

Sonoma County Museum

Wild Land: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Landscape Painting

Thomas Cole, Peace at Sunset (Evening in the White Mountains)



November 17, 2012 – January 13, 2013

Educator Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT STANDARDS	2
EXHIBITIONS OVERVIEW	3
Pre-Visit Lesson #1:	6
Pre-Visit Lesson #2:	9
Glossary:	11

For more information on education and tours at the
Sonoma County Museum, visit our website:
sonomacountymuseum.org
Or email education@sonomacountymuseum.org

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Wild Land: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Landscape Painting, Thomas Cole, *Peace at Sunset (Evening in the White Mountains)* and *The California Landscape: Selections from the Sonoma County Museum Collection of Nineteenth-Century California Paintings* offer many opportunities for student learning.

As art exhibits, the show offers curricular tie-ins for the Visual Arts, including the following **California State Content Standards**:

- 1.0 Artistic Perception
- 2.0 Creative Expression
- 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context
- 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing
- 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

In addition, teachers may find the following themes useful in finding curriculum overlaps for the exhibit, and planning their visit:

American History

- Immigration
- Westward Expansion
- Early Industrialism
- Jacksonian Democracy

Environmental Studies

- Early environmentalism movement

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

This educator guide contains information about three exhibits that will be displayed simultaneously from November 17, 2012 through January 13, 2013 at the Sonoma County Museum. The exhibits are Thomas Cole's painting, *Peace at Sunset (Evening in the White Mountains)*, *Wild Land: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Landscape Painting* and *The California Landscape: Selections from the Sonoma County Museum Collection of Nineteenth-Century California Paintings*.

Thomas Cole, *Peace at Sunset (Evening in the White Mountains)*

Thomas Cole's *Peace at Sunset (Evening in the White Mountains)* depicts a scene in the wilds of New Hampshire. Though best known for his views of the Hudson River Valley, Cole traveled throughout the Northeast during his career as a painter, visiting many wild areas of upstate New York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.

Cole first visited the White Mountains in New Hampshire in 1827. He made the trip at the recommendation of one of his patrons, Daniel Wadsworth, and made the trek together with fellow artist Henry Cheever Pratt. The two painters hiked through Crawford Notch, soon after the Saco River had flooded and washed away some of the bridges they might have used.

Cole wrote in his diary his impressions of the area: "*We now entered the Notch, and felt awestruck as we passed between the bare and rifted mountains, rising on either hand some two thousand feet above us. With the exception of a few curling round the airy pinnacles, the clouds had now dispersed and the sun shone down on a scene of wild grandeur... It is impossible to give a true picture of this desolate and savage spot: we made some sketches, and proceeded up the gorge.*"

The paintings Cole completed after his 1827 trip helped develop his reputation as a painter, and at the same time brought considerable attention to the White Mountains as a tourist destination for wilderness adventurers. Cole returned to New Hampshire several times to paint in the White Mountains, making his last trip in 1839.

Peace at Sunset is based on sketches Cole made during his 1827 trip. A largely self-taught artist, Cole began his career as a painter by working from art manuals and illustration books. But in 1823, Cole began sketching directly from nature *en plein air* (in the open air), a practice that was unusual at the time. By 1827, Cole's direct studies of nature had come to inform his works masterfully. His carefully drawn recordings of flora, fauna, and the landscape had a direct impact on his ability to capture the character of a place.

Nevertheless, sketching from nature was only the beginning of Cole's working process. As in most of his paintings, Cole embellished the accurate aspects of *Peace at Sunset* with many dramatic elements that typified his Romantic imagination. Here, black storm clouds retreating

on the left, contrasting with the bright sky in the distance, represent the emotions associated with viewing a sublime scene: the sky simultaneously speaks of fear and hope, danger and peace. The decayed trees in the foreground remind the viewer of the grand cycles of birth, growth, and death. Finally, the inclusion of brilliant autumnal color speaks to the unique Americanness of the scene, and Cole's belief – along with that of many other American landscape painters – that the American wilderness dramatized “the visible hand of God.”

The Sonoma County Museum is grateful to de Young, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco for graciously lending Cole's Peace at Sunset. The Museum also thanks Deborah Eid for her support of the exhibition.

Wild Land: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Landscape Painting

In November 1825, three large oil paintings by a relatively unknown artist appeared in a New York City gallery window. The three works, featuring dramatic landscapes from locations in upstate New York, immediately attracted critical acclaim. “This youth has done at once, and without instruction, what I can not do after fifty years of practice,” exclaimed one prominent American artist.

The creator of those three works was a young English immigrant named Thomas Cole. Over the course of the next two decades, Cole revolutionized the field of American landscape painting. He gave rise to a style of painting that later become known as the Hudson River School. In the process, the young, self-taught artist helped Americans rethink their relationship with the natural world around them. *Wild Land* explores Cole's role as an artistic and cultural pioneer who helped give rise to the emerging concept of the American nation. How did this young Englishman see something in the American wilderness that many Americans themselves did not yet see?

Using a combination of large-scale banner graphics, immersive environments, media features, and other interactive strategies, *Wild Land* takes audiences on a journey with Cole through the story of his creative process. From an itinerant portrait artist to the founder of the Hudson River School, how did this landscape artist transform sketches from nature into a new vision of the wilderness?

Wild Land examines how the meaning of nature has changed over time into a source for creative and intellectual inspiration. And just as Cole did, visitors are invited to explore the concept of preservation and how societies come to value and live in balance with natural resources. In concluding the exhibit, visitors are left to contemplate whether Cole's premature death may have signified a beginning of an American artistic legacy and an identity as a nation inextricably tied to nature.

Wild Land is co-curated by Elizabeth Jacks, the Executive Director of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site and Dr. Kevin J. Avery, Department of American Paintings, Metropolitan Museum of Art (also the essayist). The exhibit was organized by The

Thomas Cole National Historic Site/Cedar Grove in Catskill, New York.

Wild Land is adapted and toured by the NEH on the Road Program, a division of Mid-America Arts Alliance and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. It was designed and fabricated by Flint Hills Design of Newton, Kansas.

The California Landscape: Selections from the Sonoma County Museum Collection of Nineteenth-Century California Paintings

California's spectacular wilderness has long been a source of inspiration for American artists, from majestic views of Yosemite to quiet studies of California poppies. This selection of landscapes from the Museum's permanent collection showcases a variety of paintings from the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, painted by artists who lived and worked in California, and took the state's landscape as their subject.

The painters represented in the Museum's collection are emblematic of the artistic community in California during this era: some were foreign-born and trained in European art academies; others were born elsewhere in the United States and made their way to California either as children or adults. Still others were born in the West, but traveled to the East Coast or Europe for their artistic education. All of them chose to focus on California's magnificent and varied landscape in their work.

With *The California Landscape* exhibition, Sonoma County Museum highlights one of the strengths of its permanent collection. It also brings to light important issues of collections management, an aspect of museums that often remains behind the scenes. A museum is a steward of the objects under its care, ensuring that objects are in good enough condition to be exhibited and seen by the public, and preserving those objects for generations to come.

The Museum has featured some of this collections management work in this exhibition, showing one painting that has been newly restored, and also bringing out of storage one painting that has not been exhibited for years due to its damaged condition. Through addressing the need for conservation and repair of this painting, and by building the funds necessary for its care, the Sonoma County Museum can bring this magnificent painting back to pristine condition.

Pre-Visit Lesson #1: A Man of His Time

Provided by: The Educational Programming Guide for *Wild Land* © 2011, *NEH on the Road.*, a Division of Mid-America Arts Alliance

For standards in your state see:

<http://www.educationworld.com/standards/state/toc/index.shtml#math>

Grades: 5-12

Time Required: Two class periods

National Curriculum Standards:

- NSS-USH.5-12.4 ERA 4: EXPANSION AND REFORM (1801-1861)
- NL-ENG.K-12.8 DEVELOPING RESEARCH SKILLS
- NL-ENG.K-12.7 EVALUATING DATA
- NL-ENG.K-12.5 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Objectives:

- Students will become acquainted with the historical background of Thomas Cole's artwork
- Students will gain an understanding on how Thomas Cole reacted to the cultural, political, social, and environmental movements around him.

Materials:

- Paper and pencil
- Thomas Cole: A Brief Biography (handout)
- Computer time (internet access)

Student Instruction:

1. Begin instruction with a quick warm-up activity to get the creative juices flowing. Ask students to take out a piece of paper. Ask them to close their eyes and take a few seconds to make a random scribble on their paper. Try to have the scribble fill the paper. This should only take a few seconds. All papers should then be shifted to the person behind the student. They will then have five minutes to make a drawing out of the other person's scribble.
2. Begin a discussion about creativity by asking the question: *"As you were deciding how to convert or transform your classmate's scribble into a recognizable form, what was your thought process? How were you inspired? Where did your idea(s) come from?"* Have students brainstorm what creativity means and where it comes from by using some form of a graphic organizer, like a word web.

3. Students should arrive at the idea that creativity comes from both internal and external sources that are often unique to the person. Then inform your students that you will be going to a local museum to visit an exhibit called *Wild Land: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Landscape Painting*. Ask students if they can guess what the exhibit is about by the title.

4. Give you students the brief biography of Thomas Cole (handout) to read. Follow their reading with the following discussion: *Cole was a landscape artist from the early 1800s who drew his creative inspiration from the world around him. He was largely inspired by the natural world, or the Wild Land, as the title suggests. His artistic work was also a product and a reflection of the time period in which he lived.*

5. To get a better understanding of the historical time period that produced Thomas Cole and his unique approach to painting and viewing the world around him, students will be constructing a mock newspaper highlighting the important social, political, and environmental events of the early 19th century.

6. Divide students into 5 work/research groups. Assign each group one of the following significant historical events of Cole's time:

Westward Expansion
Jacksonian Democracy
Early Industrialism
Art and Literature
Immigration

7. Give students the following directions:

- Each team member should decide on a "topic-within-the-topic" to research and write about. In other words, each student will determine a specific event or phenomenon related to their group's broader topic that would have had the most significant impact on someone like Thomas Cole. For instance, students in the Westward Expansion group might choose a specific topic like Indian Removal and the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Early Industrialism group members could research the tanning industry or the opening of the Erie Canal.
- Each student should research their topic and write a 1-2 page article as if they were writing for a newspaper in the early 19th century. One or two images (with captions) should accompany their story. Each student should be prepared to share their story with the rest of their group at the next class period.

8. During the next class period, assemble students into their working/research groups. Have each group read and pass around the stories in order to decide which story should be given "front page" priority of their section. The "front page" story is the feature article/event that student groups hypothesize would have had the greatest impact on Thomas Cole, a young English immigrant trying to make his way in New England in the early 1800s.

9. Each working/research group should then elect a spokesperson to present their mini-newspaper to the class at large. They should be able to state their reasoning for choosing their front page story. After each working/research group has presented, ask the class what story they would choose to feature on the front page of the entire newspaper and their reasons for choosing that event/phenomenon.

10. As teacher, you will also serve as editor-in-chief of your classroom's newspaper. Assemble the newspaper and make copies for each student.

11. In keeping with the newspaper theme, you may wish to ask each of your students to write an art critic's review of Thomas Cole's work after visiting *Wild Land: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Landscape Painting*.

Pre-Visit Lesson #2: Your Own Neck of the Woods

Provided by: The Educational Programming Guide for *Wild Land* © 2011, *NEH on the Road.*, a Division of Mid-America Arts Alliance

For standards in your state see:

<http://www.educationworld.com/standards/state/toc/index.shtml#math>

Grade level: 2-4

Time Required: 1-2 class periods

National Curriculum Standards:

- NA-VA.K-4.4 UNDERSTANDING THE VISUAL ARTS IN RELATION TO HISTORY AND CULTURES
- NSS-US.H.K-4.2 THE HISTORY OF STUDENTS' OWN STATE OR REGION
- NL-ENG.K-12.4 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Objectives:

- Students will gain an understanding of how American's perception of the environment has changed over time.
- Students will research a regional place of environmental significance.

Materials:

- 8 1/2 x 11" piece of heavy card stock paper for each student
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.
- Scissors and glue sticks (optional)
- Computer use (internet access)

Student Instruction:

1. Explain to students that they will be taking a field trip to their local museum to view an exhibit called *Wild Land: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Landscape Painting*.
2. Explain who Thomas Cole was with the following dialogue: *Thomas Cole was a painter lived in New York over 150 years ago. He was a landscape painter. Can you guess what a landscape painter paints? What is a landscape?*
3. Define **landscape painting**. Landscape painting depicts a scene from nature. It usually shows a wide view of earth abounding with natural things like trees, rocks, mountains, valleys, creeks and rivers.
4. Continue with the following information: *Before Thomas Cole's time, many people who came to America to settle its lands were afraid of the wilderness. They saw it as dark and mysterious*

and even full of savage beasts. They believed that the best trees should be cut down for building materials and that the best land was land that could be farmed. Thomas Cole's paintings and poems helped to change the way Americans thought about the natural world around them. Through his paintings and writing, Cole introduced the idea that there is beauty in nature and this beauty had the ability to stir up strong feelings.

5. Ask students to think about a time that they were in nature. Ask them how they felt and write these feeling words on the board or overhead.

6. Inform students that *one of Cole's most treasured places to explore the beauty of nature was in the Catskill Mountains of New York. He painted and sketched scenes from the Catskills dozens of times and was continuously amazed by the beauty of nature. He worried that factories and railroads would destroy his beloved Catskills and wrote about this too. He believed that nature should be preserved and that spending time in nature was good for human beings.* You can explore Cole's Catskill paintings here: <http://www.explorethomascole.org/landscape>

7. Invite your students to give examples of places close to your city/town/region that are treasured because of their natural beauty. Explore the idea that just as Cole cherished the Catskills, there are local and regional landforms that we love.

8. Instruct students to make a brochure about a regional natural treasure. If you can, have sample travel brochures on hand to pass around as examples. Instruct students to include the following in the brochure:

- The name and location of the natural treasure
- Why is it treasured? Why is it important to your state?
- What will people see when they go there? What can they do?
- Why should this place be preserved/taken care of?
- Pictures, drawings, photos, or illustrations that capture the beauty of the place

For resources, you can direct your students to the following websites:

National Park List: <http://www.nationalparks.org/discover-parks/?fa=complete-list>

State Park List: <http://www.stateparks.com/usa.html>

Note: The place students choose does not have to be a park. It could be a favorite tree in their backyard, a grandparent's farm, a fishing pond. The idea is that students will have different responses to different places.

9. Give students an opportunity to present their brochures to the class. Ask who would like to or who already has visited the place displayed in each brochure and why they would like to go there.

10. **Extension:** Students can draw or paint their version of their natural treasure.

Glossary

Provided by: The Educational Programming Guide for *Wild Land* © 2011, *NEH on the Road*, a Division of Mid-America Arts Alliance

*where indicated, definitions courtesy: www.explorethomascole.org

Allegory: a form of art or literature that conveys a theme or story figuratively as opposed to literary. It is often abstract and dramatic. Cole's *The Course of Empire* and *The Voyage of Life* are considered allegorical paintings.

Bierstadt, Albert: A German-born painter following the style of the Hudson River School. He has also been grouped with Thomas Moran of the Rocky Mountain School. Bierstadt was famous for his sweeping landscapes of the American West, specifically mountain landscapes and Yosemite Valley.

Bladders (paint): Before the invention of paint tubes in 1841, early artists carried their paint in the pouches provided by pig bladders.

***Bread and Cheese Club:** Also known as "The Lunch Club." Founded in 1820 by the novelist James Fenimore Cooper, the Bread and Cheese Club was a lunchtime gathering of writers, artists, and other New York intellectuals who met to discuss art and culture. Thomas Cole, William Cullen Bryant, and Asher B. Durand were all regular attendees of the club's meetings

***Bryant, William Cullen:** American journalist and poet, editor/owner of *The New York Evening Post*, and frequent contributor to *The Knickerbocker* magazine. Both Bryant and Cole came to New York City in 1825, meeting at the Bread and Cheese Club, where they began a lifelong friendship with fellow artist Asher B. Durand. Bryant, like James Fenimore Cooper, sought to create a uniquely American style of literature, although he was equally entranced by the antiquities of Europe and often gave lectures on Greek and Roman mythology at the National Academy of Design. Bryant is perhaps best known for "Thanatopsis," a poem that explores themes of mortality, similar to those addressed by Cole in his work. Bryant gave Cole's funeral oration at the National Academy following the artist's death in 1848

Burke, Edmond: Born in Dublin in 1729, Burke later attended law school in London. He decided that his talents were more literary than legal and his first work to receive public notice was "Vindication of Natural Society, by a Late Noble Writer." Later that year (1756), he produced his most famous work "Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful," which serves as the basis for the philosophical background of most Hudson River School painters and their relationship with the natural world.

***Catskill Mountain House:** Originally known as the Pine Orchard Hotel and opened to the public in 1824, the Catskill Mountain House was a premiere destination for Catskill tourists in the early- to mid-nineteenth century. The resort was built on South Mountain in the Catskills, overlooking the Hudson River Valley. At first only comprised of ten private rooms, the hotel grew to accommodate up to nearly 200 guests, who would stay for a few nights to see the surrounding scenery, including Kaaterskill Falls. The hotel's popularity declined after the Civil War, and it eventually fell into ruin. On 25 January 1963, the New York State Conservation Department, amid protest from preservationists and the local population, burned the decrepit hotel to the ground. Cole painted many views of the Catskill Mountain House, such as: *A View of the Two Lakes and Mountain House, Catskill Mountains, Morning*.

Cedar Grove: Thomas Cole's home in Catskill, New York. Cedar Grove was originally owned by the Thomson brothers, bachelor merchants who oversaw the orchards, vineyards, and grain fields that covered the 110-acre property. The Thomson brothers also raised a variety of livestock on the land to supplement their income. Their extended family lived in a three-story Federal-style house that still stands today. The property once included a multitude of outbuildings, some of which Cole used for painting studios as early as 1833. In 1836, Cole married one of the Thomson nieces, Maria Bartow, and moved in with his wife's family. Cole and Maria's family grew to include five children: Theodore (Theddy), Mary, Emily, Elizabeth (who died in infancy), and Thomas Cole II. When John Thomson died in 1846, Cedar Grove passed into the hands of Cole, who himself died only two years later.

***Church, Frederick:** Hudson River School painter and student of Thomas Cole. In 1844, Daniel Wadsworth wrote to Cole, asking him to take the promising Church as a pupil. Church proved his worthiness, and within a year he was exhibiting landscapes at the National Academy of Design alongside his teacher. Church became famous for his monumental paintings of South America, exhibited to much excitement and acclaim in 1855. In 1860, Church bought a tract of land overlooking the Hudson River not far from Cedar Grove. He began building Olana, a "Persian"-style home that he largely designed himself. Olana is now a National Historic Landmark and open to the public. Church was devastated by Cole's sudden death in 1848; that year he painted *To The Memory of Cole* and taught Theodore Cole to farm and maintain Cedar Grove so that he could provide an income for Cole's widow, Maria Bartow, and their family

***Cooper, James Fenimore:** New York novelist and founder of the Bread and Cheese Club, Cooper was a contemporary of Cole's and a prominent figure in the development of an original American literary tradition. His series of Leatherstocking novels, such as *The Pioneers* (1823), included some of the first descriptions of the wild Catskill scenery and encouraged tourism to the area. In 1827, Cole created a series of paintings illustrating scenes from one of Cooper's most famous novels, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). See John Wesley Jarvis, *Portrait of James Fenimore Cooper*.

Copley, John Singleton: Born in Boston in 1738, Copley is considered one of America's best and most prolific artists of colonial times. He is known for his meticulous style and his portraiture as well as his historic paintings. He is also one of the first American painters to be recognized abroad, specifically for his work *The Boy with a Squirrel* (1765).

Daguerreotype: The daguerreotype process was invented in France by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre and was quickly adopted in 1839 by American photographers because of its capability of capturing a "truthful likeness" of the subject.

***Durand, Asher B.:** American engraver, portraitist, and Hudson River School landscape painter who, along with John Trumbull, bought one of Cole's paintings in 1825. Durand, Cole, and poet William Cullen Bryant maintained a close friendship throughout their lives, joined by their mutual involvement in American arts and culture. Durand helped to found the National Academy of Design, acting as its president from 1845-61. It was Cole who first persuaded Durand to begin landscape painting and taught him how to sketch outdoors, and together the two artists took many summer sketching trips to the Catskill, White, and Adirondack mountains. Durand painted *Kindred Spirits* (1849) after Cole's death, forever memorializing the friendship of the three men

Doughty, Thomas: Doughty was born in 1793 and along with Cole, is regarded as one of America's first landscape artist. As opposed to capturing the sublime, his paintings were considered noble, quiet, and pastoral.

***History Painting:** Usually large in scale, history paintings depict events from the imaginary or ancient past that have deep human significance and convey moral lessons to contemporary viewers. Once considered the most noble of the genres of painting, history painting requires that the artist render complex, multifigural compositions filled with convincing, heroic human forms. Cole's *The Course of Empire: Consummation* (1835-36) is the artist's most ambitious attempt to capture the scope of history painting within the landscape genre.

***Hudson River School:** A group of mid- to late-nineteenth-century American landscape painters, including artists such as Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, Frederic Edwin Church, Jasper Francis Cropsey, George Inness, Sanford Gifford, Charles Herbert Moore, and others. The term "Hudson River School" was first coined around 1879, possibly by the art critic Clarence Cooke. The name initially referred to the members of the National Academy of Design, who lived and painted in the Hudson River Valley; eventually the "Hudson River School" came to encompass nearly all nineteenth-century American landscape painters who worked in the East.

Hudson River School painters favored a highly illusionistic style of carefully rendered, crisply defined forms. They studied both nature and previous art to achieve precise effects of light and atmosphere, and they excelled at rendering rocks, trees, skies and bodies of water. Unlike European contemporaries such as J.M.W. Turner, they avoided

painterly flourishes that called attention to artistic technique. This has led some critics to judge the Hudson River School as less adventurous than other landscape traditions in the nineteenth century, but stylistic differences emerged out of a specifically American social and intellectual context. American artists' reliance on print sources for their models may have given rise to a crisp linearity. A deeper explanation derives from the artists' belief that nature was an arena of revealed divinity. Stylistic innovation and bravura technique violated their sense of appropriate humility before, in Cole's words, nature's "purer love

Itinerant Portrait Artist: see Portraiture

Irving, Washington: Born in New York in 1783, Irving has become known as the first American to earn a living by writing. He frequently wrote under pennames, including Dietrich Knickerbocker. Some of his most famous works are *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle*, which features the Catskill Region of New York.

***Inness, George:** Hudson River School painter deeply influenced by Thomas Cole's work; first exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1844. Inness, like Cole, firmly believed that nature evidenced the glory of the divine, and his landscapes often have a spiritual significance, such as *The Valley of the Shadow of Death* (1867).

Johnson, Joshua: A noted African American folk and portrait artist of the early 1800s. At the time, he painted more portraits of Maryland children and families than any other artist. Johnson may have earned his freedom from slavery by way of producing art.

Landscape Tourism: Scenic tourism that was promoted, in this case, as a result of the artwork and literature featuring a specific region. The Hudson River painters, including Thomas Cole, encouraged tourism to the New York region and the Catskills. It is important to note that landscape tourism predated Cole; the work of William Guy Wall and *The Hudson River Portfolio* helped start this.

Leatherstocking Tales: The series of novels written by James Fenimore Cooper featuring protagonist Natty Bumppo, a European American child who grew up with Native Americans.

Moran, Thomas: An English-American landscape artist of the 1870s, following the Hudson River School style, Moran was famous for his panoramic mountain landscapes. His vision of the West was critical to the creation of Yellowstone National Park, as his artwork was presented to members of Congress by Park supporters.

***Noble, Reverend Louis Legrand:** Cole's close friend and pastor at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Catskill. Noble baptized Cole and his wife Maria Bartow in 1844, thus reaffirming their Christian faith. Noble also acted as Cole's biographer, publishing *The Life and Works of Thomas Cole* in 1853, one of the most important early sources for Cole's life, thoughts, and correspondence.

Ammi Phillips: Phillips began his career around 1811 as an itinerant portrait artist travelling throughout New England. He was most likely entirely self-taught.

***Picturesque:** A landscape type defined by irregular, rugged, and uncultivated forms that are charming to the eye, such as ragged trees, unruly streams, and rocky cliffs. An example of this type of landscape is Cole's *Lake with Dead Trees* (1825).

Portraiture: From the colonial times to the antebellum age, this form of painting was the most popular in America. Portrait artists seldom had formal training and often times were former sign or house painters. They often travelled from town to town (known as

61
The Educational Programming Guide for *Wild Land* © 2011, *NEH on the Road.*, a Division of Mid-America Arts Alliance

itinerant portrait artists) painting pictures of individuals or families for a documentation of status. Sitters were often positioned in well-appointed rooms adorning their finest clothes.

***Reed, Lumen:** Self-made New York merchant with a passion for collecting contemporary American art, Reed was a close friend and mentor to Cole. He commissioned some of Cole's greatest works, including *The Course of Empire* (1834-36). Cole was devastated by Reed's death midway through the completion of the series in 1836.

Stuart, Gilbert: One of 18th century America's master portrait artists in the 1700s, best known for his unfinished work of George Washington, the image now made iconic by the one dollar bill.

***Sublime:** The combined feelings of awe, pleasure, and fear associated with viewing a dangerous landscape, such as the summit of a mountain or a large waterfall. The viewer becomes entranced by the infinity of nature and forgets himself in the contemplation of the landscape; only afterwards does the viewer realize that he has experienced the sublime. Cole often tried to communicate this feeling in his landscape paintings: see for example, *The Clove, Catskills* (1827).

***Trumbull, John:** Soldier in the Revolutionary War and an American history painter best known for *The Declaration of Independence* (1786-97), Trumbull also acted as president of the American Academy of Fine Arts from 1816-25. He bought one of Cole's early landscape paintings in 1825 and is quoted as saying, "This youth has done at once, and without instruction, what I cannot do after fifty years practice." Trumbull went on to introduce Cole to many other important patrons, including his nephew-in-law Daniel Wadsworth and to the artist Asher B. Durand.

***Wall, William Guy:** Irish-born landscapist who moved to New York in 1818 and painted the Hudson River Valley during the summer of 1820. Engravings after Wall's

topographical watercolors were featured in John Hill's *Hudson River Portfolio*, one of the first collections of American landscape views. After the book's publication, Wall continued to split his time between Ireland and New York and was one of the founding members of the National Academy of Design.