be surveyed in detail and incorporated into interpretive programs. Together with the landscape at Olana, sites within a 15-mile radius of the Cole House should be documented further and strategies developed for their preservation, perhaps as a Hudson River School National Historic Landmark Historic District.

Although the study team did look for recognizable painting sites in the Hudson River region associated with the Hudson River school (from the Palisades opposite Manhattan, north to Lake George in the Adirondacks), it concluded that the best interpretive approach would focus on sites in the immediate vicinity of Catskill and Hudson, NY. Discussed further in the feasibility section of this report, this conclusion was reached primarily because so many intact, recognizable painting sites exist near Cole's home.

Adequacy of Configuration for Public Use

As currently configured, the Thomas Cole House poses some serious challenges to the site manager, mostly in terms of vehicular access. Although it is located at a prominent road intersection, it is not readily visible from all directions, and access into the site is less than ideal. The adjacent Temple Israel parking lot, currently used by visitors under the terms of an informal agreement, is reached by a steep driveway and has a relatively limited capacity that would not easily accommodate tour buses. Alternatively, visitors might approach the site from Hudson Street and exit from the temple lot, but this would necessitate the construction of a driveway through a wooded area behind residential backyards. Visitors could also be directed through signs to use on-street parking, but care would have to be taken to ensure that this did not become disruptive to residential neighbors. Shuttle bus service from Olana is one way of reducing future conflicts of this nature and could meet interpretive goals as well, by providing an organized tour of the regional landscape associated with the Hudson River school painters.

The regional landscape is accessible from State Routes 23A and 9E and most of the potential interpretive sites are on public property. Direct access to the sites would be on hiking trails, not all of which are passable at present. Some obstructions of the historic routes taken by Cole and his contemporaries are due to management policies of the Catskill Preserve, which for safety reasons has limited access to the top of Kaaterskill Falls, for example. A well-researched interpretive program could evaluate the sites associated with the artists, and offer strategies for their preservation and identification for tours.

Site Ownership and Acquisition Costs

The Thomas Cole House is currently owned by the Thomas Cole Foundation, subject to deed restrictions pertaining to maintenance of the site and preservation of its historic fabric. The restrictions, also known as a conservation easement, are monitored by the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, and run with the land, meaning that they will continue to bind any future owners of the site. The easement prohibits demolition of any of the existing structures, and requires that the site be maintained to an acceptable level of repair, and that proposed alterations be consistent with the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*.

The Cole Foundation has offered to donate the house and 3.4-acre site to the National Park Service to preserve and interpret Thomas Cole. If another permanent management entity were identified, it can be assumed that the Foundation would also offer the site under the same conditions. The only other acquisition would be a permanent easement on the Temple Israel parking lot. As mentioned earlier, the Temple Israel easement would involve minimal cash outlays (if any) and could be accomplished through an exchange of services, i.e. paving and maintaining the lot in exchange for use. It is not envisioned that any of the painting sites will require acquisition in order to protect or interpret them, although the results of a more complete inventory may suggest otherwise.

Threats

While the Cole House is not in imminent danger of demolition, it is in need of a great deal of work to arrest further decay and to make it suitable for visitation. It has been named on the NPS annual report of threatened and endangered National Historic Landmarks for the past five years, falling into a group of properties which comprise approximately 10% of the nearly 2000 landmarks. It is listed as a "priority two" or "endangered" property, priority one being "threatened" and priority three "non-threatened." Its current partially preserved condition makes it somewhat of a disappointment to visitors, whose expectations are likely to be very high after having visited Olana or other nearby sites like Martin Van Buren NHS.

The nearby historic landscape, the painted scenes upon which an interpretive program would be based, are in greater danger. Although many identified sites are within the Catskill Park's Forest Preserve and protected from private development under the "forever wild" provision of the New York State Constitution, some are inaccessible due to maturing vegetation while others encompass views over privately held lands regulated by local zoning which rarely includes scenic values as a concern. Depending upon the geographical extent of a planned interpretive program, important historic vistas associated with Cole might need more protection than currently exists.

V. Study Goals

The management alternatives presented in the next section of this report were designed to explain the various approaches that could be taken to tell the story of Thomas Cole and the Hudson River school within the settings with which they are most closely associated. They all call for basic preservation and interpretation of the Thomas Cole National Historic Landmark in Catskill, NY, but in formulating the goals, it became clear to the study team that much more than a traditional National Park Service site was envisioned by the art historians, environmental conservation advocates, museum professionals, and managers of related sites consulting in the course of this study.

While there is a certain amount of overlap between the goals listed below and the National Park Service criteria for new areas (see the significance statement), they are not identical. The goals are presented here to show that the study team considered a broad range of possible programmatic alternatives in addition to addressing the question of whether or not the Thomas Cole House met the criteria for inclusion into the National Park System.

All the management alternatives attempted to meet as many of the following goals as possible, keeping in mind that this study will be compared with those evaluating Weir Farm, the Georgia O'Keeffe landscapes, and other examples of proposed additions to the National Park System.

Goal #1

To preserve and protect the Thomas Cole National Historic Landmark in Catskill, NY.

Goal #2

To explore means of using the site to interpret Cole as the founder of the first important movement in American art, the Hudson River school.

Goal #3

To identify, interpret, and promote preservation of the historic landscapes associated with and depicted by Cole and his followers.

Goal #4

To identify interpretive and preservation approaches that are complementary to and supportive of nearby related sites, especially Olana State Historic Site.

Goal #5

To locate information about art works and bibliographic materials on Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School and evaluate their accessibility for research and educational purposes.

Goal #6

To ensure that the Cole House and programs associated with it are maintained by a financially viable institution.

Goal #7

To promote the development of educational programs based on the art and associated lessons embodied in Cole's work.

Goal #8

To work in partnership with other organizations having common aims.

VI. Management Alternatives

Alternative A: Thomas Cole National Historic Site

Key Features

- o House and Regional Painting Sites*
- o Lead agency could be National Park Service or NPS/Private nonprofit partnership.*

General Description

In this alternative the Cole site would be owned and operated by the National Park Service, with a mission to tell the story of the founder of the first American school of landscape painting and how this helped set the stage for the beginning of a conservation ethic in the United States. The house and studio would be preserved or partially restored based on documentation and physical evidence obtained through historic structures and landscape reports. The site could be administered jointly with the nearby Martin Van Buren NHS in Kinderhook, NY, although the Cole site would have a core staff of its own. The site would be closed to the public until sufficient funds were appropriated to study and document its historic structures, landscapes, and artifacts. Next, preservation work would begin on the existing three historic structures — Cole's house, studio/barn, and privy. Although refurbishing might be attempted, evidence suggests that only a very few items directly associated with Cole are available, and NPS policies would indicate that most of the interior would remain unfurnished and not be interpreted as a collection of period room restorations. One or more of the rooms in the main house would be used to exhibit works of art and artifacts owned by the Cole Foundation. Interpretive displays and audio-visual programs would acquaint visitors with background information on Cole, the site and other artists of the Hudson River school. The landscape immediately surrounding the house would be preserved and partially restored where documentation exists, to permit better interpretation of the site itself, and of the vistas Cole depicted in his paintings.

Efforts would be made to develop joint programs with other sites related to the Hudson River school artists. These might include sites currently open to the public like Olana and the Young-Morse House in Poughkeepsie (home of Samuel F.B. Morse, [1791 - 1871] founder of the National Academy of Design, artist, and inventor of the telegraph), as well as one or more museums with significant collections of related work, such as the Albany Institute and the Hudson River Museum. They might also include sites open on a limited basis, such as the Jasper Cropsey House in Hastings-on-Hudson. Ties would also be sought with regional organizations like the Greene County Historical Society, Scenic Hudson, Heritage Task Force for the Hudson River Valley, and the Hudson River Greenway Council, to pursue programs sharing environmental conservation and landscape preservation themes. The State University of New York might become involved through its Carl Carmer Center for Hudson River Studies or through the art history programs at its nearby branches.

Staff at the Cole site would coordinate joint programs, exhibitions, and regional tours, and identify and monitor the historic landscape painted by the Hudson River school. Preservation of the historic landscape would occur through a technical assistance program for affected landowners, local governments, and state agencies. While the geographic focus of programs could be broad — ranging along the Hudson River from New York City north to the Adirondacks, no other Hudson River school artist homes would be administered by NPS.

Interpretive Emphasis and Audience

The site would emphasize interpretation of Thomas Cole, the immediate surroundings of his residence in Catskill, NY, and the painting sites he visited within a 15-mile radius of his home. State-of-the-art interactive video technology would supplement traditional interpretive exhibits, allowing visitors to obtain a visual preview of the region's scenery through the eyes of Thomas Cole, and then select a personalized tour route to the actual places depicted in the paintings. Many opportunities exist to use these techniques now being developed by museum educators. Recent developments in video disc technology, for example, would allow for images of all known Hudson River school paintings to be readily accessible for research or interpretive purposes. Touch screen computer programs can be developed that will allow students or visitors to compare paintings selected from an enormous data base, or to explore an individual work in depth. A model for this approach is the Museum Education Consortium Interactive Video Project based at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, cosponsored by seven major museums including the National Gallery of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The audience would be drawn from people visiting other sites in the region, particularly Olana, and would probably draw those already somewhat knowledgeable about Cole and the Hudson River school. Programs would be targeted to school children and the general public, but the site might also serve academic specialists and museum professionals, particularly if it became a repository of computer accessible information on the topic.

Management Entity and Funding Sources

The site would be managed by the National Park Service, primarily with federal funds, although meaningful partnerships with one or more other organizations will also be critical to the success of this alternative. Specialized interpretive programs might be developed for the site by others — the Department of Environment Conservation, for example, has expressed an interest in producing a video on the history of the Catskill Forest Preserve which might be shown at the Cole site. Support might also be sought for art history education programs from several national foundations which specialize in this area and which have indicated their interest in supporting efforts to interpret Thomas Cole and the Hudson River school because of their great significance to the development of American art. The existing Thomas Cole Foundation could be expanded into a "friends" group with local as well as national membership to assist in the development of these programs.

Site Preservation and Development

After preparation of Historic Structures and Cultural Landscape Reports, a fairly extensive preservation effort would begin at the site, in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's standards. Possible restoration items in the Cole House would include the rear porches and the ground floor "summer kitchen." Attention would also be directed to the interiors of the house and studio, and would include preservation of existing historic fabric and restoration of missing elements if they could be identified through documentary evidence. Buildings to be interpreted to the public would be made accessible to the disabled, with priority given to the first floors of the house and studio. Exhibition space would be created in the Cole House, but making it secure enough to meet lending requirements of other museums would probably not be feasible (it is virtually impossible to make an individual room in a wood-frame structure fireproof and completely safe from intrusion without wholesale destruction of the historic fabric).

The ca. 1890 kitchen wing might be removed in order to restore the house to its earlier appearance, and this would preclude the creation of quarters for a resident caretaker unless some of the attic bedrooms were used for this purpose. Office space for the site manager would be accommodated on the second floor of the main house. The studio would be preserved and interpreted. Landscape preservation would be carried out with guidance provided by research, and views reopened to the nearby Catskill peaks Cole enjoyed and painted. Flower and vegetable gardens and landscape features such as the wisteria vines that graced the piazza would be restored in accordance with available documentation and interpreted. The distinctive perimeter stone wall topped by its picket fence could also be recreated. Visitor facilities would include an upgraded parking lot and first floor rest rooms.

Site Ownership

The Thomas Cole Foundation would donate the land and buildings at the site, subject to the conservation easement held by the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development which governs alterations. Donation of a permanent easement would be sought for the adjacent parking lot owned by Temple Israel. The site boundary would include the Cole Foundation-owned acreage, the temple, and a property on Hudson Street which might be acquired to restore historic viewsheds. This boundary is suggested to facilitate future management but should not be construed as a recommendation that the site could not be interpreted without this abutting property. All land acquisition would be done on a willing seller basis.

Costs

*One Time Expenditures*¹⁹

Building Preservation	\$1,300,000	(preservation - partial restoration)
Site Restoration/Parking	\$1,100,000	(preservation - partial restoration)
Interpretive Exhibits	\$100,000	fixed exhibits
	\$250,000	interactive video
	\$50,000	waysides (some off-site)
 Research	 \$200,000	 historic structure, cultural landscape and archeological studies
 Sub Total	 \$3,000,000	

Annual Costs

Maintenance Operations and Programs	\$300,000
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¹⁹ All figures are gross and include related planning and design costs for each project.

Alternative B: Thomas Cole Interpretive Center

Key Features

- o Cole Site as Olana Satellite with Painting Sites*
- o Lead agency would be private nonprofit or partnership; NPS not required*

General Description

The Thomas Cole interpretive center would interpret the Cole site as an adjunct to Olana State Historic Site with the primary goal of expanding existing interpretive programs to include more information on Cole, the acknowledged leader of the Hudson River school, and a greater focus on the regional historic landscape which inspired these important American artists.

Unlike a traditional house museum where efforts are made to recreate a setting recognizable to the original occupants, the site would emphasize interpretive exhibits and programs rather than period rooms. The site would identify nearby sites associated with the Hudson River artists and depicted in their work such as Kaaterskill Falls, and develop programs and informational materials to make them accessible to visitors. Visitors would come to the interpretive center after having visited Olana for information and to take part in programs, but it would be quite different from a traditional museum based on extensive collections of objects.

The exterior and existing landscape of the Cole House would be preserved in their current configurations; the interior would be treated according to the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation, and might be adaptively reused to accommodate compatible activities not directly related to the interpretive theme. As the entire house, for example, would not necessarily be needed to conduct a good interpretive program, it might actually be donated to an entity such as the Greene County Historical Society which would use the building as a library and meeting facility.

Interpretive Emphasis and Audience

The interpretive center would be only one of several destinations in the region that would be interpreted as part of a Thomas Cole/Hudson River school historic district program. The theme would be introduced at Olana, as an additional offering to the current house tour which is so popular that it cannot accommodate all those seeking admission on a given day. Expanded visitor offerings might include self-guided or mini-van tours to the Cole House and to the painting sites in the nearby Catskills. The audience would resemble the people who now visit Olana, but might include more family groups and younger patrons interested in programs involving short hikes. Programs with a broader focus would also have greater appeal for schools and youth organizations like scouting, particularly if the subject matter were seen as a way of interesting young people in local environmental issues and not just on the work of Frederic Church.

Another interpretive goal might be to link together the homes, historic landscapes, and museum collections associated with all the Hudson River painters — Cole, Church, Durand, Whittredge, Gifford, Cropsey, Rossiter, Casilear, Hart, Moore, and others. This might be done through historic markers, special museum exhibitions, guided tours, and audio-visual presentations at one or more of the sites. It should be noted that such programs might also be carried out by the National Park Service under Alternative A.

Management Entity and Funding Sources

The site would be operated and maintained by an expanded Thomas Cole Foundation with the interpretive program run by Olana State Historic Site, with funds generated by a trust fund established for this purpose. A limited amount of federal funding might be sought under existing authorities and programs which provide support for the preservation of National Historic Landmarks. Such funds could be used for basic preservation of the historic structures at the Cole site. Startup funding for programs might come from several sources including the State of New York, National Endowment for the Humanities, and private foundations. Ongoing operations would be the responsibility of the Cole Foundation but might be supplemented by these same sources, and by user fees and program co-sponsorship with participating cultural institutions. While the site might be appropriate as an "Affiliated Area" in order to have a continuing relationship with the National Park Service, particularly in the area of interpretive programs, the State of New York could certainly provide similar assistance if sufficient funding were made available.

The proposed programs might also be suitable for a new National Park Service initiative now under consideration that would create American Heritage Areas where sites could receive technical assistance and one-time funding for preservation and interpretive programs without NPS acquisition or direct management of site operations.

Site Preservation and Development

In this alternative, the preservation effort would involve preservation and repair in kind of the exteriors of the structures and of the historic landscape surrounding the buildings at the Cole National Historic Landmark site. Inside the buildings, existing historic fabric would be preserved, but restoration to the artist's time would not be attempted. No landscape restoration would be attempted although views might be reopened to the nearby Catskill peaks Cole enjoyed and painted. Visitor facilities would include an upgraded parking lot, rest rooms, and disabled accessibility. Budget figures for this alternative include off-site wayside exhibits at sites like Kaaterskill Falls and Fawn's Leap that were important to the Hudson River school artists, and other interpretive programs.

Site Ownership

The Thomas Cole Foundation would retain ownership of the land and buildings at the site or sell them to a nonprofit organization willing to abide by the preservation restriction held by the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development which governs alterations. Donation of a permanent easement would be sought for the adjacent parking lot owned by Temple Israel.

Costs

*One Time Expenditures*²⁰

Building Preservation	\$975,000
Site Preservation & Parking	\$910,000
Interpretive Exhibits	\$150,000
Research	\$100,000
Sub Total	\$2,135,000

Annual Costs

Maintenance and Operations	\$75,000
Programs	\$75,000

²⁰ All figures are gross and include related planning and design costs for each project.

Alternative C: Status Quo

Key Features

- o Private nonprofit*
- o Extension of current operations*

General Description

The purpose of this alternative is to show how the Cole National Historic Landmark would fare if current operations were to continue unchanged. Without further intervention, it is unlikely that the site will remain open to the public, even on its existing very limited basis. Without a comprehensive preservation and maintenance program, the buildings will continue to deteriorate to the point where they are unsafe to visitors. Even now, much of the house is closed and the overall appearance is of a site not adequately prepared to receive the public.

Interpretive Emphasis and Audience

The current audience is quite small, not due to a lack of interest in the site's subject matter, but because it does not come highly recommended by standard sources in the region — guides at nearby sites, regional tourism centers etc. Even knowledgeable rangers at Martin Van Buren NHS, for example, rarely direct visitors to the Cole House because they are not sure whether the site is open and because they are under the impression that visits are only available by appointment.

While the house contains some interpretive exhibits and four large paintings (the "Voyage of Life" series by Boutelle discussed earlier) it does not have the basic visitor amenities people expect, and they often come away without a good understanding of Cole's significance unless they were very knowledgeable about the subject in advance.

Site Preservation

At present, only basic maintenance is carried out at the site. The lawns are mowed, the premises kept clean, and repairs are made if they are urgently needed. Without a substantial preservation effort the buildings will continue to deteriorate and the landscape will lose all traces of the mid-nineteenth century plantings which are still in evidence today. Views of the Catskills known to Cole will continue to be hidden by overgrown vegetation.

Site Ownership

The site is currently owned and operated by the Thomas Cole Foundation, but without a clear sense of direction as to its future. Current funding is clearly inadequate to operate the Cole House as a public site.

Future

Without a clear direction for the future involving a realistic plan for increasing visitor use of the site, it is probable that the directors of the Cole Foundation would be advised to dispose of the property. If offered for sale on the open market, it would likely sit vacant for some years, making it susceptible to fire and vandalism. Because it is much larger and includes far more acreage than any other nearby houses, it is unlikely to be purchased by an individual as a private home. It might be acquired by an institutional user such as a school or nursing home, but the restrictive preservation easements controlling alterations to the buildings might prove too constraining to attract such organizations. Although those same restrictions prohibit conscious demolition of the structures, the likely future would probably be the form of continuing deterioration known as "demolition by neglect."

VII. Feasibility

Alternatives Compared and Assessed

Although only three management alternatives are presented in detail in this report, the study team considered but rejected many more. In examining various approaches of how best to meet the study goals, the team identified four land-based interpretive approaches for consideration:

- Cole site alone (the National Historic Landmark at Catskill)
- Painting sites within 15 miles of Catskill
- Cole site plus Olana State Historic Site
- Painting sites and homes of Hudson River artists from New York City to the Adirondack Mountains

After a great deal of discussion and analysis, the team recognized that while none of these approaches made sense by themselves, they could be combined in several ways to meet the goals identified earlier in the study process. Reasons for rejecting the uncombined elements were:

- Cole site alone — too many missing ingredients for a good interpretive program (see Alternative C: Status Quo)
- Painting sites alone — no focal point; no way to orient or attract visitors
- Cole site plus Olana — would merely add additional management responsibilities to state; not enough incentive to attract participation
- Painting sites/homes in larger region — too broad to initiate without a great deal of additional study; could be too diffuse without a well defined focal point

The two best combinations identified were ones that combined 1) the Cole NHL site with painting sites in the 15-mile radius and 2) the Cole NHL site, the painting sites within 15 miles, and Olana State Historic Site. The study team next looked at various methods of implementing these two combinations over time. Again, several management approaches were identified but eliminated, particularly those involving private-only initiatives (the Cole Foundation by itself or sale on the open market) or state-only initiatives. When several different partnership approaches appeared feasible, this was noted in the descriptions.

The accompanying chart was used to evaluate the management entities against the two geographic approaches selected. Eventually Management Alternative A and its variations were developed to implement 1) Cole NHL site and nearby painting sites, while Management Alternative B explored how best to operate 2) Cole NHL site, Olana, and nearby painting sites. Management Alternative C describes how the site will fare under the status quo.

The major advantages of Alternative A: Thomas Cole National Historic Site are that management by the National Park Service would guarantee a high level of preservation and continuing maintenance at the site, and designation would strengthen the Thomas Cole Foundation's ability to obtain substantial commitments from nongovernmental funding sources. This would allow a wide range of programs to be developed, not all of which would be based physically at the site. Tours to nearby painting sites in the Catskills and to Olana would enhance local efforts to promote conservation and recreation. Several possible partnership approaches could be employed to do this, reducing the burden of responsibility on the NPS.

The Thomas Cole site and associated cultural landscape are clearly of great significance and retain a high degree of integrity, even acknowledging the unfortunate loss of the second Cole studio and the bulk of the acreage once part of the Cedar Grove estate. The major disadvantage of this alternative is that the site itself might not support a high visitation level due to physical constraints associated with traffic and parking.

The most challenging site management problems are in the mundane areas of access and circulation. While the Cole House is located near the intersection of two major roads, it is difficult to see in time to make the necessary maneuvers to reach it safely. And while access could be remedied somewhat with better signage, and circulation improved by cutting a new driveway at the edge of the property, it would not appear to be an ideal location for an interpretive center serving large numbers of people at any one time.

The major advantages of Alternative B: Thomas Cole Interpretive Center are that the program would enhance the existing high quality offerings of Olana State Historic Site while ensuring that a more complete presentation of the subject matter is offered. Similar programs to Alternative A could be offered, although an extensive on-site interpretive program is not envisioned because the house would most likely be occupied by a nonprofit organization and used as office space. Other advantages of Alternative B are lower costs, and the ability of the owners to begin implementation of plans without new federal legislative authorities.

The most important disadvantage of Alternative B surrounds preservation of the Cole property itself, which is somewhat problematic under the financial constraints now facing all New York State historic sites.

Alternative C: Status Quo obviously has little to recommend itself, and is presented to show the likely future for the site if no action is taken to improve its current state. Without an aggressive management plan, the site's future is bleak, and would likely result in the unfortunate loss of an endangered National Historic Landmark.

Alternatives Compared

Alternative A: Cole National Historic Site	Alternative B: Cole Interpretive Center	Alternative C: Status Quo
Operated by NPS with administrative support from Martin Van Buren NHS. Annual operating cost estimated at \$300,000.	Operated by State with funds generated by Cole Foundation trust fund. Annual operating cost estimated at \$150,000.	Continued operation by Cole Foundation or close to public. Annual operating cost for basic maintenance estimated at \$40,000.
Preserved or partially re-stored house, studio, gardens and grounds.	Adaptive reuse of house, studio, no garden restoration. Possible use by unrelated programs.	No major work beyond emergency maintenance.
\$1,300,000 (buildings) \$1,100,000 (grounds) \$200,000 (research)	\$975,000 (buildings) \$910,000 (site work) \$100,000 (research)	Repairs included in annual operating budget.
Interpretive program at site and linking painting sites within 15-mile radius. Use of interactive video. \$400,000 startup cost.	Interpretive program based at Olana. Visitors would come to Cole house as part of specialized tours which could include painting sites within 15 miles. Fixed exhibits and wayside markers only. \$150,000 startup cost.	No interpretive program. Open only by appointment.
Full visitor services at site. Parking for 60 cars and 2 buses.	No visitor services at site. Parking for 20 cars and 2 buses.	No visitor services.
Annual visitation estimated at 20,000.	Annual visitation estimated at 15,000.	Minimal visitation.

Appendix A: Sanctity of Place: Why Thomas Cole Resided in Catskill.

Prepared by Christine Robinson, Curator, Historic Cherry Hill, Albany, NY. Robinson is curating an upcoming exhibition at the Albany Institute of History and Art centered around Thomas Cole's concern for conservation of the natural environment.

O Cedar Grove! whene'er I think to part

From thine all peaceful shades my aching heart

Is like to his who leaves some blessed shore

A weeping exile ne'er to see it more

Thomas Cole

Catskill

November, 1834.¹

Thomas Cole (1801-1848) was an immigrant to the United States in 1818. Born and raised in the emerging English middle class, Cole, trained as an artisan, was prepared to assume his father's craft, designing and making patterns for fabric and floorcloth. Cole and his family lived in various locations in the United States from 1818 until 1825, when they finally settled in New York City. By 1825, Thomas Cole had decided to pursue an artist's life. He had lived in or travelled through the urban and rural areas around Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and New York City. Throughout his lifetime, Thomas Cole constantly travelled to witness the power of nature's most sublime and most beautiful locales. He journeyed through landscapes foreign and domestic: Western Europe, the West Indies, the Adirondack and White Mountains, western New York State, Maine, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. All the while, Cole's life was a consciously inward journey towards self-creation. Despite all of these important journeys, Thomas Cole chose to reside in the heart of the majestic Hudson River Valley, in the small village of Catskill, nestled at the foot of his beloved Catskill Mountains.

¹ Marshall B. Tymn, ed., *Thomas Cole's Poetry*, (York, PA: Liberty Cap Books, 1972), 73.

Thomas Cole first came to the Catskills in 1825. Filled with restless and passionate ambition, he sought both to fashion himself into a great moral teacher through his art, and to profoundly influence the course of the American Empire he saw growing up around him. Cole was greatly moved by the natural beauty of the environment he found in the Catskills. His journals and letters record in detail many scenes of "savage and silent grandeur"²

Summit rose above summit, mountain rolled away beyond mountain - a fixed, suspended tumult. The prospect was sublime.³

For the next ten years of his life, Cole divided his time between living in the heart of New York City during the winter, and in Catskill during the warmer months. This contrast gave Cole the opportunity to observe the profound changes being wrought on both urban and rural climes by the forces of industrialization and immigration. Cole witnessed the growth in commerce and trade prompted by the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. He saw the development of mechanized transportation - the railroad and the steamboat - and increased agricultural use of land in the Hudson Valley. Cole viewed the impact of the influx of foreign immigrants, and the tide of migration from New England into New York State. In many ways, these years were ones of change, of destruction and desecration of familiar social patterns, the alteration of the environment, and of political and social uncertainty.

Cole's ambivalence toward cities, railroads, and steamboats was built on conflicting beliefs. In Cole's view, economic and social progress were not only inevitable (*The Course of the Empire*), but also a *natural* progression of civilization. But Cole's regret, and his self-appointed mission to remedy, was that American men did not possess refined sensibilities. This refinement in feelings, thoughts, and manners, would have allowed civil and cultivated progress, and simultaneously, careful stewardship of the environment and commerce. Americans could not perceive, and therefore, not revere as Cole did, nature's bounties, which had been bestowed by the Divine Creator.

If men were not blind & insensible to the beauty of nature the great works of commerce might be carried on without destroying it, and at times might even contribute to her charms by rendering her more accessible.⁴

Cole's romantic sensibilities, while not at first directed toward any one religion, were, in fact, religious. His zealous, self-appointed role was to educate men's souls and minds to the sublimity of nature and the power of the Creator, whose grand, unfolding plan underlay all the visible world. Cole wrote to his patron, Luman Reed, on March 26, 1836:

...although I despise the miserable creatures who destroy the beautiful works of nature wantonly and for a paltry gain...I do not know that I could wish them anything worse than the barrenness of mind, that sterile desolation of the soul in which sensibility to the beauty of nature cannot take root.⁵

² Louis Legrand Noble, *The Life and Works of Thomas Cole*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), 258.

³ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴ Cole Papers, New York State Library.

⁵ *Ibid.*

There is no question that Cole preferred life in the small village of Catskill over New York City. His residence in the city, and dependence on its society may have increased his feeling for the wilder Catskill environment. Even before his permanent move to Catskill in 1836, his journals and letters contain dread-filled references to the prospect of returning to the city crowded with its "heartlessness and bad taste"⁶

Nov. 8th. Today I commenced packing up for my return to New York, it is rather a melancholy business with me after my summer sojourn in the country. I always go to the city with a presentiment something like of evil - I am happiest in the country ...⁷

Likewise, his returns to Catskill in the spring were greatly anticipated. Cole wrote on April, 17 1835:

I am once more in the midst of preparation for the country & shall start in a few days for my favourite haunt Catskill.⁸

In "Lecture on American Scenery" delivered before the Catskill Lyceum on April 1, 1841, Cole sanctified the Hudson Valley and the Catskill region he chose as his home:

The lofty Catskills stand afar off; the green hills gently rising from the flood, recede like steps, by which we may ascend to the great temple, whose pillars are those everlasting hills, and whose dome is the blue and boundless vault of heaven.⁹

The mountains held great allure for Cole. The sense of power Cole perceived while walking in the Catskills satiated Cole's great appetite for experiencing the sublime. Cole beheld the peaceful grandeur of a vista from a mountaintop. He relished the fear inspired by a fierce thunderstorm that raged around him. The environment was not unlike Cole's own temperament.

I stood among the mountain heights, alone!
The beauteous mountains, which the voyager
On Hudson's breast far in the purple west
Magnificent beholds; the abutments broad
Whence springs the immeasurable dome of heaven.¹⁰

Cole was certainly at ease in the small riverside village. He boarded at Cedar Grove, the estate of Alexander Thompson, just north of the village of Catskill. In 1836, he married Thompson's niece, Maria Bartow, and settled at Cedar Grove permanently. The house at Cedar Grove was a modest, Federal-style structure, built in 1812 - 1814. Cole did not alter the exterior of the house during his residence. From the piazza which ran along three sides of the house, Cole could have enjoyed the vista of the Catskill Mountains to the west and south. The grounds at Cedar Grove were modest

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Thomas Cole, "Lecture on American Scenery," *The Northern Light*, Vol. I, 26, in Cole's papers, McKinney Library, Albany Institute of History and Art.

¹⁰ Tynn, *Op Cit.*, p.107.

ones. Beyond the flower gardens, which Cole designed with pleasing blends of color, Cole's view took in fruit trees, vines, and vegetable gardens. Meadows and woods lie beyond Cedar Grove. In the words of Jasper Francis Cropsey, a second generation Hudson River school artist who visited Cedar Grove in 1850, Cole's home did not exude "luxurie and wealth."¹¹

Although Cole remained permanently at Cedar Grove in Catskill from 1836 until his death in February, 1848, much of his time during the spring through autumn months was spent hiking in the nearby mountains and valleys, sketching and observing nature, and writing poetry and prose. William Cullen Bryant, Cole's friend, said of Cole's work:

Here is the physiognomy of our own woods and fields; here are the things of our own atmosphere; here is American nature and the feeling it awakens.¹²

Cole's sensibilities for home and family were met at Cedar Grove, but his passionate desire for the experience of the sublime drove him to seek the wilderness, sometimes at the distance in the White or Adirondack Mountains, but more importantly, within walking distance of his own home. Cole's need for patrons and artistic recognition was met in New York City, a relatively easy travelling distance by steamboat from Catskill, but his inspiration was drawn from the landscape of the Catskills.

A holy calm pervades the rural earth. Where men assemble there is turmoil;
but these shades are unto me a solemn sacred place, where envy - malice - pride
can never come.¹³

The mountains area near Cole's house held his life-long interest. If not for his attachment to the landscape and hiking trails in the Catskills, Cole might have settled elsewhere. In Cole's case, his house was not the most important factor in his decision to reside in Catskill.

Rather, it was Cole's vision, and the vistas he sought near Cedar Grove, that were and continue to be celebrated. The Catskills remained for Cole, the single place where his passion for the awesome power of nature and the transcendent experience of the sublime were required.

These shady groves, these bright blue hills
From memory ne'er can pass away
Though borne afar by winds and waves
I visit realms of earlier day.

¹¹ Jasper F. Cropsey to his wife, July 7, 1850, quoted in William B. Rhoads, "The Artist's House and Studio in the Nineteenth Century Hudson Valley and Catskills," Sandra S. Phillips and Linda Weintraub, eds., *Charmed Places*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988), 79.

¹² William Cullen Bryant, "Address Before the National Academy of Design," reprinted in Parke Goodwin, *Prose Writings of William Cullen Bryant*, 2 Vols., (New York: 1884), Vol. I., 333.

¹³ Cole Papers, *Op Cit*.

Within my heart I e'er shall feel
The breezes of these vallies blow
Each rippling lake, each glancing rill
Will murmur wheresoe'er I go.

No! These wild mountains streams and woods
Have grown so beauteous to my soul
That life's swift stream reflects them clear
Where'er its wandering waters roll.

Catskill Mountains
1845¹⁴

¹⁴ Tynn, *Op Cit.*, 161.

Appendix B: Study Team and Contributors

North Atlantic Regional Office Study Team

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Bruce Craig, National Parks and Conservation Association
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Christine Robinson, Curator, Historic Cherry Hill, Albany, NY; formerly of Albany Institute of
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Appendix C: Organizations Consulted

The Hudson River Valley is rich in cultural, historic preservation, and conservation organizations with a concern for the protection of resources in the region. In addition, several New York State public agencies have jurisdiction over lands and properties discussed in this report. Due to time and budget constraints it was impossible to consult with each and every one of these, but interviews were conducted with representatives of those organizations listed, and several presentations were made during the course of the study at conferences and meetings in which many of the relevant public and private agencies were present.

It should be understood that the agencies and organizations listed below were consulted, but have not necessarily endorsed the findings of this report which are entirely those of the study team. When names of individuals are listed, this is for information only, to indicate the contact person.

New York State

Department of Environmental Conservation, Robert Bendick, J. Winthrop Aldrich
Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Julia Stokes, James Gold
Olana State Historic Site, James Ryan
Historic Preservation Advisory Board, Stuart Stein
Secretary of State's Office, Nancy Nugent
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Young-Morse House
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Museum Education Consortium, Susan Stedman

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