Thomas Cole Papers, 1821-1863; bulk, 1821-1848

SC10635
Series I. Correspondence, 1820-1855
Box 1, Folder 4: Letters by Thomas Cole, 1839-1840

To	Year	Month/Date
Ithiel Town	1839	March 6
William A. Adams	1839 1839 1839	March 11 June July 29
Edwin C. Hyde	1839	September 2
Asher Brown Durand	1839	September 4
Samuel Ward	1839	September 14
William A. Adams	1839	October 30 December 2
Samuel Ward	1839	December 7
Asher Brown Durand	1839	December 18
D. B. Hervey	1840 1840	January 3 February 22
William A. Adams	1840	February 26
Rev Joseph F. Phillips	1840	March 21
Ithiel Town	1840	May 25
Asher Brown Durand	1840	May 26
Charles Lanman	1840	June 15
Ithiel Town	1840	July 13 July 24
William A. Adams	1840	August 4
Samuel Ward	1840 1840	September 23 October 12

James S. Huggins	1840	October 20
Samuel Ward	1840	October 28 November 14

N. Hamm March 6th 1839.

Received from Thos Town in Books & Engravings the amount of $222.25/100 towards paying for a picture which I am to paint of the value of $500 — Two hundred dollars to be paid by him in Cash six months after the painting is finished, the remainder of the five hundred dollars to be paid in Books & Engravings. The picture is to be painted in the course of the next Summer —

Copy of a Note given to Mr Town —

Hamm got from Mr Town Books to the amount of $86.00

Phil Town

My dear Sir,

I come again upon you with a demand on your kindness, but will not tax you with an apology for that which it seems I am determined to persist in. I have to be sure an inward desire that the opportunity will offer before long for making some return for my accumulating indebtedness — On speaking to Professor Silliman the other day of the beautiful impressions of fossil plants found in your neighborhood & of those you forwarded to Mr Ingham he expressed a strong desire to obtain similar specimens. he has previously made several unsuccessful attempts to obtain such from your region ~~[illegible]~~ I have offered to write to you on the subject & to request that you forward to him some of the best specimens that can be obtained large specimens in general are desirable as he ~~expects~~ such as can be used in the Lecture Room lecturing in Boston in a few months — He desired me to say that he expects to obtain them only by paying a reasonable sum — that is he expects to pay for them & does not intend to tax your packet as well as postage — to pay is expected — If you can obtain a collection of ~~[illegible]~~ specimens they may be forwarded in a Box addressed Prof. Silliman, Newhaven. to be left in the care of G. S. Silliman 44 William St. N. York. — Mr S. desired me to say that each specimen should be wrapped in a seperate piece of paper.

Pray what is become of the State House? I have been expecting to hear from you week after week — Is the design chosen, the premiums awarded? I have positively heard nothing about the matter since you wrote with the exception of an article in the N York American, in which the designs are spoken of & mine in perhaps too flattering a manner. You may have seen the Article, I am really desirous to hear from you. about yourself. I have been almost expecting you here in propria persona — I have spent the winter in the City & it has been a broken one with me I have literally done nothing & am waiting for the breaking up of the North River that I may be in sight of the Catskills & pursue my art without interruption —

I write in great haste — and conclude in the hope to see you or hear from you in a very short time — You may address me

No 1 Laight
N. York

Remain
Yours as ever sincerely
Thomas Cole —

N. York
March 11. 1839

I scarcely know how to address you.
Zanesville or Columbus.

N York Thursday.

My dear Sir,

I was sorry that I had not an opportunity of conversing more at length with you on the subject of Mr D & his designs - I have a few moments to spare before I leave the City & will venture to make a few remarks. When you told me that you thought of making Mr D the judge I felt pretty sure that he would be jury also & pass a verdict of "guilty" on all the plans - And prepare to offer you one of his own, which as he has the result of the labours of three or four men as materials to work from he ought to be superior to any of the premium designs & in his own estimation will naturally be so - When you see him again you will find that the premium plans will be treated with contempt as childish & impracticable works - he will talk about violation of first principles in crude phraseology. And will offer you some ~~beautifully finished~~ pretty ~~finished drawings~~ drawings one of whose excellencies will certainly be beautiful execution - It is not my place to object to your plan of showing

the plans to Architects & men of Taste, but I cannot but think that the result will be very unsatisfactory - it reminds me of the Painter who exposed his work in the Market place for each passer to make a chalk-mark on the the part that did not please him - the whole picture was chalked. Our designs will be treated in like manner - & I feel confident that the only way by which you can expect to obtain a fine plan is to give it to one man - Let him have the premium designs before him - let him study & combine their advantages of each & he will have a fair chance to produce a noble work; but I really think that the Artist should be one of those who have obtained the premiums. In leaving the Designs with Mr Davis for so great a length of time you have done him a great favour you have given him the conceptions of three of your minds & he will certainly endeavour to make use of them - Whatever deficiencies there may be in my design (& I know there are such) it possesses originality simplicity & facility of execution & if you approve I will be bound that if you could look into his Port Folio a few weeks from this you would see the results in sundry drawings upon the same principle - I cannot but think that it will be somewhat unfair to accept even his modifications - It may be said that your object is to obtain a fine plan let it matters not who the designer are or how many? but after all it must be subjected to one man & surely one of those whose designs have been considered best should be that Artist - I shall be far from blaming Mr Davis if he tries to put his own design on you it is his business to do so if he can - I will say no more for fear that I may appear more anxious than I really am on the subject - But as your friend & as one who has a sincere desire to see the ~~best~~ a noble work produced ~~of the Metropolis~~ where there appears an ample opportunity I have ventured to speak -

I hope to see you in Catskill in a few days -

I remain

Yours truly

Thomas Cole -

I should like to finish a design after the Sketch I showed you

Wm A Adams Esq
American Hotel
N York.

P.P.
June 1839

Concord July 29th 1839

My Dear Sir,

I owe you a thousand apologies for not having replied to your letter of the 21st June; but I with only offer one, which is that I have been absent from home several weeks on a tour to the White Mts of N. Hampshire — On the subject of the State House I have little to say — I find that my plan is the one adopted with slight modification — the plan of advancing a central portico from the main Building you know is mine — though that that portico should be a copy of the part of the Parthenon never entered my thoughts — You know my opinions with respect to the Pediment, and I believe you are agreed with me on that point, but I suppose your fellow labourers were determined to have one — I cannot but think that as the first premium was given to one whose Design is not adopted that I ought to have some pecuniary compensation for what I have done, and my nephew since and I do not know but I shall send you in a Bill, but I will hear what you say — You must not think me mercenary or grudge in speaking of pecuniary compensation for my labour, but consider that I am speaking to you as Commissioner not as my friend. I think in justice I ought to have a first Premium. I am obliged to you for your endeavours to get my Nephew in as Superintendent — but I have not taken the measures you advised with respect to Mr Town & Mr Davis — The fact is on reconsidering the matter I believe it is my Nephew's interest will be more advanced

by Keeping him in N York. He is now doing well and with the prospect of doing better and should he ~~have to~~ go to Ohio he would be in great measure cut off from the advantages he now possesses & the Salary that he would get would most probably not be a sufficient inducement for the sacrifice he would have to make — I was very sorry to learn that your lameness had increased, but sincerely hope it has by this time passed away & that your health has improved also —

We often think about you & talk about you & should like to have you nearer to us — I am as usual engaged in painting & hope you will to these parts will set your cabel up again. When you forward Mr Silliman's Minerals you will perhaps favour me with a line —

Mrs Cole is pretty well & desires to be remembered — & little Theodore would if he could speak. Write to me soon & tell me how the State House grows; but much more of & about yourself —

Remain
Yours very truly
Thomas Cole

25

Wm A Adams Esq
Zanesville
Ohio

CATARIL
JUL
30

7 P.M.
July 1839.

Edwin C. Hyde, Esq.

Circumstances will not permit me to undertake the payment of claims against my Father such as that of Messrs Hening & Co. (of what plan you do not say) however much my inclination might lead me to do so –

I am a little surprised that the Notes were not presented some years ago as Mess. Hening & Co must have known that my Father was in business in N. York several years before his death.

Yours &c

Thomas Cole.

Catskill Sep 2 1839

My dear Durand

I hope you will pardon me for my long delay in answering your letter; but I assure you that it has been next to impossible for me to write — I am obliged to you for writing to inform me of the arrival of Dechaux's Canvas I had made arrangements through Henry to obtain some of it, which I have now in view & think it will answer admirably. I have also ordered some English Canvas from Ashton of Philadelphia so you see I have not given up the intention of painting, although in the course of the last year I have had many interruptions; but I am like Witherington in the Battle of Chevy Chase who ~~&c~~ When his legs were ~~&c~~ cut away he fought upon the stumps. I am very desirous to learn the particulars of your excursion through Vermont — My own excursion to the west I imagine ~~was~~ not so fraught with incident — With respect to the Small Frames as they are not of the size you expected & you have no use for them — of course they ~~may~~ be sent back again Connelly will take them from your rooms sometime when he calls ~~&c~~ to D Ackerlys —

We are in the daily expectation of an increase in our family — our little boy has been sick of the

Summer complaint but is now recovering —
I have commenced various Landscape pictures
some of which I hope will be successful, for I
should like to make my debut in the New Rooms
with grace — I suppose you sometimes think
of the same matter — I hope to see you
before long I should like to invite you up here
this charming weather but family matters in-
-terfere with my desires —
I hope Mr Durand is ~~very~~ well ~~especially~~
and all your young folks — Mrs Cole joins
me in kind regards for Mr Durand & yourself —
And I think I had better close for I am
beginning to blunder
Yours truly
Thomas Cole —

Catskill
Sept 4 1839.

1839

1 Dr

A. B. Durand Esq
Amity St
N York.

SKANEATELES
SEP 4
N.Y.

No. 29

Catskill Sept 14 1839.

Mr Samuel Ward,

Dear Sir,

From my long silence on the subject of your pictures I hope you will not infer that I have allowed so many months to pass without making some progress towards their completion – I assure you they have occupied too much of my mind to permit me to be idly defering their execution – In fact it has been difficult for me to overcome my impatience to commence the pictures before I had studied them with that care which I know to be necessary to ensure the production of a work of high excellence – ~~In conceiving~~ The poetical conception of a subject ~~particular~~ may not be difficult, for it is spontaneous; but to ~~create~~ imagine that which is to be embodied in ~~the~~ Light Shadows Colour, that is strictly pictorial is an accumulative work of the mind I speak of this that I may be excused for any seeming dilatoriness – During the Summer I have been engaged in making finished studies of the subject – introducing ~~in~~ and arranging in them all the necessary objects determining the Characters so that when I have the large canvasses before me I shall be enabled to proceed with a certainty &

facility that could not be obtained otherwise.

I have made some progress on the Portrait picture of the ~~Lieutenant~~ on the large canvas (which is 6 ft. 6 in. long) & if I may trust my own judgment or measure the excellence of my work by my desire to produce excellence it will be the finest picture that I have painted — I am only hope my natural love for my own productions & especially the last does not deceive me.

I shall take the liberty of drawing on you for $100 upon Gunning, in the course of a few days —

It will give me great pleasure to hear from you — My address is Catskill.

In the hope that you are in the enjoyment of health —

I am
Gratefully & respectfully
Thomas Cole

~~Catskill~~
~~Sept 14th 1839~~

William Cullen Bryant
New York
Care of Messrs Bryant & Co
Wall Street

Catskill Oct 30th 1839

My dear Sir,

Your letter of the 17th inst. was very acceptable for I began to fear that you had either forgotten me or were sick. ~~I suppose~~ I will make enquiry of Mr Silliman about the Fossils: I feel confident that he will find them valuable: for myself I feel very much indebted to you. Your reply to my letter relative to further remuneration was such as I anticipated, taken on the ~~ground~~ that my plan was the adopted one, but you allow that you have authority to remunerate such architects & assistants as you may employ in modifying & maturing a plan: my dear Commissioner did not I assist in modifying and maturing the plan? I am much pleased to learn that you are going on so bravely with the work I hope appropriations will be liberal so that you may see the building rise rapidly. First would not be troubling you too much I should like to have a little plan, such as could be sent in a letter shewing of the Building as it is intended to be; shewing the alteration to my last plan giving the proportion & ~~height~~ number of Columns in the portico. A mere dotting with pencil will do. At the same time I would learn the number of Columns in the last design I made for the Portico (for I have forgotten). It is my intention to send set of drawings of the Design to our next Exhibition. I wish to do this as it is probable that an arrangement will be made between Mr Bayless & myself by which we shall be connected as Architects. He as the practical man. I more to aid him with my little influence than for anything else. I assure you I am not going to abandon my

I must offer you also to make in my stylish Hotel, the Court Dome I made for nothing, if it is perfectly convenient.

first love for all the blandishments of an Architectural mistress. If the arrangement of which I speak is made it will be well for me to make public the little I have done - and as the State House is the most important thing I have attempted I must make the most of it. It would be agreeable to have a some acknowledgement from the Commissioners or through the Press, that the Design adopted is mine; for I find that it is a matter of dispute here, Mr Thomson for one I understand claims the design adopted as his. — I have been thinking of making a proposition to the Commissioners, (or suggesting the thing) that they get a model of the Building constructed under my superintendence - it may be either of plaster or wood the first mentioned material is the cheapest & perhaps the best, a model is almost indispensable in the construction of a great building like your State House. And if it were not of such importance for architectural purposes & I believe it is - it is a matter of policy for the Commissioners to have a good model made it would give a more perfect idea to your Legislators &c of what the building will be when finished than a thousand drawings could. I would propose that it be constructed on a large scale (say five or six feet long) so large that the details should be executed with such exactness that they might be measured from, and it ought to be sectional. The mere making of the model would not cost more than a few hundred dollars 2 or 3. Of course if I had the labour of superintending it designing all the capitals, columns, ornaments for interior &c I should be reasonably compensated. I should esteem it a pleasure to write to me and

let me know your views & whether you think it
~~necessary~~ will for me to address the Commissioners on the
subject. perhaps your suggestion will be sufficient.
But I will now cease to trouble you about architectural matters except it is to tell you that I am
about building a house, it will be a sort of Italian
looking thing - if times are favourable I expect to finish
it next Summer. There is a room in it that Mrs Cole
I have set apart (in our minds for you) so I hope that
you will pray that the house be finished soon; but
I trust that you will not defer visiting us until
that room is ready for we can find one at any
time for you that will be a thousand times be-
-ter than any imaginary apartment can be.
My dear Sir I often wish that you were here to en-
-joy with me the beauty that Nature spreads around
us. I assure you I consider it quite a Godsend
when I find a man who can see & feel. Mrs Cole
joins me in the expression of the wish to see you. We have
had an increase in our family since we saw you. ~~and~~
Little Theodore who is now getting to be quite a boisterous
fellow has now a Sister. You must not suppose that
the pencil has been idle. I have finished several pictures
since I saw you - And I have commenced my great Gen
the Series of the Voyage of Life, I work at it "con amore" & hope
to make it the finest work I have executed. - You say
nothing in your letter of your health or your foot. When
you write again say something of yourself, if only to keep me in
countenance - I am afraid my late letter to you have taken
a tone that would lead to wrong impressions of my predominant
thoughts - "remuneration", "compensation" &c &c - I never consider
me a Bank Note worm but believe me to be an Artist
and as ever Yours truly
Thomas Cole

you see he is free — we talk very comfortably
his letters. he feels it hard among the Mountains
and a little lonesome now my fine fellow!

Yours

Oct. 30

Wm A Adams Esq
Zanesville
Ohio.

25

2 DEC 39

My dear Sir,

I was just on the eve of writing to you when your welcome letter arrived — I had received a letter from Mr Silliman in which he says the box of fossils so kindly forwarded by you had not arrived & that such matters have sometimes a long transit from the west — he desired me when I wrote to you to make his particular acknowledgments & that when the box arrives he will himself write to you —

I am a little surprised to learn that the plan of your State House is not yet determined; from your previous letter I inferred that all was decided. I am much afraid that ~~[illegible]~~ the building when finished will be like most other buildings erected in this country, a monument of Bad Taste & Architectural Ignorance. My only hope is in you — My dear friend do not yield. do not I beg you give your consent to the absurdities that will be attempted. nor let your name be coupled with those whose only knowledge is conceit ~~&~~ whose only taste capricious. the work you are engaged in if unmeaning & deformed as it possible, will endure & be your monument through ages to come as certainly as if its proportions were as beautiful as ever the mind of man conceived — ~~[illegible]~~ As it respects my share of the design if you cut off the nose & ears & fix this place put a proboscis or a plug I shall not acknowledge the offspring —

Regarding the alteration that your fellow-commissioner & architect insist upon. I merely advise that when finished a painted cross should be made in each recess by the western portico (as is common in such like places in Italy)

with the words "Rispetti la Croce" in large letters over it; or the more obvious sentence "Non si urina qui" though in plain English for the temptation will be very strong to all passers-by. The alteration suggested for the East Front is not very objectionable but certainly a far differing arrangement of rooms will be required in order to obtain light. I do not think that pilasters instead of Columns for the Dome is an improvement as lightness is required in such a superstructure. I may appear to you more tenacious of my plan than I really am. I assure you that no one would be more ready to acknowledge the fitness & beauty of any alteration more readily than myself; but as yet I must say that the alterations proposed by your coadjutors are unmeaning whims & capricious experiments. The fact is there is so much conceited ignorance amongst us & overweening ambition that the good is seldom acknowledged. every man thinks himself capable of producing better however excellent a thing may be although he is utterly unprepared by study for the thing proposed. you can scarcely meet one man in fifty who does not presume to be universal, capable of doing everything under the sun.

Respecting the Model I have nothing to say since your architect is engaged in it. & I suppose it will be as well for me give up all further interest in the matter. except that as my design is likely to be mutilated in a "shocking manner" as the accident-mongers say I may bring in an action for damages in the way of a "Bill for altering with intent to improve the Plan for State House." But enough of this. You complain of the times & I have reason to do so for I have suffered through my friends, but I have antidote to loaded cares in the ample canvass that now spreads before me. I wish you were here to see

what I am doing. I have commenced my great series the "Voyage of Life" and I hope it will be the best work I have ever executed; but I write rather a less selfish wish it is that you were here to see the beautiful mountain and the wondrous sky that now is filled with the golden light of the setting sun — We have delightful weather — Mrs Cole is well & all Mr Thomson's family — Mr C wishes to be particularly remembered to you — Theodore is having some mischievous to his sister Nell — I was pleased to hear that your health was better & hope it may continue to — I am sorry that you do not promise us a visit soon — but you must remember that when you come you will be very welcome —

I thought I had written you long ago that I had abandoned the idea of going abroad with the why & the wherefore — the story is too long for this sheet so I will close by acknowledging myself

Yours very truly

Thomas Cole —

Catskill
Decr 2nd 1839

Write soon —

Let me have the plans at your convenience —

25

Wm A Adams Esq
~~Zanesville~~
Columbus Ohio -

Dec 31

To Samuel Ward Esq N. York.

Dear Sir

It is with sincere sorrow that I sit down to answer your letter of the 5th Inst: – but the sorrow of one who has lost a friend or patron perhaps ought ~~to have been expressed to one who~~ not to be expressed to one who has lost a ~~father~~ Parent – I had already received the melancholy news of your Father's death & ~~with it had~~ dissipated many a pleasing anticipation ~~that~~ of his appreciation of the work I was engaged on which I considered a happy privilege ~~to be engaged upon~~

It gives me pain to learn that it is necessary for the administrators to enquire on what terms I will release the Estate from the agreement for the four Pictures of the Voyage of Life – I had hoped that the arrangement between Mr Ward & myself regarding the pictures would have met with no impediment on his decease & the enquiry as to the terms on which I can release the Estate from the agreement comes so unexpectedly that I scarcely know how to answer – It ~~was~~ is the more unexpected in consequence of the circumstance that in the conversation which he had with me ~~when~~ when he gave me the Commission he seemed to anticipate the event which has taken place & yet gave the Commission – He requested me to send the pictures down as they were finished & not to wait until the whole series was completed. He made the request he said "because of the uncertainty of life" ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ Perhaps I ought not to have troubled you with the relation of this ~~circumstance~~ conversation as it ~~was~~ probable you are acquainted with all its purport ~~of which this was a part~~ & I am sure the request of the Administrators would not have been made without good reason – But my dear Sir, the request would seem to call upon me for a sacrifice ~~that~~ cannot be merely pecuniary ~~[illegible]~~ but one of cherished hopes & ~~[illegible]~~ objects – When I received your Father's liberal commission I felt that the opportunity had arrived of embodying a favourite Poem, an opportunity such as I had as yet only dreamed of. & since that time I have lived & laboured in the strong hope of being able to produce a work that ~~should~~ would be an honour to myself & my generous patron. I know that you are capable of feeling how hard a thing it is to give up the dearest object of artistic life just on the eve of accomplishment – I know not how to do it, I could more easily resign the pecuniary compensation than the opportunity of accomplishing the work – There is not probability that I could find a purchaser for the Pictures even ~~should~~ circumstances ever allow me to finish them – I am requested

to make a proposition. I will do so, but before I proceed in order that the circumstances of the case may be fully understood & that I may not run the risk of being suspected of unwillingness to accommodate it will be well to make a little statement of the condition in which things stand. The series has been my chief labour for nine months: but even previously it had been the subject of much study. I have purchased materials necessary & devote wholly to this. I have let aside other commissions that I might devote wholly to this. I have been at considerable expense in fitting up a painting room more suitable than the one formerly occupied which was too small for the execution of such large pictures. I have made various pecuniary arrangements in consequence of the commission. I have made finished studies for several of the pictures and have made considerable progress towards the completion of the first picture. I expect that about a year's labour will be required before the completion of the whole series. My proposition is that you shall pay half the amount of the whole consideration, that is $1500 in addition to what I have already received, with a lien on the pictures for the amount. I will be ready to deliver the series when completed. It is with pain that I make such a proposition, because although it may be a sacrifice, it would seem to be no equivalent given to you for the money expended. On consideration I am induced to make another proposition which will perhaps be more satisfactory to all. I will agree to paint for the family or for any member of it a complete copy of the whole series small cabinet size say 3 feet by 2 if in addition to the $1500 before mentioned upon receiving $500 on finishing the first picture. The mode not considered. The additional $500 I consider as an adequate compensation for the copies which I should finish in the highest manner possible. The pictures of that size of ordinary subjects I obtain $500 each. I hope this proposition will be accepted if it is concluded not to take the large pictures for certainly it would be gratifying to yourself & family to possess the work even on a small scale which but for the liberality of your father would probably never have been executed at all. And I assure you that it will be a source of satisfaction to me that you possess some equivalent for the money paid. Of course I should require some eighteen months to elapse before I could finish the small pictures. I have now made the only propositions which the nature of circumstances will allow and I sincerely think that there is nothing unreasonable in what I have proposed. I am desirous for your sake of making such a proposition as you desired me to write frankly on the subject & I have done so & trust you will excuse me for long letters with which I have troubled you.

I am now sitting with the first picture of the series of the Course of life spread before me — the light of its early birth to morning mountain mellow & the more melancholy associations than I ever supposed could arise from it — its sky seems sad & its flowers faded, for now its morning is too closely associated in my mind with the evening — the artist had portrayed the fairest morning of life — his patron had experienced the evening & the close. With every kind wish

I remain
Yours very truly
Thomas Cole

Catskill
Dec 7th 1839

Copy of a Letter
to Samuel Ward Esq
Bond St
N. York.

Catskill Decr 18 1839

My dear Durand,

Being ensconced for the winter in sight of the gray-headed mountains & feeling as though the river ought to close soon & consequently as though my friends in N York were removed one thousand miles farther off I begin ~~to feel as though~~ to think I should like to commence a correspondence with you in order that the ~~little~~ chain that binds us may not be broken by the stress of Time & distance — And in the hope that through you I shall from time to time hear a little news from the world of Art — There is also another object in this letter, which is to ask a favour, but it is one that I will not ask you to grant unless it is perfectly convenient & agreeable — My Sister has got a notion of trying to Etch a little — has the implements — had not my time been so fully occupied when I was in the City I intended to have given her information on the subject, such as I possess but I was prevented — Now the favour I ask of you is, this that some day when you are near Laight St you will have the kindness to call on her & tell her to prepare her Etching Materials & you will call again some day when you have a convenient opportunity & spend an hour with her & give her a little information on the subject I do not wish to impose this thing upon you. I know how you are occupied & how precious your time is

but if it does happen that you can do it without inconvenience I shall esteem it a great favour — ~~I Dare say~~

Do you know that I have got into a new painting Room — Mr Thomson has lately erected a Lot of Stores house & has let me have part of it for a temporary painting room it answers pretty well is somewhat larger than my old one & being removed from the noise & bustle of the house is really charming — What I shall be able to produce in it heaven knows — The walls are of unplastered brick with the beams & rafters seen on every hand — not a bad colour this pale brick & mortar — I am engaged upon my great series ~~for Mr~~ & Mr Ward you know is dead I regret the circumstance exceedingly — I do not know that it will make any difference with respect to the pictures —

Why did Mr Vatterman see you & have you furnished him with a drawing or two I have done so to the amount of a sketch or two. I should have done so with a much better feeling if he had not said that he intends to ~~shew it in Europe~~ give the Old World a proof of the genius which has arisen to assert the magnificence of Art in the New!! !!! A little too much of the Show Man about this same Mr Vatterman —

By the by we have had a great snow storm here between our house & the Village the snow lies only about seven or eight feet deep in places — its all right I like things to be done thoroughly; when it snows I want it to snow — the weather is now clear the mountains beautiful in the sunshine — I regret exceedingly that I cannot meet the 21 this winter — when you go remember me to all my old friends — I hope to see great things from you next Spring so dont disappoint me —

Do write to me now & then & let me know what is going on among the Arts & artists & particularly tell me what you are doing — When you see Mr Allen & Family please tender our regards to them —

Mrs C desires to be remembered very particularly to Mr Durand — she would like much to see the Young Durand — Our little folks are well also the big ones so with every good wish

I remain
Yours truly
Thomas Cole —

1839

A B Durand Esq
Amity St
N York

PAID 2

CATSKILL
DEC
19
N.Y.

Dr Sir,

I have sent you a Bill of the Timber I want, you will find it on the other side — I wish to procure some Chesnut Posts & Hemlock Boards for a Fence — perhaps you can furnish me with them —

100 Chesnut Posts 7 feet long 6 or 7 inches in diameter if round — 3 in by 6 in if square —

2500 ft of Hemlock Boards cut in lengths of 6 ft, 5 inches at one end & 1 at the other for Pickets. 700 feet of 14 inch Hemlock Boards split in two for Fence Stuff — I wish you to inform me if you can let me have the Fence Stuff — and the timber for the House and at what price — The Fence Stuff I shall want as early as possible — the Timber for the House must be delivered before the 1st of May next —

I am Yours &c

Thomas Cole —

Catskill

Jan 3 1840

To D B Henry

South Durham Co N. Y

Catskill Feb 22 1840

Dear Sir,

I have received yours of the 19th Inst & I am a little surprised that you should have commenced sawing & preparing logs - I wrote for you to come to Catskill in order to make a definite agreement as to the price & the quantity and size of the Timber - I had previously informed you that it was likely I should make some alteration in the plan which would require the Timber to be cut different from the Bill which I had before sent you to examine. - I did not in my letter of the 7th Inst tell you to proceed - because it is always best in cases of this kind to have a written agreement - & you did not know the quantity of Timber I wanted nor the price you would take for it. I am much more disappointed in the circumstances that induce me to delay the building than you can possibly be in the fact that I cannot order the Timber at present - I am extremely sorry if I have put you to any inconvenience & assure you that when I build you shall have the preference - I may possible want the Timber delivered next Fall but I cannot now give you an order for it.

The deranged state of the times has interfered with my plan of building at present. ~~I wish you to send me~~ ~~Fence Stuff I wrote about~~ ~~with the exception of the posts, which I shall~~ ~~obtain elsewhere. Please send me also~~ 200 ft of the Hemlock Boards I shall be glad to get as soon as the roads will permit.

Yours truly

Thomas Cole

To D. B. Mooney Esq
South Durham
Greene Co
N. York

Catskill Feb 26 1840

My dear Sir

I received yours of the 21st ult. informing me of the battle that was waging between the Goths & the Vandals & yourself & was glad to hear that you are not vanquished though the enemies numbers are so great - I hope you may yet conquer - ~~I can~~ I can conceive what great difficulties you have to encounter & I shall be very agreeably surprised if you come off conqueror. It is almost too good a thing to expect in these times -

Perhaps you have forgotten my request that you would send me in a letter a small plan of the building according to my last design - but more probably your business will not permit you to spend so much time in the matter - I would not wish to impose a task which would require a sacrifice - so let it be at your convenience - If you can send it let it be soon as we are now preparing for Exhibition. I wish you could come & see our Exhibition not that I expect any thing extraordinary; but that I should like to see you in it - next to yourself a picture of yours - Do send one. I am very desirous indeed of seeing something of yours.

With respect to the voyage of life the fictitious

one is going on slowly, but the real one rapidly. I suppose you have read a great deal about the Daguerrotype & if you believe every thing the Newspapers say (which by the by would require an enormous bump of Marvellousness) you would be led to suppose that the poor craft of painting was knocked in the head by this new Machinery for making Nature take her own likeness & the poveri diavoli have nothing to do but to give up the Ghost; but thank goodness these Newspapers are great liars & I intend to launch a little boat of an Adage ~~upon~~ that shall pass the Public Ear - it is, when you hear anybody speaking falsely, to say "He lies like an Editor". The old saying "he lies like a pickpocket" is quite out of date for pick-pockets are become pious of late & the Total Temperance men - they "gave it up" finding the Editors unapproachable - But I was saying something about Daguerrotype matters, this the conclusion that the Art of Painting is a creative as well as imitative art & is in no danger of being superseded by any mechanical contrivance. "What fine chisel did ever yet cut breath"

The little I have seen of the Daguerrotyped productions did not astound me - the drawings of drawings they can be called were extremely faint & ghost-like; but wonderfully beautiful in detail - The invention will undoubtedly be one of great value - To the Artist it is a means of accumulating materials and it will confound all false & lying pictures - When I go to N York again I hope to see some more perfect specimens than I have yet seen -

I have been closely housed in Catskill all winter; but the river has opened uncommonly early & New York is now only a few hours sail from here; but perhaps I am too hasty - to night may come a killing frost & another winter commence -

Your Cage was excellent & no Bugs yet.

Mrs C is well & the Young ones she desires to join me in best regards to you -

I have not heard that Mr Silliman has yet received the Fossils -

You desired me to write when I had nothing to say - so I have filled the sheet with nothing - if you find it difficult to comprehend light your Cegar with it - it will then become smoke which is a little heavier than nothing - Write soon -

Yours very truly

Thomas Cole -

25

Wm H Adams Esq

Zanesville

Ohio

SKANEATELES
FEB 26
N.Y.

7c 40

7c

No 38

My dear Sir,

I am am obliged to you exceedingly for the kind criticism with which I have been favoured on the subject of the direction of the stream in my pictures of the "Voyage of Life": and though I cannot perceive the weight of your objection I owe it to your kindness to give my reasons for differing from you –

In the first place the subject is a poetical one & of course poetical reasons are valid – so I will say: There are many windings in the stream of Life & on this idea I have proceeded – its course towards the Ocean of Eternity we all know to be certain but not direct – each picture I have wished to make a sort of antithesis to the other thereby the more fully to illustrate the changeable tenor of our mortal existence – I am convinced that the opinions of spectators will be various on the subject of the direction of the stream – this I have already gathered from remarks made – that which you have thought might be a defect has been considered a beauty –

But I may be permitted to defend my work on stronger ground than this – I mean on that of ~~Poetical~~ Pictorial necessity – this the painter must consider equally with poetical propriety – the circumstances of Colour Form & Chiaro-Scuro have to be held in view – he

is not merely aiming to express a poetical thought; but to express it picturesquely - Now to apply this to my subject - in order to give the same direction to the stream in each picture I should be constrained to give the same view of the Boat & Figure or Figures, nearly the same, in each picture - this would be monotonous & would strike the spectator as having arisen, either from incompetency to execute or poverty of invention & that pleasure which rises from novelty would be entirely lost -

I will say a few words explanatory of my conception of the subject from which perhaps, you may be enabled to gather my reasons for executing it as I have - it

The first picture represents Infancy - The infant lives in the present - it neither looks back into the past nor forward to the future - it enjoys the strange world into which it is come, but its views & capacities are limited to a very small circle - The second picture represents Youth on the verge of Manhood - In that season of life all is hope & expectation - the world opens before us a wide paradise & visions of glory & happiness rise in the heated imagination - Consequently in the first picture I have placed the Infant in the Allegorical scene where the objects on which it gaze are all near, there are flowery banks but not wide spreading Landscapes to mar its feeble vision - By painting the cave in the back-ground of the picture & not very far from the spectator and by bringing the stream directly towards the spectator I have confined the scene as much as I knew how with due regard to pictorial effect -

In the second picture the scene I have endeavoured to represent as the scene is magnificent & extensive - The stream flows from the spectator into the scene & stretches far away directly towards a visionary pile of Architecture suspended in the air over the distant horizon - Here you will perceive the pictorial necessity of which I have spoken - A picture is not like a scene in nature where the eye can embrace the whole circle of the horizon, but is bounded like a scene through a narrow window - the greatest scope of vision is from the foreground to the distance - or horizon. Now if the river had flowed in any other direction than the one I have chosen how could the Aerial Architecture have been introduced so as to have been placed in full view of the traveller - it must have been imagined as existing out of the picture - which would be a tax on the imagination of the spectator that few would be willing to pay - In the third picture the direction of the stream will be across the picture for I do not require in it an extension view - In the last the stream is to be seen mingling with the vast ocean of Eternity - Birds are afraid I am troubling

you too much – I will merely add that – I do not think and objection to a picture which can be obviated by placing it in another situation with relation to others – can scarcely be a very great one –

We were speaking of questions for a Debate at the Lyceum – If the one I now suggest is a good one – perhaps you will propose it –

~~An Lecture introducing Conjecture~~ An favorable or unfavorable Rail roads & Canals ~~Conclusion~~ to the morality & happiness of the present generation in the U States –

I have written these remarks hastily & perhaps unintelligibly but will be kind enough to make any excuse ——

I am
Yours very respectfully
Thomas Cole

To the Rev Joseph F Phillips
Catskill
March 21 1842

Catskill May 25 1840

My dear Sir,

I have received yours of the 20th inst. and am surprised & mortified exceedingly at its contents. The picture which I have painted for you was, as far as lay in my power, executed in such a manner as to meet your expressed desire. I have taken the utmost pains with it & it is one of immense labor. In fact I have striven to the uttermost to gratify your wishes. You may judge then of the disappointment I have experienced from reading your letter. With respect to choice of subject, I proposed several to you which I felt would be fine ones for my pencil & I feel confident that if you had consented then would have been some probability of pleasing you, but you declined them.

I differ with you in the opinion that modern & antient Athens would have been fine subjects; and with respect to the former, I could not consent to copy any print. I could not visit Athens & without visiting Athens & sketching there, there would be a want of reality in the thing which that would discourage me from proceeding.

Almost any painter can copy a print & as for introducing a few Figures in the Picture these would scarcely give any interest, particularly as I should have to go to the prints for them & not having had an opportunity of sketching Greeks & Turks from nature — But we had discussed this matter before the subject I have painted was suggested — If I had painted all that was suggested, or was to paint even what you now suggest "the Mixture of different Ages & Styles in the same imaginary picture — the Landscape to predominate — the Architecture, History &c to be various & subservient!" ~~[illegible]~~ the Architecture, History &c would be in a very miniature form & I am confident that the best I could do on any square of Canvass would not ~~have~~ have been satisfactory — The picture I have painted is one of the best I have ever painted, it has been as much admired as any single picture of mine — it is painted for a much smaller ~~sum~~ price than any similar commission for several years & it was painted in full confidence that you would be satisfied — I am grieved & disappointed but I cannot undertake to paint another subject in place of it — I might reasonably expect another picture to be as unsatisfactory as the one I have painted. I might paint a dozen and perhaps not be successful, I am sorry for the circumstance but if I were to paint pictures to be rejected at the option of those

who give the commission, & my profession would be both
uncertain & precarious – I would much rather return
the Book &c that I have had from you, every one, & consid-
-der the commission as null, however it might grieve
me to do so than attempt another picture in the
place of this –

I have painted you a picture that I hoped would
be creditable to both of us & one which I am vain
enough to ~~think~~ believe is not fully appreciated
by you – Whatever hope I may have that you
will yet view the picture more favourably, I
will not trouble you with any further defence
of it or myself & will conclude by saying
that I have seldom experienced so great a disap-
-pointment, when I had ~~laboured~~ made due
endeavours for, & considered that I had taken every
means to ensure approbation.

I am

Yours respectfully

Thomas Cole.

To Phil Tacon Esq
New Haven.

Thos Town Esq
New Haven
Conn.

Catskill May 26 1840

My dear Durand,

I have intended & still intend if possible to be down with you in a day or two to see you off if you are going & to shake hands with you if you have given up the idea of crossing the Atlantic but as human events are uncertain I thought to make sure of a word with you by letter should I be denied the verbal pleasure. I have little to say but to wish you all success & to wish that I was to be your companion. It would be useless for me to offer you any advice as to mode of travelling &c — others whom you will meet who have travelled later will give it you more efficiently. I will only say take care of yourself & when you see anything very beautiful think how I should admire it — when you buy any beautiful color for yourself buy a little more for me or anything you think would be valuable to me — I mean when the cost is not so much as to incommode you & above all write to me, this I shall expect to hear —

Do you know I have received a letter from Mr Town telling me that neither he nor his friends like the picture I have painted for him, and desiring (expecting) me to paint another for him in place of it, composed of rich & various Landscape, History, Architecture of

different styles & Ages. &c" these are his words, or Antient or Modern Athens — this letter is interlarded with fulsome panegyric on my excellence in such ~~lands~~ pictures, "My friend Cole is celebrated for painting rich Landscapes with Architecture, History &c — intermixed" You & I painting Modern & Antient Athens would ~~have~~ with the aid of prints &c "have made pictures full of poetry & all or reality & full of the most intense interest to every body of literary character who should behold them" And full of trumpery if they had resembled this twaddle — For this trashy stuff he thinks after I having painted him a picture as near as I could accommodate my pictorial ideas to his prosaic voluminousness — a picture of immense labor at a much lower price than I have painted pictures of the same amount of labour ~~in~~ for several years past he expects me ~~to~~ again to ~~wait~~ spend weeks & weeks after the uncertain shadow of his approbation — I will not do it & I have written to him to say that I would rather give him his Books back & consider the Commission as null, than ~~paint~~ on such precarious terms — the Picture was painted for him — is his, ~~whether it is approved of or not~~ I am sure you would commend the Course I have taken if you knew all the circumstances.

On this subject I will say no more, but, beware of how you paint for the same patron —

My dear Durand write to me immediately on receipt of this, believe me desirous of your well being & enjoyment & one who will give you a warm welcome on your return —

Mrs Cole joins me in her ~~sends~~ regards to yourself & Mrs Durand mean all wishes in the hope that you are so —

Remain
Yours truly
Thomas Cole

I was desirous of borrowing a work or two as I mentioned to you — Perhaps if I do not see you before you start you will give me a Carte Blanche to present to Mr Durand.

1840

1 Dy

A. B. Durand Esq
Amity St
N York

KINGSKILL
MAY 13
N.Y.

83

Tour Pictures

Dear Sir,

I received yours of the 11th inst. and have taken the earliest opportunity of answering it — I am much obliged to you for considering my works as subjects worthy of the Essay of which you spoke, but I hope you will excuse me if I am brief in my reply to your request concerning the list of pictures, &c.

The truth is, that I feel some repugnance at the idea of furnishing matter towards any article or critique on my pictures — I feel gratified at judicious praise & benefitted by just censure, but I have always ~~avoided~~ shunned even the most distant suspicion of aiding in the expression of the one or avoiding the other —

I have but one remaining copy of the Description of the Course of Empire, but if you will take the trouble to look into the October or November Number of the Knickerbocker of 1836 you will find it there — The most important works that I have executed since the series above mentioned — are the Departure & Return — The Dream of Arcadia — The Past & The Present — The Architect's Dream, these

an entirely imaginative picture — I have painted several remarkable views, such the View on the Catskill belonging to Mr Sturges — a View of Athens and several others which you may have seen — I have no written description of the Departure & Return, but it was intended as a scene illustrative of the Feudal Times — Our picture represents a Knight departing from his Castle in the Morning in the midst of his Armed Friends & Retainers — as if going forth to Battle — The Second picture is a Sunset — The Knight Wounded or dying is seen carried on a litter by men. his War Horse follows the Knight but scarcely any of the Gallant Train with which he departed return with him — The locality in each picture is identified by a Gothick Cross with Madonna & Child — In the Past & the Present which are in the Possession of P. G Stuyvesant Esq. the first picture represents a Castle in its Pomp & Pride. beneath its walls is seen a rattling Tournament. The Second which is a Sunset. Represents the same Castle but in Ruin — A solitary Shepherd Boy stands on the Field where the gallant Tournament had been ——— These are poor lame descriptions of the pictures but my time is at present so fully occupied that I beg you will excuse them to me — You will find better & more ample descriptions of them in some of the Newspapers of the Time when they were exhibited if you thought proper to undergo the Labor of searching for them —

I trust that if you write on the Subject you propose it will be on the Works of the Artist only. they are the proper Subjects for Criticism or remark — Artists are often grieved offended or put to the blush by being dragged in propria personâ before the Public — Such ought not to be — when the Artist has passed away & if then the publick full Confidence intrust in him to Know more about him than his works have disclosed, let them have it — You will excuse this gratuitous remark —

The Country is now exceedingly beautiful and every lover of it ought to be in it —

I regret on much to learn the hard lot of Mr Ridner ——

Yours truly
Thomas Cole —

Catskill
June 15th 1840

Wm

Charles Lanman Esq

78 Pearl St

N York

CATSKILL
JUN 15
N.Y.

Catskill July 13th 1840.

Thos Cole Esq.

Dear Sir,

On reading your letter of the 4th inst I at first determined to write you briefly, giving a proposition for the adjustment of the difficulty between us; but there are several remarks in the letter which if suffered to pass unanswered, might be considered by you as acknowledgments on my part as correct. I have taken the liberty of replying to them previously to offering the proposition.

You say that "you have in almost every instance made it a condition not to charge for them (drawings) without giving entire satisfaction" I have in several instances given up the whole. There was no such condition entered into when your picture was engaged. Such a condition could not be entered into by my profession without some extra compensation for its uncertainty. An Architect does not live by merely making plans. In this matter it is probable that the case is not a parallel one. But this I think is most probable that you would be very unwilling to give away labour by which you could have earned the amount asked for the picture & particularly when you in consequence neglected your work & of certain compensation.

I do not believe that with a written description of

the picture I should have succeeded ~~any~~ better. I remember perfectly our conversation on the subject - It was to be the "Architects Dream" - from your description ~~I [illegible]~~ I selected ~~from~~ that which struck me as pictorial & ~~&~~ possible ~~& which in my simplicity I conceived would meet your approbation - I acknowledge that you spoke~~ You said you did not expect me to paint every thing of which you spoke ~~which you acknowledged at the time~~ ~~of much more than I have painted - much more than was possible to~~ I could not ~~embody in one~~ embody every thing in one single piece of canvas - ~~I could not paint every thing~~ ~~you did not expect me~~ ~~the whole world~~ - ~~A picture to be [illegible] be a good one must have some sort of unity with~~ -

But you do not give me credit for what most I solemnly assert that I worked on the picture faithfully & with the earnest desire to please you and to make as fine a picture as ~~of the subject as possible~~ lay in my power - ~~I was able~~ : -

I will not be offended by the low value you put & your pricing on ~~my~~ picture though I might justly be so. but I will say that if your estimate is correct & ~~my~~ the pictures I have painted for others have been extravagantly overrated ~~&~~ & I am labouring under an unfortunate hallucination - You state that you never wanted so large or high priced a picture & that I urged you strongly against your wish & judgment. I am sorry that you had not ~~stated plainly~~ intimated to me that such was the case I should have been ~~my~~ the last man in the world to urge you to that which you "did not feel able to do." I acknowledge that I was desirous of painting a picture for you; but the pecuni-

It is evident from several expressions that you have made use of that you act under a great mistake as to the amount of labour expended on the picture, & particularly so if you imagine that the picture was commenced & executed within the few weeks between the time when I informed the Home Maker of the age of the picture & the time of Exhibition — but that time I labored incessantly, but I had commenced on another canvas, there was more than the ordinary labour of three months on it. Several pictures for which I have received a high price have taken me less time. Perhaps I have never informed you that I am

This erroneous opinion respecting the time in which the picture was painted may have led you to place too low a value on the picture — if your estimate is correct the pictures I have painted for others have been extravagantly overrated or I am labouring under a strange hallucination. That you should imagine which you evidently do, that I am acting so dishonourably as to attempt to force an unworthy picture on you, or that I have to be inferior gives me more pain than anything you could do, because I never could have expected such proposers a friendship for me & believe me capable of such meanness. You state that you never wanted to buy a picture & that I urged you strongly against your wishes & judgement — I am now sorry that you did not estimate more plainly that such was the case. You are mistaken with respect to Mr Reid I have more than once had to plead putting your for him & was always remunerated for my extra trouble — There are several other matters in your letter to which I

might reply but knowing that you are not altogether pleased with what you call my close reasoning I will not offend you more. You are mistaken if you suppose that I should have hesitated to make some amicable arrangement with you, on finding that you could afford some means might have been devised to adjust the matter but when you required me as a matter of course to duplicate my pains & labour without any equivalent, I could not but feel that you treated me very unfairly.

I now propose ~~to~~ you cannot reasonably object to this. I shall be perfectly willing to abide by the decision whatever it may be.

I am sincerely grieved that such a difficulty should have arisen between us & trust that it may soon be adjusted ~~amicably~~ with satisfaction to both.

Farewell

Yours &c

Thos Cole

any ~~consideration~~ benefit ~~intend~~ did not make me urgent, indeed I cannot acknowledge that I was so ~~very~~ pressing in my application. ~~If Mr Reed had~~ You say I should have acceded without so much reasoning to the request of Mr Reed to repaint a picture. ~~Mr Reed would not have~~ ~~asked~~ asked ~~if I would repaint the picture without offering me some remuneration~~ / ~~under~~ in fact such a proposition was once made of me of the design of the Course of Empire & he told me I should be remunerated.

From the manner in which you speak of a "few weeks" I am afraid you ~~labour~~ put under a mistake as to the amount of labour expended on your picture & particularly so if you imagine that the subject was commenced & executed entirely in the few weeks between the time when I informed the Rev. maker of the design of the picture & the Exhibition in that time, this last was incessantly; but I had commenced and studied out the picture previously on another canvas. There was more than the ordinary labour of three months on it. Several ~~of my~~ pictures for which I have received higher prices took me ~~much~~ less time than this, ~~pictures~~ others much more ~~are not to be~~ Besides this Perhaps I have never informed you that in the winter of 1838 & 9 I commenced a picture for you a View of the Temples of Jupiter Panhellenius which after a good deal work I threw aside being dissatisfied with it. But I will trouble you no more with what you call my close reasoning, I am sorry I should be called upon for it — the proposition I

The ~~Proposal~~ is that the matter be left to the decision of four Gentlemen two of whom ~~given~~ I shall name & two shall be named by myself — I am perfectly willing to abide by any decision that may be made by them & am sincerely & truly grieved that there has been ~~so much~~ so much trouble about the matter & I sincerely hope it will be amicably adjusted —

Thos Foon Esq.

Cat Kill July 24 1840

Dear Sir,

I am again disappointed in your reply of the 22nd ult. The proposition to refer the difficulty to others I considered as a friendly arrangement & not a matter of litigation & as the facts & true merits of the case seem to my self & friends decidedly as favourable to me as they can possibly appear to you I was willing to make a sacrifice in order to accomplish an amicable ~~arrangement~~ settlement of the matter.

I do not perceive why there should be such an aversion on your part to such an arrangement or how decency can be outraged by such a procedure.

~~I have no design in the world to force a picture of mine on you against your inclination & particularly one which you dislike but that my endeavours to meet your wishes should be acknowledged & to be secured from the uncertainty of painting pictures which may be rejected at the pleasure of the person for whom they are painted in an unreasonable manner is what I cannot in justice to myself allow.~~

I have no design in the world to force a picture that you dislike upon you - but in justice, my endeavours to meet your approbation ought to be acknowledged - and it is unreasonable to expect me to paint pictures ~~under a hope~~ which may be rejected at the pleasure ~~nothing a sacrifice of my time & labour. But I will say no more~~ in my previous letters I have said enough on this subject. ~~I wish to make another proposition~~

Respectfully,

I write to make another proposition, in the hope that it will be more successful than the last.

I will agree to paint in the course ~~of a few months in place of the Architect's Dream~~ ~~of which I make no doubt~~ ~~this~~ A picture with the same area of canvass as Mr Van Rensselaer ~~if my health will allow~~ say 5 by 3 3/5 a View of the Temples of Pæstum — or if you like better, a View of Aqueducts in the Campagna de Roma — or a View of Tivoli, you have your choice — ~~I have a Sketch~~ for which I shall keep the Books I have received from you & be paid $250 in Cash when the picture is completed — The Architects dream ~~will be to be taken back with the frame~~ ~~which you have had made for it which I suppose cost~~ ~~$100 or so~~ ~~to be taken by me~~ delivery to me — ~~which will be a~~ This I shall make deduction of about a Hundred Dollars from the price of the Architects dream — Of course I shall expect you to take the picture when completed — My desire to ~~pla~~ satisfy you & my credit as an Artist will ensure you as good a picture as I can paint. The subjects of which I speak are the no best my Sketch books possess — The View of Tivoli is the one perhaps which will suit you best as it has Temples Trees & Waterfalls in it. I have another Sketch taken at Tivoli that may possibly ~~suit you~~ please more than this — it is looking down the Valley, the Villa of Mecænas with several Towers rising on the left, the Anio stealing from the Cascatelles pursuing its course towards the Campagna which spreads in the distance. The Dome of St Peters just visible — I have now appeared you all I know how to offer & I hope shown you that I am not undesirous to suit you,

approbation — If my Canvass ~~suits~~ I ~~have~~ will paint ~~not exceed~~ the picture a little larger than the before mentioned size. I have before explained to you Why I cannot paint the Athens Line I cannot put them as fine subjects — I believe the first mentioned Tivoli will require to be painted as an upright picture to look well.

In the hope that your next letter will conclude this pleasant correspondence, ~~that I shall receive it~~

I remain

Yours respectfully

Thomas Cole.

Catskill August 14 1840

My dear Adams,

I hope you will forgive me for having neglected so long to answer your letter enclosing the drawing of State House - I have been on the eve of writing time after time but circumstances of one kind or other have continually held back my pen - I am obliged to you for the trouble you have been at to obtain that drawing. I did wish something more, such as a slight sketch of Ground Plan & interior of the Rotunda, merely sketches. but I cannot wish you to do them your time is better occupied - Your Tippecanoe heading is excellent I hope the your Chanticleer will will continue to crow after next November - If he does the State House will perhaps rise a peg higher - by the bye I saw a Gentleman from Columbus a month or two since who seemed quite knowing about State House Matters. he assured me that Mr Walters plan was the one adopted - Our Exhibition though better than the last was far from being what I would wish it to be the pictures generally were of a low character

Indeed it appears to me that Art is on the declin-
~~[illegible]~~ as well as morals. There seems to be little
or no effort among the Artists anything elevated or
intellectual – I don't know what we are coming to
I assure you that after a visit or two I looked at
the Exhibition with complete disgust – They seem
to have done wonders in Philadelphia this season
I regretted much my inability to visit their Exhi-
-bition – You speak of my Architectural
picture – it was painted for Mr Town according
to receipt – I did my best to make the mixture
"take & good". but however it may please the taste
of others Mr Town turns his nose up at it & refuses
to take it – After having spent weeks & weeks of the
hour upon it with the earnest desire to please, since
he ~~has expects~~ me to paint another without a doll-
-ar as Compensation – A precarious profession mine
would be if I were to paint pictures on such terms –
I have always known him to be a narrow man but
I did not expect to be treated in the manner he seems
inclined at present – but the hard times ~~[illegible]~~
~~[illegible]~~ may account in some measure for the wretched
-ness of the picture –
If you will take the trouble to look in the Knicker
-bocker of Septr when it comes out you will see
a little article there addressed to Critics on the
Art of painting – You will know who is the Author –
A letter to Painters & another to Architects may
possibly make their appearance in the course
of time – I am busily engaged fighting
with Co-lors – my series is going on slowly.
I intend, if I can obtain permission to exhibit
to visit November (after Election) when I hope
you will be able to come on –
Mrs Cole & the two little folks are well she
wishes to join me in best regards for your
health & prosperity – Write soon & let
me know that I am forgiven for having
been so neglectful & writing such a scrawl
as this.

Remains
Yours truly
Thomas Cole

25

Wm A Adams Esq
Zanesville
Ohio.

CATSKILL
AUG 4
N.Y.

7 Cts

Aug 4 1840

To Samuel Ward Esq

Catskill Sept 23 1840

Dear Sir

I cannot but express how greatly I have been disappointed in not seeing you in Catskill according to your promise; doubtless business of a more important nature interfered with your intention & fearing that I may not have an opportunity of seeing you soon I have taken the liberty of communicating to you by letter a matter that has been dwelling in my mind for some time past –

Several persons of taste have expressed to me the desire that the Series of the Voyage of Life may be exhibited publickly in the manner in which Mr Reid's "the Course of Empire" was – Of Course I have stated to them that it would depend on the pleasure of Mr Cole's family as I could not do anything of this kind without their approval – Mr John Ward to whom I incidentally mentioned the subject gave me reason to suppose there would be no objection on the part of the Family.

As the time of the Completion of the Pictures is now approaching I have thought I would ~~speak of~~ open the matter with you expressing my views & wishes ~~&~~ although I am not rich enough to afford a pecuniary benefit I wish you to believe that such is the least of my reasons for ~~the~~ desiring ~~them~~ to Exhibit the Pictures –

I am sure you would regret the circumstance as much as myself, if a work of Art like the one I am engaged upon, (I am supposing it to be all that you or I can wish) should be shut up in a private Room in-accessible to hundreds who might desire to see it & as a fine work of Art is a source improvement as well as pleasure to a Community ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ peculiarly ~~[illegible]~~ & heaven knows this Community has need of ~~some~~ the genial influence of the Fine Arts to soften ~~[illegible]~~ its hard & utilitarian features —

It is my impression that the Pictures will be increased in value by a publick Exhibition. ~~It~~ It is certainly so in the case of the Course of Empire, if they had not been Exhibited they would have been comparatively unknown at this time.

There is ~~a~~ another reason which if my ~~impressions~~ feelings ~~are~~ is correct, that with you will be stronger than anything ~~I have~~ I have said ~~It~~ is that the Exhibition will be honourable to the memory of your gifted father and there are hundreds who will be desirous to see the Pictures for his sake — ~~[illegible]~~ If the Pictures could be finely Engraved their value would be much increased — And ~~the only means~~ no better means, perhaps the only, ~~[illegible]~~ for accomplishing this would be by getting Subscribers in the Exhibition Room.

~~I could offer other [illegible]~~

~~In Ext~~ If the Family should think proper to allow me ~~to~~ Exhibit the Pictures in the beautiful new Rooms ~~in the~~ of the National Academy in the Lyceum at Corner of Leonard St & B'y can be obtained ~~about the first~~ in Nov next which I think will be a good time (just after the Election) I shall if I am fortunate complete the Series before that time —

If you grant me the permission I ask the Family must of course have ~~an~~ ample opportunity of seeing them before the Exhibition — And in my advertisements ~~I~~ shall express that the permission is given to me by the Family.

I have hesitated some time before ~~writing~~ mentioning the subject fearing that there might be some circumstance or other which I am acquainted to prevent your acceding to my request but I hope there is not & I trust you will excuse the liberty I have taken in thus expressing my desire — If you cannot visit me you will perhaps favor me ~~when~~ as soon as convenient with a reply to this —

Yours very respectfully
Thos Cole

The Second picture has been finished two or three months and ~~I believe~~ I have the liberty to draw another thousand dolls if ~~then~~ in the course of a few days I draw on you for a few hundreds & hope it will be convenient —

Catskill Oct 12 1840

Dear Sir,

I am exceedingly unwilling at such a time as this, when Death has again ~~appl~~ afflicted your family, to trouble you about my concerns & have delayed doing so in the hope that you would ~~write to me when after the first burst of grief had subsided~~ favor me with an answer to my letter of the 23th as soon as your feelings & circumstances would permit — If I now ~~attempt~~ exhibit any impatience to hear from you I trust you will not attribute it want of sympathy on my part; but to circumstances of great importance — If the painting may be exhibited as I have proposed it is necessary that I know my course for the opportunity of obtaining a suitable room will escape — If it is not convenient for you to let me draw on you for the $100 which is due me, or — Lastly I ought to address some other person on the subject you please to inform me —

It grieved me to learn (from the hand ~~[illegible]~~) that the picture will most probably go out of the family — It would have pleased me if the arrangement I proposed had been acceded to although perhaps to my pecuniary disadvantage — ~~I have that of deducting $200 from the sum to be paid me and furnishing the family with the picture, at a smaller price but as respects in any other aspect, the language can have [illegible] not [illegible]~~

Favor me if possible with an answer to this & believe me

Yours very truly —

Thomas Cole —

A. Saml Ward Esq
92 Bond St
N.Y.

James L. Huggins Esq

Sir

I have received your favor of the 17th Inst and am happy to learn that there is no objection on the part of the family of Mr West to the exhibition of the pictures, as regards publishing that the pictures will be exhibited by permission of the family & will I trust with my act as is most agreeable to the family & yourself.

My object in desiring to know whether Mr West's family had any objections to the pictures being exhibited arose from a desire to avoid doing anything that was not perfectly agreeable to them.

Every Artist has the disposal of his own works until completed & delivered, & for the sake of his reputation which is a part of his compensation he of course exhibits them to his friends & others at his pleasure. I hope therefore that you will excuse me for not entering into any pecuniary arrangement with you on the subject of exhibiting the pictures, although I assure you I shall be very unwilling to do anything that does not meet with your entire approbation.

I am inclined to think that you estimate the probable receipts of the Exhibition much higher than can

reasonably be expected & if I were to agree to your proposition I should most probably be ~~a loser~~ greatly ~~much~~ the loser – I have considered ~~that~~ undertaking the Exhibition of the pictures on my own account as ~~a great~~ involving a risk – the expenses of room attendance printing &c are likely to require all the receipts for their disbursements & if I put a reasonable value on my own time much of which will be required during & in preparation of the Exhibition I shall certainly even under my fortunate circumstances be no great gainer in pecuniary – ~~Any inclination to exhibit arises from a wish to gratify the expressed desire of many persons of Taste in N. York & other places by giving them an opportunity of seeing the pictures which by no other means can be obtained~~ Other ~~objects~~ desires than ~~those~~ that of pecuniary emolument ~~induce~~ cause me to ~~[illegible]~~ the pictures; among these that of gratifying the expressed wish of many persons of Taste ~~in the York & other places~~ & if the pictures have sufficient merit, to contribute to the improvement of publick taste – I had no desire to monopolize the ~~whole~~ merit of making this contribution to the pleasure ~~or~~ & benefit of others & therefore desired ~~the pictures~~ it to be done ~~patronized~~ by permission of the family of Mr Ward –

I sincerely hope that all objection on your part will vanish on this explanation – An unbiased Exhibition ~~of the pictures~~ will have the effect of enhancing the ~~effects~~ value of the pictures & if they are to be sold, as has been intimated to me by Mr J Ward, will certainly offer a more favorable opportunity than can otherwise be obtained & my own influence, whatever it may be, will be used to their advantage –

I shall be much pleased to hear from you at your earliest convenience –

Yours respectfully
Thomas Cole

Catskill
Oct 20th 1840

To Samuel Ward Esq N.Y. Catskill Oct 28 1840

Dear Sir

In consequence of a correspondence between Mr Huggins & myself in relation to the exhibition of the pictures & which terminated on his part, in a manner as uncourteous as it was unexpected on mine, I came to N York on Thursday last. ~~I was so fortunate as to find~~ with the intelligence that you were absent from the City. ~~I remained in the~~ I awaited your return until Monday Eve. & as ~~if~~ their appeared uncertain how long you would be absent I was under the necessity of leaving without the accomplishment of my wish. I have therefore taken the liberty of addressing you in this manner & have enclosed a copy of the correspondence between Mr Huggins & myself. I have taken this liberty under the impression that what has transpired between Mr Huggins & myself is not fully known to you & from my anxiety to explain away ~~everything~~ anything that ~~could~~ might tend to destroy the good feeling that I believe yourself & family entertain towards me. In my reply to Mr H's first letter I have spoken of the right which the Artist ~~possesses~~ has to exhibit at pleasure pictures not completed & delivered. Whether there is, or is not any legal or other right in the Artist to exhibit publickly for pecuniary compensation I was in this instance ready to yield to the pleasure of my friend & patron the family. The right to exhibit pictures privately to my friends no person will be ~~so~~ foolish or ungenerous as to deny one. The Conduct of Mr Huggins in this matter

appears to me ~~is certainly~~ ~~most~~ as injudicious as it is illiberal. The pictures have not been painted in the dark. Many persons know they are in progress & for whom they were to be painted - it has been intimated in the public press - every day & from quarters most remote enquiries are made of me respecting them. I do not mention these circumstances from the feeling of gratified vanity; but to place the matter before you in their true light ~~the consequences that will result from the conduct of Mr Huggins~~. It will be asked by those of whom I have spoken, - Why the pictures are not to be seen by the public? The answer must be that in consequence of Mr Cole ~~refusing~~ having refused to give to the Estate of Mr Ward half the gross proceeds arising from the exhibition of the pictures the Administrator has withdrawn the consent of the family and has interdicted the Exhibition - I will not say in what light such a matter will be viewed, your own imagination will suggest more than I would say.

My desire to exhibit the pictures publicly is in some measure dissipated by the treatment I have received & ~~even~~ if the full consent even of Mr Huggins were given I might now hesitate whether ~~to not~~ to incur the risk trouble & anxiety of exhibiting these ~~the pictures~~, and I certainly shall do nothing that can possibly lead to litigation with the administrator of the Estate.

~~If the pictures go out of my hands I will not be obliged to allow the~~ advantages of such a gallery for their exhibition by your Father's & his influence, as a public exhibition which I offered as a form of compensation for what has been lost I later part of ~~my~~ income - pain for my labors

There are those who consider a picture as nothing more than a piece of merchandise for which at parting there is no regret more than may arise from some pecuniary consideration, which has no value but its price in dollars & cents. Your, I know, place a far higher value on the productions of the pencil & can imagine the regret with which an artist parts with his favorite ~~picture~~ work. Pictures are the children of the artist - his interest in them never ceases - he watches them anxiously long after they have left his ~~easel~~ - if he thinks they are worthy & they happen to be placed in honorable situations he rejoices - if they are thrust into obscure corners he is grieved - he has a part in them that money cannot purchase - nor distance destroy - These pictures which ~~I have~~ may be painted for your Father have more than usual interest with me - I believe them to be the choicest product of my mind & labor & if they had gone from the easel to the honorable situation he would have given them I should have felt sad at parting; but now I shall part with them with unfeigned grief for I know not what their destiny may be.

I have drawn on Mr Huggins for the second instalment - he may require evidence that the second picture is finished - If my word & my repeated invitations to you to come & see it are not sufficient evidence - I must refer to persons in the City who have seen it - Please excuse me for troubling you with so long a letter & believe me

Yours very truly

Thomas Cole

Samuel Ward Esq Catskill Nov 14 1860

N York

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter of the 10th Inst & will endeavor to answer it with the politeness than perhaps I have been led to trouble you with in my former letter. With regard to the Exhibition of the pictures in the National Academy. ~~To which claim in your letter you wished to imply~~ I can say that such an arrangement as your proposal would be perfectly agreeable to me & indeed I am obliged to you for the offer. ~~I do so~~: although I do not think that an Exhibition so crowded with pictures is the most advantageous ~~one for~~ pictures of much study & contributes less to their value ~~for~~ than a more ~~private~~ exclusive one. If I have done injustice to the motives of Mr Higgins & expressed myself too strongly I am much grieved; but the aspect of our correspondence most ~~certainly~~ naturally leads to the inferences I drew. Of course I knew nothing of his having bought at one time & offering me $500 for my time & services. It was the apparent desire of transferring all the risk of loss by the Exhibition on me that offended ~~me most~~. I certainly did hope that ~~the~~ an Exhibition would be profitable & ~~that it~~ ~~might be~~ so I intimated in my letter; but every person conversant with Exhibitions knows how uncertain they are. It is not improbable that the "Voyage of Life" would Exhibit well; but the chance of failure was nevertheless great. Exhibitions ~~depend on so~~ are an expensive & subject to many contingency. I hear that some

* The intended proposition of $500 had been made & I should not have received such a proposition if the matter had been left to Higgins & nobody knew of it but myself & he. I should have had to the authorities of the Exhibition in accordance with the terms

The profits of the Cosmo Empire were $1000 ~~but~~ the expenses fell very little short of the same. I had comparatively little trouble with it. Mr Allen the son-in-law of Mr Reed did almost all the business of it & exerted himself exceedingly in my behalf. ~~in this matter~~ Mr Huggins consenting to the Exhibition without reference to a particle of profit to either of us as you remark would have been doing me a kindness - this I acknowledge & under such a supposition my friends & myself would have no right to censure or complain; but such consent was never intimated to me. ~~I believe~~ If you will look at the agreement you will perceive a slight error in your statement respecting the delivery of the picture after the second instalment. The second instalment has been paid since my last letter to you. With respect to particular comment ~~I am~~ certainly ~~not desirous that~~ shall be sorry to see any. I have mentioned to a few friends how the matter stood & cannot consider that I have committed any breach of ~~im~~propriety in doing so. If you suppose that I imagined your Father or yourself capable of making any ostentatious display of liberality you do me great injustice. As regards compensation I have not complained your Father treated me generously & to you I must always feel indebted; but I may say in a money making point of view the little over $4,000 (that is all the allowing expense of painting materials & frame) is all that I shall clear for my extraordinary sum for the ordinary labor of two years of a reputable Artist!

~~I will note open enough for you to see Huggins several propositions I shall be pleased if he accepts any of the~~

~~1st Inside of which the picture this Fall if it is permitted for me to complete them in season (I am in delay by indifferent~~

~~my late visit to the City) and the Estate shall receive~~ half the gross receipts of the ~~Exhibition~~ after the receipt of the first $500 - The Exhibition to continue ~~until it is no~~ no longer pays my expenses - or

~~2nd I will~~ keep the pictures & release the Estate from the obligation to pay me the $3000 yet ~~coming~~ to me. & give half the profits of the Exhibition after the first $500 is received at the door. or

~~3d Release~~ the Estate from the $3000 due me on delivery of the picture - & give the first $600 received ~~for the Exhibition~~ - and keep possession of the pictures myself. This proposition would amount to your ~~proposals~~ intended on last Fall viz making a sacrifice of $1500.

~~If you agree to any of these propositions I am indeed to make an account of the exhibition destiny of my pictures. I can ill afford to buy in my pictures works in this town when there is such difficulty in disposing, even of the smallest one.~~

I will conclude ~~with~~ by again expressing my sorrow that this matter has assumed such an unpleasing aspect & yet to perceive that my earnest wishes to ~~contribute~~ myself to the pleasure of yourself & family is rendered valueless by a few ~~considerations~~ difficulties that half an hour's conversation with you would have removed.

~~I beg my intentions to bring my picture down to the City of Providence in a few days in order to finish them in the Summer~~ Write

~~Independence~~

~~If you think proper to answer any~~

If you would favor me with an answer to this please direct Dr A. Cooley No 1 Laight St — In opposition to the delay attendant on my last visit to New York I have deferred the execution or completion of the portrait to a later period than I expected —

Yours very respectfully

Thomas Cole

Copy of letter to S Ward,