

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New website a guide to historic views

SEE THE VIEWS THAT APPEAR IN 19TH-CENTURY PAINTINGS

www.thomascole.org/trail



CATSKILL, NY - A new way to tour the historic Hudson Valley is now online, weaving art history and enjoyment of the outdoors into a single experience. The website, part of the Hudson River School Art Trail, contains photographs of the actual views which inspired the great landscape paintings of the 19th century, illustrations of the paintings for ease of comparison, and a map and directions to the locations where the views can still be seen today. The views are all within 15 miles of the homes of Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, two of the Hudson Valley's most significant historic sites, which together form the anchor of the Trail.

The Hudson River School Art Trail is a project to map the painting sites of the artists Thomas Cole, founder of the Hudson River School, Frederic Church, one of the most accomplished painters of the movement, and their contemporaries including Asher B. Durand, Sanford Gifford and Jasper Cropsey. The newly launched website includes the following resources to guide visitors on an actual or virtual journey on the Trail.



Cedar Grove

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site

The "[Trail Views](#)" section takes the visitor on a virtual tour of the painting sites, comparing several paintings by Hudson River School artists with photographs of the same views as they appear today. The majority of views appear remarkably similar to the 19th-century paintings, having been protected by their inclusion in the Catskill Forest Preserve. Often, several artists painted the same view, enabling a comparison of the artists' styles and choices. Other views are now vastly different from their 19th-century appearance, giving the viewer a sense of how our landscape has been altered by human activity during the last 150 years.

The "[Map & Directions](#)" section provides the tools to visit the Trail sites, which are located in the Hudson Valley within 15 miles of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and the Olana State Historic Site. Some of the stops are easy to get to by car, and are therefore accessible to virtually everyone. Others can be reached only on foot and range from an easy walk to a fairly strenuous hike. From the new website, one can download pages with maps, directions, and reproductions of the images, which are formatted for easy printing on 8 1/2 x 11 sheets.

A [full-color printed brochure](#) for the Hudson River School Art Trail was launched in 2005, and a pdf is now available online. It includes a map, driving and walking directions, and illustrations of the paintings to use as a comparison with today's actual views. The brochure can be found in the Cedar Grove visitor center during regular hours of operation, or in the Olana visitor center during their regular hours of operation, and is free of charge. One can also request a brochure by mail by sending a stamped (63 cents postage), self-addressed envelope to Cedar Grove, The Thomas Cole National Historic Site, PO Box 426, Catskill, NY 12414. Although the pdf can be viewed on the new website, the size of the design makes printing impractical.

The Hudson River School Art Trail is a work in progress with new developments underway. The "[More Information](#)" section of the website describes how the Trail came into being, and gives a preview of future developments. Immediate plans include mounting wayside exhibits outdoors in the landscape which reproduce the painting or paintings that depict the scene that is visible from that site, as well as directional signage and trail markers.

The Hudson River School Art Trail is a project of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, presented in partnership with Olana, the home and workplace of Frederic Church, and with the National Park Service Rivers & Trails program, with assistance from the Greene County Tourism Promotion Department. The Trail project is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Arts & Business Council of New York and the New York State Council on the Arts, with special thanks to Congressman John Sweeney for his support.



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About the Hudson River School

The Hudson River School is the first coherent American art style, and was the prevalent genre of the 19th-century. With roots in European Romanticism, the Hudson River painters, nonetheless, defined a distinct vision for American art through sweeping depictions of its landscape. The movement is credited with having a major influence on America's understanding of its natural environment, its national destiny, the idea that nature reflected the divine, and the desire for touring the country's natural wonders.

About Cedar Grove

Cedar Grove is the site where the artist Thomas Cole lived, worked and was married, and where he died at the age of 47. Today the site consists of the Federal style brick home (c. 1815), as well as Thomas Cole's original studio building (1839), on 5 landscaped acres with a magnificent view of the Catskill Mountains. In recent years the house has undergone a major restoration, and now contains both furnished rooms and gallery rooms with special exhibitions. The newly restored studio contains Cole's original easel and art-making tools, and offers a greater understanding of the artist and his working environment.

Upcoming Events

The 2006 Summer Party Pic-Nic - Saturday, July 29

Join us for the third annual summer party at Cedar Grove, with cocktails on the lawn starting at 5 pm, followed by an extraordinary dinner "Pic-Nic" at one of the area's loveliest homes. Dinner locations for each guest will be given out at the event. Tickets are \$100 per person, or \$75 for members. To purchase tickets please call 518-943-7465 extension 2, or send a check to the address listed below.