

Jasper Francis Cropsey



Fig. 1.

Jasper F. Cropsey

PAINTER OF FAITH

The beauties of nature had a charm, and the voice of God came to me through every motionless leaf—on every blade of grass—the odor of the flower and in every breath of air I drew. . . .¹

ANY DISCUSSION OF Jasper Cropsey is remiss if it does not highlight his Christian faith, for it was the guiding light of his life and career. His faith gave him the strength and courage to pursue his career as an artist and was the well from which he drew inspiration. It ran through every aspect of his life, like blood through his veins. Letters to his family and his wife are marked by references to the Almighty and reminders to live a Christian life. He often wrote of the services and sermons he attended during his extensive travels. His career was, in many ways, an effort to use his considerable talents to portray God in Nature. One of the hallmarks of the Hudson River School artists was their close attention to detail, which stemmed from the belief that everything God created was significant and should be portrayed exactly. Cropsey's detailed foregrounds, especially in the early part of his career, were prime examples of this belief. It was faith that led Cropsey (and others) to believe that America was the new Garden of Eden and should be portrayed as such, with the result that Cropsey's paintings became a complicated tapestry of fine art, faith, and patriotism.

Evidence of Cropsey's spirituality can be found in many of his paintings: some contain obvious Christian symbols, such as crosses and kneeling monks, whereas others such as *The Millennial Age*, 1854 (NCF 46, cat. no. 289), are taken from the Bible, in that case the Book of Isaiah. More subtle references may also be found, including ethereal rays of sun bursting through the clouds, which was Cropsey's symbol of God blessing America, and also his belief that the hand of God can be seen everywhere in nature. These symbols are seen almost exclusively in the skies of his American views, whereas his European scenes focus on the foreground and middle ground, usually European ruins or other man-made structures.

Faith kept Cropsey in good stead as he navigated the vast changes of nineteenth-century America and his own life and career. Starting as a boy whose talents were too great to be contained on the humble farm he grew up on, he developed into a successful and famous artist before returning to a humble existence in his twilight years. His lifetime saw some of the greatest changes in America's history, as the country grew from an agrarian society to an industrialized nation, eliminated the blight of slavery through a long civil war, and finally emerged as a strong independent nation. Through it all, Cropsey remained a man of faith. As he endured extremely trying times, both personally and professionally, Cropsey kept to his chosen path, resolutely maintaining his intertwined spiritual and artistic beliefs, at times to his own professional detriment. His love of family, in particular Maria, his wife of fifty-four years, and his love of God were unwavering constants in a lifetime that saw many changes.

JASPER FRANCISC COPSEY was born in Rossville, Staten Island, on February 18, 1823. His parents, Jacob Rezeau Cropsey and Elizabeth Cortelyou Cropsey, were from historic Staten Island families that had arrived in the 1600s. The Cropseys, originally of German and Dutch descent, were prominent in the Dutch Reformed Church, and the Cortelyous, of French Huguenot ancestry, were founders of the Moravian Church at New Dorp, Staten Island. Religion was therefore a mainstay of both families, and Jacob and Elizabeth strove to instill Christian values in their children. These values, along with a strong work ethic, would be an important part of Jasper's life and career.

Jacob Cropsey had been an oysterman and sailor but later turned his talents to farming, probably when Jasper was a young boy. The Cropsey farm produced grain, hay, and other produce. Although a humble farmer, Jacob was civic- and community-minded, at different times holding the positions of county supervisor, road commissioner, and school commissioner.



Fig. 2. *Cropsey Farm, Staten Island, 1843*. Oil on canvas (NCF 517; cat. no. 3)

Jasper, known throughout his life to family and friends as “Frank,” was the first born in a family of eight children. As a young boy, he had recurring periods of poor health that continued intermittently after he reached adulthood. Either from birth or because of an early illness, Jasper was permanently hearing impaired, a condition that contributed to his becoming a quiet, somewhat shy person. Living on a farm in a rural area, Jasper developed an early appreciation of nature. During periods of illness, while absent from school and unable to do chores, Jasper sketched views of the family farm, barns, and surrounding landscape (fig. 2).

He also copied landscapes and buildings from images he found in books and other publications, drawing on notepads and in the margins of his textbooks. He used any material he could find: “Often when I could go to the teacher, to have some arithmetical problem solved, he would turn the slate over, and find it filled with my picture fancies. These sketches were mostly of the landscape, and architectural tendency.”²

Jasper's artistic skills improved rapidly as he mimicked whatever illustrations, drawings, and architectural renderings he could find. He later wrote that he taught himself drawing and that he knew of no previous artistic talent in his family history.³ He also displayed a keen interest in building structures and began to make wooden models of houses, using tools he made himself. He observed local workmen and carpenters in order to gain knowledge about building and structural basics. In 1837 he entered an architectural model (and the home-made tools he used) in the Mechanics' Institute Fair held at Niblo's Garden in New York City and won a “diploma” from the institute, as well as the “privileges of the institute” (probably access to instruction and the extensive architectural library). The diploma states it is presented for a “well executed model of a house by a boy of 13 years old.”⁴ The model house Jasper made with the tools he had crafted earned him his first bit of celebrity, as he became known locally as “the boy that built the house.”⁵ Jasper kept the model for the rest of his life and recalled his fondness for

and attachment to it when he was well into his seventies.

Almost fifty years later, in 1881, a family friend would write to Jasper reminiscing about his talents as a youth: “In my boyhood days when you were a young man at your father’s home on Staten Island I was amused and delighted with many ingenious articles which you were pleased to provide me with by the whitlings of your pocketknife. The miniature farm houses and barns surrounded by post and rail fences afforded me much pleasure in building and rebuilding many times over. And of all of the wonders of my early recollection the architectural model of a fine Villa which you so handsomely constructed, impressed me with great admiration for your genius.”⁶



Fig. 3. *Temple of Minerva, Parthenon Restored*, n.d.
Oil on canvas (NCF 367)

Jasper’s diploma from the Mechanics’ Institute and his drawing skills enabled him to enter into a five-year apprenticeship with Joseph Trench, an architect on Pearl Street in Manhattan. At the age of fourteen, Jasper began commuting from Staten Island to Manhattan every day. About 1838, while in Trench’s employ, Jasper sent an architectural rendering of the Temple of Minerva (based on illustrations of the temple) to the American Institute Fair, for which he won another award (fig. 3).⁷

Trench’s office was very successful during the years Cropsey apprenticed there (1837–42) and was among a few leading-edge firms that adorned their front elevation blueprints with colored landscape backgrounds in order to provide their clients with an aesthetically pleasing rendering of the proposed structure, in which the building façade and landscape objects would be painted in watercolor. Trench hired an English artist named Edward Maury to show Cropsey some basic watercolor techniques, since Cropsey’s artistic talents, as well as his position as an apprentice, made him a natural choice to enhance the drawings. Subsequently, almost every set of plans passed through his hands before being submitted to the client.⁸ Mr. Trench recognized Jasper’s artistic ability, so he generously provided him with art supplies and allowed him to use his private office in order to develop his skills. Jasper took advantage of this encouragement and sketched and painted in watercolor whenever he could. Aside from the rudimentary lessons with Maury, he was self-taught, practicing on his own both before and after regular working hours at the firm. He painted mostly landscapes and an occasional architectural composition, learning to paint as he had learned to draw: by copying prints and other published images. It was probably about this time, while he was still a teenager, that he began to frequent the National Academy of Design (NAD) and other art museums to view original paintings made by professional artists. In or about 1841, he began to experiment with oil painting.

In 1842 Cropsey terminated his employment with Joseph Trench, months before his apprenticeship was over. By the standards of the day,⁹ although he was only nineteen years old, Cropsey was a very well-trained young architect, having completed some training in the Mechanics’ Institute program and more than four years as an apprentice in a busy Manhattan architect’s office. It was at this time that he decided to pursue a career as a professional architect, even as he continued his development as an artist.



Fig. 4. *Side Elevation: Moravian Church, New Dorp, Staten Island, 1843.*
Watercolor on paper (NCF Collection)

Fig. 5. *Front Elevation: St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Rossville, Staten Island, 1845.*
Watercolor on paper (NCF Collection)

At first, since he lacked architectural clients and funds, Cropsey returned home to Staten Island shortly after leaving Trench's employ. In 1843 and 1844, he designed two churches on Staten Island and possibly one dwelling.¹⁰ The first commission, the Moravian Church at New Dorp, was an original design by Cropsey (figs. 4 and 5). This commission was important to Cropsey, as the Staten Island parish of the Moravian sect had been founded by his mother's ancestors and his parents had been married in the original building, which was being replaced by a new church of Cropsey's design.¹¹ Cropsey's plans called for a simple Greek Revival structure that reflected the austerity of the Moravian sect, with clapboard siding, simple windows, and a rectangular bell tower. The church is still in use and remains as Cropsey designed it, aside from the steeple, which replaced the bell tower in the mid-twentieth century, and some minor alterations. The Cropsey family plot is located in the adjacent cemetery, where Jasper's parents, some siblings, and other relatives are interred. The building was funded largely by Cornelius Vanderbilt, who would later become a patron of Cropsey's, and the cemetery contains the Vanderbilt Mausoleum. The Moravian Church Archives (Bethlehem, PA) indicate that Cropsey was paid \$75 for his design.

The second church Cropsey designed on Staten Island, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, was, at the request of an important parishioner, based on the general design of the parish church at Ross Castle in Scotland.¹² Cropsey probably worked from illustrations and descriptions of the Scottish church to create the design for St. Luke's. The building was in use for about a century before being demolished in 1945 to accommodate a larger structure.

Even as Cropsey continued in architecture, it became clear to him that painting was his primary interest. His experimentation with oil paints graduated from copying prints and other illustrations (as he had when learning to draw) to composing original views. In 1843, a scant two years after he started to work in oil, the National Academy of Design exhibited his work for the first time (*Landscape Composition*, 1843; fig. 6). Although he mostly painted in his studio working from pencil sketches done in the field, in August 1843 Cropsey created his first oil sketch (*Williams Bridge, Westchester*, 1843 [NCF 2112; cat. no. 9]) done *en plein air*, a practice he employed on rare occasions throughout his career.

As Cropsey developed as an artist, he traveled to different locations, recording views, terrain, and plant life in sketchbooks and on pads. He then used the sketches made in the field as the basis for compositions in oil paint, which were almost always done in his studio. In 1843 his friend J. P. Ridner, one of the original elected members of the Management Committee of the American Art-Union, asked Cropsey to join him on a trip to the Greenwood Lake area around West Milford, New Jersey. Ridner was related to the Cooley family, and he and Cropsey would



Fig. 6. *Landscape Composition*, 1841. Oil on canvas (NCF 565, cat. no. 6)

stay with them while in the area. Cropsey became very friendly with Isaac Cooley and his family, in particular his daughter Maria. It soon became apparent that Cropsey's frequent trips to Greenwood Lake were more for the chance to be with Maria than to be with nature. Because he was shy, it took many trips before he had the nerve to let his feelings be known. It was not until the summer of 1845 that Cropsey realized that Maria's feelings were mutual. He recounted in his journal an evening at the Cooleys when he showed the whole family a painting he had done there: "I had nearly all the family around me. . . . Maria put her head near my shoulder and whispered [*sic*] in my ear some flattering things. I verily believe the girl loves me. All praised my work as it advanced from the oldest to the youngest, but Maria praised the author."¹³

The Greenwood Lake region remained important to Cropsey throughout his life. He visited often, and at different times he lived in the surrounding area. His sketches from around Greenwood Lake resulted in dozens of paintings. One such painting was particularly important: *View in Orange County with Greenwood Lake in the Distance, after a Sketch taken October 4, near Sundown*, ca. 1843 (NCF 564; cat. no. 8), which was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1844 and earned Cropsey an associate membership to the NAD. At twenty-one, he was one of the youngest to have received this honor. The Academy, founded in 1826 by Samuel F. B. Morse and others, was the most prestigious art association in New York, probably in the country. It was the mark of an accomplished artist to follow their signature with "A.N.A." or "N.A.," denoting associate or full membership in the Academy. Cropsey's remarkable advances as an artist brought him status and recognition at a very young age. In 1845 he was asked to give a talk at the New York Art Reunion, a society for young artists. His talk included an homage to Thomas Cole, his idol and the founder of the Hudson River School: "Our Cole, the first American landscape painter of eminence, who stands at the head of the Art, has been a close student of nature and has advanced in the art in proportion to his application, his works that are mostly admired, are the nearest transcripts of her."¹⁴

Cropsey was part of the so-called second generation of Hudson River School artists. The two leading lights of the first generation were Thomas Cole (1801–1848) and Asher B. Durand (1796–1886). Cropsey met Durand on a trip to Saugerties, New York, in 1844. He admired Durand and his work but really seemed to idolize Cole. Cropsey traveled to Cole's studio, Cedar Grove, in Catskill, New York, in the summer of 1845, and while there, he also met Cole's most famous student, Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900). Although Cropsey and Cole never achieved



Fig. 7. *View of the Mediterranean, after Cole*, 1844.
Oil on canvas (NCF 439; cat. no. 20)

the student / mentor relationship that Cropsey sought, he held Cole in the highest esteem and would continue to revere him and his art long after the older artist had passed away. For Cropsey, Cole's work was the standard he tried to emulate. Cole's *View on the Mediterranean after a Shower*, ca. 1832, is the only painting Cropsey is known to have copied; his *View of the Mediterranean, after Cole*, 1844 (fig. 7), is a direct copy, although smaller in size with a few details changed.

Cropsey believed that depicting nature realistically should be the ultimate goal of an artist. The belief that all of God's creations were significant led Cropsey and others to paint their subjects with attention to the minutest details. The prevailing view was that America was the last "unspoiled wilderness," devoid of the scars of industry, wars, and past civilizations. The

artists were celebrating the natural beauty of America and also celebrating America as a gift from God. This mixture of spirituality and nature reinforced the popular notion that America was the "new Garden of Eden." This led Cropsey to regard his artistic endeavors as a higher calling rather than as a vocation, a calling that fulfilled both his spiritual and creative goals. "Whatever good I may have done, has been more indebted to the presence and blessings of Him in whom 'I live, and move and have my being' than to any natural inclination of my own."¹⁵



By the mid-1840s, Cropsey had established himself as a professional artist and developed friendships with other landscape artists, many of whom he met as a member of the NAD. He spent time in the summer of 1845 in Gaylord's Bridge, Connecticut, with Charles Seely Gaylord, traipsing through the woods and painting alongside Gaylord in his studio there. This trip saw Cropsey complete several works, including the large *Schatacook Mountain, Housatonic Valley, Connecticut*, 1845 (NCF 6, cat. no. 36), which was started and completed in Gaylord's studio. While in Connecticut, Cropsey also met the artist George Inness for the first time.

Until about 1846, many of Cropsey's paintings were sold through the American Art-Union auctions, as Cropsey was a new artist and had not yet developed many patrons. In 1846 and 1847, he was becoming better known, and several collectors began to purchase work directly from him. His early patrons included John Rutherford of New Jersey and Owen Gill of Baltimore, Maryland. The artist, collector, and art dealer John M. Falconer also became Cropsey's patron and good friend.

By the end of 1846, Jasper and Maria were engaged and making preparations for their first trip abroad, where they planned to spend at least a year in Rome. It was almost a prerequisite for an American artist to make a European tour, studying the old masters, visiting the ancient ruins, and taking in the history of art and culture in Europe. Artist friends and critics encouraged the tour, but they also warned Cropsey not to be swayed by the European art world and not



Fig. 8. Daniel Huntington, *Portrait of Maria Cropsey*, ca. 1850. Oil on canvas (NCF Collection)

and sketched and painted Italian ruins and landscapes. His architectural training enabled him to label all the different architectural styles he encountered, and he recorded them in his journal and sketchbooks. The drawings made in Italy would be used for many painting subjects, including the ruins at Paestum, the Coliseum (fig. 10), the Roman Forum, the Isle of Capri, and others. Cropsey used these sketches and his notes to create paintings of Italy for the rest of his career, even though he never returned to Italy after this trip. In addition to his Italian scenes, Cropsey created a Scottish scene (*Jedburgh Abbey*, ca. 1847 [NCF 1104; cat. 89]), for John Rutherford, along with English views and several winter scenes of Switzerland. American artists he spent time with in Europe included Christopher P. Cranch, William Story, and Thomas Hicks. The Cropseys returned to England via northern Italy and France before setting sail for America in July 1849.

Sadly, Thomas Cole, the “father of the Hudson River School,” had passed away in February 1848, while Cropsey was in Europe. Cropsey received a letter from John M. Falconer, a mutual friend, describing Cole’s unexpected death after a few days’ illness. The letter began, “Thomas Cole is no more . . .”¹⁶ His death at

to begin painting in the “Grand Style” of the Old World. There was a real fear that American artists would lose their artistic identity and that the native Hudson River School movement would be lost.

Jasper Cropsey and Maria Cooley were married on May 1, 1847, by Minister Daniel Higbie in West Milford, New Jersey (Maria’s hometown in the Greenwood Lake area). The newlyweds sailed to Europe in the early summer of 1847. The trip they took—first to England, where they spent the summer of 1847, and then to Italy, via Geneva and the Simplon Pass (fig. 9)—paralleled trips made by Cole and other American artists. The Cropseys settled in Rome, where they coincidentally lived in Thomas Cole’s old apartment and where Jasper utilized Cole’s former studio. Jasper studied architecture



Fig. 9. *Winter in Switzerland*, 1861. Oil on canvas (NCF 933; cat. no. 679)

Fig. 10. *The Colosseum*, 1847. Oil on canvas (NCF 438; cat. no. 82)



Fig. 11. *Days of Elizabeth*, 1853. Oil on canvas (NCF 41; cat. no. 251)

the age of forty-seven marked the passing of the first generation of American landscape painters. Of course, being in Italy, Cropsey did not receive Falconer's letter until at least mid-March, and by that time, Cropsey had written to Cole, not knowing that the artist had already died. Cropsey's letter reveals how much he revered Cole and how timid he was about writing to him, for fear of wasting his time: "The favor you extend me of accepting occasionally a letter, I shall esteem very much, but shall address you with diffidence and hesitation, because I fear my

communication will scarcely compensate you for the loss of time expended in reading them;— and because of being possessed with not a little of those feelings that are felt by a child in the presence of his kind master in all things; or, as is shown by "the Angle [sic], ministering to their Lord." However if you will accept an occasional communication I shall esteem it as and feel it a great compliment."¹⁷

Shortly after returning to America in 1849, Cropsey visited Thomas Cole's studio and spent time with Cole's widow. He would continue to visit Cedar Grove from time to time for many years.

Although he was working mainly on American landscapes and scenes from his European journey, Cropsey also began to paint literary, imaginary, and allegorical scenes at this time. These types of paintings, first popularized in America by Cole, were departures from his traditional compositions of views he observed and recorded at first hand. *Days of Elizabeth*, 1853 (fig. 11), and others like it,¹⁸ were scenes inspired by the works of Sir Walter Scott, one of Cropsey's favorite authors. *The Spirit of War*, 1851 (NCF 35; cat. no. 216), and *The Spirit of Peace*, 1851 (NCF 36; cat. 215), were allegorical epics meant to hang as pendants. This departure from his normal subjects enabled Cropsey to explore spiritual and Christian topics. *The Millennial Age* describes a utopian vision of the world with a lion, a lamb, and a child on an altar as described in the Book of Isaiah. *The Good Shepherd*, 1855 (NCF 376; cat. no. 330), depicts Christ in a bucolic setting holding a lamb in his arms. Other similarly themed paintings were completed in the early 1850s. *Ideal Landscape: Homage to Thomas Cole (Study for The Land of Beulah)*, 1850 (NCF 240; cat. no. 165), was one of several studies for Cropsey's contribution to *The Grand Moving Panorama of Pilgrim's Progress*, a sequence of paintings to which many artists contributed. The scenes were painted on huge rolls of fabric (8 feet tall and over 800 feet in length) that was unrolled across a stage like an enormous spool of film over a period of two hours, accompanied by music and a lecturer who explained the points of interest. The book on which the panorama was based, *Pilgrim's Progress*, is a seventeenth-century morality tale written by Puritan preacher John Bunyan, and it was the most popular book, aside from the Bible, in mid-nineteenth-century America. It is a traditional tale of good versus evil in which the characters, Christian and Christiana, travel through such unappealing places as the Slough of Despond, the Valley of the Shadows of Death, and the Cave of the Giant Despair, before their eventual salvation in the beautiful Celestial City. Cropsey's study describes a scene near



Fig. 12. *Niagara Falls*, 1853. Oil on canvas (NCF 487; cat. no. 259)

the end when Christian and Hopeful first see the Celestial City. The panorama debuted in New York in November 1850 and was a critical and financial success. Most of the artists who contributed scenes to the panorama were associate or full members of the National Academy of Design.¹⁹

While Cropsey was finishing *Land of Beulah*, Mary (“Minnie”) Cropsey, Jasper and Maria’s first child, was born on September 5, 1850. In 1851 Cropsey was elected a full member of the NAD. The early 1850s were marked by sketching trips through New York; the White Mountains of New Hampshire; Newport, Rhode Island; and Massachusetts. Cropsey worked many of these New England drawings into paintings, in addition to completing English and Italian scenes from his European sketchbooks. To augment his income during this period, Cropsey taught drawing and painting to individual students. His most noteworthy students were the Hudson River School painters David Johnson and Norton Bush, who later became an important California artist.

A traditional but important subject for Cropsey was Niagara Falls, which he visited in August of 1852. A tourist attraction even in Cropsey’s day, Niagara was a preeminent symbol of America’s power and natural beauty. Almost all well-to-do Americans, as well as travelers from abroad, made the journey to Niagara to marvel at magnificence of the falls. Cropsey made a point of stopping at the falls again in the autumn of 1855 and returned to Niagara with Maria in March of 1856. *Niagara Falls*, 1853 (fig. 12), is probably the most famous of the many views of Niagara that Cropsey made.

In autumn of 1853, Cropsey traveled to Pennsylvania, where he studied and sketched the Starrucca Viaduct of the Erie Railroad. The viaduct was considered an engineering marvel and a monument to American ingenuity. Later in his career, Cropsey would utilize the sketches to produce one of his largest paintings, *An American Autumn—Starrucca Vale*, 1865 (NCF 954). Although predominantly a painter of nature, Cropsey was also interested in man-made structures and considered them worthy subjects for his paintings. Perhaps because of his architectural



Fig. 13. *The University of Michigan*, 1855. Oil on paper (NCF 52; cat. no. 388)

In Manhattan and lived for seven years in London. At that time, no symbol of man and his effect on nature was greater than the railroad.²⁰ Unlike Cole, who was very wary of railroads and industry, Cropsey included trains and rail lines in many of his paintings,²¹ which suggests that he believed man and nature were both part of God's plan and not naturally opposed to each other.

In 1855 Cropsey traveled to Ann Arbor, Michigan, at the request of the president of the University of Michigan, Dr. Henry Tappan, whom Cropsey had known in New York. Cropsey painted the university campus and the Detroit Observatory, for which the university was famous (fig. 13). The observatory painting was engraved, and a copy is still used on the university's trustee letterhead. On Cropsey's return from Michigan, he traveled across Lake Erie to Buffalo, on to Niagara Falls, and then up the St. Lawrence River. He proceeded to Montreal and Quebec before visiting Lake Champlain and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Although this particular trip took Cropsey as far west and north as he would ever travel in the United States, it was a typical summer sketching trip in that he was away from home for a prolonged period of time. By the mid-1850s, Cropsey was a successful and famous artist whose clients included such luminaries as Cornelius Vanderbilt and Cyrus Field, among others.



Fig. 14. *Stateroom on the Devonshire en route to England*, 1856. Oil on canvas (NCF 445; cat. no. 436)

In April 1856, Cropsey held a sale of paintings in his studio, which realized about \$8,000.²² Jasper and Maria set sail for England in 1856, along with their two daughters, Mary and Jenny (born in 1852). *Stateroom on the Devonshire en Route to England*, 1856 (fig. 14), depicts Maria and the two girls in a figure or genre painting of the kind that Cropsey rarely painted. In London Cropsey established his studio in the home they rented at Kensington Gate, Hyde Park South, which they maintained as their permanent resident as they made excursions to the Dorset coast and the Isle of Wight. Some of Cropsey's favorite English subjects were Bonchurch on the Isle of Wight, Richmond Hill (Thames River), Warwick Castle, the Church at Stoke Poges,²³ and Anne Hathaway's Cottage near Stratford-upon-Avon.

Cropsey quickly established himself as an important artist in London. His paintings were exhibited at the Royal Academy and were well received. In London he met and befriended John



Fig. 15. *Autumn—On the Hudson River*, 1860. Oil on canvas (NCF 89; cat. no. 620)

Ruskin, the purveyor of aesthetics and a man Cropsey greatly admired, and Ruskin often visited Cropsey in his studio. Cropsey also presented engravings of Cole's *Voyage of Life* series to Sir Charles Eastlake, president of the Royal Academy, at the behest of the engraver James Smillie, who had engraved some of Cropsey's paintings.²⁴

While in England, Cropsey sent paintings back to America and was well represented at the National Academy of Design's exhibits during his absence. In addition to his landscape paintings, Cropsey illustrated various literary works, including volumes of poetry by Edgar Allen Poe and Thomas Moore in 1857 and illustrations for Hoffman's poem "Room, Boys, Room" in 1858.²⁵ Cropsey was commissioned in 1857 by E. Gambart & Co. to paint thirty-six views of America. Gambart planned to publish these as the *American Scenery* series of colored lithographs. Owing to financial hardship, Gambart cancelled the commission after the first sixteen paintings were purchased. These works were of familiar views of America, including Niagara Falls, the White Mountains, the Hudson River, Lake George, and the Connecticut River.

The English were very impressed with Cropsey's views of American autumn, especially *Autumn—On the Hudson River*, 1860 (fig. 15), which was an enormously successful painting and added greatly to his reputation. The painting, measuring 5 feet high by 9 feet wide, was exhibited extensively for a year or two before being sold in 1862 for \$2,000, the most Cropsey had received at that point for a single painting. Some of the English critics were incredulous at the brilliant reds and oranges of Cropsey's autumn scenes, having never experienced these hues in their native land. Cropsey wrote home asking for autumn leaves that he could display with *Autumn—On the Hudson River*; his friend, F.A. Otis replied, "Some two months ago I gave to Mr Falconer for you a large collection of very fine forest leaves which my beloved wife & I gathered & pressed last fall for you. I was much chagrined the other day calling on Mr Falconer to find he had not yet found an opportunity to forward them to you. When they do come to you you will I trust find them as fine as when we packed them, if so I am confident you will be able to convince your English friends that your rendering of the American Autumn forest is true."²⁶ When Cropsey finally received the leaves, he scattered them around the base of *Autumn—On the Hudson River* while it was on exhibit.

On June 27, 1861, the American minister, Charles Adams, presented Jasper to Queen Victoria at St. James's Palace, London, and Mrs. Adams presented Maria to the queen. This was the highlight of the Cropseys' stay in England, and both Jasper and Maria cherished the event for the rest of their lives. *Autumn—On the Hudson River* had cemented Cropsey's fame in England and is still regarded as his masterpiece. His very large English view *Richmond Hill in the Summer of 1862*, 1862 (NCF 97; cat. no. 695), was done during the same period and is also regarded as one of his most important works.

While in London, Cropsey volunteered to supervise the American section of the International Exhibition of 1862, and he received a medal for his role as Assistant Commissioner of the Exhibition. By this time, Cropsey was one of the best-known American artists in Europe, and Maria was known as a gracious host in London society: "And thus it soon became an honor to be invited to Mrs. Cropsey's Saturday evenings, especially for the American colony in the British metropolis."²⁷

As the 1860s progressed, the news received in England about the United States was ominous, for the country was in the midst of the Civil War. Jasper and Maria were ardent supporters of the Union and contemplated returning home. At about this time, Cropsey created *A Cane Brake in Louisiana*, ca. 1862 (NCF 1074, cat. no. 682), commissioned by Dion Boucicault, a



Fig. 16. *Morning over a Cane Brake*, 1861. Oil on canvas (NCF 1261; cat. no. 666). This is a study for *A Cane Brake in Louisiana* and is the only known version.

close friend of Cropsey's and one of the greatest of Irish playwrights. Although he was Irish, Boucicault became enamored of America and spent much of his adult life traveling between London and New York. Cropsey's painting would be used as the model for the backdrop of the opening of the second act of the London production of Boucicault's *Octoroon*, which was, along with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a popular anti-slavery theatrical production. It debuted in New York's Winter Garden on December 5, 1859, with the playwright's wife, Agnes Robertson, an accomplished actress, playing the female lead.

Cropsey's association with Boucicault is further indication of his support for the Union in the Civil War, as the playwright was disliked by Southerners and their Confederacy for his anti-slavery views.

Worried about the war and concerned for the safety of their families back home, as well as being perturbed over England's support of the Confederacy, the Cropseys auctioned off many paintings in London and prepared to travel back to America. By this time, the Cropsey family numbered six, as Rose Victoria (b. February 25, 1858) and Lilly Frances (b. July 16, 1859) had been born in England. Before they departed for New York, Jasper presented the author Charles Dickens with the painting *An Autumnal Scene*, by 1863 (NCF 839; cat. 707). The Cropseys arrived in New York on July 4, 1863, the day after the decisive Battle of Gettysburg ended. Cropsey soon traveled to Gettysburg, sketched the battlefield, and made a series of small Civil War oil studies. These works were the basis for his large oil painting *Gettysburg*, 1866 (NCF 543). Cropsey donated paintings to various Sanitary Fairs to aid Union Army veterans, and he also volunteered his time and talents to the 1864 Metropolitan Fair of New York, for which he designed the New Jersey department and donated artwork.²⁸ In addition, a children's production



Fig. 17. *Valley of Wyoming*, 1865. Oil on canvas (NCF 102)

of “Cinderella” was held to benefit the fair on April 16, 1864, featuring Mary (“Minnie”) Cropsey, Jasper’s oldest daughter, in the title role. The male lead was Charlie Fremont, son of General John C. Fremont, and the son of Samuel F. B. Morse was the “herald.” Also featured was Jenny Cropsey, Mary’s younger sister.²⁹

As supporters of the Union, the Cropseys also supported Abraham Lincoln. Jasper in particular greatly admired Lincoln and wrote him several letters. In June of 1864, Jasper and Maria were in Washington, D.C., and on June 11, they were formally presented to President Lincoln at the White House. Later that day, they were invited by a friend, the artist and author Francis Bicknell Carpenter, to visit a temporary studio at the White House that he was allowed to set up for the purpose of creating his now famous painting of Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation. As Jasper and Maria visited with Carpenter, Lincoln stopped by the studio, and the Cropseys had a more intimate meeting with him, as related in Carpenter’s well-regarded book *Six Months at the White House with Abraham Lincoln: The Story of a Picture*: “Towards the close of the concert the door suddenly opened, and the President came in, as he was in the habit of doing, alone. Mr. and Mrs. Cropsey had been presented to him in the morning; and as he came forward, half hesitatingly, Mrs. C., who held a bunch of beautiful flowers in her hand, tripped forward playfully, and said: ‘Allow me, Mr. President, to present you with a bouquet!’”³⁰

Thus, in three years’ time, the Cropseys were presented to the Queen of England and the President of the United States, on the basis of Jasper’s fame and success, in addition to the couple’s civic contributions. Cropsey’s popularity as an artist continued after the war; in fact, 1865 was one of his most profitable years. He received \$3,500 for *Valley of Wyoming*, 1865 (fig. 17), and \$3,000 for *An American Autumn—Starrucca Vale*. The American Watercolor Society formed in 1866, and in early 1867 Cropsey was one of ten original members elected. Up to this time, watercolor was viewed as an inferior medium by American art critics and, to a degree, not worthy of accomplished oil painters. After the initial exhibit in 1867, Cropsey’s contribution to the annual Society exhibition was slight, but beginning in 1880, he began to work in watercolor more regularly.



Fig. 18 *Aladdin*, 1884, Engraving by W. G. Jackson after a painting by Cropsey (*Aladdin Seen from the North*, 1883 [NCF 2062]).

Cropsey had not depicted overtly Christian themes since the mid-1850s, before he traveled to Europe. Starting probably with *Autumn—On the Hudson River* in 1860, he began instead to represent God as rays of sunlight bursting through the clouds. By the end of the decade and through the 1870s, his work often featured ethereal skies, symbolic of God blessing America. In this manner, Cropsey continued to display his faith and belief in the Almighty through his paintings. His concentration on skies and atmospheric effects led twentieth-century art scholars to include

him in the movement they called Luminism, which consisted of select Hudson River School painters, such as John Kensett and Sanford Gifford.

In 1866 the Cropseys purchased forty-five acres of land in Warwick, a town in Orange County, New York, not far from Maria's hometown of West Milford, New Jersey. The area was near some of Cropsey's favorite painting subjects, including Greenwood Lake, Lake Wawayanda, and the Ramapo Valley. Eventually they would expand their acreage to about one hundred acres, on which Jasper designed and built Aladdin, a twenty-nine-room Victorian summer home that was completed in 1869 (fig. 18). Aladdin, equipped with a full artist's studio, greenhouses, and separate housing for the caretaker, servants, and farmhands, represented Cropsey's lofty status as a famous and successful artist, a far cry from the humble farmhouse he had grown up on in Staten Island. His care in designing the house and overseeing its construction is an indication of how important it was to him, both as a home and as a symbol of his standing. He designed much of the furniture and décor for the grandiose mansion, which became known as one of the finest estates in the county:

The interior of "Aladdin" is especially pleasing. The ground floor contains the main hall and staircase of the building, the reception or sitting room, one of the largest studios in this country, a beautiful billiards room, a large dining room, a handsome conservatory, and the kitchens, servants' rooms, etc. which extend back for 100 feet in a wing. Reaching the house after a lovely ride up the hill, the carriage can be driven under a porch, from which we step into the main hall.³¹

Jasper and Maria hosted large social gatherings at Aladdin, often inviting at least one hundred guests, which the house easily accommodated. The servants' wing alone extended one hundred feet past the kitchen. The billiards room was declared the best in the country by George M. Pullman, railroad magnate and a patron of Cropsey's. The house truly combined all of Cropsey's talents as architect, designer, and interior decorator, as it was built according to his design. He also supervised the construction and approved all the materials used.

By the late 1860s, the popularity of the Hudson River School style of painting was declining. Cropsey's paintings were still somewhat sought after but at reduced prices. All of the Hudson River School paintings began to decrease dramatically in value, as changing tastes shifted toward newer styles. Over the course of a decade, painting values would plummet

to 50 percent or less of what they had been. Cropsey continued painting at his prolific pace, completing some thirty oil paintings each year. He stored more and more of his work, as it grew harder to find buyers. By 1870 or so, he no longer received many commissions, and instead he painted what he wanted to paint and hoped they would sell, either from his studio or through auction.

By 1869, the year *Aladdin* was completed, Maria began sending unsolicited letters to wealthy art patrons in an effort to bring in commissions for her husband's paintings.³² The timing for the construction of *Aladdin* could not have been worse. Just as the popularity of landscape paintings was eroding, Jasper and Maria went deeply into debt to build their dream home. Their financial straits were also partly the result of their lifestyle. Jasper was a famous and successful artist, and the Cropseys lived accordingly. All four daughters attended private schools and then finishing schools, and Jasper and Maria traveled extensively and hosted many social events. Even as things grew worse, *Aladdin* remained the venue for many large and lavish social gatherings and parties. The Cropseys had once managed well financially because Jasper's income was always relatively high for the time, but by the early 1870s, unfortunately, paintings that once commanded thousands of dollars were selling in the hundreds.

Probably because of economic worries but perhaps also because he was reinvigorated by the *Aladdin* project, Cropsey renewed his architectural career.³³ There is no record of his doing any architectural work during the twenty-year period from 1844 to 1864, when he did some design work for the Metropolitan Fair. Perhaps his career as an artist and the years spent in Europe precluded his continuing his architectural work, although it is more likely that he performed some minor architectural commissions that went unnoticed.

Fortunately for Cropsey, his art patrons and social contacts included such illustrious names as the Rutherfurds of New Jersey; the railroad magnate W.H. Vanderbilt (1821–1885); George M. Pullman (1831–1897), president of the Pullman Palace Car Company; General Horace Porter (1839–1921), former aide to Ulysses S. Grant and railroad executive; and the Atlantic cable line promoter, Cyrus W. Field (1819–1892). Most of these individuals would be instrumental in reviving Cropsey's career as an architect.

In the 1870s, Cropsey designed summer homes in Long Branch, New Jersey (the foremost ocean resort in the country), for the Rutherfurds, Pullman, and Porter. In addition to his design work, Cropsey also personally supervised some of the constructions of these homes. There is also evidence that he did some design work for Jay Gould, president of the Erie Rail Company, who also maintained a summer residence in Long Branch. According to Donald Barrell,³⁴ Cropsey decorated the *George G. Barnard*, an Erie locomotive for Gould. He decorated the locomotive, which was named after a Tammany Hall judge, with hundreds of red roses done in oil paint.

Cropsey's relationships with railroad executives and his reputation as an artist and architect led to his most prestigious commission: designing the stations for the Manhattan Elevated Railway in New York City. This project, which he undertook in 1878, was to design and oversee the construction of the first station on the Sixth Avenue line. Eventually, fourteen stations were built, all nearly identical, according to Cropsey's specifications. The project and the commission were important for several reasons: the elevated train was an early contribution to the city's mass transit system, completed nearly thirty years before the inception of the subway system; the stations were made of the then-controversial material prefabricated cast iron; and Cropsey's



Fig. 19. 14th Street Station, Metropolitan Elevated Railway Company, undated photograph (NCF Collection)

design was widely lauded for adding aesthetic appeal to such a utilitarian project (fig. 19). The stations that Cropsey designed would serve New York City for about sixty years. The Sixth Avenue El was ordered torn down in 1939 by Mayor LaGuardia as Sixth Avenue would then be served by the subway system.

Financially, Cropsey should probably have become a full-time architect at this point. His architectural talents were in demand, and he certainly had the necessary client base and contacts. But he viewed architecture as a vocation and painting as his true calling. He performed architecture on a sporadic basis so

that it would not interfere too much with his painting career. Architecture was not an avenue through which Jasper could convey his spirituality and belief in God, so it was destined to play a secondary role to painting, which fulfilled his spiritual and artistic goals and desires.

Cropsey's last major successful painting, *The Old Mill*, 1876 (NCF 143), was shown at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. At the same exhibition, he was presented an award for *Old Bonchurch, Isle of Wight*, 1875 (fig. 20). A noteworthy aspect of the exhibition was that it was dominated by European paintings and new styles. As he reached middle age, Cropsey was accorded the respect and accolades due to a veteran artist of his stature, but changing tastes would deem his art largely irrelevant in the art world for the rest of his career. *The Old Mill*, at 4 feet by 7 feet, was a size reminiscent of those he had painted during the prime years of the Hudson River School, when large paintings were highly coveted. By this time in Cropsey's career, however, he generally worked with medium- or smaller-sized canvases, not wanting to risk months of work on major paintings that could not be sold. *The Old Mill*, for example, did not sell at the Centennial Exhibition (its price was \$7,000), nor did it sell the following year at the St. Louis Exposition with a price of \$2,500. In fact, very little is known of the provenance of this painting until 1963, when the Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences (now known as the Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia) acquired it.

As he had done for the Metropolitan Fair years earlier, Cropsey volunteered his time and talent in 1879 to provide designs and decorations for the Seventh Regiment Armory drill shed in New York City. It was an immense project, requiring decorations for a space some 50,000 square feet in area. For the project Cropsey created full-sized stencils on heavy paper for all of the decorations so that artisans could trace his patterns on the beams, girders, and walls of the drill shed. The designs were patriotic, befitting the military nature of the building, but also organic, as Cropsey interspersed the patriotic symbols with botanical elements, such as leaves



Fig. 20. *Old Bonchurch, Isle of Wight*, 1875. Oil on canvas (NCF 1568)



Fig. 21. *Design for Drill Hall, 7th Regiment Armory, NYC, ca. 1879.* Watercolor on paper (NCF Collection)

and vines (fig. 21). His decorations were widely lauded for their aesthetic value and for brightening up an otherwise drab, utilitarian space. Unfortunately, in the 1890s the regiment commander decided that the designs were not in keeping with a military building and had them painted over.

The Cropseys continued to live at Aladdin in the summers and returned to New York City in winter. They nearly always maintained a home in the city in addition to rented studio space. Maintaining Aladdin and the New York apartment, however, seriously impacted their finances, as painting sales continued to dwindle. By the early 1880s, Jasper and Maria were grandparents, for both Mary and Rose were married with children of their own. Their daughter Jenny was living on her own, and Lilly was the only daughter remaining at home.

It became more apparent to Jasper that they would have to give up Aladdin, as their mounting debt and lack of painting commissions had put the family in a precarious

financial position. In 1884 they barely avoided a mortgage foreclosure on Aladdin and were subsequently forced to sell the property and to auction off most of the contents of the house, greenhouses, and studio. They sold sixty-eight paintings for a total of \$5,000, an average of less than \$100 per work. Also sold were more than a thousand plants from their greenhouses, much of the furniture, and all of the farming equipment. Subsequent owners of the house were the Barr family, and Aladdin became known locally as Barr Castle.

In 1885 the Cropseys relocated to a rented house that overlooked the river in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. About 1886 they purchased a fifty-year-old house at 49 Washington Avenue, which Jasper named Ever Rest (figs. 22 and 23). Jasper's finances were such that he could no



Fig. 22. Ever Rest, 49 Washington Avenue, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York (NCF Collection)

Fig. 23. The family at Ever Rest in 1886 (back row, l. to r.): Lilly Cropsey, Jasper F. Cropsey, Maria Cropsey; (front row): Isabel and Constance Wack



Fig. 24. *Waldheim, Residence of W. H. Webb, Tarrytown, NY, 1888*. Oil on canvas (NCF 165)

longer maintain studio space in New York City, so he built a studio at Ever Rest about 1887, and he continued to paint. The studio was patterned after the one he had built at Aladdin, although it was smaller in size. This period of his life was spent almost exclusively in Hastings-on-Hudson and the surrounding area, where he painted oils of the Hudson River, other local areas, and views taken from his sketchbooks, and he also spent more time on watercolors. Popular local subjects from his years in Hastings-on-Hudson include views of the Saw Mill River, the Hudson from Ever Rest, and the Hastings-on-Hudson waterfront. Cropsey's last known architectural commission was Waldheim, a home he designed for William Webb, who was said to be America's foremost wooden shipbuilder (fig. 24).

In February 1889, Lilly Cropsey died of an unknown illness at the age of twenty-nine. She had been very special to Jasper, as she was the only artist among his four daughters, and some of her work was sold at auction alongside her father's. Lilly's painting subjects included flowers, horses, and farm scenes. She was listed in an 1887 auction ad as the "daughter and pupil" of Jasper F. Cropsey. Lilly and her father were very close, and while they were at Aladdin, she would stay with him to close the house for the season after the rest of the family had gone to the city for the winter. Often they had painted side by side in the studio, as she depicted flowers and animals (fig. 25), while her father worked on his landscapes.

Rose, the second youngest of the Cropsey girls, and her husband, Conrad Wack, were killed in a California train accident in 1892. They had moved to San Francisco shortly after marrying. Their two girls, Isabel and Constance Wack (ages eight and ten), were sent back to Hastings-on-Hudson, where Jasper and Maria continued their upbringing.

In 1893, at the age of seventy, Jasper had a severe stroke, although he recovered well enough within several months to continue to work. He had probably suffered smaller strokes in preceding years, but this one was the most debilitating. Through these trying times, with the loss of his daughters, his own health problems, and his financial difficulties, Jasper nevertheless persevered with his painting. He still exhibited yearly at the National Academy and the American Water Color Society, and his outlook and spirit remained as positive as ever. Throughout his life, he kept his strong faith and knowledge that God's plan was not to be questioned. He took great enjoyment in his two grandchildren, Isabel and Constance. In February 1900, he wrote to Constance



Fig. 25. Lilly F. Cropsey (signed LFC), *White Horse, 1879*. Oil on canvas (NCF Collection)

who was away at school: “Your delightful little letter of the 16th came in due time, as an happy greeting, on my seventy seventh birthday. The day dawned bright, with its snow clad garments, and northeast winds. . . . After a while the spring days will come, and we may be altogether again. May fortune and blessing crown your life, with a halo as beautiful as your golden hair. . . . Grand-pa.”³⁵

Jasper Francis Cropsey died on June 22, 1900, at the age of seventy-seven. Although Cropsey produced some fine paintings in his later years, the art world had changed so much that he died in near anonymity. His obituary in the *New York Times* gave more weight to his architectural career and mentioned his painting career only in passing. Today most of Cropsey’s architectural work is forgotten, as many of his creations have been demolished.³⁶

After losing her husband of fifty years, Maria carried on as best she could. She kept up correspondence with old friends and patrons. Throughout her life, in addition to raising their children, Maria was the main correspondent between Cropsey and his patrons, and for the most part she managed Jasper’s career. She had also steadfastly fulfilled the social responsibilities and requirements of the wife of a prominent artist, and in both New York and London, she was known as a gracious, charming hostess. Maria Cooley Cropsey died at Ever Rest in 1906. After her death, many paintings from Jasper’s studio were auctioned off in New York City to settle the Cropsey estate.³⁷ Most of these paintings were from the last twenty-five years of Jasper’s life, when they were difficult to sell, but some were just too dear to him and Maria to ever part with. Fortunately, their home, Ever Rest, remained with their granddaughter Isabel (1880–1958). Isabel’s husband, William Steinschneider (1889–1970), was the last family member to reside at Ever Rest, which is now a historic site owned by the Newington-Cropsey Foundation.

In 1909 Aladdin burned to the ground.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the popularity of the Hudson River School had diminished to the point that a solo exhibition of Cropsey’s work would not be hung until 1949 at the Harry Newman Gallery in New York City, and it was not until 1968 that a major Cropsey exhibition would be held.³⁸ William Talbot’s groundbreaking research into Cropsey’s career in the 1970s greatly enhanced interest in his paintings and life. Since then, Cropsey’s reputation has soared, and he is once again considered an American master of landscape painting, as he was for most of his career. Cropsey’s faith in God led him to believe that depicting nature was the highest form of art he could aspire to, and this belief has resonated with new generations of artists and art patrons. His depictions of nature with spiritual overtones are now immensely popular and have inspired new artists and helped to spur a revival in realism and landscape art. Cropsey is well represented in all major public and private collections of nineteenth-century landscape art. His paintings were almost worthless in the mid-twentieth century, but their values have skyrocketed since he was rediscovered nearly forty years ago. Likewise, the values of most of the Hudson River School artists have also escalated. In 1996 the greatest collaboration of these artists, *The Moving Panorama of Pilgrim’s Progress*, was discovered in a barn in Maine, where it had sat for a hundred years after being donated to the York Institute (now known as the Saco Museum). Approximately one quarter of the panorama underwent extensive restoration, and in 1999 it was exhibited nationally to great response. In 2010 and 2011 the remainder of the panorama was meticulously restored, and in 2012 it was shown in its entirety for the first time in over a century.

Almost all of Cropsey's major works, such as *Autumn—On the Hudson River* and *Backwoods of America*, 1858 (NCF 667, cat. no. 517), are now in public collections. As of this publication, *Richmond Hill in the Summer of 1862* is still held privately in London and in 2012 was appraised for over eight million dollars.

Anthony Speiser

- 1 Letter from JFC to Maria, July 4, 1846. NCF Transcripts.
- 2 Jasper Cropsey, "Reminiscences of My Own Time" (unpublished manuscript written for Mr. Lester, 1846). Typescript on deposit, Print Room, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 1837 certificate ("diploma") from Mechanics' Institute of the City of New York. NCF Collection
- 5 William Henry Forman, "Jasper Francis Cropsey, N.A.," *Manhattan Magazine* 3 (April 1884): 372.
- 6 Letter from Henry S. Cane, Atlanta, GA, to JFC, Sept. 10, 1881. NCF Transcripts.
- 7 Cropsey, "Reminiscences."
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 The AIA was not founded until the 1850s, and it was not until the 1860s that American universities would begin to offer architecture as a major field of study.
- 10 Henry T. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists* (1867; repr. New York: James F. Carr, 1966), p. 534.
- 11 Cropsey's parents, Jacob and Elizabeth, are buried in the cemetery of the Moravian Church in the Cortelyou family plot. Cropsey's brother, Harmanus, and his family are also buried there.
- 12 Margaret Louise Lynd, ed., *Staten Island and Staten Islanders* (New York: The Grafton Press, 1909), p. 31.
- 13 JFC journal, July 15, 1845. NCF Collection.
- 14 "On Natural Art," transcript of talk for American Art-Union, August 24, 1845, NCF.
- 15 Letter from JFC to betrothed, Maria Cooley, March 3, 1846. Typescript on deposit, Print Room, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA.
- 16 John M. Falconer letter to JFC, Feb. 24, 1848. NCF Transcripts.
- 17 JFC to Thomas Cole. Transcript on deposit in NCF archives.
- 18 Cropsey did many paintings during this period based on medieval English knights, including *Days of Chivalry*, *Olden Times—Going to Tournament*, *Olden Times—Return from Tournament*, and others.
- 19 For an extensive discussion of the panorama in American art, see Kevin J. Avery, "The Panorama and its Manifestation in American Landscape Painting, 1795–1870." PhD diss., Columbia University, 1995 (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1999).
- 20 For the importance of railroads in 19th-century American art, see Maddox 1999.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Talbot 1977, p. 274.
- 23 The courtyard of the church (Buckinghamshire, England) was the locale for Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." Cropsey painted the church with the white steeple, as it was when he viewed it, and also without the steeple, as it was in Gray's time (1716–1771). Thomas Gray is buried in the church's cemetery.
- 24 *New York Evangelist*, December 4, 1856, p. 27
- 25 Talbot 1977, pp. 274–75.
- 26 F. A. Otis letter to JFC, Feb. 4, 1861. NCF Transcripts.
- 27 William Henry Forman, "Jasper Francis Cropsey, N.A.," *Manhattan Magazine* 3 (April 1884): 374.
- 28 See Maddox 2005.
- 29 Barbara Finney, research report on "Cinderella." Typescript NCF Archives.

- 30 F. B. Carpenter, *Six Months at the White House with Abraham Lincoln: The Story of a Picture* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1867), p. 169.
- 31 *New York Evening Mail*, August 26, 1875, p. 2.
- 32 Several responses to letters sent by Maria Cropsey including Jay Gould to JFC, June 26, 1869, and Ezra Cornell (Cornell University) to Maria, Feb. 22, 1869. NCF Transcripts.
- 33 See Barbara Finney in Foshay and Finney 1987.
- 34 Donald M. Barrell, *Along the Wawayanda Path; From Old Greycourt to Chester to Sugarloaf* (Middletown, NH: T. Emmett Henderson, 1975), p. 115.
- 35 Letter from JFC to granddaughter Constance Wack, Feb. 20, 1900. NCF Transcripts.
- 36 The only known structures of Cropsey's design in existence are the Moravian Church, Staten Island, which was remodeled in 1945; the Rowayton train station in Rowayton, CT, a fairly simple structure that opened on Feb. 24, 1868, and has been remodeled extensively on numerous occasions; and the Cropsey studio that Cropsey added to his home at Ever Rest about 1887 and is probably the best example of Cropsey's vision as architect and designer. Cropsey may have gotten the Rowayton commission from his artist friends Vincent Colyer and John F. Kensett, who, along with publisher G. P. Putnam, another acquaintance of Cropsey, had homes in Rowayton and were instrumental in getting Rowayton its own station.
- 37 *Cropsey Estate Auction*, Silo Art Galleries, New York, June 8, 1906.
- 38 Birmingham 1968.