

# MOUNT WASHINGTON COG RAILWAY

---

# CLIMBING TO THE CLOUDS

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

*The Search for an American Identity and the Industrial Revolution Meet at the Cog Railway*

*"We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. ... We will walk on our own feet, we will work with our own hands, we will speak our own minds." Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar" Lecture to the Phi Beta Kappa Society, Harvard College, on August 31, 1837*

### INTRODUCTION

Sylvester Marsh, inspired by the grandeur of Mount Washington, was determined to build a train that could carry passengers up the mountain to experience the wonder of nature and the scenic views from atop the mountain without having to climb to the summit.

Marsh didn't build the cog railway to transport goods or serve a community. He built it to draw tourists to Mount Washington.

The cog railway was built at a time in American history when the country was searching for a uniquely American identity, when Americans were looking to advances in science and engineering to solve problems and when the idea of tourism and vacations for an emerging middle class was gaining a foothold.

Advances in technology gave workers more leisure time. City dwellers were looking for places to get away from the hustle and bustle of urban life. The American wilderness was being romanticized by artists, philosophers, poets and novelists. Improvements in transportation were opening up more of the country to travelers.

On July 3, 1869, "Old Peppersass" became the world's first cog-driven train to climb the 6,288-foot Mt. Washington. Sylvester Marsh had the right idea at the right time when he built the first mountain-climbing cog railway in the world!



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)

## QUESTIONS

- How did the growth of railroads impact tourism in New Hampshire? Are there any local examples of rail lines in your town that were created primarily to promote and support tourism?
- What role did the industrialization and urbanization of America play in the expansion of tourism in the second half of the 19th Century? What are some factors of urban life that may have created a desire to explore areas of the country untouched by development. What changes took place in those untouched areas once they became tourist destinations?
- What role did authors like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau play in promoting both the preservation and the desire to explore the American wilderness?
- What role do you think stereographic photographs played in promoting tourism in New Hampshire?
- What role do you think Hudson River School artists like Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Taber Doughty, Jasper Francis Cropsey, Martin Johnson Heade, John F. Kensett, Asher Brown Duran, George Inness, and Asher Brown Durand, who all also painted New Hampshire landscapes, play in promoting tourism in New Hampshire? What are some features of landscape used to encourage tourism in New Hampshire today?
- How did the Cog Railway change its approach to tourists over time? What factors led to these changes? What steps can the Cog Railway take to stay relevant going into the future.

- What role did the grand hotels from the Gilded Age like the The Balsams, The Mountain View and The Mount Washington Hotel play in opening up northern New Hampshire to tourism after the Civil War? What factors led to the eventual decline of the Grand Hotels? What factors led to the revitalization of some of the Grand Hotels in New Hampshire?

## ACTIVITIES

- Create an advertisement for the Cog Railway for an audience in the 1870s and an advertisement for today's audience.
- Examine how advances in transportation have impacted tourism in New Hampshire from both a positive and a negative perspective.
- Evaluate New Hampshire's tourism web site [visitnh.gov](http://visitnh.gov) and analyze how the state is being marketed to tourists. What are the key aspects of New Hampshire that are being highlighted? Who is the target audience for the site? Are there aspects of New Hampshire that you think are being ignored? What would you do to improve the site?
- Compare tourist attractions popular in New Hampshire from the 1900s to the present day. Are there attractions that have been in the state since the 1900s? How have they changed over the years? What type of tourists would or do visit each attraction - families, senior citizens, young adults, day tourists? How did or does transportation impact the attraction? Some attractions you look at might include Hampton Beach, Weirs Beach, Storyland, Loon Mountain and Canobie Lake Park.



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)

- Conduct interviews with parents, grandparents, or town residents about their experiences in New Hampshire’s tourist spots. Find out how those spots have changed. Are there any spots that are no longer there?
- Identify tourist spots in your town or region. How are those spots promoted to tourists? What is it about those spots that are unique to your town or region? What do you think those spots say about your town or New Hampshire to outsiders? Why do you think those spots are popular with tourists? What is the history of those spots?
- Using the attached cartoon on page 17, discuss some of the negative impacts tourism can have in New Hampshire, for example increased traffic (leaf peepers!), unruly crowds (Pumpkin Festival, Bike Week), and environmental damage.

## EXTENSIONS

### **Stereographic Photographs**

At the height of their popularity, it is estimated that over half of American households had stereographs. The Kilburn Brothers of Littleton, NH published Stereographic photographs of American and Canadian landscapes beginning in 1865. Explore the New York Public Library’s collection of thousands of Stereographic photographs. You can search by topic (ie. Mount Washington) or name (ie. Kilburn) and you can even create an online 3D anaglyph and view it with 3D glasses.

**Web Site:** [digitalcollections.nypl.org](http://digitalcollections.nypl.org)

### **Currier Museum of Art**

The Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, NH has works by some of the Hudson River School artists. Some of the works are of New Hampshire landscapes. **Web Site:** [currier.org](http://currier.org)

### **Harper’s Weekly ( A Journal of Civilization)**

Artist Winslow Homer created a print of tourists on the top of Mount Washington that was published in Harper’s Weekly, July 10, 1869. Combining politics, news, essays, fiction, humor, illustrations and photographs, Harper’s Weekly, published by Harper & Brothers from 1857-1916, was a primary source of news and entertainment in the latter half of the 19th century. You can access issues of Harper’s Weekly at the Internet Archive. **Web Site:** [archive.org](http://archive.org)

### **Hudson River School**

The artists of the Hudson River School played a huge role in exposing Americans to the natural wonders of America. You can follow their paths through New York, Connecticut, Wyoming, and the White Mountains and discover how to get to the locations where they painted some of their iconic landscapes.

**Web Site:** [hudsonriverschool.org](http://hudsonriverschool.org)

## ATTACHED READING

Artist Thomas Cole’s essay, “American Scenery” ran in American Monthly Magazine in 1836. The essay examined the natural landscapes of the United States in comparison to the natural landscapes of Europe and the importance of nature to the well-being of man and society.

## SUGGESTED READING

Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essay “Nature,” published in 1836, was a huge influence on American literature, art and philosophy. In it, Emerson argued that American art, culture, scholarship and literature should be influenced by the American natural world, not European traditions and history.

**Web Site:** [emersoncentral.com/nature.htm](http://emersoncentral.com/nature.htm)



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)



## CURRICULUM STANDARDS

### Social Studies

SS:GE:6:5.1: Understand the consequences of human modification of the physical environment e.g., coastal development or forest management.

SS:GE:6:5.2: Examine the role of technology in the human modification of the physical environment, e.g., work animals or electrical production.

SS:GE:6:5.3: Appreciate how characteristics of different physical environments provide opportunities human activities or place constraints on human activities, e.g., winter sports tourism or annual flood patterns.

SS:HI:6:3.1: Examine how the art, music and literature of our nation has been enhanced by groups, e.g., immigrants or abolitionists.

SS:HI:8:2.2: Explain major United States efforts to remove European influence from the Western Hemisphere, e.g., the Monroe Doctrine or the Cuban Missile Crisis.

SS:HI:8:3.1: Explain how art, music and literature often reflect and/or influence major ideas, values and conflicts of particular time periods, e.g., manifest destiny, protest movements, or freedom of expression.

SS:HI:6:4.2: Evaluate the importance of technological inventions and inventors and their impact on American life, e.g., household appliances or communication technologies.

SS:HI:6:5.2: Describe the impact of major national and state events on everyday life, e.g., the Industrial Revolution or the World War II home front.

SS:WH:6:5.4: Examine forms of entertainment and leisure time activity, e.g., religious festivals, sporting events, or theatre.

SS:GE:12:2.2: Investigate how relationships between humans and the physical environment lead to the formation of 'place,' e.g., terracing of hillsides or oasis agriculture.

SS:GE:12:2.5: Recognize that places and regions serve as symbols for individuals and societies, e.g., Mecca or Salt Lake City.

SS:HI:12:3.1: Evaluate how individuals have developed ideas that have profoundly affected American life, e.g., transcendentalism or relativism.

SS:HI:12:3.2: Analyze how the arts and science often reflect and/or influence major ideas, values and conflicts of particular time periods, e.g., the impact of the Enlightenment on the

founding of our nation or the Harlem Renaissance.

SS:HI:12:3.3: Critique how the art, music and literature of our nation have been influenced by groups, e.g., the Spanish colonists in the Southwest or the 60s counter culture movement.

SS:WH:12:3.4: Consider how art, music, and literature often reflect or influence major ideas, values and conflicts of particular time periods, e.g., pre-Columbian America, the Renaissance, or eras of intense nationalism.

SS:WH:12:4.2: Analyze the impact of the Industrial Revolution around the world, e.g., the emergence of the factory system or the search for markets in Asia and Africa.

### The Arts

Curriculum Standard 4: Analyze the visual arts in relation to history and culture.

Curriculum Standard 6: Students will make connections among the visual arts, other disciplines, and daily life.

### Common Core: Reading Standards for Informational Text 6–12

Includes the subgenres of exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience

**Grade 8 standards are highlighted. There are comparable standards at grade 6-7 and 9-12.**

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.



nhptv.org/cog



# Thomas Cole



Artist Thomas Cole, founder of the Hudson River School of landscape painting, was born in Bolton-le-Moors in Lancashire, England in 1801. In 1818, his family emigrated to Steubenville, Ohio where Cole learned the rudiments of portriat painting from an itinerant painter named Stein. Cole then spent two years studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

In 1825 he joined his family in New York City. A trip up the Hudson River to the Catskill Mountains resulted in three landscape paintings that a local bookseller agreed to display in his window. One of the paintings was bought by artist John Trumbull, who was known for his painings of figures from the Revolutionary War period. Trumbull was so impressed with Cole's work that he recommended him to landscape artist Asher B. Durand and American theatre pioneer and artist William Dunlap. With the help of Trumbull, Cole was well on his way to making a name for himself.

Cole painted sweeping landscapes of the Catskills and the White Mountain region of New Hampshire. After a trip to Europe that lasted from 1829-1831, he also began painting allegorical and landscape paintings largely set in Italy. But he also came back from Europe with a determination to promote the natural beauty of the American landscape, which he felt was equal if not superior to European landscapes in natural beauty, if not historical significance.

In 1836, Cole moved to his beloved Catskill Mountains where he met and married Maria Bartow. His paintings took on more religious themes following his marriage. He returned to Italy in 1841, returning to the U.S. in 1842. After his return, he spent most of his time in the Catskills.

In 1844, artist Frederic Church came to study under Cole. (Church's father paid Cole \$300 a year (about \$8000 in 2015 dollars) for training Church. Cole died in 1848 of pleurisy.



*Mount Chocorua New Hampshire (1827)*

In 1836, Cole wrote the following essay for *American Monthly Magazine* extolling the landscapes of the eastern United States. He mentions New Hampshire a number of times in the essay (watch for the creative spelling of Lake Winnepesaukee.)

**ESSAY ON AMERICAN LANDSCAPES**  
*American Monthly Magazine 1 (January 1836)*  
Thomas Cole

**INTRODUCTION**

The essay, which is here offered, is a mere sketch of an almost illimitable subject--American Scenery; and in selecting the theme the writer placed more confidence in its overflowing richness, than in his own capacity for treating it in a manner worthy of its vastness and importance.

It is a subject that to every American ought to be of surpassing interest; for, whether he beholds the Hudson mingling waters with the Atlantic--explores the central wilds of this vast continent, or stands on the margin of the distant Oregon, he is still in the midst of American scenery--it is his own land; its beauty, its magnificence, its sublimity--all are his; and how undeserving of such a birthright, if he can turn towards it an unobserving eye, an unaffected heart!

Before entering into the proposed subject, in which I shall treat more particularly of the scenery of the Northern and Eastern States, I shall be excused for saying a few words on the advantages of cultivating a taste for scenery, and for exclaiming against the apathy with which the beauties of external nature are regarded by the great mass, even of our refined community.

**THE CONTEMPLATION OF SCENERY  
AS A SOURCE OF DELIGHT AND  
IMPROVEMENT**

It is generally admitted that the liberal arts tend to soften our manners; but they do more--they carry with them the power to mend our hearts.

Poetry and Painting sublime and purify thought, by grasping the past, the present, and the future--they give the mind a foretaste of its immortality, and thus prepare it for performing an exalted part amid the realities of life. And rural nature is full of the same quickening spirit--it is, in fact, the exhaustless mine from which the poet and the painter have brought such wondrous treasures--an unfailing fountain of intellectual enjoyment, where all may drink, and be awakened to a deeper feeling of the works of genius, and a keener perception of the beauty of our existence. For those whose days are all consumed in the low pursuits of avarice, or the gaudy frivolities of fashion, unobservant of nature's loveliness, are unconscious of the harmony of creation.



*Crawford Notch (1839)*



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)

Heaven's roof to them is but a painted ceiling hung with lamps; No more--that lights them to their purposes-- They wander 'loose about;' they nothing see, Themselves except, and creatures like themselves, Short lived, short sighted.

What to them is the page of the poet where he describes or personifies the skies, the mountains, or the streams, if those objects themselves have never awakened observation or excited pleasure? What to them is the wild Salvator Rosa, or the aerial Claude Lorrain? There is in the human mind an almost inseparable connection between the beautiful and the good, so that if we contemplate the one the other seems present; and an excellent author has said, "it is difficult to look at any objects with pleasure--unless where it arises from brutal and tumultuous emotions--without feeling that disposition of mind which tends towards kindness and benevolence; and surely, whatever creates such a disposition, by increasing our pleasures and enjoyments, cannot be too much cultivated."



*View Across Frenchman's Bay from Mount Desert Island After a Squall (1845)*

It would seem unnecessary to those who can see and feel, for me to expatiate on the loveliness of verdant fields, the sublimity of lofty mountains, or the varied magnificence of the sky; but that the number of those who seek enjoyment in such sources is comparatively

small. From the indifference with which the multitude regard the beauties of nature, it might be inferred that she had been unnecessarily lavish in adorning this world for beings who take no pleasure in its adornment. Who in groveling pursuits forget their glorious heritage. Why was the earth made so beautiful, or the sun so clad in glory at his rising and setting, when all might be unrobed of beauty without affecting the insensate multitude, so they can be "lighted to their purposes?"

It has not been in vain--the good, the enlightened of all ages and nations, have found pleasure and consolation in the beauty of the rural earth. Prophets of old retired into the solitudes of nature to wait the inspiration of heaven. It was on Mount Horeb that Elijah witnessed the mighty wind, the earthquake, and the fire; and heard the "still small voice"--that voice is YET heard among the mountains! St. John preached in the desert;--the wilderness is YET a fitting place to speak of God. The solitary Anchorites of Syria and Egypt, though ignorant that the busy world is man's noblest sphere of usefulness, well knew how congenial to religious musings are the pathless solitudes.

He who looks on nature with a "loving eye," cannot move from his dwelling without the salutation of beauty; even in the city the deep blue sky and the drifting clouds appeal to him. And if to escape its turmoil--if only to obtain a free horizon, land and water in the play of light and shadow yields delight--let him be transported to those favored regions, where the features of the earth are more varied, or yet add the sunset, that wreath of glory daily bound around the world, and he, indeed, drinks from pleasure's purest cup. The delight such a man experiences is not merely sensual, or selfish, that passes with the occasion leaving no trace behind; but in gazing on the pure creations of the Almighty, he feels a calm religious tone steal through his mind, and when he has turned to mingle with



his fellow men, the chords which have been struck in that sweet communion cease not to vibrate.

In what has been said I have alluded to wild and uncultivated scenery; but the cultivated must not be forgotten, for it is still more important to man in his social capacity--necessarily bringing him in contact with the cultured; it encompasses our homes, and, though devoid of the stern sublimity of the wild, its quieter spirit steals tenderly into our bosoms mingled with a thousand domestic affections and heart-touching associations--human hands have wrought, and human deeds hallowed all around.

And it is here that taste, which is the perception of the beautiful, and the knowledge of the principles on which nature works, can be applied, and our dwelling-places made fitting for refined and intellectual beings.

### **THE ADVANTAGES OF CULTIVATING A TASTE FOR SCENERY**

If, then, it is indeed true that the contemplation of scenery can be so abundant a source of delight and improvement, a taste for it is certainly worthy of particular cultivation; for the capacity for enjoyment increases with the knowledge of the true means of obtaining it.

In this age, when a meager utilitarianism seems ready to absorb every feeling and sentiment, and what is sometimes called improvement in its march makes us fear that the bright and tender flowers of the imagination shall all be crushed beneath its iron tramp, it would be well to cultivate the oasis that yet remains to us, and thus preserve the germs of a future and a purer system. And now, when the sway of fashion is extending widely over society--poisoning the healthful streams of true refinement, and turning men from the love of simplicity and beauty, to a senseless idolatry of their own follies--to lead them gently into the pleasant paths of

Taste would be an object worthy of the highest efforts of genius and benevolence. The spirit of our society is to contrive but not to enjoy--toiling to produce more toil-accumulating in order to aggrandize. The pleasures of the imagination, among which the love of scenery holds a conspicuous place, will alone temper the harshness of such a state; and, like the atmosphere that softens the most rugged forms of the landscape, cast a veil of tender beauty over the asperities of life.

Did our limits permit I would endeavor more fully to show how necessary to the complete appreciation of the Fine Arts is the study of scenery, and how conducive to our happiness and well-being is that study and those arts; but I must now proceed to the proposed subject of this essay--American Scenery!



*Mountain Sunrise, Catskill (1826)*

### **THE ELEMENTS OF AMERICAN SCENERY**

There are those who through ignorance or prejudice strive to maintain that American scenery possesses little that is interesting or truly beautiful--that it is rude without picturesqueness, and monotonous without sublimity--that being destitute of those vestiges of antiquity, whose associations so strongly affect the mind, it may not be compared with European scenery. But from whom do these



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)



opinions come? From those who have read of European scenery, of Grecian mountains, and Italian skies, and never troubled themselves to look at their own; and from those travelled ones whose eyes were never opened to the beauties of nature until they beheld foreign lands, and when those lands faded from the sight were again closed and forever; disdain- ing to destroy their transatlantic impressions by the observation of the less fashionable and un- famed American scenery. Let such persons shut themselves up in their narrowshell of prejudice--I hope they are few,--and the community in- creasing in intelligence, will know better how to appreciate the treasures of their own country.



*Landscape (1825)*

I am by no means desirous of lessening in your estimation the glorious scenes of the old world--that ground which has been the great theater of human events--those mountains, woods, and streams, made sacred in our minds by heroic deeds and immortal song--over which time and genius have suspended an imperish- able halo. No! But I would have it remembered that nature has shed over this land beauty and magnificence, and although the character of its scenery may differ from the old world's, yet inferiority must not therefore be inferred; for though American scenery is destitute of many of those circumstances that give value to the European, still it has features, and glorious ones, unknown to Europe.

## WILDNESS

A very few generations have passed away since this vast tract of the American continent, now the United States, rested in the shadow of primeval forests, whose gloom was peopled by savage beasts, and scarcely less savage men; or lay in those wide grassy plains called prairies-- The Gardens of the Desert, these the unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful. And, although an enlightened and increasing people have broken in upon the solitude, and with activity and power wrought changes that seem magical, yet the most distinctive, and perhaps the most impressive, characteristic of American scenery is its wildness.



*Romantic Landscape with Ruined Tower (1832-36)*

It is the most distinctive, because in civilized Europe the primitive features of scenery have long since been destroyed or modified--the extensive forests that once overshadowed a great part of it have been felled--rugged moun- tains have been smoothed, and impetuous rivers turned from their courses to accommodate the tastes and necessities of a dense population-- the once tangled wood is now a grassy lawn; the turbulent brook a navigable stream--craggs that could not be removed have been crowned with towers, and the rudest valleys tamed by the plough.



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)

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

## **MOUNTAINS**

As mountains are the most conspicuous objects in landscape, they will take the precedence in what I may say on the elements of American scenery.



*Schroon Mountain Adirondacks (1838)*

It is true that in the eastern part of this continent there are no mountains that vie in altitude with the snow-crowned Alps--that the Alleghanies and the Catskills are in no point higher than five thousand feet; but this is no inconsiderable height; Snowdon in Wales, and Ben-Nevis in Scotland, are not more lofty; and in New Hampshire, which has been called the Switzerland of the United States, the White Mountains almost pierce the region of perpetual snow. The Alleghanies are in general heavy in form; but the Catskills, although not broken into abrupt angles like the most picturesque mountains of Italy, have varied, undulating, and exceedingly beautiful outlines--they heave from the valley of the Hudson like the subsiding billows of the ocean after a storm.



*View in the White Mountains (1827)*

But in the mountains of New Hampshire there is a union of the picturesque, the sublime, and the magnificent; there the bare peaks of granite, broken and desolate, cradle the clouds; while the valleys and broad bases of the mountains rest under the shadow of noble and varied forests; and the traveler who passes the Sandwich range on his way to the White Mountains, of which it is a spur, cannot but acknowledge, that although in some regions of the globe nature has wrought on a more stupendous scale, yet she has nowhere so completely married together grandeur and loveliness--there he sees the sublime melting into the beautiful, the savage tempered by the magnificent.



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)



## WATER

I will now speak of another component of scenery, without which every landscape is defective--it is water. Like the eye in the human countenance, it is a most expressive feature: in the unrippled lake, which mirrors all surrounding objects, we have the expression of tranquility and peace--in the rapid stream, the headlong cataract, that of turbulence and impetuosity.



*Schroon Lake (1838-40)*

## LAKES

In this great element of scenery, what land is so rich? I would not speak of the Great Lakes, which are in fact inland seas--possessing some of the attributes of the ocean, though destitute of its sublimity; but of those smaller lakes, such as Lake George, Champlain, Winnipisiogee, Otsego, Seneca, and a hundred others, that stud like gems the bosom of this country.



*American Lake Scene (1844)*

There is one delightful quality in nearly all these lakes--the purity and transparency of the water. In speaking of scenery it might seem unnecessary to mention this; but independent of the pleasure that we all have in beholding pure water, it is a circumstance which contributes greatly to the beauty of landscape; for the reflections of surrounding objects, trees, mountains, sky, are most perfect in the clearest water; and the most perfect is the most beautiful.



*View on Lake Winnipiseogee (1828)*

I would not be understood that these lakes are always tranquil; but that tranquillity is their great characteristic. There are times when they take a far different expression; but in scenes like these the richest chords are those struck by the gentler hand of nature.

## WATERFALLS

And now I must turn to another of the beautifiers of the earth--the Waterfall; which in the same object at once presents to the mind the beautiful, but apparently incongruous idea, of fixedness and motion--a single existence in which we perceive unceasing change and everlasting duration.



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)



The waterfall may be called the voice of the landscape, for, unlike the rocks and woods which utter sounds as the passive instruments played on by the elements, the waterfall strikes its own chords, and rocks and mountains re-echo in rich unison. And this is a land abounding in cataracts; in these Northern States where shall we turn and not find them? Have we not Kaaterskill, Trenton, the Flume, the Genesee, stupendous Niagara, and a hundred others named and nameless ones, whose exceeding beauty must be acknowledged when the hand of taste shall point them out?



*Kaaterskill Falls (1826)*

In the Kaaterskill we have a stream, diminutive indeed, but throwing itself headlong over a fearful precipice into a deep gorge of the densely wooded mountains--and possessing a singular feature in the vast arched cave that extends beneath and behind the cataract. At Trenton there is a chain of waterfalls of remarkable beauty, where the foaming waters, shadowed by steep cliffs, break over rocks of architectural formation, and tangled and picturesque trees mantle abrupt precipices, which it would be easy to imagine crumbling and "time disporting towers."



*Distant View of Niagara Falls (1830)*

And Niagara! That wonder of the world!--where the sublime and beautiful are bound together in an indissoluble chain. In gazing on it we feel as though a great void had been filled in our minds--our conceptions expand--we become a part of what we behold! At our feet the floods of a thousand rivers are poured out--the contents of vast inland seas. In its volume we conceive immensity; in its course, everlasting duration; in its impetuosity, uncontrollable power. These are the elements of its sublimity.

Its beauty is garlanded around in the varied hues of the water, in the spray that ascends the sky, and in that unrivalled bow which forms a complete cincture round the unresting floods.

## RIVERS

The river scenery of the United States is a rich and boundless theme. The Hudson for natural magnificence is unsurpassed. What can be more beautiful than the lake-like expanses of Tapan and Haverstraw, as seen from the rich orchards of the surrounding hills? Hills that have a legend, which has been so sweetly and admirably told that it shall not perish but with the language of the land. What can be more imposing than the



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)

precipitous Highlands; whose dark foundations have been rent to make a passage for the deep-flowing river? And, ascending still, where can be found scenes more enchanting?



*Morning Mist Rising Plymouth New Hampshire (1830)*

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

The Rhine has its castled crags, its vine-clad hills, and ancient villages; the Hudson has its wooded mountains, its rugged precipices, its green undulating shores--a natural majesty, and an unbounded capacity for improvement by art. Its shores are not besprinkled with venerated ruins, or the palaces of princes; but there are flourishing towns, and neat villas, and the hand of taste has already been at work. Without any great stretch of the imagination we may anticipate the time when the ample waters shall reflect temple, and tower, and dome, in every variety of picturesqueness and magnificence.

## FORESTS

In the Forest scenery of the United States we have that which occupies the greatest space, and is not the least remarkable; being primitive, it differs widely from the European. In the American forest we find trees in every stage of vegetable life and decay--the slender sapling

rises in the shadow of the lofty tree, and the giant in his prime stands by the hoary patriarch of the wood--on the ground lie prostrate decaying ranks that once waved their verdant heads in the sun and wind.

These are circumstances productive of great variety and picturesqueness--green umbrageous masses--lofty and scathed trunks--contorted branches thrust athwart the sky--the mouldering dead below, shrouded in moss of every hue and texture, from richer combinations than can be found in the trimmed and planted grove. It is true that the thinned and cultivated wood offers less obstruction to the feet, and the trees throw out their branches more horizontally, and are consequently more umbrageous when taken singly; but the true lover of the picturesque is seldom fatigued--and trees that grow widely apart are often heavy in form, and resemble each other too much for picturesqueness.



*Peace at Sunset (Evening in the White Mountains) (1827)*

Trees are like men, differing widely in character; in sheltered spots, or under the influence of culture, they show few contrasting points; peculiarities are pruned and trained away, until there is a general resemblance. But in exposed situations, wild and uncultivated, battling with the elements and with one



NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PUBLIC TELEVISION

[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)



another for the possession of a morsel of soil, or a favoring rock to which they may cling--they exhibit striking peculiarities, and sometimes grand originality.

For variety, the American forest is unrivalled: in some districts are found oaks, elms, birches, beeches, planes, pines, hemlocks, and many other kinds of trees, commingled--clothing the hills with every tint of green, and every variety of light and shade.

There is one season when the American forest surpasses all the world in gorgeousness--that is the autumnal;--then every hill and dale is riant in the luxury of color--every hue is there, from the liveliest green to deepest purple from the most golden yellow to the intensest crimson. The artist looks despairingly upon the glowing landscape, and in the old world his truest imitations of the American forest, at this season, are called falsely bright, and scenes in Fairy Land.



*Landscape, the Seat of Mr. Featherstonhaugh in the Distance (1826)*

## SKY

The sky will next demand our attention. The soul of all scenery, in it are the fountains of light, and shade, and color. Whatever expression the sky takes, the features of the landscape are affected in unison, whether it be the serenity of the summer's blue, or the dark tumult of the storm. It is the sky that makes the earth so

lovely at sunrise, and so splendid at sunset. In the one it breathes over the earth the crystal-like ether, in the other liquid gold.



*Indian at Sunset (1845-47)*

The climate of a great part of the United States is subject to great vicissitudes, and we complain; but nature offers a compensation. These very vicissitudes are the abundant sources of beauty--as we have the temperature of every clime, so have we the skies--we have the blue unsearchable depths of the northern sky--we have the upheaped thunder-clouds of the Torrid Zone, fraught with gorgeousness and sublimity--we have the silver haze of England, and the golden atmosphere of Italy.

And if he who has travelled and observed the skies of other climes will spend a few months on the banks of the Hudson, he must be constrained to acknowledge that for variety and magnificence American skies are unsurpassed. Italian skies have been lauded by every tongue, and sung by every poet, and who will deny their wonderful beauty? At sunset the serene arch is filled with alchemy that transmutes mountains, and streams, and temples, into living gold.



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)



But the American summer never passes without many sunsets that might vie with the Italian, and many still more gorgeous--that seem peculiar to this clime.

### THE WANT OF ASSOCIATIONS

I will now venture a few remarks on what has been considered a grand defect in American scenery--the want of associations, such as arise amid the scenes of the old world.

We have many a spot as umbrageous as Vallombrosa, and as picturesque as the solitudes of Vacluse; but Milton and Petrarch have not hallowed them by their footsteps and immortal verse. He who stands on Mont Albano and looks down on ancient Rome, has his mind peopled with the gigantic associations of the storied past; but he who stands on the mounds of the West, the most venerable remains of American antiquity, may experience the emotion of the sublime, but it is the sublimity of a shoreless ocean un-islanded by the recorded deeds of man.



*Daniel Boone Sitting at the Door of His Cabin on the Great Osage Lake (1826)*

Yet American scenes are not destitute of historical and legendary associations--the great struggle for freedom has sanctified many a spot, and many a mountain, stream, and rock

has its legend, worthy of poet's pen or the painter's pencil. But American associations are not so much of the past as of the present and the future. Seated on a pleasant knoll, look down into the bosom of that secluded valley, begin with wooded hills--through those enamelled meadows and wide waving fields of grain, a silver stream winds lingeringly along--here, seeking the green shade of trees--there, glancing in the sunshine: on its banks are rural dwellings shaded by elms and garlanded by flowers--from yonder dark mass of foliage the village spire beams like a star. You see no ruined tower to tell of outrage--no gorgeous temple to speak of ostentation; but freedom's offspring--peace, security, and happiness, dwell there, the spirits of the scene.



*Home in the Woods (1847)*

On the margin of that gentle river the village girls may ramble unmolested--and the glad school-boy, with hook and line, pass his bright holiday--those neat dwellings, unpretending to magnificence, are the abodes of plenty, virtue, and refinement. And in looking over the yet uncultivated scene, the mind's eye may see far into futurity. Where the wolf roams, the plough shall glisten; on the gray crag shall rise temple and tower--mighty deeds shall be done in the now pathless wilderness; and poets yet unborn shall sanctify the soil.



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)



*New England Scenery (1839)*

## THE DESTRUCTION OF BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES

It was my intention to attempt a description of several districts remarkable for their picturesqueness and truly American character; but I fear to trespass longer on your time and patience. Yet I cannot but express my sorrow that the beauty of such landscapes are quickly passing away--the ravages of the axe are daily increasing--the most noble scenes are made desolate, and oftentimes with a wantonness and barbarism scarcely credible in a civilized nation. The wayside is becoming shadeless, and another generation will behold spots, now rife with beauty, desecrated by what is called improvement; which, as yet, generally destroys Nature's beauty without substituting that of Art. This is a regret rather than a complaint; such is the road society has to travel; it may lead to refinement in the end, but the traveller who sees the place of rest close at hand, dislikes the road that has so many unnecessary windings.

## WE ARE STILL IN EDEN

I will now conclude, in the hope that, though feebly urged, the importance of cultivating a taste for scenery will not be forgotten. Nature has spread for us a rich and delightful banquet. Shall we turn from it? We are still in Eden; the wall that shuts us out of the garden is our own ignorance and folly. We should not allow the poet's words to be applicable to us-- Deep in rich pasture do thy flocks complain? Not so; but to their master is denied To share the sweet serene.

May we at times turn from the ordinary pursuits of life to the pure enjoyment of rural nature; which is in the soul like a fountain of cool waters to the way-worn traveller; and let us Learn The laws by which the Eternal doth sublime And sanctify his works, that we may see The hidden glory veiled from vulgar eyes.



*The Garden of Eden (1828)*

MLA Citation: Cole, Thomas. "Essay on American Scenery". *American Monthly Magazine* 1, (January 1836) 1-12



[nhptv.org/cog](http://nhptv.org/cog)



## THE IMPACT OF TOURISM

Tourism is the second leading industry in New Hampshire. Regions like the Seacoast, the White Mountains and the Lakes Region depend on tourism for their economic health. But with the positives of tourism, also come negatives.

Using the following cartoon from artist Sara Odom of tourists descending on Portsmouth in the summer as a jumping off point, discuss some of the negative impacts tourism can have on New Hampshire's economy, environment, and quality of life.



verahistoria.tumblr.com



nhptv.org/cog