

Frederic Edwin Church

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FRANKLIN KELLY

with

STEPHEN JAY GOULD

JAMES ANTHONY RYAN

DEBORA RINDGE

National Gallery of Art
Washington

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Lenders to the Exhibition

Albany Institute of History and Art
Alexander Gallery, New York
Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth
The Art Institute of Chicago
Bayly Art Museum at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville
Cincinnati Art Museum
The Cleveland Museum of Art
The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Dallas Museum of Art
Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington
Des Moines Women's Club, Hoyt Sherman Place
The Detroit Institute of Arts
The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr.
Gulf States Paper Corporation, Tuscaloosa, Alabama
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York
National Academy of Design, New York
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh
National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri
The New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut
The New-York Historical Society
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation,
and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region
The Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey
The Parthenon, Nashville, Tennessee
Private Collections
Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Seattle Art Museum
The George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum, Springfield, Massachusetts
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut
Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland
Yale University Art Gallery

At right, cat. 33, detail



Foreword

J. CARTER BROWN

Director

THIS BOOK ACCOMPANIES THE FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION devoted to the work of Frederic Edwin Church in almost twenty-five years. Perhaps even more important, *Frederic Edwin Church* marks the first time ever that all of this great American artist's most significant paintings have appeared together. Church created some of the most powerful landscapes of the nineteenth century, technical and intellectual *tours de force* that commanded the attention of his contemporaries, much as they do ours today, after an intervening period of neglect. But not even in Church's own lifetime was the ambitious sequence of masterpieces that forms the core of this exhibition ever shown on a single occasion. This exhibition thus represents an unparalleled opportunity to assess his achievements and to understand why Church was heralded in his own day as one of the greatest painters to appear in the young nation.

In the early stages of planning the exhibition we decided to concentrate on assembling Church's most important finished paintings: the ones he actually exhibited publicly or sold to important patrons and the ones he would have undoubtedly considered his most significant. Although today we greatly admire his wonderfully fluid oil sketches and his meticulous pencil drawings (which have themselves been the subject of recent exhibitions), these were known only to a limited number of Church's contemporaries, primarily family members and close friends. Thus, the Frederic Church presented in this exhibition is very much the public figure, the painter of spectacular works that were seen and enjoyed by thousand of viewers, both in America and abroad.

We decided that we must not, at least in the pages of this book, neglect Olana, the great home Church built high on a hill overlooking the Hudson River. The design, construction, and furnishing of Olana and the creation of the lovely manmade landscape that surrounds it absorbed much of Church's time and creative energy during the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s. In a real sense, then, Olana was the last great work of his life, and it is fitting that the final essay here should be devoted to this extraordinary achievement.

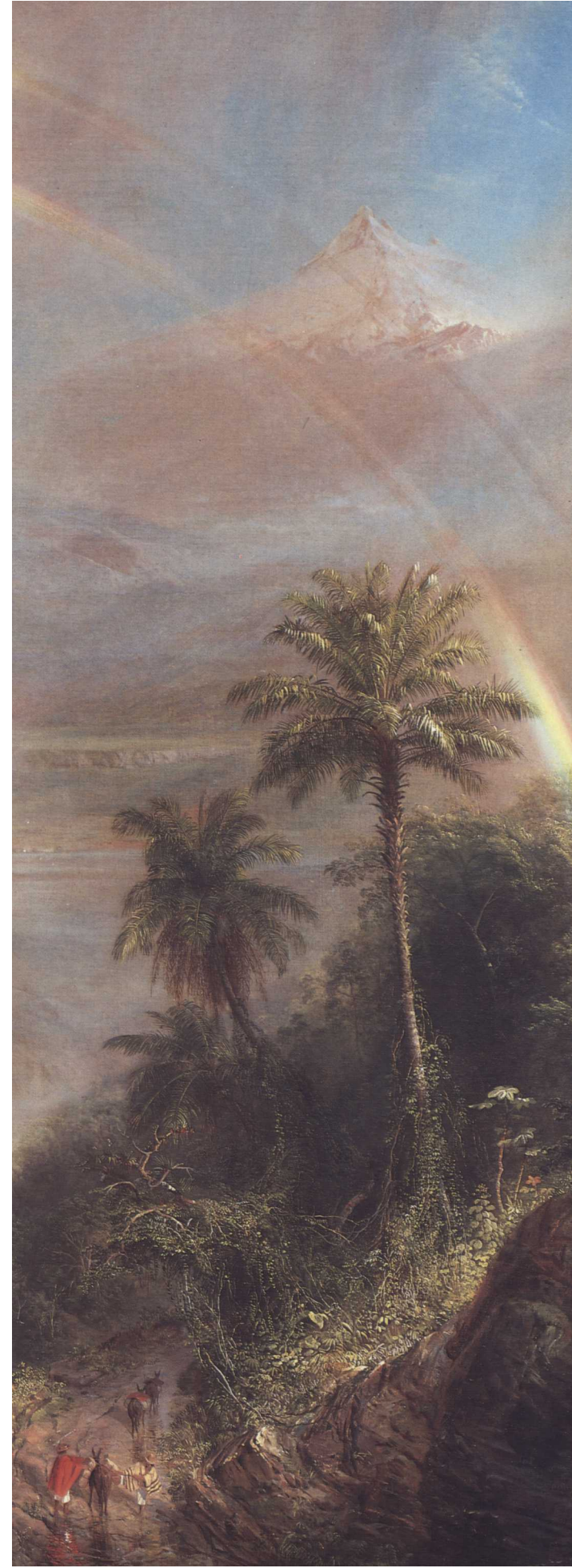
Any major loan exhibition depends for its very existence on the generosity of lenders willing to part with treasured possessions. In the case of Frederic Church, such generosity is particularly essential, for he painted a limited number of key works, which is hardly surprising when one considers the months of intense effort that went into the creation of a single picture such as *Heart of the Andes*.

Accordingly, we are deeply grateful to the museums and private collectors who have lent to the exhibition. In particular, we acknowledge the Wadsworth Atheneum, in Church's hometown of Hartford, which has lent four major works; Olana State Historic Site, which has lent three; and the Detroit Institute of Arts, the National Museum of American Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (which is lending *Heart of the*

Andes for the first time since it was given to the museum in 1909), the Albany Institute of History and Art, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, each of which has lent two. Other museums, including the Dallas Museum of Art, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and the National Gallery of Scotland (which is allowing *Niagara, from the American Side* to return to this country for the first time since 1887) have also lent works that were absolutely crucial to the success of the exhibition. To all of the lenders we extend heartfelt thanks.

At the National Gallery we are grateful to Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., curator of American art. We owe a very special debt to Franklin Kelly, whose understanding of Church's art has enhanced this exhibition immeasurably. First as a Samuel H. Kress Fellow, subsequently as curator, American art, at the National Gallery of Art, and now as curator of collections at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Frank Kelly has made this project a labor of love.

Finally, to all of those who are acknowledged on the following pages and elsewhere in this book, we are most grateful for their assistance and encouragement.



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Acknowledgments

FRANKLIN KELLY

Many individuals have assisted me during the time I was organizing this exhibition, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge them here. First and foremost, I thank other scholars who have devoted attention to Church, in particular David C. Huntington, the leading expert on the painter, and Gerald L. Carr, author of numerous important studies. My thanks also to the other contributors to this catalogue: Stephen Jay Gould, professor of geology and Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology at Harvard University; James Anthony Ryan, site manager of Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York; and Debora Rindge, Maryland Museum Fellow in the department of American art, National Gallery of Art. Debora Rindge also deserves special thanks for her tireless coordination of myriad essential organizational details.

It has been a great pleasure to work with my former colleagues at the National Gallery of Art. Every department in the institution played a role in bringing this project to fruition, and I thank all who have offered help and encouragement over the years. I am grateful in particular to Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., curator of American art, and Rosemary O'Reilly and Elizabeth Chew, also of the American art department; D. Dodge Thompson and Ann B. Robertson, department of exhibitions; Frances Smyth and Mary Yakush, editors office; Gaillard Ravenel, Mark Leithauser, Gordon Anson and staff, department of installation and design; Ira Bartfield and Desiree Miller, department of photographic services; Mary Suzor, registrar's department; Will Scott, department of education; Trudi Olivetti, library, who prepared the bibliography and index; and Michael Swicklick, department of conservation. In addition, I owe thanks to John Wilmerding, former deputy director of the National Gallery, for his support and encouragement; to Cheryl Hauser, formerly of the department of exhibitions, for her cheerful and efficient handling of loan arrangements during the planning stages of the exhibition; and to Ellen Hirzy, who edited this catalogue.

Many private collectors, dealers, museum staff members, and scholars across the country have helped in various ways, for which I am grateful. For special assistance and consideration, I thank in particular: Patrick Stewart, Amon Carter Museum; Genetta Gardner, Cincinnati Art Museum; Christina Orr-Cahall, Jane Livingston, William Bodine, and Dare Hartwell, Corcoran Gallery of Art; Mary F. Holahan, Delaware Art Museum; Anna Belle Wonders, Des Moines Women's Club; Samuel Sachs II, Detroit Institute of Arts; Marc Simpson, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; Rick Lapham; John K. Howat, Doreen Bolger, and Kevin Avery, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Paul D. Schweizer, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute; William Truettner, National Museum of American Art; Joel Sweimler, Olana State Historic Site; Wesley M. Paine, The Parthenon, Nashville; Meg Perlman; Jeremy Adamson, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; Mrs. Charles C. Shoemaker; Wayne Craven, University of Delaware; Elizabeth Kornhauser and Raymond Petke, Wadsworth Atheneum; and Jean Woods, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts.

Introduction

FRANKLIN KELLY

WHEN FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH died in 1900, one writer noted that his name, although once famous throughout America, was likely to be confused with that of the younger (and today largely forgotten) artist Frederick Stuart Church, a popular animal and figure painter. F. E. Church had, in fact, lived long past the era of his greatest popularity. His most important successes came early in life: He was thirty-one when he completed *Niagara* (cat. 30) and thirty-three when he painted *Heart of the Andes* (cat. 33), to name his two most famous works, and he executed his last truly successful picture, *Morning in the Tropics* (cat. 49), when he was only fifty-one. Unlike his contemporary George Inness (1825–94), who achieved the height of critical admiration during his last years, Church spent the decades of the 1880s and 1890s in relative obscurity. And although the Metropolitan Museum of Art honored him with a memorial exhibition of ten of his most important paintings in 1900, it would be almost half a century before serious interest in his art would revive.

Church's name was often dutifully mentioned in surveys of American art written during the first decades of the twentieth century, but he was usually cited as one of the exemplars of an old-fashioned and discredited school of art that favored painstaking detail. Thus, even though he was not consigned to the kind of deep oblivion of neglect that was visited on his friend Martin Johnson Heade (1819–1904), Church was by and large dismissed. In 1945, however, nineteen of his paintings appeared in the important exhibition *The Hudson River School and the Early American Landscape Tradition* at the Art Institute of Chicago, a key event in reawakening interest in the American landscape school. Also in 1945, Albert Ten Eyck Gardner of the Metropolitan Museum of Art found himself puzzled by *Heart of the Andes*, which had been given to the museum some thirty-five years earlier. Why, wondered Gardner, should a painting that had been so famous and so admired in its own day come to be regarded as of little interest and merit in the present? Gardner correctly reasoned that there must have been far more to *Heart of the Andes* and to the circumstances of its creation than was immediately apparent. In a pioneering article, "Scientific Sources of the Full-Length Landscape: 1850," Gardner outlined the sources of Church's interest in South America, discussed the circumstances of the exhibition of *Heart of the Andes*, and related Church's art and travels to broader issues in mid-nineteenth-century American culture.

Although other scholars did not immediately pursue the implications of Gardner's work, his article represented an important new perspective on the painter that would prove of great value. In recognizing that Church's art should be understood as having expressed beliefs and issues of importance to America of the 1850s and 1860s, he had grasped that his paintings functioned as something more than just evocations of spectacular scenery. In the mid-1950s at Yale University George Heard Hamilton, a distinguished scholar of French nineteenth-century art, encouraged one of his students to pursue the investigation of Church's landscapes as the



Cat. 1

Hooker and Company Journeying through the Wilderness from Plymouth to Hartford, in 1636

1846, oil on canvas, 40¹/₄ X 60³/₁₆ (102.2 X 152.9)

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut

subject of a doctoral dissertation. In 1960 that student, David C. Huntington, completed “Frederic Edwin Church, 1826–1900: Painter of the Adamic New World Myth,” which remains to this day the most complete discussion of the artist’s life and work. Like Gardner, Huntington recognized that to understand Church’s work one must investigate the influences that lay behind it, but he greatly expanded his investigation to include the importance of Thomas Cole, John Ruskin, and contemporary beliefs about Manifest Destiny, America as a second Eden, and the American as a new Adam.

In 1966 Huntington published *The Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church: Vision of an American Era*, which included both biographical information and detailed analysis of individual paintings. In that same year he and Richard Wunder organized for the National Collection of Fine Arts (now the National Museum of American Art) in Washington the first major exhibition devoted to Church, which also appeared at the Albany Institute of History and Art and the M. Knoedler and Company Gallery in New York. Also in 1966 the campaign to preserve Church’s home, Olana, which Huntington had led, reached a successful conclusion when the property was acquired by the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites.

With this dramatic increase of interest in Church, works by him began to change hands, with many entering public collections. *Twilight in the Wilderness* (cat. 34), which had been unlocated since its appearance in the 1900 memorial exhibition, resurfaced and was acquired in 1965 by the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the National Gallery of Art purchased *Morning in the Tropics* (cat. 49) that same year. Other major paintings, such as *The Andes of Ecuador* (cat. 25), which had remained in the families of their original owners for more than a hundred years, also found their way onto the market.

Although there was a brief lull in attention paid to Church in the late 1960s (he received, for instance, only passing mention in Barbara Novak’s important study *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism, and the American Experience*) his reputation grew during the general resurgence of interest in American art in the years leading to the Bicentennial. As new studies of American art began to appear, Church more and more came to hold a central role in the discussions of mid-nineteenth century landscape painting, and his works were given prominent places in numerous exhibitions. In 1978 Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., organized for the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service a selection of Church’s oil sketches from the collection of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York, the first important exhibition devoted solely to his work since the 1966 show at the National Collection of Fine Arts.

Perhaps no single event of recent years was as important to the popular restoration of Church’s name as the dramatic rediscovery in England in 1979 of his long-lost *The Icebergs* (cat. 35) and its sale at auction for the then-record sum of \$2.75 million. Just a few months later, early in 1980, *The Icebergs* was one of twenty-five works by Church included in the National Gallery of Art’s landmark exhibition, *American Light: The Luminist Movement, 1825–1875*, which still stands as one of the most popular and well-attended displays of American art ever held. Although Church’s relationship to the so-called “luminists” remains a subject of debate, *American Light* reaffirmed his central position in mid-nineteenth-century American painting. Indeed, in the book that accompanied the exhibition the only essay devoted to the work of a single artist was David Huntington’s “Church and Luminism: Light for America’s Elect.” And for Barbara Novak, in her *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825–1875* (1980), Church was now worthy of lengthy and serious discussion as “the great exemplar of

how the official concerns of the age found their way into landscape painting.” Novak concluded that Church’s “interest were broader, his involvement in natural science more intense than those of any other artist of his era.” Also in 1980 Gerald L. Carr organized for the Dallas Museum of Art an exhibition devoted to *The Icebergs*, which had been given to the museum by an anonymous donor. In the accompanying catalogue, which included a substantial introduction by David Huntington, Carr marshaled a wealth of information about the picture and the cultural environment that saw its creation, forcibly demonstrating just how aesthetically and intellectually rich Church’s most important paintings can be.

In recent years Church has been before the public eye on numerous important occasions and has been the subject of significant scholarly research. In 1983–84 eight of his most important paintings were included in *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting, 1760–1910*, which was shown at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, and the Grand Palais, Paris. The year 1984 also saw exhibitions devoted to his early landscapes at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, and to his drawings at the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers, New York, each accompanied by substantial publications. In 1985 Jeremy Adamson organized for the Corcoran Gallery of Art a comprehensive exhibition devoted to the subject of Niagara Falls, with Church’s 1857 painting occupying the focal point, and Katherine Manthorne organized for the National Museum of American Art a survey of the artist’s views of the volcano Cotopaxi. More recently, in the Metropolitan’s *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School* (1987) Church was represented by nine works, a number equaled by only one other artist, his teacher Thomas Cole.

As all of his exhibition activity suggests and as the bibliography included in this book indicates, Church and his art have now received considerable attention. Anyone interested in learning more about the artist can consult a wide variety of books, articles, and exhibition catalogues, which range from detailed discussions of individual works to overviews of his entire career. There are, as well, a number of forthcoming books and dissertations that promise to add significantly to our understanding of specific aspects of Church’s career. Among these are Gerald L. Carr’s catalogue of the works by Church in the collection of Olana State Historic Site, which will include an introductory essay by David Huntington, and John K. Howat’s study of the painter’s life and art. Several more broadly based investigations, such as Katherine Manthorne’s study of American artists in South America and John Davis’ dissertation on American artists in the Near East, also promise to enrich substantially our knowledge of Church. However, we still lack, and will for the foreseeable future, a catalogue raisonné of Church’s paintings.

As we enter the final decade of the twentieth century and approach the centennial of the artist’s death, Church’s reputation as perhaps the leading American landscape painter of the mid-nineteenth century is secure. There is fresh interest in his work abroad—important paintings have recently been exhibited in Paris (*Coast Scene, Mount Desert* [cat. 37] and *The Vale of Saint Thomas, Jamaica* [cat. 42]) and in Berlin and Zurich (*Twilight in the Wilderness* and *Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives* [cat. 44])—and scholars are beginning to assess his achievement in the context of international romantic landscape painting. The last of Church’s full-scale paintings in private hands, *Chimborazo*, has recently been sold by the family of the original owner to a museum (Virginia Steele Scott Foundation, Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California), and one of his most beautiful early works, *Home by the Lake* (cat. 17), has changed hands for yet another record price at auction. Although there is always the hope that lost paintings such as the early *The River of the*

Water of Life (1848), *The Plague of Darkness* (1849), and *View Near Clarendon, Vermont* (1850) or the late *After the Rain Storm* (1875) will turn up, most of Church's major works have now been identified and located.

In 1879, S. G. W. Benjamin, in assessing the previous fifty years of American art for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, noted that it was in the work of Church that the national school of landscape found "its culminating excellence. . . . What [Byron's] 'Childe Harold' did for the scenery of the Old World, the art of Church has done for that of the New. The vastness of this continent were yet unrevealed to us. With the enthusiasm of a Raleigh or a Balboa he has explored land and sea, combining the elements of explorer and artist. . . . Our civilization needed exactly this form of art expression at this period, and the artist appeared who taught the people to love beauty and to find it." For Americans of the late twentieth century Church's art may no longer fill the same needs or speak to quite the same dreams. But his paintings are still undeniably capable of evoking thoughtful wonder about the mysteries of art and the complexities of the natural world and of providing delight and fascination. In short, Church managed to create works of both profound intellectual interest and compelling artistic beauty. As one of his admirers observed in 1860, "to very few is such ability accorded."

Cat. 2

Storm in the Mountains

1847

oil on canvas

29⁷/₈ X 24⁷/₈ (75.9 X 63.2)

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of
Various Donors by Exchange and Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund





Cat. 3

Scene on the Catskill Creek, New York

1847, oil on canvas, 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ X 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ (54.6 X 75.6)

Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland



Cat. 4

Morning

1848, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 (45.7 x 61)

Albany Institute of History and Art, Gift of Catherine Gansevoort Lansing



Cat. 5
To the Memory of Cole
1848, oil on canvas, 32 x 49 (81.3 x 124.5)
Des Moines Women's Club—Hoyt Sherman Place, Des Moines, Iowa



Cat. 6
New England Landscape (Evening after a Storm)
1849, oil on canvas, 25¹/₈ x 36¹/₄ (63.8 x 92.1)
Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth



Cat. 7

Above the Clouds at Sunrise

1849, oil on canvas, 27¹/₄ X 40¹/₄ (69.2 X 102.2)

The Warner Collection of Gulf States Paper Corporation, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

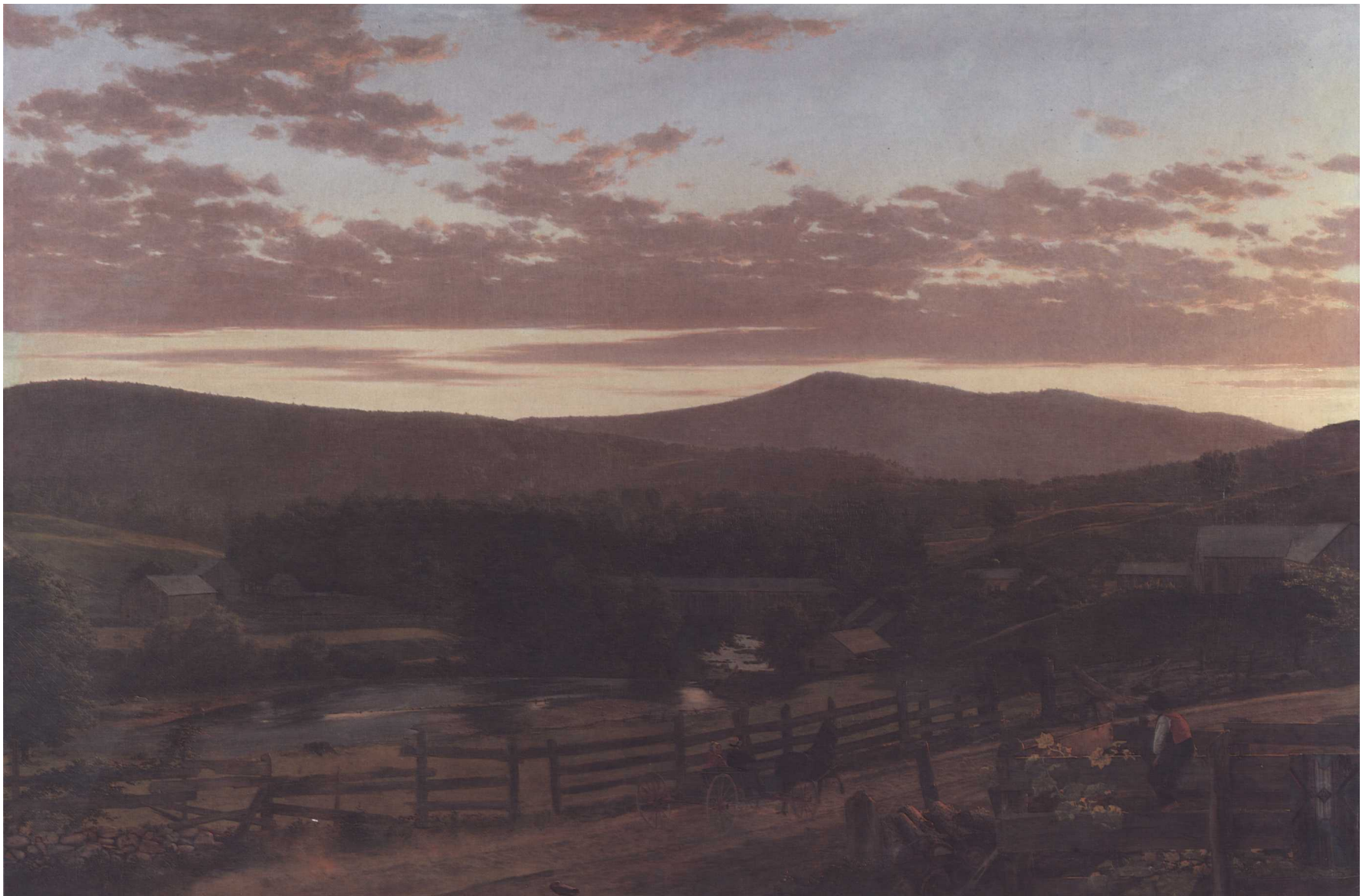


Cat. 8

West Rock, New Haven

1849, oil on canvas, 26½ x 40 (67.3 x 101.6)

The New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut



Cat. 9

Ira Mountain, Vermont

1849–50, oil on canvas, 40⁵/₈ X 61⁵/₈ (103.2 X 156.5)

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Cat. 10

Twilight, "Short arbiter twixt day and night"

1850, oil on canvas, 32¹/₄ X 48 (81.9 X 121.9)

The Newark Museum



Cat. II
Beacon, off Mount Desert Island
1851, oil on canvas, 31 X 46 (78.7 X 116.8)
Private Collection



Cat. 12

New England Scenery

1851, oil on canvas, 36 x 53 (91.4 x 134.6)

George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum, Springfield, Massachusetts



Cat. 13
The Wreck
1852, oil on canvas, 30 x 46 (76.2 x 116.8)
The Parthenon, Nashville, Tennessee



Cat. 14

Grand Manan Island, Bay of Fundy

1852, oil on canvas, 21³/₁₆ X 31⁵/₁₆ (53.8 X 79.5)

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, Gallery Fund



Cat. 15
Coast Scene
1852, oil on canvas, 20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2)
Private Collection



Cat. 16

The Natural Bridge, Virginia

1852

oil on canvas

28 x 23 (71.1 x 58.4)

Bayly Art Museum at the University of
Virginia, Charlottesville

A Passion for Landscape: The Paintings of Frederic Edwin Church

FRANKLIN KELLY

Landscape painting is the thoughtful and passionate representation of the physical conditions appointed for human existence.

John Ruskin, “Lectures on Landscape,” 1871

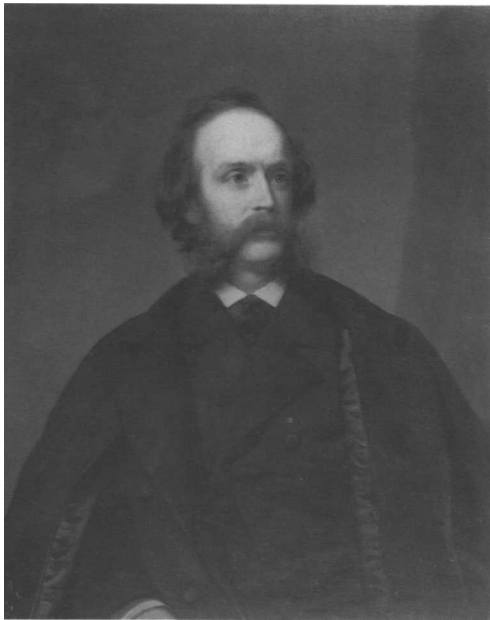


Fig. 1. Charles Loring Elliot, *Frederic Edwin Church*, 1866, oil on canvas, 34 x 27 (86.4 x 68.6), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

At right, cat. 31, detail

NO ERA IN THE HISTORY of Western art has seen so many artists invest so much thought and passion in the depiction of “the physical conditions” of the world as did Ruskin’s own century. It was a time of great national schools of landscape painting—the Hudson River School in America, Barbizon and impressionist painters in France, the Düsseldorf School in Germany, the Macchiaioli in Italy, the Heidelberg School in Australia—and of extraordinary individual talents such as England’s J. M. W. Turner and Germany’s Caspar David Friedrich. For those who painted landscapes, purchased or commissioned them, wrote about them, or simply enjoyed studying them in a public exhibition or private gallery, it was a time when art seemed to help “the book of nature” unfold “its innumerable leaves, all illuminated with glorious imagery.”¹

In the middle decades of nineteenth-century America landscape painters were active in remarkable numbers, exploring and painting the scenery of the New World, deciphering the “book of nature” to eager audiences. None, however, surpassed Frederic Edwin Church (fig. 1), whose intellectual convictions about landscape painting, technical skills, and artistic ambitions exceeded those of even his most talented contemporaries in the Hudson River School. He was, to borrow Ruskin’s words, “thoughtful and passionate” in portraying “the physical conditions appointed for human existence,” and as a result he found both fame and fortune.² Church, as David Huntington has shown, was the right man in just the right place at precisely the right moment, for his art gave eloquent expression to some of the most important issues and ideas of concern to Americans of the 1850s and 1860s.³ But Church did more than that. He created in the great works of his maturity—such as *Niagara* (cat. 30), *Heart of the Andes* (cat. 33), *Twilight in the Wilderness* (cat. 34), *The Icebergs* (cat. 35), and *Cotopaxi* (cat. 36)—a new kind of heroic landscape, one that was not only fresh and inventive in its expression of American values and concerns, but also able to transcend local limitations and appeal to a broader international audience. In doing so, Church would synthesize influences from a variety of sources, including Old Master painting, the art of his teacher Thomas Cole, the writings of John Ruskin and Alexander von Humboldt, and the works of other contemporary artists, both American and European.

To appreciate Church’s achievement and understand his place both in American art and in international nineteenth-century landscape painting, we must trace his development from student to mature artist—using the works in this exhibition as our guide—and unravel these various influences. At the same time we must heed Church’s own considerable genius for artistic invention, for it was the catalyst that helped him transform what he learned from others into a vision of the world that is still original and powerfully expressive almost one hundred years after his death.





Figs. 4–7. Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life*, 1842, oil on canvas: *Childhood*, 52⁷/₈ x 77⁷/₈ (134.3 x 197.8); *Youth*, 52⁷/₈ x 76³/₄ (134.3 x 194.9); *Manhood*, 52⁷/₈ x 79³/₄ (134.3 x 202.6); *Old Age*, 52¹/₂ x 77¹/₄ (133.3 x 196.2), National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

Fig. 2. Frederic Edwin Church, *Thomas Cole*, c. 1845, pencil drawing, 7¹/₁₆ x 9⁹/₁₆ x (17.8 x 23.6), National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington



Study with Thomas Cole

The first and ultimately the most profound influence on Church was Thomas Cole (fig. 2), with whom he began a two-year period of study in 1844. Cole had by then been the most famous and most respected landscape painter in America for almost twenty years, but he had never accepted a pupil. The eighteen-year-old Church thus began his artistic career on a particularly auspicious note, for being Cole's pupil gave him advantages that were not available to any other aspiring painter of his generation. Cole was well known in New York cultural circles, and although his relationships with leading patrons and connoisseurs were often uneasy, he understood the market for landscape painting better than anyone. Church, almost from the first, had a shrewd appreciation for the economic possibilities of his chosen profession, and he no doubt learned much from Cole about practical matters such as the tastes and interests of potential customers in New York and the workings of important art institutions like the National Academy of Design and the American Art-Union.⁴ Cole also must have given his pupil basic instruction in drawing and painting and in the complexities of pictorial composition, even though it was clear to him that Church was born with exceptional talent.⁵ But such things, no matter how much they may have helped Church make his way, were of little importance compared to the deeper lessons he learned from Cole about the purposes of landscape painting and the role of the artist in society.

Cole, whose ideas about art were deeply indebted to European artistic theory, felt that landscape painters should have higher goals than merely recording the literal appearance of the natural world. To be sure, he recognized the value and appeal of American scenery as a subject and painted many superb works (e.g., fig. 3) depicting it in a relatively straightforward manner. But Cole much preferred painting “compositions,” works that were based on the study of nature but did not attempt to re-create specific scenes. Such works, he felt, allowed him to exercise his artistic imagination, which was crucial to the creation of serious art. As he wrote to an early patron, “If the imagination is shackled, and nothing is described but what we see, seldom will anything truly great be produced in either Painting or Poetry.”⁶

Even more, Cole believed that the ultimate purpose of the landscape painter was to create “a higher style of landscape”⁷ that could “speak a language strong, moral and imaginative.”⁸



By the mid-1840s, when Church joined him in Catskill, New York, Cole felt more strongly than ever that the “mission” of the artist was “a great and serious one,” and that his “work ought not to be a dead imitation of things, without the power to impress a sentiment or enforce a truth.”⁹ Cole had demonstrated his commitment to these beliefs in his great serial landscapes, of which the famous *Voyage of Life* (figs. 4–7) is perhaps the epitome.¹⁰ And from what his pupil’s works tell us, it is clear that Cole deeply impressed upon Church that to be a landscape painter was indeed to embark on a “great and serious mission.”

Within a year after beginning his apprenticeship with Cole, Church made his professional debut, sending two landscapes—*Twilight among the Mountains*, c. 1845 (Olana State Historic Site) and *Hudson Scenery* (unlocated)—to the annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design in the spring of 1845. At least one reviewer, who noted that the works were by “a pupil of Mr. Cole’s,” found “evidence of genius in the painter.”¹¹ Far more genius, however, would be evident in Church’s first truly important work, *Hooker and Company Journeying through the Wilderness from Plymouth to Hartford, in 1636* (cat. 1), which appeared at the Academy in 1846. Given its large size (about three and a half by five feet), the care with which it was executed, and the ambitiousness of its subject, this was clearly a major effort by the young artist, meant to announce his talent to the New York art world. Church had completed his two years of study with Cole, and *Hooker and Company* gives evidence both of what he had learned from his teacher and of his own artistic inclinations. *Hooker and Company* is related to many of Cole’s works in the “higher style of landscape,” for it uses landscape elements to set the stage for an important human event. But at the same time, it is painted with a crispness of detail—particularly evident in the handling of the foliage—and a clarity of light that are unlike any of the older artist’s works. Moreover, whereas Cole, especially in the 1840s, preferred to paint subjects of his own invention, Church chose for his first important picture a real episode from American history.¹² He had thus taken an early step toward adapting Cole’s ambitions for landscape to the evolving taste in America of the 1840s, which favored more straightforward and factual paintings. In doing so he had also chosen a subject that appealed not only because of its historical interest, but also because of its relevance to contemporary events. Hooker’s migration into what was then untamed wilderness and his founding of a democratic settlement



Fig. 3. Thomas Cole, *The Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)*, 1839, oil on canvas, 40 x 61½ (101.6 x 156.2), National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Fund



Fig. 8. E. Gallaudet, after a painting by Thomas Cole, *The Whirlwind*, engraving published in *The Token*, 1837, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Fig. 9. Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Blasted Tree*, 1850, oil on canvas, 17 x 14 (43.2 x 35.6), Jamee and Marshall Field



Fig. 10. Thomas Cole, *Catskill Creek*, 1845, oil on canvas, 26 x 36 (66 x 91.4), The New-York Historical Society, New York

offered a perfect precedent for America's vigorous westward growth and confirmed the sanctity of the nation's "Manifest Destiny" to dominate the North American continent.

Following his success with *Hooker and Company*, Church briefly established a studio in Hartford, but he soon "felt the need of atmosphere for his art that few artists can do without—kindred activities going on about him; artists at work and giving sympathetic companionship; works of art in greater abundance."¹³ So, like virtually all aspiring artists of his generation, he went to New York. In the fall of 1847 he set up painting quarters at the Art-Union Building and soon began to attract favorable attention. During the next few years Church progressed rapidly in his mastery of landscape painting, exploring various approaches to the genre and assimilating influences from a number of sources. As before, Cole's work remained of primary importance. As Church gained confidence he tried his hand at creating more ambitious works that were based on precedents from his teacher's art. In the early years of his career reviewers would frequently note this strong allegiance of pupil to master—"We were astonished at the great resemblance to Cole shown in the landscapes of Mr. Church," wrote one—and would caution him to "beware of being merely an imitator, even of the best."¹⁴ Comparison of Church's *Storm in the Mountains* (cat. 2) to Cole's *The Whirlwind* (fig. 8) shows just how closely Church sometimes followed Cole's example. Yet, as in *Hooker and Company*, Church's manner of painting with precise, crisp brushwork and his more carefully observed effects of light and atmosphere make his work different. One would, in fact, be less likely to mistake Church's *Storm in the Mountains* for a Cole than one would a similar work by his contemporary Jasper Cropsey (fig. 9), where the expressive, agitated brushwork comes close indeed to the older man's style.

Church also created works that were indebted to the more peaceful and less turbulent style of landscape that Cole had developed during the early 1840s. His *Scene on the Catskill Creek, New York* (cat. 3), which was shown at the Art-Union with four other paintings (including



Fig. 11. Frederic Edwin Church, *Christian on the Borders of the “Valley of the Shadow of Death,” Pilgrim’s Progress*, 1847, oil on canvas, 40½ x 60¼ (102.9 x 153), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region (at left)

Fig. 12. Henry Fuseli, *Oedipus Cursing His Son, Polynices*, c. 1777, oil on canvas, 59 x 65⅞ (149.9 x 165.4), National Gallery of Art, Washington, Paul Mellon Collection (above)

Storm in the Mountains) in the fall of 1847, shows the pastoral side of nature that Cole had celebrated in such works as *Catskill Creek* (fig. 10). Once again, however, Church’s ability to suggest the actual appearance of nature and, especially, his ability to capture with startling clarity the radiant play of light across rocks, water, trees, hills, and clouds, sets his work apart from Cole’s.

During his early period Church also continued to create major works indebted to Cole’s “higher style,” and these works were invariably his most important and ambitious efforts for each year. Such was the case with his large *Christian on the Borders of the “Valley of the Shadow of Death,” Pilgrim’s Progress* (fig. 11), shown at the National Academy exhibition of 1847. At least one observer was greatly impressed with this effort at dramatic landscape: “If the idea is original with this promising young artist, . . . it entitles him to great credit. The profound depth of shadow over the valley is managed with extraordinary skill; and the demon-cloud hovering over the ‘everlasting fire’ in the bosom of the abyss is a conception worthy of Fuseli.”¹⁵ This assessment is notable not only for its praise, but also for its invocation of the Swiss artist Henry Fuseli (1741–1825), whose works were much admired by American and English connoisseurs for their dramatic and imaginative power. Looking at a typical Fuseli today (fig. 12), we may find the comparison to Church somewhat puzzling. But Fuseli was a significant influence for a number of English painters who achieved a high level of sensationalism and theatricality in their landscapes (most notably J. M. W. Turner and John Martin) and who were, in turn, of importance for Cole. Thus, when seen in this broader context of Anglo-American landscape painting, the linking of Fuseli and Church becomes more understandable. As we shall see, critics would gradually recognize that the talents and interests of this ambitious

young painter were such that to relate his work to international developments was not only logical, but inevitable.

Church's satisfaction with *Christian on the Borders of the "Valley of the Shadow of Death"* is suggested by his creation the following year of a second major work based on John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress, The River of the Water of Life* (unlocated). This work showed Christian and his companion walking along the verdant banks of a river at twilight, and it was considered "a glorious landscape; one of the best, if not the very best" in the Academy exhibition of 1848.¹⁶ Interestingly, what was most admired in this purely imaginary landscape was its accuracy in depicting the forms of nature: "Let the visitor observe the truth with which a partial rippling of the stream is represented, and the great accuracy of touch in the foliage."¹⁷ Observers might, on the one hand, admire the "high character" of Bunyan's "universally-read and world-renowned book," but they could also be captivated by Church's ability to capture the most fleeting of nature's effects.¹⁸ As William J. Stillman, who studied with Church briefly around 1848, observed: "His retention of the minutest details of the generic or specific characteristics of tree, rock, or cloud was unsurpassed. . . . His vision and retention of even the most transitory facts of nature passing before him must have been the maximum at which the human mind is capable."¹⁹ Church had now achieved exceptional competency as a landscape painter and was receiving extravagant praise for his mastery of natural effects. In particular he was earning a reputation for the depiction of spectacular skies, and more and more his works (e.g., *Morning* [cat. 4]) would reveal a fascination with capturing the evanescent play of light and atmosphere.

Church was only twenty-one when Thomas Cole died in February 1848, but some already viewed him as fully capable of "following in the footsteps of Cole" and becoming "eminently successful."²⁰ Appropriately, the first painting created by any artist in honor of Cole was Church's *To the Memory of Cole* (cat. 5), which was completed in April 1848 and included in the fall exhibition of the Art-Union.²¹ In this touching memorial Church both paid homage to the memory of his departed master and reaffirmed his own commitment to the "higher style of landscape" Cole had taught him about. The scene, although based on the topography around Catskill that Church knew well from his days with Cole, has an almost otherworldly appearance, which is heightened by the absence of human presence. Certain key elements—the sawn tree stump, the winding stream, and the garland-draped cross—bring to mind Cole's use of such details in his own symbolic landscapes, as does the way the entire landscape is punctuated by signs of change and transition—light alternating with dark, running water, leaves turning red amid sprouts of fresh growth, and evergreens juxtaposed with a deciduous tree. Church's painting thus becomes a meditation on the cycles of time and the contrast of the fleeting quality of human life with the enduring permanence of nature. Cole had a lifelong fascination with such matters, and he constantly addressed them in his art.²² *To the Memory of Cole* was, then, as much in honor of such lofty and challenging interests as it was in memory of the man himself, a clear affirmation on Church's part of the continuing validity and relevance of the "higher style of landscape."

Early Career in New York

In May 1848 Church was elected an Associate of the National Academy of Design; he was elevated to the rank of Academician the following year. Although still only in his early twenties, he was now solidly established as an artist of note in the New York art world. A new level of assurance and confidence came into his art, and he began producing—and selling—



Fig. 13. Asher B. Durand, *View toward Hudson Valley*, 1851, oil on canvas, 33¹/₈ x 48¹/₈ (84.1 x 122.2), Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection (1948.119)

greater numbers of paintings. It was a fortunate moment for talented painters, because the National Academy and the American Art-Union afforded ample opportunities for bringing works to the attention of the public, and there were also growing numbers of collectors who were willing to pay handsomely for high-quality landscapes. Church made the most of the situation, showing three works at the Academy in the spring of 1849 and seven at the Art-Union that fall. Among them were several works of considerable ambition. *New England Landscape* (cat. 6), which is possibly the painting entitled *Evening after a Storm* that Church exhibited at the Art-Union, shows how he continued to draw inspiration from Cole's art while at the same time perfecting his own vision. Similar in composition to Cole's *Catskill Creek* (fig. 10), *New England Landscape* manages to be both more accurate in its depiction of nature and more sweeping in its evocation of vast space. Church was learning that by combining meticulous brushwork with compositions that were broad in scope he could create a kind of landscape that held potent appeal for Americans of his day. Although not especially radical—*New England Landscape*, in fact, fits comfortably within the long tradition of pastoral landscapes inspired by the work of the seventeenth-century master Claude Lorrain (see, for example, fig. 20)—Church was already reaching beyond anything most of his fellow painters were attempting.²³ Only the older Asher B. Durand, in works such as *View toward Hudson Valley* (fig. 13) would in these same years be capable of a comparable synthesis of intricate foreground detail and ambitious portrayal of American space; but even he could not match the precision, clarity, and conviction of Church's vision.

Church continued in the late 1840s to explore a more dramatic, or sublime, style of landscape. His extraordinary *Above the Clouds at Sunrise* (cat. 7), although reminiscent of earlier

works such as *Storm in the Mountains* (cat. 2) and *Morning* (cat. 4), brought a new level of drama to his portrayal of the American scene. “We know from repeated observation,” wrote one reviewer, “how much close observance of nature there is in this fantastic picture; and we give the artist credit for his boldness in placing it before the public, nine tenths of whom will deem it absurd.”²⁴ Inspired by the view eastward across the Hudson Valley from the vicinity of the famous Catskill Mountain House, *Above the Clouds at Sunrise* captured a view that seemed to rival “the very process of creation.”²⁵ In Church’s painting the swirling mists, streaming light, and vibrantly alive trees suggest a landscape newly formed, almost as if God was re-creating the New World on a daily basis so that it would always be fresh and unspoiled for a chosen people. Or perhaps the painting might inspire even more metaphysical musings, as in William Cullen Bryant’s contemporary poem “Earth’s Children Cleave to Earth,” which uses similar imagery of a misty sunrise in the mountains.²⁶ For Bryant the sight of morning mists rising and gradually dissolving into the sky evoked man’s struggle to cling to physical life and served as a metaphor for the ultimate passage of all life into a greater whole.

Whatever meanings *Above the Clouds at Sunrise* might have suggested to Church’s audience, it is clear that it expressed a vision of American nature that quite simply had no parallel in the works of any of his fellow landscape painters. Although flawlessly accurate in its portrayal of external reality, it was so expressive and evocative in capturing the rich mystery of nature as to inspire potent associations in the mind of the receptive viewer. Not surprisingly, *Above the Clouds at Sunrise* has been compared to the works of Caspar David Friedrich (e.g., *Traveler Looking over a Sea of Fog*, c. 1815 [Hamburger Kunsthalle]), which often do seem suggestively similar in their vision.²⁷ But Friedrich was little known outside of his native Germany, and there has been as yet no evidence that his work was known at all in America. Still, the questions that should most concern us are perhaps not ones of direct stylistic influence or specific connections between artists. To compare Church to Friedrich is simply to recognize what is too often forgotten in many discussions of nineteenth-century American landscape painting—namely, that it can and should be seen within the broader context of romantic landscape painting that flourished internationally in the same years. To be sure, American landscapes were created in response to situations and needs that were not precisely duplicated elsewhere, but much of the creative energy invested in them was driven by currents of artistic, literary, scientific, and philosophical thought that cut across national boundaries. Whether one compares Church to Friedrich, Bryant to William Wordsworth, or Ralph Waldo Emerson to Friedrich Wilhelm von Schelling, the fundamental point remains the same: the investigation of the complex relationships between man and the natural world dominated the cultural life of the mid-nineteenth century in a way perhaps unmatched by any other single concern. If Church’s art reminds us of this fact more often, and more cogently than that of any of his colleagues in the American school, perhaps that is only because appreciating the full measure of his achievement inevitably demands that we look beyond purely national concerns.

Certainly Church himself by the late 1840s was capable of looking for inspiration well beyond the confines of the New York art world, for as his ambitions for landscape painting grew, so did his need to embrace new modes of artistic thought. In 1849, as in previous years, Church devoted much of his energy to the creation of a large imaginary work that continued the tradition of Cole. Church deemed this work, *The Plague of Darkness* (unlocated), of sufficient importance for exhibition at both the Academy and the Art-Union, an honor not accorded to any of his other efforts that year.²⁸ Although all trace of the painting was lost in the nineteenth century, we know from contemporary descriptions that it showed Moses on a “lofty crag,” with “thick black clouds” above and “long lines of Egyptian architecture, seen



Fig. 14. John Martin, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 1826, mixed media intaglio and hand coloring on paper, 18⁵/₁₆ x 26³/₄ (48.1 x 68), National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of William and Ruth Benedict

by reflected light” below.²⁹ And though this painting must have reminded many observers of Cole’s most dramatic works, it also suggested another artist. “This piece,” wrote one critic, “has much of that grandeur which characterized Martin’s celebrated pictures.”³⁰ The English artist John Martin (1789–1854) had by the 1840s gained an international reputation for his highly charged, melodramatic images based on John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the Bible (fig. 14). Prints after his works were avidly collected in America, and Church was surely familiar with them, just as Cole had been. Martin actually created many of these prints himself, and they were often more successful than the related oils. Such prints thus represented an important source of original works by an English master readily available in America. That the young artist would aspire to create a work in the manner of Martin suggests that he was now ready to test himself in a larger arena than New York. But although *The Plague of Darkness* was highly praised for, among other things, its “originality of design and grandeur of effect,”³¹ it was all but overshadowed by a smaller, quieter, and seemingly less ambitious work that appeared with it at the National Academy. Ironically enough, the work that relegated *The Plague of Darkness* to the background, *West Rock, New Haven* (cat. 8), was by Church himself. He may have stolen his own thunder, but he had also, on the eve of his twenty-third birthday, “taken his place, at a single leap, among the great masters of landscape.”³²

West Rock, New Haven is one of those key works in an artist’s career that not only summarizes all that has gone before, but also announces new interests and predicts new artistic directions. Church’s contemporaries pronounced it “a faithful, natural picture,” recognizing that it demonstrated, more clearly than had any previous work, just how successful he could be in capturing the actual appearance of American nature.³³ Indeed, it even seemed to meet the “‘Oxford Graduate’s’ [i.e., John Ruskin’s] conditions of excellence.” The first volumes of

Ruskin's *Modern Painters* were just becoming known in America, but his "truth to nature" aesthetics were already gaining influence. We know that Church was familiar with *Modern Painters*, because his pupil Stillman recalled having come across a copy in his studio around 1848.³⁴ Without question, Church's own inclination toward a detailed, factual portrayal of nature would have been strongly reinforced by what he read in Ruskin, and he would have equally agreed with the English critic's ideas as to how the beauties of the natural world were reflections of the higher order and plan of God. Ruskin encouraged landscape painters to express the deeper meanings of nature: "The teaching of nature is as varied and infinite as it is constant; and the duty of the painter is to watch for every one of her lessons, and to give . . . those in which she has manifested each of her principles in the most peculiar and striking way. The deeper his research and the rarer the phenomena he has noted, the more valuable will his works be."³⁵ From this point on Church would deepen his research into the lessons of nature and seek ever more vigorously the rarest of phenomena. *West Rock, New Haven* is the first evidence of that expanded quest.

West Rock and nearby East Rock—"two bold and striking bluffs of trap-rock, lifting themselves, in magnificent array of opposition, about four hundred feet out of the plain"—were among the most famous scenic wonders in the vicinity of New Haven and had long attracted the attention of artists, writers, and geologists.³⁶ Church sketched the view that would provide the basis for his painting in July 1848.³⁷ In the finished work he closely followed the drawing, adding the field of mown hay, the men and the wagons, and placing a splendid blue sky filled with drifting white clouds above. The result was a work of lyrical beauty, celebrating not only the pastoral charm of the American scene and the unique character of one of its geological monuments, but also paying homage to the labors of the industrious citizens who were reaping the bounty of this new Paradise. It would be difficult to imagine a more lucid expression of nature's lessons. But for Church's contemporaries the painting did more than just offer instruction about nature; it spoke of the lessons of history as well.

Church and certainly many of those who saw his painting at the National Academy knew perfectly well that West Rock had the "advantages of a positive historic charm."³⁸ Church had done more than merely re-create "a beautiful and well-known scene"; he had illustrated "a passage in colonial history."³⁹ That episode was the story of two seventeenth-century Englishmen who had defied the Crown and found sanctuary in the Colonies. Sympathetic colonists kept them hidden at one point in a cave high on West Rock. For Americans of Church's day, that event foreshadowed the nation's struggle for independence from Britain. Thus, whereas with *Hooker and Company* (cat. 1) of three years earlier, Church had taken a subject from history that had powerful meaning for his own day, with *West Rock* he had chosen a modern landscape that had historical connotations.⁴⁰ But unlike other artists, who were inclined to focus more closely on the specific locale of the story (e.g., George Henry Durrie's *Judges' Cave*, 1856 [New Haven Colony Historical Society]), Church had used it as subtext for a landscape that had its own positive associations. Like Turner's *Dolbadarn Castle, North Wales* of 1800 (Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House), with its evocation of Welsh history, Church's *West Rock* may be seen as a version of the associationist landscape. Cole knew the theories of Archibald Alison perfectly well, and it is likely he impressed upon his student Church the validity of the associationist landscape, even though he knew that America had, compared to the Old World, relatively few sites hallowed by history. Although associationist landscapes were out of fashion in England by the 1850s, Church and other Hudson River School painters managed to breathe fresh life into the convention in the context of the New World landscape.

In *West Rock, New Haven* Church had created his first masterpiece, a work that was not only entrancingly beautiful, but also capable of expressing deeper levels of content and meaning. As the decade of the 1850s dawned he began to seek out new artistic challenges, working with an assurance and confidence remarkable for one who had been a professional painter for barely five years. He began to travel more widely, exploring areas that had not been visited by other painters and tackling subjects that would prove new to his contemporaries. And as he did so, he would bring to “full fruition the aspirations of his master”⁴¹ Cole, who had taught him so much about the higher purposes of landscape painting and the role it could play in the cultural life of the nation.

Church’s travels in the summer of 1849 took him into the Green Mountains of Vermont, where he found material for several important paintings he would execute in the fall and winter of 1849–50. One of these, the large *Ira Mountain, Vermont* (cat. 9), appeared at the National Academy in the spring of 1850 and then became part of the Art-Union distribution that fall. It elicited considerable praise from New York critics, who were by now becoming aware that Church was a talent who could not be ignored. One, who admired the “beauty of the sky and the foreground” in the painting, nevertheless criticized its “want of variety in form and outline,” which left “the landscape wanting in character.”⁴² But the deficiency was not Church’s fault; as he noted some years later, “although the picture is one of my earlier efforts, yet I did it with great care, and with a relish, and it is an exact representation of the scene where I was then spending the summer.”⁴³

The most important painting to result from Church’s experiences in Vermont was also a twilight scene, but one of a markedly different character from *Ira Mountain, Vermont*. This work, *Twilight, “Short arbiter ’twixt day and night,”* (cat. 10), was being judged “one of his best works” even before it had gone on public exhibition at the Academy.⁴⁴ Critics were quick to recognize that Church was attempting something unusual here, for *Twilight, “Short arbiter”* was one of the most assertively dramatic pure landscapes that had yet appeared in America. Some found it too much so, faulting the “effects” of the picture as “not within the province of true landscape painting.”⁴⁵ What the intense mood, unusual contrasts of color, and expressive brushwork suggested most were indeed not “true landscape painting,” but the more dramatic side of Cole’s “higher style” (see fig. 6). In fact, the title of the painting was borrowed from the opening of book 9 of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, when Satan prepares to return to the Garden of Eden. It thus makes reference not only to the transitional moment between day and night, but also alludes to the elemental opposition of good and evil.⁴⁶ As we have seen with *West Rock, New Haven*, Church was fully capable of conceiving a seemingly straightforward landscape that still managed to embrace deeper levels of meaning. It is likely that he intended *Twilight, “Short arbiter ’twixt day and night”* to function in a similar vein, a work to be enjoyed and appreciated for its re-creation of natural phenomena, but to be pondered by sensitive viewers for its more profound implications.⁴⁷ From this point on, all of his major landscapes would be conceived in the same way, so that they both entranced viewers with their visual beauty and their technical skill and challenged them to look beyond the obvious in search of the “lessons” offered by the myriad aspects of nature. Through this combination of the sensual and the intellectual Church would achieve his great success in his masterpieces of the 1850s and 1860s. As one of his contemporaries observed, he was “a dilettante and a scholar, born to a life of ease, calm retirement, and aristocratic culture. But what he achieved showed that he had force of character as well as brains, and the competence he had always enjoyed had not hindered him from following the dictates of his praiseworthy ambition.”⁴⁸

In the summer of 1850 Church went to Mount Desert Island, Maine, in search of “marine



Fig. 15. Andreas Achenbach, *Clearing Up, Coast of Sicily*, 1847, oil on canvas, 32 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 45 $\frac{3}{4}$ (81.9 x 116.2), Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

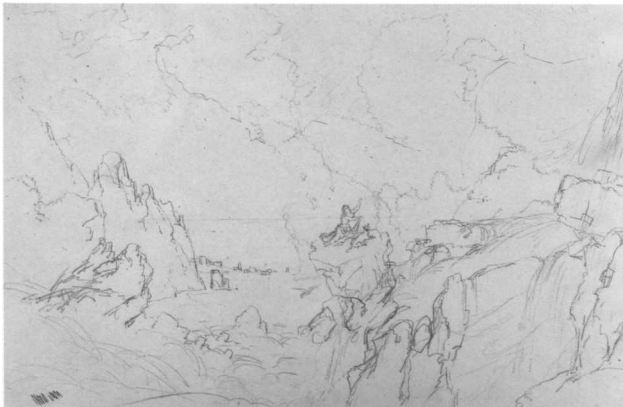


Fig. 16. Frederic Edwin Church, *Sketch for The Deluge*, 1850, pencil on paper, 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ (25.1 x 37.8), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Fig. 17. John Martin, *The Deluge*, 1828, mezzotint, 21 x 30 (53.3 x 76.2), Victoria and Albert Museum, London

views” that were said to be “among the finest in the country.”⁴⁹ Church had not previously attempted to paint marines, and it is likely that he was partially inspired to do so by seeing *Clearing Up, Coast of Sicily* (fig. 15) by the Düsseldorf-trained German artist Andreas Achenbach (1815–1910). This dramatic sea-piece had been exhibited in 1849 at the Art-Union and had been much praised by critics, who deemed it a consummate example of faithful and accurate painting and admonished young American artists to learn from it. Church may well have profited from close study of *Clearing Up, Coast of Sicily* and works by several other Düsseldorf painters that were on view in New York by the spring of 1850, but the influence of the German school on his art was probably limited. After all, what American critics and connoisseurs most admired in artists such as Achenbach was their “careful and accurate drawing” and fidelity to nature, qualities that Church himself already exemplified.⁵⁰ The primary influence, then, of *Clearing Up, Coast of Sicily* was that it encouraged Church to try “his pencil in a new field of art”—marine painting.⁵¹ And as he explored the possibilities of that new field, he again sought assistance from the work of the English school.

The largest and most ambitious painting to result from Church’s trip to Mount Desert was an attempt at “one of the greatest subjects for the pencil,” the *Deluge*.⁵² Although it has been lost since the nineteenth century, surviving descriptions and compositional studies (fig. 16) indicate that Church’s *The Deluge* was similar to John Martin’s 1826 and 1834 paintings of the same subject (fig. 17). The subject, of course, was an extremely popular one in English painting,⁵³ and many Americans would probably have known several other major examples such as J. M. W. Turner’s 1805 *Deluge* (Tate Gallery; published as a mezzotint in 1828) and Francis Danby’s (1793–1861) enormous canvas of 1840 (Tate Gallery). But the widely available mezzotint after Martin’s 1826 version (fig. 17) was most likely the direct inspiration for Church.

In spite of its allegiance to the work of the much-admired Martin and although it recalled Cole’s dramatic imaginary landscapes, Church’s *The Deluge* was not a success. Some observers felt it was “metallic and unpleasant,” others faulted its lack of truth to nature, and George William Curtis of the *New-York Daily Tribune* considered its very conception “inadequate.”⁵⁴ By 1851 allegorical and imaginary works were more and more regarded in America as “a class of



Fig. 18. James Mallord William Turner, *Staffa, Fingal's Cave*, 1832, oil on canvas, 35³/₄ x 47³/₄ (90.8 x 121.3), Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (at left)

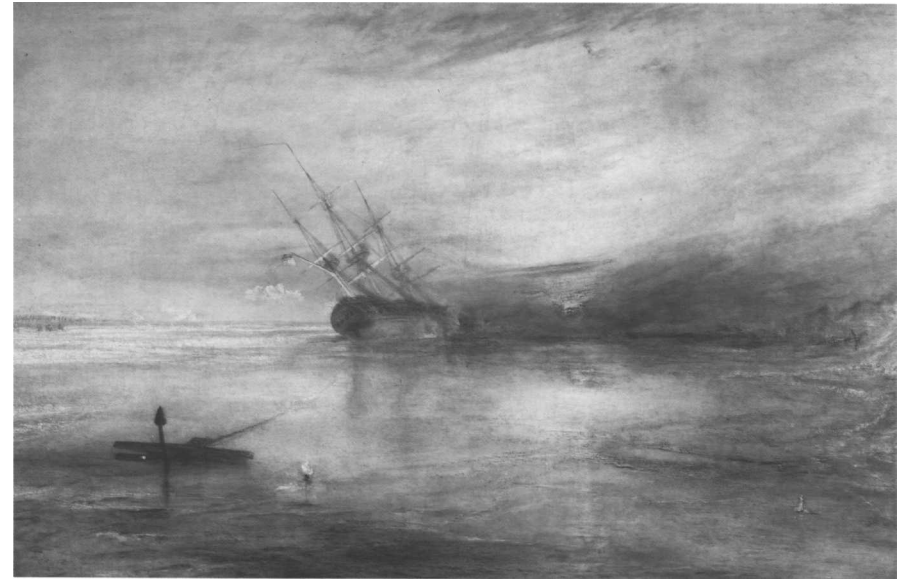


Fig. 19. James Mallord William Turner, *Fort Vimieux*, 1831, oil on canvas, 28 x 42 (71.1 x 106.7), private collection, photo courtesy of Christie's (above)

pictures very objectionable,” and young painters such as Church were being encouraged to reject them as outmoded and unfashionable.⁵⁵ Although Cole had been dead only three years, his influence was already waning; the direction of the American school was now shifting toward pure landscape, and Church could see the trend clearly. The failure of *The Deluge* was a sign of the change, but so too was the great critical and popular acclaim that greeted his other major effort for 1851, “a strong and truthful picture” called *Beacon, off Mount Desert Island* (cat. 11).⁵⁶

“This work of Mr. Church,” wrote George William Curtis, “is deservedly one of the most popular in the Gallery [of the National Academy], for it is broadly conceived, and its feeling and association command a universal sympathy.”⁵⁷ What was especially admired about the painting was the way that it, like *West Rock, New Haven* before it, re-created the facts of external nature with such veracity as to suggest that one were actually present at the scene. As one observer wrote: “The whole illimitable expanse of sky and ocean is opened to your astonished eyes.”⁵⁸ No other American artist of the day could match Church in showing “the splendid play of light, and air, and clouds”; he was worthy now of being classed with Turner as “a devoted student and artistic delineator of the peculiarities of atmospheric phenomena.”⁵⁹ From this moment on Church would be compared more often to Turner than to any other artist. And it was a comparison that surely pleased him, for as his contemporaries knew, he “was a great admirer of Turner.”⁶⁰

Given its detailed style and overall clarity of effect, there might at first glance seem to be little about *Beacon, off Mount Desert* suggestive of the work of England’s greatest painter of landscapes and marines. But *Beacon* is forceful and direct in its presentation of nature’s spectacle in a way that does indicate that Church had now had the opportunity to study a painting by Turner at first hand.⁶¹ In fact, there were two such works available in New York by 1851. *Staffa, Fingal's Cave* (fig. 18), the first Turner in America, had arrived in 1845, followed by *Fort Vimieux* (fig. 19) five years later. Both were owned by James Lenox (1800–80), a prominent

collector and philanthropist who would later purchase Church's *Cotopaxi* (cat. 36). Although we cannot be certain of it, Church likely had access to Lenox's collection to study the two Turners. *Fort Vimieux*, in particular, suggests *Beacon, off Mount Desert* in its spare composition and dramatic stress on light and atmosphere. But the most important lessons Church learned from Turner's works had to do with the very way in which the Englishman conceived his paintings. Turner managed in works such as *Staffa* and *Fort Vimieux* to present a view of the world that was both expansive in scope and powerfully unified in compositional effect. Church would strive to achieve this same goal throughout much of his own career. Although he would not always succeed, the lessons he learned from Turner would serve him well on many occasions.

During 1851–52 Church became particularly enamored of marine and coastal views, and he created a number of works that suggest he was, at least in part, responding to Turner. Thus *The Wreck* (cat. 13) might be seen as an American counterpart to *Fort Vimieux*, just as *Grand Manan Island, Bay of Fundy* (cat. 14), with its striking rock formations reminiscent of the great cliffs around Fingal's Cave, can be considered a New World version of *Staffa*. Even when working on more modest scale, as in the fine *Coast Scene* (cat. 15), one senses in Church's adept portrayal of water clear homage to Turner. Still, at this point in his career Church's debt to Turner was mostly in terms of subject matter; it would be some years before he would begin to absorb the more challenging stylistic implications of the Englishman's work.

Church's early interest in English art was manifested in another way. In 1852 he sent one of his works, *The Natural Bridge, Virginia* (cat. 16) to the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy in London.⁶² This faithfully detailed picture of one of the New World's most celebrated wonders⁶³ had amazed Church's friend Cyrus Field, who had wagered that the artist would not be able to duplicate the exact colors of the rocks.⁶⁴ When Church succeeded, Field agreed to purchase the painting, and he may also have suggested that it be sent to England, where it would surely be admired for both the sublimity of its subject and for its Ruskinian correctness of detail.⁶⁵ As one of the artist's contemporaries noted, depicting the subject required a "felicitous combination of the elements of the sublime, with the minutest detail . . . and no artist, living or dead, of American birth, has ever possessed these qualities of mind and pencil equal to Mr. Church."⁶⁶ Although *The Natural Bridge* probably made little impact amid the hundreds of paintings on view at the Royal Academy, it did mark Church's first exposure in England. In a very few years he would become much better known to this demanding audience.⁶⁷

New England Scenery

By the early 1850s Church had absorbed influences from a variety of sources and had begun to forge his own manner. Late in 1851 he completed a work that his contemporaries felt surpassed all of his earlier efforts and that marked his arrival as the premier American landscape painter of the day. This was *New England Scenery* (cat. 12), which made its debut at the Art-Union in the fall. *West Rock, New Haven* of three years earlier had signaled a new maturity in Church's art, but *New England Scenery* was even more significant in setting the course that would lead to his great masterpieces of the late 1850s and the 1860s. Unlike earlier works, which were generally views of specific places or which depicted landscapes of fairly limited geographical extent, *New England Scenery* was a composed scene meant to evoke the very essence of an entire region of America, as the title implies. Church had assembled bits of meticulously rendered scenery

culled from the studies made on his travels, using as his basic structure the time-honored Claudian mode (compare fig. 20). The result was a painting that not only had “great breadth of effect, with wonderful excellence of details,”⁶⁸ but also seemed to infuse the New World scene with a heroic grandeur akin to that found in the great masterpieces of European landscape painting.

In creating this ambitious work Church had been inspired by a new influence, a man whose name would join those of Cole, Ruskin, Martin, and Turner as having played a key role in the development of his art. This was the German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt, whose *Cosmos: Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe*, appeared in English editions in the late 1840s.⁶⁹ *Cosmos* was an attempt to synthesize existing scientific knowledge about the world into a grand theoretical system that could explain the underlying principles of the universe. In the years before the theories of Charles Darwin overturned so many of man’s basic assumptions about the world (see Stephen Jay Gould’s essay elsewhere in this book), Humboldt’s ideas provided a comforting mix of rational science and firm belief in the existence of a divinely ordered structure for the world. Humboldt’s *Cosmos* not only confirmed many of Church’s own beliefs; it also included a detailed chapter on landscape painting that offered strong justification for his artistic methods. Humboldt was particularly interested in landscapes as means to acquaint people with parts of the world they would never see, and he encouraged painters to become explorers in search of nature’s grandest scenes. He also advocated the use of detailed, on-the-spot preparatory sketches that recorded the facts of nature with scientific accuracy and that could subsequently be used to provide a sound foundation for finished works. He did not, however, argue that the painter must paint mere transcriptions of specific locations, advocating instead views that captured the essence of particular regions of the globe. The result would be “heroic landscape painting” that made use of the creative imagination and maintained a connection with the great traditions of painting, yet was also modern in its



Fig. 20. Claude,
*Landscape with the
Marriage of Isaac and
Rebekah* (“*The
Mill*”), 1648, oil on
canvas, 58³/₄ x 77¹/₂
(149.2 x 196.9),
National Gallery,
London

scientific accuracy. For Church, Humboldt offered both a justification of Cole's preference for synthetic, composed landscapes and a scientific rationale for his own tendency to favor precise detail based on careful observation. In essence, then, Humboldt espoused a kind of idealized landscape that, like Joshua Reynolds' vision of idealized portraiture, placed considerable stress on the role of the artist as the mediator between nature and art. Perhaps even more importantly, Humboldt's theories convinced the painter that his mission now should be to create ambitious works that could show his public aspects of the natural world it had either never seen or had never seen accurately portrayed in art. In effect, Humboldt confirmed much of what Church had already learned from Cole and Ruskin about the higher purposes of landscape painting.

New England Scenery was "considered by many to be the chef-d'oeuvre of the artist," and when it sold at the Art-Union auction late in 1852 for \$1,300 it set a record price for an American landscape.⁷⁰ Church's pleasure with this success and his confidence that Humboldt's formula for "heroic landscape painting" was valuable and relevant for his audience are evident in the number of major works of the next few years that followed in the mold of *New England Scenery*. There was *Home by the Lake* of 1852 (cat. 17), which took for its subject the virtuous American pioneer family making its way on the American frontier; *Mount Katahdin (Katahdin)* of 1853 (cat. 18), which restructured the raw Maine wilderness into an imagined pastoral paradise; and *A Country Home* of 1854 (cat. 19), which took a humble bit of American rural scenery and gave it the dignity and presence of an ideal landscape.

First Trip to South America

Humboldt was also of key importance in leading Church to a new subject, the tropical landscape of South America. The German had made extensive tours in South America and had used the data from his experiences in formulating the ideas expressed in *Cosmos*. Although Humboldt knew that several important artists had visited the tropics, he felt that none had truly succeeded in conveying the full effect of the magnificent scenery. "Why may we not be justified," he wrote, "in hoping that landscape painting may hereafter bloom with new and yet unknown beauty, when highly-gifted artists shall often pass the narrow bounds of the Mediterranean, and shall seize, with the first freshness of a pure youthful mind, the living image of manifold beauty and grandeur in the humid mountain valleys of the tropical world?"⁷¹ Frederic Church would take up this challenge with such vigor and determination that he would, in a few years, become known as "the very painter Humboldt so longs for in his writings."⁷²

Church's first South American pictures did not represent a radical break with the compositional formulas he had perfected in his previous North American landscapes. But they did present a picture of a world that, although exotic and largely unknown, was of considerable interest to Americans for its scientific and scenic wonders and as a possible location for future expansion of the nation. When they appeared at the National Academy of Design in the spring of 1855, *The Cordilleras: Sunrise* (cat. 20), *La Magdalena* (cat. 21), *Tamaca Palms* (cat. 22), and *Tequendama Falls, near Bogotá, New Granada* (cat. 23) received extravagant praise and were considered "a most brilliant triumph, . . . noble achievements."⁷³ Church himself was also clearly proud of his work, for he described *The Cordilleras: Sunrise* as "unquestionably the finest picture I have painted."⁷⁴

The largest and most dramatic of the four paintings, *Tequendama Falls, near Bogotá, New Granada*, recalls Church's *Natural Bridge* in its use of a low vantage point and in its masses of



Fig. 21. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Apollo and Daphne*, 1837, oil on wood, 43 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 78 $\frac{1}{4}$ (109.9 x 198.8), Tate Gallery, London

precisely rendered rocks. The falls were considered one of the scenic wonders of South America,⁷⁵ and Church took great pains to reach them and make sketches from various vantage points. He described the scene in a letter to his mother: “The river Bogota after a long, tortuous and tranquil course through the plains suddenly breaks through a gap in the Mountains and falls in one unbroken sheet into a terrific Chasm 670 feet and then descends in a series of waterfalls and cascades about as much more.”⁷⁶ So great was the change in elevation that Church noted that at “the top of the fall you are in what is called the cold country with the trees and plants and fruits of temperate climates; at the bottom grow palms, oranges, etc.” Church found such juxtapositions of different climatic zones within one view unparalleled by anything he had seen in North America, and virtually all of his South American pictures would, in some manner, make use of this contrast. In *The Cordilleras: Sunrise*, *Tamaca Palms*, and *La Magdalena*, for instance, the scene moves from a humid lowland foreground with dense plants and trees to lofty snow-capped mountains in the distance.

If Church’s earliest South American paintings did not break new stylistic and compositional ground, the same cannot be said of his *The Andes of Ecuador* of 1855 (cat. 25). This was, by considerable measure, the largest work he had yet executed, and without question it was his most ambitious production since *New England Scenery* of four years earlier. Although Church chose to show it first in Boston, it still amazed observers two years later when it appeared in New York at the National Academy in the spring of 1857. As one wrote:

The picture before which perhaps the greatest number of art-critics will congregate is the masterly landscape, by Church, of the Andes of Ecuador. Wonderful hazy ridges of mountain-peaks, flooded with tropical sunlight. Sharp pinnacles just tipped with the eternal snow, soaring like white birds to heaven. Vast, distant torrents, dashing over rocky ledges into bottomless ravines that gape for the silver waters. Faint gleams of tropical vegetation reddening the foreground, with all detail, all shape lost in the vastness of the gorges, but shedding a delicious neutral bloom over lonely places. Grandeur, isolation, serenity! Here there is room to breathe.⁷⁷

Others were more succinct in describing the painting. “Amazing in its effects of atmosphere

and light. It almost blinds the eye of the spectator,” wrote one, and another admitted it was so “striking and bewildering” as to justify the nickname “The Thousand Mountains.”⁷⁸ As such comments make clear, Church had managed once again to dazzle his audience and, in doing so, he had entered a new phase in his art. *The Andes of Ecuador* is Church’s first full-scale masterpiece and the first of his paintings to express what Humboldt called “the feeling of unity and harmony of the Cosmos.” To create it Church had to draw on all that he had learned, and he must also have looked with fresh eyes at the work of Turner.

The composition of *The Andes of Ecuador*, although it retains some of the basic features of the pastoral tradition (such as the framing trees), is remarkably expansive and open. None of Church’s contemporaries in the American landscape school had pushed landscape to this extreme. Church’s experiences in South America had acquainted him with views of vast mountain scenery that were unlike anything he had seen before, and as he struggled to re-create such scenes on canvas Turner’s art once again would have provided a model. Church avidly “studied the many engravings [after Turner’s works] to which he had access,”⁷⁹ and even though these could not help him with color, they could provide compositional inspiration. Certainly the visual leap from the foreground into deep space in *The Andes of Ecuador* bears comparison with some of Turner’s most expansive landscapes (compare fig. 21). Yet, even more, it is Church’s handling of light and atmosphere that now most suggests his debt to the English painter. As Henry Tuckerman wrote of *The Andes of Ecuador*: “Seldom has a more grand effect of light been depicted than the magnificent sunshine on the mountains of a tropical clime. . . . It literally floods the canvas with celestial fire, and beams with glory like a sublime psalm of light.”⁸⁰ Although Asher B. Durand was at this time in his “Letters on Landscape Painting” advising younger painters to study carefully the effects of light and atmosphere, he had not yet in his own works fully mastered its “magic power.”⁸¹ *The Andes of Ecuador*, with its almost palpable atmosphere, proves that Church understood perfectly what Ruskin (in explaining similar effects in Turner’s works) called “the Law of Evanescence,” or the way gradations of light and atmosphere soften the appearance of distant objects.

Church’s contemporaries recognized that *The Andes of Ecuador* was indeed a dramatic breakthrough and that he had “caught and conveyed a new feeling to mind. . . . His pictures speak their meaning, have an influence, excite feelings.”⁸² For some observers, to study the painting was, in effect, to be transported mentally to a new world. As one wrote: “Let me stand with bare head and expanding chest upon one of Church’s mountain-peaks, gazing over a billowy flood of hills; at my feet, torrents flashing, half-seen, through clouds; while from the rifted heavens the southern sunshine pours, like God’s benediction on my temples.”⁸³ From this point on, Church’s audience would expect him to produce major pictures for public display at regular intervals. For the next decade he would comply, and in the process he created an extraordinary sequence of masterpieces.

Niagara

The first of that sequence was *Niagara* (cat. 30), the picture that made Church the most famous painter in America. *Niagara*, unlike Church’s earlier works, was not exhibited at the National Academy of Design, nor at the Art-Union, which had been disbanded in 1853. Instead, it was shown as a one-picture special exhibition at the commercial gallery of Williams, Stevens, Williams and Company in New York, and viewers were charged a quarter for admission. Church had realized, no doubt in part because of the success of *The Andes of Ecuador*, that

he was capable of creating major works that could stand on their own and be best appreciated outside the crowded conditions of normal art exhibitions. And he clearly knew that he stood to gain financially in the bargain, for he not only would receive a portion of the admission proceeds, but also would share in the income from subscriptions to a proposed chromolithograph of the painting: *Niagara* was thus Church's first attempt in the genre known as the "Great Picture"—individual works (or multipart series) that were conceived for independent exhibition, usually with carefully managed publicity.⁸⁴

Many other artists before Church had, of course, depicted the famous falls.⁸⁵ None, however, had ever succeeded in capturing their majestic reality, and many of Church's contemporaries felt it was an impossible task. Church rose to the challenge. As one "cultivated and charming" observer stated: "If the object of painting be to render faithfully, and yet poetically, what an artist's eye discerns, this is Niagara, *with the roar left out!*"⁸⁶ Another admirer, an Englishman who saw the picture in New York, assumed it must have been painted by one of his own countrymen: "Church?" said he. "I don't remember him—*when did he come over?*"⁸⁷

Church, following his now-standard procedure, had made numerous pencil sketches and oil studies when visiting the falls, using them as sources once back in his studio. As with virtually all of his major works, Church worked out the final details of the composition in an oil study (Olana State Historic Site) before starting the finished picture. So great was his concern that he get the color and appearance of the water exactly right, he reportedly only worked on the canvas when "the sky was clear and the sun shining bright."⁸⁸ Remarkably, he was said to have completed it in less than two months.⁸⁹

Although it was clear to Church's contemporaries, as it is to us today, that *Niagara* captured the appearance of the falls with extraordinary reality, it was perhaps less obvious just how he had done it. The answer lies both in the way he composed the picture and the way he actually painted it. Of course, in working with a real scene—and an especially well known one at that—Church could not take the kind of liberties with topography he could in a composed landscape. He could, however, take particular care in choosing the vantage point for his picture so that it presented an easily recognizable view of the falls, yet also allowed him to use certain pictorial devices to enhance the illusionism. Church sketched the falls from a variety of locations, but in the end chose the view across Horseshoe Falls from the Canadian side. The view depicted in the painting is, however, not one that actually can be taken in by the human eye, for Church expanded the field of vision and adjusted the perspective so that both the near and the far sides of the falls come into sight. Rather than attempting to fit the composition onto a canvas with a traditional ratio of height to width such as two to three, Church selected a format of one to two as better suited to evoke the great lateral expanse of the falls.⁹⁰ But his most important compositional decision was to dispense with a foreground. The result was a dramatic viewing experience:

The spectator stands looking directly upon the troubled waters, flowing at the very base line of the canvas; . . . the eye naturally travels with the current until it reaches the brink of the invisible abyss into which the water tumbles; then running along the edge of the great horse-shoe curve, towards the extreme right of the picture, the eye follows round the receding bend to Goat Island, at which point the sheet of water first appears in full height.⁹¹

As this description suggests, the painting so immediately engages the viewer's attention and so skillfully leads the eye through the canvas that it breaks down the seemingly indestructible barrier between the work of art and the scene itself. Spectators could, in fact, imagine that they were actually present at the falls; all that was missing was indeed the roar.

The success of *Niagara* also depended on the technical brilliance of its execution, which

Fig. 22. Thomas Cole, *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*, 1827–28, oil on canvas, 39 x 54 (99.1 x 137.2), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Mrs. Maxim Karolik for the Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815–1865



would be obvious to anyone once the composition had drawn their eye into the scene. The key was Church's ability to depict water: "We have never before seen it so perfectly represented," wrote *The Crayon*.⁹² Just two years earlier one critic had faulted the artist's *Tequendama Falls, near Bogotá, New Granada* (cat. 23), declaring, "He should not paint falling water—for he cannot,"⁹³ and Church had obviously taken the challenge to heart. As David Huntington has discussed, Church must have benefited from a careful reading of the lengthy discourses on the depiction of water in Ruskin's *Modern Painters* and from additional study of Turner's works.⁹⁴ Combining this fresh knowledge with his own painstaking observation of the scene itself, Church managed to create one of the most convincing depictions of water ever to appear on canvas. Even Ruskin, when he saw the picture on exhibition in London in the summer of 1857, was amazed.⁹⁵ And *Niagara* would continue to amaze and impress the British when it returned in 1858 for a second tour, including stops in London, Glasgow, Manchester, and Liverpool.⁹⁶

Although *Niagara* dominated Church's creative and professional activities for much of 1856 and early 1857, he continued to investigate other subjects. His interest in South America may have waned slightly, but he did create a number of fine small paintings of tropical scenery, including *In the Tropics* (cat. 26) and *View of Cotopaxi* (cat. 29). In these and in several related works (e.g., *South American Landscape*, 1856 [Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection]), Church shifted from his earlier pastoral interpretation of South American scenery toward a more rugged and dramatic—in short, a more sublime—presentation.⁹⁷ These works often have a foreground corner of dense tropical vegetation, but frequently dispense with a clear middle ground,



Fig. 23. J. C. Bentley, after a painting by Richard Wilson, *Lake Avernus*, engraving published in the *Art-Journal* (London), 1851



Fig. 24. Thomas Cole, *Landscape (American Lake Scene)*, 1846, oil on academy board, 18 x 24 (45.7 x 61), Mint Museum Collection, Charlotte, North Carolina

introducing instead a deep valley or river bed. The viewer's eye moves quickly into the distance, where jagged mountains recede miles into space. One is reminded of Cole's *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* (fig. 22), which juxtaposed a lush and tropical Garden of Eden with a rugged volcanic landscape. Although much smaller than *The Andes of Ecuador*, paintings such as *In the Tropics* and *View of Cotopaxi* still manage to achieve some of its heroic force and grandeur.

Church also continued in these years to explore the North American wilderness, with a corresponding shift away from the pastoral viewpoint (as epitomized by *Mount Katahdin* [cat. 18]). In *Twilight (Sunset)* (cat. 27), painted early in 1856, the presence of a substantial house in what is seemingly a wilderness area suggests an uncertain and perhaps uneasy relationship between American nature and American civilization. In a closely related painting, also known as *Twilight* (cat. 31), however, Church introduced only a lonely trapper's hut into the otherwise unspoiled wilderness. One of Church's most mysterious and evocative works, *Twilight* is also one of his most beautifully painted, with softly glowing colors and a convincing sense of light and atmosphere.⁹⁸

The most dramatically effective of Church's new interpretations of the American landscape is the striking *Sunset* (cat. 28), painted in the fall of 1856 after he and the young writer Theodore Winthrop had returned from a summer trip into the wilds of the Katahdin region in Maine.⁹⁹ As Winthrop noted, both he and the painter had "needed to be somewhere near the heart of New England's wildest wilderness," for they both wanted to experience the powerful beauty of undisturbed, primeval American scenery. *Sunset* is a pictorial testament to that experience, for other than the crude dirt road and the sheep in the foreground, there are no hints of man's presence. One senses that in the distance, toward the Katahdin-like mountain, there is nothing but raw American wilderness. Although perhaps inspired in part by works such as the English painter Richard Wilson's *Lake Avernus* (fig. 23), which Church would have known through engravings, or generally reminiscent of some of Cole's late wilderness pictures (fig. 24), *Sunset* is less consciously a view of nature filtered by the experience of art.¹⁰⁰ Like *Niagara*, it draws the viewer into the scene so forcefully as to become not so much a painted interpreta-



tion of nature, but an actual re-creation of it. Four years later Church would perfect the vision of American nature introduced by *Sunset* in the heroic *Twilight in the Wilderness* (cat. 34).

Second Trip to South America and Heart of the Andes

In May 1857 Church made his second visit to South America. Traveling with another artist, Louis Rémy Mignot (1831–70), Church stayed in the tropics until August. He visited the great volcanoes Chimborazo, Sangay, and Cotopaxi and made numerous oil sketches and pencil studies of the spectacular scenery. Buoyed by his recent success with *Niagara*, Church was clearly thinking of making a major South American landscape that would be considered a worthy successor to his picture of the falls. He must have been well aware that having “painted this *Niagara* [he] must go on to greater and still greater attainments, or meet this picture in condemnation.”¹⁰¹ Having renewed his acquaintance with that part of the world so dear to Humboldt, he was ready to meet the challenge.

The first important picture executed after his return from South America was *Cayambe* (cat. 32), which was painted on commission for Robert L. Stuart. Stuart, a wealthy sugar refiner and avid amateur naturalist, took “great pleasure in fostering and encouraging” American artists.¹⁰² Having read Humboldt’s works, Stuart knew that the scientist considered Cayambe perhaps the most beautiful of all South American volcanoes, and he may well have suggested the subject to Church. Whatever the case, *Cayambe* shows that Church’s fresh look at South America had helped revitalize his depiction of the tropical landscape. From a lush foreground of dense foliage and palms we look across a shimmering lake in the middle distance over ranges of hills and past floating clouds to the great snow-capped form of the volcano; to the left a full moon appears, slightly obscured by cloud.¹⁰³

Cayambe lies on the equator, where there is no seasonal change, the days are always the same length, and nature is especially fertile. Yet even though it is a place of climatic equilib-



rium, Church, as in earlier paintings, juxtaposes scenery of the warm lowlands with the frozen landscape of the high mountains, creating an implied seasonal contrast. Other contrasts are present, such as the pairing of sunlight and moonlight, water and land, and fire (within the dormant volcano) and ice. Contemplating such contrasts in the natural world, as Church had learned from his reading of Humboldt, could help one appreciate the diversity of the Cosmos and the complexity of the relationships between its elements. Church's *Cayambe*, like *New England Scenery* before it, thus becomes a meditation on an entire region of the globe, admirably fulfilling Humboldt's desire for "heroic landscape." As such, *Cayambe* set the stage perfectly for the far more ambitious work that was to follow it, *Heart of the Andes* (cat. 33).

Church began *Heart of the Andes* by January 1858, when it was reported that "Mr. Church, who has taken possession of a new studio in the Tenth Street building, has underway a landscape, on a canvas some ten feet in length."¹⁰⁴ The Tenth Street Studio Building, designed by Richard Morris Hunt, had opened in 1857 and was filled with tenants by early 1858.¹⁰⁵ It quickly became one of the most important art centers in New York, the site of the studios of several major painters and of artists' receptions and exhibitions. Although Church was able to maintain a certain measure of privacy in the Studio Building—he was, in fact, well known for bolting his door when working on a major painting¹⁰⁶—the public eagerly followed each new rumor about his activities. It soon became known that "he had commenced a composition picture, designed to illustrate the general idea he received of tropical scenery, and that he intended to surpass his picture of Niagara."¹⁰⁷ When *Heart of the Andes* went on view on 27 April 1859, opinion differed as to whether he had succeeded, but more than a few observers deemed the painting even greater than its celebrated predecessor.

Leaving aside such questions of relative aesthetic merit, *Heart of the Andes* was, without doubt, the most ambitious and most thematically complex painting of Church's career. To appreciate his achievement in this great work, we must see it as the most complete synthesis of the variety of creative influences that played key roles in the formation of his art. Indeed, *Heart of the Andes* was, in Cole's terms, "a higher style of landscape" that addressed what Ruskin called "the teaching of nature" while answering Humboldt's call for "heroic landscape paint-

Left to right: Fig. 25. John Martin, *The Plains of Heaven*, 1851–53, oil on canvas, 78 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 120 $\frac{3}{4}$ (198.8 x 306.7); Fig. 26. John Martin, *The Last Judgement*, 1851–53, oil on canvas, 77 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 128 $\frac{1}{4}$ (196.8 x 325.8); Fig. 27. John Martin, *The Great Day of His Wrath*, 1851–53, oil on canvas, 77 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 119 $\frac{3}{8}$ (196.5 x 303.2), all Tate Gallery, London

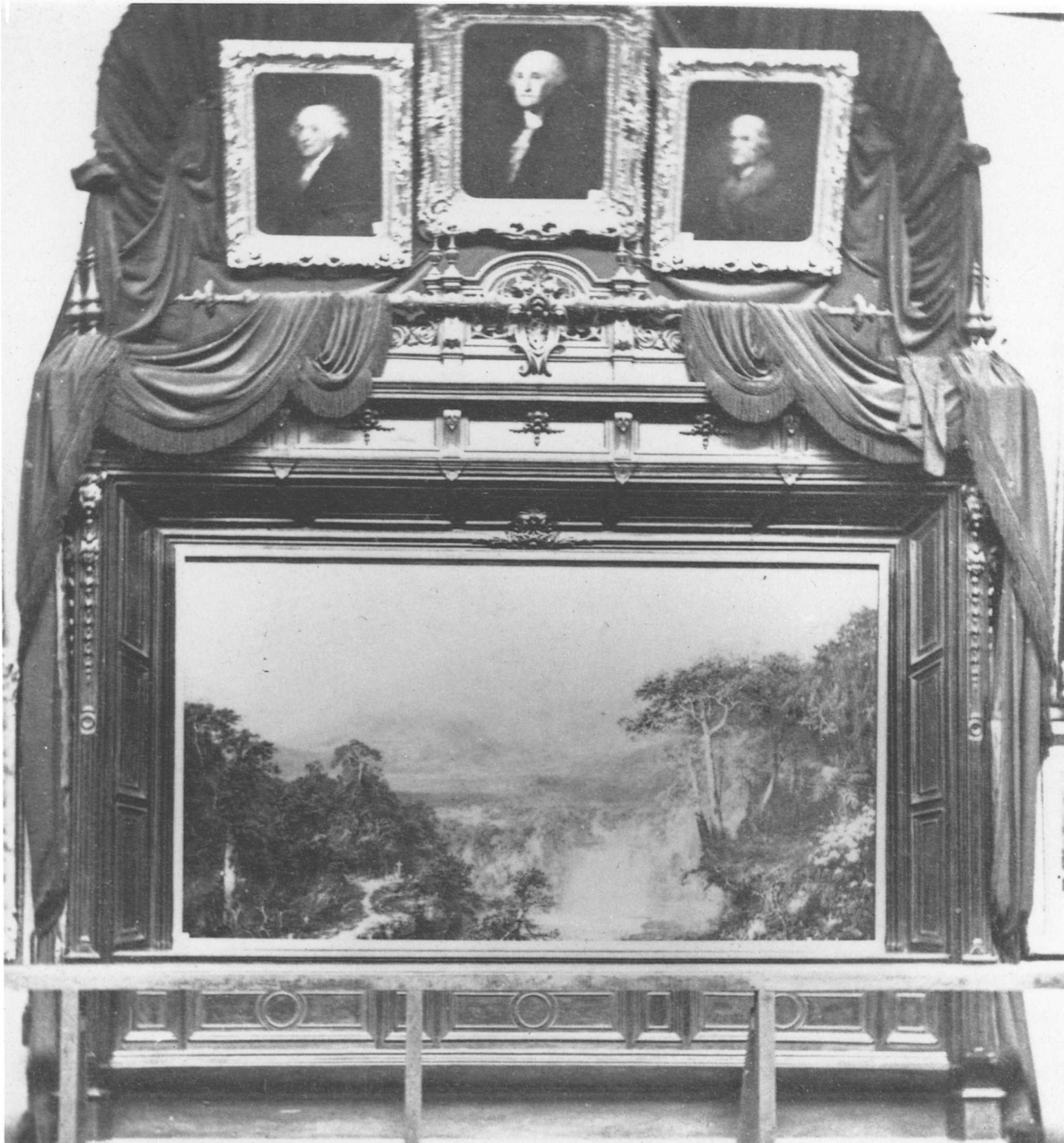


Fig. 28. Photographer unknown, *Heart of the Andes* in its original frame, on exhibition with other works of art at the Metropolitan Fair in aid of the Sanitary Commission, New York, April 1864, stereograph, The New-York Historical Society, New York

ing.” In creating it, Church had managed both to break “from all trammels of schools” and to make “use of all the advantages they afford.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, even though Church clearly still owed much to the example of John Martin—most especially his *magnum opus*, the *Last Judgment* triptych (figs. 25–27), which was shown in New York in 1856¹⁰⁹—his work was clearly his own. And even though in scope and ambition *Heart of the Andes* rivaled Turner’s grandest creations, it even more forcefully spoke of Church’s “originality.”¹¹⁰ Indeed, once the British saw it, even they agreed not only—in the painter Clarkson Stanfield’s (1793–1867) words—that “the man must be a great genius,” but that “on this American, more than on any other . . . does the mantle of our greatest painter [i.e., Turner], appear to us to have fallen.”¹¹¹

Like *Niagara*, *Heart of the Andes* was shown as a one-picture, paid-admission special exhibition. In this instance, however, Church was able to dispense with the services of a commercial gallery and hold the event in the gallery of the Tenth Street Studio Building.¹¹² The painting was presented with a level of showmanship and a flair for the dramatic that Church would never surpass. The picture was placed in an elaborate dark wooden structure adorned with parted draperies (see fig. 28) that suggested a window in a grand house.¹¹³ The illumination was carefully controlled so the picture was brightly lit but the rest of the room was left in relative darkness. Benches were present so visitors could sit and study the painting at length, and dried tropical plants Church had brought back from South America to decorate his studio apparently gave the space an exotic atmosphere (see fig. 32 for a slightly later view of Church’s studio).¹¹⁴ The experience was not so much suggestive of visiting an art gallery, but rather of standing in a room where one might actually have a view of the Andes themselves. Visitors came in great numbers to see the painting; some studied it through opera glasses or metal tubes (both of which served to enhance the illusion of seeing a real scene), while others read about it in pamphlets written by Church’s friends Theodore Winthrop and the Reverend Louis Noble and available for sale.¹¹⁵

It is abundantly clear from contemporary reports that seeing *Heart of the Andes* was completely different from any other art experience of the day. One visitor gave the following account:

Determined to visit this celebrated picture, we bent our steps up Broadway, and at the *ultima thule* of business we found Tenth-street, in big gilt letters on the wall of Grace Church, “Brown, sexton, and undertaker” and farther west, at the corner of Fifth Avenue, sure enough and stuck to a tree, corporation property, in big red letters over the gutter, “The Heart of the Andes.” The lantern over a door indicated not only the portico of the studio, but also, that the painting can be *seen too by gaslight*.

. . . We paid our quarter, which went into the same till wherein thousands dropped before ours, and took our position in front of the painting, as we found the benches, which are arranged in a semi-circle, too low in position to the horizon of the painting, though suited tolerably well in regard to the frame, which latter is ornamented with pannels [sic], “in perspective,” whose vanishing lines fall some three feet below the former. Frames with other than common ornaments ought not to be left entirely to the frame maker.

The public present behaved as usual, admirably and respectful. Some gazed in silence, others had to read the description of the painting, in order to know what they were looking at. All remarks were made in whispers, such as, aerial perspective, beautiful tone, chiar-oscuro, frame looking like out of a window, harmony, Herring, mezzotint, Moissonnier [sic], landscape, Landseer, power, Powers, Poussin, school, scholar, Salvadore, softness, studio, stillness, and so on. The exhibition room was overheated by the crowd and furnace.¹¹⁶

Among those who endured the heat and the crowds was Washington Irving, who made a special trip on the last day of the exhibition from “Sunnyside, invalid as he is, expressly to see the picture.”¹¹⁷ Open for view for three weeks, except Sundays, the painting took in more than \$3,000 in admissions and \$6,000 in subscriptions for the proposed engraving. It was,

without question, “the most notable success which has ever attended the Exhibition of a single picture by a native artist.”¹¹⁸

It is important to realize that the success of *Heart of the Andes* depended on its appeal to a broad spectrum of the public, because it managed to be both serious art and popular entertainment. As Theodore Winthrop observed, “A great work of art is a delight and a lesson.”¹¹⁹ For those who wished to enjoy a display of technical brilliance and be presented with a strange, exotic, and beautiful landscape, *Heart of the Andes* offered obvious pleasures. But for others, who wished to learn the deeper “lesson” at “the core of Nature,” the painting was equally rewarding.¹²⁰ It was, in Humboldt’s terms, an image of an entire region of the planet (“a complete condensation of South America . . . into a single focus of magnificence,” observed the Reverend Theodore Cuyler),¹²¹ epic in scope, but precise in its detailed depiction of the physical facts of plant and animal life, geography, light, and atmosphere. And for those who desired more metaphysical significance the painting was also accessible: “The deep meaning of nature, its purifying, elevating influences are profoundly felt in the presence of this truly *religious* work of art.”¹²² *Heart of the Andes* thus succeeded, perhaps more than any other American painting of the nineteenth century, in addressing a broad spectrum of ideas and issues and in appealing to a large and diverse audience. It was “an intellectual feast” presented by an artist who had “caught the simple truth and exalted poetry of nature and transferred them to canvas.” In short, it was precisely what so many of Church’s contemporaries proclaimed it: “a master-piece.”¹²³ In large measure it established the direction of Church’s art for the next fifteen or twenty years, and it became the standard (along with *Niagara*) by which all of his subsequent productions would be judged. And, like *Niagara* before it, *Heart of the Andes* was a great success in Britain, adding even more luster to Church’s growing international reputation.¹²⁴

Twilight in the Wilderness, The Icebergs, *and* Cotopaxi

As Church was completing work on *Heart of the Andes* in the spring of 1859, he was already giving thought to a subject for his next great painting. Although he at first made plans to go to Europe, he abruptly shifted his destination to the far north.¹²⁵ According to one report, he was so exhausted from painting the detailed foliage in *Heart of the Andes* “as to long for scenes where not a tree or a leaf was to be met with.”¹²⁶ Perhaps this was true, but it is clear that in seeking out icebergs Church was aware of the powerful appeal and considerable interest the subject held during this great era of arctic exploration.¹²⁷ He chose as his traveling companion the Reverend Louis Noble, author of Cole’s biography and of a pamphlet on *Heart of the Andes*. Noble recorded the details of their two-month expedition in a book entitled *After Icebergs with a Painter*, which appeared in 1861.¹²⁸ When Church returned to his studio in New York in the fall of 1859 he had with him a plentiful supply of drawings and oil sketches from the trip, and it was naturally assumed that he would immediately begin work on a “Heart of the Icebergs.”¹²⁹ But before he did, Church returned to a subject that had interested him several years before, the North American wilderness.

By mid-January 1860 Church had begun a major new picture, and interested observers had soon learned that it was to be a dramatic sunset scene. In the spring of 1859 Church had exhibited a small work entitled *Twilight, a Sketch*, 1858 (Olana State Historic Site) and he was now translating this first effort into a finished painting. The result, *Twilight in the Wilderness* (cat. 34), although “not one of Mr. Church’s largest works,” was generally recognized as “one

of his very best.”¹³⁰ Renewing his interest in the theme he had explored four years earlier in *Sunset* (cat. 28), Church created a North American counterpart to *Heart of the Andes*. Similar in composition to the Andean landscape, *Twilight in the Wilderness* nevertheless presented a “strong contrast . . . to the tropical beauty of its predecessor.”¹³¹ It was a summary image of the American landscape painted as the nation was poised on the brink of civil war, and it may be seen as reflecting Church’s uneasiness about the future of his country. Still, regardless of how it might be interpreted, *Twilight in the Wilderness* is surely one of the most brilliant recreations of the evanescent beauty of light and atmosphere at dusk ever to appear on canvas. Church’s lifelong study of the sky and his understanding of Turner’s works (see figs. 18 and 19) had finally paid a rich dividend indeed. Some passages in *Twilight in the Wilderness*, especially the striated areas of pigment that define the clouds, indicate that Church had learned from Turner’s skillful manipulations of paint. But, even more, *Twilight in the Wilderness* proves that Church had at last managed to integrate his own facility for precise and detailed paint handling with an expansiveness and expressive force worthy of the great Englishman himself.

Like *Niagara* and *Heart of the Andes*, *Twilight in the Wilderness* was exhibited by itself as a one-picture, paid-entrance event in New York, and this would be true with virtually all of Church’s major paintings for the next decade or so. When *The Icebergs* (cat. 35) went on public view on 24 April 1861, the nation had become absorbed in the Civil War, but the painting still managed to evoke considerable excitement. “We might write for hours of the subtle aerial lights which play over ice-rock and sea in this picture, and of the innumerable watery colors which blend with them from below,” observed the *New York Times*, and the *New-York Daily Tribune* hailed it as “the most splendid work of art that has yet been produced in this country.”¹³² Similar in size to *Heart of the Andes*, *The Icebergs* was regarded as a contrasting pendant to the tropical work. According to one report, Church originally intended to call it “Crown of the Arctic Regions,” making the link to *Heart of the Andes* even more obvious.¹³³



Fig. 29. James Mallord William Turner, *The “Fighting Téméraire,” tugged to her last Berth to be broken up, 1838, 1839, oil on canvas, 35¹/₄ x 48 (90.8 x 121.9), National Gallery, London*

Fig. 30. C. Ridson, after a painting by Frederic Edwin Church, *Under Niagara*, c. 1862, chromolithograph overpainted by the artist, $17\frac{1}{4} \times 30\frac{5}{8}$ (43.8 x 77.8), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Fig. 31. Frederic Edwin Church, *Chimborazo*, 1864, oil on canvas, 48 x 64 (121.9 x 162.6), Virginia Steele Scott Foundation, Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California



“Mr. Church’s object in both these great pictures,” wrote one observer, “was, no doubt, to give a comprehensive idea of a specific kind of scenery, to group together as much truth as he could homogeneously, naturally, and to represent as he actually saw it, as much as he could, consistently with higher purposes.”¹³⁴ *The Icebergs*, then, like *Twilight in the Wilderness* and *Heart of the Andes*, was a pictorial summary of a region of the globe, and together the three works form a landscape trilogy spanning the entire north-south axis of the New World.

In the early and mid-1860s Church kept up a steady pace of work. It was also a time of important developments in his personal life, for in 1860 he married and he started a family in 1862. Although he did not immediately seek out new subject matter, he created in these years some of his finest and most powerful pictures. *Cotopaxi* (cat. 36), painted for James Lenox (owner of Turner’s *Staffa*, *Fingal’s Cave* and *Fort Vimieux*; see figs. 18 and 19), was Church’s ultimate interpretation of the great volcano that had fascinated him for so many years (see cat. 24, 29).¹³⁵ Making use of compositional lessons he had learned in *Niagara*, *Heart of the Andes*, and *Twilight in the Wilderness*, Church constructed the picture so that the viewer seems to be hovering in space, facing a vast abyss. Walls of rock loom at the right and a great waterfall animates the middle distance. Beyond, across miles of rugged landscape, is the volcano “in continuous but not violent eruption,” discharging thick smoke through which “the newly-risen sun flares with a lurid fire.”¹³⁶ *Cotopaxi* is Church’s greatest homage to Turner, a recasting in geological terms of the famous *The ‘Fighting Téméraire,’ tugged to her last Berth to be broken up, 1838* (fig. 29), which Church’s contemporaries considered perhaps the most majestic of the English painter’s works.¹³⁷ As W. P. Bayley wrote: “Here is the only landscape painter who, *in the large sense*, can be said to have taken up the pencil of our great Raphael of Landscape, Turner—the only one who has similar perceptions of beauty, and similar creative powers, to raise him to the same high principles of Art. Nay, more, he is carrying on Turner’s work where *he left off*.”¹³⁸

The influence of Turner and the memory of Achenbach’s *Clearing Up, Coast of Sicily* (fig. 15) perhaps also led Church to return, for the first time since the early 1850s, to the theme of the sea. *Coast Scene, Mount Desert* (cat. 37), which was shown at the National Academy of Design in 1863, was criticized by some observers for its seemingly exaggerated combinations of color, but was nonetheless greatly admired for its powerful depiction of agitated water. “Here is magnificent force in the sea,” wrote one critic; “we give ourselves up to enthusiasm for it, regarded as pure power.”¹³⁹ Henry Tuckerman commented on the “peculiar yeasty waves and lurid glow incident to a dry autumnal storm in northern latitudes,” bringing to mind Ruskin’s discussion of “yesty [sic] waves” in volume 1 of *Modern Painters*.¹⁴⁰ Although for Ruskin only Turner had ever come close to capturing the full effect of a storm on the sea, Church’s *Coast Scene, Mount Desert* achieved a level of truthful intensity in its depiction of crashing waves and blowing spray that would not be equaled, in America at least, until Winslow Homer created his great seascapes of the 1890s.

Church also returned to the subject of Niagara Falls late in 1862 with *Under Niagara* (location unknown; see fig. 30), a four-by-six-foot painting that he was reported to have completed in one day.¹⁴¹ He spent considerably longer, however, on *Chimborazo* (fig. 31), which was begun in the spring of 1863 and completed by the end of the year.¹⁴² Like *Cotopaxi*, *Chimborazo* was intended to be a pendant to *Heart of the Andes*, with the three forming “nothing less than an epic of the Tropics in color.”¹⁴³ Church intended for them to form “a magnificent landscape triptic [sic] . . . : the ‘Chimborazo’ [to be] hung on the left, for its expression of the tropical witchery of landscape, the Andean *beauty*; and the ‘Cotopaxi’ on the right, as especially representing the Andean *grandeur* and energy.”¹⁴⁴



Fig. 32. S. Beer, stereoscopic view of Church's studio at the Tenth Street Studio Building showing *Rainy Season in the Tropics* on the easel, c. 1866, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

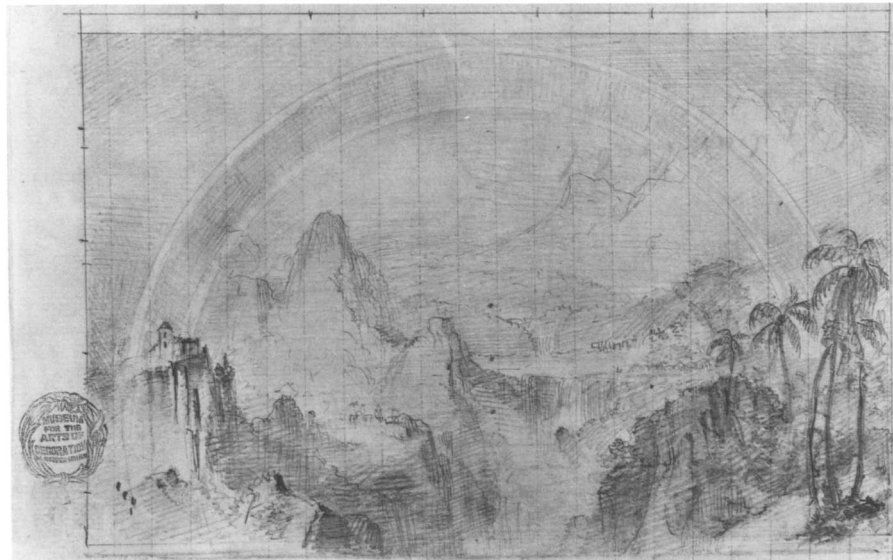


Fig. 33. Frederic Edwin Church, *Study for Rainy Season in the Tropics*, c. 1863–66, graphite on paper, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{16}$ (13.3 x 20.8), Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Smithsonian Institution

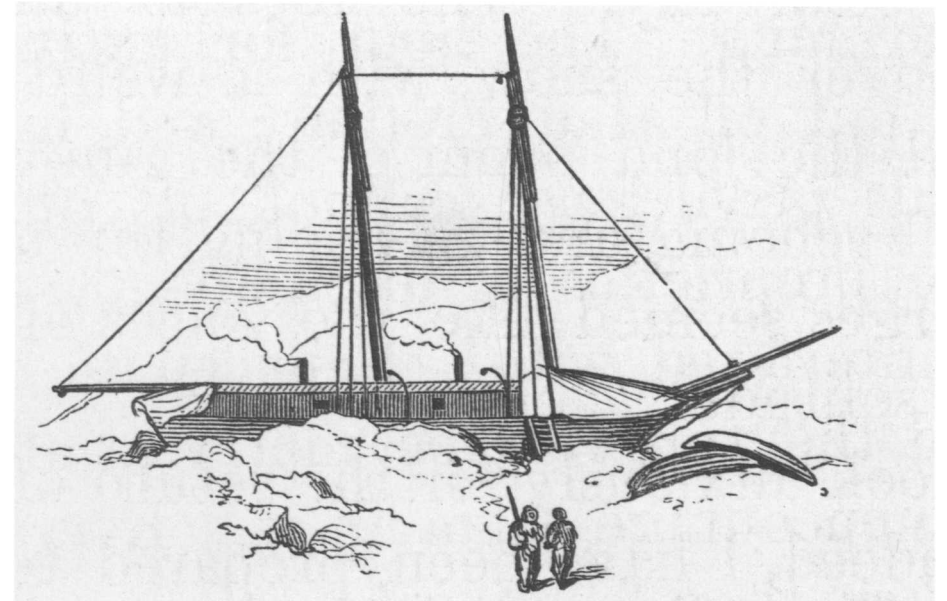
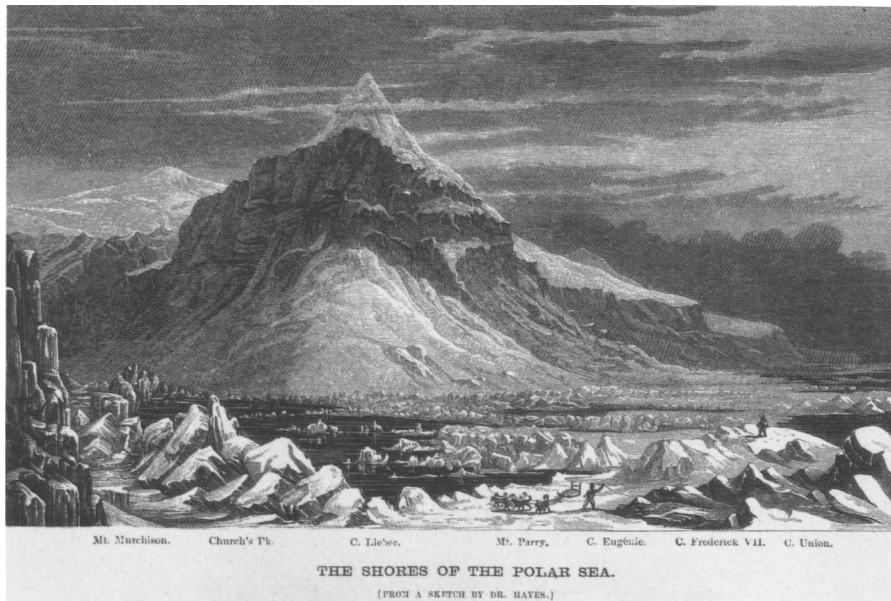


Fig. 34. Frederic Edwin Church, *Aurora Borealis, Maine*, 1860, oil on cardboard, $10\frac{3}{8} \times 13\frac{7}{8}$ (26.4 x 35.2), Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Smithsonian Institution

Rainy Season in the Tropics and Aurora Borealis

Rainy Season in the Tropics (cat. 38), which Church commenced in 1864 but did not complete until mid-1866 (fig. 32), blended in one work the pastoral and the sublime, becoming in essence a fusion of *Cotopaxi* and *Chimborazo*. Based on an elaborate pencil study (fig. 33), *Rainy Season in the Tropics* returned to the compositional formula Church had used in several earlier works (see cats. 26 and 29). Lush jungle foliage at the lower right corner of the picture is separated from dramatic mountain scenery by a mist-filled chasm. Church now bound the two sides of the landscape together, however, with a great double rainbow that seemed “to clasp the whole with a prismatic bridge.”¹⁴⁵ Church had begun *Rainy Season in the Tropics* when some of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War were being fought, but finished it after the war had ended. In it he reaffirmed with almost visionary intensity his hope for the nation. The rainbow, emblem of God’s covenant with mankind,¹⁴⁶ symbolically joins the separated halves of the landscape, just as the conclusion of the war reunited the fragmented nation.¹⁴⁷ If *Twilight in the Wilderness* may be seen as representing the eve of war, and *Cotopaxi* (with its opposition of dark smoke and sunlight) signifies the struggle in progress, *Rainy Season in the Tropics* was Church’s pictorial celebration of the return of peace.

The Civil War also played a role in the creation of *Aurora Borealis* (cat. 39), which Church completed during the waning months of the war.¹⁴⁸ On 23 December 1864 there was a dramatic occurrence of the aurora borealis, which many northerners interpreted as a divine omen of a forthcoming Union victory.¹⁴⁹ Church surely saw this display of the “northern lights,” and the event must have rekindled his interest in the arctic landscape, which he had visited five years before. In composing *Aurora Borealis*, however, Church did something unusual. He did not base the landscape on scenery he had actually seen, for on his 1859 trip to Labrador and Newfoundland he had not traveled so far north as to have witnessed the kind of frozen



landscape depicted in *Aurora Borealis*. He had, to be sure, sketched auroras before—one of which became the basis for the finished painting (fig. 34)—but these had been observed from Mount Desert Island. Church found another source for the landscape itself, a source that had personal significance.

During the late 1850s and early 1860s Church had followed the progress of numerous arctic explorations, and he took a particular interest in a voyage toward the North Pole that Dr. Isaac I. Hayes made from July 1860 to October 1861. Church knew Hayes and had given him drawing lessons.¹⁵⁰ Hayes must have had a particular fondness for the artist, for he named a mountain after Church at the farthest point north he reached on his voyage. Hayes made a sketch of the scene, which he gave to Church (Olana State Historic Site; see chronology, 1865) and which he subsequently used as an illustration (fig. 35) in his book, *The Open Polar Sea*.¹⁵¹ Church based his painting on this image, using his earlier sketch of an aurora for the sky. He added an icebound schooner, based on a vignette from *The Open Polar Sea* of Hayes' ship the *United States* (fig. 36), and a great streak of light bursting from the horizon at the lower right. This latter detail was, no doubt, in response to Hayes' description of an aurora he had witnessed: "Suddenly a bright ray darted up from behind the black cloud which lay low down on the horizon before me. It lasted but an instant, and, having filled the air with a strange illumination, it died away, leaving the darkness even more profound than before. Presently the arch which I have before mentioned sprang across the sky, and the Aurora became gradually more fixed."¹⁵² *Aurora Borealis* is the only one of Church's major landscapes to depict a part of the world he had not actually seen, but by using Hayes' sketches and verbal descriptions and his own recollections of frozen scenery from 1859, he managed to make the picture completely convincing.

Church's *Aurora Borealis* was both specifically a pictorial testament to Hayes' important voyage of exploration and more generally symbolic of broader national issues. Gradually, however, Church and other painters would recognize that landscape was losing its currency as

Fig. 35. After a sketch by Isaac Hayes, *The Shores of the Polar Sea*, plate from *The Open Polar Sea*, New York, 1867 (at left)

Fig. 36. After a sketch by Isaac Hayes, *The Schooner "United States,"* vignette from *The Open Polar Sea*, New York, 1867 (above)

Fig. 37. Frederic Edwin Church, *The Valley of the Santa Ysabel*, 1875, oil on canvas, 40 x 60½ (104.1 x 153.7), Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Gift of Henry W. and Clifford H. Buckingham



a means for expressing ideas of relevance and interest to the American audience in the post-Civil War years. “Landscape art disappears year by year from our exhibitions,” wrote one critic, who concluded that it was “easily ascertainable that the public takes no interest whatever in landscape.”¹⁵³ Younger painters who gave the human figure prominence in their works—such as Winslow Homer, with his much-admired *Prisoners from the Front*, 1866 (Metropolitan Museum of Art), and the expatriate James McNeill Whistler, with *The White Girl (Symphony in White)*, 1862 (National Gallery of Art)—were already being accorded the sort of praise that had once been reserved exclusively for men like Church and Durand. Other painters who were inspired by French Barbizon art, most notably George Inness, were creating powerful landscapes that aesthetically were more internationally current. These works were also more expressive and meditative and thus more suited to the mood of post-Civil War America.

Church was surely aware of these developments. More and more he removed himself from the day-to-day activities of the New York art world and concentrated on preparing his estate at Olana (see James Anthony Ryan’s essay elsewhere in this book) and on raising his family. Financially secure from his earlier artistic successes and from continuing commissions, Church was free to occupy himself as he chose. In 1867 he painted his third major view of Niagara, *Niagara Falls, from the American Side* (cat. 40). “This new Niagara,” wrote a Boston critic, “takes in the whole sweep of the American and English Falls [i.e., Horseshoe Falls], from a point of view on the American side. It is the most comprehensive attempt yet made to ‘paint Niagara,’ and a new triumph for Church as draughtsman, colorist and poet. Such a picture defies description, and can only be appreciated by the patient, delighted study of hours.”¹⁵⁴ On other occasions, Church returned to the well-rehearsed theme of the tropical landscape, as in *Scene in the Andes* (cat. 41) and *Tropical Scenery* (cat. 48). Such works, although reminiscent of

earlier paintings in composition, often had a more vaporous atmosphere, giving them a languid, dreamy mood. Writing of *The Valley of the Santa Ysabel* (fig. 37), Henry James found it almost impossible to criticize: “As we looked at Mr. Church’s velvety vistas and gem-like vegetation . . . we felt honestly sorry that there was any necessity in this weary world for taking upon one’s self to be a critic. . . . Why not accept this lovely tropic scene as a very pretty picture, and have done with it?”¹⁵⁵ But not all observers were so charitable, and increasingly in the late 1860s and the 1870s Church found his works the subjects of vehement criticism.

A Trip to Jamaica

Among the most impressive of Church’s late paintings were two Jamaican landscapes, *The Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica* (cat. 42) and *The After Glow* (cat. 43). Church had visited the island in 1865 and while there had painted a large number of fine oil sketches of scenery that represented “a most striking combination of the beautiful, the romantic and the sublime.”¹⁵⁶ *The Vale of St. Thomas*, originally known simply as *Jamaica*, “combined the effect of storm and sunshine . . . with the most vivid and startling power.”¹⁵⁷ The expansive composition and swirling vortex of light and atmosphere are reminiscent of Turner’s great *Snow Storm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps* (fig. 38), although Church’s work is, of course, devoid of obvious



Fig. 38. James Mallord William Turner, *Snow Storm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps*, 1812, oil on canvas, 57½ x 93½ (146 x 237.5), Tate Gallery, London

historical associations. Nevertheless, like so many of his works, it is still suggestive of deeper spiritual meanings, for it depicts scenery that encourages the viewer to “look *through* Nature and up to Nature’s God.”¹⁵⁸ Such content would have been agreeable not only to Church himself, but also to the woman who commissioned *Jamaica*, Mrs. Samuel Colt of Hartford, the deeply religious daughter of an Anglican minister.¹⁵⁹

Even more dramatic and “grand in its expression of a fact in nature” was *The After Glow* (cat. 43).¹⁶⁰ Church considered this work “the best Twilight I have ever painted,” “a subject so extraordinary that I might not see similar again.”¹⁶¹ The view moves across rolling country, with a ruined church in the right foreground, into the distance, where a great fan of crepuscular rays bursts from dark clouds beyond the mountains. Perhaps no other work by Church is so

Fig. 40. James Mallord William Turner, *Regulus*, 1828; reworked 1837, oil on canvas, 35¼ x 48¾ (89.5 x 123.8), Tate Gallery, London



Fig. 39. Caspar David Friedrich, *The Tetschen Altar (The Cross in the Mountains)*, 1808, oil on canvas, 44⁷/₈ x 34¹/₄ (114 x 87), Gemäldegalerie, Dresden

intensely charged in its depiction of an exceptional natural moment, and no other is so clearly indicative of his “special taste for phenomena.”¹⁶² And perhaps no other work so convincingly achieves, through purely natural means, something akin to the deep spirituality that animates Caspar David Friedrich’s most profound works (fig. 39). But the painting received mixed reviews: “We do not, however, realize glow; whatever force of hue there is is due to an over-obscurity—an undue darkening—of the rest of the landscape, and is inharmonious with anything like comprehensive poetic sentiment. At the first glance we thought it an explosion.” Church was now told that “Mr. Bristol” [John Bunyan Bristol (1826–1909)] had treated “a sunset in ‘Shades of Evening’ with a similar aim, and . . . with greater success.”¹⁶³

The Old World

We do not know with certainty just how such critical admonishments affected Church, but he did in the early 1870s introduce significant changes into his art, in terms of both subject matter and style. In 1867–68 the artist for the first time visited Europe, and although he spent time in London, Paris, and Rome, the highlight of the trip was the five months he spent touring the Near East.¹⁶⁴ After having thoroughly explored the boundaries of the New World, from the tropics to the frozen North, Church was ready to investigate the most ancient lands of the Old World. In the years after the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of Species* had shaken his confidence in science, Church was now seeking sites that had been hallowed by history and the Bible. In the Old World he sought confirmations of what he had earlier believed with unquestioning faith: that the world, in all its marvelous complexity, had been created by a supreme being who intended man to enjoy its bounty and use its resources responsibly.

For some modern observers Church’s major Near Eastern paintings are less original and more conventional than his earlier masterpieces.¹⁶⁵ To be sure, some, such as *Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives* (cat. 44; originally known simply as *Jerusalem*) and *The Parthenon* (cat. 45), a



Fig. 41. After a painting by Thomas Cole, *Desolation*, from *The Course of Empire* (completed 1836), engraving from S. G. W. Benjamin, *Art in America: A Critical and Historical Sketch*, New York, 1880



Fig. 42. After a sketch by Frederic Edwin Church, *A Composition*, engraving from S. G. W. Benjamin, *Art in America: A Critical and Historical Sketch*, New York, 1880

view of “the most perfect building of antiquity,”¹⁶⁶ depicted scenes that had become perhaps overly familiar through representations by many other artists. But others, including *El Khasné*, *Petra* (cat. 46), are notable for their portrayal of scenes that were little if at all known in the Western world.

The most successful of Church’s Near Eastern landscapes was, however, the one least tied to the re-creation of a specific famous spot. *Syria by the Sea* (cat. 47), “a reminiscence of his travels,”¹⁶⁷ was a composed landscape based on studies made amidst the ruins of Baalbek and Damascus. In this powerful work Church again looked for inspiration to Turner, whose paintings he had studied in London’s National Gallery on his way home from the Near East. The view across receding ranks of ancient architecture directly into a brilliant sun recalls the Englishman’s Carthaginian pictures (e.g., fig. 40) and, more distantly, Claude’s great seaport scenes.¹⁶⁸ But even more pertinent at this moment was the memory of Cole’s *Desolation*, from *The Course of Empire* (fig. 41), which Church admired above all other works by his master. The similarities between *Syria by the Sea* and *Desolation* are plainly evident and are made even more obvious in a composition (fig. 42) in which Church expanded the theme of “former grandeur” first explored in the painting.¹⁶⁹

Morning in the Tropics

By the mid-1870s Church, although still painting regularly and not yet forgotten in New York, was more and more criticized for what had been considered one of his greatest strengths—the ability to paint in a precise, detailed style. His *Valley of the Santa Ysabel* (fig. 37), as we have seen, was praised by some reviewers, but was deemed “painfully-finished” by at least one critic.¹⁷⁰ Perhaps challenged by such opinions, Church, in one last heroic effort, returned to the theme of the tropics in a major, full-size landscape. *Morning in the Tropics* (cat. 49), would be Church’s last fully convincing masterpiece, a work that on the one hand drew strength from his unrivaled experience with painting the tropics and on the other showed that he was still capable of a fresh statement.



Fig. 43. Martin Johnson Heade, *South American River*, 1868, oil on canvas, 26 x 22½ (66 x 57.1), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Gift of Maxim Karolik for the Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815–1865

“The subject is simple and broad, notwithstanding its richness of detail, and the key of color is considerably lower than in most of Church’s later works,” wrote the critic for the *New-York Tribune*. “But just these qualities were necessary to emphasize the strength and harmony of the composition and the happy union of truth and sentiment.”¹⁷¹ As this assessment indicates, Church, while keeping the intricate detail that had served him well so many times before, and now made it subservient to compositional unity. Whereas earlier works such as *Heart of the Andes* were expansive views across miles of scenery, *Morning in the Tropics* presented a more geographically limited scene. The spectator seems to stand on the banks of a quiet river, looking past luxuriant trees and plants into the morning sun rising in the misty distance. In the foreground a fallen tree serves as a bridge into the picture space, and the shining leaves of a large plant seem to reach out invitingly.¹⁷² *Morning in the Tropics* is a work of human not continental scale, and inexorably the viewer’s attention is drawn to the focus of the painting—the opening in the forest-jungle where the river disappears into the mists. Although perhaps inspired, as Theodore Stebbins has pointed out, by *South American River* by Church’s friend Martin Johnson Heade (fig. 43), *Morning in the Tropics* is more suggestive and enigmatic. Confronted with a mysteriously beautiful world that still seems in the process of creation, we are left to ponder what lies beyond the cloaking vapors.

Intriguingly, when exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1880, the painting bore a new title: “The River of Light.”¹⁷³ Although descriptively accurate, the allegorical and metaphysical implications of the title cannot be ignored. The river becomes more than just a body of water; it is a fusion of air, water, and light, transcending the boundaries between earth and sky. A line of white birds, emblems of the soul, moves along above the river, and in the distance a figure in a boat disappears into the mists. One cannot help but be reminded of *Old Age* (fig. 7) in Cole’s *Voyage of Life*, where the voyager, having reached the end of life’s journey, is about to ascend into heaven along a light-filled pathway in the sky. In *Morning in the Tropics* Church had made a final gesture of respect to his teacher’s art, and in doing so he had summed up his lifelong interest in the tropical landscape with a poetic and moving eloquence. The “river of light” had now illuminated the artist’s own psyche.¹⁷⁴

By the 1880s Church’s tenure as the leading landscape painter in America was already a fading memory. For those who cared enough to remember his achievements, he was “the best example of the old school of American painters, a man of lofty and original ideas, who sees far above his head into the ether and among the great elevations of mountains as no other painter of our time sees.”¹⁷⁵ When he died on 7 April 1900 the Metropolitan Museum honored him with an exhibition of ten of his most important paintings and a catalogue written by Church’s friend Charles Dudley Warner. “We can scarcely overestimate,” wrote Warner, “the debt of America to Mr. Church in teaching it to appreciate the grandeur and beauty of its own scenery, and by his work at home and in tropical lands in inculcating a taste and arousing an enthusiasm for landscape art—that is, landscape art as an expression of the majesty and beauty of the divine manifestation in nature. . . . He aspired to interpret nature in its higher spiritual and aesthetic meaning.”¹⁷⁶ No other American painter of Church’s generation held higher aspirations, and none equaled his powerful and original vision of landscape. For three decades in the middle of the nineteenth century, when landscape spoke to the nation with an unrivaled authority and clarity, Church, the painter of *Niagara* and *Heart of the Andes*, stood alone.

Acknowledgments

In the course of my work on Church over the last ten years many individuals have given me assistance and encouragement. I wish to thank several friends and colleagues with particular reference to this essay. As always, I am deeply grateful to David Huntington, the foremost authority on the artist, whose work has been of great inspiration. My thanks also to Gerald L. Carr, author of many important articles and essays on Church. Carr's work on Church and England (which will form a key part of his forthcoming study of American artists and Great Britain) has greatly enriched our understanding of the artist's career. I have also greatly profited over the years from conversations with Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr. Andrew Wilton offered useful suggestions about Church and English art, both in conversation and after reading a first draft of this essay. Colonel Merl M. Moore kindly provided me with photocopies of many important articles—especially from the *Boston Transcript* and the *New York Evening Post*—that included indispensable information. Nancy Anderson also assisted by sharing copies of newspaper and journal articles that included references to Church, and Debora Rindge diligently pursued the comparison photographs necessary for the essay.

Notes

1. E. L. Magoon, "Scenery and Mind," in *The Home Book of the Picturesque; or, American Scenery, Art and Literature* (New York, 1852), 5.
2. In using Ruskin's words here I do not mean to imply that he would necessarily have approved of Church's art in every respect. We know, in fact, that even though he admired the American's skill and felt he had "a great gift of his own," Ruskin ultimately believed that Church did "not know yet what painting means." See his letter to Charles Eliot Norton of 15 August 1865 in *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, vol. 36, *Letters I, 1827–1869* (London, 1909), 495; see also *The Correspondence of John Ruskin and Charles Eliot Norton*, eds. John Lewis Bradley and Ian Ousby (Cambridge, 1987), 91. Ruskin's opinion about Church has been cited a number of times, most recently in Andrew Wilton's review of *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School*, *Burlington Magazine* 130 (May 1988), 379.
3. David C. Huntington, *The Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church: Vision of an American Era* (New York, 1966), ix.
4. Church's father was a successful Hartford businessman and was initially opposed to the idea of his son becoming a painter, fearing he would never make a decent living from it. Later, when Church had achieved greater financial success than any other American artist, his father would take pride that his son had proved him wrong.
5. Cole once said that Church had "the finest eye for drawing in the world," and surely recognized that in terms of native ability the younger man was his superior; see Louis L. Noble, *The Life and Works of Thomas Cole* (1853), ed. Eliot S. Vesell (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), 272.
6. Thomas Cole to Robert Gilmor, 25 December 1825, quoted in Noble, *Cole*, 63.
7. Cole to Gilmor, 21 May 1828, quoted in Noble, *Cole*, 64. Cole was specifically describing his paintings *The Garden of Eden* (unlocated) and *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* (fig. 22), which he exhibited at the National Academy of Design in the spring of 1828.
8. The words are Noble's (*Cole*, 59) in describing what led Cole to shift away from his early factual style of portraying the American wilderness.
9. Cole to Daniel Wadsworth, undated but probably early 1844, in Noble, *Cole*, 266; see *The Correspondence of Thomas Cole and Daniel Wadsworth*, ed. J. Bard McNulty (Hartford, 1983), 71. Wadsworth, a leading Hartford patron and friend of Church's family, would that year arrange for Cole to accept Church as his pupil.
10. During the two years that Church was with him in Catskill, Cole was hard at work on the most ambitious of his serial paintings, the five-part *The Cross and the World*, which concerned the individual's quest for spiritual salvation. Although some of the pictures were complete at Cole's death in 1848, only studies for them survive today.
11. "Twentieth Annual Exhibition of the Academy of National Design [sic]," *The Broadway Journal*, 3 May 1845, 276.
12. Cole only rarely painted historical scenes, but in his list of possible subjects for pictures he did include the story of Hooker; see "Thomas Cole's List 'Subjects for Pictures,'" in *Studies on Thomas Cole, an American Romanticist* (Baltimore, 1967), 90.
13. See Charles Dudley Warner's unfinished biography of Church elsewhere in this book.
14. "The Fine Arts: The Art Union Pictures," *The Literary World*, 30 October 1847, 303.

15. "The Fine Arts: Exhibition at the National Academy," *The Literary World*, 22 May 1847, 371. Although it was hoped that *Christian on the Borders of the "Valley of the Shadow of Death"* would be available for this exhibition, its condition unfortunately prohibits it from traveling. As the only one of Church's major early imaginary works to have survived, it is of particular importance for a full understanding of his art. I am grateful to Andrew Wilton for sharing his thoughts on Fuseli and his influence on American and British landscape painters.
16. "The Academy of Design," *Evening Post* (New York), 13 May 1848.
17. "The American Art-Union," *The Knickerbocker* 32 (November 1848), 444. See also the comments in "National Academy of Design, Twenty-third Annual Exhibition, Third Visit," *Evening Post* (New York), 30 May 1848, 2, and "The Fine Arts, National Academy Exhibition," *The Literary World*, 13 May 1848, 288.
18. "Fine Arts. Panorama of Pilgrim's Progress. A More Particular Notice," *The Literary World*, 7 December 1850, 460 and "Fine Arts," *The Literary World*, 16 November 1850, 392. These comments refer specifically to a popular panorama illustrating *Pilgrim's Progress* that included a scene based on Church's *Christian*.
19. William James Stillman, *Autobiography of a Journalist* (Boston and New York, 1901), 114–15. Although Stillman would have some success as a painter, he would become best known for cofounding in 1855 New York's first important art periodical, *The Crayon*.
20. *Evening Post* (New York), 13 May and 30 May 1848.
21. This long-lost work was rediscovered in 1980 by J. Gray Sweeney, who has recently published a detailed study entitled "'Endued with Rare Genius': Frederic Edwin Church's *To the Memory of Cole*," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 2 (Winter 1988), 45–71. For a similar discussion of *To the Memory of Cole*, but with a slightly different emphasis on its iconography and its place in Church's early career, see Franklin Kelly, *Frederic Edwin Church and the National Landscape* (Washington, 1988), 19–21.
22. Late in his career Cole considered painting several series of paintings based on the theme of the cycles of nature and human life, including four to be known as "Sowing and Reaping" and three to be called "Death and Immortality"; see his letter to Daniel Wadsworth of c. 1844 in Noble, *Cole*, 267.
23. On the pastoral landscape tradition see Robert Cafritz, et al., *Places of Delight: The Pastoral Landscape* [exh. cat., Phillips Collection and National Gallery of Art] (Washington, 1988). For a discussion of *New England Landscape* and its possible identification as the painting known as *Evening after a Storm*, see Franklin Kelly and Gerald L. Carr, *The Early Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church, 1845–1854* (Fort Worth, 1987), 99–107.
24. "Art Union Gallery," *The Albion*, 17 March 1849, 129.
25. "The Catskill Mountains," *The Home Journal*, 17 July 1852, 4. See also William Cullen Bryant, ed., *Picturesque America* (New York, 1872), vol. 2, 122: "The Mountain House is built on a flat rock, on the very edge of the precipice. Beneath it the cliff falls almost perpendicularly about eighteen hundred feet. The view from the piazza is wonderful. Two or three trees, growing on the broken stones twenty or thirty feet below the level of the house, peep up about the rock in front; and between their waving tops the landscape for miles lies spread out before you." Guests at the Mountain House were actually awakened before sunrise so they could assemble on the piazza to enjoy the spectacle; see Roland Van Zandt, *The Catskill Mountain House* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1966) for a complete discussion of the hotel and its importance in nineteenth-century American culture.
26. *Poems by William Cullen Bryant, Collected and Arranged by the Author* (New York, 1854), 252. For a discussion of this poem and its symbolism, see Donald A. Ringe, *The Pictorial Mode: Space and Time in the Art of Bryant, Irving, and Cooper* (Lexington, Ky., 1971), 78.
27. See John K. Howat's entry on *Above the Clouds at Sunrise* in *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School* [exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art] (New York, 1987), 240. See also Barbara Novak's important discussion of the issue in her *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825–1875* (New York, 1980), 255–73.
28. Church exhibited another highly dramatic work, *A Mountain Tempest* (unlocated) at the Academy that year. Inspired by Byron's *Childe Harold* (lines from which were quoted in the exhibition catalogue), this painting was apparently similar to *Above the Clouds at Sunrise*, but with a stormy sky. It was not well received, with one critic complaining that it was "wanting in that soul, that feeling for the sublime, that should characterize the scenes attempted to be represented"; see "National Academy of Design," *The Knickerbocker* 33 (May 1849), 470.
29. This description is from the catalogue of the Art-Union exhibition, quoted in Mary Bartlett Cowdrey, *American Academy of the Fine Arts and American Art-Union Exhibition Record, 1816–1852, Collections of the New-York Historical Society* 77 (1953), 71. The catalogue for the National Academy exhibition included lines quoted from Exodus 10: 21–22: "And the Lord said unto Moses, stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days."
30. "The National Academy of Design," *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* 2 (May 1849), 14.
31. "The National Academy of Design," 14.

32. "Fine-Art Gossip," *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* 2 (April 1849), 20.
33. "National Academy of Design," *The Knickerbocker*, 469.
34. Stillman, *Autobiography of a Journalist*, 11.
35. John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Pt. II, Section I, Chapter IV.
36. Bryant, *Picturesque America*, vol. 2, 442–3.
37. For a reproduction of the drawing, see Kelly and Carr, *Early Landscapes*, 147.
38. Bryant, *Picturesque America*, vol. 2, 444.
39. Mary E. Field, "West Rock, New Haven," in *The Home Book of the Picturesque* (New York, 1852; reprint ed., 1967), 138. Field's text was illustrated with an engraving of Church's painting. For a more complete discussion of *West Rock, New Haven* see Christopher Kent Wilson, "The Landscape of Democracy: Frederic Church's *West Rock, New Haven*," *American Art Journal* 18 (1986), 20–39 and Kelly, *Church and the National Landscape*, 22–24.
40. As with *Hooker and Company*, the story of the two Englishmen, Edward Whalley and William Goffe, was one that Cole had included on his list of possible subjects for pictures; see *Studies on Thomas Cole*, 87. We can only guess as to whether Cole ever shared this list with Church, but it would be reasonable to assume that he did. I am grateful to Andrew Wilton for his observations about the associationist landscape tradition.
41. S. G. W. Benjamin, *Art in America: A Critical and Historical Sketch* (New York, 1880), 81.
42. "The Fine Arts; The National Academy; A First View; Durand and the Landscapes," *The Literary World*, 26 April 1850, 424.
43. *S. P. Avery's Entire Collection of American and Foreign Paintings in Oil, Water Color Drawings of Art, Antiques, Etc.* [auction cat., Sommerville Galleries] (New York, 1871), 9. I am grateful to Merl M. Moore, Jr., for this reference.
44. "Movements of Artists," *Bulletin of the American Art-Union*, 1 April 1850, 15.
45. "The Fine Arts," *The Literary World*, 424.
46. The link between *Paradise Lost* and *Twilight*, "Short arbiter 'twixt day and night" was first pointed out by William H. Gerdtz in "Early American Paintings from the Newark Museum," in *Aspects of a Collection—18th- and 19th-Century American Painting from the Newark Museum* [exh. cat., M. Knoedler and Co.] (New York, 1977), 9.
47. These issues are more fully discussed in Kelly, *Church and the National Landscape*, 26–33.
48. S. G. W. Benjamin, *The Life and Adventures of a Free Lance* (Burlington, Vt., 1914), 322. Benjamin's use of "dilettante" was not meant pejoratively, but in its original sense—"a lover or admirer of the arts." Benjamin somewhat overstated Church's "life of ease [and] calm retirement," for the artist was well known for his industrious work habits and his fondness for taking arduous journeys to faraway places.
49. "Chronicle of Facts and Opinions; American Art and Artists; Movements of Artists," *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* (August 1850), 81.
50. "The School of Art at Düsseldorf," *Bulletin of the American Art-Union*, 1 April 1850, 5–6.
51. "Art and Artists," *The Home Journal*, 15 February 1851, 3.
52. "Art and Artists," 3.
53. See Morton D. Paley, *The Apocalyptic Sublime* (New Haven and London, 1986), 7–16.
54. "Twenty-sixth Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* 4 (May 1851), 23; "The Fine Arts; The National Academy," *The Literary World*, 19 April 1851, 320; "Academy of Design," *The Home Journal*, 26 April 1851, 3; "The Fine Arts; National Academy of Design; III," *New-York Daily Tribune*, 10 May 1851, 5.
55. "Fine Arts: National Academy of Design," *The Albion*, 27 April 1850, 424. In 1856 *The Crayon* (3 [April 1856], 114–15) would run an unsigned article (probably by William J. Stillman) entitled "Allegory in Art," that was highly critical of imaginary works, arguing that "the office of painting is with the visible world, or the ideal, in some kind; and although it may have a certain value as a means of expressing ideas of great moral value or theological importance, it seems clear to us that there is a degradation of the Art involved in making it the servant either of ethics or theology, because it stands, by right, sovereign in its own sphere."
56. "Fine Arts," *The Literary World*, 19 April 1851, 320.
57. *New-York Tribune*, 10 May 1851, 5.
58. "Twenty-sixth Exhibition of the National Academy," *Bulletin of the American Art-Union*, 23.
59. "The Fine Arts," *The International Magazine* 3 (June 1851), 327.
60. "Frederic E. Church Dead. Famous Landscape Painter Passes Away in this City—His Career," *New York Times*, 8 April 1900, 16.
61. The issue of Turner's influence on American painting in the years before the publication of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* will be discussed in Marcia Briggs Wallace's forthcoming dissertation for the City University of New York.
62. Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904* (London, 1905), 62.
63. See *So Beautiful an Arch: Images of the Natural Bridge, 1787–1890* [exh. cat., duPont Gallery, Washington and Lee

University] (Lexington, Va., 1982).

64. See Isabella Field Judson, *Cyrus Field, His Life and Work, 1819–1892* (New York, 1896), 39.

65. Church was praised for sending his painting to London by *The Home Journal* (“Fine Arts,” 3 April 1852, 2), which asked why other artists did not do the same. *Natural Bridge* is today often cited as one of the clearest statements of Church’s admiration for Ruskin; see, for example, *The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites* [exh. cat., Brooklyn Museum] (Brooklyn, 1985), 246; and Virginia L. Wagner, “John Ruskin and Artistic Geology in America,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 23 (Summer/Autumn 1988), 165.

66. “Fine Arts,” *The Home Journal*, 6 March 1852, 3.

67. Gerald Carr is currently preparing a major study on American artists and Great Britain, which will include a thorough discussion of Church and the English audience.

68. The quote is from the description in the Art-Union sale catalogue of 1852; see Mary Bartlett Cowdrey, *American Academy of Fine Arts and American Art-Union Exhibition Record*, 73.

69. Several editions of *Cosmos*, the earliest from 1849, are in Church’s library at Olana. Quotations used here are from the translation by Edward Sabine (London, 1848).

70. Cowdrey, *American Academy of Fine Arts and American Art-Union*, 73.

71. *Cosmos*, vol. 2, 84.

72. W. P. Bayley, “Mr. Church’s Pictures. ‘Cotopaxi,’ ‘Chimborazo,’ and ‘The Aurora Borealis.’ Considered Also with Reference to English Art,” *The Art-Journal* (London) 4 (1 September 1865), 265.

73. “Editor’s Table,” *The Knickerbocker* 45 (May 1855), 532.

74. Church to E. P. Mitchell, 14 December 1854, Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (microfilm, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., roll P22, frames 103–4).

75. See “Great Natural Curiosities,” *The Daily Chronicle* (Cincinnati), 1 December 1849, 2 (copy in curatorial files, Cincinnati Art Museum).

76. Church to his mother, 7 July 1853, Joseph Downs Manuscript Collection, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware. With characteristic humor Church observed that the scene was so huge that he was sure his sister Elizabeth “would have been able to have seen this Waterfall without her glasses.”

77. “Pictures Canvassed,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 30 May 1857, 339.

78. “National Academy of Design,” *The Home Journal*, 13 June 1857, 2; “National Academy of Design,” *The Crayon* 4 (July 1857), 222.

79. “Frederic E. Church Dead,” *New York Times*, 16.

80. “An Old Contributor” [Henry T. Tuckerman], “New-York Artists,” *The Knickerbocker* 48 (July 1856), 33.

81. Letter V, *The Crayon* 1 (7 March 1855), 146.

82. Adam Badeau, *The Vagabond* (New York, 1859), 155.

83. “Pictures Canvassed,” 339. The writer was discussing how much more rewarding and interesting he found landscapes than portraits, which, he noted, “teach me nothing.”

84. For an excellent discussion of the “Great Picture” tradition, its popularity in America and England, and Church’s place in it, see Gerald L. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: The Icebergs* [exh. cat., Dallas Museum of Fine Arts] (Dallas, 1980), 21–30.

85. See Jeremy Elwell Adamson, et al., *Niagara: Two Centuries of Changing Attitudes, 1697–1901* [exh. cat., Corcoran Gallery of Art] (Washington, 1985) for a thorough survey. See also David Huntington, “Frederic Church’s ‘Niagara’: Nature as the Nation’s Type,” *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 25 (Spring 1983), 100–138.

86. “Our Private Correspondence,” *The Home Journal*, 9 May 1857, 2.

87. Fidelius [pseud.], “Letter from New York,” *Boston Transcript*, 5 May 1857, 2.

88. “Notes on the West, In Two Letters—Letter One,” *The Crayon* 6 (July 1859), 221.

89. “Our Private Correspondence,” 2.

90. The preliminary oil sketch for the painting is even more horizontal in proportion; see Adamson et al., *Niagara*, 62–69, for a discussion of Church’s creative process in painting *Niagara*.

91. “Sketchings,” *The Crayon* 4 (4 May 1856), 157.

92. “Sketchings,” 157.

93. “Editor’s Table,” *The Knickerbocker* 45 (May 1855), 532.

94. Huntington, *Landscapes*, 65–71.

95. Huntington, *Landscapes*, 2.

96. Gerald L. Carr, “American Art in Great Britain: The National Gallery Watercolor of *The Heart of the Andes*,” *Studies in the History of Art* 10 (1982), 86–87.

97. See Franklin Kelly, “Frederic Church in the Tropics,” *Arts in Virginia* 26 (1986), 16–33.

98. The two *Twilights* are closely related to a third work, *The Evening Star* of 1858 (Jamee and Marshall Field), which was painted as a memorial to a deceased child of Church’s friend Erastus Dow Palmer. For a discussion of these

works, see Kelly, *Church and the National Landscape*, 84–86, 106–7.

99. Winthrop recorded their experiences in a book entitled *Life in the Open Air* (Boston, 1863); for a discussion, see Huntington, *Landscapes*, 73–78, and Kelly, *Church and the National Landscape*, 88–95.

100. David Huntington first pointed out the strong resemblance of *Sunset* to Wilson’s *Lake Avermus* (letter to Edward H. Dwight, Jr., 14 December 1962, in curatorial files, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, N.Y.); Ellwood Parry, in a talk at the symposium “American Paradise: Aspects of Hudson River School Painting” (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), compared *Sunset* to Cole’s *Untitled (American Lake Scene)*.

101. “Our Private Correspondence,” 2.

102. “The Fine Arts; Mr. R. L. Stuart’s House and Art Collection,” *The Home Journal*, 2 April 1859, 2.

103. The presence of the curious “ruin” in the lower left is difficult to explain, but it is possible that Stuart, who was also interested in pre-Columbian archaeology, may have asked the painter to include it. The Incas were believed to have “built their palaces and temples of freestone on the heights of the mountains about Cayambe” (James Sommerville, *F. E. Church’s Painting, “The Heart of the Andes”* [Philadelphia, c. 1860], 5–6), but the sculpture on the ruin does not suggest their art.

104. “Sketchings,” *The Crayon* 5 (January 1858), 24. In contemporary references the painting is sometimes referred to as *The Heart of the Andes* and sometimes *Heart of the Andes*. Although it is uncertain which form Church himself used, the latter occurs somewhat more often and has been adopted here.

105. See Annette Blaugrund, “The Tenth Street Studio Building: A Roster, 1857–1895,” *American Art Journal* 14 (Spring 1982), 67–71.

106. Mary Sayre Haverstock, “The Tenth Street Studio,” *Art in America* 54 (September–October 1966), 51.

107. “The Heart of the Andes,” *The Spirit of the Times*, 14 May 1859, 157. This account noted that this information was circulating twelve months earlier (i.e., in the spring of 1858).

108. Sommerville, “The Heart of the Andes,” 13.

109. The importance of Martin’s *Last Judgment* series for Church is discussed in Carr, *The Icebergs*, 27. Carr notes the strong resemblance between *The Plains of Heaven* and *Heart of the Andes*. For a contemporary critical reaction to the *Last Judgment* paintings, see “Martin’s Pictures,” *The Crayon* 3 (December 1856), 376.

110. “The ‘Heart of the Andes,’” *The Art-Journal* (London) 5 (1 August 1859), 298.

111. “The ‘Heart of the Andes,’” 298. Although in this article Clarkson Stanfield is not identified by name, information given in “The ‘Heart of the Andes,’” *Boston Transcript*, 14 December 1859, 2, suggests that it was he who proclaimed Church “a great genius.”

112. The painting was first shown at Lyric Hall, 765 Broadway, but was moved two days later to Tenth Street, where the lighting conditions were deemed better; see Kevin J. Avery, “*The Heart of the Andes* Exhibited: Frederic E. Church’s Window on the Equatorial World,” *American Art Journal* 18, no. 1 (1986), 52–72, for an excellent discussion of these issues. In my *Church and the National Landscape*, 97, I mistakenly gave the date of the first showing of the painting as 17 April. As Avery and others have discussed, there were many European precedents for this kind of dramatic presentation of a single important picture.

113. This unusual frame was much commented upon in newspapers and journals; see, for example, “Z.,” “Letter from New York,” *Boston Transcript*, 24 April 1859, 2: “Mr. Church has improved the occasion of exhibiting his magnificent South American landscape to innovate wisely upon this puerile custom [i.e., the uniform use of gilt frames]. Through the tasteful skill of an accomplished English decorator—Mr. Whitelaw—he has caused to be manufactured a lofty, deep, black walnut cornice, elaborately carved, capable of being taken apart and put together easily, with a sill at the bottom of ten or twelve inches; within this massive and appropriate frame-work, the effect of his landscape is infinitely increased and improved; drapery above and around completes the illusion, and as you gaze you seem to be looking from a palatial window or castle terrace upon an actual scene of picturesque mountains, tropical vegetation, light and loveliness.”

114. There is some question as to whether dried tropical plants were, in fact, present. Worthington Whittredge recalled newspaper reports of “rich tapestry hangings” and “enormous palm leaves, all the way from the Andes, gray in color because dried, but none the worse for that, suspended over the picture, with their long slender leaves rising out of the darkness and kissing, as it were, the rich gold frame”; see John I. H. Baur, ed., *The Autobiography of Worthington Whittredge*, quoted in *Brooklyn Museum Journal* (1942), 28. But Whittredge was actually in Rome in 1859, did not write his recollections until almost fifty years later, and as Avery has pointed out (“*The Heart of the Andes* Exhibited,” 53), he misremembered a number of key details (e.g., “the rich gold frame”) about the event. Still, Church was known to have stocked his studio with mementos of his South American travels, including plants (see, for example, fig. 32, which shows the studio in c. 1866; see also T. B. Aldrich, “Among the Studios, No. 1,” *Our Young Folks* 1 [September 1865], 597: “Everywhere about the room we have sunny hints of the equator. Even the pot-plants at the casement threaten to turn into graceful date-palms and cocoanut trees under the influence”). He may have used plants in the gallery to enhance the experience of seeing *Heart of the Andes*.

115. Theodore Winthrop, *A Companion to The Heart of the Andes* (New York, 1859) and Louis L. Noble, *Church's Painting, The Heart of the Andes* (New York, 1859).
116. "A Visit to The 'Heart of the Andes,'" *The Spirit of the Times*, 26 November 1859, 500. This account dates from the second New York showing of the painting, after it had returned from a summer tour in England.
117. "Z.," "Art in New York," *Boston Transcript*, 3 June 1859, 1.
118. "Z.," "Art in New York," 1.
119. Winthrop, *Companion to The Heart of the Andes*, 4.
120. Winthrop, *Companion to The Heart of the Andes*, 4.
121. T[heodore] L[edyard] C[uyler], "Church's 'Heart of the Andes,'" *Littel's Living Age* 62 (2 July 1859), 64; reprinted from *The Christian Intelligencer*.
122. "Church's Heart of the Andes," *Russell's Magazine* 5 (August 1859), 427.
123. Sommerville, "The Heart of the Andes," 13–14.
124. See Carr, "American Art in Great Britain."
125. "Domestic Art Gossip," *The Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 3 (March 1859), 87, noted that Church and his friend the sculptor Erastus Dow Palmer were going abroad for "study and recreation." Church was also hoping to travel with *Heart of the Andes* to Berlin and meet Humboldt, but the scientist died on 6 May 1859.
126. W. P. B[ayley]., "Mr. Church's Picture of 'The Icebergs,'" *The Art-Journal* (London) 2 (1 September 1863), 187.
127. See Carr, *The Icebergs*, for a thorough discussion. See also Chauncey C. Loomis, "The Arctic Sublime," in U. C. Knoepfelmacher and G. B. Tennyson, eds., *Nature and the Victorian Imagination* (Berkeley and London, 1977), 95–112.
128. Louis Noble, *After Icebergs with a Painter: A Summer Voyage to Labrador and Around Newfoundland* (New York, 1861).
129. *Evening Post* (New York), 5 August 1859; quoted in Carr, *The Icebergs*, 59.
130. "Fine Arts," *The Albion*, 9 June 1860, 273. For a more detailed discussion of *Twilight in the Wilderness*, see Kelly, *Church and the National Landscape*, chapter 6.
131. "Z.," "Letter from New York," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 5 June 1860, 1.
132. "Mr. Church's View in the Arctic Regions," *New York Times*, 29 March 1861, 4; "The Icebergs," *New-York Daily Tribune*, 24 April 1861, 7. For a thorough and thoughtful discussion of the painting, see Carr, *The Icebergs*, passim.
133. "Spice of New Books; 'After Icebergs with a Painter,'" *The Home Journal*, 27 April 1861, 4.
134. Bayley, "The Icebergs," 188.
135. See Katherine Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal: Views of Cotopaxi by Frederic Edwin Church* [exh. cat., National Museum of American Art] (Washington, 1985), for an excellent discussion of Church's many depictions of the volcano.
136. Henry T. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists; American Artist Life* (New York, 1867), 379.
137. "The Turner Bequest," *The Crayon* 4 (January 1857), 24.
138. Bayley, "Mr. Church's Pictures," 266.
139. "The National Academy of Design; Its Thirty-ninth Annual Exhibition; Third Article," *The Evening Post* (New York), 21 May 1863, 1.
140. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists*, 372. In section 5, "Of Truth of Water," chapter 3, "Of Water as Painted by Turner," Ruskin discussed the effect of a tempest on the sea and noted the description of "yesty waves" in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (act 4, scene 1). The phrase "yesty billowy sea" was used in one description of Achenbach's *Clearing Up, Coast of Sicily*; see "Gallery of the Düsseldorf Artists," *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* 2 (June 1849), 12.
141. Carr, *The Icebergs*, 28; Adamson et al., *Niagara*, 70.
142. "Art and Other Matters in New York," *Boston Transcript*, 14 May 1863, 4. This report noted that "Church has just received an order for a picture [i.e., *Chimborazo*] at \$7500." By January 1865 the painting was on its way to London; see "A National Gallery of Paintings," *Boston Transcript*, 17 January 1865, 1.
143. [George William Curtis], "The Lounger; Cotopaxi," *Harper's Weekly*, 4 April 1863, 211. Curtis states that the "three are a series." Gerald Carr (*The Icebergs*, 27) has noted that Church's three paintings bear a strong resemblance to the three works comprising Martin's *Last Judgment* series (see figs. 25–27).
144. Bayley, "Mr. Church's Pictures," 265. Church hoped to exhibit the three pictures together in England, but *Heart of the Andes* was not available. He substituted *Aurora Borealis* (cat. 39), which appeared with *Cotopaxi* and *Chimborazo* at McLean's Gallery in London.
145. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists*, 383.

146. See George P. Landow, "The Rainbow: A Problematic Image," in Knoepfelmacher and Tennyson, *Nature and the Victorian Imagination*, 341–69.
147. Huntington, *Landscapes*, 56–57. The religious implications of the painting would have been even more obvious had Church not painted out the church he originally included at the left end of the rainbow (see fig. 33).
148. For an excellent discussion of this painting, see William H. Truettner, "The Genesis of Frederic Edwin Church's *Aurora Borealis*," *The Art Quarterly* 31 (Autumn 1968), 267–83.
149. Huntington, *Landscapes*, 61–62.
150. Truettner, "Aurora Borealis," 272. See also "Church's Pictures and Rogers's Statuettes in England," *Daily Evening Transcript* (Boston), 14 July 1865, 2: "The materials for this [*Aurora Borealis*] have been furnished partly by Mr. Church's own Labrador voyagings, partly by the sketches of Dr. Hayes, the latest American Polar explorer, himself a pupil of Mr. Church's."
151. Isaac Hayes, *The Open Polar Sea: Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery Towards the North Pole, in the Schooner "United States"* (New York, 1867); the plate is between pages 346 and 347.
152. Hayes, *The Open Polar Sea*, 215.
153. "Fine Arts. Forty-fifth Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *The Nation* 8 (29 April 1869), 340.
154. "Church's Picture of Niagara," *Daily Evening Transcript* (Boston), 12 September 1868, 2. Church may have based this new Niagara in part on a photograph; see Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., *Close Observation: Selected Oil Sketches by Frederic E. Church* [exh. cat., Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service] (Washington, 1978), 28.
155. "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited," *The Galaxy* 20 (July 1875), 96.
156. A. M. R., "Natural Scenery in Jamaica," *The Crayon* 1 (21 June 1855), 397.
157. "A New Tropical Landscape," *Evening Post* (New York), 10 September 1870, 2.
158. A. M. R., "Natural Scenery," 397.
159. I am grateful to Elizabeth Kornhauser, curator of American painting at the Wadsworth Atheneum, for discussing with me the connections between Church and Mrs. Colt.
160. "National Academy of Design; Reception and Private View Tonight; Some of the Pictures," *Evening Post* (New York), 14 April 1870, 1. Gerald Carr first identified *The After Glow* as the painting at Olana long known as *Jamaican Sunset*; see his "New Information on Church's Paintings at Olana," *The Crayon* (Olana) 15 (Spring 1983), 1, 10.
161. Church to his father, 3 October 1867, cited in Kelly and Carr, *Early Landscapes*, 23.
162. "National Academy of Design; Third Notice," *Evening Post* (New York), 10 June 1870, 1.
163. "National Academy," 1.
164. For a discussion of this trip and its effect on Church and his art, see John Davis, "Frederic Church's 'Sacred Geography,'" *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 1 (Spring 1987), 79–96.
165. See, for example, Stebbins, *Close Observation*, 39.
166. "Church's 'Parthenon,'" *Evening Post* (New York), 7 May 1872, 1. Church probably used photographs as inspirations when painting *The Parthenon*; see Stebbins, *Close Observation*, 42.
167. "Art at the Century," *Evening Post* (New York), 8 December 1873, 2.
168. Church owned an engraving after Claude's *Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba* (Olana State Historic Site); see David Huntington, "Church and Luminism: Light for America's Elect," in John Wilmerding, ed., *American Light: The Luminist Movement, 1850–1875* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art] (Washington, 1980), 171, fig. 214.
169. "Art at the Century," *Evening Post*, 2.
170. "Fine Arts; Fiftieth Exhibition of the Academy of Design, IV," *The Nation* 20 (20 May 1875), 352. Church's painting was not on view at the Academy, but was shown privately during the same time.
171. "New Pictures by Church and Colman," 7 May 1877, 5.
172. See Huntington's discussion of the painting in *Landscapes*, 105–6.
173. William C. Brownell, "The Younger Painters of America: Second Paper," *Scribner's Monthly* 20 (July 1880), 323. See also *New York Herald*, 8 May 1877, 5, where the painting is called "El Rio de Luz" ("The River of Light"); I am grateful to Gerald Carr for this reference.
174. Huntington, *Landscapes*, 106: "*Morning in the Tropics* was Church's last and perhaps greatest psychic landscape."
175. William Howe Downes and Frank Torrey Robinson, "Our American Old Masters," *New England Magazine* 13 (November 1895), 302.
176. *Paintings by Frederic E. Church, N. A.* [exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art] (New York, 1900), unpaginated.

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Cat. 17

Home by the Lake

1852, oil on canvas, 31⁷/₈ x 48¹/₄ (81 x 122.6)

Collection of Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr.



Cat. 18

Mount Katahdin (Katahdin)

1853, oil on canvas, 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ X 55 $\frac{1}{4}$ (92.1 X 140.3)

Yale University Art Gallery, Stanley B. Resor, B.A. 1901, Fund



Cat. 19

A Country Home

1854, oil on canvas, 45⁵/₈ X 63³/₈ (115.9 X 162.2)

Seattle Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Paul C. Carmichael



Cat. 20

The Cordilleras: Sunrise

1854, oil on canvas, 28½ X 43 (72.4 X 109.2)

Courtesy of Alexander Gallery, New York



Cat. 21

La Magdalena (Scene on the Magdalena)

1854, oil on canvas, 28 x 42 (71.1 x 106.7)

National Academy of Design, New York

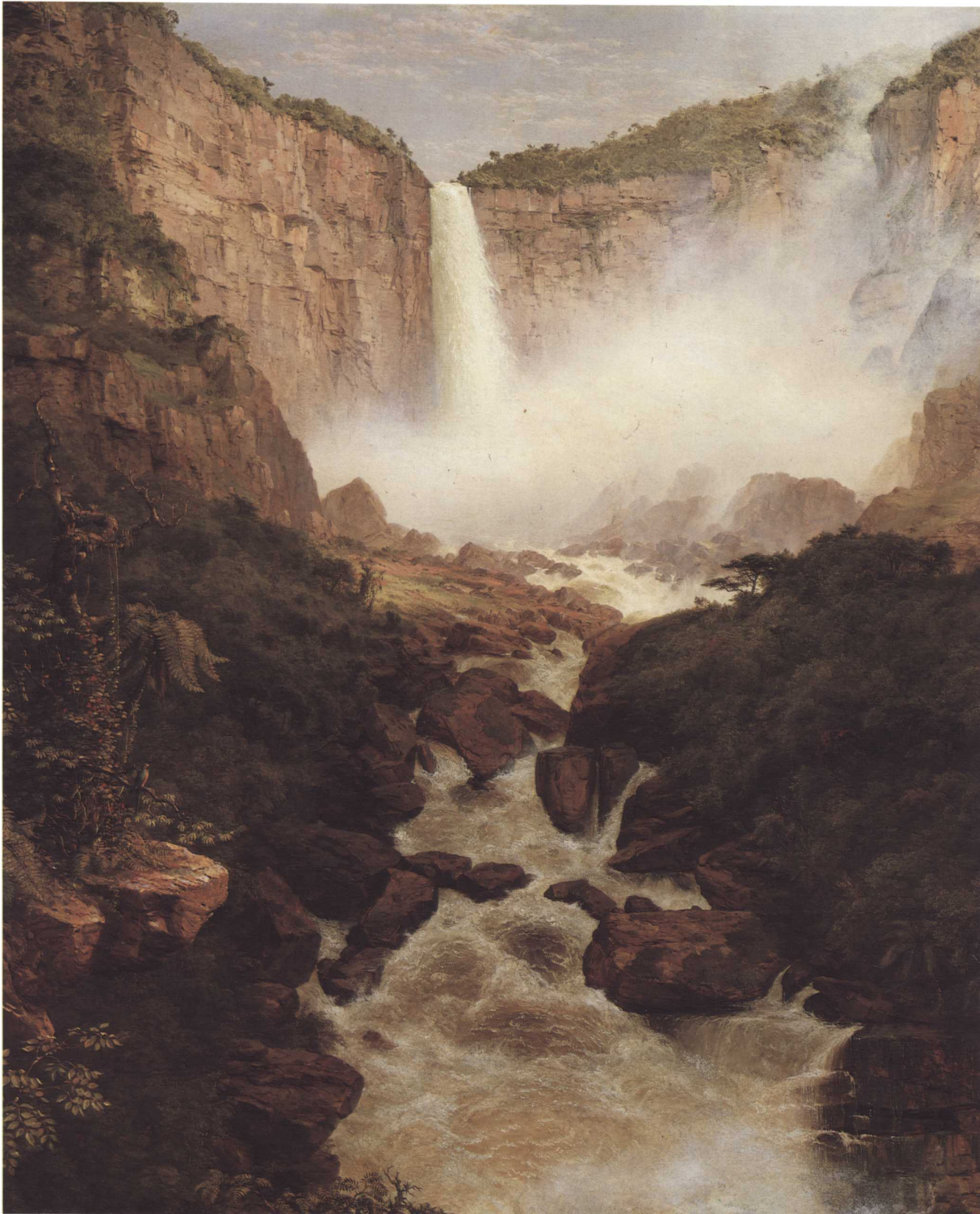


Cat. 22

Tamaca Palms

1854, oil on canvas, 27³/₄ X 36¹/₂ (70.5 X 92.7)

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Gift of William Wilson Corcoran



Cat. 23
*Tequendama Falls, near Bogotá,
New Granada*
1854
oil on canvas
64 X 40 (162.6 X 101.6)
Cincinnati Art Museum,
The Edwin and Virginia
Irwin Memorial



Cat. 24

Cotopaxi

1855, oil on canvas, 28 X 42¹/₈ (71.1 X 107)

National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of Mrs. Frank R. McCoy



Cat. 25

The Andes of Ecuador

1855, oil on canvas, 48 x 75 (121.9 x 190.5)

Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina



Cat. 26

In the Tropics

1856, oil on canvas on panel, 25¹/₄ x 36¹/₄ (64.1 x 92.1)

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, The Glasgow Fund



Cat. 27

Twilight (Sunset)

1856, oil on canvas, 16¹/₄ X 24¹/₄ (41.3 X 61.6)

Albany Institute of History and Art, Gift of Beatrice Palmer



Cat. 28

Sunset

1856, oil on canvas, 24 X 36 (61 X 91.4)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York



Cat. 29

View of Cotopaxi

1857, oil on canvas, 24½ x 36½ (62.2 x 92.7)

The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Jennette Hamlin
in Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Dana Webster



Cat. 30

Niagara

1857, oil on canvas, 42½ x 90½ (108 x 229.9)

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Cat. 31
Twilight (Catskill Mountain)
1856–58, oil on canvas, 24 X 36 (61 X 91.4)
Private Collection



Cat. 32

Cayambe

1858, oil on canvas, 30 x 48 (76.2 x 121.9)

The New-York Historical Society, New York,

The Robert L. Stuart Collection, on permanent loan from the New York Public Library

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Church, Humboldt, and Darwin: The Tension and Harmony of Art and Science

STEPHEN JAY GOULD

In order to depict nature in its exalted sublimity, we must not dwell exclusively on its external manifestations, but we must trace its image, reflected in the mind of man, at one time filling the dreamy land of physical myths with forms of grace and beauty, and at another developing the noble germ of artistic creations.

Alexander von Humboldt, introduction to volume 2 of *Cosmos*, 1847

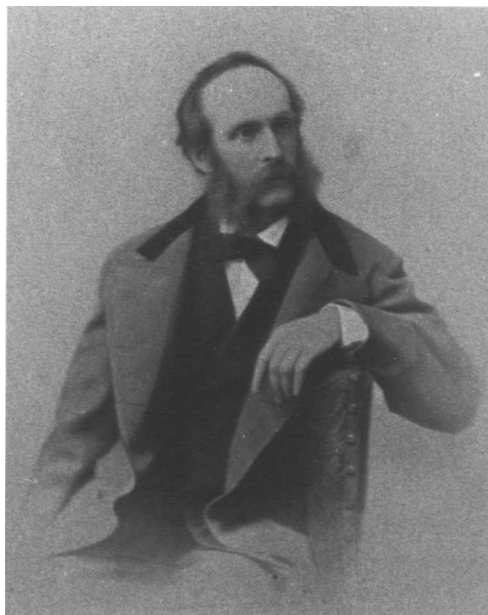


Fig. 1. Sarony and Company, *Frederic Edwin Church*, c. 1860, photograph, 9 x 7 (22.9 x 17.8), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

THE INTENSE EXCITEMENT AND FASCINATION elicited by Frederic Edwin Church's *Heart of the Andes* (cat. 33), when first exhibited in New York in 1859, may be attributed to that odd mixture of apparent opposites that has always characterized American showmanship—commercialism and excellence, hoopla and incisive analysis. The large canvas, more than ten by five feet, was set in a massive frame and displayed alone in a darkened room, with carefully controlled lighting and the walls draped in black.¹ Dried plants and other souvenirs that Church had collected in South America may have graced the room, complementing the subject of the painting. Visitors marveled at the magisterial composition, with its background of the high Andes, blanketed in snow, and a foreground of detail so intricate and microscopically correct that Church might have been proclaimed the Van Eyck of botany.

But public interest also veered from the sublime to the merely quantitative, as rumors circulated that the unprecedented sum of \$20,000 had been paid for the painting (the actual figure of \$10,000 was impressive enough for the time). This tension of reasons for interest in Church has never ceased. The catalogue produced by the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts upon the acquisition of *The Icebergs* (cat. 35) contains, in order, as its first three pictures, a reproduction of the painting, a portrait of Church, and a photo of the auctioneer at Sotheby Parke Bernet gaveling the sale at \$2.5 million as “the audience cheered at what is the highest figure ever registered at an art auction in the United States.”²

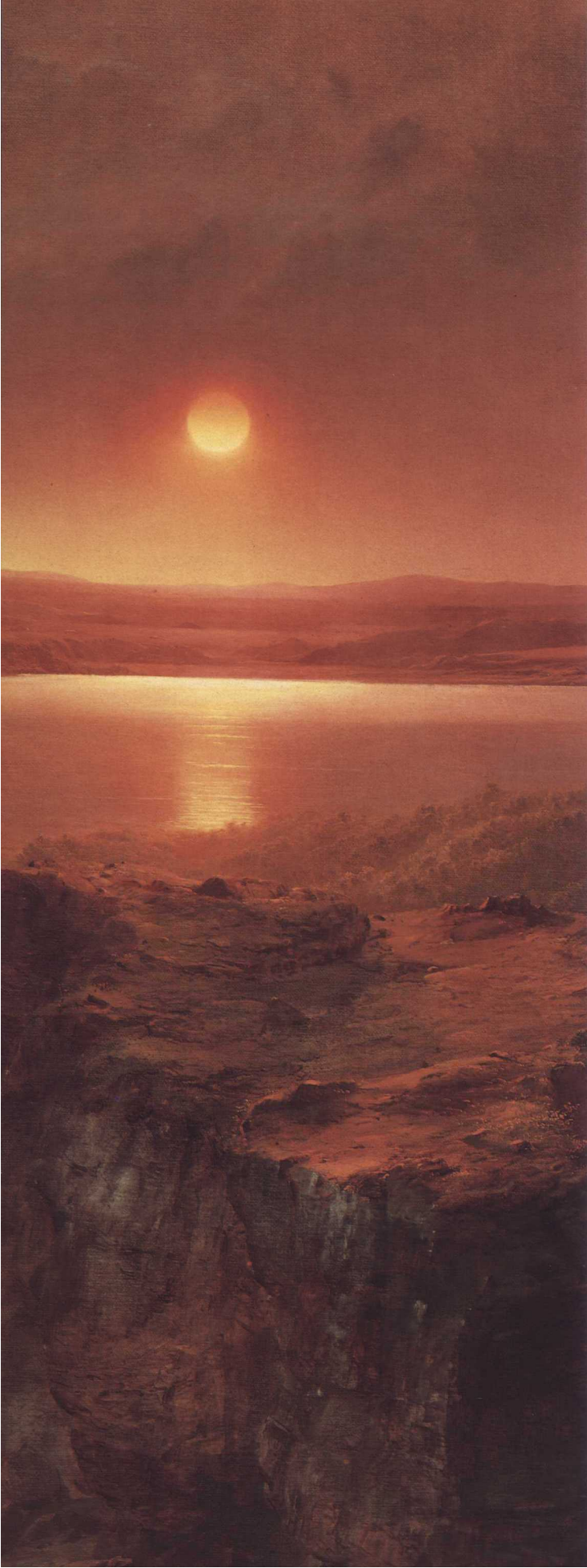
A far more important tension, that between art and science, permeates our current concern with Church. This tension, however, is only retrospective, a product of divisions that have appeared in our society since Church painted his most famous canvases. Church did not doubt that his concern with scientific accuracy went hand in hand with his drive to depict beauty and meaning in its highest form. His faith in this fruitful union stemmed from the views of his intellectual mentor Alexander von Humboldt, a great scientist who had ranked landscape painting among the three highest expressions of our love of nature.

Church sent *Heart of the Andes* to Europe after its great American success of 1859. He wanted, above all, to have the painting shown to the ninety-year-old Humboldt who, sixty years before, had begun the great South American journey that would become the source of his renown. Church wrote to Bayard Taylor on 9 May 1859:

The “Andes” will probably be on its way to Europe before your return to the City. . . . [The] principal motive in taking the picture to Berlin is to have the satisfaction of placing before Humboldt a transcript of the scenery which delighted his eyes sixty years ago—and which he had pronounced to be the finest in the world.³

Cat. 33, detail





But Humboldt died before the painting could be sent, and Church's act of homage never occurred. Later in 1859, as *Heart of the Andes* was enjoying another triumph of display in the British Isles, Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published in London. These three events, linked by their combined occurrence in 1859—the first exhibition of *Heart of the Andes*, the death of Alexander von Humboldt, and the publication of *On the Origin of Species*—form the core of this essay. They represent, in my view, foci for understanding the central role of science in Church's career and for considering the larger issue of relationships between art and science.

As a professional scientist, I have no credentials for judging or interpreting Church's paintings. I can only say that I have been powerfully intrigued (stunned would not be too strong a word) by his major canvases. I first saw *Niagara* (cat. 30) at the Corcoran Gallery of Art and marveled at the "odd" but exciting orientation at the lip of the great Horseshoe Falls. (In our parish of science, any describer should "naturally" choose the "fuller" and more "objective" view of the cascade head on from below.) Church's decision taught me something important about the power of human imagination in its fruitful union with accuracy.

I then developed a special interest in Church when his works stood out for me at the exhibition *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting 1760–1910* at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts a few years later. I made a trip to New York to see *Heart of the Andes* at the Metropolitan as I was preparing this essay. I marveled at the interplay between creation and destruction shown in *The Icebergs*, the fantastic geometry of erosion following the construction of these ice mountains. I thought that I saw the same themes even more complexly developed in *Cotopaxi* (cat. 36)—the layered rocks of the foreground and the awesome symmetry of the volcano itself, contrasted with the destructive force of the eruption, the cloud of smoke that darkens the rising sun (which, as it moves up, shall emerge from the pall). I noted the unobtrusive signs of human life, drawn (I suppose) to emphasize the mastery of nature in comparative scales—the tower in *Niagara*, two figures by a roadside cross in *Heart of the Andes*, a single figure on the path in *Cotopaxi*, the shipwreck in *The Icebergs*. I smiled at the artist's signature, cut in bark on the highlighted tree in the foreground of *Heart of the Andes*—so faded into the scene in its organicism, yet so emphasized in its illumination.

But if I have no license to discourse on Church, at least I inhabit the world of Humboldt and Darwin, and I can perhaps clarify why Humboldt became such a powerful intellectual guru for Church and a whole generation of artists and scholars, and why Darwin pulled this vision of nature up from its roots, substituting another that could and should have been read as equally ennobling, but that plunged many votaries of the old order into permanent despair.

When Church began to paint his great canvases, Alexander von Humboldt was probably the world's most famous and influential intellectual. If his name has faded from such prominence today, this slippage only records a curiosity and basic unfairness of historical judgment. The history of ideas emphasizes innovation and downgrades popularization. The great teachers of any time have enormous influence over the lives and thoughts of entire generations, but their legacy fades as the hagiographic tradition distills thoughts judged as new and discards context. No one did more to change and enhance science in the first half of the nineteenth century than Alexander von Humboldt, the cardinal inspiration for men as diverse as Charles Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace, Louis Agassiz (whom Humboldt financed at a crucial time), and Frederic Edwin Church.

Humboldt (1769–1859) studied geology in his native Germany with another great teacher,

A. G. Werner. Following Werner's interest in mining, Humboldt invented a new form of safety lamp and a device for rescuing trapped miners. Early in his career, Humboldt developed a deep friendship with Goethe, a more uncertain relationship with Schiller, and a passion to combine personal adventure with the precise measurements and observations necessary to develop a science of global physical geography. Consequently, recognizing that the greatest diversity of life and terrain would be found in mountainous and tropical regions, he embarked on a five-year journey to South America in 1799, accompanied by the French botanist Aimé Bonpland. During this greatest of scientific adventures, Humboldt collected 60,000 plant specimens, drew countless maps of great accuracy, wrote some of the most moving passages ever penned against the slave trade, proved the connection between the Orinoco and the Amazon, and established the altitude record (at least among westerners inclined to measure such things) by climbing to 19,000 feet (though not reaching the summit) on Chimborazo. On the way home in 1804, he visited the United States and had several long meetings with Thomas Jefferson. Back in Europe, he met and befriended Simon Bolívar, becoming a lifelong advisor to the great liberator.

The rest of Humboldt's professional life revolved around this voyage and the meticulous records and diaries that he had kept. Over 25 years, Humboldt published 34 volumes of his travel journal illustrated by 1,200 copper plates, but never finished the project. His large and beautiful maps were the envy of the cartographic world. Most important (for its influence on Church and Humboldt's other disciples), Humboldt conceived, in 1827–28, a plan for a multivolumed popular work on, to put it succinctly, everything. The first two volumes of *Kosmos*, appeared in 1845 and 1847, the last three in the 1850s. *Kosmos*, immediately translated into all major Western languages, may be the most important work of popular science ever published. It remains the greatest of all testaments to the essential humanism of science.

Humboldt's primary influence on Church can scarcely be doubted.⁴ Church owned, read, and reread both Humboldt's travel narratives and *Kosmos* (or *Cosmos*, as translated into English). In an age when most painters aspired to a European grand tour to set the course of their work and inspiration, Church followed a reverse route, taking his cue from Humboldt. After his apprenticeship with Thomas Cole, Church first traveled, at Humboldt's direct inspiration, to the high tropics of South America in 1853 and 1857. In Quito, he sought out and occupied the house that Humboldt had inhabited nearly sixty years before. The great canvases of his most fruitful decade (1855–65) are embodiments of Humboldt's aesthetic philosophy and convictions about the unity of art and science. Even subjects maximally distant from the tropics bear Humboldt's mark of influence. *The Icebergs* (cat. 35) and Church's general fascination with polar regions closely parallel Humboldt's second major expedition, his Siberian sojourn of 1829. Church did not visit Europe until 1867, and this cradle of most Western painting did not provoke a new flood of great creativity.

We can best grasp Humboldt's vision (which so inspired Church) by examining the plan of *Cosmos*. On the first page of his preface, Humboldt states the grand aim of his entire work.⁵

The principal impulse by which I was directed was the earnest endeavor to comprehend the phenomena of physical objects in their general connection, and to represent nature as one great whole, moved and animated by internal forces (1: vii).

“Nature,” he adds later (1: 24), “is a unity in diversity of phenomena; a harmony, blending together all created things, however dissimilar in form and attributes; one great whole animated by the breath of life.” This twofold idea of natural unity forged by a harmony of internal laws and forces was no mere rhapsodizing on Humboldt's part; this vision represented

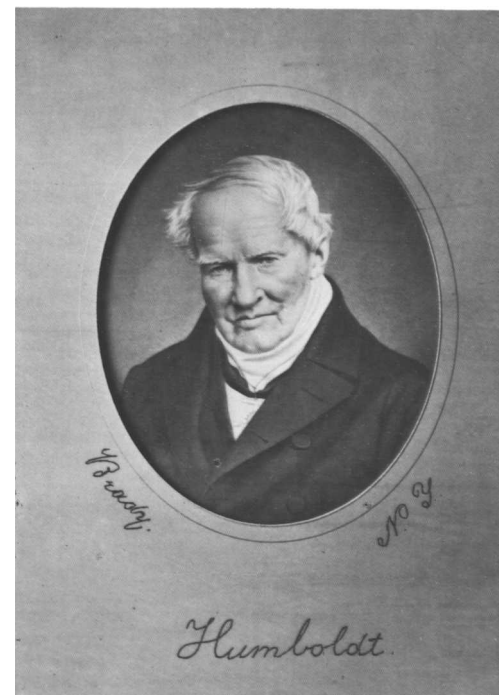
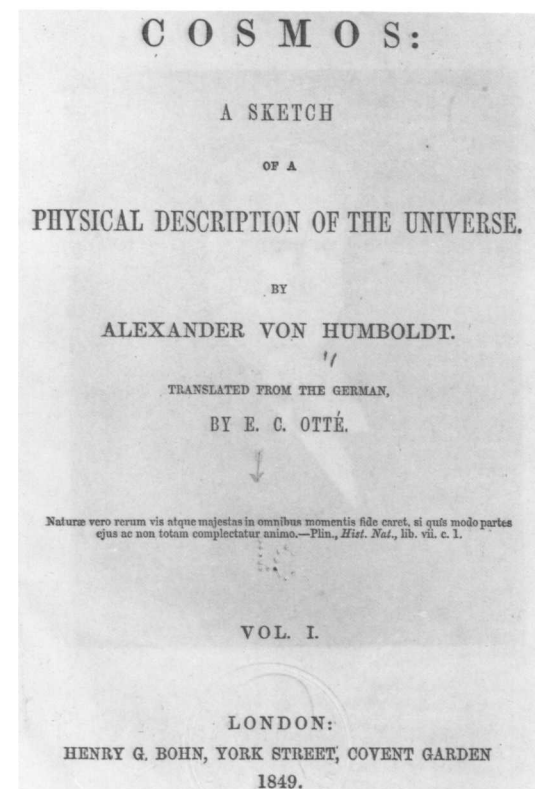


Fig. 2. Studio of Mathew Brady, *Alexander von Humboldt*, c. 1862, posthumously issued carte de visite, Library of Congress; Fig. 3. Title page from Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos*, London, 1849



his view of natural causation. It also embodied the guiding principles that animated Church and that Darwin would tear down with a theory of conflict and balance between internal and external (largely random) forces.

Volume 1 of *Cosmos* covers, on the grandest possible scale, the science that we would call physical geography today. Humboldt ranges from stars in the most distant galaxies to minor differences in soil and climate that govern the distribution of vegetation. (The book is fundamentally a geography, a treatise about the natural forms and places of things. Thus, Humboldt includes little conventional biology in his treatise and discusses organisms primarily in terms of their geographic distribution and appropriate fit to environments.)

But *Cosmos* takes seriously, and to the fullest possible extent, its own primary theme of unity. If volume 1 is a physical description of the universe, then volume 2—an astounding *tour de force* that reads with as much beauty and relevance today as in Church's era—treats the history and forms of human sensibility toward nature. (The last three volumes of *Cosmos*, published many years later, present case studies of the physical world; these volumes were never as popular as the first two.) Humboldt wrote of his overall design:

I have considered Nature in a two-fold point of view. In the first place, I have endeavored to present her in the pure objectiveness of external phenomena; and secondly, as the reflection of the image impressed by the senses upon the inner man, that is, upon his ideas and feelings (3: 5).

Humboldt begins volume 2 with a discussion of the three principal modes (in his view) for the expression of our love of nature—poetic description, landscape painting (need I say more for influence upon Church), and cultivation of exotic plants (Church made a large collection of dried and pressed tropical plants). The rest of the volume treats, with stunning erudition and encyclopedic footnotes, the history of human attitudes toward the natural world.

Humboldt embodied the ideals of the Enlightenment as well and as forcefully as any great intellectual—as Voltaire, as Goya, as Condorcet. If he lived so long, and past the hour of flourishing for his philosophy, he remained ever firm in his convictions, a beacon of hope in a disillusioned world. Humboldt conveyed the Enlightenment's faith that human history moved toward progress and harmony based on the increasing spread of intellect. People may differ in current accomplishments, but all races are equally subject to similar improvement. In the most famous nineteenth-century statement of equality made by a scientist, Humboldt wrote:

While we maintain the unity of the human species, we at the same time repel the depressing assumption of superior and inferior races of men. There are nations more susceptible of cultivation, more highly civilized, more ennobled by mental cultivation than others, but none in themselves nobler than others. All are in like degree designed for freedom (1: 358).

In expressing his liberal belief in progress, Humboldt contrasts his perception of unity with the standard views, based on division and separation, of such social conservatives as Edmund Burke. For Burke and other leaders of the reaction against liberalism, feeling and intellect are separate domains; the former, the chief mode of the masses, leads to danger and destruction. The masses must therefore be restrained and ruled by an elite capable of mastering the constructive and empowering force of intellect.

Humboldt's vision, in direct contrast, is based on the union and positive interaction between feeling and analysis, sentiment and observation. Sentiment, properly channeled, is not a dangerous force of ignorance, but a prerequisite to any deep appreciation of nature:

The vault of heaven, studded with nebulae and stars, and the rich vegetable mantle that covers the soil in the climate of palms, cannot surely fail to produce on the minds of these laborious observers of nature an impression more imposing and more worthy of the majesty of creation than on those who are unaccustomed to investigate the great mutual relations of phenomena. I cannot, therefore, agree with Burke when he says, “it is our ignorance of natural things that causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions” (1:40).

Romantic nonsense might proclaim a superiority of untrammelled feeling over the dryness of accurate observation and measurement, but the Enlightenment’s faith in rationality located highest truth in the mutual reinforcement of feeling and intellect:

It is almost with reluctance that I am about to speak of a sentiment, which appears to arise from narrow-minded views, or from a certain weak and morbid sentimentality—I allude to the fear entertained by some persons, that nature may by degrees lose a portion of the charm and magic of her power, as we learn more and more how to unveil her secrets, comprehend the mechanism of the movements of the heavenly bodies, and estimate numerically the intensity of natural forces. . . . Those who still cherish such erroneous views in the present age, and amid the progress of public opinion, and the advancement of all branches of knowledge, fail in duly appreciating the value of every enlargement of the sphere of intellect, and the importance of the detail of isolated facts in leading us on to general results (1: 38–40).

Humboldt viewed the interaction of feeling and intellect as an upwardly spiraling system, moving progressively toward deep understanding. Feeling excites our interest and leads us to a passionate desire for scientific knowledge of details and causes. This knowledge, in turn, enhances our appreciation of natural beauty; nature is a unity; all forces push to the same goal; feeling and intellect are complementary sources of understanding; knowing the causes of things leads us to even greater awe and wonder.

Thus do the spontaneous impressions of the untutored mind lead, like the laborious deductions of cultivated intellect, to the same intimate persuasion, that one sole and indissoluble chain binds together all nature. . . . Every imposing scene in nature depends so materially upon the mutual relation of the ideas and sentiments simultaneously excited in the mind of the observer (1: 27).

Humboldt’s theory of aesthetics is rooted in this idea of mutual reinforcement. A great painter must also be a scientist, or at least committed to the detailed and accurate observation, and to the knowledge of causes, that motivate a professional scientist. For the visual arts, landscape painting is the principal mode of expressing the unity of knowledge (as poetry serves the literary arts and cultivation of exotic plants the practical arts). A great landscape painter is the highest servant of both nature and the human mind.

Church accepted Humboldt’s aesthetic theory as his own guide (and why not, for I think that no one has ever improved upon this primary statement of humanism). Church was identified and respected as the most scientific of painters (when such a designation implied admiration, not belittlement as it might today in some circles). His penchant for accuracy in observation and rendering, both for intricate botanical details in his foregrounds and geological forms in his backgrounds, was admired as a primary source of quality in his art and as a key to his success in awakening feelings of awe and sublimity in his viewers.

I do not, of course, say that Church attempted, or that Humboldt advocated, a slavish rendering of particular places with snapshot accuracy. Humboldt did stress the value of colored sketches from nature, even of photographs (though he felt, in the nascent years of this art, that photography could only capture the basic forms of a landscape, never the details). But Humboldt realized that any fine canvas must be an imaginative reconstruction, accurate in all its details of geology and vegetation, not a re-creation of a particular spot:

A distinction must be made in landscape painting, as in every other branch of art, between the elements generated by the more limited field of contemplation and direct observation, and those which spring from the boundless depth and feeling and from the force of idealizing mental power (2: 95).

None of Church's great tropical paintings are representations of particular places. He often constructed idealized vantage points so that he could encompass all life zones, from the vegetation of lush lowlands to the snow-clad Andean peaks, in a single composition. (For example, although Church's most famous painting of *Cotopaxi* [cat. 36] includes no lowland plants, most of his other canvases of this great volcano [e.g., cat. 29] feature palm trees and other luxuriant plants that actually grow nowhere in such proximity to the mountain.)⁶ Moreover, though likely with no conscious intent, Church did not always depict his geological backgrounds accurately. Volcanologist Richard S. Fiske discovered that Church painted the symmetrical cone of *Cotopaxi* with steeper sides than the actual mountain possesses.⁷ We may, however, view this "license" as a veering toward accuracy, for Humboldt himself had drawn *Cotopaxi* with even steeper slopes!

Humboldt's influence over Church extended to far more than general aesthetic philosophy and the value of science and accurate observation. One may easily identify landscape painting as the principal mode of glorifying nature in the visual arts, but which among the infinitude of earthly landscapes best captures the essence of wonder? Humboldt replied with the aesthetic conviction that still motivates such modern ecological movements as the battle to save the rain forests of the Amazon. Maximal diversity of life and landscape is the *summum bonum* of aesthetic joy and intellectual wonder. Maximal diversity is enhanced by two circumstances, which have their greatest confluence in the High Andes of South America. First, the vastly greater diversity of vegetation in tropical regions marks the torrid zone as immensely more varied than temperate areas inhabited by most Western peoples. Second, diversity is greatly enhanced by a range of altitudes, for the sequence of lowland to mountaintop in a single district may span the entire panoply of lowland environments from equator to pole, with an equatorial mountaintop acting as a surrogate for the Arctic. Thus, the higher the mountains, the more the range of diversity. The Himalayas might win our preference, but they lie too far north of the equator and do not include the zones of tropical lowland vegetation. The Andes of South America are the premiere spot on earth for landscape painting, for only here does the full luxuriance of the lowland jungle stand in the shadow of such a massive range of snow-clad peaks. Humboldt therefore went to South America, as did Darwin, Wallace, and Frederic Edwin Church, much to the benefit of art and history. Humboldt wrote:

Are we not justified in hoping that landscape painting will flourish with a new and hitherto unknown brilliancy when artists of merit shall more frequently pass the narrow limits of the Mediterranean, and when they shall be enabled, far in the interior of continents, in the humid mountain valleys of the tropical world, to seize, with the genuine freshness of a pure and youthful spirit, on the true image of the varied forms of nature (2: 93)?

When Church was still a small boy, Humboldt's travel writings were setting the life course of a young English graduate who planned on becoming a country parson (not from any particular zeal for religion, but probably to maximize time for avocational interests in natural history). But Charles Darwin veered down a different course to become one of history's most important intellectuals—and Humboldt was his primary influence. Darwin read two books that focused his interests upon natural history in a more serious and professional way: J.F.W. Herschel's *Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural History* and Humboldt's *Personal Narra-*

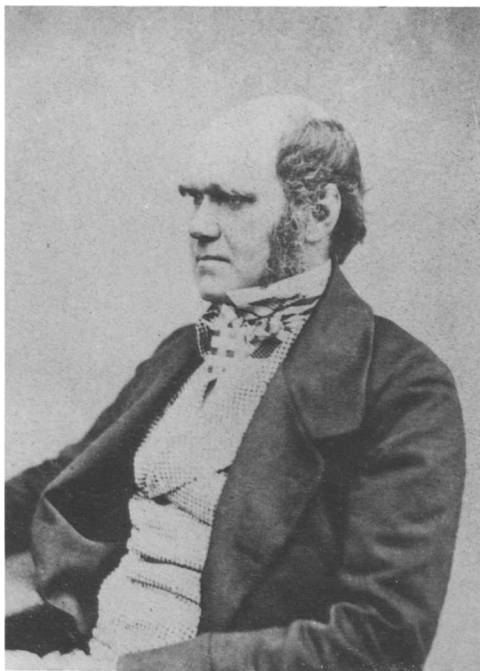


Fig. 4. J. Victor Carus, *Charles Darwin*, c. 1860, Smithsonian Institution Archives Photo no. 85-4429

At right, cat. 29, detail



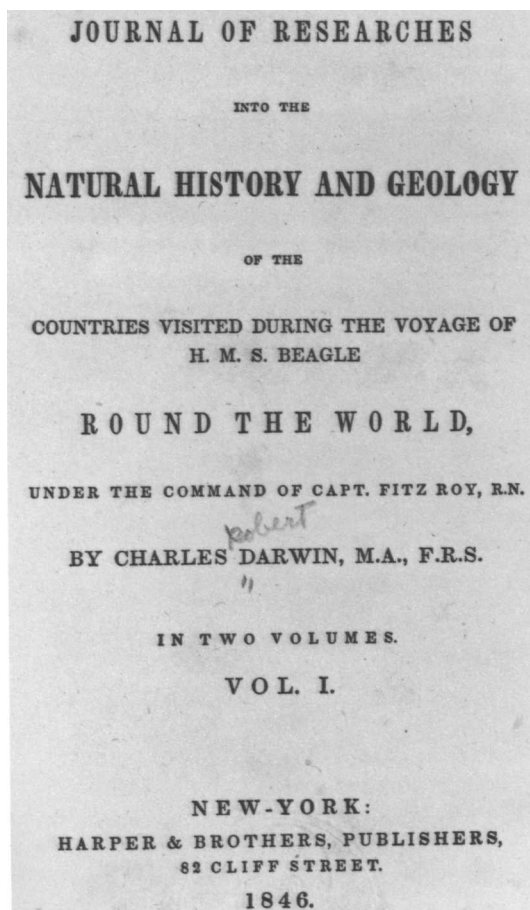


Fig. 5. Title page from Charles Darwin, *Journal of Researches*, New York, 1846

At right, cat. 25, detail

tive of the South American voyages (1814–29). As an old man, Darwin reminisced in his autobiography: “[These books] stirred up in me a burning zeal to add even the most humble contribution to the noble structure of Natural Science. No one or a dozen other books influenced me nearly so much as these two.”

Moreover, directly inspired by Humboldt’s views on the need for tropical travel, Darwin hatched a plot to visit the Canary Islands with some entomologist friends. Darwin involved his mentor, botanist J. S. Henslow, in the plan, and this step led, clearly if indirectly, to Darwin’s invitation to sail on the *Beagle*, the beginning and *sine qua non* of his rendezvous with history. Mathematician George Peacock asked Henslow to recommend a keen young naturalist to Captain FitzRoy, and Henslow, impressed with Darwin’s general zeal and desire for tropical travel, recommended his young protégé for the job. The *Beagle* spent five years circumnavigating the globe, but the trip was primarily a surveying voyage of South America, and Darwin spent the bulk of his time in and around Humboldt’s favorite places. Can it be accidental that the twin discoverers of natural selection, Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, were both inspired by Humboldt, and both made their most extensive, youthful voyages to South America? On 28 April 1831, as Darwin made his preparations for the *Beagle*, he wrote to his sister Caroline:

My head is running about the tropics: in the morning I go and gaze at Palm trees in the hot-house and come home and read Humboldt; my enthusiasm is so great that I can hardly sit still on my chair.⁸

Darwin’s first view of the richness of tropical life led him to rhapsody, for the real objects were even better than Humboldt had described. In Brazil, Darwin wrote in his diary for 28 February 1832:

Humboldt’s glorious descriptions are and will for ever be unparalleled; but even he with his dark blue skies and the rare union of poetry with science which he so strongly displays when writing on tropical scenery, with all this falls far short of the truth. The delight one experiences in such times bewilders the mind; if the eye attempts to follow the flight of a gaudy butterfly, it is arrested by some strange tree or fruit; if watching an insect one forgets it in the stranger flower it is crawling over; if turning to admire the splendor of the scenery, the individual character of the foreground fixes the attention. The mind is a chaos of delight, out of which a world of future and more quiet pleasure will arise. I am at present fit only to read Humboldt; he like another sun illumines everything I behold.

And, more succinctly, in a letter to his mentor Henslow a few months later on 18 May: “I never experienced such intense delight. I formerly admired Humboldt, I now almost adore him.”

Darwin did not only read Humboldt for the visceral wonder of it all; he evidently studied Humboldt’s aesthetic theories with some care as well, as several entries in the *Beagle* diary testify. Consider this comment from Rio de Janeiro in 1832:

During the day I was particularly stuck with a remark of Humboldt’s who often alludes to “the thin vapor which without changing the transparency of the air, renders its tints more harmonious, softens its effects,” etc. This is an appearance which I have never observed in the temperate zones. The atmosphere, seen through a short space of half or three-quarters of a mile, was perfectly lucid, but at a greater distance all colors were blended into a most beautiful haze.

Or this, from his summary comments upon returning in 1836:

I am strongly induced to believe that, as in Music, the person who understands every note, will, if he also has true taste, more thoroughly enjoy the whole; so he who examines each part of a fine view, may also thoroughly



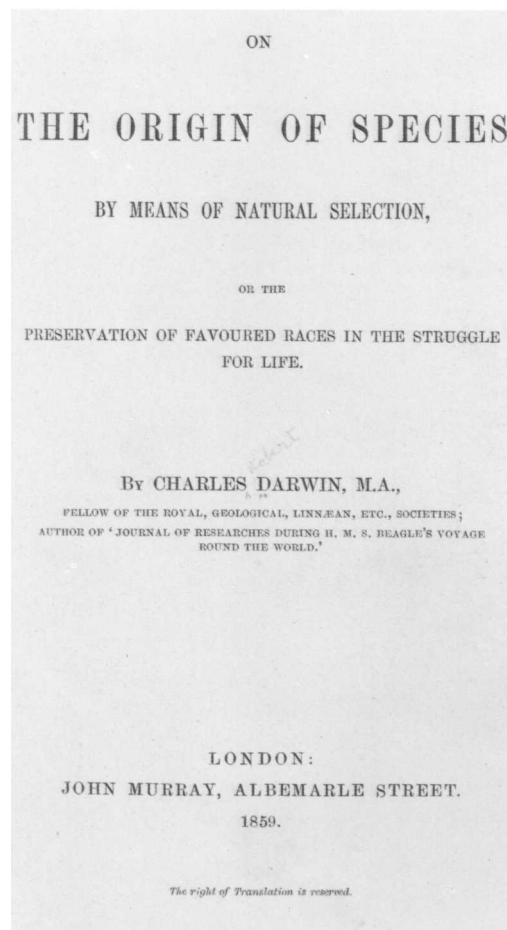


Fig. 6. Title page from Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, London, 1859

comprehend the full and combined effect. Hence a traveler should be a botanist, for in all views plants form the chief embellishment. Group masses of naked rocks, even in the wildest forms, for a time they may afford a sublime spectacle, but they will soon grow monotonous; paint them with bright and varied colors, they will become fantastick [*sic*]; clothe them with vegetation, and they must form at least a decent, if not a most beautiful picture.

Humboldt himself could not have written a better passage on the value of diversity and his favorite theme of aesthetic appreciation enhanced by detailed knowledge of individual parts—the union of artistic pleasure and scientific understanding.

So we reach the pivotal year of our drama, 1859. Humboldt lies dying in Berlin, while two powerful and influential men, half a world apart in geography and profession, reach the apex of a fame founded on Humboldt's inspiration: Frederic Edwin Church displays *Heart of the Andes*, and Charles Darwin publishes the *On the Origin of Species*.

And we encounter a precious irony, an almost painfully poignant outcome. Humboldt himself, in the preface to volume 1 of *Cosmos*, had remarked on the paradox that great works of science condemn themselves to oblivion as they open floodgates to reforming knowledge, while classics of literature can never lose relevance:

It has frequently been regarded as a subject of discouraging consideration, that while purely literary products of intellectual activity are rooted in the depths of feeling, and interwoven with the creative force of imagination, all works treating of empirical knowledge, and of the connection of natural phenomena and physical laws, are subject to the most marked modifications of form in the lapse of short periods of time. . . . Those scientific works which have, to use a common expression, become antiquated by the acquisition of new funds of knowledge, are thus continually being consigned to oblivion as unreadable (1: xi–xii).

In Darwin's hand, Humboldt's vision suffered this fate of superannuation in 1859. The exterminating angel was not the fact of evolution itself, for some versions of evolution as necessary progress, internally driven, fit quite well with Humboldt's notion of pervasive harmony. Darwin's particular theory, natural selection, and the radical philosophical context of its presentation⁹ drove Humboldt's pleasant image to oblivion. Frederic Edwin Church, alas, was even more committed than Humboldt to the philosophic comfort of their shared vision, for Church (unlike Humboldt) had rooted a good portion of his Christian faith, for him a most important source of inspiration and equanimity, in a view of nature as essential harmony in unity.

Consider just three aspects of the new Darwinian world view. All confute central aspects of Humboldt's vision.

1. Nature is a scene of competition and struggle, not higher harmony. Order and good design arise by natural selection only as a side consequence of struggle, and Hobbes' "war of all against all" is the causal reality of most daily interactions in nature. The struggle is metaphorical and need not involve bloody battle (a plant, Darwin tells us, may be said to struggle against an inclement environment at the edge of a desert). But more often than not, competition is overt, and some die that others may live. The struggle, moreover, is for the reproductive success of individual organisms, not directly in the service of any higher harmony. Darwin, in one of his most trenchant metaphors, seems to tear right through the faith of Humboldt and the canvases of Church in depicting apparent harmony as dangerously misleading:

We behold the face of nature bright with gladness, we often see superabundance of food; we do not see, or we forget, that the birds which are idly singing round us mostly live on insects or seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life; or we forget how largely these songsters, or their eggs, or their nestlings, are destroyed by birds and beasts of prey.¹⁰

2. Evolutionary lineages have no intrinsic direction toward higher states or greater unification. Natural selection is only a process of local adaptation, as organisms change in response to alterations in their environment. The geological and climatological causes of environmental change have no inherent direction either. Evolution is opportunistic.

3. Evolutionary changes are not propelled by an internal and harmonious force. Evolution is a balance between the internal characteristics of organisms and the external vector of environmental change. Both the internal and external forces have strong random components, further obviating any notion of impulse toward union and harmony. The internal force of genetic mutation, ultimate source of evolutionary variation, is random with respect to the direction of natural selection. The external force of environmental change is capricious with respect to the progress and complexity of organisms.

Frederic Edwin Church was not the only humanist crushed by the new and apparently heartless view of nature. Few themes, in fact, are more common in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literature than the distress and ineffable sadness provoked by losing the comfort of a world lovingly constructed with intrinsic harmony among all its constituent parts. Thomas Hardy, in a striking poem entitled *Nature's Questioning*, lets the natural objects and organisms of Darwin's new world express their despair through stunned silence:

*When I look forth at dawning, pool,
Field, flock, and lonely tree,
All seem to gaze at me
Like chastened children sitting silent in a school.*

*Upon them stirs in lippings mere
(As if once clear in call,
But now scarce breathed at all)—
“We wonder, ever wonder, why we find us here!”*

I am no fan of psychobiography or psychohistory, and I will not indulge in speculative details about the impact of Darwin's revolution on Church's painting. But something must be said about the coincidences of 1859 and the last thirty years of Church's life. When I began this project, I was shocked to learn that Church had lived until 1900. His work and its meaning are so firmly fixed, in my eyes, to the world just before Darwin's watershed, that I had trouble imagining his corporeal self peering into our own century. (He reminds me of Rossini, living into Wagner's era, but with all his work done thirty years before in a different age of *bel canto*; or of Kerensky, deposed by Lenin, but then living for more than fifty years as an aged exile in New York.)

My impression is supported by Church's output. He continued to do some painting right into the 1890s, but his great landscapes were all behind him by the end of the 1860s. I know that several non-ideological reasons may explain Church's withdrawal. For one, he became very wealthy from his painting (contrary to the stereotype of struggling artists) and spent much of his later life designing and furnishing his remarkable home at Olana (see James Anthony Ryan's essay).¹¹ For another (and one could hardly state a better reason), he had severe health problems with inflammatory rheumatism and eventually lost the use of his painting arm. Still, I wonder if the collapse of his vision of nature, wrought by Darwin's revolution, made it impossible ever to paint such landscapes again. If an uplifting harmony turns into a scene of bloody battle, is not the joke too bitter to bear?

Cat. 5, detail



Several scholars have commented that the large number of books about science that Church maintained in his library at Olana¹² prove his continuing concern for keeping up with the latest in scientific thought. But this claim cannot be supported, and the list implies rather the opposite. Yes, he owned many books about science, but as Sherlock Holmes recognized the absence of a bark as the most crucial bit of evidence (for the nonexistence of a dog), the key to Church's collection lies in the books he did *not* own. He maintained a good collection of Humboldt; he owned Wallace's books on geographic distribution of animals and tropical biology, Darwin's on the *Beagle* voyage and the *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1873). He bought the major works by Christian evolutionists who continued to espouse the idea of necessary progress mediated by internal forces of vital matter—H.F. Osborn and N.S. Shaler. He did not have either of Darwin's evolutionary treatises, *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871). More important, he apparently owned not a single work of a mechanistic or materialist bent—not a word of E.H. Haeckel and only a text on religion by T.H. Huxley, though their books were the most widely read of all late nineteenth-century popularizations of evolution. I think that Frederic Edwin Church probably did undergo a crisis of confidence akin to that suffered by the organisms of Hardy's poem—and that he could not bear to face the consequences of Darwin's world.

I cannot end on this somber note, not only because I try to maintain a general cheerfulness of temperament, but also because such a termination would not represent a proper end to my story. I want to finish by affirming something in Humboldt that I regard as more important than his falsified vision of natural harmony and, therefore, by upholding the continuing power and beauty of Church's great paintings. I also want to suggest that Hardy's sadness and Church's silence were not the best responses of humanists to Darwin's new world—the first reaction of shock and dismay perhaps, but not the considered conclusion of more reflection and understanding from both sides.

First of all, Humboldt was right in arguing, as quoted earlier, that great works of science supersede themselves by sowing seeds for further advances. This, Humboldt adds (directly following the last quotation) is an aspect of science's joy, not its distress:

However discouraging such a prospect must be, no one who is animated by a genuine love of nature, and by a sense of the dignity attached to its study, can view with regret anything which promises future additions and a greater degree of perfection to general knowledge (I: xii).

Second, and of far more importance for this essay, Humboldt was right again in emphasizing the interaction of art and science in any deep appreciation of nature. Therefore Church was absolutely right, as right and as relevant today as in his own time, in his fidelity to natural observation combined with the shaping genius of his imagination. Indeed, I would go further and argue that this vision may be even more important today than in the era of Humboldt and Church. For never before have we been surrounded with such confusion, never with such a drive to narrow specialization, never with such indifference to (or even disdain for) the striving for connection and integration that marks the humanist tradition. Artists dare not hold science in contempt, and scientists will work in a moral and aesthetic desert—a most dangerous place in our age of potentially instant destruction—without art. Yet integration is harder than ever, as jargons divide us and anti-intellectual movements sap our strength. Can we not still find inspiration in the integrative visions of Humboldt and Church?

I will not deny that such integration is more difficult in Darwin's world, a bleaker place, no doubt, than Humboldt's. But in another sense, the very bleakness of Darwin's world

points to the right solution, one seen with crystal clarity by Darwin himself. Nature simply is what she is; nature does not exist for our delectation, our moral instruction, or our pleasure. Therefore, nature will not always (or even preferentially) match our hopes. Humboldt asked too much of nature, and pinned too much of his philosophy on a particular outcome. This is a dangerous tactic, for indifferent nature may not supply the answers that our souls seek.

Darwin grasped the philosophical bleakness with his characteristic courage. He argued that hope and morality cannot, and should not, be passively read in the construction of nature. These are human concepts, and must be shaped in human terms, not “discovered” in nature. We must formulate these answers for ourselves and then approach nature as a partner who can answer other kinds of questions for us—questions about the factual state of the universe, not about the meaning of human life. If we grant nature the independence of her domain, her answers unframed in human terms, then we can grasp her exquisite beauty in a freely given way, for we shall be liberated to approach nature without the need for finding inappropriate moral messages to assuage our hopes and fears. We can pay our proper respect to her independence and read her own ways as beauty or inspiration in our different terms. I give the last word to Darwin (diary entry of 16 January 1832), who could not run from the apparent truth of natural selection as a mechanism of change, but who never lost his sense of beauty or his childlike wonder. Darwin stood in the heart of the Andes as he wrote:

It has been for me a glorious day, like giving to a blind man eyes, he is overwhelmed by what he sees and cannot justly comprehend it. Such are my feelings, and such may they remain.

Notes

1. See Franklin Kelly’s essay in this book for a discussion of the uncertainty surrounding the circumstances of the first exhibition of *Heart of the Andes*.
2. Gerald L. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: The Icebergs* [exh. cat., Dallas Museum of Fine Arts] (Dallas, 1980), 8.
3. Frederic E. Church to Bayard Taylor, 9 May 1859, Bayard Taylor Correspondence, Cornell Regional Archives.
4. I thank Franklin Kelly, curator of collections at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, for supplying me with so much information about Church. The relationship between Church and Humboldt is discussed in: Edmunds V. Bunkšć, “Humboldt and the Aesthetic Tradition in Geography,” *The Geographical Review* 7 (April 1981), 127–46; Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, “Scientific Sources of the Full-Length Landscape: 1850,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 4 (October 1945), 59–65; David C. Huntington, “Landscape and Diaries: The South American Trips of F.E. Church,” *Brooklyn Museum Annual* 5 (1963–64), 65–98; Franklin Kelly, “Frederic Church in the Tropics,” *Arts in Virginia* 27 (1987), 16–33, and *Frederic Edwin Church and the National Landscape* (Washington, 1988); Katherine Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal: Views of Cotopaxi by Frederic Edwin Church* [exh. cat., National Museum of American Art] (Washington, 1985); and Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting: 1825–1875* (New York, 1980).
5. All references to Humboldt in this paper are from the following English edition of *Cosmos*, an edition owned by Frederic Church: Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos: A Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe*, translated by E.C. Otte (New York, 1852).
6. Katherine Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal*.
7. Richard S. Fiske and Elizabeth Nielsen, “Church’s *Cotopaxi*: a Modern Volcanological Perspective,” in Katherine Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal*, 1–6.
8. All references to Darwin’s *The Beagle Diary* and letters will be found in R.D. Keynes, *The Beagle Record* (Cambridge, England, 1979).
9. Howard Gruber, *Darwin on Man* (New York, 1974) and Stephen J. Gould, *Ever Since Darwin* (New York, 1977).
10. Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (London, 1859), 62.
11. Gerald L. Carr, “Frederic Edwin Church as a Public Figure,” in Franklin Kelly and Gerald L. Carr, *The Early Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church, 1845–1854* (Fort Worth, 1987), 1–30.
12. I thank Franklin Kelly for sending me the list of Church’s library.

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Cat. 33

Heart of the Andes

1859, oil on canvas, 66 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 119 $\frac{1}{4}$ (168 x 302.9)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Mrs. David Dows



Cat. 34

Twilight in the Wilderness

1860, oil on canvas, 40 X 64 (101.6 X 162.6)

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marlatt Fund



Cat. 35

The Icebergs

1861, oil on canvas, 64¹/₄ x 112¹/₄ (163.2 x 285.1)

Dallas Museum of Art, anonymous gift



Cat. 36

Cotopaxi

1862, oil on canvas, 48 x 85 (121.9 x 215.9)

The Detroit Institute of Arts,

Founders Society Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Manoogian,

Robert H. Tannahill Foundation Fund, Gibbs-Williams Fund,

Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., Fund, Merrill Fund, and Beatrice W. Rogers Fund



Cat. 37

Coast Scene, Mount Desert

1863, oil on canvas, 36 x 48¹/₄ (91.4 x 122.6)

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, Bequest of Mrs. Clara Hinton Gould



Cat. 38

Rainy Season in the Tropics

1866, oil on canvas, 56¹/₄ x 84³/₁₆ (142.9 x 213.8)

The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Mildred Anna Williams Collection



Cat. 39

Aurora Borealis

1865, oil on canvas, 56¹/₈ X 83¹/₂ (142.6 X 212.1)

National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of Eleanor Blodgett



Cat. 40
*Niagara Falls,
from the American Side*
1867
oil on canvas
102½ x 91 (260.4 x 231.1)
National Gallery
of Scotland



Cat. 41
Scene in the Andes
1863–67, oil on canvas, 38 x 48 (96.5 x 121.9)
Private Collection



Cat. 42

The Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica

1867, oil on canvas, 48⁵/₁₆ X 84⁵/₈ (122.7 X 215)

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, The Elizabeth Hart Jarvis Colt Collection



Cat. 43

The After Glow

1867, oil on canvas, 31¹/₄ X 48³/₄ (79.4 X 123.8)

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Cat. 44

Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives

1870, oil on canvas, 54 x 84 (137.2 x 213.4)

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, Gift of The Enid and Crosby Kemper Foundation



Cat. 45

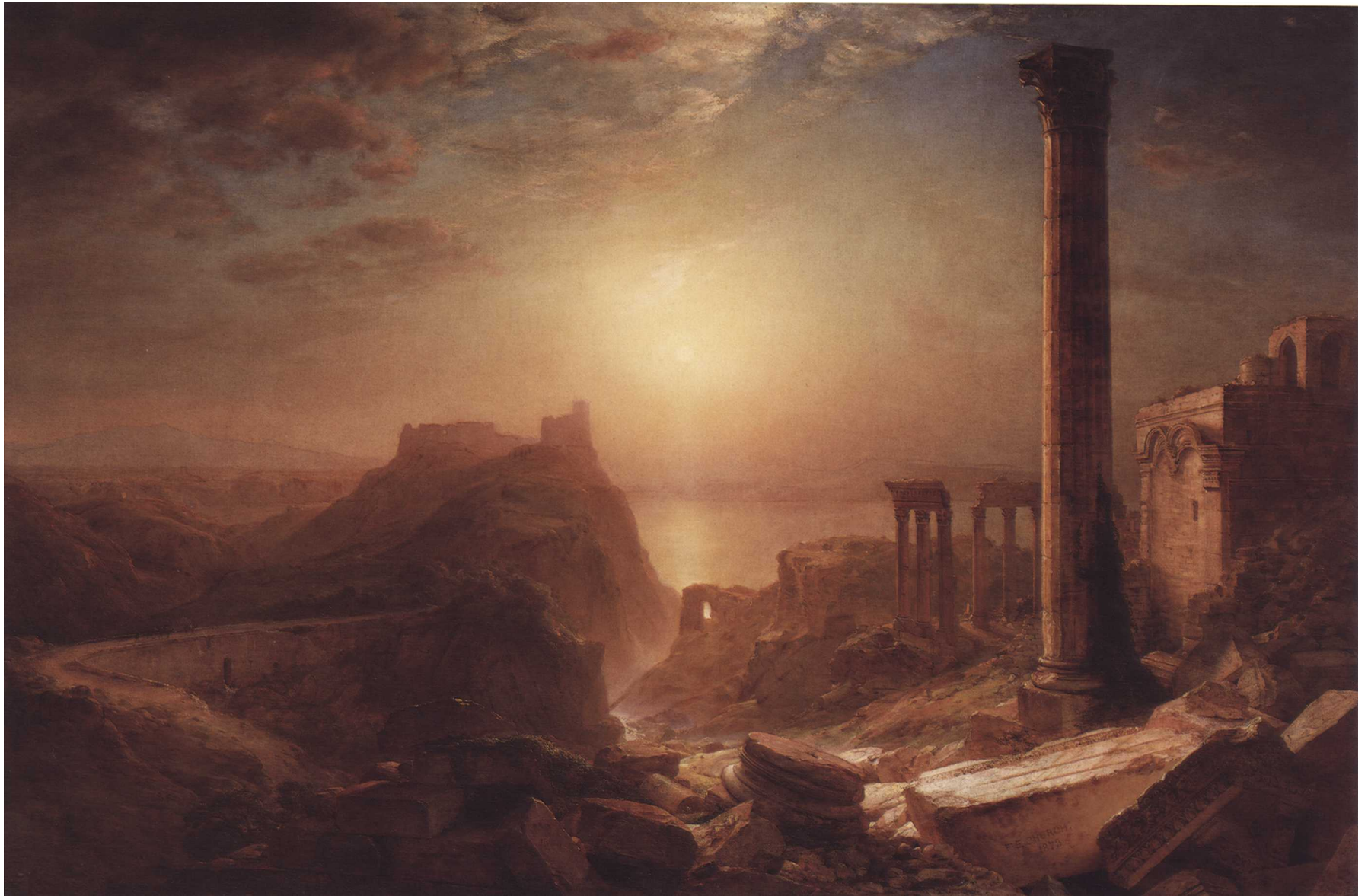
The Parthenon

1871, oil on canvas, 44 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 72 $\frac{5}{8}$ (113 x 184.5)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Maria De Witt Jesup, from the collection of her husband,
Morris K. Jesup



Cat. 46
El Khasné, Petra
1874
oil on canvas
60 $\frac{1}{2}$ X 50 $\frac{1}{4}$ (153.7 X 127.6)
New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation, and Historic
Preservation, Olana State His-
toric Site, Taconic Region



Cat. 47
Syria by the Sea
1873, oil on canvas, 56 x 85 (142.2 x 215.9)
The Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Mrs. James F. Joy



Cat. 48

Tropical Scenery

1873, oil on canvas, 31 X 48½ (78.7 X 123.2)

Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, Gift of the Friends of Art



Cat. 49

Morning in the Tropics

1877, oil on canvas, 54³/₈ x 84¹/₈ (138.8 x 213.7)

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Avalon Foundation 1965.14.1

Frederic Church's Olana: Architecture and Landscape as Art

JAMES ANTHONY RYAN

The harmonious union of buildings and scenery, is a point of taste that appears to be but little understood in any country; and mainly, we believe, because the architect and the landscape painter are seldom combined in the same person, or are seldom consulted together. It is for this reason that we so rarely see a country residence, or cottage and its grounds, making such a composition as a landscape painter would choose for his pencil.

Andrew Jackson Downing¹

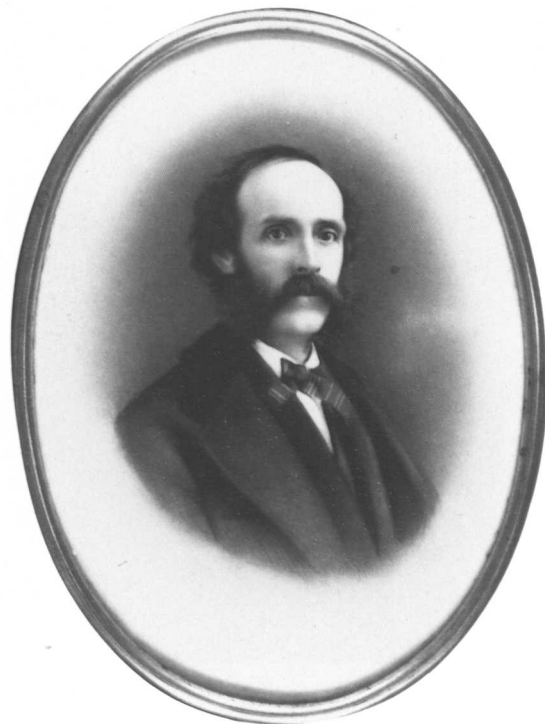


Fig. 1. Ludwig Sturm, *Frederic Edwin Church*, 1870, oil on porcelain, 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ (14.6 x 10.8), New York State. Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region. Painted the year Church began to build Olana.

THE RECOLLECTION OF the blue mountains is as fresh and vivid to me as the day I last saw them,” wrote twenty-year-old Frederic Church in the fall of 1846 to Thomas Cole, his former teacher.² Cole lived in the small Hudson River town of Catskill, New York, and Church studied with him from June 1844 to May 1846 (fig. 3). During those two years, the blue Catskills became for Church, as they had been for Cole, “steps by which we may ascend to a great temple.”³ The Catskills formed the daily landscape of Church’s life, and, as hundreds of his early sketches attest, the topography, trees, clouds, and skies provided the subject matter for his instruction as a landscape artist. In fact, the Catskills were the subject for his *Twilight among the Mountains* of c. 1845 (Olana State Historic Site), one of the first two paintings he exhibited publicly at the National Academy of Design in 1845.

In May of that year, Cole took Church across the Hudson to sketch the spectacular view from a high shale bluff called Red Hill (fig. 4). Three miles to the south, the Hudson widens into a lakelike expanse framed by the receding ranges of the Catskills and the Shawangunks beyond. During the 1830s, Cole had sketched this same view at least four times; the thin pencil sketch that Church produced that spring day portended his lifelong association with the landscape of the Hudson River and the Catskills.⁴ After painting landscapes of the Americas, the Middle East, and Europe, Church would return to this spot and “pronounce the views most beautiful and wonderful.”⁵ He eventually chose the ridge of which Red Hill was a part as the site for his Hudson River home, Olana, a landscape and architectural work of art that, beginning in 1860, occupied his creative energies for more than half his life.

Success, Marriage, and Making a First Home

After he left Cole and moved to New York City, Church advertised himself in the newspapers, wrote reviews of his own paintings, traveled in search of picturesque or sublime views, and eventually borrowed the British concept of a “great picture”—a large canvas depicting an important subject. In 1857, Church rose to international prominence with *Niagara* (cat. 30). His next large painting, *Heart of the Andes* of 1859 (cat. 33) brought more than acclaim; he met his future wife, Isabel Mortimer Carnes, during the first public showing of this work in New York City. As friend and artist Worthington Whittredge described the meeting, Church was “standing behind some of the rich draperies he had arranged around his picture” and glimpsed “a ravishing vision, a star illumined with a light never before seen on land or sea!”⁶ Church introduced himself, and on 10 January 1860, the *Boston Evening Transcript* commented, “Church has been successfully occupied with another Heart than that of the Andes.”⁷



Fig. 2. Frederic Edwin Church, *Olana in the Clouds*, 1872, oil on paper, 8¹¹/₁₆ x 12¹/₈ (22.1 x 30.8). From the collections at Olana, this oil sketch shows the Persian-style home and 250-acre ornamental farm of landscape painter Frederic Edwin Church. Splendidly sited on a hillside overlooking the Hudson River and the Catskills near Hudson, New York, the property was saved from dispersal through the efforts of David Huntington, Alexander Aldrich, and the members of Olana Preservation, Inc. The State of New York purchased it intact in 1966 from the estate of Sally Church, the painter's daughter-in-law. Olana State Historic Site is operated by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Taconic Region.

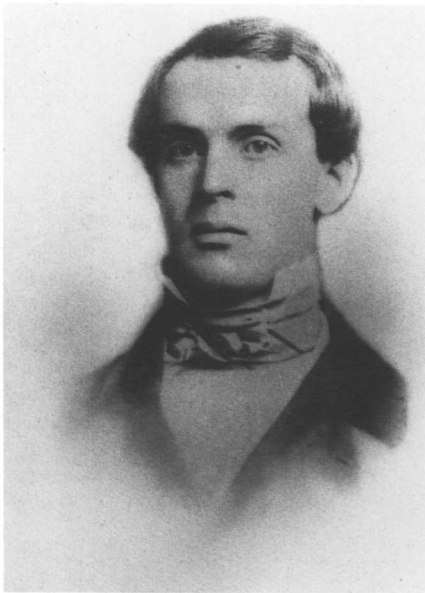


Fig. 3. R. S. De Lamater, *Frederic Edwin Church*, c. 1855, carte-de-visite, 4 x 2³/₈ (10.2 x 6), photograph of a daguerreotype taken in 1844, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Fig. 5. George Baker, *Isabel Carnes Church*, 1860, oil on canvas, 27 x 22¹/₈ (68.6 x 56.2), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Fig. 4. Frederic Edwin Church, *The Hudson Valley from Red Hill*, 1845, graphite on paper, 10¹/₈ x 14³/₈ (25.7 x 36.5), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Born in Paris in 1836, Isabel Carnes (fig. 5) was twenty-three years old and living in Dayton, Ohio, with her parents, who were originally New Englanders.⁸ Years later, a contemporary remembered her as “a lovely flower—the realization of a Poet’s dream. In her Maidenhood after her engagement, when her whole being was enlisted in admiration for the man of her choice, a new beauty developed, richer, deeper than that of the fresh young girl, and she grew more charming than before.”⁹ For the Yankee artist—reared in a stern Congregationalist household, the son of six generations of ministers and merchants—his engagement to Miss Carnes was “great cause . . . for congratulations.”¹⁰ The couple were married in Dayton on 14 June 1860 by Louis LeGrand Noble, Thomas Cole’s minister and biographer and one of Church’s closest friends.

Four months before the wedding, on 31 March 1860, Church took time from painting *Twilight in the Wilderness* (cat. 34) to travel up the Hudson River to purchase 126 acres of fields and woodlands known as the Wynson Breezy farm.¹¹ This property included Red Hill, from which Church and Cole had sketched, but not until 1867 did Church acquire the higher summit on which he built Olana. Although two contemporary accounts state that Church searched the shores of the Hudson for three years before selecting Wynson Breezy’s farm as the site for a home, it seems inevitable that this location, associated with his formative years and with his mentor Cole, drew the artist to return.¹² A reporter visiting the property a few years later wrote:

The artist who, of all our artists, has the quickest eye for beauty has set his seal of choice on this part of the Hudson. Compared with its only rival, the Highlands, it is like maturity compared to youth. The abrupt wildness, the impetuous romance, and the concentrated prodigalities that make the very name of the “Highlands” ravishing to the imagination, are tempered here by lengthened approaches, more leisurely [illegible] heights and broader horizons, and so, if such a term may be allowed to scenery, intellectualized at Kaatskill.¹³

On this “intellectualized” landscape, Church created in three dimensions a personal vision of harmony between man and the American landscape. It was a vision created not by a



showman to delight and instruct the American public, but by a husband making a home for a family. Standing on the escarpment in front of the Catskill Mountain House, the Reverend Theodore Cuyler glimpsed across the Hudson River “a patch of green no larger than a man’s hand, . . . the spot on which the painter Church is gathering materials for his nest.”¹⁴

The farmland that provided Church’s earthy canvas included a swampy spring and fields that extended three-quarters of the way up the slope of the *Sienghenbergh*, or Long Hill, near the summit of which he would eventually build Olana. Church immediately began the construction of a modest board-and-batten rural cottage designed by architect Richard Morris Hunt (1827–96).¹⁵ Frederic and Isabel Church occupied Cosy Cottage, as it came to be called, in May or June of 1861 (fig. 6). The farm was to be a place to rear their children. Herbert Edwin was born on 29 October 1862 and Emma Frances two years later on 22 October 1864. To celebrate their births, Church painted two works: *Sunrise* for the boy and *Moonrise* for the girl.¹⁶ “Herbert enjoys the Farm as much as anybody,” Church wrote to his father in 1864. “We have a coop of 15 chickens by the house and he feeds them out of his hand. . . . I have a pair of pigeons—one of them today marched into the parlor to the great delight of Herbert.”¹⁷

From the beginning, Church hoped that “the farm,” as the family called it, would serve as a retreat from an often-painful artistic celebrity. Painting at first in the cottage or in an outbuilding, Church erected a large wood-frame studio in 1864 at the topmost boundary of his property on Long Hill. He no doubt chose this location because it offered the site’s broadest panoramas, which he depicted on paper and canvas many times between 1861 and the 1890s. “I am appalled when I look at the magnificent scenery which encircles my clumsy studio, and then glance at the painted oil-cloth on my easel,” Church wrote to art critic Henry Tuckerman in 1867 (fig. 7).¹⁸

Church’s method of work required long deliberation, intense concentration, and, usually, rapid execution. He liked to work on a painting in his city and country studios and com-

Fig. 6. Unidentified photographer, *Cosy Cottage*, c. 1890, albumen print, 3¹⁵/₁₆ x 5⁷/₈ (10 x 14.9); Fig. 7. Frederic Edwin Church, *Winter Twilight from Olana*, c. 1871–72, oil on paper, 10¹/₁₆ x 13 (25.6 x 33), both, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Fig. 8. Arthur Parton, *Looking Southwest over Church's Farm from the Sienghenburgh*, 1864, oil on canvas, 19³/₄ x 31¹/₈ (50.2 x 79.1); Fig. 9. Frederic Edwin Church, *Apple Blossoms at Olana*, 1870, oil on canvas, 11⁵/₈ x 18¹/₄ (29.5 x 46.4), both, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

mented that he did not consider a work to be finished until he had seen it in the light of both. During his first four years on the farm, Church painted *Under Niagara*, 1862 (unlocated), *Cotopaxi*, 1862 (cat. 36), *Chimborazo*, 1864 (Virginia Steele Scott Foundation, Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens), and *Aurora Borealis*, 1865 (cat. 39).

Designing the Landscape

An integral part of Church's early creativity at Olana was the transformation of the property from a strictly agricultural landscape into an ornamental farm. In the mid-nineteenth century, landscape gardening was "the laying-out and improvement of grounds."¹⁹ A book in Church's library—*Landscape Gardening: or Parks and Pleasure Grounds*, by the Scottish landscape gardener Charles Smith—outlines the duties of the landscape gardener. Smith recognized the similarity of vision between landscape gardening and landscape painting:

The Landscape-gardener . . . is bound to *create* views. . . . His business is what is technically called *composition*. This circumstance makes his work parallel to what, we believe, is the highest line of landscape-painting, viz: the formation of pictures by combination of the finest objects which the artist has copied into his sketch-book, or can recall by his memory, or can embody by his imagination.²⁰

Church created Olana's landscape as consciously as he created a painting. The river and mountains provided a sublime background; all that was required of Church was the creation of the foreground and middle-ground.²¹ A painting of 1864 by Arthur Parton (1842–1914), looking southwest from near the summit of Long Hill, shows a cornfield studded with a few broken trees (fig. 8). On this site, Church eventually built the main house. He began to develop Olana's landscape at the apogee of his artistic career and at the height of the popularity of the romantic style of landscape gardening in America. In his mind's eye he created the "composition" for Olana's topography and, over thirty years, used his vision to transform the landscape.

As a practical Yankee, Church expected a working farm to produce a profit; as a landscape artist, he expected a part of its bounty to be beauty. To achieve the first aim, he hired a farm manager. Orchards and fields of corn, hay, and rye joined the flower and vegetable gardens. Church purchased livestock and erected buildings to house them. To achieve his second aim,



Fig. 10. Frederic Edwin Church, *Si nghenburgh and the Catskills from Mrs. Van Deusen's Farm*, 1863, graphite on paper, 10³/₈ x 16¹/₈ (27 x 41), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region. The cleared fields and buildings at left center are Church's farm.

Church began planting trees in 1860. Smith advised that “trees are the principal means of ornament available to the garden artist. They are, as it were, the colors with which he paints.”²² Years later, Church recalled that “for several seasons after I selected this spot as my home, I thought of hardly anything but planting trees, and had thousands and thousands of them set out on the southern and northern slopes.”²³

He planted maples, birches, hemlocks, chestnuts, and oaks singly and in clusters throughout the park on Long Hill. At the same time, his workmen excavated the swampy stream at the foot of Long Hill, and by 1873 they had dug a lake with edges that echoed the shape of the Hudson as it widened to form the lakelike expanse that Church came to call “the bend in the river.” Within ten years, Church had achieved his first landscape goals, and *Cosy Cottage* was “embowered by an orchard.”²⁴ He wrote that Isabel “now sits under the apple trees in luxurious contemplation of the beautiful scenes which encircle our little cottage.”²⁵ Church's pencil and oil sketches of *Cosy Cottage*, the apple orchard in bloom (fig. 9), and the views to and from the farm (fig. 10) attest to his delight in depicting the landscape he had created and to his success as both a landscape artist and a landscape gardener.

Misfortune, New Property, and Middle Eastern Travels

While the Churches were in New York City in March 1865, Herbert and Emma died of diphtheria.²⁶ Believing a change of scene would help to assuage their grief, the Churches left in late April or early May for Jamaica. They were accompanied by friends, among them artists Fritz Melbye and Horace Robbins. “Poor Mr & Mrs Church,” Robbins wrote from Jamaica. “She is often very sad and speaks to Sarah about her children.”²⁷ Frederic, Robbins explained, “never likes to speak of his feelings” and handled his grief in a different manner: “He works most unremittingly here—seems never to be willing to allow a moment to be unoccupied, I think it does him good to work hard, it makes him forget for part of the day at least his recent great—affliction. He never alludes to it in any—way—whatever—I suppose it must be a great blow to parents to lose all their children at once.”²⁸

Even in Jamaica, however, Church often thought of the farm. “When I return to the states,” he wrote to farm manager Theodore Cole (the son of Thomas Cole), “I shall hasten

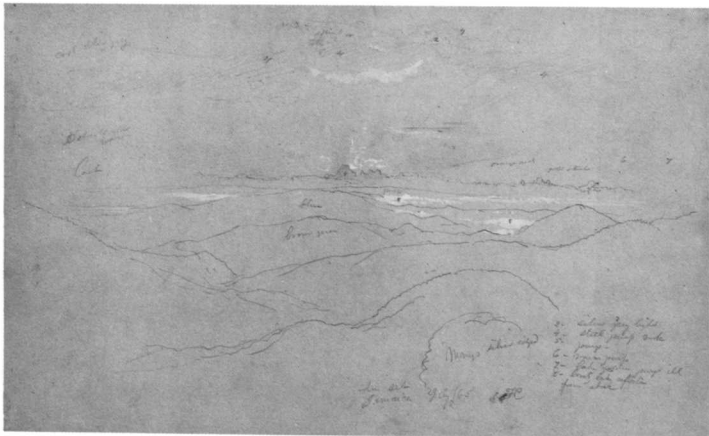


Fig. 11. Frederic Edwin Church, *Sunset, Jamaica*, 1865, graphite and white gouache on paper, $10\frac{3}{4} \times 17\frac{3}{4}$ (27.3 x 45.1), Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Smithsonian Institution

Fig. 12. Frederic Edwin Church, *Sunset, Jamaica*, 1865, oil on paper mounted on canvas, $12\frac{1}{8} \times 18\frac{1}{8}$ (30.8 x 46), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region. An oil sketch that Church painted in his studio using the pencil sketch of figure 11.



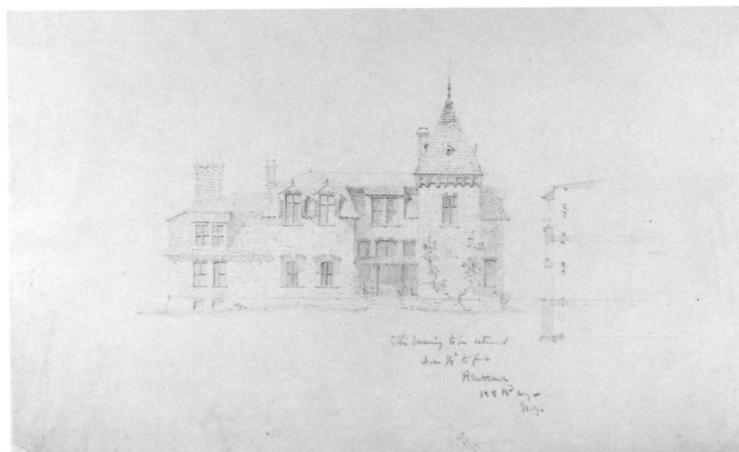
up the river to see you all and great good it will do me too—Notwithstanding this magnificent scenery. I cannot think of the farm and surrounding friends without great longing.”²⁹ The Churches left Jamaica in the fall of 1865 and spent the winter at the farm. On New Year’s Day he wrote, “I am not much interrupted in my studio . . . and am accomplishing more than I ever did in my life before.”³⁰ During this period, Church completed *Rainy Season in the Tropics* of 1866 (cat. 38) and *The After Glow* of 1867 (cat. 43) (figs. 11 and 12). Both paintings resonate with the aftershock of the children’s deaths.³¹ By the spring of 1866, Isabel Church was again pregnant, and Frederic Joseph Church was born on 30 September 1866. Church now had reason to acquire more land and build a suitable home for his family.

In 1860, Church had paid \$80 an acre for Wynson Breezy’s farm. Only seven years later he paid more than twice that sum, \$194 an acre, for the eighteen-acre woodlot that covered the summit of Long Hill. Church’s ambitious landscaping of the property in the 1860s reflected his intention to build a house at the top of the hill above his studio many years before he purchased the land.³² The importance he attached to the acquisition of this property is evident in his letter to sculptor Erastus Dow Palmer: “I have purchased the wood lot on the top of the hill recently at a high price but I don’t regret it. . . . I want to secure . . . every rood of ground that I shall ever require to make my farm perfect.”³³

To design the house for the summit, Church again engaged Richard Morris Hunt, who envisioned a “French manor” (fig. 13). No correspondence between the artist and the architect remains. A pencil and a watercolor sketch for the principal facade and both the original and the revised floor plans do exist, however, and indicate a lengthy process of design and frequent communication between the two men.”³⁴

In November 1867, Frederic and Isabel Church, accompanied by one-year-old Frederic Joseph and by Isabel’s mother, Emma Carnes, departed on a journey to Europe and the Middle East that would last until 1869. In letters to several friends, written in the summer of 1867, Church referred obliquely to his pending trip abroad, which was apparently common

Fig. 13. Richard Morris Hunt, *Residence for F. E. Church*, 1867 or 1869, graphite on paper, $15\frac{5}{8} \times 22\frac{5}{16}$ (39.7 x 58.3), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



knowledge. The reason for his decision to leave off house building and travel abroad may never be known. According to John Davis, Church “spent a great deal of time on research” preparing for the trip.³⁵ In addition to travel literature, his library contained studies that “attempted to relate the biblical narratives with the actual Palestinian topography,” such as Leon de Laborde’s *Journey through Arabia and Petraea* (1838), and Oriental romances including Henry Webber’s edited *Tales of the East* (1812) and Washington Irving’s *The Alhambra* (1859).³⁶ The Churches prepared themselves for a journey that united science and romance.

After short stays in London and Paris, the traveling party went to Marseilles, took a steamer to Alexandria, and then journeyed to Beirut, which Church found “beautifully situated at the foot of a high range of mountains which are now snow clad, and the mountain sides are dotted all over with villages, convents, &c. From the houses on the summit of the hill on which the city is built, the views are charming.”³⁷ Church was immediately attracted to the architecture of the dwellings. “I like the houses,” he wrote artist Martin Johnson Heade. “They are so solid and capacious and are decidedly effective albeit the carpenter work would amuse our people” (fig. 14).³⁸

For the next few months, Isabel, Frederic Joseph, and Mrs. Carnes remained in Beirut while Church traveled to Jerusalem and Petra (fig. 15). The desert landscapes and ancient cities moved him profoundly and were the source for a new series of paintings that would record the continuity of human civilization. In South America, Church had sought confirmation of his vision of the earth as an Eden fresh from the hand of God. When Darwin’s *Origin of Species* challenged this premise in 1859, Church had begun to study human history as it related to divine plan. He hoped this approach might provide a new scientific basis for the presence of God’s work in human history. As John Davis explains, “Travel through the holy topography [of the Middle East] tended to produce a mingling of space and time, and archaeological data could make human experience seem limitless. Consequently, for the first time, Church became interested in the relics of man.”³⁹ When Church wrote William H. Osborn of his plans for a house and said, “When you build, build of stone,” he was not thinking merely of architectural soundness but of divine timelessness and human continuity. As Davis goes on to say, “Through these stone ruins the entire history of the human race took on [for Church] a kind of simultaneous existence.”⁴⁰

The Middle Eastern journey gave Church a changed intellectual sensibility that radically affected his image of what a house should be. “The Dwellings [of Beirut] are often quite

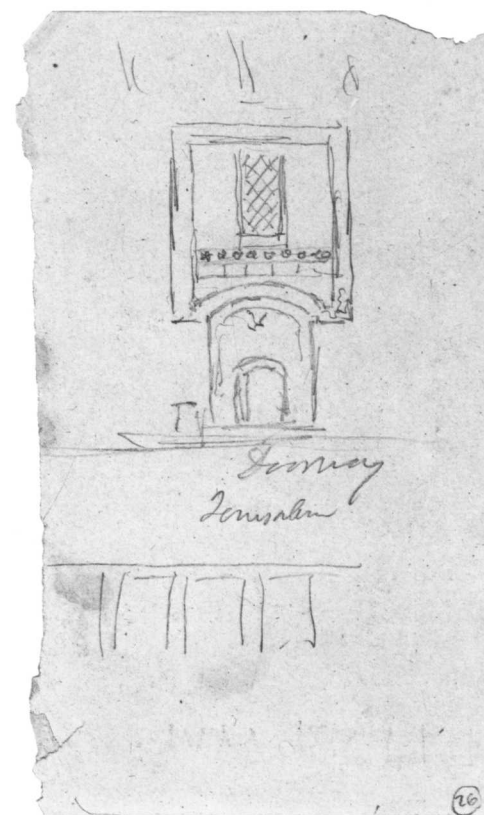


Fig. 14. Frederic Edwin Church, *Doorway, Jerusalem*, 1868, graphite on paper, $4\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$ (12.4 x 7.3), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Fig. 16. Calvert Vaux, *Study for a House for F. E. Church, Esq., at Hudson, N. Y.*, 1870, graphite on paper, $10\frac{1}{4} \times 13\frac{3}{4}$ (26 x 34.9), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Figs. 17 and 18. Frederic Edwin Church, *Design for Balustrade for the Main Staircase at Olana* [recto] and *Sunset at Olana* mingled with architectural details [verso], September 1873, graphite and ink on paper, 10³/₈ x 11⁷/₈ (26.4 x 30.2), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region. Church interrupted his balustrade design to sketch a sunset. Almost two years earlier, on 24 October 1870, Church had written Martin Johnson Heade, “I have actually been drawn away from my usual steady devotion to the new house to sketch some of the fine things hung in the sky” (Archives of American Art).

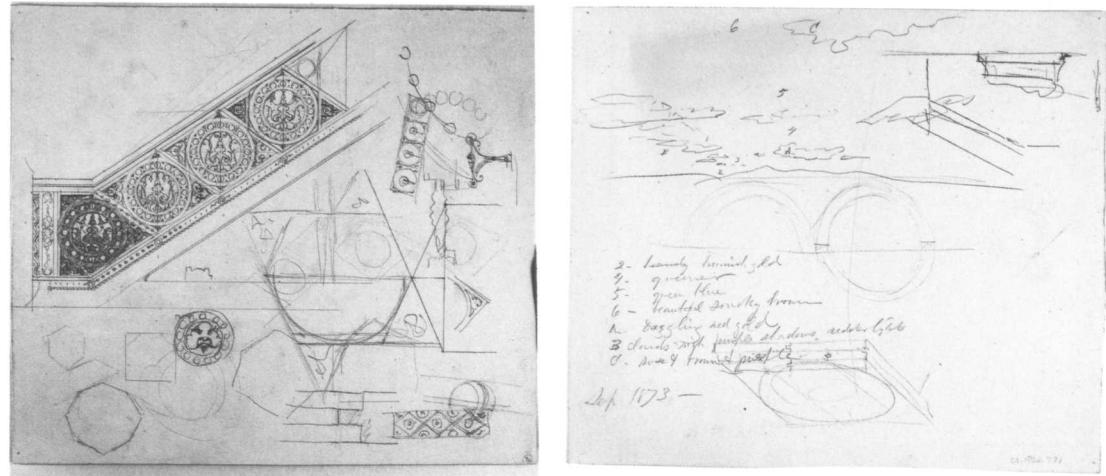
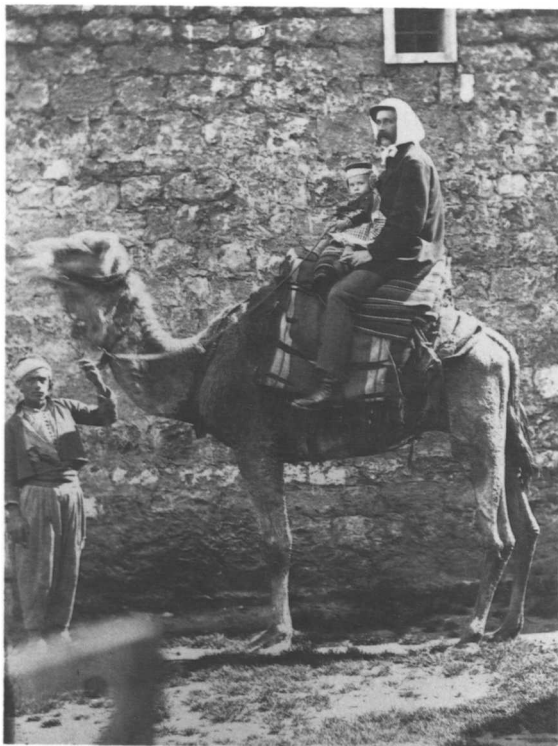


Fig. 15. Felix Bonfils [attributed], *Frederic Edwin Church and His Son, Frederic Joseph, in Beirut*, 1868, carte de visite, 4⁷/₈ x 3³/₈ (12.4 x 8.6), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



grand,” he wrote Palmer. “They have a large room called the court in the center often 30 x 50 feet or larger—and perhaps 30 feet high and smaller rooms on each side. . . . I have got new and excellent ideas about house building since I came abroad.”⁴¹ In addition to the central courtyard, he decided that his house should have thick, fortresslike walls and that the interior should reflect the ornamental intricacy that he and Isabel saw in many Moorish homes. In sum, the house would be “Persian, adapted to the Occident.”⁴² As a seventh-generation New Englander, Church would build a “permanent” home where the next several generations of his family would dwell.

Years later, Church’s former pupil Lockwood de Forest (1850–1932) reminisced that Church “had decided that he could learn more from Oriental architecture [about] how to plan a house than from any other [architecture] as he had been deeply impressed with it when he spent the winter of 1868 in Beyrout and Damascus.”⁴³ A letter that the couple’s daughter wrote to Church’s biographer affirms Isabel’s role in the design of the house: “Could my little Mother’s . . . influence on his building this house too be brought in? . . . I have not mentioned this to Papa—but he has often spoken of how her taste in the house is shown from top to bottom—and her advise was asked about it all.”⁴⁴

The Churches spent the winter of 1868–69 in Rome, where another son, Theodore Winthrop, was born on 22 February 1869. Church’s letters and actions reflect his continued longing for “our home on the Hudson” and his growing preoccupation with the new house: “Sometimes the desire to build attacks a man like a fever—and at it he rushes.”⁴⁵ Church revealed his enthusiasm for building in successive letters to Osborn, who was then building houses on his farm at Garrison, New York, and on Park Avenue. “Don’t settle any plans about building a house until I return,” Church wrote him. “I am conceited enough to wish to thrust my finger into that pie and offer my opinions on domestic architecture.”⁴⁶ Church then went on to criticize Osborn’s current architect, thus indicating his opinion of the architect’s role in house building: “I don’t think him good at contriving nor good at effect—both pretty important considerations in architecture. . . . A Clever *young* architect who has been trained in a good school will be the best man to give shape to the emanations from our three heads and we will place first Mrs. Osborn’s head. A young architect is more painstaking and more tractable than an old and popular one.”⁴⁷

The Church family returned to New York City on 28 June 1869, and Church journeyed to

the farm ahead of Isabel to prepare the cottage for her and the babies. Church wrote Palmer of his determination to build a new dwelling: “I long for a new house . . . I expect to build next season.”⁴⁸ He may have turned again to Richard Morris Hunt for new house plans, since two elevation drawings and a plan for the chamber floor exist, all drawn by Hunt in the Moorish style.⁴⁹

Changing Architects and Designing a House

Sometime between June 1869 and May 1870, Church changed architects. Perhaps Hunt’s designs did not match the “emanations” from Church’s head. To replace him, Church chose Calvert Vaux (1824–95), whom he had known since at least the middle 1850s. Born in England, Vaux worked for Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–52) and married Mary Swan McEntee, the sister of Church’s former pupil and friend Jervis McEntee (1828–91). Like Church and Hunt, Vaux was a member of the Century Club.⁵⁰ In his book, *Villas and Cottages*, Vaux wrote that “in all times of great art, there has always been a close connection between Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting. . . . Architecture derives its greatest glory from such association.”⁵¹ Vaux agreed with Church’s passion for natural beauty, and his theory of architecture suited Church’s aesthetics—his standard of “contriving and effects,” about which Church had written Osborn. “As [architecture] seeks to please the eye,” Vaux wrote, “its forms and colors should be carefully designed in accordance with the laws of the eye, or it will be a failure.”⁵² His book also shows that he was familiar with Middle Eastern styles, whose “magical effects” he praised.⁵³ Most important, Vaux was accustomed to creating and often modifying his designs on the basis of clients’ suggestions.⁵⁴

In his letters for the next two years, Church often discussed his house plans. He was in frequent communication with Vaux, probably receiving drawings from him during the winter of 1869–70. Church also began house sketches of his own. On 13 May 1870, he wrote Palmer, “I want to show you my plans and have your critical judgement.”⁵⁵ An elevation Vaux prepared for the house is dated 28 May 1870 (fig. 16); other contemporaneous drawings that he provided include a staircase elevation and original and revised floor plans. The latter, no doubt drawn to Church’s directions, must have met his requirements well, for they were amended only to include a more generous service wing. One element of Vaux’s floor plan—the recessed verandah, or ombra, with the court hall behind—is similar to Hunt’s original floor plan and therefore can be attributed to Church. In both floor plans, the ombra and court hall were oriented to “the bend in the river.”

In Church’s revision of Vaux’s elevations, the building’s overall height, the configuration of the towers, and the decorative details are by Church (figs. 17–19); only Vaux’s massing remains. Years later, in an undated handwritten record of his most important commissions, Vaux wrote that he “was consulting architect/for Mr. F. E. Church/the artist/House Hudson Hudson River.”⁵⁶ Clearly, Church initiated the design, though he would not have hired Vaux if the artist had intended to be the sole architect. Church’s sketches and correspondence show his control of the details and of the whole. Vaux had the contractual responsibility to provide a sound structural foundation and frame. More than three hundred drawings record Church’s pursuit of the “perfect” house. Church designed the building in the same way he created a work of art (figs. 17 and 18). He began with preliminary pencil sketches, which he followed with color drawings that then guided house construction (figs. 19–22).

Church’s correspondence suggests that the relationship between the two men was not

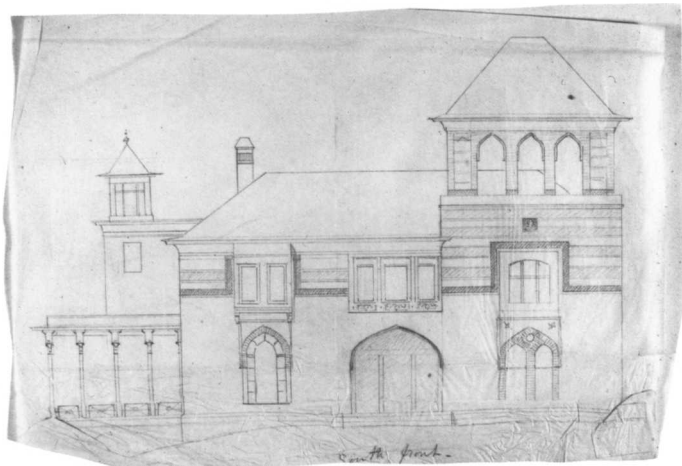
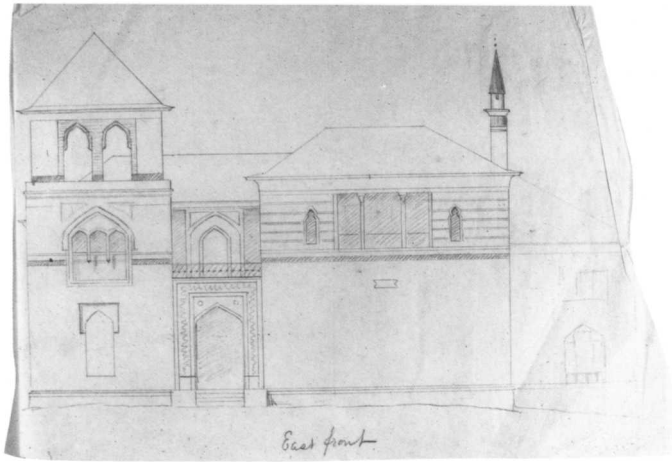


Fig. 19. Frederic Edwin Church, *East Façade, Olana*, c. 1870, medium and dimensions unknown, from a photograph at Olana (upper left). Figures 19–22 illustrate the final stage in the design of the major façades.

Fig. 20. Frederic Edwin Church, *East Façade, Olana*, c. 1870, watercolor, ink, and graphite on paper, $14\frac{1}{16} \times 21\frac{7}{8}$ (37.3 x 55.6) (upper right)

Fig. 21. Frederic Edwin Church, *Southwest Façade, Olana*, c. 1870, medium and dimensions unknown, from a photograph at Olana (lower left)

Fig. 22. Frederic Edwin Church, *Southwest Façade, Olana*, c. 1870, watercolor, ink, and graphite on paper, $13 \times 21\frac{13}{16}$ (33 x 55.7) (lower right). Figs. 19–22: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

without difficulty. “I have been much delayed by being separated from my Architect although he has been up several times to see me,” he wrote Palmer in July 1870.⁵⁷ While there is no direct evidence of conflict, Vaux’s aesthetic views, if ever different from Church’s, must have given way to the views of the artist and owner. On the other hand, Church’s vision of the house had to stand on Vaux’s technical competence. Because Vaux was not regularly on the building site, one can imagine Church encountered frequent construction difficulties, as Church suggested in a letter to artist John Ferguson Weir (1841–1926):

I hope to be in New York in a week or so—but a Feudal Castle which I am building—under the modest name of a dwelling house—absorbs all my time and attention. I am obliged to watch it so closely—for having undertaken to get my architecture from Persia where I have never been—nor any of my friends either—I am obliged to imagine

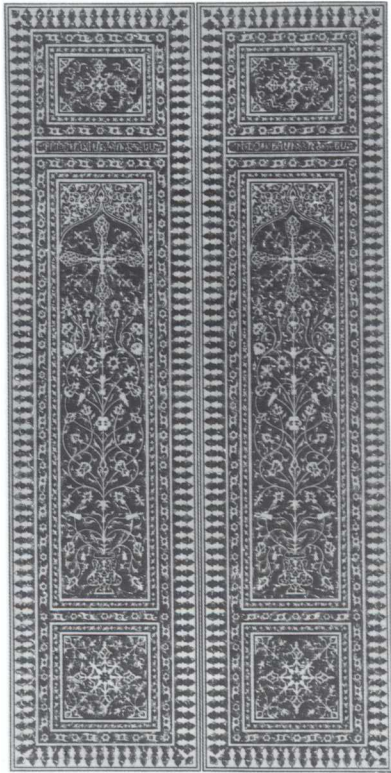


Fig. 23. Jules Bourgoïn, “Porte de L’Eglise de St. Jacques des Armeniens, à Jerusalem, Plate 27,” *Les Arts Arabes*, 1868, ink on paper, 17½ x 12¾ (44.5 x 31.4), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Fig. 24. *East Parlor, Olana*, 1982, Friends of Olana, Inc. The stenciled door on the right illustrates Church’s adaptation of the design in figure 23.

Persian architecture—then embody it on paper and explain it to a lot of mechanics whose ideal of architecture is wrapped up in felicitous recollections of a successful brick school house or meeting house or jail. Still—I enjoy this being afloat on a vast ocean paddling along in the dreamy belief that I shall reach the desired port in due time.⁵⁸

As in Church’s paintings, the artist’s creative imagination was the source for many of the decorative elements in the house. At the same time, however, the ornamental motifs at Olana were grounded in his recollections of Middle Eastern residences and adapted from books on Persian architecture that he purchased for his library. His use of Middle Eastern pattern books illustrates the spontaneous evolution of Olana’s design. Two books on Persian architecture provided an important basis for various house designs. In Pascal Coste’s *Monuments Modernes de la Perse* (1867), Church found designs for the piazza columns, the water tower, and the stencils for the court hall arches and their spandrels. Jules Bourgoïn’s *Les Arts Arabes* (1868) inspired the east window and its decorative wood screen and the stencil design on the interior doors (figs. 23 and 24).⁵⁹

Church’s diligent labors on the house and his thorough study of Persian architecture are confirmed by Lockwood de Forest, who later reminisced that from 1870 on “I was a great deal with Mr. Church for nearly 10 years. I staid [sic] with him painting in his studio and going over his plans for the house he was building, and studying all the books on Persian, and Oriental Architecture in the evenings.”⁶⁰

By November 1870, Church saw his “way through clearly so far as the design and construction of the building is concerned.”⁶¹ The imaginative use of memories and pattern books allowed Church to “contrive effects” that pleased the eye in architecture. He prepared hundreds of architectural sketches. Many sheets contain twenty-five or more separate drawings of such architectural elements as finials, moulding profiles, staircase balustrades, brick and stone

Fig. 26. Frederic Edwin Church, *Four Sketches for Attic Window and Cornice, Bay, Southwest Façade, Olana*, c. 1870–72, graphite on paper, 10¹/₈ x 7¹/₂ (25.7 x 19.1)

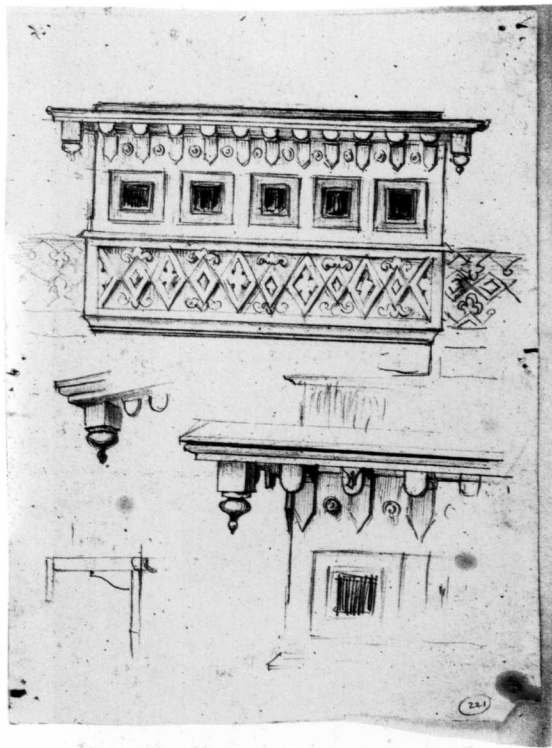


Fig. 27. Frederic Edwin Church, *Detail of Attic Window and Cornice, Bay, Southwest Façade, Olana*, c. 1870–72, oil and graphite on paper, 6¹/₂ x 9¹/₄ (16.5 x 23.5)

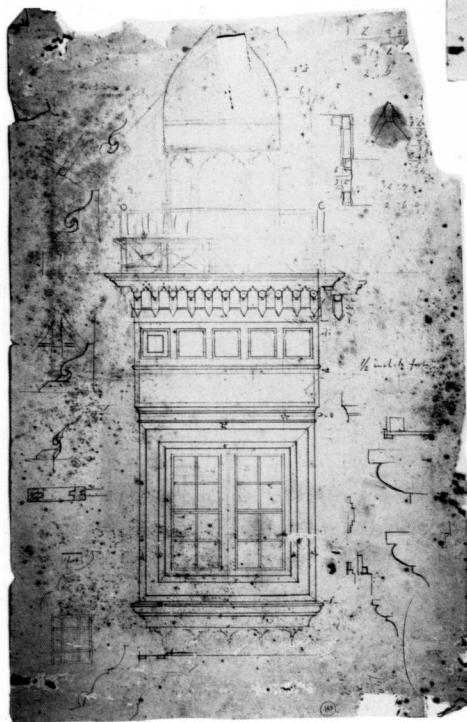


Fig. 25. Frederic Edwin Church, *Sketch of Bay and Tower, Southwest Façade, and Moulding Profiles, Olana*, c. 1870–72, graphite on paper, 10¹/₈ x 7¹/₂ (25.7 x 19.1), Figures 25–29 illustrate several stages of the evolution of Church’s design for the bay and cornice on Olana’s southwest façade. This sequence shows how Church created a work of art. All are from the collections of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana Historic Site, Taconic Region

patterns, and geometric floral designs for the stencils that would cover the interior walls and the exterior cornices. Most of these elements were never used in the final design; instead, they record Church’s visual experimentation with his pencil (figs. 25–29).

With the births of two more children—Louis Palmer in April 1870 and the couple’s only daughter Isabel Charlotte in July of the next year—Church no doubt felt that he had made a wise decision to build a larger house. During the summer of 1871, the stone walls of the house rose to their full height but were not yet roofed. Church showed the unfinished structure to a visiting journalist, who wrote that “the moustache of our guidebook [i.e., Church] became more and more animated, and fairly kindled in describing the liberal ground proportions of a mansion whose principal ‘up stairs’ the height itself has furnished.”⁶²

The Exterior and Floor Plan

After Church completed construction of the house in late 1872, the family moved into the second story, and he began the decoration of the first-floor rooms. In November 1872, the artist’s cousin Henry Mack visited the house and thought it “a unique structure” (fig. 30).⁶³ He saw a massive, cubelike, two-story structure with two towers projecting above the roofs. The thick stone walls of the first story were “of a dark brown color”; the shale from which they were built had been quarried from the house site. The second-story façades were more complex, with red, yellow, and black bricks forming geometric mosaic patterns in the shale. Painted in geometric floral designs, the cornices of the second story were “decorated in beautiful colors,” reminding one of an Islamic garden.

The exterior massing reflected the interior divisions. Double-height entries pierced the centers of the east and the south façades. A double-height stairway window was centered on the north façade. Out of sight because of the sheer drop of the ridge, the west façade was

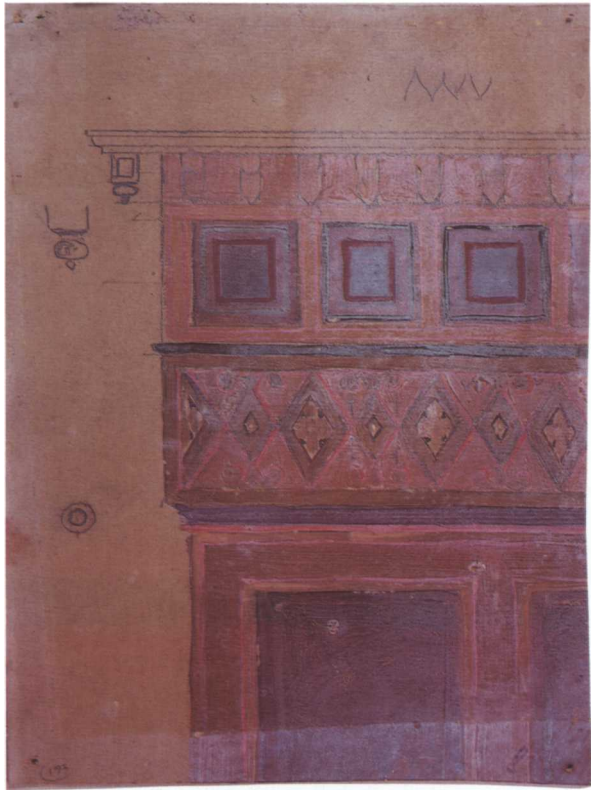


Fig. 28. Frederic Edwin Church, *Bay and Cornice, Southwest Façade, Olana*, c. 1870–72, oil and graphite on paper, 9³/₈ x 7 (23.9 x 17.8) (at left)

Fig. 29. *Bay, Southwest Façade, Olana*, 1988 (above)

unelaborated except for a polychromed piazza, which allowed the family an uninterrupted view of the Catskill sunsets. On the east, south, and north façades, the centered doors and windows were given additional emphasis through second-story recesses, projections, changed rooflines, or elaboration with decorative tiles.

Simple and balanced, the floor plan of the first story is a Greek cross with rooms filling the spaces between its arms (fig. 31). The court hall is the cross itself, around which are the major spaces of the house—east parlor, sitting room, kitchen, and dining room/picture gallery. The four arms of the court hall end in four smaller spaces that serve as vestibule, ombra, library, and stairhall. As the court hall organizes the house spatially, it also organizes the house visually. The court hall's centered doors and windows frame the vistas beyond (fig. 32). Originally, Church planned the court hall to be a double-height room, illuminated by a skylight and visually anticipated by the centered double heights of the front door, ombra window, library doors, and stairhall window. The family needed additional room upstairs, however, so this higher space, although framed in by the carpenters, was floored over.⁶⁴

Stenciling the Interior

In June 1873, Jervis McEntee noted in his diary that the family continued to live in the second story as the carpenters were “at work down below.”⁶⁵ Completion of the woodwork and painted decoration of the first floor required four years.⁶⁶ The simple floor plan is overlaid and enriched by the elaborate painted and stenciled decorations, which have a subtle but cohesive organization. Although the initial impression is a random profusion of color overwhelming the eye, Church in fact left no aspect of the decoration to chance. Mixing pigments on his palette, he prepared color swatches for the walls and ceilings of each room. In the wet paint, using the butt of his brush, he inscribed the name of the room and the pigments employed to



Fig. 30. *Southwest Façade, Olana*, c. 1970, Neefus Photography, Hudson, N.Y.

Fig. 32. *View from the Court Hall, through the Ombra, to the Hudson River and Catskill Mountains Beyond*, 1982, Friends of Olana, Inc. Church called this view “the bend in the river.”



Fig. 33. Frederic Edwin Church, *Color Swatch for Principal Rooms of the First Story, Olana*, c. 1872–74, oil and graphite on paper, 13⁷/₈ x 10⁷/₈ (35.2 x 27.6), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

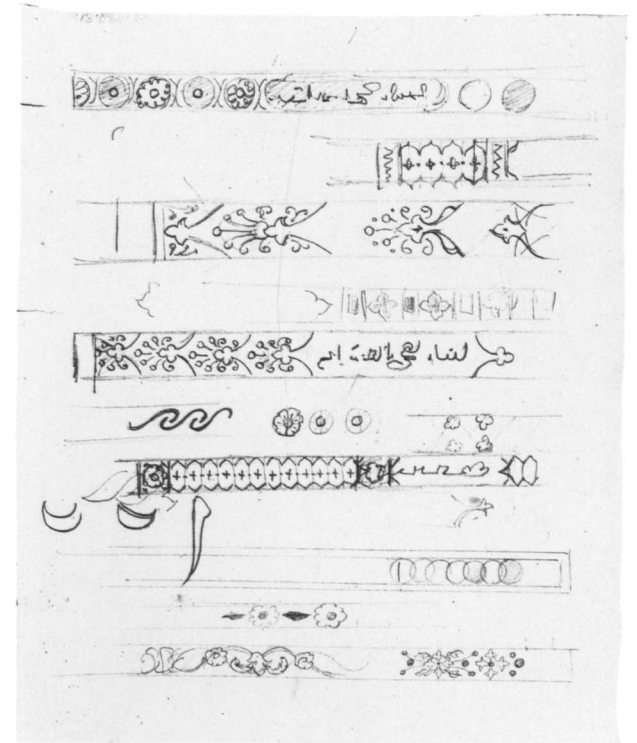


Fig. 34. Frederic Edwin Church, *Sketches for Stencil Borders, Olana*, c. 1872–74, graphite on paper, 8¹/₈ x 6⁷/₈ (22 x 17.5)

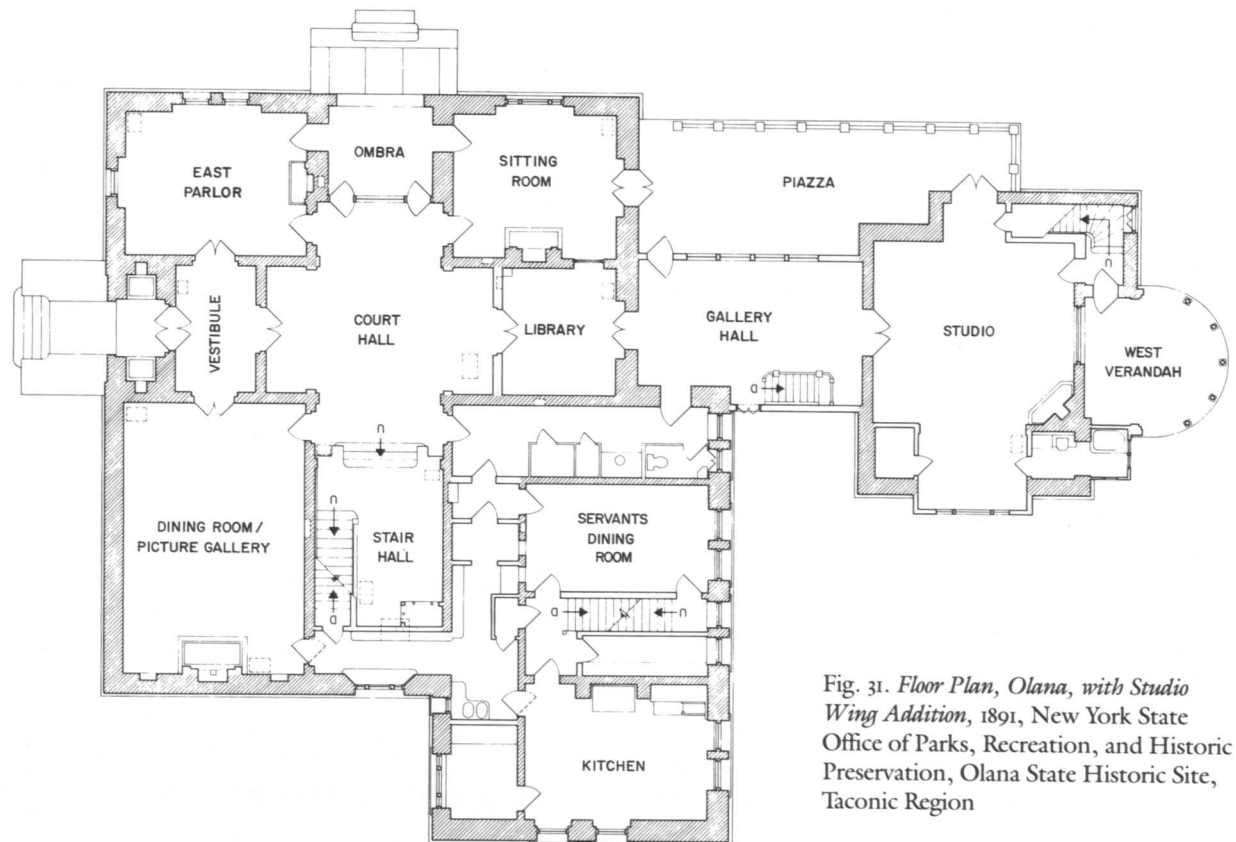


Fig. 31. *Floor Plan, Olana, with Studio Wing Addition, 1891*, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

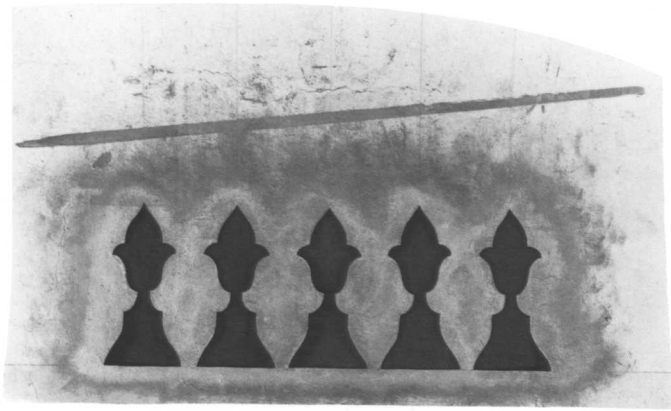


Fig. 35. Frederic Edwin Church, *Stencil Cut Out for Border, Double-leaf Doors, Olana*, c. 1873, bronze powder on paper, 10¹¹/₁₆ x 6¹/₂ (27.2 x 16.5)

Fig. 36. Frederic Edwin Church, *Stencil Cut Out for Central Floral Motif, Double-leaf Doors, Olana*, 1873 or 1890, aluminum powder on paper, 9⁷/₈ x 6¹/₂ (25.1 x 16.5)



Fig. 37. Frederic Edwin Church, *Sketch for Stencil Border, Court Hall, Olana*, 1870–74, graphite on paper, 19¹/₄ x 9³/₄ (48.9 x 24.8) (at left)

Fig. 38. Frederic Edwin Church, *Stenciled and Painted Mock-up, Court Hall Borders, Olana*, 1872–74, oil on paper, 23³/₄ x 5³/₄ (60.3 x 14.6) (at right). Figs. 34–38: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region.

obtain the color. On one swatch, he set out the final colors for every room, perhaps for Isabel and himself to evaluate (fig. 33).

Church designed the stencils in the same manner as he did the house, making a profusion of pencil sketches (fig. 34), then color renderings of those he and Isabel preferred, then stencils for execution in place by his workmen. The interior stencils are not the all-over wall patterns so often seen in the work of Associated Artists and Viollet-le-Duc. Rather, the patterns are used as borders that delineate doorways, window frames, baseboards and, occasionally, a frieze. Church used bronze and aluminum powders (the latter were more expensive than silver leaf in the nineteenth century), both for applying the elaborate stencils on the doors and for outlining and emphasizing the wall stencils (figs. 35 and 36).⁶⁷ Most important, the metallic quality of these stencils added reflective light.

The key to understanding the colors and stencils is found in the court hall, which forms the spatial, visual, and artistic center of the house. Grace King, a guest at Olana in the 1880s, found “the great pillars [of the court hall] a mass of color,” but closer examination reveals an intricate interrelationship of hues and tones.⁶⁸ The colors of the court hall’s walls and stencils are yellow, purple, red, coral, salmon, gold-brown, and green (figs. 37 and 38). In various combinations, these colors radiate to the adjoining rooms and even to the exterior. The salmon color found at the edge of the broad Islamic arches in the court hall, for example, reappears in the sitting room—in the window and door embrasures, in the marble fireplace front, and in *El Khasné, Petra* (cat. 46), Church’s painting of 1874 that is the visual focus of the room, which was completed in 1875. In fact, the colors in *El Khasné* are all repeated in the room, which becomes a shadow box for the painting. The salmon color reappears on the exterior cornices and on the column capitals of the piazza. Another example of color interrelationship is in the coral edge of a flower petal on the walls of the court hall. That color reappears



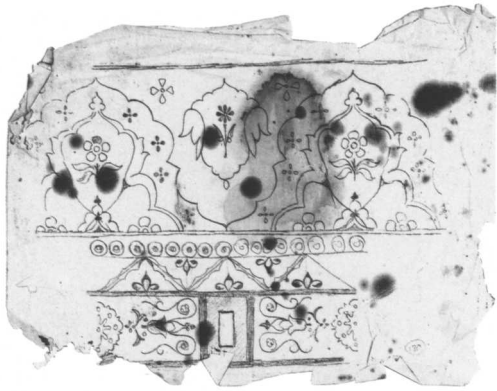


Fig. 39. Frederic Edwin Church, *Sketch for Stenciled Decoration, Dining Room Cornice, Olana, 1870–72*, graphite on paper, 7 x 9¹/₈ (17.8 x 23.2). Figures 39–42 illustrate the progression in Church’s design for the exterior cornice for Olana’s dining room. He used a similar process for designing the stencils for Olana’s other four cornices.

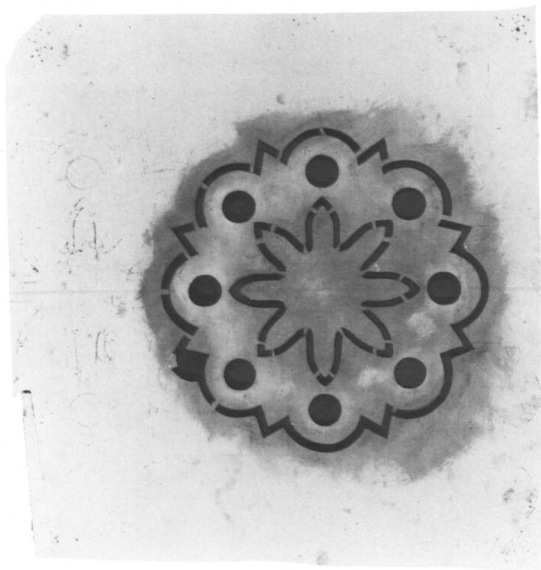


Fig. 42. Frederic Edwin Church, *Stencil Cut Out for Ornament, Dining Room Cornice, Olana, 1872*, oil and graphite on paper, 14⁵/₈ x 15³/₈ (37.2 x 39.2). Figs. 39–42: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Fig. 40. Frederic Edwin Church, *Sketch for Stencil Decorations, Dining Room Cornice, Olana, 1870–72*, watercolor and graphite on paper, 9¹/₈ x 12 (23.2 x 30.5)



Fig. 41. Frederic Edwin Church, *Sketch for Stenciled Decoration, Dining Room Cornice, Olana, 1870–72*, oil and graphite on paper, 6⁵/₈ x 17⁷/₈ (16.8 x 45.4)

in another petal in the vestibule and in the arched vault of the entrance recess. Like the salmon, this color is also found on the cornices and on the piazza capitals (figs. 39–42).

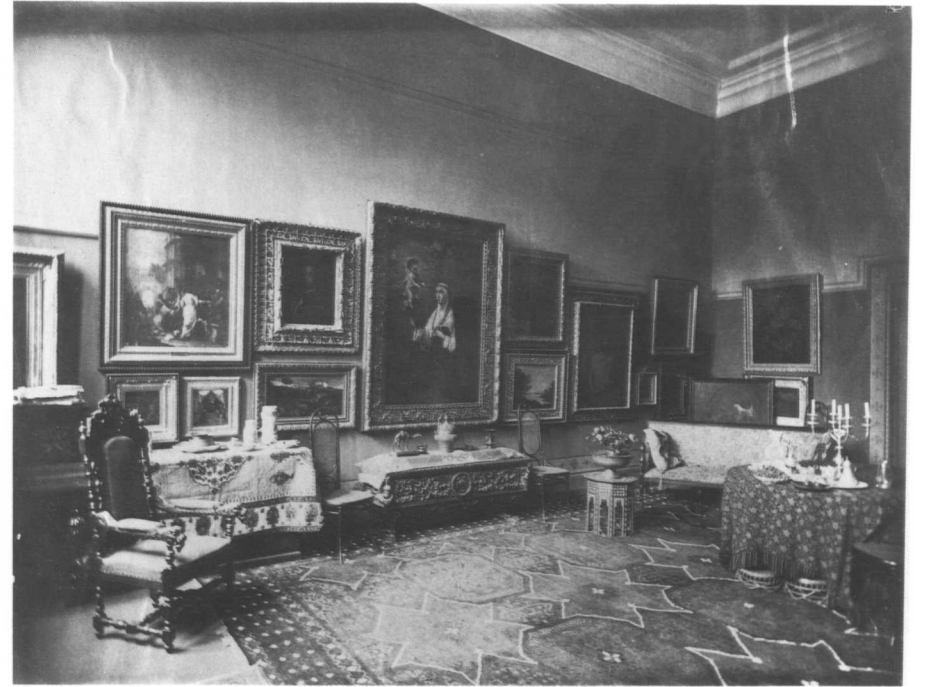
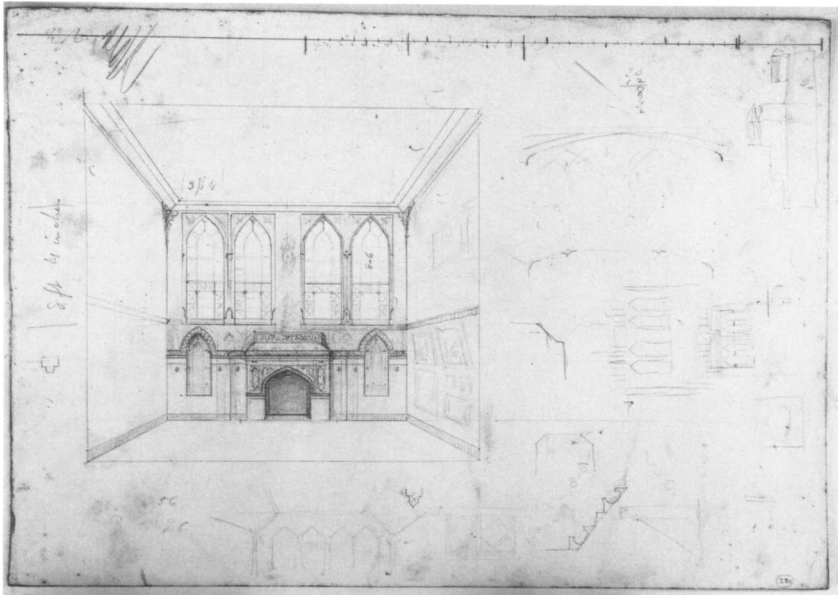
In Damascus, the Churches had visited a house that may have provided one model for the polychromed and metallic stencils used at Olana. In her diary, Isabel wrote:

Walls & ceiling [were] highly and gorgeously decorated, and mirrors everywhere, amid the decorations, little bits of mirrors—doors & all the woodwork—inlaid with ivory & mother of pearl—At night by candle light, the effect must be quite splendid—One is reminded of Arabian nights tales.⁶⁹

Certainly, Olana’s effect on some visitors was a sense of Middle Eastern fantasy. As one visiting journalist concluded in 1889, “One feels as if transported into the Orient when surrounded by so much Eastern magnificence.”⁷⁰

Furnishing the House

Church brought back from abroad not simply the idea for a Moorish house. The trip inspired in him the desire and confidence to create the house and its interior himself. Ten years earlier,



Richard Morris Hunt had drawn the plans for *Cosy Cottage*, and factories and relatives had provided the furnishings readymade.⁷¹ Now Church himself was the designer and decorator (figs. 43 and 44).⁷²

In furnishing *Olana*, one of Church's first aims was to create a repository for the objects of civilization. "The whole house," wrote a journalist, "is a museum of fine arts, rich in bronzes, paintings, sculptures, and antique and artistic specimens from all over the world."⁷³ The rooms were filled with exotic objects: Painted Kashmiri tables and chairs, Shaker rockers, rococo revival furniture inherited from his father, and furniture built to Church's own designs were intermingled with Persian and Syrian metalware, Mexican religious statuary, mounted South American birds and butterflies, marble and bronze statuary by Erastus Dow Palmer, and Turkish rugs. Church conceived this collection and began to acquire it while he was in the Middle East. In Damascus, the Churches called on the notorious Lady Jane Digby El Mezrab, an Englishwoman married to a Moslem sheik.⁷⁴ They found her parlor "furnished semi oriental, semi European—forming a very agreeable and pretty combination."⁷⁵ Before leaving the Middle East, they purchased "rugs—armour—stuffs—curiosities . . . old clothes (Turkish) stones from a house in Damascus, Arab spears—beads from Jerusalem—stones from Petra and 10,000 other things."⁷⁶ These objects were packed in fifteen crates and shipped back to the United States.⁷⁷

Most of the objects that comprise *Olana's* exotic diversity have little intrinsic value. Rather, Church selected objects in part for their visual and associative effects. Like the Middle Eastern architecture that inspired the design of the house, the artifacts that furnish *Olana* have an iconographic significance; they were physical and symbolic expressions of ancient cultures and religions (figs. 45 and 46). A gilded Buddha, a polychromed madonna, ancient armor, fragments of the Parthenon, striated stones from Petra, and pre-Columbian artifacts all represented for Church the survival and distillation of civilization brought to a new Eden—his farm in the Hudson Valley.⁷⁸

Fig. 43. Frederic Edwin Church, *Perspective Sketch of Dining Room/Picture Gallery, Olana*, 1870–74, graphite on paper, 11⁷/₈ x 17 (30.2 x 43.2), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region (at left). Note the paintings on the side wall and the armorial trophy over the fireplace. Eventually, Church placed this trophy at the stair landing.

Fig. 44. Robert and Emily de Forest, *Dining Room Picture Gallery, Olana*, 11 October 1884, albumen print, 6⁷/₁₆ x 8³/₁₆ (16.4 x 20.8), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region (at right)



Fig. 45. Robert and Emily de Forest, *Court Hall, Olana*, 11 October 1884, albumen print, 6¼ x 8⅜ (15.9 x 21.3), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region (at left)



Fig. 46. Unknown Photographer, *Stair Hall, Olana*, c. 1891, albumen print, 6⅛ x 8⅞ (15.6 x 21.4), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region (at right)

But for what purpose? Church wished to create a home for his family. Nineteenth-century mores dictated that parents provide a home in which children could be reared to be the best possible human beings. At Olana, Frederic and Isabel Church could nurture a “new Adam,” but with the advantage of all past civilizations as mentor.⁷⁹ After trying several other possibilities, the Churches had chosen the name Olana by 1880. Gerald Carr’s research shows that it is a variation on *Olane*, a fortress–treasure house in ancient Persia. The Churches had never recovered from the loss of their children in 1865, and the house was a fortress built to protect the fragile new family. As Carr concludes, Olana’s treasure was not merely the objects, but the children.⁸⁰

Church made this intention clear in 1875, four years before the house was named, when he hung his painting of *El Khasné, Petra* (cat. 46) in the sitting room, the principal gathering place for the family (fig. 47). The painting depicted an ancient treasury house carved from stone. For Church, this place was so rich with associations of civilization that upon first seeing it he recorded in his diary that the temple appeared illuminated “as if by its own internal light.”⁸¹ *El Khasné* was the civilized equivalent of the spiritual peace and hope he had found in the wild nature depicted in *Twilight in the Wilderness* (cat. 34), the painting he interrupted in 1860 to travel up river on the eve of his marriage to purchase the farm. The home that Church created at Olana needed the corrective of past civilizations.

In a letter of 1877 written to his close friend Amelia Edwards (1831–92), Church succinctly described his home. He emphasized the harmony of interior and exterior elements and the visual relationship of the house to the larger landscape. Most significantly, he declared himself the architect:

I designed the house myself. It is Persian in style adapted to the climate and the requirements of modern life. The interior decorations and fittings are all in harmony with the external architecture.

It stands at an elevation of 600 feet above the Hudson River and commands beautiful views of sky, mountains, rolling and savannah country, villages, forest and clearings. The noble River expands to a width of over two miles forming a lake like sheet of water which is always dotted with steamers and other craft.⁸²



Fig. 47. *Sitting Room*, Olana, 1982, Friends of Olana, Inc.

Additions to the House

In 1869, Church experienced recurrent pain that was the beginning of a crippling rheumatism, possibly caused by the materials of his art.⁸³ At the same time, the public's taste for Church and the works of the Hudson River School waned as the work of the Barbizon painters grew in popularity. Church painted less and, according to Isabel, was often despondent.⁸⁴ An important solace was his continuing work on the house and grounds. As he wrote to Heade in 1885, "I have been and am tied down at home—I undertake to make thorough repairs of my House—nothing of importance in that way having been done since it was built 13 years ago."⁸⁵ For the next six years, beginning in 1885, his improvements created the appearance of the house we know today. Among these embellishments were parquet flooring in several rooms, carved Indian fireplace fronts ordered from Lockwood de Forest, and stencils for the pillared screen on the stair landing.

Church's sister Elizabeth, the only surviving member of his immediate family, died in 1886. He inherited the Hartford family house and a large number of his own works that his parents had proudly collected. Among these paintings were *Christian on the Borders of the "Valley of the Shadow of Death,"* *Pilgrim's Progress*, 1847 (Olana State Historic Site), *Autumn*, 1856, and *The After Glow* (cat. 43). These paintings greatly changed both the appearance and atmosphere of Olana's interior, bringing Church's public art into his private home. Other than *El Khasné*, *Petra*, the rooms had previously been hung with paintings and copies of the Old Masters.⁸⁶ The presence of his own paintings, as well as the acquisition of two works by Cole—*A Solitary Lake in New Hampshire*, 1830, and *View of the Protestant Burying Ground, Rome*, c. 1834—continually reminded him of his teacher and the career that had brought him to this place that was "the Center of the World."⁸⁷



Fig. 48. *Studio*, Olana, 1982, Friends of Olana, Inc.

In 1888, Church’s renewed interest in the house culminated in the construction of a studio wing that also included gallery, observatory, bedroom, and storage. In June, Church wrote to artist Charles deWolf Brownell: “I am indeed busy night and day with my plans and as I am architect and make the drawings you can readily believe that I have little spare time. . . . I wonder if I shall work as hard in the new Studio as I do in erecting it.”⁸⁸ Because of his degenerative rheumatism, Church’s design procedure changed somewhat. He made fewer drawings and thus had “to explain every little detail. It is not a little difficult I find to keep the work going economically when none of the men really know what is coming next.”⁸⁹ In 1889, Church closed the New York City studio he had rented for thirty years and shipped its contents to Olana.⁹⁰

The studio wing required three years to build and cost \$30,000. For Church, who recollected with such happiness the building of the original house, the studio wing’s design and construction were an end in themselves and energized him to paint. Although Church worked in the new studio during the late summer of 1890, not until April 1891 did he describe the space as being in full use. As he wrote Palmer, “I inaugurated the New Studio—it is perfect. Filled with enthusiasm I attacked my first canvas and an Iceberg scene is the result, the best I think I ever painted and the truest.”⁹¹ The studio addition at Olana is primarily an interior space, indicating that Church envisioned the design from the inside out. He extended the east-west axis of the ground floor to culminate in the view of the Catskills framed by a gilded Moorish window glass. According to Joel Sweimler, the ornate decoration of the studio “reflects Church’s creative brilliance, his artistic achievements, his knowledge and appreciation of the world around him, and his devotion [for] . . . his chosen career” (fig. 48).⁹²



Completing the Landscape

Even as he worked on the house, Church continued to elaborate the Olana landscape. Despite the waning of the romantic style and the growing popularity of high Victorian planting, Church designed in the same natural style. In the mid-1880s, his interest in the landscape intensified: “I have made about 1³/₄ miles of road this season, opening entirely new and beautiful views. I can make more and better landscapes in this way than by tampering with canvas and paint in the studio.”⁹³ The complex spatial composition that Church created may be better understood through its five components: the house and its immediate surroundings, the south park, the farmstead, the woodland buffers, and the roads.⁹⁴

Nestled in the hillside seventy-five feet below the crest of Long Hill, the house is the center of Olana’s landscape composition.⁹⁵ To the west of the house the hill drops abruptly, covered in underbrush; to the north the carriage house, stable, and laundry yard are screened by trees; to the east is a manicured lawn across which visitors first see the full mass of the house; and to the south is a two-tiered lawn terrace (fig. 49) that provides a viewing platform and a transition to the south park below. On the west and north sides the transition from the house to undergrowth and woodlands is immediate.

The south park, situated between the house and the lake, is an ornamental landscape “carefully planned and planted in imitation of nature over a period of thirty years.”⁹⁶ The primary function of the south park is visual. From the house, it provides a middle ground between the viewer and the far ground of river and mountains. Within the park one experiences a series of changing views, the most important of which is the house framed by the woods and capped by the sky (fig. 50). The lake forms the park’s southern boundary, providing a visual plane where the eye can rest and illuminating the park with reflections of the house, trees, and sky.⁹⁷

The farm occupied one-half of the acreage and was an important part of life at Olana. For the house, the farm produced vegetables and cut flowers. Church insisted that the farm pay for itself, and so hay, oats, rye, corn, apples, cherries, grapes, peaches, plums, pears, and strawber-

Fig. 49. Unknown Photographer (possibly Louis Church), *Winter Sunset from Olana’s Terrace*, March 1898, albumen print, 3⁷/₈ x 4¹/₂ (9.8 x 11.4), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region (at left)

Fig. 50. Unknown photographer (possibly Louis Church), *House and Park from across the Lake, Olana*, c. 1892, albumen print, 4³/₄ x 7¹/₁₀ (12.1 x 17.9), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region (at right)



Fig. 51. John A. Eberle, *South Road, Olana*, 1906, gelatin print, 12 x 10 (30.5 x 25.4), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



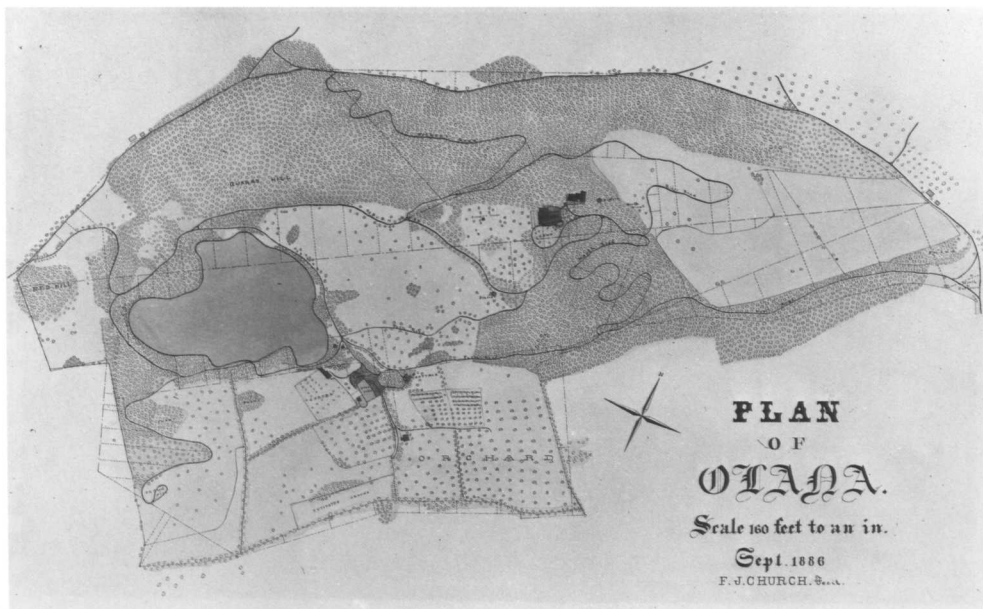
Fig. 52. Robert and Emily de Forest, *Isabel Charlotte (Downie) Church and her Grandmother, Emma Carnes*, 11 October 1884, albumen print, 8½ x 6½ (21.6 x 16.5), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region. Church brought the white Syrian donkey back from his Middle Eastern journey.

ries were produced and shipped to market.⁹⁸ At the same time, Church made aesthetic use of the farmstead, creatively manipulating the views of pastures, fields and orchards.

Thick woodlands surrounded the house, park, lake, and farmstead. The woods visually separated the varied uses of the land and buffered it from the world outside. The original purchase was largely cleared, since it was used for farming. In replanting much of the Olana property, Church was working out his design for the grounds. In 1890, a reporter for the *Boston Sunday Herald* commented, “The multitude of trees planted under Mr. Church’s direction a quarter of a century ago now give convincing evidence of his wise foresight and prompt action when he first came here.”⁹⁹

Seven and one-half miles of roads traverse the area. In a romantic landscape, the roads were of utmost importance, as they entailed the composition of myriad scenes—contrasting open pastoral views, dark hemlock forests, sun-dappled woodlands, and serene bodies of water. Church’s careful placement of the carriage roads allowed these contrived scenes to be viewed in an orderly sequence of experiences. Thus the visitor would see the landscape through Church’s sensibilities. Although to today’s visitor the roads may appear the same visually, the nineteenth-century visitor would have acknowledged a variety of experiences.

There are several farm roads, two ceremonial entrance roads, and three pleasure roads. The farm roads were strictly utilitarian, providing access to the farm buildings and the surrounding fields. The first approach to the property was the South Road (fig. 51), built in the early 1860s and described in 1884 as “direct, and . . . open, the road being chiefly lined by evergreens, shrubbery and sumach. It passes near the borders of a pretty lake.”¹⁰⁰ The road gently ascended the hill, revealing panoramic views across the south park studded with specimen trees, passed Church’s studio, and approached the house, which was “hardly seen until you are directly upon it.”¹⁰¹ An extension to the South Road, built in 1886–87, crossed the upper portion of the south park directly below the house and provided an interplay between the near and the far distance, between the house, the lake, and the Catskills. The second approach to the property was the North Road, built in 1868 and “a winding and wooded road, which constitutes a considerable drive in itself. The hill is very precipitous here, and one looks down at times upon his road directly below him in an almost inaccessible gulf.”¹⁰² Again the house was hidden by trees and underbrush until one suddenly encountered the east lawn.



The three pleasure drives on the Olana property were the Pond Road, the Crown Hill Road, and the Ridge Road, all built in 1884. On these roads, the Churches took daily recreational drives (fig. 52) and had a variety of visual experiences as they circled the lake, passed through pasture land, or drove along the rim of the western cliffs. The grandest vistas are found along these roads, where Church manipulated the route to evoke awe. All entrance and pleasure drives lead to and from the house, the center of the property. The appearance of the grounds in 1886 is documented in a map (fig. 53) made by Church's son, Frederic Joseph, while an engineering student at Princeton University, then Princeton College.

Church's Last Years at Olana

Grace King, who visited Olana in August 1891, wrote that she was in "a perfect Eden of picturesque beauty."¹⁰³ Church's thirty years of labor to make his property "perfect" had been realized. Despite the comment in a news article the previous year that "Mr. Church admits that his house will never be completed, at least as long as he lives, for every year he conceives some plan by which he can add to its convenience or attractiveness," no new projects are discussed in his correspondence from 1891 to 1900.¹⁰⁴ Instead, the letters from the infirm artist and his wife, now also ill, discuss their concern for each other and their children. In late 1891, Church offered his twenty-one-year-old son Louis the salaried management of the farm. Louis agreed, provided he was "to have full authority next to you."¹⁰⁵ Isabel Church explained the basis for Church's offer when she wrote her daughter: "Your father thought he needed one of his sons, to take charge, and *Louis*, dear boy is *the* one—There is so much to be looked into at Olana—and Father can not, nor cares to do it."¹⁰⁶ Thus Church withdrew from the active operation of Olana, which began its transition to the next generation (fig. 54).

As they had almost every year since the 1880s, Frederic and Isabel Church spent the summer and fall at Olana. After Christmas, Church departed for Mexico where he found "a climate more suited to his health."¹⁰⁷ Isabel's physicians prescribed that she spend the winters



Fig. 53. Frederic Joseph Church, *Plan of Olana*, September 1886, ink and watercolor on paper, 22 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ (56.2 x 92.1), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Fig. 54. Unknown photographer, left to right on the East Lawn of Olana: Louis Church, unidentified woman, Theodore Winthrop Church, unidentified woman, Frederic Joseph Church, Isabel Charlotte (Downie) Church and Jeremiah Black (later married to Downie), c. 1889, albumen print, 4 x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ (10.2 x 14.6), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Fig. 55. Frederic Edwin Church, *Winter Sunset from Olana*, 1870–72, oil on paper, 8½ x 13 (21.6 x 33), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



at the seashore. The couple reluctantly separated, and she traveled to Florida or Bermuda. In January 1890, Church made a will bequeathing Olana to Isabel.¹⁰⁸ After her death on 12 May 1899, he wrote a new will, this time bequeathing Olana and its contents to Louis.¹⁰⁹ When the aging artist left early for Mexico that winter, his thoughts, as always, returned to Olana. He confided to the widowed Virginia Osborn:

I have good news from my family and everything at Olana is most satisfactory. I miss my dear Isabel as much as ever and often feel that it would have been a blessing if I could have passed away when she did—but it is all for the best. There are still duties and wholesome pleasures which give each day an interest not to be despised.¹¹⁰

In the spring of 1900, in failing health, Church returned to New York City but was not able to proceed to Olana. He died on 7 April 1900 at the home of the Osborns, where Isabel had died the previous year. Obituaries appeared in all the major newspapers, most eulogizing his work. One writer recalled that the artist “learned to admire Persian architecture, which is exemplified in a modified form at his magnificent country home at ‘Olana’ on the Hudson River, one of the most notable houses in the United States, situated in a vast park beautified by the taste of the artist.”¹¹¹

Perhaps a more fitting tribute appeared in an earlier news article about Olana:

As I looked from its broad verandah one beautiful sunshiny morning the scene that spread before me filled me with regret that I had the soul of an artist without the power to wield the brush. It seemed the spot of all others to lend inspiration, and it is no wonder that the fame of Mr. Church is so great and lasting as to live long after he has gone to his last resting place (fig. 55).¹¹²

Notes

In addition to those whose help is acknowledged in individual notes, I wish to recognize David Huntington, Gerald Carr, Joel Sweimler, and Elizabeth Aldrich, who read earlier drafts and provided valuable criticism. I also wish to thank David Seamon, whose advice and assistance are reflected in all aspects of this essay.

1. Andrew Jackson Downing, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America, with a View to the Improvement of Country Residences* (New York, 1859), 327–28.
2. Frederic Church to Thomas Cole, 17 October 1846, Detroit Institute of Arts, Michigan. All quotations from correspondence are rendered exactly as written, with punctuation and spelling intact.
3. Marshall Tymn, ed., “Lecture on American Scenery: Delivered before the Catskill Lyceum, April 1, 1841,” in *Thomas Cole: The Collected Essays and Prose Sketches* (St. Paul, Minn., 1980), 206. I am grateful to Donelson Hoopes for this reference.
4. This sketch is in the collection of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Taconic Region, Olana State Historic Site, Ol.1980.1333, hereafter referred to as Olana. Gerald Carr associated this Church sketch with a visit to Red Hill that Church made with Cole. This sketch will be discussed in Gerald Carr, *A Catalogue of the Works of Frederic Edwin Church at Olana State Historic Site*, prepared for Friends of Olana, Inc. (Cambridge, forthcoming).
5. Church to William H. Osborn, 30 November 1868, transcript, Archive of Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York (hereafter referred to as Olana Archive). William Osborn (1820–94) was the president of the Illinois Central Railroad and one of Church’s closest friends and foremost patrons.
6. John I. H. Baur, ed., *The Autobiography of Worthington Whittredge* (New York, 1969), 29. Gerald Carr gave me this text.
7. “[Correspondence of the Transcript],” *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, 10 January 1860. Gerald Carr and Merl M. Moore, Jr., provided this reference.
8. Isabel Carnes was the daughter of Francis and Emma (Osgood) Carnes. Her father, a graduate of Harvard and trained as a lawyer, was persuaded by a cousin to form a dry-goods and import business. He was described in a pamphlet, *Wealth and Biography of the Wealthy Citizens of New York City* (New York, 1845, Olana Archive) as “a gentleman . . . [who] Resided a long while in Paris, where he was held in great consideration both among his countrymen and by the elite of French society, for his fine taste, classical acquirements, polished manners, and ready wit. He is yankee born, of great respectability.” Of greater interest than his antecedents and accomplishments—and the true reason for his inclusion, the pamphlet notes—was that his wife and daughters had come into an inheritance of \$200,000. I am grateful to Sally Bottiggi, Kristin Gibbons, and Joel Sweimler for this information.
9. Sarah Osgood Tucker to Isabel (Downie) Church Black, 16 May 1900, Olana Archive.
10. Church to Thomas Appleton, 10 January 1860, Olana Archive. Additional evidence of Church’s joy at his engagement is found in a letter to his daughter, written by an elderly relative at the painter’s death: “He was radiantly happy in the feeling that he had, at last, found the realization of his dreams in her.” Tucker to Black, 16 May 1900.
11. Church purchased the property from Levi and Gertrude Simmons, who had bought it in 1853. The property was known as the Wynson Breezy farm, a corruption of the name of the farmer who apparently first developed it. Wynsant Brezie or Brisea (d. 1802) had rented or mortgaged the 126 acres from John Jay Van Rensselaer of Crailo on 26 September 1794. Columbia County Clerks Office, Mortgage Book A, 297, and Deed Book 13, 283. I am grateful to Kristen Gibbons for uncovering this information.
12. Frank Bonnelle, “In Summertime on Olana,” *Boston Sunday Herald*, 7 September 1890, 17, and “The American Rhine,” *New York World*, 21 July, 1889, 11, Olana Archive. After Cole’s untimely death from pneumonia in 1848, Church had painted *To the Memory of Cole* (cat. 5), which depicted the Catskill Mountains as Cole’s monument. See J. Gray Sweeney, “Endued with Rare Genius,” *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 45–71.
13. “The Kaatskills, Their Attractions Enthusiastically Set Forth,” in an unidentified magazine clipping with the

heading “No. 1141—vol. 5,” c. 1871, Vedder Library, Greene County Historical Society, Coxsackie, N.Y. Raymond Beecher brought this article to my attention.

14. Theodore L. Cuyler, “A Sabbath in the Catskills,” in *The Catskill Mountains*, Charles Rockwell, ed. (New York, 1867), 260. Cited in David C. Huntington, “Frederic Edwin Church, 1826–1900: Painter of the Adamic New World Myth” (Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 1960), 145.

15. No renderings of the elevations or floor plans exist, but a bill from Hunt to Church dated 1 April 1861, “For architectural services rendered up to date—\$125,” is in the Olana Archive.

16. These paintings, dated 1862 and 1865 respectively, are in the collection of Olana State Historic Site (Ol.1981.12 and Ol.1981.11). Through newspaper clippings provided by Frances A. Hoxie of the Connecticut Historical Society, Gerald Carr uncovered the fact that the paintings celebrated the children’s births.

17. Church to Joseph Church, 13 May 1864, Olana Archive.

18. Henry T. Tuckerman, *The Book of the Artists* (New York, 1867), 375. Church and Tuckerman, an art critic, were longtime friends.

19. Charles H. Smith, *Landscape Gardening: or Parks and Pleasure Grounds* (New York, 1853), 287. While Smith largely advises on the selection and planting of trees, the design of roads, and the creation of an artificial lake, he emphasizes that the landscape gardener “is supposed to create a landscape in living nature, just as the painter creates one on canvas.”

20. Smith, *Landscape Gardening*, 289.

21. Church was not averse to earth moving on a grand scale. In the 1870s, he wrote Lord Dufferin, the governor-general of Canada from 1872 to 1878, regarding Niagara Falls: “The natural formation of the rocks seemed to invite some artistic treatment especially by cutting channels for the purpose of forming picturesque cascades which would not only greatly enrich and diversify certain portions but also do much toward harmonizing the general effect.” Church to Lord Dufferin, quoted by Thomas V. Welch, in Charles M. Dow, *The State Reservation at Niagara* (Albany, N.Y., 1914), 12. Gerald Carr pointed this quotation out to me.

22. Smith, *Landscape Gardening*, 135.

23. Bonnelle, “In Summertime on Olana,” 17. Church and Frank Bonnelle, a newspaper reporter, became friends, and the article seems to be accurate.

24. Bonnelle, “In Summertime on Olana,” 17.

25. Church to William H. Osborn, 16 May 1870, transcript, Olana Archive.

26. The deaths of these babies, Herbert on 18 March 1865 and Emma on 26 March 1865, affected the Churches like few other events in their lives. The artist Horace Robbins described the event to his mother: “For some three or four days previously Mr. Church’s eldest child Herbert who was over two years old and beginning to be most interesting—was a little sick—tho the parents were not much alarmed in regard to him. He was sick with the dysentery But Friday last, he was much-worse & all that 1 day & Saturday last—Mr. Church did not come to the Studio—and on Saturday at 10.P.M. the dear little fellow died. . . . Poor Mr. Church is almost broken down—he and his wife were so ‘wrapped up’ in their only son. . . . I hear that the little baby is sick too, with the same trouble.” Horace Robbins to his mother, Mary Eldrege Hyde Robbins, 21 March 1865, transcript, Olana Archive. I am grateful to Mary Rintoul, the owner of these letters, for lending them to Olana State Historic Site and for allowing transcriptions to be made. The letters were uncovered through the efforts of Gerald Carr and Kristin Gibbons. Pearl Capone transcribed those sections of the letters that discuss Frederic Church.

27. Horace Robbins to his mother, 18 May 1865, transcript, Olana Archive.

28. Robbins to his mother, 18 May 1865, and Robbins to his mother, 30 June 1865, transcript, Olana Archive. A description of Church at work is found in the same letter: “Mr. Church with all his immense natural gifts—has as the result of long years of practice & work—acquired a rapidity w[hic]h is wonderful to think of and at the same time making his sketches exceedingly elaborate and accurate. He will finish several, finely, while I am completing one and that imperfectly. . . . He works with an energy & constancy unequalled by any one. Every day of my life I am more & more convinced that he is the only great landscape painter we have, he is a giant among pigmies—and there is an earnestness & truthfulness about all he does which I have not seen the likes of in any others productions.”

29. Church to Theodore Cole, 28 July 1865, Olana Archive.

30. Church to William H. Osborn, 1 January 1866, transcript, Olana Archive.

31. I am grateful to Gerald Carr for this insight. These associations will be discussed in the catalogue he is preparing for Friends of Olana, Inc.

32. Church wrote his father in 1864: “I understand that the piece of woods at the North of my farm on the top of the hill can be had at the price asked three years ago \$2000.” Church to Joseph Church, 13 May 1864. Church considered purchasing the hilltop in 1861 and again in 1864. He finally bought the property on 23 October 1867 for \$3,500.

33. Church to Erastus Dow Palmer, 22 October 1867, McKinney Library, Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, N.Y.
34. Church studied in an architect's office in 1867 before he left for the Middle East. According to a letter from Isabel's cousin Mrs. Henry de Forest to her son Lockwood, Church advised her that Lockwood should "pass a few weeks in an architect's office as he [Church] did before he went to Syria." Mrs. Henry de Forest to Lockwood de Forest, 15 August 1875, quoted in Anne S. Lewis, *Lockwood de Forest: Painter, Importer, Decorator* (Huntington, N.Y., 1976), 6. As Hunt was the architect for the proposed house and both men had offices in the Tenth Street Studio Building, it seems likely that Hunt's atelier might have conveniently welcomed the artist. A large number of drawings of classical structures, in the collections at Olana, are the likely result of this architectural study.
35. John Davis, "Frederic Church's 'Sacred Geography,'" *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 81.
36. Davis, "Church's 'Sacred Geography,'" 81; Church's library at Olana contains many volumes on the Middle East, including history, science, biblical studies, travel guides, and romance novels. I am grateful to Gerald Carr and Robin Eckerle for pointing out the large number of romance novels.
37. Church to William H. Osborn, 13 January 1868, transcript, Olana Archive.
38. Church to Martin Johnson Heade, 22 January 1868, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, roll D5, frames 633–34.
39. Davis, "Church's 'Sacred Geography,'" 90. This is an excellent examination of Church's journey to the Middle East. Although Davis does not discuss the artist's home directly, he provides a basis for understanding the construction of Olana and the acquisition of its contents.
40. Davis, "Church's 'Sacred Geography,'" 90; Church to William H. Osborn, 29 July 1868, transcript, Olana Archive.
41. Church to Erastus Dow Palmer, 10 March 1868, McKinney Library, Albany Institute.
42. Bonnelle, "In Summertime on Olana," 17.
43. Lockwood de Forest, undated manuscript, Archives of American Art, roll 2730, frame 20.
44. Isabel (Downie) Church Black to Charles Dudley Warner, 23 September 1899, Olana Archive.
45. Church to William H. Osborn, 9 November 1868, transcript, Olana Archive.
46. Church to William H. Osborn, 4 November 1868, transcript, Olana Archive.
47. Church to Osborn, 9 November 1868.
48. Church to Erastus Dow Palmer, 7 July 1869 and 4 August 1869, McKinney Library, Albany Institute. Church was even more explicit about his reasons for building with his friend and financial advisor William H. Osborn: "I have got plenty of capital ideas and new ones about house building. As soon as I can afford it I shall build a modest substantial house for a permanent home." He then proceeded to outline his reasons: "[First,] after all, at my age [he was 42] one ought not to postpone longer than necessary the acquisition of such a home. . . . [Second,] our little cottage is all well enough but we are always cramped. . . . [Third,] it has not enough conveniences for my wife's comfort—and [fourth, prefiguring the next several years of concentrated work on the house] I have no opportunity for adding the thousand little improvements—which I could do to a more substantial residence." Finally, summing up the past seven years of landscape gardening, he wrote, "I have got a perfect situation and a perfect site for it." Church to Osborn, 29 July 1868.
49. These drawings may also date as early as 1867, since the floor plan does not seem to reflect Church's Middle Eastern architectural interest. They are in the Prints and Drawing Collection of the American Institute of Architects Foundation, Washington, D.C.
50. The Century Club (Association) was founded in 1847 as a place where men with an interest in the arts might gather socially.
51. Calvert Vaux, *Villas and Cottages: A Series of Designs Prepared for Execution in the United States* (New York, 1857), xvi.
52. Vaux, *Villas and Cottages*, 50.
53. Vaux, *Villas and Cottages*, xvi.
54. For this information about Vaux's marriage and his relationship with clients, I am grateful to William Alex, president, Frederick Law Olmsted Association.
55. Church to Erastus Dow Palmer, 13 May 1870, McKinney Library, Albany Institute.
56. Calvert Vaux, undated manuscript, Vaux Papers, New York Public Library. I am grateful to Willam Alex for this quotation from the document.
57. Church to Erastus Dow Palmer, 27 July 1870, McKinney Library, Albany Institute.
58. Church to John Ferguson Weir, 8 June 1871, Archives of American Art, roll 530, frame 32. Betsy Fahlman of Arizona State University uncovered this letter, which she passed on to Gerald Carr, who in turn suggested I use it.
59. Pascal Coste, *Monuments Modernes de la Perse* (Paris, 1867) and Jules Bourgoïn, *Les Arts Arabes* (Paris, 1868).

- Church's checkbook for 1869–71 records the following 1870 expenditure: "Sep 1/ at Christern/ Book—Persian/ Architecture/80.00." Olana Archive.
60. Lockwood de Forest, undated manuscript, Archives of American Art, roll 2730, frame 20.
 61. Church to William H. Osborn, 7 November 1870, Olana Archive.
 62. "The Kaatskills," n.p.
 63. Henry Q. Mack diary, 1872, Vedder Library, Greene County Historical Society. The next two quotations about the house are from this same source.
 64. This description is partly based on a 4 June 1986 letter to the author from William F. Wilson, architect, who discusses the floor plan of the house. I am grateful to Wilson for his insights.
 65. Jervis McEntee diary, 22 June 1873, Archives of American Art, roll D180.
 66. According to Church's account book for 1869–75, the cost of the house was \$61,309.60. A recalculation of his expenses indicates that the correct total is \$59,707.45. The account book is in the Olana Archive, and I am grateful to Jane Churchill for recalculations.
 67. Frank Sagendorph Welsh, "Architectural Metallic Finishes in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries: The Great Imitators: Aluminum and Bronze," in *The Interiors handbook for Historic Buildings* (Philadelphia, 1988), 3–37–43. Welsh notes that in 1854, the cost of aluminum was equal to that of gold, and values did not change until the late 1880s. I am grateful to Joel Sweimler for drawing my attention to this fact.
 68. Grace King to May [?], 7 June 1889, Grace King Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge. A native of New Orleans, Grace King (1851–1932) was a "local color" writer who visited Olana with the Samuel Clemenses and the Charles Dudley Warners.
 69. Isabel Church diary, 24 April 1868, New-York Historical Society.
 70. "The American Rhine," II.
 71. Numerous bills for furniture, china, and kitchen equipment are in the Olana Archive. Like most newly married couples, the Churches had to furnish an entire household. Correspondence from Church to his father indicates that his mother sent a dining room rug and pairs of curtains. Frederic Church to Joseph Church, 15 April 1864, Olana Archive.
 72. Church had brief contact with the "art" movement in England in the late 1860s. While in London in early December 1867, Church lunched with artist G. H. Boughton (1833–1905) and examined the work in his studio. Frederic Church to Erastus Dow Palmer, 10 March 1868. Boughton was an occasional member of the Cranbrook Colony, a group of genre painters whose best-known member was J. C. Horsley (1817–1903). Norman Shaw (1831–1912) designed an addition to Horsley's Cranbrook house in 1864–65 and a studio house for Boughton in 1877–78. Andrew Saint points out that Shaw's early country house career began with commissions from painters. Saint writes that the painters "had their own judgment, could be expected to make a personal choice of architect, and often wished to participate in the making of the design." Andrew Saint, *Richard Norman Shaw* (New Haven, 1976), 36. Before their return to America in 1869, the Churches spent three more weeks in London (from late May through mid-June). Considering his friendships in the artistic and literary world, Church probably was examining artistic interiors. The couple were feted continuously. Church wrote: "We are going through a course of diners etc. in London and my antiquated dress coat has a busy time of it." Frederic Church to Edward A. Weeks, 7 June 1869, Olana Archive. Among Church's friends in London were Thomas Taylor, the art critic and editor of *Punch*, and Amelia Edwards, the Egyptologist and novelist. Roger B. Stein, in his essay on the Aesthetic Movement, cites Olana as an early and very personal example of "the new artistic activity" in the United States. See Roger B. Stein, "Artifact as Ideology: The Aesthetic Movement in Its American Cultural Context," in *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement* (New York, 1987), 24.
 73. F. N. Zabriskie, "'Old Colony Papers.' An Artist's Castle and Our Ride Thereto," *New York Christian Intelligencer*, 10 September 1884, 2, Olana Archive.
 74. The life of Lady Jane Digby El Mezrab is discussed by Lesley Blanch in *The Wilder Shores of Love* (New York, 1954), 142–208.
 75. Isabel Church diary, 2 May 1868.
 76. Church to William H. Osborn, 4 February 1869, Olana Archive.
 77. Crates containing artifacts collected by the Churches were sent from Beirut and Constantinople. Church discussed the number of crates in correspondence with his brother-in-law. Church to Weeks, 7 June 1869.
 78. Tucker to Black, 16 May 1900. In this letter to Church's daughter, an elderly relative writes: "Shall I ever forget . . . a visit to Olana when you were all children and there was every thing to make it an Earthly Paradise?" Other important discussions of Olana's interior are David C. Huntington, *The Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church* (New York, 1966), 114–15, and Huntington, "Olana, the Center of the Center of the World," in Irving Lavin, ed., *World Art, Themes of Unity and Diversity*, Acts of the XXVIth International Congress of the History of Art (University Park, Pa., forthcoming).

79. David C. Huntington, "Frederic Edwin Church 1826–1900," 275.
80. Gerald Carr's research on the origin and meaning of the name Olana will be published in *Olana Landscapes* (New York, forthcoming). An excellent discussion of the house as a domestic fortress in the mid-nineteenth century is Clifford Edward Clark, Jr., *The American Family Home, 1800–1960* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1986). Clark writes: "The central tenet of the new canon of domesticity [in the mid-nineteenth century] was the assertion that the household should be a refuge from the outside world, a fortress designed to protect, nurture, and strengthen the individuals within it." (29) I am grateful to Marc Rabun for this reference.
81. Frederic Church, "Diary of a Journey to Petra, 1868," Olana Archive. Gerald Carr discusses this association in his *Olana Landscapes*.
82. Church to Amelia Edwards, 2 September 1877, Somerville College Library, Oxford, England. Amelia Edwards was a noted British Egyptologist whose work included *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* (London, 1877). Robin Eckerle and Joel Sweimler located this letter.
83. Lisbet Milling Pedersen and Henrik Perwin, "Rheumatic Disease, Heavy-Metal Pigments, and the Great Masters," *The Lancet* 1, no. 8597 (4 June 1988): 1267. This article discusses artists' exposure to "mercury sulphide, cadmium sulphide, arsenic sulphide, lead, antimony, tin, cobalt, manganese, and chromium, the metals of the bright and clear colors." The authors say that "exposure to these metals may be of importance in the development of inflammatory rheumatic diseases."
84. Isabel wrote her daughter: "I think we should try to remain in our own home—here father will go to the studio and paint, in New York he will only lie on the sofa—and think of his various symptoms." Isabel Church to Isabel (Downie) Church Black, 17 January 1887, Olana Archive.
85. Church to Martin Johnson Heade, 22 September 1885, Archives of American Art.
86. Zabriskie "Old Colony Papers," 2. The writer observed while touring Olana: "We saw but one of Mr. Church's own great works, his striking picture of the rock temple at Petra, the remainder being sketches and studies."
87. Church to Palmer, 7 July 1869.
88. Church to Charles DeWolf Brownell, 7 June 1888, Olana Archive.
89. Church to Erastus Dow Palmer, 11 September 1888, McKinney Library, Albany Institute.
90. Two bills dated 10 January 1889 and 8 January 1890 from George Siegel, a New York City furniture manufacturer and dealer, document this move. The packing list indicates that Church had few objects and no paintings in the studio, which had been sublet to other artists for a number of years.
91. Church to Erastus Dow Palmer, 19 April 1891, McKinney Library, Albany Institute. This painting is in the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh.
92. Joel Sweimler, "Evidence of Room Use and Original Furnishings—Studio," *The Furnishing Plan for Olana State Historic Site*, work in progress, Olana State Historic Site.
93. Church to Erastus Dow Palmer, 18 October 1884, McKinney Library, Albany Institute.
94. Information in this section is drawn from several reports commissioned by the Bureau of Historic Sites, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation and Friends of Olana, Inc.: Robert M. Toole, "Historic Landscape Report, Phase One," 31 August 1984; Ellen McClelland Lesser, "Historic Landscape Research Report, Phase Two," 1 June 1986; Ellen McClelland Lesser, "Landscape Research Report, Phase Three," 15 September 1986; and Robert M. Toole and Ellen McClelland Lesser, "Master Restoration Plan, Phase Four, Part One, Mansion Environs," 15 August 1988.
95. An extended discussion of the relationship between the house and landscape and sky is David Seamon, "Recommendations for a Visitors' Center at Frederic Church's *Olana* Based on the Approach of Christopher Alexander's Pattern Language," National Endowment for the Arts, Design Arts Program, Report 87-4216-0152 (Washington, D.C., 1989).
96. Robert M. Toole, "Draft Proposal for Master Restoration Plan, Phase Four, Part Two, South Park," 15 November 1988, Olana.
97. The lake also served a practical function. From it ran underground pipes that provided water for the vegetable garden and for livestock in the barns. In addition, a steam engine housed near the lake pumped water to the house for non-drinking uses.
98. Frederic Church to Edward A. Weeks, 13 October 1869, Olana Archive.
99. Bonnelle, "In Summertime on Olana," 17.
100. Zabriskie, "Old Colony Papers," 2.
101. Zabriskie, "Old Colony Papers," 2.
102. Zabriskie, "Old Colony Papers," 2. The author continues: "The expenditure in road-building, and in otherwise bringing this huge, wild, steep mass of earth into suitable shape and condition, has been immense, and could not have been accomplished by the Bohemian type of artist, whose wealth is purely in aesthetic securities and

whose castles are all in Spain.”

103. Grace King to Nan [?], 4 August 1891, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries.
104. Bonnelle, “In Summertime on Olana,” 17.
105. Louis Church to Frederic Church, 26 October 1891, Olana Archive.
106. Isabel Church to Isabel (Downie) Church Black, 13 December 1891, Olana Archive.
107. Bonnelle, “In Summertime on Olana,” 17.
108. Frederic Church, Last Will and Testament, 9 January 1890, Olana Archive. The signature is excised from this document, thus invalidating it.
109. Frederic Church, Last Will and Testament, 22 July 1899, Olana Archive.
110. Church to Mrs. Virginia Osborn, 7 December 1899, Olana Archive.
111. “Mr. Church Dies,” undated and unidentified newspaper article, Olana Archive.
112. “The American Rhine,” II.

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Chronology

DEBORA RINDGE

This is a revised and expanded version of the chronology written by Richard P. Wunder for the exhibition catalogue *Frederic Edwin Church* [National Collection of Fine Arts] (Washington, 1966). While every effort has been made to include information from scholarship published since 1966, this history is by no means complete. Current research, including the forthcoming publication of Gerald Carr's catalogue of the works of Church at the Olana State Historic Site, will add new information and refinements to this record of the artist's activities and the exhibition history of his paintings.

* in the exhibition

Ex. exhibited same year

sponsoring organization

NAD National Academy of Design, New York City

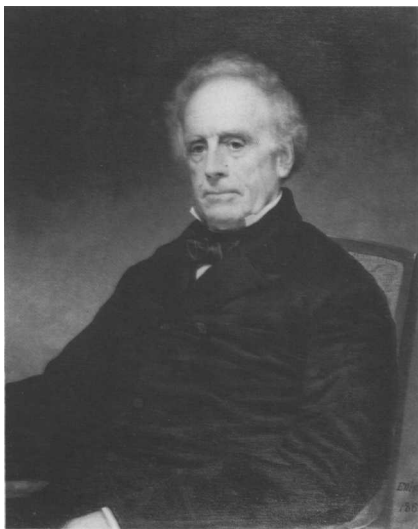
AA-U American Art-Union, New York City

PAFA Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia

BAA Brooklyn Art Association, New York

Present locations of paintings, when known, are given in parentheses in the initial citation.

- 1826 4 May. Born in Hartford, Connecticut, to Joseph Edward (1793–1876) and Eliza Janes Church (1796–1883). Joseph Church, a successful businessman, jeweler, and silversmith, was also on the board of several banks and an insurance company. Frederic, the only son of three to survive, had two sisters, Elizabeth Mary (1824–86) and Charlotte Eliza (1832–67).
- 1842 In Hartford through 1843. Studies with Alexander Hamilton Emmons (1816–84) for six months and Benjamin Hutchins Coe (1799–after 1883).
- 1844 June. Moves to Catskill, New York, to study with Thomas Cole (1801–48) until 1846. October. Sketches in East Hampton, Long Island.
- 1845 February. Sketches near the Mountain House, Catskill.
April. In Hartford.
August. In Madison, Connecticut. Returns to the area of the Mountain House, Catskill, to sketch.
Completes: *The Catskill Creek* (c. 1845, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York); *Scene near Hartford* (Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York); *Twilight among the Mountains* (c. 1845, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York) Ex. NAD no. 321; *View of Hartford* (1844–45, private collection)
Also exhibits: *Hudson Scenery* NAD no. 344
- 1846 In the Berkshires, near Lee and Stockbridge, Massachusetts, sketching. Hartford residence indicated in NAD catalogue.
Completes: **Hooker and Company Journeying through the Wilderness from Plymouth to Hartford, in 1636*, cat. 1 (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut) Ex. NAD no. 114. Purchased in the fall by the Wadsworth Atheneum for \$130, it is the first recorded sale of one of his paintings; *Catskill Sunset* (c. 1846, private collection); *Moses Viewing the Promised Land* (private collection); *New England Landscape with Ruined Chimney* (private collection); *Rapids of the Susquehanna* (c. 1846, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut); *View of Quebec* (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut)
Also exhibits: *Winter Evening* NAD no. 145
- 1847 Spring. Hartford listed as residence in NAD catalogue. Sketches in the Berkshires.
Fall. Moves to the Art-Union Building, 497 Broadway, New York City, residing there until 1858.
Completes: **Scene on the Catskill Creek, New York*, cat. 3 (Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland) Ex. AA-U no. 78; *The Charter Oak* (c. 1847, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York); *The Charter Oak, at Hartford* (1846–47, Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company) Ex. AA-U no. 118; **Storm in the Mountains*, cat. 2 (Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio) Ex. AA-U no. 120; *Kauterskill Clove, Catskill* Ex. AA-U no. 124; *Landscape* Ex. AA-U no. 254; *Christian on the Borders of the "Valley of the Shadow of Death," Pilgrim's Progress* (Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York) Ex. NAD no. 84; *July Sunset* (Manoogian Collection) Ex. NAD no. 173; *North Lake* (Alexander Gallery, New York, New York); *A Sunset*



Landscape (1846–47; private collection); *The Van Vechten House, Catskill, New York* (Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York); *View near Stockbridge* (Manoogian Collection)

Left to right: Charles Loring Elliott, *Joseph Church* (1793–1876), 1865, oil on canvas, 34½ x 27¾ (87.6 x 69.5); Samuel Rouse, *Eliza Church* (1796–1883), c. 1870s, charcoal on paper, 23⅞ x 19 (60 x 48.3); Rintouri and Rockwood, *Elizabeth Church* (1824–86), c. 1860s, photograph, 2⅜ x 3⅞ (6 x 9.8); George A. Baker, *Charlotte Church* (1832–67), 1867 (painted posthumously from a photograph), oil on canvas, 27¼ x 22 (69.2 x 58.4). All New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

- 1848 11 February. Death of Thomas Cole in Catskill, New York.
Elected an Associate of the National Academy of Design.
William James Stillman (1828–1901) becomes his first pupil, to 1849.
July. Sketches in the region of New Haven, Connecticut.
Visits Rochester Falls, New York; possibly travels to Niagara Falls for the first time.
August–September. Sketches in Vermont.

Completes: *The River of the Water of Life* Ex. NAD no. 77, AA-U no. 28; **To the Memory of Cole*, cat. 5 (Des Moines Women's Club—Hoyt Sherman Place, Des Moines, Iowa) Completed in April, AA-U no. 251; *Lake Dunmore* Ex. AA-U no. 290; **Morning*, cat. 4 (Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, New York) Ex. AA-U no. 348; *Rutland Falls, Vermont* (possibly *Gookin Falls, Rutland, Vermont*, in the White House, Washington, D.C.) Ex. AA-U no. 360

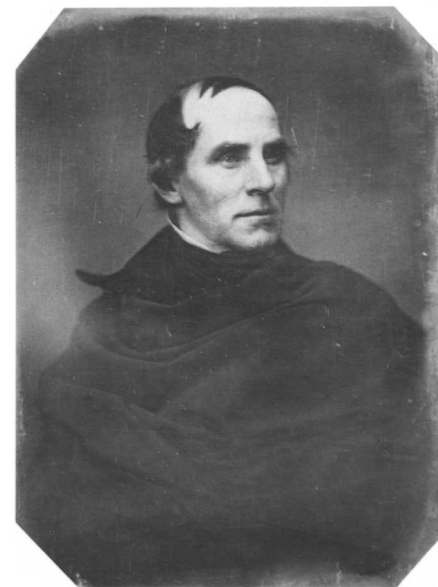
Also exhibits: *View near Stockbridge* (1847) NAD no. 290

- 1849 Elected a full member of the National Academy of Design.
Sketches in Vermont.

Completes: *A Mountain Tempest* Ex. NAD no. 38; *The Plague of Darkness* Ex. NAD no. 82, AA-U no. 151; **West Rock, New Haven* (New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut) Ex. NAD no. 131; **Above the Clouds at Sunrise*, cat. 7 (Warner Collection of Gulf States Paper Corp., Tuscaloosa, Alabama) Ex. AA-U no. 22; *View in Pittsford, Vermont* Ex. AA-U no. 41; **New England Landscape (Evening after a Storm)*, cat. 6 (Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas) Ex. AA-U no. 140; *The Harp of the Winds (A Passing Storm)* (M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts) Ex. AA-U no. 358; *Morning* Ex. AA-U no. 363; *Sunset* Ex. AA-U no. 375; *Lower Falls, Rochester* (private collection)

- 1850 Becomes a member of the Century Club, New York.
Jervis McEntee (1828–91) becomes his second pupil, to 1851.
July–August. Travels through Vermont, New Hampshire (White Mountains), and Maine (Mount Desert).

Completes: **Ira Mountain, Vermont*, cat. 9 (1849–50; Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York) Ex. NAD no. 42, AA-U no. 216; *Autumn, A Sketch* Ex. NAD no. 64; *View near Clarendon, Vermont* NAD no. 97, AA-U no. 233; *A Wet Day* Ex. NAD no. 323; **Twilight*, “*Short arbiter ’twixt*

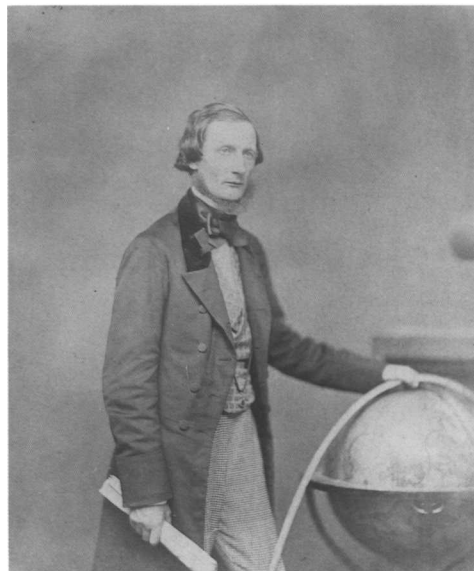


Attributed to Mathew Brady, *Thomas Cole*, c. 1845, daguerrotype, 5⅜ x 4 (13.7 x 10.2), National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of Edith Cole Silberstein

At right: *Twilight among the Mountains*, c. 1845, oil on canvas, 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ (41.3 x 59.1) (oval), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Far right: *July Sunset, Berkshire County, Massachusetts*, 1847, oil on canvas, 29 x 40 (73.7 x 101.6), Manoogian Collection

Below: *View of Hartford*, 1844–45, oil on canvas, 11 x 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ (27.9 x 39.4), Private Collection



Attributed to Mathew Brady, *Cyrus West Field*, c. 1860, salt print, 17 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{1}{16}$ (44.8 x 35.7), National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

day and night," cat. 10 (Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey) Ex. NAD no. 349, AA-U no. 261; *On Otter Creek* (Sheldon Museum and Library, Middlebury, Vermont) Ex. AA-U no. 14; *Twilight* Ex. AA-U no. 41; *Sunset* Ex. AA-U no. 58; *View of Blackwell's Island, New York* Ex. AA-U no. 193; *Landscape* (possibly *A Catskill Twilight*, ex. coll. Alexander Gallery, New York, New York) Ex. AA-U no. 243; *Fog off Mount Desert Island, Maine* (private collection); *Mountain Landscape* (c. 1849–50; University Art Galleries and Collections, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana); *An Old Boat* (Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection)

Also exhibits: *Sunset—A Lake View* (possibly *View in New England*, IBM Corporation, Armonk, New York) no. 25, Albany Gallery of Fine Arts, Albany, New York

- 1851 14 May. Elected to the council of the National Academy of Design for one year.
 June. Travels through the South (Virginia, North Carolina [?], Kentucky, and the Upper Mississippi River region) with friend and patron Cyrus W. Field (1819–92).
 July. Sketches in the Catskills.
 August. Travels to Grand Manan Island and the Bay of Fundy, Canada. Possibly in Niagara Falls.
 September. Visits Mount Katahdin, Maine, for the first time.
 October. Visits Mount Desert, Maine.
Completes: **New England Scenery*, cat. 12 (George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum, Springfield, Massachusetts) Ex. AA-U, purchased by AA-U for \$500; sold by AA-U in 1852 for \$1,300, the highest price his work commanded to date; *The Deluge* Ex. NAD no. 1, AA-U no. 264; **Beacon, off Mount Desert Island*, cat. 11 (private collection) Ex. NAD no. 371, AA-U no. 266; *Lake Scene in Mount Desert* (George F. McMurray Collection at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut) Ex. NAD no. 383; *Otter Creek, Mount Desert* (c. 1850–51; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts) Ex. PAFA no. 37; *New Port Mountain, Mount Desert* (private collection)
Also exhibits: *An Old Boat* (1850) Ex. NAD no. 166; *Fog off Mount Desert Island, Maine* (1850) Ex. AA-U no. 135; *Twilight, a Scene at Mount Desert Islands* PAFA no. 171

- 1852 August. Visits Grand Manan Island and Mount Katahdin, Maine.
 September. In the Catskills, sketching.
Completes: **The Wreck*, cat. 13 (The Parthenon, Nashville, Tennessee) Ex. NAD no. 145; **Home by the Lake*, cat. 17 (Collection of Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr.) Ex. NAD no. 456; *New England Scenery* (Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York) Ex. PAFA no. 141; **The Natural Bridge, Virginia*, cat. 16 (Bayly Art Museum at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville) Commissioned by Cyrus W. Field in 1851. Ex. Royal Academy, London; **Coast Scene*, cat. 15 (c. 1852; private collection); **Grand Manan Island, Bay of Fundy*, cat. 14 (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hart-



Gookin Falls, Rutland, Vermont, 1848, oil on canvas, 20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2), The White House



A New England Lake, 1854, oil on canvas, 30 x 42 (76.2 x 106.7), Private Collection

ford, Connecticut); *Scene in Vermont* (c. 1852; there are two versions of this painting, both in private collections)

Also sold: *Fog off Mount Desert Island, Maine* (1850) AA-U no. 119, \$50; *The Deluge* (1851) AA-U no. 235, \$300; **Beacon, off Mount Desert Island*, cat. 11 (1851) AA-U no. 350, \$380; **New England Scenery*, cat. 12 (1851) AA-U no. 354, \$1,300.

1853 April–October. First trip to South America; travels with Cyrus W. Field. 8 April, sails from New York; 28 April, arrives at port of Savanilla in Barranquilla, New Granada (now Colombia), the mouth of the Colombia River; 10 May, begins trip by steamer up the Magdalena River; 12 May, Mompós; then to Nare; 23 May, from Conejos, boat to Honda; 24–31 May, Honda; 31 May–4 June, Honda to Bogotá by mule; 4 June–8 July, Bogotá; Tequendama Falls; 9 July, Fusugasugá (between Bogotá and Ibagué); 16 July, Ibagué; 22–25 July, Cartago; 25–30 July, up Cauca Valley to Cali; 5 August, Popayán; one week near Purese (now Puracé) volcano; 9–20 August, from Popayán through valley of Rio Patía to Pasto; 25 August, crosses the border over the Andes Mountains into Ecuador; 30 August, in Quito, after traveling through Túquerres, Ibarra, and Otavalo. Sees Cotopaxi and Pichincha volcanoes; 9–14 September, from Quito through Machachi, Latacunga, and Ambato to Riobamba; 10–11 September, San Juan, at hacienda of Señor Larrea; 12 September, sketches Chimborazo; 19 September, ascends Chimborazo; 20–21 September, Guaranda; then to Bodegaz on the Guayas River; 22–23 September, to Guayaquil by boat; 24–30 September, Guayaquil; 30 September–5 October, departs Guayaquil on the steamer *Bogotá* for Panama; 18 October, sails from Aspinwall (now Colón, Panama) on the steamer *Ohio*; 29 October, arrives in New York.

Completes: **Mt. Katahdin (Katahdin)*, cat. 18 (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut) Ex. NAD no. 81; *Valley of the Madawasca* (possibly *American Landscape*, Blount Collection, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, Alabama, or *Autumn*, 1853, Collection of Rick Lapham) Ex. NAD no. 424; *Sunset on the Connecticut* Ex. PAFA no. 124; *Landscape* Ex. PAFA no. 200; *Cotopaxi* (private collection)

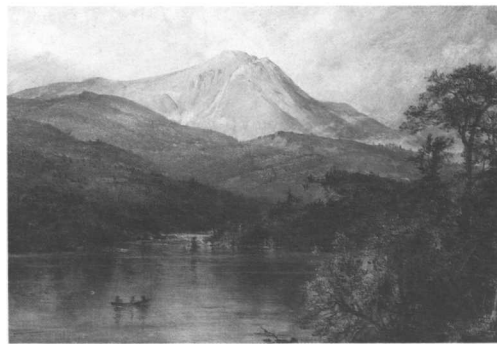
Also exhibits: **The Natural Bridge, Virginia*, cat. 16 (1852) NAD no. 105; **Grand Manan Island, Bay of Fundy*, cat. 14 (1852) NAD no. 359; *Twilight* (probably **Twilight*, “Short arbiter ’twixt day and night,” cat. 10) AA-U no. 21 (Washington Exhibition in Aid of the New-York Gallery of Fine Arts)

1854 August. Visits Annapolis, Nova Scotia.
September. At Mount Desert, Maine.

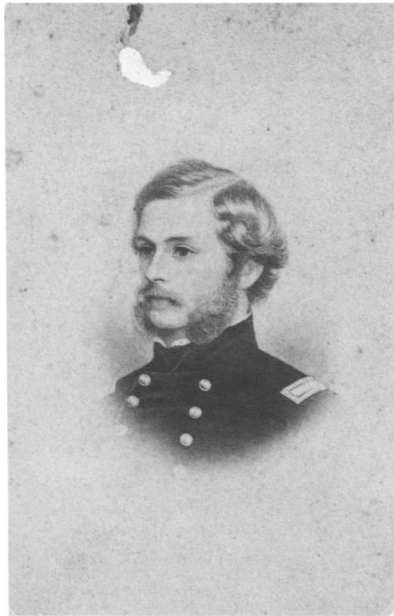
Completes: **A Country Home*, cat. 19 (Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington) Ex. NAD no. 64; *A New England Lake* (private collection) NAD no. 124; **The Cordilleras: Sunrise*, cat. 20



Cotopaxi, 1855, oil on canvas, 30 x 46⁷/₁₆ (76.2 x 117.9), The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Hogg Brothers Collection, gift of Miss Ima Hogg by exchange



Landscape—Mt. Katahdin, 1856, oil on canvas, 8 x 11³/₄ (20.3 x 29.9), Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts



Louis Prang and Company, *Major Theodore Winthrop*, 1863, engraving on paper, 3³/₈ x 2¹/₈ (8.6 x 5.4) (posthumous, carte de visite format), Private Collection

(Alexander Gallery, New York); **Tequendama Falls, near Bogotá, New Granada*, cat. 23 (Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio); **La Magdalena (Scene on the Magdalena)*, cat. 21 (National Academy of Design, New York); **Tamaca Palms*, cat. 22 (Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

- 1855 Summer. Travels to Mount Desert, Maine, with a large group of friends, including lawyer Charles Tracy (1810–85) and lawyer-author Theodore Winthrop (1828–61).
Completes: **The Andes of Ecuador*, cat. 25 (Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina) Ex. Boston Athenaeum; **Cotopaxi*, cat. 24 (National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.) for Cyrus W. Field; *Cotopaxi* (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas)
Also exhibits: **The Cordilleras: Sunrise*, cat. 20 (1854) NAD no. 49; **Tamaca Palms*, cat. 22 (1854) NAD no. 63; **Tequendama Falls, near Bogotá, New Granada*, cat. 23 (1854) NAD no. 74; **La Magdalena (Scene on the Magdalena)*, cat. 21 (1854) NAD no. 131; *Landscape* PAFA no. 115
- 1856 19–20 March. Visits Niagara Falls, New York.
 Summer. Visits New Hampshire and Whiteface Mountain, New York.
 7 July. At Niagara Falls.
 July–August. At Mount Katahdin, Maine, with Theodore Winthrop, whose colorful story of their journey would be published as *Life in the Open Air* in 1863.
 September–10 October. Visits Niagara Falls again.
Completes: *A Tropical Morning* NAD no. 137 (possibly **In the Tropics*, cat. 26, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia); *Autumn* (Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York) Ex. Boston Athenaeum, Boston, Massachusetts; *Landscape—Mount Katahdin* (Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts); *South American Landscape* (Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire); *South American Landscape* (Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection); **Sunset*, cat. 28 (Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York); **Twilight (Catskill Mountain)*, cat. 31 (c. 1856–58; private collection); **Twilight (Sunset)*, cat. 27 (Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, New York) for Erastus Dow Palmer
- 1857 May–August. Second trip to South America; travels with the artist Louis Rémy Mignot (1831–70). 15 May, leaves Panama for Ecuador; 23 May, Guayaquil, Ecuador; 29 May, journeys up the Guayas River; 3–14 June, Guaranda and Guanajo; 15–19 June, sketches Chimborazo; travels through Mocho, Latacunga, Ambato, San Miguel, and Machachi en route to Quito; 19–24 June, at base of Cotopaxi volcano; in Quito; 26 June, Chillo Valley, below Quito; 26–27 June, Pinchicha and Cayambe volcanoes; 3 July, Quito; 7 July, arrives in Riobamba, via Latacunga and



View on the Magdalena River, 1857, oil on canvas, 24 x 36 (61 x 91.4), Manoogian Collection



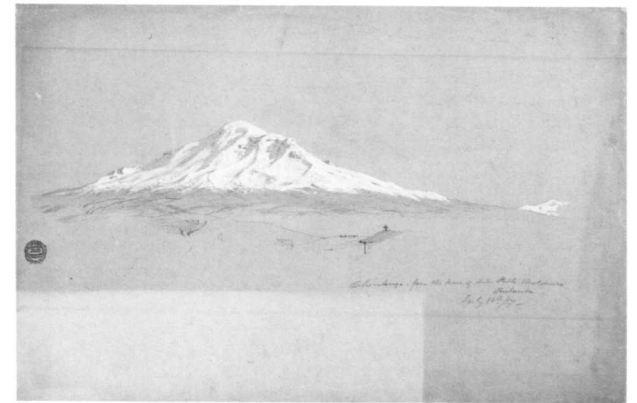
Cross in the Wilderness, 1857, oil on canvas, 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ (41.3 x 61.6), Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Lugano, Switzerland

Ambato; 9 July, begins journey to Sangay volcano; 11 July, begins ascent of Sangay; 13 July, arrives back at Riobamba; 21 July, Guaranda; 23 July, Jorge; 24 July, Guayaquil; returns to the United States by steamer via the Isthmus of Panama.

October 1. Visits Salisbury, Connecticut.

Completes: **Niagara*, cat. 30 (Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) Completed in the spring. First exhibited in April at the gallery of Williams, Stevens, Williams, New York, to enthusiastic reviews; establishes Church's reputation. Exhibits in London in summer, bringing Church to the attention of influential critic John Ruskin (1819–1900). Purchased by Williams, Stevens, Williams for \$2,500 plus \$2,000 for copyright; chromolithograph published by Risdon & Day. Sold in 1861 to John T. Johnston for \$5,000. Purchased at auction of the Johnston collection in 1876 by W. W. Corcoran for \$12,500; *View on the Magdalena River* (Manoogian Collection) Ex. NAD no. 522; *Cross in the Wilderness* (Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection); *American Landscape* (Manufacturers Hanover Collection); **View of Cotopaxi*, cat. 29 (Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois)

Also exhibits: **The Andes of Ecuador*, cat. 25 (1855) NAD no. 23; *Autumn* (1856) NAD no. 143; *Autumn Scenery* (*Autumn* 1856?) Washington Art Association, Washington, D.C.; *Twilight on Lake George* (possibly **Twilight (Catskill Mountain)*), cat. 31 (c. 1856–58) Washington Art Association 2nd Annual Exhibition no. 25, Washington, D.C.



Chimborazo from Riobamba, Ecuador, 1857, graphite and white gouache on paper, 13 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ (35.2 x 55.3), Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Smithsonian Institution

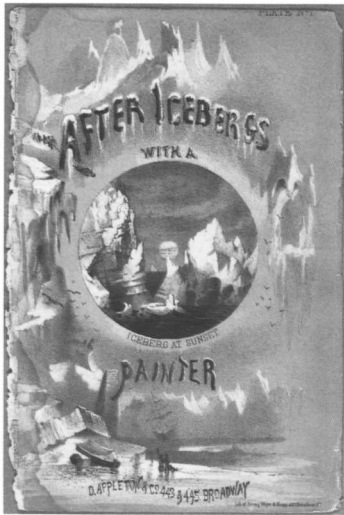
1858 April and/or August. Visits Niagara Falls.

July 29. At East Hampton, New York.

Moves to the Studio Building (built in 1857) at 15 West 10th Street, New York, New York (later renumbered 51 West 10th Street).

Completes: **Cayambe*, cat. 32 (New-York Historical Society, New York) Commissioned by Robert L. Stuart; *The Evening Star* (private collection) Painted as a memorial to a deceased child of Erastus Dow Palmer; *Morning in the Tropics* (Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland) Purchased for \$555 by William T. Walters; *Twilight: A Sketch* (Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York)

Also exhibits: **Niagara*, cat. 30 (1857) German Gallery, London (21 April–c. 28 May); gallery of James McClure and Son, Glasgow (3–18/19 June), Manchester (22 June–9 July), Liverpool (c. 16–28 July); *Autumn Scene* no. 52 and *The Plague of Darkness* (1849) no. 68, Yale College, New Haven, Connecticut



Title page from Louis Legrand Noble, *After Icebergs with a Painter*, New York, 1861

Sarony and Company, *Isabel Mortimer Carnes Church* (1836–99), c. 1860, albumen print, 4¼ x 5½/16 (10.8 x 14.1), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Morning in the Tropics, 1858, oil on canvas, 8¼ x 14 (21 x 35.6), Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

- 1859 **Completes:** **Heart of the Andes*, cat. 33 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) Completed on 27 April. Purchased by William T. Blodgett for \$10,000, the highest price to date for a painting by a living American artist. Exhibited at Lyric Hall on Broadway on 27 April, at the New York Studio Building 29 April–23 May, and at the German Gallery, London, summer 1859. Toured other American cities through May 1861. Purchased in 1876 by A. T. Stewart at Blodgett collection auction for \$10,000.
17 June–23 July. Trip along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador; sails with the Reverend Louis Legrand Noble (1813–82) from Boston to Halifax (Noble described the trip in his book *After Icebergs with a Painter*, 1861, illustrated with lithographs after sketches by Church). Louis Agassiz (1807–73) was also on the steamer from Boston to Halifax.
Engaged to Isabel Mortimer Carnes (1836–99), of Dayton, Ohio.
Also exhibits: *Twilight: A Sketch* (1858) NAD no. 384; *Twilight* no. 8, *Sketch, South American* no. 23; *Mount Desert Scenery* no. 36, Young Men’s Association, Troy, New York; **View of Cotopaxi*, cat. 29 (1857) no. 180, Chicago Exhibition of Fine Arts, Burch’s Building, Chicago, Illinois
- 1860 31 March. Purchases the Wynson Breezy farm at Hudson, New York.
14 June. Marries Isabel Carnes.
Summer. Sketches in the Catskills.
September. Visits Mount Desert, Maine.
November. Moves on to the property at Hudson, New York, referred to as “The Farm.”
Completes: **Twilight in the Wilderness*, cat. 34 (Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio) For Baltimore patron William T. Walters. Ex. 8 June–25 July, Goupil’s Gallery, New York. In 1866, sold to John T. Johnston for \$4,300.
Also exhibits: *Twilight Scene* no. 21, *Cotopaxi, from the Plains of Chillo, Ecuador* no. 32, and **Home by the Lake*, cat. 17 (1852) no. 54, Young Men’s Association, Troy, New York
- 1861 **Completes:** *Star in the East* (Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York) NAD no. 334; **The Icebergs*, cat. 35 (Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas) Ex. 24 April–9 July Goupil’s Gallery, New York; *Our Banner in the Sky* (reproduced as chromolithograph)
Also exhibits: *Tropical Landscape* BAA
- 1862 29 October. Birth of first child, Herbert Edwin (d. 1865).
Sketches in the Catskills.
Visits Mount Desert with Rev. Noble.
Completes: **Cotopaxi*, cat. 36 (Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan) Commissioned by James Lenox in 1861. Ex. March, Goupil’s Gallery, New York; *The Meteor of 1860* (private collection) Ex. 30 January, New York Studio Building; *Oosisoak (Assissnag)* (private collection)

Our Banner in the Sky, 1861, oil on paper, 7½ x 11¼ (19.1 x 28.6), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Ex. no. 104, Young Men's Association, Troy, New York; *Under Niagara* (reproduced as chromolithograph) Ex. December, New York

Also exhibits: **The Icebergs*, cat. 35 (1861) February–March, Boston Athenaeum; *Landscape in South America* PAFA no. 74; *Sunset on the Connecticut* (1853) PAFA no. 734; *Twilight, a Scene at Mount Desert Islands* (1851) PAFA no. 748; *Otter Creek, Mount Desert* (1850–51) PAFA no. 751; *Study for a Picture* December, BAA no. 129; *Gem from the Andes* no. 22, *Cotopaxi from the Plains of Chillo, Equador* (1860) no. 51, *The Star in the East* no. 106, and *A Sketch of Icebergs* no. 107, Young Men's Association, Troy, New York; **A Country Home*, cat. 19 (1854) no. 201, Artist's Fund Society, New York, New York

Listed for sale: *The Deluge* (1851) no. 70, Institute of Art, New York; *Landscape, Sunset on the Connecticut* no. 105, *Twilight, the Sun below the Horizon tinges the fleecy clouds, reflecting upon the clouds beneath* no. 121, and *Landscape, Otter Creek, Mount Desert* no. 124, M. Thomas and Sons, Auctioneers, Philadelphia

1863 May–August. In the Catskills.
October. Visits Clarendon Springs, Vermont.

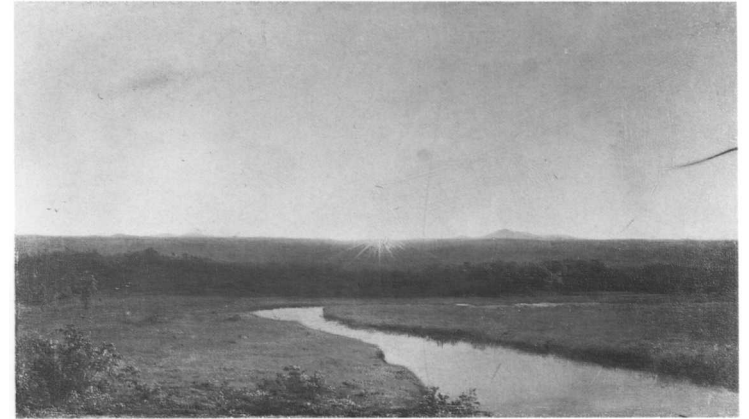
Completes: **Coast Scene, Mount Desert (Sunrise off the Maine Coast/Storm, off the Coast of Mount Desert)*, cat. 37 (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut) Ex. NAD no. 74; *To Illumine the Iceberg* (Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, Connecticut)

Also exhibits: **Cotopaxi*, cat. 36 (1862) Goupil's Gallery, New York; **The Icebergs*, cat. 35 (1861) 22 June–19 September, German Gallery, London; *Landscape* (1850) no. 221, Boston Athenaeum; *The Meteor of 1860* (1862, private collection) Ex. PAFA no. 123, BAA no. 195; *Twilight: New England* no. 233, Boston Athenaeum; *Under Niagara* (1862), Boston Athenaeum; **View of Cotopaxi*, cat. 29 (1857) no. 200 (listed as *South America*), Chicago Exhibition of Fine Arts of the Chicago Branch of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, Chicago, Illinois

1864 22 October. Birth of second child, Emma Francis (d. 1865).

Completes: *Chimborazo* (Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California) Commissioned by Samuel Hallett in 1862; *Our Flag* (Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, Indiana)

Also exhibits: **Niagara*, cat. 30 (1857) no. 14, **The Andes of Ecuador*, cat. 25 (1855) no. 89, **Heart of the Andes*, cat. 33 (1859) no. 111, *Setting Sun* no. 165, and *Evening* no. 333, New York Metropolitan Sanitary Fair, New York; **Sunset*, cat. 27 (*Twilight [Sunset]*) (1856) no. 5, *Coast Scene, Mount Desert*, cat. 37 (1863) no. 10, *View in Maine* no. 14, *Home by the Lake (Home of the Pioneer)* (1852) no. 17, *Autumn* (sketch, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York) no. 90, *Evening Star* no. 103, *A Scene in South America* no. 111, **Cayambe*, cat. 32 (1858) no. 114, and *Study of a Sunset* no. 122, Albany Sanitary Fair, Albany, New York; *Landscape* (1850) Boston Sailor's Fair; *Landscape* no. 251, Boston



At right: *Moonrise (The Rising Moon)*, 1865, oil on canvas, 10 x 17 (25.4 x 43.2), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

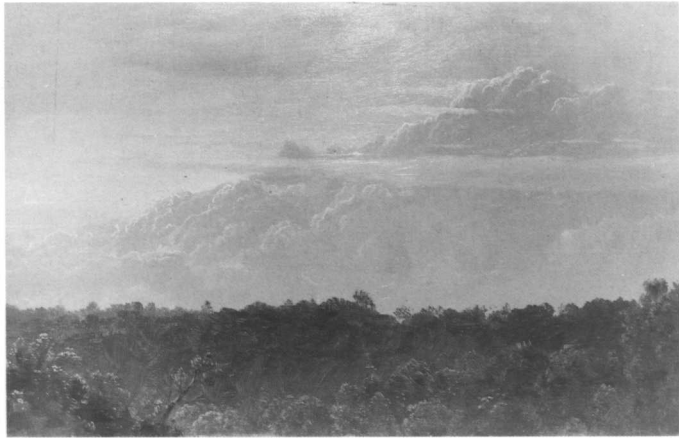
At far right: *Sunrise (The Rising Sun)*, 1865, oil on canvas, 10½ x 17½ (26.7 x 44), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



Isaac Hayes, frontispiece from Isaac Hayes, *The Open Polar Sea*, New York, 1867

Athenaeum; *Autumn Landscape* December, BAA no. 120; *The Meteor of 1860* (1862) March, BAA no. 73 (Brooklyn and Long Island Fair in Aid of the U.S. Sanitary Commission)

- 1865
- 18 March. In New York, death of his son Herbert Edwin of diphtheria, age two.
 26 March. In New York, death of his daughter Emma Francis of diphtheria, age five months.
 24 April–August. Travels to Jamaica with his wife and a number of friends, including the artist Horace Walcott Robbins, Jr. (1842–1904) and Fritz Melbye.
 6 October. In Vermont (Bird Mountain), sketching.
Completes: **Aurora Borealis*, cat. 39 (National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.) Commissioned by William T. Blodgett, based on a sketch by Dr. Isaac Hayes (1832–81). Ex. McLean's Gallery, London; *Sunrise* and *Moonrise* (both, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York) Painted to commemorate the births of his first two children; *Cotopaxi* (c. 1865; two paintings of this title are in private collections); *Eruption of Cotopaxi* (private collection); *Mount Desert* (Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri) NAD no. 310 (listed as *Twilight*)
Also exhibits: *Chimborazo* (1864) and **Cotopaxi*, cat. 36 (1862) with **Aurora Borealis*, cat. 39, June–August, McLean's Gallery, London
- 1866
- 30 June–19 July. At Hudson, New York.
 30 September. Birth of third child, Frederic Joseph (d. 1914)
Completes: **Rainy Season in the Tropics*, cat. 38 (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, California)
Exhibits: *A Glimpse of the Caribbean Sea from the Jamaica Mountains* NAD no. 287
- 1867
- 15 January. Death of his younger sister, Charlotte Eliza.
 February–September. At Hudson, New York. Purchases eighteen acres on the forested summit of Long Hill above The Farm, future site of his principal residence at Olana.
 Late October–early November. Departs New York for Europe with his wife, his infant son Frederic, and his mother-in-law, Emma Carnes; arrives in France; visits Paris.
 Winter. In London for a week before the end of the year. Then returns to France; in Marseilles for three days; then to Egypt via the steamship *Pelouse*.
Completes: **The After Glow*, cat. 43 (Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York); **Niagara Falls, from the American Side*, cat. 40 (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh); **Scene in the Andes*, cat. 41 (c. 1863–67; private collection); **The Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica*, cat. 42 (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut) Commissioned by Mrs. Samuel Colt; *View of Cotopaxi* (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut)



Cloudy Skies, Jamaica, West Indies, 1865, oil on cardboard, $7\frac{1}{8} \times 11\frac{9}{16}$ (18.2 x 29.4), Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Smithsonian Institution



Mt. Desert Island, Maine, 1865, oil on canvas, $31\frac{1}{4} \times 48\frac{1}{2}$ (79.4 x 123.2), Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis

Also exhibits: *Memorial to Cole* (possibly *To the Memory of Cole*, cat. 5 [1848]) PAFA no. 242. Listed for sale; *Mt. Chimborazo* November, BAA no. 173; *Niagara*, cat. 30 (1857) awarded the silver medal, and *Rainy Season in the Tropics*, cat. 38 (1866), Exposition Universelle, Paris

1868 4 January, Arrives in Alexandria, Egypt; 7 January, Port Said, Suez; then to Jaffa and Beirut; 10 January, Arrives in Beirut; 14 January, Beirut, Lebanon; 6 February, Sails to Jaffa, traveling with Rev. D. Stuart Dodge and Mr. Fowler; 7 February, arrives at Jaffa; hires guide Michail Hené; then to Jerusalem and Haifa; 12 February, leaves Jerusalem on expedition to Petra; 13 February, Hebron; Mt. Carmel; 15 February, Simua; 20 February, El Yemen; 21–23 February, Arabah; Mount Hor; 24–27 February, Petra; 2 March, El Yemen; 3 March, Beersheba; 5 March, Jaffa, via Gaza; 7–9 March, Jaffa; 2–7 April, Jerusalem; 4 April, Bezetha; Beirut; 28 April, El Musmieh; Burak; Dur Aly; 24 April–2 May, Damascus; 4 May, Figit; Mount Abels; 6 May, Mount Lebanon; 6–12 May, Baalbek; 15 May, arrives in Beirut; 25 May, Beirut; 27 May, Lamoca; Cyprus; 28 May, Cyprus; Rhodes; 29 May, Rhodes; Patmos; Samos; Mytiline; 30 May, Smyrna; 31 May, passes Mytiline and Scio (Chios); Troy and Mount Ida; 2 June, The Dardanelles; 4 June, Constantinople; then up the Black Sea to the Danube; 9 June, Varna, on the Black Sea; by train to Roustchwek; steamer up the Danube; by 17 June, in Vienna; 26 June, Berchtesgaden, Bavaria; 8 July, side trip to Salzburg, Austria; 1 August, Austria; 2 August, Rhone Valley; 5 August, Sollins; Abtenau, Switzerland; 6 August, Gossau; 8 August, Lake Halstead, Switzerland; 20 August, Lake Thun; 24 August, Vevey; Sion (via Interlaken); Martigny; 27 August–4 September, Belalp, Aletsch Glacier; 11 September, Mount Rosa; Ceppo Morelli; Ponte Grande, Italy; September, Florence; Perugia; 1 October, Terni; arrives in Rome. From November–early April 1869 in Rome, at Hotel Russie, on the Pincian. Friendship with artist Sanford W. Gifford (1823–80).

Exhibits: *Landscape* NAD no. 189; *Rainy Season in the Tropics*, cat. 38 (1866) no. 638, and *Niagara*, cat. 30 (1857) NAD no. 646, American Society of Painters in Watercolors

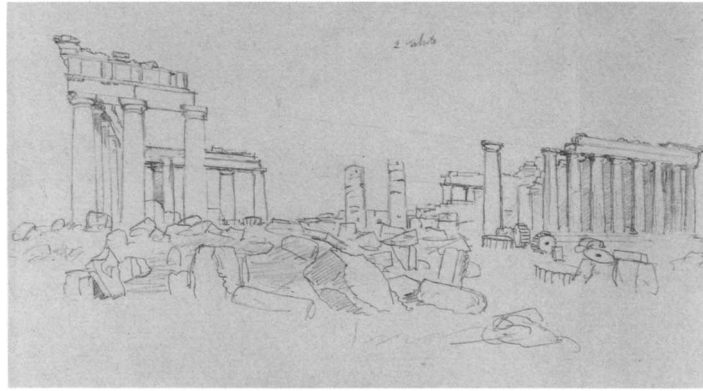
1869 *The Arch of Titus* begun (completed 1871; Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey) with Jervis McEntee (1828–91) and George P. A. Healy (1813–94) in Rome. 22 February. Birth of fourth child, Theodore Winthrop (d. 1914) in Rome. Early April. Pompeii; then to Sicily; visits Agrigento; to Greece; 20–24 April, Athens; Gulf of



Photographer unknown, *Frederic Joseph Church* (1866–1914), c. 1885, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4$ (6.4 x 10.2), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



El Khasneh, Studies of Architectural Details, Petra, Jordan, 1868, graphite on olive-green paper, 15¹/₁₆ x 10⁷/₈ (38.2 x 27.6), Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Smithsonian Institution



Parthenon, Athens, 1869, graphite on gray paper, 11¹/₁₆ x 21¹/₂ (30.2 x 54.6), Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Smithsonian Institution



Frank Forshew, *Theodore Winthrop Church* (1869–1914), c. 1885, photograph, 4¹/₈ x 6³/₈ (10.5 x 16.2); Frank Forshew, *Louis Palmer Church* (1870–1943), c. 1885, photograph, 4¹/₄ x 6¹/₂ (10.8 x 16.5), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Corinth; Cephalonia; Corfu; 28 April, Foggia; Paestum; Pompeii; 29 April, Velletri; 6 May, Rome; 14 May, Paris; 15 June, London; also visits Birmingham; 19 June, sails from England on ship *Russia*; 28 June, lands in New York.

September. At Hudson, New York.

Begins to experience the crippling pain of rheumatism.

Completes: *Damascus* Ex. December 1869–February 1870, Goupil's Gallery, New York; also London. Subsequently destroyed.

Exhibits: *A Passing Shower* no. 251 Boston Athenaeum; *Sunset–Passing Shower* December, BAA no. 204; *Valley of the Lebanon* (Kennedy Galleries, New York), November–December, Goupil's Gallery, New York

1870 30 April. Birth of fifth child, Louis Palmer (d. 1943), named for the sculptor Erastus Dow Palmer (1817–1904).

Walter Launt Palmer (1854–1932), the sculptor's son, becomes Church's third student, through 1872.

June. Sketches in the Catskills.

Completes: **Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives*, cat. 44 (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri); *The Mountains of Edom* (private collection) Ex. March–April, Goupil's Gallery, New York

Exhibits: **The After Glow*, cat. 43 (1867) NAD no. 374; *Syrian Landscape* March, BAA no. 248; *Damascus* (1869) no. 33, Yale School of Fine Arts, New Haven, Connecticut; **Niagara*, cat. 30 (1857) no. 52, Yale School of Fine Arts, New Haven, Connecticut; **Twilight in the Wilderness*, cat. 34 (1860) no. 114, Yale School of Fine Arts, New Haven, Connecticut; **The Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica*, cat. 42 (1867) April–May, Goupil's Gallery, New York

Through 1872, construction of the house Olana atop the summit of Long Hill, Hudson, New York. Architect Calvert Vaux replaces Richard Morris Hunt.

Spends summer and fall seasons through 1876 sketching and painting at Hudson, in the Catskills, Vermont, and Maine. About 1876, acquires property on Lake Millinocket, near Mount Katahdin, Maine, where camp named “Rhodora” is then constructed. Possibly travels to North Carolina.

1871 17 July. Birth of his sixth and last child, Isabel Charlotte (d. 1935).

Completes: *The Arch of Titus* (1869–71; with McEntee and Healy; Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey); **The Parthenon*, cat. 45 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); *Snow Scene, Olana* (private collection)

Exhibits: *Damascus* (1869) no. 69, Yale School of Fine Arts, New Haven, Connecticut; **Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives*, cat. 44 (1870) April, Goupil's Gallery, New York



Passing Shower in the Tropics, 1872, oil on canvas, 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ (31.1 x 51.4), The Art Museum, Princeton University, Museum purchase

- 1872 Summer. Probably occupies the new house at Olana for the first time with his family.
Completes: *Bamboo Stems—A Study from Nature* Ex. NAD no. 171; *Passing Shower in the Tropics* (Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey)
Exhibits: **The After Glow*, cat. 43 (1867) no. 49, Hartford Art Association, Hartford, Connecticut; **Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives*, cat. 44 (1870) Hartford Art Association, Hartford, Connecticut; **The Parthenon*, cat. 45 (1871) Goupil's Gallery, New York; *Passing Shower* May, BAA no. 127; *The Plague of Darkness* (1849) no. 81, Yale School of Fine Arts, New Haven, Connecticut
- 1873 October. Visits Clarendon Springs, Vermont.
Completes: *South American Landscape (Tropical Scenery)* (Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York) Commissioned by Robert Hoe; **Syria by the Sea*, cat. 47 (Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan) Ex. December, no. 25, Century Association, New York; **Tropical Scenery (South American Landscape)*, cat. 48 (Delaware Museum of Art, Wilmington, Delaware)
Exhibits: *Watch Tower in Italy* December, BAA no. 333
- 1874 Summer. Travels through the Green Mountains, Vermont, with Walter Palmer.
Completes: **El Khasné, Petra*, cat. 46 (Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York) Ex. NAD no. 320; *Sunrise in Syria* (Kennedy Galleries, New York); *The Three Columns* (Osborn Collection) and *A Tropical Moonlight* (private collection, on loan to Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, California) Painted for William H. Osborn.
Also exhibits: *The Arch of Titus* (1869–71) (listed as *The Arch of Constantine, at Rome*, Church, McEntee, Healy) no. 3 and *Twilight* no. 406, November, BAA; **Niagara*, cat. 30 (1857) no. 102, Cincinnati Industrial Exhibit, Cincinnati, Ohio; **The Parthenon*, cat. 43 (1871) no. 490, Chicago Interstate Industrial Exhibit, Illinois
- 1875 Late winter. Visits Niagara Falls for the last time (letter of 22 March)
Completes: *Valley of the Santa Ysabel* (Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, Massachusetts); *Autumn* (Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection)
Exhibits: *After the Rainstorm* Goupil's Gallery, New York; **El Khasné, Petra*, cat. 46 (1874) Spring, Chicago Academy of Design, Chicago, Illinois; *A Tropical Moonlight* (1874) no. 25, Union League Club, New York
- 1876 14 February. Death of his father.
 7 September. At Mount Katahdin, Maine.
Exhibits: *Chimborazo* (1864) no. 440, Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Wins bronze medal; **The Parthenon*, cat. 45 (1871) NAD no. 190 and Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; *Twilight in the Tropics* NAD no. 251; *Sunrise in Syria* (1874) NAD no. 256; *South American Landscape* NAD no. 287; *Tropical View* NAD no. 373; **Niagara*, cat. 30 (1857) and **Twilight*



G. P. A. Healy, Frederic Edwin Church, Jervis McEntee, *Arch of Titus*, 1871, oil on canvas, 74 x 49 (188 x 124.5), The Newark Museum, Dr. J. Ackerman Coles Bequest, 1926



Frank Forshew, *Isabel Charlotte (Downie) Church* (1871–1935), c. 1885, photograph, 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ (10.5 x 16.2), New York State Office of Parks Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region



South American Landscape, Tropical Scenery, 1873, oil on canvas, 39³/₁₆ x 60 (99.5 x 152.4), The Brooklyn Museum, Dick S. Ramsay Fund (at left)

The Aegean Sea, 1877, oil on canvas, 54¹/₄ x 84³/₈ (137.8 x 214.3), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Mrs. William H. Osborn, 1902 (at right)



- in the Wilderness*, cat. 34 (1860) Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- 1877 September. At Mount Katahdin, Maine.
Completes: **Morning in the Tropics*, cat. 49 (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.); *The Aegean Sea* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)
- 1878 September to 2 October. At Mount Katahdin, Maine.
Exhibits: **The Parthenon*, cat. 45 (1871) and **Morning in the Tropics*, cat. 49 (1877) Exposition Universelle, Paris; *The Aegean Sea* (1877) Century Club and Goupil's Gallery, New York; *Evening on the Sea* (possibly painting in Graham Gallery, New York) NAD no. 473
- 1879 1 October. At Mount Katahdin, Maine.
Completes: *The Monastery of Our Lady of the Snows* (Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio)
Exhibits: **Morning in the Tropics*, cat. 49 (1877), Century Club, New York
- 1880 July. Sketches at Lake George, New York.
 Fall. Sketches at Lake Millinocket, Maine; later in North Carolina.
Exhibits: **Morning in the Tropics*, cat. 49 (listed as *El Rio de Luz*) (1877), *New England Landscape*, and *Damascus* (1869), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- From 1880 through 1900, only sporadic activity in painting and sketching; winters spent in Mexico; summers divided between Olana and Lake Millinocket, Maine.
- 1881 **Completes:** *Evening in the Tropics* (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut)
- 1882 June. At Hudson, New York.
Completes: *The Mediterranean Sea* (private collection); *El Ayn (The Fountain)* (Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts)
- 1883 17 July. Death of his mother.
 December. In Mexico.
- 1884 21 December. In Mexico.



- 1885 1 May. Still in Mexico.
- 1886 Touches up **Niagara*, cat. 30 (1857) at Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
5 March. Death of his older sister, Elizabeth Mary.
- 1887 May. In Saratoga Springs.
- 1888 Begins studio wing on house at Olana.
- 1889 23 February–27 April. In Mexico.
Completes: *Moonrise in Greece* (Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California); *Ruins at Baalbeck* (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut)
- 1890 23 January–15 April. In Mexico.
- 1891 Studio wing at Olana completed.
7 February. Daughter Isabel marries Jeremiah Black.
17 November. Granddaughter Mary born to Isabel and Jeremiah Black.
Completes: *The Iceberg* (Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania); *Jungle Interior* (Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York)
- 1892 27 March. In Mexico.
- 1893 21 January–27 February. In Mexico with painter T. Worthington Whittredge (1820–1910).
7 March. Granddaughter Isabel born to Isabel and Jeremiah Black.
27 March–26 April. In Chattanooga and Lookout Mountain, Tennessee; then to Washington, D.C.; York, Pennsylvania, and New York.
16 December. Departs for Mexico, traveling with architect James Renwick (1818–95).
Exhibits: *The Aegean Sea* (1877), American Fine Arts Society, London
- 1894 February. Still in Mexico.

The Monastery of Our Lady of the Snows, 1879, oil on canvas, 46³/₄ x 72¹/₈ (118.8 x 183.2), The Cleveland Museum of Art, Hinman B. Hurlbut Collection (at left)

Evening in the Tropics, 1881, oil on canvas, 32¹/₂ x 48⁹/₁₆ (82.6 x 123.3), Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Bequest of Mrs. Clara Hinton Gould (at right)



Walter Launt Palmer, *Church on a Balcony in Orizaba, Mexico*, 1895, photograph, 2¼ x 3⅜ (5.7 x 8.6), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

- 1895 2 January. Departs from New York to Mexico with Walter Palmer.
December. To Mexico from New York with author Sylvester Baxter (1850–1927) and Mr. Graves of Hartford.
Completes: *Mount Katahdin from Millinocket Camp* (private collection), his last dated canvas.
- 1896 February–March. Still in Mexico.
3 December. Departs from New York to Mexico City with son Louis and author Charles Dudley Warner (1829–1900).
- 1897 19 December. In Cuernavaca, Mexico, with Mr. Graves.
- 1898 24 March. Still in Mexico.
1 October. Granddaughter Louise born to Isabel and Jeremiah Black.
19 December. Departs with his son Louis to winter in Mexico.
- 1899 12 May. Death of his wife.
18 October. Son Theodore marries Amalie Vanderkief.
3 November. Departs with his son Louis to winter in Mexico.
- 1900 March. Returns to New York in poor health.
7 April. In New York, dies at age seventy-three in the home of his friend and patron William H. Osborn.
Buried next to his wife in Spring Grove Cemetery, Hartford, Connecticut.
28 May–15 October. Memorial exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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An Unfinished Biography of the Artist

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER

Chapter I

Annotations

DEBORA RINDGE

Charles Dudley Warner (1829–1900), author, editor, and a close friend to Frederic Edwin Church, began this biography shortly before the artist's death in April 1900. Unfortunately, Warner had completed only five chapters and begun the sixth when he himself died several months later.

Although the location of the original manuscript is not known, it is thought to have been a part of the Church family papers at one time, for a typescript of it was at Olana when it became a state historic site in 1966. From this typescript, kindly provided by the Olana State Historic Site, the biography is published for the first time. Only typographical errors have been corrected; otherwise it is unedited. Most of the letters and other documents Church provided to Warner as source material for this biography have never been found.

Warner came to know the Church family when he moved to Hartford in 1860. Born in Plainfield, Massachusetts, he practiced law in Chicago until he came to Hartford to work as a newspaper editor. In 1867 he became coeditor of the Hartford *Courant* and in 1884 an editor of *Harper's* magazine. He published biographies of John Smith and Washington Irving in 1881, but he was more widely known as a prolific and popular essayist. He also wrote four novels, including *The Gilded Age* (1873), which he coauthored with friend and neighbor Samuel Langhorne Clemens.

Frederic Edwin Church was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on May 4, 1826. He was the only son of Joseph and Eliza Church. On both sides he was of good New England stock. His paternal ancestor was Richard Church, one of the original proprietors of Hartford, probably coming from England to Massachusetts Bay with the Dorchester immigrants. Several of his ancestors were of the Plymouth Colony. On his father's side appear the names of Standish and Howland. His mother's maiden name was Janes. William Janes, the first of the family from England, was among the original settlers of New Haven, and one of the signers of the Planters' Covenant. Removing to Northampton, Massachusetts, he lost nearly all his property by the Indian war. Governor Bradford of Plymouth was one of the maternal forebears. Notable names on that side are also those of Mason and Fitch. Major John Mason was eminent both as a soldier and a legislator. He was a lieutenant under Sir Thomas Fairfax; and Miles Standish, John Underhill, and Lyon Gardiner, afterwards all famous captains, were his comrades. The famous inventor of the first practical steamboat, John Fitch, comes into the line in England. Other names in the maternal ancestry are Judd, Steele, Loomis, White, Moore, Allger, Norton, Hanson, Carpenter, Peck, Lyon, Warren and Skinner. In the paternal line may be found the names of Buckley, Wyard, Williamson, Cobb, Lewis, Olmsted, Loomis, Hosmer, Bushnell, Pitkin, Goodwin, Woodford, Stanley, Lyman and Hale.

His birthplace was on Temple street, but for most of his Hartford life his home was a roomy, old-fashioned house at No. 28 Trumbull street, with a pleasant garden of flowers and many fruit trees. Here the boy was brought up with his two sisters, Elizabeth and Charlotte, in the comfortably plain circumstances of a prosperous New England family of that period. His father had always been well to do, identified with various manufacturing interests, both in that hive of Yankee industry, and in other parts of New England. He was also largely concerned in insurance and banking enterprises. As a man of business Joseph Church was steadily successful and in the course of his life he accumulated a handsome fortune.

Hartford of that day was a snug and flourishing town, with the air of a typical New England centre of the age when all New England was distinctly rural—a fringe of commercial communities dotting the coast and occasionally lying inland on a navigable stream; little market-towns scattered here and there, and the days of power-manufacturing not far beyond their beginning. As a river port it was of relatively greater importance than it is now, for the lines of commerce extended up, as well as down the Connecticut. There was regular steamboat communication with New York, but all overland transportation was by stagecoach, and it was not until young Church had ceased to be a resident of his native city that the railway connections with the metropolis were established. The Connecticut valley was then, as it is now, the home of the most skillful mechanics in the United States, and this factor was already strong in determining the development of the place. As one of the dual capitals of the State, the rank of Hartford as a centre was beyond that implied by its few thousand inhabitants, and it had the

Emily and Robert de Forest, *Charles Dudley Warner reading in the Court Hall, Olana*, 11 October 1884, photograph, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Joseph Edward Church (1793–1876) was a successful Hartford businessman, jeweler, and silversmith who served on the boards of several banks and an insurance company. He and his wife, **Eliza Janes Church** (1796–1883) had three sons, but Frederic was the only one to survive. They also had two daughters, who are introduced later in the manuscript.

Richard Church (1610–67) immigrated to America from London. He is first recorded in Hartford in 1637.

William Janes (1610?–90) settled in Hartford in 1637.

William Bradford (1589/90–1657), one of the leaders of the Pilgrim expedition to America, landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620 and was for many years the governor of Plymouth colony. The Janes and Bradford families were linked when Jonathan Janes, great-grandson of William Janes, married Irene Bradford, granddaughter of William Bradford.

John Mason (1600–72) came to Massachusetts from England in 1630. He was an officer of the Connecticut militia and a colonial official. In 1637 he became a military hero when he defeated the Pequot Indians at Mystic. Mason was deputy governor of Connecticut from 1660 to 1669. He died of wounds suffered in a battle with the Narragansets.

John Fitch (1743–98) was an inventor and metalcrafter born in South Windsor, Connecticut. He invented the steamboat in 1785.

Elizabeth Mary (1824–86) was Frederic's older sister, and **Charlotte Eliza** (1832–67) his younger sister.



The population of **Hartford** in 1830 was 51,131. *Abstract of the Fifth Census of the United States, 1832* (Washington, 1832), 7. Hartford became the capital of Connecticut in 1665 but shared the designation with New Haven beginning in 1701. The government sat in each capital in alternate years until various proposals for changing this rather inconvenient arrangement caused statewide debate in the late 1860s. In 1873 the city of Hartford won a referendum to become the sole capital; the change became effective in May 1875.

Jonathan Edwards (1703–58), a dynamic Congregational minister, was a controversial but influential theologian. An advocate of strict Calvinist belief and moral discipline, he was one of the leaders of the popular religious revival known as the Great Awakening, which challenged the complacent religious practice of many new Englanders in the 1740s.

Warner refers to one of his earlier publications, *Captain John Smith (1579–1631), Sometime Governor of Virginia, and Admiral of New England: A Study of His Life and Writings* (New York, 1881). The settlement of the Virginia colony is discussed in chapters 12 and 13.

historical perspective of one of the oldest of New England communities. Being a focus of Yankee energy, shrewdness, and thrift, accumulations of capital had laid the foundations for the great insurance institutions of the city. With wealth had come not exactly leisure—for the people of Connecticut were always too busy with the practical aspects of life to include that term in their vocabulary—but at least a deal of substantial comfort and of ease in life. This wealth was pretty well distributed and there was in Hartford an unusual proportion of those who, both in the regard of the community and in their own esteem, were accounted rich, according to the modest estimation of a period when millionaires were all unknown in the United States. The ranks of the well to do were likewise uncommonly numerous in this community, whose general atmosphere was one of prosperity commensurate with the fat soil of the Connecticut's alluvial levels.

In such a community, where a high average of intelligence was necessary equipment for its common activities, and education was accordingly respected, the cultivation that means gentleness in life, with essence held above form, was inevitably a social characteristic, and the charming qualities of refinement and high breeding in beautiful simplicity that make Hartford a delightful centre today, typical of the best of New England, was born of the homelier sensibility of the society that gave the controlling tone to the life of that day. That life, was of course, shaded by strong religious influences. These were of a somewhat more austere cast than in eastern New England where Unitarianism had become dominant, overwhelming church and college with a wave of liberalism. This wave had pretty well lost its momentum before it reached the Connecticut valley, and it gave but little color to spiritual or intellectual conditions there, which took shape under a prevalent orthodoxy that has but gradually yielded to the action of the nineteenth-century solvents. This orthodoxy still held to the standards of Jonathan Edwards in its formal manifestations, but social conventions had been already notably relaxed, and though still not lacking in severity life under its tenets passed in rounds by no means unsmiling. The reputed blue-laws of Connecticut had indeed never existed to cast a chilling shadow over the land; the real Blue Laws belonged to a more southerly latitude; for, as Mr. Warner has shown us in his life of John Smith, they were of Virginia enactment—a colony of the Cavaliers, not of Puritans.

The Churches were a typical well-to-do family of this community. The boy Frederic grew amid wholesome surroundings, the centre of affections which, though undemonstrative in their expression, after the New England fashion of the day, were none the less deep. He was the object of high hopes as an only son. His parents were too sensible to spoil him with indulgence, but nothing was spared to assure him an adequate development. His life at home was tranquil and happy, pervaded by the air of sweet domesticity in which has been shaped the character of so many a New England boy. With all the exuberance of an uncommonly active nature and the keen sensibility of an essentially artistic temperament, there appear to have been no restraints imposed upon him sufficient to chafe him and impel him to break their bonds. As the man was known, it follows that the boy must have had an exceptionally elastic vitality, irrepressibly buoyant and mischief-loving. But he had the balance-wheel of self control, and the depth of his affections, the strength of his home attachments made him a tractable lad.

The boy's talent for drawing was very early manifest. The most primitive, the most universal of manual arts, the first that exercises the infant mind and the parent of letters, it is notable that when the tendency of the individual to depict the things and the life about him begins to transcend its first crude expressions the gift becomes imbued with something of the marvellous, almost of the miraculous, in the esteem of the multitude. One of the boy's first

remembrances was of his attendance at an infant school—a very small one. His gift for drawing seemed so notable that he used to be placed on a chair on the platform and left there to make drawings that would interest others. He remembered some people coming expressly to look at the drawings he had made. No examples of this juvenile work have been preserved. His youthful copy books show a somewhat cramped writing. Like that of many artists, his penmanship was never beautiful. But some ornamental lettering in these books, done with pen, indicates a true and steady hand.

Young Frederic went for a short time to a public school in charge of _____ who afterwards established the Hartford Asylum for Deaf Mutes, where talking with the fingers was taught. The teacher's wife was deaf and dumb. All the children in the school learned to talk with their fingers and found it very convenient as a substitute for whispering, with less danger of detection.

He next went to the public high school, whose head was a noted teacher, Theodore Wright. Later, Mr. Wright established a private school in Hartford and young Church was transferred to that.

This school was established in a fine old Colonial house, surrounded by pleasant grounds. It was both a boarding and a day school. When his parents went into the country summers Frederic was left there, and he used to walk to the school when they were at home. He was then between sixteen and seventeen years old. It is notable that among his schoolmates was a boy of the same given name as himself, likewise a son of Hartford who was destined to rise to the foremost rank in another field of art, as well as to achieve eminence in other capacities—Frederick Law Olmsted, the great landscape architect. Another schoolfellow was Charles Loring Brace, who in New York became celebrated as a philanthropist, devoted to the welfare of poor children. There were several other pupils in the school who became noted in various walks in life. Both Olmsted and Brace were somewhat older than Church.

In his schooling the boy was put through the usual course of Latin and Greek, with less than the usual intellectual results. His gifts in that direction were below the average; he used to say of himself: "I was as stupid as an owl in languages." He got the credit, however, of turning out exceedingly free translations! He felt some little interest in geometry, but not any in arithmetic. It was not hard, however, for him to learn his lessons, though he was apt to be behindhand in his studies.

In a copy-book that has been preserved are written down a number of his compositions. While by no means remarkable in a literary sense, there are certain characteristic things about the work. The almost entire lack of punctuation indicates that it belongs to a very early period in life, probably not later than his tenth year at the most. Yet the spelling is exceptionally good, indicating an unusual sense of accuracy. A couple of these efforts are of sufficient interest as the work of a small boy to justify reproduction here, exhibiting the amusing side of the juvenile point of view. The following Crusoe-like "serial," which has no little fertility of invention, is particularly notable for the weight given to mechanical details in the description—something quite typical of the boy, and the man that grew out of him:

"I was born in Massachusetts 1781 and was removed to Boston in my 13 year my father was a captain and being desirous to be near the sea he removed to Boston when I was about 21 my father made me midshipman of his ship which was called the Elisa one time my father was sick and he gave me command of his ship I then went to the west-indies and thence to the east Indies when I got home I found my father dead I then gave my mother my money and went to sea the next time she went with me having put all her things on board and carried the baby this time we were un fortunate we were wrecked on a little island but I

The **unnamed schoolmaster** is Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (1787–1851). Warner's chronology is confused, however, for Gallaudet directed the Hartford Asylum for Deaf Mutes from its establishment in 1817 (before Church was born) until 1830. It was the first school for the deaf in the United States, conceived by a group of Connecticut businessmen as a philanthropic effort. They selected Hartford minister Gallaudet to head the school and sent him abroad to study. In Paris he learned the sign language methods used by the Abbé Sicard at his famous school for the deaf. When Gallaudet resigned his directorship in 1830, he retired to his home in Hartford, writing a number of educational and religious texts until he became chaplain to the Connecticut Retreat for the Insane in 1838. At some point during this "retirement," he apparently taught, for later in life Church wrote that one of his earliest instructors was Dr. Gallaudet and recalled the mischievous use of sign language practiced by the students. Frederic Church to Charles Dudley Warner, 16 December 1887, transcript, Archive of Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York, hereafter cited as Olana Archive. Joel Sweimler, curator of Olana, provided this reference.

Sophia Fowler (1798–1877) married Gallaudet on 29 August 1821. Like her, nearly half of the first students to enroll at the Hartford school in 1817 were more than eighteen years old.

Theodore Wright taught at the Hartford Grammar School; Frances A. Hoxie of the Connecticut Historical Society has kindly shared her research on this school and its students. Wright then moved to the Wisconsin Territory, where he became involved in business and manufacturing.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822–1903) was the first professional landscape architect in the United States. A designer of urban parks, private estates, and college campuses across the country, his best-known project is New York's Central Park, which he designed with Calvert Vaux in 1857.

Charles Loring Brace (1826–90) achieved international fame for his work in the slums of New York. A leader of philanthropic enterprises that promoted self-help, he founded the Children's Aid Society in New York in 1853, dedicated to the education, health, housing, and recreation of immigrants. Contrary to Warner's description, Brace was actually a few days younger than Church, born 19 June 1826. Brace and Olmsted (above) remained close friends through life.

saved my mother and myself by getting to land in a little boat when she got on shore I went to the ship and got some sailcloth to make a tent and some planks and beams to make a house having returned to the Island I began the house having 3 shovels and 5 hoes I made four holes in the ground and put four of the beams in them and then the earth around them. And then I nailed boards over and around them leaving a place at the top as I thought I should want water I placed my roof Slantain and put a pipe there I then nailed some lathes on the inside

To be continued

“I then made some mortar for I had put some lime on board and I took some of the sand on the beach and got some water and this was the way I made the mortar Having some tin on board I made a trowel and plastered the wall. Then I began a fireplace but just as I began it, it grew so dark that I could not see so I went home or in our tent as I might have said here I found my mother had got a supper for me after I had eaten this I went to sleep on some sail-cloth. The next morning I took a light supper (!!!) and went and finished my house and made a table for the house

To be continued

“I then told my mother that my house was finished so she went into it and then removed her utensiles I then went to the ship and took home 8 of gunpowder and a high stove and two little cannons about a pound weight (!!!) I then went home. One day I saw a lisard about 3 feet long asleep I loaded both of the cannons and placed them close to his eyes and touched them off (O!) both to gether and put him on a stone and being tired I sat on his back but I had not killed him for he run off with me on his back (O dear) I remembered my cannons and put some powder in them but I could not find a ball at length found 3 in a hole in my pocket I took these & shot him dead and brought him home after a great deal of labour

To be continued

“When I got home there was nobody in the house save the baby who was playing but just then my mother came in with a gourd full of the finest strawberries she said she would fix them for eating the next day and I went out with my gun I had not gone far before I saw a goat I was going to kill it when I found it had got caught in a bush so I went and carried him home and tied him with a string in the morning my mother brought in the strawberries in a dish of milk I was surprised for I did not know where she got the milk but she told me she had milked the goat we then made a delicious breakfast on our strawberries

To be continued

“I then went out and saw a sail I then made signs and they came and carried us to boston.”

It may be noted that the parenthetical comments in the foregoing were inserted in lead-pencil, probably by himself at a later date. The following bit of natural history has a dramatic touch in its conclusion:

“Life of a spider.

“The first I can remember of myself I was in a silken bag with my companions one day I saw a great number hooked thing cut a hole in the bag which frightened me very much but I saw it was my mother, she was a big thing. When she see me and the rest she took good care of us but one day a great woman come with a broom and knocked me down and I then got on her back and she could not find me so I got off from her and spun a web but she came again and found me and raised the broom.”

The only letter of his schooldays that appears to have been preserved was to his sister Elizabeth, who was visiting their uncle in Rochester, New York, in August, 1842. His writing at the age of sixteen is plainer and more regular, if less facile, than that of his maturity. He remarks: "I have taken up a new study, γζηηz, which I find is a very crooked language." And he sends word to his cousin: "Just inform Charles, that any time when he has leisure, I should be glad to see him this way. There are so many railroads in operation, that it is the easiest thing in the world, to slip over-east." Then he tells his sister: "Our Old 'Orse has three sound legs; the fourth is better, although he walks a little lame now and then."

The boy's education came from various sources other than his regular lessons. He became a great reader very early, and the habit remained all through life. He felt a keen interest in the general affairs of the world. He never followed any particular line of reading. He was very fond of works of travel and was naturally always interested in anything relating to art. He was also fascinated with accounts of machines and inventions, and kept up the interest all through life.

His childhood passion for drawing was supplanted for a time by his growing interest in mechanics, though the two went together to a considerable extent, and naturally they helped each other. His father was interested in factories and had a great many tools around the house. The boy took great delight in using them. Hartford was then a great tool-making place, as it is now. The boy was surrounded with an atmosphere of mechanical ingenuity, the air swarmed with new ideas from hundreds of active brains, and the soil was fertile with inventions. Frederick not only made a clock that would actually go, but it would even keep any kind of time! Another thing which he made that would go was a miniature steam engine. Practising at invention was a favorite pastime. He used to invent—or at least try to—a variety of things. His father was desirous to make a physician of him, but he never showed the slightest inclination towards that profession. He once asked his son what he would like to be.

"I would like to be an inventor," was the answer.

The father laughed and said there was no such profession. Had he been encouraged to devote himself to mechanics—as perhaps he would have been, had his parents foreseen the awakening of his passion for art—there can be little doubt that he would have distinguished himself with valuable contributions to progress in that direction, and perhaps even have earned fame as a great inventor. But there were no great technical schools in those days, and mechanical engineering was hardly recognized as a special pursuit. Moreover, while it was all very well for a man to work his way up from the bench, easy circumstanced parents at that time felt that it was hardly the thing for their son to have seriously to do with the grease and grime of the mechanic.

The boy's school, however, contributed towards this bent in a marked degree. Mr. Wright was an educator of advanced ideas. He anticipated the manual training principles of today. He had many other things for his pupils beside the school. One of these was a workshop for the boys, well provided with tools. This had the keenest attraction for the lad, who used to spend most of his time there, outside of school hours. It was there that he made most of the contrivances aforementioned, for the shop was more thoroughly equipped with the proper tools than his home was.

One day when he reached school ahead of time he took a notion to start up the engine in the shop. He kindled a fire under the boiler and then turned his attention to his studies. He had meant to keep run of the engine, but he became so absorbed in his studies that he forgot all about it. Everything was tranquil when suddenly there came an explosion; the boiler had blown up, for it was without a safety-valve. Nobody was harmed, and when they found out the cause, both teachers and scholars well nigh split their sides with laughing. It struck

In the collections of the Olana State Historic Site, the only example of the spelling of the artist's name as "**Frederick**" appears as an engraving on a silver spoon. From at least 1844, date of the earliest letter in the Olana Archive, the artist consistently signed his correspondence "Frederic"; I am grateful to Joel Sweimler for providing this information. The name, spelled in this fashion, was popular on the Janes side of the family in the nineteenth century. See Rev. Frederic Janes (1808-?), *The Janes Family* (New York, 1868), 390, for a list of Janes relatives, all contemporaries with the given name "Frederic."

everybody as a huge joke that a not over-diligent pupil should have studied so hard as to burst the boiler. The fact that he was so preoccupied in studying as to forget the affairs of his beloved shop counted rather in his favor than otherwise and he was not even censured. He was a pranksome boy, and though this was an unintentional joke he enjoyed its effect as hugely as did the rest.

Chapter II

With waxing adolescence the inclination of the youth toward his destined career began to assert itself irresistably. To the community at large in that day the world of art was a realm unknown and almost incomprehensible. Yet a soil as rich in invention as was that of Connecticut must be correspondingly fertile in artistic possibilities. The poet, the painter and the inventor are necessarily of kindred nature; at the root the same, though so diverse in manifestation. In each the faculty implies the free exercise of the creative imagination.

Throughout his boyhood Church had held his soul unconsciously open to the influences that were so powerfully giving shape to his individuality. His great passion was for natural scenery, and in his frequent fishing excursions, in his roamings with companions through woods and fields in the beautiful country around Hartford, he was ever observing the world about him and training that wonderful visual memory of his to the orderly accumulation of vast store of recorded impressions upon which in after life he was to draw at will according to the needs of his art. The novice in art commonly concerns himself with the more palpable facts in the artistic phases of the world above him. But the delicacy of the boy's perceptions is attested by the irresistible charm that the evanescent qualities of the atmosphere, the luminous depths of the sky, the infinite tone gradations in the clouds, had for him. It is related that he would often return from his ramblings in the country with his hat full of pencil sketches of the clouds.

He appears to have taken drawing lessons at school, but these apparently consisted of nothing more than the conventional copying of the various lithographed designs in the drawing-books of that period. A few of these copies have been preserved—representations of aggressively picturesque castles, cottages, water-mills, etc. The reproductions are conscientious, and in their delicacy have a notably confident touch, but naturally are not otherwise remarkable.

His desires for instruction in art led to a course of drawing lessons with a locally very notable teacher, Benjamin H. Coe, a man of strenuous character and widely celebrated for his competence as an instructor, with private students and large classes in the chief towns of New England, New York and New Jersey. He appears to have been exceptionally thorough in his method. At the same time young Church, who was then about sixteen years old, took lessons in oils for six months with a resident painter, A. H. Emmons.

The artistic conditions of that period were primitive. The innate love of the beautiful that exists in all peoples had little to feed upon and less to direct and develop it. As an end in itself the quest of beauty was regarded as something too trivial to find a legitimate place in the concerns of life among a community so serious and so practically minded, while the religious influences of the time were largely of such a nature as to class it with the frivolous allurements that necessarily take rank among sinful devices. We have seen, however, that this attitude was

Benjamin Hutchins Coe (1799–after 1883), of Hartford, taught drawing in a number of north-eastern cities, including New York and New Haven. He settled in the latter in 1854. He published books on drawing and exhibited at the National Academy of Design from 1846 to 1863. About 1864, he gave up teaching to pursue temperance work. Church studied with him in 1842–43.

Alexander Hamilton Emmons (1816–84) was a painter of landscapes, portraits, and miniatures. He spent most of his life in Norwich except for about 1843 to 1848, when he maintained a studio in Hartford. Church studied with Emmons as well as with Coe (above) in 1842–43.

gradually, though almost imperceptibly, giving place to more genial views. These had already established themselves definitely though playing an apparently inconsiderable part in popular life. Art, for example, held a lawful place as an agent for the representation of historical facts. A people so patriotic and so filled with national pride naturally attached due value to the ability to depict events of historical moment and, in the prevalent lack of aesthetic discrimination, even to attach vastly exaggerated artistic worth to such efforts. One of the most eminent names in Connecticut was that of Trumbull, the soldier painter of the Revolution; his achievements in art earned him the profoundest respect, and his huge canvasses of Revolutionary battle-subjects made the deepest impression upon the multitude.

Romancified sentiment characterized the literary taste of that period, and its pictorial illustration was correspondingly popular. The New England love for reading, so long limited to grave themes that included a too robust proportion of polemics, both religious and political, had eagerly entered the domain of romance, both in poetry and prose, and found corresponding delight in the sparse and seldom adequate attempts at delineative realization of these imaginings. It was the age of “annuals” and of steel engravings, and these forms of art were devoted to pictures commonly populated by figures of simpering, mincing and otherwise vapid type, with large and languishing eyes that were then deemed soulful. This sentimentalization of art materially affected the work of even the masters of that period, or at least the greater number of them,—before the advent of Cole—and in consequence, with all its sincerity, it lacks living interest for later generations, whom it concerns only in a historic sense. Yet the widening interest felt for all this work indicated a more general striving after and appreciation of the things that embellish life and lift it above the plane of the merely sordid.

The dominant factor in giving the artist, in his aspect of painter, a strong foothold in the land, was the demand for portraiture. It is fortunate for art that photography was not discovered before it was. The desire to perpetuate the features of beloved members of the family made a wide demand for the services of the portrait-painter, who relatively was a more widely known member of the community than he is now. The average portrait-painter stood then very much as the makers of photographic enlargements, who swarm through the land like book-agents, taking orders for great “portrait factories”, do now. Very naturally they turned out a raft of truck in the shape of ghastly caricatures of their subjects, but on the whole they were certainly no worse than the horrible “enlargements” that cater to the rustic and the burgess patronage of today. A deal of tolerable, and not a little really excellent work, was done by these portrait painters of the pre-photographic period. Moreover, they furnished probably the larger number of recruits for the making [of] true artists. The artistic faculty is more widespread among men than is commonly deemed. Outside of the routine workers in the field the practice of portraiture furnished the necessary technical schooling to not a few genuine artists. Their opportunities to employ their talents outside of their regular work were all too few, for there was little encouragement for the production of pictures as works of art alone. But at least portraiture taught them to observe character, study its expression, and reveal it in their work, and occasionally some would find the means and the leisure to attempt to realize their aspirations upon canvas.

In pursuit of their calling these portrait painters were wont to roam all over the country. Their existence was often precarious enough, and socially the portrait-painter was esteemed in much the same degree as were tin-peddlers and other itinerants. They were apt to be merry, easy-going fellows, living from hand to mouth and leading careless lives. This vagrant sort of existence has contributed towards the bohemian repute of the painter’s life, no doubt, and has had its share in founding the traditions of the vocation, though the artistic temperament,—

John Trumbull (1756–1843), son of the governor of Connecticut and a Revolutionary War officer, was a painter best known for portraits and historical subjects. The recipient of one of the first artistic commissions awarded by Congress, he created four paintings of Revolutionary subjects for the Capitol Rotunda in Washington. With friends and fellow artists Asher B. Durand and William Dunlap, he discovered the work of Thomas Cole, Church’s teacher, in New York in 1825. Trumbull was an important and influential artist who wielded great power as president of the American Academy of Fine Arts in New York from 1816 to 1835. Later in this chapter, Warner mentions Trumbull’s paintings in the Wadsworth Atheneum collection in Hartford.

sensitive as it is sensuous, correspondingly impressionable, and prone to act upon impulse—is undoubtedly the chief factor.

In the evolution of painting in America the portrait-painter established the calling on the firm, though prosaic footing of a trade, supplied the equipment and the technical experience, such as it was, and at least wonted the public to such things as brush and palette, paints and canvas.

Of educational opportunities other than those enjoyed by young Church in the pursuit of his art there were practically no other or better anywhere in the country, even in the large cities. There were few good collections of paintings or sculpture, either public or private. Occasionally a notable picture by a European master might be seen. Beyond instruction to a very limited degree, including the study of perspective, copying, drawing from the round, little from the cast, less from life, and practically none from the nude, there were no schools. Such art production as there was, was mostly a pale reflection from foreign examples and a following of foreign standards at second and third hand. It was inevitable, therefore, that the votaries of this art, when it did become actually creative in this country, should have turned directly to materials next at hand for inspiration. And since American life was then too new, too raw, for expression in art forms—having hardly found a place in literature—it is quite natural that they should have been drawn most powerfully toward that phase which represents the most modern aspect of art, the themes for which existed on every hand in as great abundance and beauty as anywhere in the world. It was therefore fitting that an artist so rarely equipped by nature as Church was should have become the foremost exponent of American landscape painting.

It was the demand for portraiture that gave to minor centres, like Hartford, their little colonies of resident artists. Community of tastes naturally drew young Church into association with the members of the Hartford group. Beside Emmons, his instructor in painting, who was ten years his senior, he became particularly intimate with two other artists, Ralph Isham and Edward Sheffield Bartholomew, both of whom were in their early manhood when he was at the entrance of youth. Whether in Paris or London, New York or Boston, Hartford or Indianapolis, the same stamp marks genius everywhere. Some of the correspondence of these four that has been preserved shows that their associations, their tastes, their ideals, their aspirations, were those shared by artists universally. The three young delighted in the company of the brilliant boy, recognizing his uncommon talent, undeveloped though it then was, and taking keen pleasure in his lively nature, superabounding in fun and quick in spirit. Emmons was also light-hearted, ready for fun, and of ever cheerful outlook. Uninstructed, he had talent of no mean order. In some of his letters to Church, written in the first few years after the latter left Hartford, are bits of off-hand pen-and-ink work running through the text that show a clever hand and a decided feeling for graceful line and beauty of expression. Isham, like Emmons, was self taught; but Bartholomew, with Church, had studied drawing under Coe. Both Isham and Bartholomew were all the more drawn to Church because the gaiety of his temperament met a lack of high spirits in their own, and his generous sympathetic nature was ever ready to respond to calls upon it. Isham had a morbid disposition and was severely critical of his own work as well as that of others. His art was of excellent promise, but he died young and had had little opportunity to realize his aims. Bartholomew, who in his young manhood was strikingly handsome in face and figure, was quiet, shy and reserved, and impetuous and hot-tempered withal. Beginning with drawing and painting he felt the plastic impulse strong within him; form exerted a superior fascination above line, and his determination to become a sculptor was hastened by his suddenly discovering that he was color-blind. He was at work

Ralph Isham (1820–?) was a painter of landscapes and portraits. As Warner notes later in this chapter, Isham was the first director of the gallery of the Wadsworth Atheneum, which opened in Hartford in 1844. **Edward Sheffield Bartholomew** (1822–58) studied painting but turned to sculpture when he realized he was color-blind. He moved from Colchester, Connecticut, to Hartford in 1836, then to Italy in 1850. He traveled in the Near East in 1851. In chapter 3 he is discussed as the second director of the Wadsworth Atheneum gallery.

upon a large canvas when he found that he was unable to distinguish green from blue. He drew his brush across his painting, kicked easel and picture to the end of the room and threw palette and brush after them, to be abandoned forever. He achieved fame in his art, but unlike Church, it was by no pleasant path. His way was beset by obstacles at every hand; disease, suffering, and repeated discouragement in his work made his life a tragic one. The helpful friendship of Church was therefore all the more valued by him.

Hartford was one of the first cities of the country to have a public gallery of art. This was due to the public spirit of Mr. Daniel Wadsworth, who was the most influential art-patron in Connecticut. In 1842 Mr. Wadsworth gave a fine lot on Main street for the erection of an art gallery. In consequence the Wadsworth Atheneum was established by an association formed for the purpose, and the gallery was opened early in 1844. Ralph Isham had the fortune to be placed in charge. The most prominent feature was the works of Col. Trumbull, which had been recently sold at auction by the Art Union. Very appropriately there is in the gallery a considerable collection of the works of Connecticut artists, making it an unusually good place to study the development of art in the State.

During the time that Church remained in Hartford the four artists remained inseparable friends. When Church returned to his old home in the summer the comradeship would be resumed, and pleasant trips for sketching would be made together into the surrounding country. As a memento of one of these trips, made in 1845, there remained inscribed for many years on a rock on Talcott mountain, near Hartford, the names of the four friends—Church, Isham, Emmons and Bartholomew—painted by their several hands.

Chapter III

The time came for young Church to decide upon his career. His father was strongly desirous that he should choose one of the learned professions, and to that end take a collegiate course. But the boy would not listen to the proposition and insisted on becoming a painter—a determination strengthened by his recent associations. The father very wisely did not insist upon his own desire but respected his son's steadfastness, though full of the gravest misgivings as to the result. And since Frederic was determined to become a painter, the father resolved to give him the best possible opportunities to acquire proficiency in the art.

Thomas Cole was then recognized as the first painter in America. He had taken pupils, but Mr. Wadsworth was an old family friend and had long been a friend and patron of Cole. The latter, several years before, had staid for some time in Hartford probably in 1831 or '32, when young Church was a small child. He had his studio in the Wadsworth house. Several, if not all, of Cole's pictures in the Wadsworth Atheneum probably belong to that period. Wadsworth used his influence with Cole to induce him to receive the youth as his disciple. The effort was successful. So at the age of eighteen years Church went to Catskill on the Hudson, where Cole had his home, to serve what might be called an apprenticeship in his art. He did not become a member of the Cole household, a comfortable boarding-place having been obtained for him in the neighborhood, but he soon won the affections of the master's family and became regarded as one of themselves.

The two years spent with Cole had the profoundest influence upon his future in many ways, both artistically and in the moulding of his general character. The noble landscape of

Daniel Wadsworth (1771–1848) was a wealthy Hartford merchant, philanthropist, amateur artist, and collector. The Atheneum in Hartford, which he modeled after the Boston Athenaeum, housed a library and the Connecticut Historical Society in addition to the art gallery. As one of Thomas Cole's most important patrons, Wadsworth facilitated the introduction of the young Frederic Church to the renowned artist; Daniel Wadsworth to Thomas Cole, 8 May 1844, microfilm, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, roll ALC2, previously published in *The Correspondence of Thomas Cole and Daniel Wadsworth*, ed. J. Bard McNulty (Hartford, 1983), 74. The first recorded purchase of a painting by Church was made by the Wadsworth Atheneum in 1846, **Hooker and Company Journeying through the Wilderness from Plymouth to Hartford, in 1636*, cat. 1 (1846, Wadsworth Atheneum).

Wadsworth was related to **John Trumbull** by marriage. A major patron, he acquired a number of paintings during the artist's lifetime. The Atheneum purchased other works from the artist's estate in 1843. Among these were five Revolutionary War subjects, which are the works Warner describes as "most prominent." Completed in 1835, these paintings were large replicas from among a group of eight (1787) that had been acquired from Trumbull by Yale College in 1831. The five later paintings were of special interest to the Wadsworth Atheneum, as the artist had intended them to be featured at a Trumbull Gallery in Hartford that Wadsworth had proposed but was never realized.

This tale of friendship between the four artists was told by H[enry] W[illard] French in his *Art and Artists in Connecticut* (Boston, 1879), 109: "For years an old rock on Talcott Mountain, near Hartford, bore the names of Church, Isham, Emmons, and Bartholomew, painted when the artists were upon a sketching trip in 1845."

Thomas Cole (1801–48), the leading landscape painter in the United States during his lifetime, accepted Church as his first student. In 1844 Church moved to Catskill, New York, where he studied with Cole for two years.

* in the exhibition

that region was never thereafter to grow unfamiliar to him. It was to lie before his eyes through the greater portion of nearly every year of his life. And singularly enough, it would seem, while it came to form a part of his very being, as it were, its features were less directly reflected in his art than almost any other scenery with which he became acquainted. Nevertheless it entered into his work, though as material assimilated to reappear in new shape, unrecognizable in form, though ever the same in substance. So this landscape became for him one of Nature's grandest schoolrooms; in its midst he was constantly observing, recording and absorbing the infinitude of facts whose possession constitutes so largely the capital of an artist.

He could not have been more fortunate in the selection of a master, for Cole was adapted to the peculiar requirements of his individuality in a way to bring out the best that was in him. Cole was an artist of the most delicate sensibility, his sensuous nature subordinate to intellectual powers of a high character that gave to his art an interpretive quality, exalted and forceful. A genuine poet, he was consequently a thoroughly poetical painter. He was the first eminent American artist to find the fascination and the main subject of his art. Natural scenery was the object of his strongest passion. As with so many others, wood-engraving, followed by portrait painting, furnished the avenues that led him to his calling. He was gifted as a musician, playing the flute well, and was fond of architecture, he had the faculty of literary expression, but the great language of his soul was the interpretation of visible nature, using the elements of landscape for the weaving of his thoughts and the expression of his ideas as the musical composer expresses himself in the melodious interweavings of a symphony. It was, in fact, the reading of a book about the natural scenery of America that kindled in the English youth an intense desire to come to this country; his enthusiasm influenced his father—who had been unfortunate in business—to such a degree as to bring him with his family to the New World for a fresh start in life when the son was eighteen years old. So the influences that formed his art and shaped his career made him truly an American artist. Belonging to a romantic period, naturally his work was romantic in its conception. Cole has been called the American “Claude Lorraine”. The title, like every designation of that character applied to a creative artist, is misleading. While Claude was the favorite master of Cole's, the American painter had traits and tendencies that differentiated him radically from the former. The manner of grouping, the picturesque intentionality of Cole's ideal landscapes, undoubtedly often suggest Claude. But the manifestly arbitrary arrangement, the unnatural juxtapositions of the elements in Claude's work have apparently no purpose other than to produce a romantic impression. But Cole used the instruments of romance in landscape to express thoughts beyond the romantic. In his chief works his methods were essentially symbolistic. He was, indeed, a great symbolist, and a master like Elihu Vedder finds an artistic American forebear in an individuality like Cole, though the latter worked along entirely different lines in the expression of kindred depths of the soul. Cole used the forms of inanimate Nature with masterful originality and force in the expression of a lofty range of thought, embodying conceptions of an epic scope.

Cole's idea of truth in art was the imitation of the true in nature, not the imitation of accidents, nor merely the common imitation of nature indiscriminately. “The true and the beautiful in art are the reproduction of the perfect in nature, and the carrying out of principles which nature suggests,” he wrote. “Art, in its true sense, is, in fact, man's lowly imitation of the creative power of the Almighty. . . . When, to our clay clogged perceptions, and to the dimness in which all objects at present are immersed, shall succeed the fine medium of eternity and the piercing vision of the soul in its new and glorious body, then shall we behold, according to the poet, that that has come to us as truth which once we knew as beauty.”

The work of Claude Gellée, called **Lorrain** (1600–82), French painter of idyllic Italianate landscapes, established a canon of classical landscape composition employed by many nineteenth-century artists.

Elihu Vedder (1836–1923), a painter of mystic and visionary subjects, was originally from New York but lived much of his life as an expatriate. His work appealed to a diverse audience, and his illustrations in the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (Boston, 1884) and other books were of special interest in literary circles.

“**The true and the beautiful . . . as beauty**” is an excerpt from Thomas Cole, journal, 27 November 1842, published in Louis Legrand Noble, *The Life and Works of Thomas Cole* (1853), ed. Elliot S. Vesell (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), 251–52.

The foregoing is important as showing the character of the influences to which the neophyte was subject at the beginning of his career and which, in the alembic of his temperament, produced results strikingly different from those embodied in the art of his master. Cole thought with his brush, as it were; behind the substance he perceived the finer spiritual fact, and his influence upon the light-hearted but thoughtful youth was correspondingly strong in that direction. A master strong in sensuous resources, but unintellectual, might have trained the pupil to record his impressions most delicately and vividly directly from subject to canvas, without the intervention of the mind. But Cole's intellectual and moral nature were in such admirable equilibrium with his sensuous nature that his example could not fail to potent with the student, though his teachings may have been confined strictly to the imparting of technical accomplishments. So, though Church employed his talents realistically rather than with the allegorical spirituality of his master, nevertheless—doubtless very largely because of these influences—his art, like his master's, though after radically differing fashion, was informed with spirituality; the spirituality that made him an interpreter of nature rather than a transcriber, and enabled him to reveal her soul through its manifestations in form. Church never rose superior to Cole in his own esteem, and all through life he was wont to speak of him with the same affectionate veneration that he must have felt for him in the first weeks of his tutelage.

The quiet river town of Catskill could not have been very different then from what it is today. It spreads over high and rolling ground at the junction of the Catskill river with the Hudson. It was then, as now, the most convenient point of departure for the Catskill mountains, whose noble wall rises ten miles away to the southwestward. This fact early made the place a favorite summer resort, especially for New York people, who found the steamboat journey, either by day or night, an easy and pleasant one. Now the trains of two railways go their shrieking way through the place, and across the river those of the great New York Central rush and rumble almost without intermission. Extensive manufacturing interests have been developed on the banks of the Catskill, giving the town more of an urban aspect. On the other hand the riverside is not so animated, or so characteristically lively, as in the days when the traffic of the Hudson was mostly transacted by the sailing craft that flecked its waters with their snowy wings.

Cole was naturally attracted to the lordly Hudson when, in 1825, he first established himself in New York, and at the first opportunity he made the trip up the river and to the Catskill mountains. This brought him to Catskill, and he was so charmed with the place that in 1827 he fitted up a studio there for the summer. Returning in 1852 from his European sojourn, he was in Catskill again the next summer. Extremely fond of rural life, and disliking the city, he soon thereafter made the place his permanent home. It was in 1846, soon after Church had finished his studies with him, that Cole built the large and pleasant house now occupied by his son Theodore, which he lived to enjoy but little more than a year.

It was in the midst of this wholesome country life that the young art student passed the two years of his novitiate. The Cole family had a pleasant little circle of friends, and Church became intimate with the young minister of the church where Cole worshipped, the Rev. Louis LeGrand Noble, who became the biographer of the master. Noble was a man of notable intellectual capacity, sympathetic, and he did not take his profession too solemnly, having a decided sense of humor. He had a genuine love of art and was intensely interested in following the work of Cole and that of his talented pupil. His correspondence with Church, carried on as long as he lived, indicated a mercurial temperament. His handwriting varied extraordinarily, at one time being abnormally large, variable and coarse, and again small and uniformly regular. He wrote an interesting book about a voyage to the North that he made with Church, “After

“**affectionate veneration.**” For example, when he was nearly sixty, Church wrote, “Thomas Cole was an Artist for whom I had and have the profoundest admiration.” Church to John D. Champlin, 11 September 1885, microfilm, Archives of American Art, roll DDU1, frames 115–16, previously cited by Franklin Kelly, *Frederic Edwin Church and the National Landscape* (Washington, 1988), 1.

Louis Legrand Noble (1813–82) was both minister and close friend to Cole and Church. In addition to writing Cole's biography, Noble also published a narrative of his travels with Church (see below) and a pamphlet guide that was sold at the exhibition of one of Church's greatest South American subjects, *Church's Painting: The Heart of the Andes* (New York, 1859).

Noble's book, *After Icebergs with a Painter: A Summer Voyage to Labrador and around Newfoundland* (New York, 1861), describes the journey he and Church made from Boston to Halifax. The book is illustrated with lithographs after Church's drawings.

Icebergs with a Painter,” and later he accumulated much material for a life of his friend that he proposed to write. Death came before he could realize an intention that might have made the present work superfluous.

Noble enjoyed many a walk about the country with Cole and his brilliant pupil, whom he mentions in his life of the master as “a mere youth, and fonder, perhaps, of the beauties spread in profusion around him than of the painting-room.” One infers from this that, boy-like, young Church was more given to what seemed like an idle roaming about the country than to a diligent application to his technical tasks at the easel. Even so intelligent a layman as Cole’s biographer did not seem to appreciate that the youth, in his apparently indolent enjoyment of the scenes about him was in reality engaged in his truest studies; at school with the greatest teacher of all, while saturating his soul in the life of nature. Noble noted, however, the facility and correctness of drawing exhibited in the student’s sketches of nature, and he quoted Cole as remarking on several occasions that “Church has the finest eye for drawing in the world”.

But could the senior Church at Hartford have known that his son’s courses in his schooling were of that fashion his misgivings as to the outcome would undoubtedly have been intensified to a conviction of failure. His idea of art-study appears to have been that it was something to be pursued with counting-room diligence, with machine-shop industry. Enclosing a remittance that his son had asked for, the father wrote to the effect that the rash experiment was costing altogether too much. The youth’s expenses, however, could not have been excessive in that place. His board, in the family of John A. Thomson, cost only three dollars a week, and there was not much to spend money upon in such a village. Only the cost of tuition with a master like Cole could have made the total outlay anything considerable. It does not appear what that was, but since Cole had never taken a pupil before he was probably well paid for the trouble. He was not a man, however, to make extravagant charges.

One of the first things that Church learned from Cole was that there is no special way for an artist to paint. He must find out the manner for himself, trying perhaps this course and that, and choose such implements of work, such a medium for his art, as might best be suited to the expression of his own individuality. The master can only guide development, correct faults, and indicate what in the work of his pupil seems to him good—not do any of the unfolding himself, as one might take an ear of corn and strip off the husks. It was in this spirit that Cole taught. “Paint when you see; paint things as you see them,” he often told his pupil. Church always bore this precept in mind. Very many young artists, after he had become famous, used to ask his advice as to the best course of study. He replied simply: “Grasp nature with one hand and do what you like with the other.”

Of course it is often of enormous value for the young painter to watch a master at his work and note the manner in which he achieves the admired results. He gains many valuable hints, and doubtless in a general way forms his style upon that of his master. But if he has an artistic individuality of his own, if he is anything more than a mere imitator, if he sees things for himself and not through the eyes of others, he will paint what he sees in his own way, and not in the way of another man. He may assimilate much from his master’s methods, but after he has learned the use of his tools, the art of dealing with materials, he cannot help handling them in a way quite his own; a way quite different from that of his preceptor. Murillo, for example, was a pupil of Velazquez, and had there been no Velazquez there would have been a very different Murillo. But since Murillo had a strong individuality he formed a style perfectly suited to its expression that was radically different from that conveyed by the tremendous technical vigor of the great Spanish realist whose brush-strokes have swept down through the

“a mere youth . . . painting-room.” Quoted in Noble, *Cole*, 272.

“Church has the finest eye. . . .” Quoted in Noble, *Cole*, 272.

A marked change in the style of **Bartolomé Esteban Murillo** (1617–82) before 1650 has often been attributed to a possible visit to Madrid c. 1648–51, where he would have worked with another artist from Seville, the celebrated **Diego Velázquez** (1599–1660).

centuries, so to speak, and stirred to its depths the technical enthusiasm of succeeding generations of artists, down to the present, which still regards Velazquez as a modern of the moderns. Nevertheless, had we the eyes to see, we might perceive how the sweeping brush-marks of Velazquez permeate the delicate surfaces of the younger painter's work, much as the rays of crystallization knit themselves together to form the solidified mass in its translucence. But the more poetic character of Murillo required a gentler utterance, and the forceful technique of his master was overlaid, as it were, by the finer texture that so well suited the mystical qualities, the transparent depths and the shimmering tones of his most typical subjects.

With Cole and Church the case was much the same. Only here the romanticist was the master and the realist was the pupil; and the realist, doubtless largely because of this fact, achieved a technique which attained the ends, not of literalism, which is quite another matter, but of a lucid representation of nature in her truest guise, by the most delicate, intricate, and almost intangible processes. It is not too much to say that, but for the fact of his tuition under such auspices—he sympathetic, receptive, and imaginative; Cole dreamy, philosophical and poetic, and deeply interested in the extraordinary technical capacity of the joyous youth who unconsciously was striving towards ideals quite other than those expressed in his master's work—Church would probably not have equipped himself with such rare completeness for his career. It was a remarkable conjunction, that of these two artists—each the master of his day in landscape painting; one practically the founder of the art in America, utilizing the forms of inanimate nature as symbols to express some of the most sublime imaginings and aspirations of the human soul; the other destined soon to be likewise the unrivalled master of landscape art on this side the Atlantic, paying homage to nature in the striving to present her in her most perfect moods. Had Cole lived no one would have watched the programs of his brilliant pupil with closer regard or greater pride. But he was only to witness the first budding of the young genius. With all his fine intuitions he had probably no idea that the youth was to make such giant strides in his art. But so soon did Church achieve the primacy in American landscape painting that he became Cole's immediate successor, and it was like passing the wand of leadership directly from one to the other.

Cole's estimate of the rank of landscape painting was expressed in the following words: "It is usual to rank it as a lower branch of the art, below the historical. Why so? Is there a better reason than that the vanity of man makes him delight most in his own image? In its difficulty . . . it is equal at least to the historical. There are certainly fewer good landscape pictures, in proportion to their number, than historical. In landscapes there is a greater variety of objects, textures, phenomena to imitate. It has expression also, not of passion, to be sure, but of sentiment, whether it be tranquil or spirit-stirring:—has its seasons, sunrise, sunset, the storm, the calm, various kinds of trees, herbage, waters, mountains, skies. And whatever scene is chosen, one spirit pervades the whole: light and darkness tremble in the atmosphere, and each change transmutes."

His pupil had a similar conception of the value of landscape art. We have seen that Cole had no particular method in teaching, and that he had impressed upon his disciple's mind that there could be no special method for studying. But early in his own career he had discovered the value of certain principles in procedure, in observation, and upon these he naturally laid due stress. Cole had been almost wholly self taught, so far as the absence of personal instruction is concerned. Very early in his formative period, when a young man of twenty-two years, he perceived that he had gone to work wrong. As he told his biographer: "hitherto he had been trying mainly to make up nature from his own mind, instead of making up his mind from

"It is usual . . . transmutes." Excerpt of letter from Cole to William Dunlap, published in Noble, *Cole*, 125.

"hitherto . . . clouds." Quoted in Noble, *Cole*, 23–24.

nature. This now flashed upon him as a radical mistake. He must not only muse abroad in nature, and catch her spirit, but gain for his eye and hand a mastery over all that was visible in her outward, material form, if he would have his pictures breathe of her spirit. This thought set him at work right: it changed his whole mind and method at once, and turned him from his easel and the dreams of fancy to seek first, as a humble learner, the rudiments of his art out in the fields and under the open sky. Once in possession of the golden thought, revealing where he should go, it was not long before there came another equally precious, revealing how he should do. And this was that he must go to the centre and work outwards: that he must not first skim the surface, and touch the outline, reversing the order of the vital processes of nature, but must begin, as nature herself begins, at the heart, and move outward and upward to the extremes, seeking the principle under the fact,—coming up with the living spirit through the earth, the stone, the water and the wood,—rising from elements to masses, from minutest details and particulars to general forms, thus reaching the surface and the outline last. According to this thought he worked: it was henceforth his law of procedure, and the path to a great mastery over nature, both in her sublime unity, and in her infinite and beautiful variety. At its first and last light, many a spring, summer and autumnal day found him on the wild banks of the Monongahela, carefully drawing, from the crinkled root that lost itself in the mould to ‘the one red leaf . . . on the topmost twig that looks up at the sky’—to the mountain line on the skirts of the sky—to the clouds far up in the sky, and the blue sky far away from the clouds.’

These principles of the master’s procedure, as thus set forth, must have had a powerful effect upon the development of a pupil so receptive. In his primitive work at Hartford the youth had selected the subjects that had most attracted him. These scenes were large, complex, and correspondingly difficult. His failure to grasp them was, of course, disheartening, but he could not see where the trouble lay. Cole told him to go out and paint what he pleased and how he pleased, but advised him to try simple things and do them as thoroughly and truthfully as possible. He thus learned how to depict all manner of details. Then, having completely familiarized himself with the nature, the individuality, of the greatest possible variety of the elements that make up a scene, having acquired the skill to reproduce them faithfully, his own intuitions showed him how to bring them together, as the maker of a machine knows how to assemble the parts in an organic whole. His mastery of the nature of his elements thus belonged to his technical equipment, like his knowledge of pigments and of manipulation, and it lay at the root of his exceptional power of dearly expressing the character of the scene.

His old artist companions at home kept affectionately in touch with him, writing him the gossip of the studios and the town. Of these his former instructor, Emmons, was his most frequent correspondent, writing with effervescent gaiety and responding evidently to what was a deal of fun in Church’s letters to him. Emmons was jubilant over his own prosperity, being rushed with orders for portraits, and was ambitious for progress in his art—an aim that he achieved in considerable measure. He looked for great things from his youthful friend and told Church that he liked the tone of his letters, smacking strongly of something that he himself possessed in a certain degree—enthusiasm. He had been to New York and had seen with his own eyes Cole’s pictures of “The Voyage of Life” and “The Course of Empire;” the second canvas in the first-named series had “knocked him all to pieces;” he had stood before it entranced, and he even wept. “If poetry ever was put upon canvas by mortal man it was in this instance,” he said.

Bartholomew wrote about a charming idea he had in mind; he contemplated modelling all the Hartford artists in bas-relief on a panel, and each was to have a cast; he wanted Church to send him a good profile of himself for the purpose. He had succeeded Isham in charge of the gallery at the Wadsworth Atheneum and had a good place to do his modelling in. All the other artists were going to sit to him for the purpose, but he would not do any of them unless he could first get Church's. Another home correspondent was Ralph J. Shaw, who was studying portraiture.

In the second year of Church's stay Cole had taken two other pupils, B. M. McConkey and John Stenfort Kidney, and the three had delightful times together. Church began to show some inclination toward historical subjects. The past of his native State naturally appealed to him in this connection. His first notable work while with Cole was a picture of "The Charter Oak," painted in 1845 and sold to the American Art Union for its distribution of 1847. He had gained some proficiency in painting the human figure, and he projected a somewhat ambitious canvas representing a scene in the foundation of Connecticut, "The Emigration of Hooker." The home circle was deeply interested in his intentions with this subject, and one of his sister Elizabeth's letters to him in the autumn of 1845 was devoted to an account of her efforts to look up the costumes of the period at the library in Hartford, with reference to the work. The picture was painted and was shown at the national academy exhibition of 1846, where it was catalogued as "Hooker and Company journeying through the wilderness from Plymouth to Hartford, in 1636." A picture that he early had in mind was a "Rip Van Winkle." But he soon found that landscape was more to his taste. His first works exhibited in New York were sent to the National Academy in 1845, when he had been with Cole about a year.

Church was now a tall and slender youth. In a letter written when he had first gone to Catskill his sister Elizabeth playfully addresses him as "your own tall Majesty." His father continued distrustful of the career that he had chosen, and sent his remittances somewhat grudgingly. In one letter he remarks that he has little confidence in the "business" which he has entered upon in meeting the expenses for a young man's maintenance. He habitually speaks of his son's calling as a "business" in his correspondence then and for several years thereafter; the common measure of the pursuit of art in those days was simply as a means for getting on in life; its purpose in meeting the soul's aspirations were hardly considered. Something that Charlotte wrote about a proposition of their father to suspend Frederic's art studies that he might go through college filled her brother with consternation. A panic-stricken letter to his father showed that art had become as meat and drink to him. His father replied explaining that his son's case was often taken up in the talk of the family circle, all feeling a deep interest in his future welfare; his own view was that it might be best for his son to get a collegiate education the better to carry out his present undertaking, knowing, as he did, that very many young artisans visit Europe for their improvement—and should it fall to his lot to go, he could wish that he should be prepared to make the voyage to his profit and honor. But he had decided not to oppose the course that might be thought best, if they had good evidence at the end of a year in Catskill that he had made progress in what he had undertaken. So he trusted that his son would persevere with his business with all diligence until he had more evidence of a decided change.

Edward Sheffield Bartholomew (1822–58) was introduced in chapter 2 as a friend from the Hartford circle of artists. He became director of the Wadsworth Atheneum gallery at the age of twenty-three.

In Noble, *Cole*, 276–77, 279, **Benjamin M. McConkey** is discussed as one of Cole's students. He was born in Maryland about 1821 and lived in Cincinnati in the 1840s. Noble does not mention **John Steinfort Kedney** (also **Kidney**) (1819–1911). Evidence of a teacher-student relationship between Cole and Kedney would be of interest. They almost certainly knew one another. Kedney was a poet and Episcopalian minister originally from New Jersey. In his poem, "To My Friend L. L. N.," he refers to a recent summer visit to the Catskills, probably with Louis Legrand Noble; *Catawba River, and Other Poems* (New York, 1847). Kedney's interest in art is indicated by his correspondence with artist William Page (John Steinfort Kidney to William Page, 20 September 1872, microfilm, Archives of American Art, roll 21, frames 1152, 1154) and two books he wrote on aesthetics in the 1880s. In addition, he and Church had at least one friend in common: Rev. H. B. Whipple, bishop of Minnesota at the end of the nineteenth century.

This is *The Charter Oak, at Hartford* (1846–47, Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company) AA-U (1847) no. 118. Another painting of this subject remained in the Church family, *The Charter Oak* (c. 1847, Olana State Historic Site). I am grateful to Joel Sweimler for clarifying the exhibition history of the two paintings. The history of the subject is discussed in Kelly, *Church*, 9–10.

**Hooker and Company Journeying through the Wilderness from Plymouth to Hartford, in 1636*, cat. 1 (1846, Wadsworth Atheneum), NAD no. 114, was purchased in the fall of 1846 by the Wadsworth Atheneum for \$130. For the history of the subject, see Kelly, *Church*, 6–9. Matthew Baigell discusses the painting in terms of nationalism in his "Frederic Church's 'Hooker and Company': Some Historic Considerations," *Arts Magazine* 56 (January 1982), 124–25.

The paintings Church exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1845 were *Twilight among the Mountains* (no. 321, Olana State Historic Site) and *Hudson Scenery* (no. 344, unlocated). Church was elected an Associate of the National Academy in 1848 and became a full member in 1849.

AA-U American Art-Union
NAD National Academy of Design

Chapter IV

His two years with Cole ended, the young painter returned to Hartford and fitted up a studio in the house on Trumbull street. He worked here for a few months, but he soon felt the need of atmosphere for his art that few artists can do without—kindred activities going on about him; artists at work and giving sympathetic companionship; works of art in greater abundance. Moreover, he felt the necessity of an environment that should not distract him from his art. So in the autumn of 1846 he went to New York.

Thenceforward his abode was elsewhere than in his native city. He entered into the life of the great city and became closely identified therewith socially as well as artistically, the head of the school of painting that has been more distinctively of New York than any other phase of art that has been developed in America, and in various ways he became a leader in the higher activities. Yet he always regarded himself as none the less a New Englander; the fact that he lived elsewhere did not affect his native sympathies; Hartford was always home to him, his associations with the place ever remained close, and all through life he took a keen interest in the affairs of his native State.

He took a studio in the Art Union Building at 497 Broadway, then the chief centre for artists, and for a few weeks lived with the family of his uncle, Mr. R. A. Janes, his mother's brother, who had lately become a resident of New York. Very naturally, affairs went a little slowly at first, and the elder Church began to feel no little concern at the necessity of replenishing his son's exchequer, apparently feeling that the outgo was liable to go on indefinitely. Frederic had been established in New York but a few weeks when his father wrote him expressing surprise that he should be so soon short of money. "I have no money to spare in this unprofitable business," he said. But enclosed twenty dollars, warning him that such an enormous expense could not be continued; if he could see any good reason to continue he would feel relieved. And he enjoined him to attend church, to improve the whole of his time—for everything would depend on that—and to take care of his clothes.

But whatever discouraging conditions there were at first were of exceptionally short duration. The new artist's work began to attract attention and he was soon on a self-supporting basis. So, though his father possessed ample means, in reality the son received less aid than does the average young man of even moderately circumstanced family in preparing for his career.

The Art Union was a great factor in Church's early success, supplying a market for all his spare pictures in the first three or four years of his activity. The art union movement occupies a very important place in the history of the fine arts in the nineteenth century, both in Europe and the United States. Its influence in a country like ours, young and with aesthetic tastes so slightly developed, was something enormous. This movement, which began early in the century and lasted well into its second half, was one of the most significant phases of the general tendency towards what may be called the democratization of art in modern times. On both sides of the Atlantic it did immense service in popularizing a love both of pictures and of plastic art, though very naturally it was affected in no slight degree by the homely tastes of the public that supplied the greater part of its clientage. Yet the arts of painting and sculpture were materially advanced by the movement, and their kindred reproductive arts were likewise extensively fostered thereby. In this country the impetus that it gave them was something really prodigious, when we consider the aridity of the conditions previously obtaining.

Church rented a studio in the **Art-Union Building** from 1847 to 1858.

Church did not have a Janes uncle with the initials R. A. This must be **Adrian Janes** (1798–?), the younger brother of Church's mother, who lived in New York. My thanks to Joel Sweimler, who offered this suggestion. Adrian Janes owned Church's *July Sunset* (1847, Manoogian Collection).

The **American Art-Union** was established to add to the efforts of the American Academy of Fine Arts and the National Academy of Design to promote the creation, exhibition, and collection of art in the United States. It aspired to provide a year-round exhibition space and, at some future point, a national gallery in New York. Prints were distributed every year as the membership premium, and members were further attracted by the opportunity to win a painting in the lottery held at the end of each year. The institution was dissolved in 1853 after the New York Supreme Court declared its lottery distribution illegal.

The relationship of European art societies to the American Art-Union is discussed in Charles E. Baker's "The American Art Union," in *American Academy of Fine Arts and American Art-Union: Introduction, 1816–1852*, ed. Mary Bartlett Cowdrey (New York, 1953), 132–38. By 1839, there were close to 30 of these organizations in Germany. Americans compared structure and membership statistics most often with the British organizations, however. The 1838 constitution for the Apollo Association was modeled on a report from The Edinburgh Association for the Promotion of Fine Arts in Scotland. The London Art-Union became the largest of the art societies, and as such it was a pacesetter for its ambitious American counterpart in New York.

The movement had its origin in Paris about 1810, with the organization of a little society by M. Hennen, a prominent amateur. This society exhibited the unsold works of artists and obtained subscriptions to a fund which, together with the proceeds of the exhibition, was devoted to the purchase of certain works selected from the collection to be distributed by lot among the subscribers. This organization was absorbed by the *Société des Amis des Arts* in 1816. The idea took strong hold in Germany some years later, and the *Kunstvereine*, or Art Societies, are still highly popular features of various German cities. The Kunstverein of Berlin was established in 1825. Beside the distribution of purchased works by lot, the objects of the German societies usually are the annual reproduction of some notable work of art in the form of an engraving, etching, photogravure, or the like, to be given to each subscriber; and the creation of a fund to be devoted to encouragement of art either by ordering or purchasing some important work for a public purpose, either to be placed in a gallery or museum, or to decorate some public building or open space. The movement extended to Great Britain in 1834, when an Art Union was established in Scotland. In 1837 the Art Union of London was founded, and similar bodies were soon established in various centres through the United Kingdom.

The leading organization of the kind in this country was the American Art Union, which was founded in 1838 under the name of The Apollo Association for the promotion of the Fine Arts in the United States. In the first year 814 subscriptions were received and 36 works of art were distributed. Its name was changed to the American Art Union in 1844. Five years afterwards it had a membership of 18,960, and it paid out \$48,120 in the purchase of 500 paintings and statuettes and 500 medals for distribution, beside giving to each member a steel engraving and a set of outline etchings. Up to 1850 it had purchased works from 257 artists; resident in 45 cities and towns and in 15 different States, while in the patronage of American artists resident abroad it paid over \$17,500.

In pursuing its declared purpose of promoting the fine arts the American Art Union was actuated by genuine public-spiritual motives. The officers were chosen annually by the members and they served without compensation. For prominent citizens it was an honorable distinction to be selected for these positions. Among the committee of management for 1850, for instance, were men like Marshall O. Roberts, Frederick A. Coe, William H. Appleton, Evert A. Duyckinck and Henry J. Raymond. At one time William Cullen Bryant was the president. Membership was obtained by the payment of an annual subscription of five dollars. This entitled the subscriber to a copy of the original engraving after an American painting issued by the society as the feature of the year, often together with other works of the kind. Both in 1850 and 1851, for instance, six line engravings were given to each subscriber. The works from which these engravings were made were usually purchased from some celebrated artist for the purpose and were included in the annual distribution. Cole's famous series of "The Voyage of Life" was bought for this purpose and, the four allegories having been made the subject of as many engravings, were the chief attraction of the distribution for 1848. They stood as No. 100 in the catalogue for that year, the four very properly considered as one work.

The intention concerning one important work was frustrated by the selfishness of the member to whom it was distributed. Leutze had painted his "Return of Columbus in Chains" while in Germany, but he refused inducements to sell it there, preferring to have it go to America, so he sold it to the Art Union, in the expectation that it would be made the subject of one of the society's engravings. This was the intention, and the right of engraving was expressly reserved in the distribution. But the person who became its owner refused to permit this to be done, and fearing a costly lawsuit, the management abandoned its purpose.

Marshall Owen Roberts (1814–80), a member of the Art-Union board from 1846 to 1851, was a highly successful merchant in the shipping and railroad industries. He acquired Church's **Mount Katahdin (Katahdin)*, cat. 18 (1853, Yale University Art Gallery); **Coast Scene, Mount Desert*, cat. 37 (1863, Wadsworth Atheneum); **Rainy Season in the Tropics*, cat. 38 (1866, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco); and the Church-Healy-McEntee *Arch of Titus* (1869–71, Newark Museum). **Frederick A. Coe** was a lawyer who participated in Art-Union activities prior to 1850 but served as a board member only in that year. **William Henry Appleton** (1814–99) was, like Coe, on the board only in 1850. He began his career as a partner in the family publishing firm D. Appleton & Co. Under his direction, it became one of the largest American publishing houses, best known for its scientific titles, travel guides, and *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of Biography*. **Evert Augustus Duyckinck** (1816–78) served on the board from 1848 to 1851. A literary scholar and well-known author, he was editor of the *Literary World*. Journalist and state politician **Henry Jarvis Raymond** (1820–69) was a board member from 1847 to 1850; he founded the *New York Times* in 1851.

William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878) was president of the American Art-Union from 1844 to 1846. Poet, author, and editor, he championed American artists and American subjects. A close friend to Thomas Cole, Bryant delivered a eulogy at the artist's funeral that offers valuable insight to contemporary thoughts on landscape painting.

Art-Union membership increased by nearly two-fold when Cole's original painting series *The Voyage of Life* (1839–40, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute) was offered as a set in the lottery of 1848.

The painting *The Return of Columbus in Chains to Cadiz* (1842), by **Emanuel Leutze** (1816–68), is in the collection of descendants of the original owner.

The *Bulletin* of the American Art-Union was published in semimonthly issues beginning in 1848 and in monthly issues (April through December) beginning in 1849. The first illustrated issues were, as Warner states, published in 1850.

The Artist's Dream was engraved in mezzotint by John A. Sartain (1808–97) after the 1841 painting (unlocated) by George F. Comegys and offered in the 1841 distribution. The selection of a subject by Asher B. Durand (1796–1886) for the 1845 distribution was politically astute within the New York art community, for the artist had just been elected president of the National Academy of Design that year. *The Capture of Major André* was engraved by Alfred Jones (1809–1900), James Smillie (1807–85), and Robert Hinshelwood (1812–after 1875) after Durand's 1834 painting (Worcester Art Museum). Two prints were selected for the 1847 distribution: *The Jolly Flatboatmen*, engraved in mezzotint by Thomas Doney (active c. 1844–49) after the 1846 painting (private collection) by George Caleb Bingham (1811–79), and *The Sybil*, engraved by John W. Casilear (1811–93) after the 1839 painting (New-York Historical Society) by Daniel Huntington (1816–1906). Only one subject from Cole's *Voyage of Life* series was produced for the membership. Engraved by James Smillie, *Youth* was selected for the 1849 print distribution. The other subjects in the series, *Childhood*, *Manhood*, and *Old Age*, were engraved by Robert Hinshelwood and published successively as illustrations in the September, October, and November issues of the *Bulletin* of 1850.

The Plague of Darkness (unlocated) was exhibited twice in 1849; NAD no. 82, AA-U no. 151.

Warner lists three of the five paintings by Church included in the 1847 distribution: *The Charter Oak*, at Hartford (1846–47, Hartford Steam Boiler

An illustrated annual report also went to each member, and in 1850 an illustrated monthly bulletin was made a feature. With its contributed articles, its engravings, its etchings and its woodcuts, this bulletin was for that day—when typographical taste was pretty crude—really a good magazine of the fine arts. These considerations amounted to a good equivalent for the money subscribed. But a main inducement was the prospect of becoming owner of a work of art of greater value, for the second object to which the money received from subscriptions was applied being the purchase, from native or resident artists, of painting and sculpture, the latter including statuettes in bronze and medals. These works were placed on free exhibition in the galleries of the association, forming one of the main attractions of the city. At the annual meeting in December they were publicly distributed by lot, each member having one share for each subscription paid. Holders of two or more shares, in place of a duplicate of the works issued for that year, had the option of selecting from the engravings issued for previous years.

The Art Union was not only a means for promoting the interests of artists to a remarkable degree; it was an educational instrumentality of no mean importance. It had over a thousand agencies scattered over the country, and every person who became a member and received its works was pretty certain to interest a circle of neighbors, especially if fortunate in the annual distribution. An interest in art was thus carried to distant communities where the densest ignorance had obtained. One subscriber, for example, wrote concerning a landscape by a prominent painter that he thus became possessor of, that the influence of that single picture in the community convinced him that the value of the Art Union to the country at large could hardly be appreciated. Among the engravings in the list of those issued to subscribers were subjects that are still familiar features in hundreds of households in all parts of the country, such as “The Artist's Dream,” “The Capture of Major Andre,” “The Jolly Flatboatmen,” “The Sybil,” and Cole's “Voyage of Life” series.

Other Art Unions were organized in Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati and Newark, and also in New York. The purpose of some of these, like that of the American Art Union, was public-spirited, while others had a commercial basis, as in the case of the International Art Union, represented by Goupil & Company. The free gallery of this institution was devoted to the exhibition of paintings by European artists. A feature of the plan, however, was a two years' scholarship for European study; an American art student was each year selected by competition to be sent abroad at the expense of the union, \$600 being annually set apart for the purpose.

So successful was the American Art Union in securing for its distributions the cream of the annual production of the leading artists that complaint was made that the attractiveness of the National Academy exhibitions suffered in consequence. Friendly relations, however, appear to have existed between the National Academy and the Union. In its distribution of 1851 the latter included a large number of pictures purchased from the Academy that had been contributed by Academicians for its benefit.

That a movement so important, widespread and popular, and of such value in the encouragement which it gave to art should have died out completely was not due to any lack of interests on the part of the public, or any falling off in the standards maintained. Its death was not due to any gradual decline; it came suddenly, its life quickly snuffed out. In short, it fell under the ban of the anti-lottery laws. Neither the many eminent gentlemen who stood at the head of these art-union projects, the artists who profited by them, nor the thousands who numbered themselves as members, could have had any idea that they were guilty of any reprehensible action in such participation, any more than did those who a half century before encouraged the lottery enterprises that built important edifices for Harvard College, or those

who in various countries today are concerned in similar undertakings established for various public objects. Possibly the element of chance in these Art Union distributions may have tended to encourage the gambling spirit in the community to such an extent as to make their continuance undesirable. Yet if all lottery undertakings had returned to each shareholder an equivalent for money paid in, corresponding in value, to that given by the art unions,—the consideration, for example, a choice of various supplies in either drygoods or groceries, as measured in current retail prices,—it might very much be doubted if there would ever have been any demand for anti-lottery legislation. And it could be wished that transactions involving such elements of chance as the stock-exchange operations of today would give as good assurance of adequate returns on all investments made as did the art unions of a half-century ago.

The Art Union was a true patron of the artists; it did not content itself with securing for leading cards a few high-priced works by eminent men and then for the rest obtain in job lots at low cost the refuse of the studios. It made it a point to secure thoroughly representative works from all artists and it paid excellent prices for those selected, the works submitted being chosen only with the approval of the best judgment obtainable. Church, for example, was paid \$400 for his painting, “The Plague of Darkness,” purchased in 1849.

In the distribution of 1847 Church was represented by three works—“The Charter Oak,” “A Storm in the Mountains,” and “Kauterskill Clove, Catskill.” In that of 1848 he had four pictures—a subject from Pilgrim’s Progress, called “The River of the Water of Life,” (purchased by the association for \$250), “Lake Dunmore,” “Morning,” and “Rutland Falls, Vermont.” Beside the works purchased for distribution the Art Union galleries made a feature of exhibiting paintings and sculptures loaned by their owners “for the gratification of the friends of art.” In that year’s exhibition the loaned works included a picture by Church called “To the Memory of Cole,” owned by C. W. Austen. The distribution of 1849 included seven of Church’s paintings—“Above the Clouds at Sunrise,” “View in Pittsford, Vermont,” “Evening after a Storm,” “The Plague of Darkness,” “A Passing Storm,” “Morning,” and “Sunset.” In that of 1850 there were eight of his works: “On Otter Creek,” “Twilight,” “Sunset,” “Blackwell’s Island after a Shower,” “Ira Mountain, Vermont,” “View near Clarendon, Vermont,” “Landscape, at Sunset,” and “Twilight—‘Short arbiter ’twixt Day and Night.’” By the next year his orders had grown so numerous that he had but three works for the Art Union—“Fog off Mount Desert Island,” “Beacon off Mount Desert,” and “The Deluge.” The latter was an intensely dramatic subject—something quite apart from his usual line. It was a canvas 68 by 48 inches. In the foreground, upon a boulder that seemingly was about to be wrenched from the mountain side by the rushing water, were crouched in a community of terror a woman, a child and a tiger, who had sought refuge from the flood. The rain was falling in sheets and the gleam of the lightning, with the red glow of sunset, contrasted with the gloom of the clouds.

Chapter V

In the earlier work of Church there was, not unnaturally, a manifest resemblance to that of Cole. This appears in his choice of subjects for various pictures, in which he sought allegorical forms of expression, as indicated in titles like “The River of the Water of Life” and “The

Inspection and Insurance Company), AA-U no. 118; **Storm in the Mountains*, cat. 2 (1847, Cleveland Museum of Art), AA-U no. 120; and *Kauterskill Clove, Catskill* (unlocated), AA-U no. 124. He neglected to include **Scene on the Catskill Creek, New York*, cat. 3 (1847, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts), AA-U no. 78; and *Landscape* (unlocated), AA-U no. 254.

The four paintings by Church in the 1848 distribution are *The River of the Water of Life* (unlocated), NAD no. 77, AA-U no. 28; *Lake Dunmore* (unlocated), AA-U no. 290; **Morning*, cat. 4 (1848, Albany Institute of History and Art), AA-U no. 348; and *Rutland Falls, Vermont* (possibly *Gookin Falls, Rutland, Vermont* in the White House, Washington), AA-U no. 360.

**To the Memory of Cole*, cat. 5 (1848, Des Moines Women’s Club—Hoyt Sherman Place), AA-U no. 251, was loaned to the 1848 exhibition by George Washington Austen, who served as treasurer of the American Art-Union from 1846 to 1851.

The seven paintings by Church in the distribution of 1849 were **Above the Clouds at Sunrise*, cat. 7 (1849, Warner Collection of Gulf States Paper Corp.), AA-U no. 22; *View in Pittsford, Vermont* (unlocated), AA-U no. 41; **New England Landscape (Evening after a Storm)*, cat. 6 (1849, Amon Carter Museum), AA-U no. 140; *The Plague of Darkness* (unlocated), AA-U no. 151; *The Harp of the Winds (A Passing Storm)* (1849, M. and M. Karolik Collections of American Paintings, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), AA-U no. 358; *Morning* (unlocated), AA-U no. 363; and *Sunset* (unlocated), AA-U no. 375.

The eight paintings by Church in the distribution of 1850 were *On Otter Creek* (Sheldon Museum and Library), AA-U no. 14; *Twilight* (unlocated), AA-U no. 41; *Sunset* (unlocated), AA-U no. 58; *View of Blackwell’s Island, New York* (unlocated), AA-U no. 193; **Ira Mountain, Vermont*, cat. 9 (1849–50; Olana State Historic Site), NAD no. 42, AA-U no. 216; *View near Clarendon, Vermont* (unlocated), NAD no. 97, AA-U no. 233; *Landscape* (possibly *A Catskill Twilight*, ex. coll. Alexander Gallery), AA-U no. 243; and **Twilight, ‘Short arbiter ’twixt day and night,’* cat. 10 (1850, Newark Museum), NAD no. 349, AA-U no. 261.

The three Church paintings acquired by the Art-Union in 1851 are *Fog off Mount Desert Island, Maine* (1850, private collection), AA-U no. 135; **Beacon, off Mount Desert Island*, cat. 11 (1851, private collection), NAD no. 371, AA-U no. 266; and *The Deluge* (unlocated), NAD no. 1, AA-U no. 264.

The **sketch club** to which Church belonged in 1847 was not “the most prominent,” as Warner states. However, the three sketch clubs active in New York in the 1840s can be easily confused. Church belonged to the New York Sketch Club, organized on 24 September 1847 by young artists in imitation of two more celebrated New York groups: the old Sketch Club, a society of artists, writers, and others founded in the late 1820s; and the New Sketch Club, formed by well-established artists in 1844. For the founding of the New York Sketch Club, see Thomas S. Cummings, *Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design* (1865; reprint, New York, 1969), 202. A Church painting recently identified as being based on one of the club’s sketching exercises, *Too Soon* (1847, Arvest Galleries, Inc.), is illustrated and discussed in Kelly, *Church*, 12–13; however, the identification of the sketch club to which Church belonged is incorrect. The activities of the New York Sketch Club, including Church’s participation and the “Too Soon” sketch assignment, are reported in the *New York Evening Express*, 16 December 1847, 2, and the *Daily Evening Transcript* (Boston), 21 December 1847, 2:2. Earlier meetings are described in “Fine Arts,” *New York Evening Express*, 7 December 1847, 2. I am grateful to Merl M. Moore, Jr., for providing me with these articles.

Thomas Augustus Cummings (1823–59), a portrait painter, was the son of Thomas Seir Cummings (1804–94), artist and founding member, officer, and historian of the National Academy of Design.

The unnamed officers of “**The Art Re-Union**” and their ambitions are described with only veiled references in the *New York Evening Express*, 16 December 1847, 2. Merl M. Moore, Jr., kindly shared this reference with me.

Established in 1847 as an outgrowth of the original Sketch Club, the **Century Club** was so called because its membership was intended to be limited to one hundred. Church became a member in 1850.

Biographies of all the artists listed in this passage can be found in George C. Groce and David H. Wallace, *The New-York Historical Society’s Dictionary of Artists in America, 1564–1860* (New Haven, 1975). Note these corrections to the typescript: “T. W. Whitridge” is Thomas Worthington Whitredge; “T. H. Hinckle” is Thomas Hewes Hinckley; “William M. Oddie” is Walter M. Oddie; “J. F. C. Prudhomme” is John Francis Eugene Prud’homme; and “Y. B. Onthank” is Nathan Ball Onthank.

Plague of Darkness.” But his strong individuality soon asserted itself in ways of his own, and he made it his great aim to let nature tell her own story in his work. One of the Art Union Bulletins of that period speaks of “Church’s reflections of nature in her grandest moods.”

The uncommon quality of his art very soon won him a commanding position. In November, 1847, he was a member of the Sketch Club, at that time one of the most prominent of social organizations among artists and amateurs, meeting Saturday evenings, fortnightly, at the houses or studios of members, where they would make sketches after a subject previously assigned, afterwards enjoying some simple refreshment informally served. It may be noted that the subject for his first evening was “Too Soon,” and that the meeting was at the house of the secretary of the club, Thomas Cummings, Jr., No. 391 Houston street. The previous February Church had been made a member of the New York Art Reunion and the following February he was elected to regular membership. The National Academy was quick to honor him; he was made an Associate in May, 1848, and the next year he was elected Academician—a rank which probably few artists have reached at the age of twenty-three years. He had also not lived long in New York before he joined the Century Club, which all through his life was his favorite social organization.

Among the American artists of that period Leutze was the master figure in historical painting as Thomas Cole was in landscape. The painters most prominent at that time were J. F. Kensett, W. L. Sontag, J. H. Beard, A. B. Durand, John Evers, J. W. Dodge, J. W. Audubon, V. G. Audubon, J. G. Chapman, George L. Brown, T. W. Whitridge, Daniel Huntington, Regis Gignoux, S. B. Gifford, George Inness, T. H. Hinckle, William Hart, Professor S. F. B. Morse, J. F. Cropsey, George Fuller, Joseph Ames, Thomas LeClear, E. H. May, William S. Jewett, Nathaniel Jocelyn, Christian Mayr, J. H. Shegogue, H. K. Brown, Seth Eastman, Frederick Fink, Jared B. Flagg, Miss Anne Hall (who was Academician), C. L. Elliott, S. R. Fanshaw, Alanson Fisher, G. W. Flagg, James E. Freeman, J. Frothingham, Henry Peters Gray, J. T. Harris, George Harvey, John Haviland, John W. Hill, C. G. Ingham, W. S. Jewett, E. D. Marchant, Shepard A. Mount, William S. Mount, William M. Oddie, S. S. Osgood, J. W. Paradise, Rembrandt Peale, J. F. C. Prudhomme, T. P. Rossiter, H. C. Shumway, James Smillie, F. R. Spencer, William Swain, Jesse Talbot, Luther Terry, Thomas Thompson, E. Terry, S. B. Waugh, James Whitehorne, Matthew Wilson, George A. Baker, Jr., J. W. Casilaer, James G. Clonney, George P. A. Healy, M. Livingston, T. H. Matteson, Y. B. Onthank, Edward Mooney, Robert W. Weir, and C. C. Wright.

Nearly all of these men were seniors of Church. A few, whose names will be recognized, have made notable contributions to the history of American art. But the most of them, if not already forgotten, soon will be, though they have nearly all enjoyed the glamour of the bauble reputation, and the rank of Academician or Associate of the National Academy attached to the names of a majority in the list, testifies that their work possessed qualities which, in the eyes of their standard-setting fellows, seemed at the time to be of enduring merit.

The prominent sculptors of the day were Horatio Greenough, Clark Mills, and Thomas Ball. A young painter whose work figured in the Academy exhibitions and in the Art Union collections of the day was George Fuller, soon to go into rustic retirement in western Massachusetts and remain in obscurity for nearly a generation, meanwhile forming a style in the midst of his remarkable isolation that, on his emergence in Boston in the ninth decade of the century was to rank him as one of the greatest of American masters. In Boston at that day were active men like William Page, F. Alexander, C. W. Rowse, Chester E. Harding, and Joseph Ames. The brilliant Allston Club movement of that city was yet to be, but in the catalogue of the National Academy for 1847 there appears below the name of Thomas Cole that of another

Cole, from Boston, the initials not given, and contributing the portrait of a lady—doubtless Joseph Foxcroft Cole, later a master in landscape and the authoritative leader in art of that city, where modern French influences made their first strong impress in this country.

Church's brilliant qualities, artistic and personal, made him exceedingly popular among his brother artists. Beside his old Hartford associates—among whom in addition to those already spoken of belong the names of E. Terry and G. W. Flagg—intimate friends among his profession sooner or later became the painters T. W. Whitridge, Regis Gignoux, E. H. May, Robert W. Weir, Jervis McEntee, C. W. Rowse, and S. R. Gifford, whose neighbor at Hudson he was afterwards to become, and the sculptor, F. T. Palmer. Of McEntee he became particularly fond. McEntee's father was a man of some means. He was a contractor in the building of the Hudson River railroad, and had bought a farm near Roundout and an interest in a steamboat when, in 1849, the young man conceived a great admiration for the work of Church—which he had seen at the Art Union exhibitions—and wrote him urging him to accept him as a pupil. McEntee had inquired of the secretary of the Art Union, Andrew Warner, who wrote that he was gratified at his intention, saying that he did not know a gentleman in the whole range of the profession in his line of the art better qualified to aid his efforts. Church had modestly demurred on receiving McEntee's proposition on the ground of his own youth; moreover, he had no proof of his own ability to impart the knowledge he possessed. But considered the similarity of their ages an advantage, for he thought it might make them better friends, and knowing that Church had accomplished so much with comparatively so little experience, he believed that it would incite him to greater exertions. And he felt no fear as to the second objection, for he was assured that one with the faculty of creating such beautiful productions must have the gift of imparting. The results were happy for both of them. The pupil did credit to his master and the two young men at once became the best of comrades in a close friendship that lasted through life. Church never took but one other pupil, the second one being William D. Palmer, the talented son of his friend, the sculptor, who was with him at Hudson for some months, long afterwards.

In the first years of the young artist's New York life his parents followed his course with anxious solicitude. One of his early letters from his father tells him that he has stepped upon the stage that will most likely decide his character for the future, and that all will depend upon his habits of industry in improving his time to the very best advantage for the cultivation of his mind and the perfection of his art. He showed his faith in the stable character of his son by telling him that, though he lived in a city of great temptations, he had all confidence that he would guard himself against anything of the kind; had he not this confidence he could not rest a moment. Speaking of a lecture that Mr. Cole was to deliver in Hartford before the Young Men's Institute that winter, the father hoped the time would come when his son would be qualified for such a call and would accept it; it would be gratifying to the family, at least. "Stranger things than this have taken place," he said. It seems that young Church had spoken slightly of the paintings exhibited at the Hartford fair that autumn, and in this letter his father said that he still had reason to regret that he had made the attack; nothing of this kind had he ever heard from Mr. Cole, and he hoped and trusted that from that time on his son would not attack the faults of others in his profession. "I know it is wise to say nothing of any one unless you can speak favorably of them," his father wrote. "Had I taken this course in early life it would have saved me days and months of regret and sorrow." In truth, the son was notably tolerant in the expression of his opinions; he had his decided view of things, but was considerate in the expression of his judgment. He doubtless had thought the art at a cattle-show a fair target and spoke his mind accordingly with the freedom and frankness of youth,

Horatio Greenough (1805–52) spent much of his professional life in Italy, sculpting primarily neo-classical subjects for American and European patrons. **Clark Mills** (1810–83) remains best known for his monumental bronze sculpture in Washington. **Thomas Ball** (1819–1911) worked in Boston and Italy and is remembered for his bronze monuments to American historical figures.

Although he was active as an artist in the 1840s and 1850s, **George Fuller** (1822–84) did little painting when he ran the family farm in Deerfield, Massachusetts, for fifteen years. He left the farm and moved to Boston in 1875, where his paintings were very popular.

For biographies, see Groce and Wallace, *Dictionary*. "C. W. Rowse" is Samuel Worcester Rowse.

During its brief life (1866–67), the **Allston Club** set important precedents for independent exhibitions in Boston. Inspired by William Morris Hunt's interest in Barbizon-style painting, the club organized two exhibitions of such work.

Joseph Foxcroft Cole (1837–92) would have been too young to have participated in this exhibition. In the *National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1826–1860* (New York, 1943), 86, Joseph Greenleaf Cole (1796–1858) of Boston is assigned NAD (1847) no. 229, *Portrait of a Lady*.

Eliphalet Terry (1826–96) was an animal and landscape painter from Hartford who moved to New York in 1851. **George Whiting Flagg** (1816/17–97), a nephew of the artist Washington Allston, was a portrait and genre painter. Originally from New Haven, Flagg moved to New York about 1843, then spent a number of years in London before returning to the United States in the 1860s.

With the exception of May, all of these artists had studios in the Tenth Street Studio Building in New York, as did Church. "T. W. Whitridge" is landscape painter Thomas Worthington Whittredge (1820–1910), who was president of the National Academy of Design in 1865 and 1874–77. He and Church traveled together to Mexico in 1893. Regis Gignoux (1816–82) was also a landscape painter. He became the first president of the Brooklyn Art Association in 1861, where several of Church's paintings were exhibited between 1861 and 1874. Edward Harrison May (1824–87) was primarily a portrait painter while in the United States. He went to Paris in 1851, where he spent the rest of his life, painting genre and history subjects. Robert W. Weir (1803–89) painted a wide range of subjects.

After retiring from West Point in 1876, where he had taught drawing, he worked in New York. Jervis McEntee (1828–91), a landscape painter, was Church's second pupil in 1850–51. In Rome, he and Church collaborated with George P. A. Healy (1813–94) on the painting *The Arch of Titus* (1869–71; Newark Museum). McEntee lived at nearby Roundout, on the Hudson. He and Church traveled together frequently, going to Maine, for example, several times in the 1870s. "C. W. Rowse" is Samuel Worcester Rowse (1822–1901), who worked primarily as printmaker in Boston but moved to New York in 1880. Another neighbor, Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823–80), was also a painter of landscapes and portraits. He and Church shared a fondness for the Catskills and traveled in Maine together in the 1870s, sometimes with McEntee. "F. T. Palmer" is Erastus Dow Palmer (1817–1904), the Albany sculptor who was one of Church's closest friends. Palmer owned at least six paintings by Church; see Kelly, *Church*, 84, 107; Franklin Kelly and Gerald Carr, *The Early Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church, 1845–1854* (Fort Worth, 1987), 122, 139.

Colonel Andrew Warner, a lawyer and banker, served as recording secretary of the Art-Union in 1842, 1843, and 1845, and was corresponding secretary from 1848 to 1851.

This is **Walter Launt Palmer** (1854–1932), son of Erastus Dow Palmer. The third of Church's students, he was, like his father, a close friend. Palmer and Church traveled to Mexico together in 1895. Warner mentions another of Church's students, Jervis McEntee, earlier in this chapter. However, claiming that Church had only two students, he does not discuss Church's first pupil in 1848–49, William James Stillman (1828–1901).

though the game was probably not worth the candle. With all the narrowness of a strictly business point of view, the elder Church, in his letters to his son, often manifests the sagacious breadth of mind which was a trait of the latter, and which was evidently inherited. It is also said that the fun-loving disposition of the son came from the father. There is no trace of this, however, in his correspondence, which is invariably grave in tone.

There was something amusing, however, in the father's insistence on a strict attention to business and diligent use of every possible moment. Young Church had been indulging his musical tastes with some guitar practice, but when he went to New York he had left his instrument at home. Desiring to keep up his practice he wrote his friend Bartholomew asking him to get his guitar for him and send it on. The endeavor cost the sculptor considerable vain effort, which required several letters for him to detail. The father objected to letting it go, fearing the diversion might occupy the time that belonged to "business." Bartholomew took the pains to explain that it would not be used "in business hours", but only evenings and at other times when its use could not interfere with the artist's painting. But the father preferred to be on the safe side and not run the risk of encouraging distractive occupation. So the united efforts of young Church, his sister Elizabeth, and his friend Bartholomew could not get the seductive guitar away from Hartford that winter.

Poor Bartholomew! He went to New York to study his art and a careless laundress left his washing exposed to small-pox contagion. This was found out in time and the woman was directed to wash it over again. Through ignorance and indolence she did not do it, but she returned the clothes with the word that it had been done. In consequence Bartholomew was prostrated with the disease and the handsome, athletic fellow was disfigured and crippled. He was an invalid after that, and his life became a tragic struggle with illness and suffering. "I sometimes think I have made my last work of sculpture," he wrote Church one time, while vainly seeking a cure for his ills, "and again I have strong hopes that there are blocks of marble waiting for me, out of which I shall yet carve a reputation and satisfy, to a certain degree, at least, my intolerable thirst for the sublime art. You can probably in some measure appreciate my feelings as an artist, but you know how little (and God grant you may never have more from experience) of what my sufferings are and have been for a year past, both physically and mentally."

Church felt deeply the misfortune of his friend. He tried to induce the Art Union to purchase a medallion that Bartholomew had made, but could not get it accepted. Eight years afterward when fame and material prosperity had come to Bartholomew—though his health remained so hopelessly shattered that he could realize but a shadow of the aspirations of his younger manhood—sixty of the most prominent men of Hartford gave a great dinner in honor of the two distinguished sons of the city.* It was the eve of Bartholomew's return to Italy, laden with commissions which he was never to fulfill. The leading men of Hartford, in all professions, paid the highest tributes to the two artists. Unfortunately Church was unable to attend, being kept in New York. Frequently allusions were made to his works and glowing prophecies made of his future triumphs.

In his first years in New York Church gave no little time to serious study. He attended a school for drawing from the antique, and with a number of other painters he organized a class to draw from life. The meeting was held in his studio. The news of this was something of a shock to the Puritanical sensibilities of his parents. His mother wrote his father and herself were much surprised on reading a notice about it in the *Tribune*, and his father exclaimed

* November 19, 1857.

when he saw it. She asked: “Have you thought what effect such a course as you purpose will have upon your character and morals and those associated with you? And will there be a good influence go out from among you? I mean a good moral influence. There has been one thing about your pictures, those that I have seen, that has always given me much pleasure. That is, the subjects have been good, and others have spoken of it. Your uncle wrote you that the eyes of the world were upon you, but I will say that the eyes of a pure and holy God are upon you. And do you realize that you are his property under his moral government, indebted to him for the genius and talent you possess, and must appear at last before him to give an account how you employed them and how you have influenced others?”

His fond mother invariably expressed in her letters a deep solicitude for his religious welfare. When Cole died she wrote: “Do you sometimes ask yourself—‘Am I prepared to follow; am I treading in his footsteps so far as he followed Christ and duty?’ If these thoughts sometimes steal into your mind do not dismiss them, thinking that you are younger. There is no time to spare; you know not the time that you may be called—and why do you wish to defer that which will bring peace and happiness into your soul, help you to bear the trials and afflictions that you will meet with in this wilderness-world and fit you for that blessed abode which is prepared for those that love and serve God here? Frederic, the world may look very pleasant to you now, and so it is. God’s world is pleasant. There are a thousand things that are worthy of our love and attention and which show the goodness and wisdom of our Heavenly Father. And when with the pencil you imitate the work of His hand let your heart praise the giver, but let not the pleasure of the world, the vanities, fill your mind and you lose the Pearl of great price. . . . I do hope that you will economize as much as you can, for it is of great importance to yourself. If you have a habit of industry and economy, with your health you will not only take care of yourself, but you will be able to taste of the luxury of doing for others—which I know you would if you were able, for I do not think you selfish by any means. I suppose you will say: ‘I knew all this before; what does Mother fill up all her letters with advice for?’ I will tell you: It is because I am your Mother and anxious for your happiness here and hereafter. . . . You know what I said to you when you first left home for Catskill: ‘Be a good boy!’ And I would say now the same.”

In these points the son dutifully followed his parents’ wishes. He had the New England conscience, and in his day and generation it demanded close regard for the external manifestations of religious faith. He was always careful to observe these. He followed the Trinitarian Congregational worship of his parents. In Hartford he had attended the Central Church, under Rev. Dr. Hawes. In New York his pastor was the Rev. Dr. Bethune, with whom he became very intimate. When Dr. Bethune was called to Brooklyn, where a church was built for him, every Sunday Church used regularly to cross the ferry for worship. When he made his home near Hudson he joined the Presbyterian church there, under the Rev. Dr. Veisley.

With all his youthful love of pleasure he always kept the reins of his will well in hand. The artistic temperament implies an exquisitely sensuous organization. The delights of the world appeal to its possessor with corresponding intensity. As this sensitiveness served Church in his art so it likewise administered to his enjoyment of life. But with him pleasure was ever balanced by duty, by his sense of responsibility. He was, indeed, a nineteenth century type of the old Puritan. One of his life-long friends says that, while this phase of his nature was never obtrusively presented, yet it was always there—the underlying motive-power. Hence his extreme conscientiousness, his absolute integrity, his reliability. Permeating his personality and coloring his temperament developed to a remarkable degree, was his keen sense of humor, ever present, and giving him quick readiness for a frolic. With attributes like these, there could not

Joel Hawes (1789–1867) served as pastor of the First Congregational Church in Hartford from 1818 until his death in 1867. **George Washington Bethune** (1805–62), a Dutch Reformed clergyman, was pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church on the Heights in Brooklyn from 1848/50 to 1859. He was also active in the New York art community. An impromptu speech he made at the opening of the twentieth annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design is quoted at length in the May 1851 *Bulletin* of the American Art-Union (31–32). He also wrote the essay “Art in the United States” in *The Home Book of the Picturesque; or, American Scenery, Art, and Literature* (New York, 1852); the book contains illustrations by several artists, including Church.

well have been any austerity to his Puritanism. Indeed, while ever adhering to the lines laid down in his inherited faith, he was essentially liberal in his belief. In his tolerant views, his consideration for the opinions of others, he showed the fundamental catholicity of his mind, and in his practical application of his religion to the conduct of life Christianity was above all the gospel of love. He was invariably thoughtful of others, ever doing for others, and no enjoyment was ever complete unless it could be shared by others. This, indeed, was the underlying motive in what for him was his supreme enjoyment—the practice of his art—in which his aim was to share with his fellows his own realization of the beauty and the grandeur of the world about him.

Chapter VI

Church had not been long in New York before his father's misgivings were overcome; the father saw that the practice of his son's art was yielding gratifying returns, and this fact contributed in no little measure to the pride with which the progress of the young genius, in his rapidly augmenting reputation, was followed in the home circle. He had been in New York a little more than two years when his father wrote: "Perhaps the time has arrived when I ought to say to you that my expectations have always been, whenever the time should come that assistance from me in the way of capital in your business would be beneficial in promoting your intent, I should be ready to do so. Had you selected the mercantile or manufacturing business for your employment such assistance would have been indispensable, and much sooner required, perhaps. But selecting a professional business, has not required so early assistance of this character. I do not now know that your business is suffering, or would be more profitable with more means. I now wish, when you have the time you would give me your views on this subject. My wish is, such assistance as I can give you should be done at a time when most beneficial to you."

There is something novel in the idea of furnishing capital for the business of an artist. Many a poor fellow who has to struggle along without the means to realize his ideals would welcome the relief from the necessity of devoting his best time to the production of "pot-boilers," and give his fresh energies to the expression of the best that is in him—a relief that an assured income equal to supplying his daily wants would give. But when this offer came Church was beyond any such need. The consciousness, however, that substantial backing was available whenever he might require it was of undoubtedly a great advantage to him in the practice of his art, giving him a sense of security, a freedom from worry as to ways and means that, in its disturbance of the peace of mind necessary to the best results in any artistic or intellectual activity, is responsible for the waste of an unspeakable amount of precious human energy.

In the same letter from his father came what was probably his first commission from home, in these words: "We should like, *if it is possible for you to spare the time*, to have you get up one or two pictures suitable for our humble mansion, that your mother and most likely myself could see should we visit you (which we hope to do in the course of the spring). I find those who call upon us expect to see something of your work."

Frederic's Uncle Leonard, his father's brother, was very fond of his nephew and frequently wrote him affectionate letters, full of sympathy for his aim. The young artist had been in New

Leonard Church (1800–87) and his brother Joseph had business and real estate interests in Lee, Massachusetts.

York a little more than two years when his uncle wrote him from his home at Lee, in the Berkshire hills of Massachusetts, expressing much gratification at his growing reputation. “I do not know that the Churches have ever been distinguished in any particular profession, and it will ever give me pleasure to learn of your proficiency as an artist.

One of the intimate associates of his youth in Hartford was a young man named Aaron C. Goodman. His letters from home to his friend are charming utterances of a young man’s heart in the spirit of comradeship. “Church,” he writes, “I wish that Hartford was New York or that New York was Hartford, so that you could be here, for I never feel in better spirits than when you are with me. If you were a woman I should certainly lay siege to your heart and hand.” He had previously, in the same letter, said some very uncomplimentary things as to the fair sex which it would be indiscreet to reproduce here, especially as not many years after he yielded to the usual attraction from that quarter. To these letters, so sprightly, vivacious and affectionate, Church would reply in kind. With epistles so imbued with the perennial spirit of youth it is not easy to think of their authors as waxing old. In one of his early letters Church writes Goodman: “I cannot avoid creating a sensation wherever I go; I can’t even walk Broadway without the street being crowded (of course on my account) and even the other day, without saying a word to anybody, I slipped as I thought unperceived into Chatham street, and lo! even there a crowd assembled. Oh! the miseries and annoyances of being known; I will not for modesty’s sake say—and appreciated.” Goodman soon after found business in New York, and was much with his friend. Financially successful here, he returned to Hartford, where for some time before his death a few years ago, he was prominent as a capitalist.

Among the members of the Sketch Club was the painter Greatorex, whose name has long been familiar in the art-world in connection with his accomplished wife and daughters—the former the first woman in the United States to achieve reputation as an etcher. Goodman was a friend of Greatorex, and the following estimate of him in a letter to Church is of interest: “He (Greatorex) I think the greatest genius I ever met. He seems to acquire any language almost at will; his sketches and paintings are generally good, and he is, take it altogether, the best and most common-sense musician I ever knew. One thing he lacks, and that is application, and a detestation of it as regards his profession is a misfortune. He is one of the most sensitive persons you can find.”

Although Church stood in no need of capital for his “business,” he called his father’s attention to an opportunity for profitable investment in connection with the fine arts by the erection of a building to be devoted to artists’ studios.

Aaron C. Goodman (1822–99) owned a successful bookshop in Hartford but left the city in 1852 to become a businessman in the paper industry in New York. He returned to Hartford in 1878, where he became president of the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company.

Although **Henry Wellington Greatorex** (1816–58) was a member of the New York Sketch Club with Church, he is better remembered as a church musician than as an artist. The more celebrated artist in the family was his wife, Eliza Pratt Greatorex (1819–97), an etcher and painter of landscapes who was elected an associate of the National Academy of Design in 1869. Their two daughters, Kathleen and Elizabeth, were also artists who achieved some renown in the late nineteenth century.

Warner may be referring to the Tenth Street Studio Building in New York, built in 1857 by real estate magnate James Boorman Johnston. Annette Blaugrund, however, has found no record of outside investor participation in this project; see her “The Tenth Street Studio Building (New York),” Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1987. Providing an affordable residence and workspace for artists, the Tenth Street Studio Building was the first structure specifically designed for this purpose in New York. It became an important gathering place and exhibition site. Church rented a studio there for about thirty years, beginning in 1858.

List of Works Exhibited

Cat. 1

*Hooker and Company Journeying through the
Wilderness from Plymouth to Hartford, in 1636*

1846

oil on canvas

40¹/₄ X 60³/₁₆ (102.2 X 152.9)

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford,
Connecticut

Cat. 2

Storm in the Mountains

1847

oil on canvas

29⁷/₈ X 24⁷/₈ (75.9 X 63.2)

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Vari-
ous Donors by Exchange and Purchase from
the J. H. Wade Fund

Cat. 3

Scene on the Catskill Creek, New York

1847

oil on canvas

21¹/₂ X 29³/₄ (54.6 X 75.6)

Washington County Museum of Fine Arts,
Hagerstown, Maryland

Cat. 4

Morning

1848

oil on canvas

18 X 24 (45.7 X 61)

Albany Institute of History and Art, Gift of
Catherine Gansevoort Lansing

Cat. 5

To the Memory of Cole

1848

oil on canvas

32 X 49 (81.3 X 124.5)

Des Moines Women's Club—Hoyt Sherman
Place, Des Moines, Iowa

Cat. 6

New England Landscape (Evening after a Storm)

1849

oil on canvas

25¹/₈ X 36¹/₄ (63.8 X 92.1)

Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth

Cat. 7

Above the Clouds at Sunrise

1849

oil on canvas

27¹/₄ X 40¹/₄ (69.2 X 102.2)

The Warner Collection of Gulf States Paper
Corporation, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Cat. 8

West Rock, New Haven

1849

oil on canvas

26¹/₂ X 40 (67.3 X 101.6)

The New Britain Museum of American Art,
New Britain, Connecticut

Cat. 9

Ira Mountain, Vermont

1849–50

oil on canvas

40⁵/₈ X 61⁵/₈ (103.2 X 156.5)

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation,
and Historic Preservation, Olana State
Historic Site, Taconic Region

Cat. 10

Twilight, "Short arbiter 'twixt day and night"

1850

oil on canvas

32¹/₄ X 48 (81.9 X 121.9)

The Newark Museum

*Measurements are given in inches, with centimeters in
parentheses.*

Cat. 11
Beacon, off Mount Desert Island
1851
oil on canvas
31 X 46 (78.7 X 116.8)
Private Collection

Cat. 12
New England Scenery
1851
oil on canvas
36 X 53 (91.4 X 134.6)
George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum,
Springfield, Massachusetts

Cat. 13
The Wreck
1852
oil on canvas
30 X 46 (76.2 X 116.8)
The Parthenon, Nashville, Tennessee

Cat. 14
Grand Manan Island, Bay of Fundy
1852
oil on canvas
21³/₁₆ X 31⁵/₁₆ (53.8 X 79.5)
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford,
Connecticut, Gallery Fund

Cat. 15
Coast Scene
1852
oil on canvas
20 X 30 (50.8 X 76.2)
Private Collection

Cat. 16
The Natural Bridge, Virginia
1852
oil on canvas
28 X 23 (71.1 X 58.4)
Bayly Art Museum at the University of
Virginia, Charlottesville

Cat. 17
Home by the Lake
1852
oil on canvas
31⁷/₈ X 48¹/₄ (81 X 122.6)
Collection of JoAnn and Julian Ganz, Jr.

Cat. 18
Mount Katahdin (Katahdin)
1853
oil on canvas
36¹/₄ X 55¹/₄ (92.1 X 140.3)
Yale University Art Gallery, Stanley B. Resor,
B.A. 1901, Fund

Cat. 19
A Country Home
1854
oil on canvas
45⁵/₈ X 63⁵/₈ (115.9 X 162.2)
Seattle Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Paul C.
Carmichael

Cat. 20
The Cordilleras: Sunrise
1854
oil on canvas
28¹/₂ X 43 (72.4 X 109.2)
Courtesy Alexander Gallery, New York

Cat. 21
La Magdalena (Scene on the Magdalena)
1854
oil on canvas
28 X 42 (71.1 X 106.7)
National Academy of Design, New York

Cat. 22
Tamaca Palms
1854
oil on canvas
27³/₄ X 36¹/₂ (70.5 X 92.7)
The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington,
D.C., Gift of William Wilson Corcoran

Cat. 23
Tequendama Falls, near Bogotá, New Granada
1854
oil on canvas
64 X 40 (162.6 X 101.6)
Cincinnati Art Museum, The Edwin and
Virginia Irwin Memorial

Cat. 24
Cotopaxi
1855
oil on canvas
28 X 42¹/₈ (71.1 X 107)
National Museum of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution, Gift of Mrs. Frank
R. McCoy

Cat. 25
The Andes of Ecuador
1855
oil on canvas
48 X 75 (121.9 X 190.5)
Reynolda House, Museum of American Art,
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Cat. 26

In the Tropics

1856

oil on canvas on panel

25¹/₄ X 36¹/₄ (64.1 X 92.1)

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond,
The Glasgow Fund

Cat. 27

Twilight (Sunset)

1856

oil on canvas

16¹/₄ X 24¹/₄ (41.3 X 61.6)

Albany Institute of History and Art, Gift of
Beatrice Palmer

Cat. 28

Sunset

1856

oil on canvas

24 X 36 (61 X 91.4)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica,
New York

Cat. 29

View of Cotopaxi

1857

oil on canvas

24¹/₂ X 36¹/₂ (62.2 X 92.7)

The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Jennette
Hamlin in Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Louis
Dana Webster

Cat. 30

Niagara

1857

oil on canvas

42¹/₂ X 90¹/₂ (108 X 229.9)

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington,
D.C.

Cat. 31

Twilight (Catskill Mountain)

1856–58

oil on canvas

24 X 36 (61 X 91.4)

Private Collection

Cat. 32

Cayambe

1858

oil on canvas

30 X 48 (76.2 X 121.9)

The New-York Historical Society, New York,
The Robert L. Stuart Collection, on perma-
nent loan from the New York Public Library

Cat. 33

Heart of the Andes

1859

oil on canvas

66¹/₈ X 119¹/₄ (168 X 302.9)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest
of Mrs. David Dows

Cat. 34

Twilight in the Wilderness

1860

oil on canvas

40 X 64 (101.6 X 162.6)

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Mr. and Mrs.
William H. Marlatt Fund

Cat. 35

The Icebergs

1861

oil on canvas

64¹/₄ X 112¹/₄ (163.2 X 285.1)

Dallas Museum of Art, anonymous gift

Cat. 36

Cotopaxi

1862

oil on canvas

48 X 85 (121.9 X 215.9)

The Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Soci-
ety Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs.
Richard A. Manoogian, Robert H. Tannahill
Foundation Fund, Gibbs-Williams Fund,
Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., Fund, Merrill Fund,
and Beatrice W. Rogers Fund

Cat. 37

Coast Scene, Mount Desert

1863

oil on canvas

36 X 48¹/₄ (91.4 X 122.6)

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford,
Connecticut, Bequest of Mrs. Clara Hinton
Gould

Cat. 38

Rainy Season in the Tropics

1866

oil on canvas

56¹/₄ X 84³/₁₆ (142.9 X 213.8)

The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco,
Mildred Anna Williams Collection

Cat. 39

Aurora Borealis

1865

oil on canvas

56¹/₈ X 83¹/₂ (142.6 X 212.1)

National Museum of American Art, Smith-
sonian Institution, Gift of Eleanor Blodgett

Cat. 40

Niagara Falls, from the American Side

1867

oil on canvas

102¹/₂ X 91 (260.4 X 231.1)

National Gallery of Scotland

Cat. 41

Scene in the Andes

1863–67

oil on canvas

38 X 48 (96.5 X 121.9)

Private Collection

Cat. 42

The Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica

1867

oil on canvas

48⁵/₁₆ X 84³/₈ (122.7 X 215)

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford,
Connecticut, The Elizabeth Hart Jarvis Colt
Collection

Cat. 43

The After Glow

1867

oil on canvas

31¹/₄ X 48³/₄ (79.4 X 123.8)

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation,
and Historic Preservation, Olana State His-
toric Site, Taconic Region

Cat. 44

Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives

1870

oil on canvas

54 x 84 (137.2 x 213.4)

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, Gift of The Enid and Crosby Kemper Foundation

Cat. 45

The Parthenon

1871

oil on canvas

44¹/₂ x 72⁵/₈ (113 x 184.5)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Maria De Witt Jesup, from the collection of her husband, Morris K. Jesup, 1914

Cat. 46

El Khasné, Petra

1874

oil on canvas

60¹/₂ x 50¹/₄ (153.7 x 127.6)

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region

Cat. 47

Syria by the Sea

1873

oil on canvas

56 x 85 (142.2 x 215.9)

The Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Mrs. James F. Joy

Cat. 48

Tropical Scenery

1873

oil on canvas

31 x 48¹/₂ (78.7 x 123.2)

Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, Gift of the Friends of Art

Cat. 49

Morning in the Tropics

1877

oil on canvas

54³/₈ x 84 ¹/₈ (138.8 x 213.7)

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Avalon Foundation 1965.14.1

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