ROMANTICISM AND RURALISM

Changing 19th Century American Perceptions of the Natural World

Paige Doerner
Romantic Sentimentality

“Death inspires here no dread: on the contrary, a glance at this beautiful cemetery almost excites a wish to die.”

- Swedish visitor to Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, MA (1833).
“To every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower
Even the loose stones that cover the high-way
I gave a moral life, I saw them feel
Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.”
19th Century American Landscape Painting

- Thomas Cole
  - 1801 - 1848
- Picturesque, beautiful and sublime
- Landscape art as pedagogical tool
- Awe-inspiring power of nature
  - De-emphasis of the human

“The Oxbow, or, View from Mt. Holyoke” by Thomas Cole (1836)
Landscape Architecture

- Andrew Jackson Downing
  - Domestic architecture as moralizing
  - “Livelier perceptions of the beautiful”
- Purifying powers of natural world
- Recreation of natural landscape
The Rural Cemetery Movement

- Mt. Auburn (est. 1831)
  - Cambridge, MA
- Mt. Hope (est. 1838)
  - Rochester, NY
The Sanitarium Reform Movement

- Trudeau Sanitarium
  - Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau
  - Saranac Lake, NY (f. 1884)
- Treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis in a rural sanitarium
- Nature as a healing agent
Trudeau Sanitarium

- Creation of picturesque vistas
  - Viewing landscape as a work of art
- Physical and emotional renewal in nature

Blumenthal Cottage at Trudeau Sanitarium (photograph by Paige Doerner)
Natural Healing in the Adirondacks

- Open air treatment
- Natural activities encouraged
  - Hunting, hiking, swimming, landscape painting
- Climate not generally associated with healing
- Association between sentimentalized landscape portraiture and Saranac scenery

Adirondack Lake (Photo by Paige Doerner)

Cure Cottage. Trudeau Sanitarium (Photo by Paige Doerner)