SEEING THE HUDSON ANEW

Science, History & Art in the Hudson Valley and Beyond….

James Lancel McElhinney

HUDSON RIVER MUSEUM, YONKERS NEW YORK

Sunday October 6, 2019

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George Perkins Marsh (1801-1882)



MAN AND NATURE;

OR,

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION.

BY

GEORGE P. MARSH.

"Not all the winds, and storms, and earthquakes, and seas, and seasons of the world, have done so much to revolutionize the earth as MAN, the power of an endless life, has done since the day he came forth upon it, and received dominion over it."—H. BUSHNELL, *Sermon on the Power of an Endless Life.*

NEW YORK:
CHARLES SCRIBNER, 124 GRAND STREET.
1864.

Samuel Colman

Hudson River from Irvington. 1867

Collection Hudson River Museum



Early Views of the Hudson: Thomas Davies, Royal Engineers

The Attack on Fort Washington. November 16, 1776



View Across the Schuylkill from Edgefield to Belmont

American Sketchbook, Captain Joshua Rowley Watson, Royal Navy. 1816

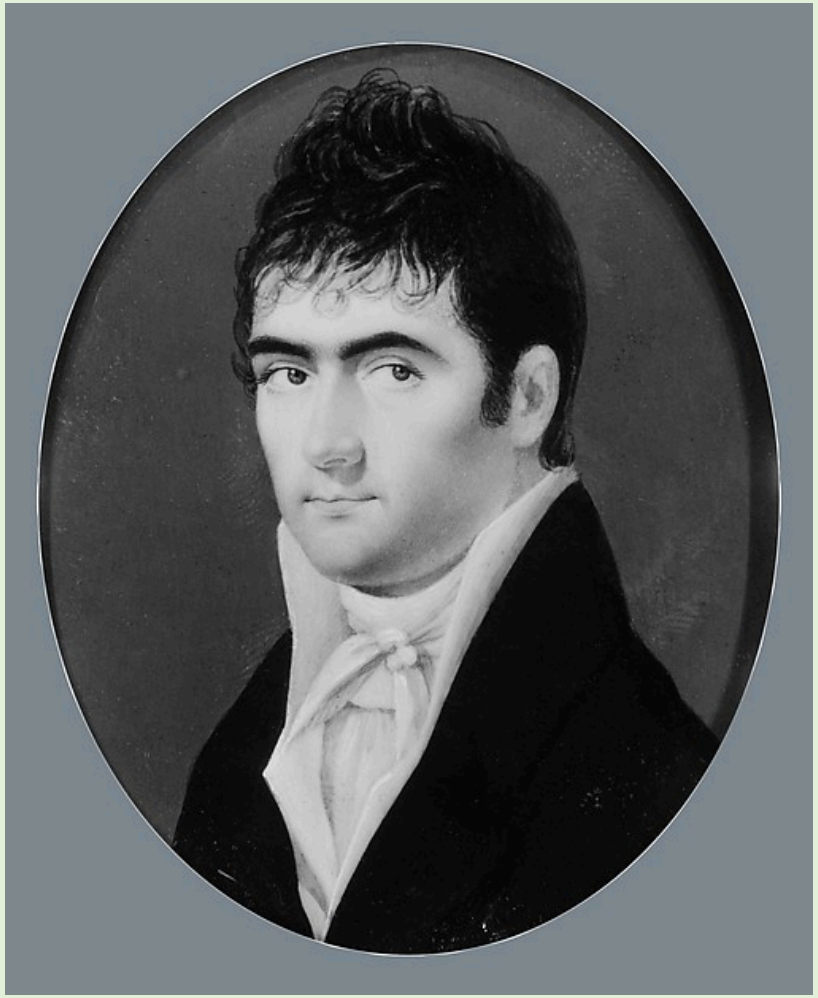
Travel drawings & paintings based on the concept of *coup de l'oeil militaire*



Thomas Gimbrede

(1781-1833)

USMA Drawing Master 1819-1832



Sylvanus Thayer

(1785-1872)

USMA Superintendent 1817-1833

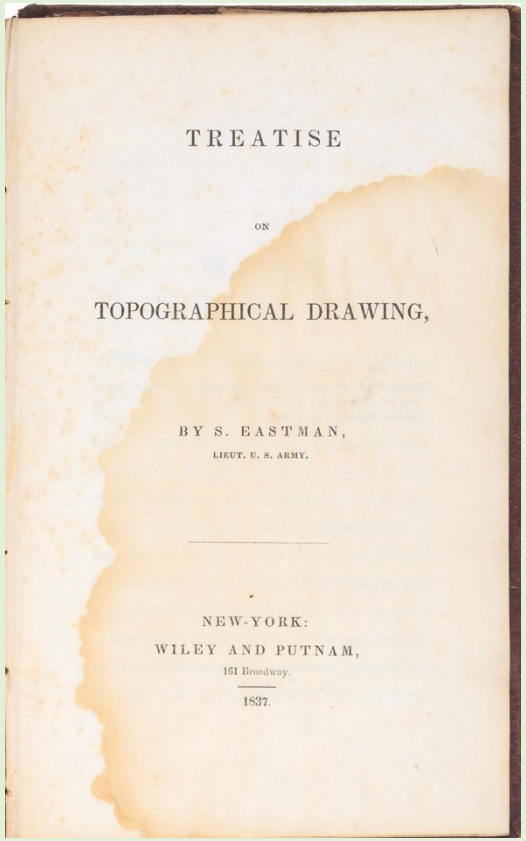


The North Gate from Knox Battery, West Point. 1875

Collection U.S. Senate



Seth Eastman: *A Treatise on Topographical Drawing*. 1837
Textbook, USMA West Point


TREATISE

ON

TOPOGRAPHICAL DRAWING,

BY S. EASTMAN,

LIEUT. U. S. ARMY.

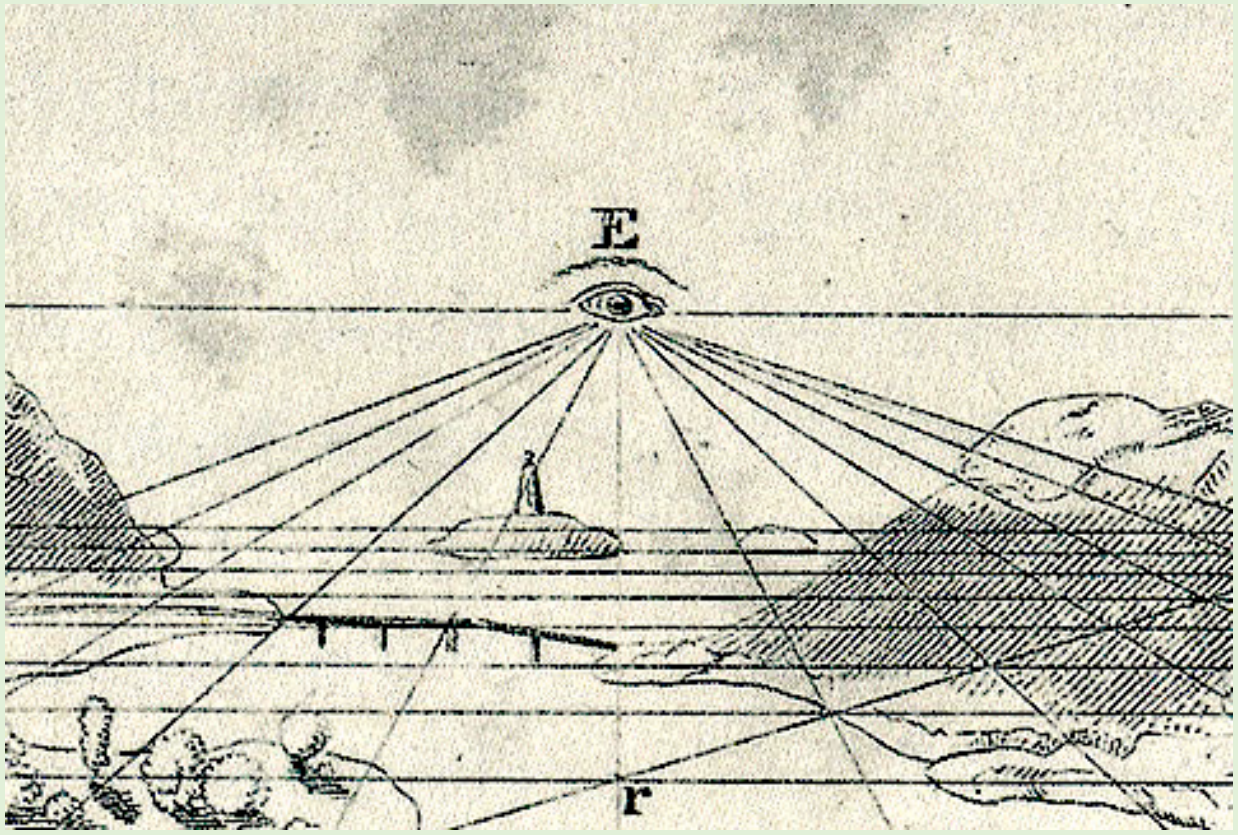
NEW-YORK:

WILEY AND PUTNAM,

161 Broadway.

1837.

Title Page.

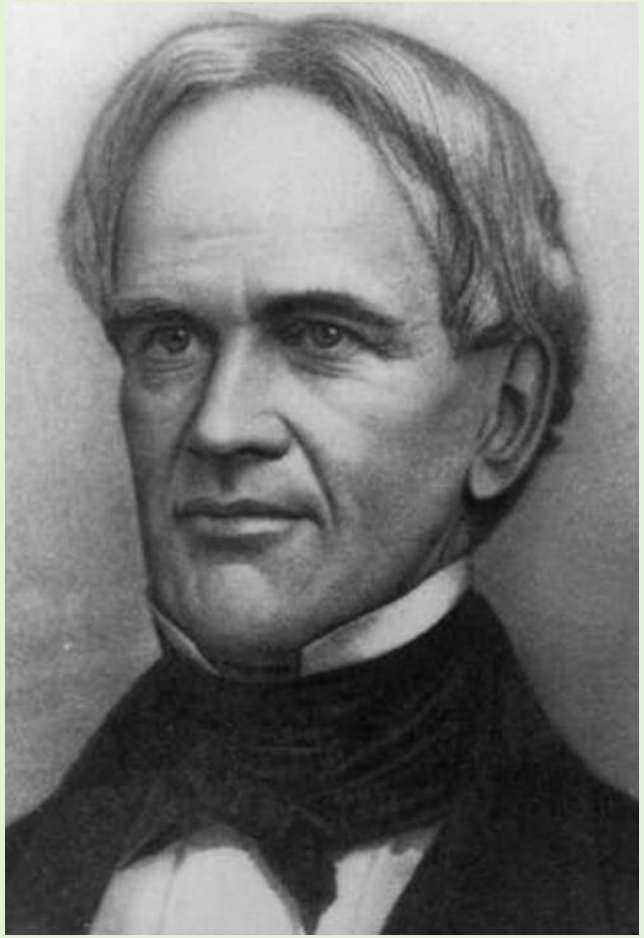


Optical Projection.



Map of Fort Putnam

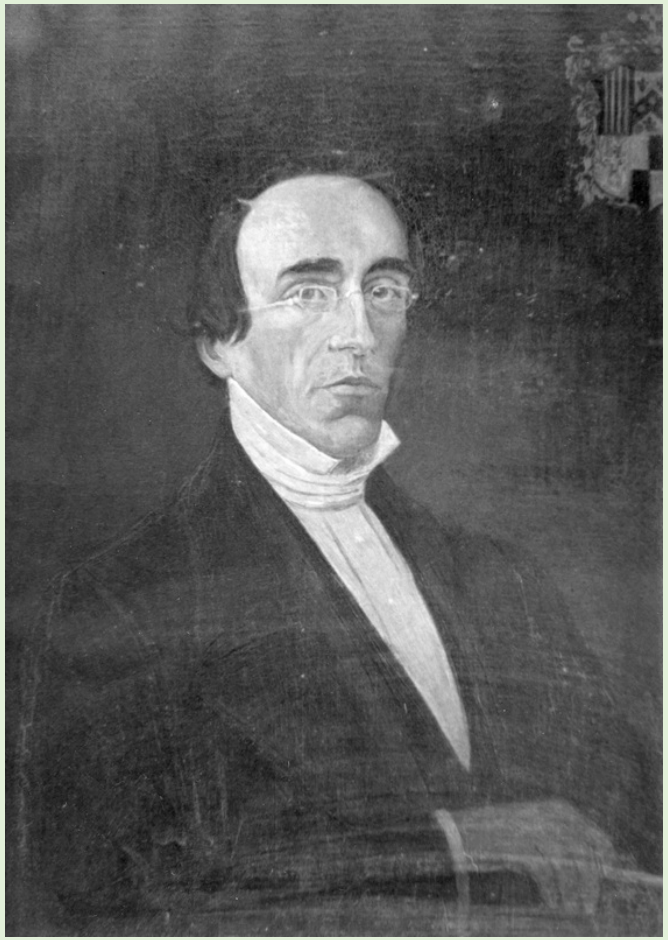
Horace Mann



Rembrandt Peale



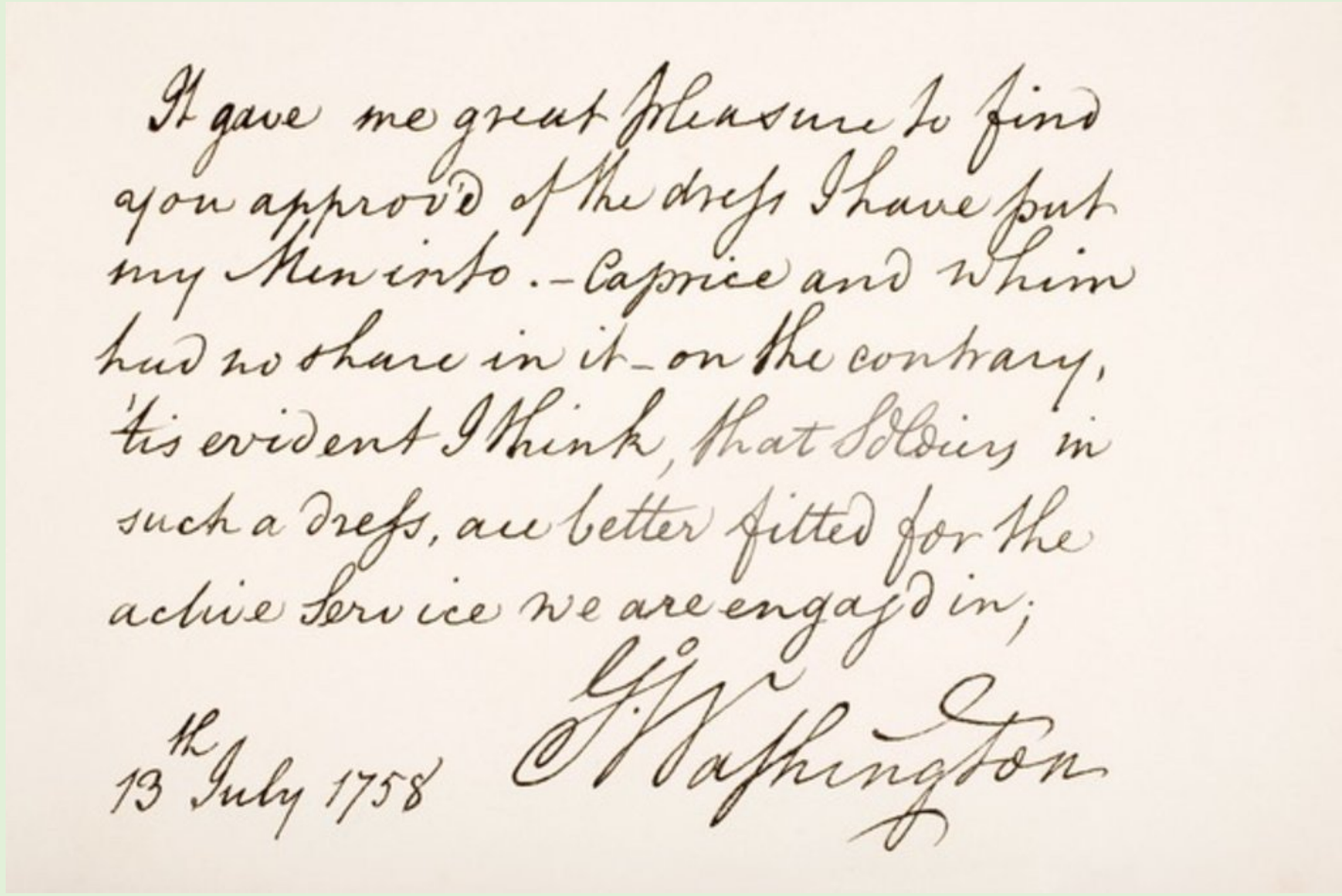
Hector Humphreys



Limits of Literacy

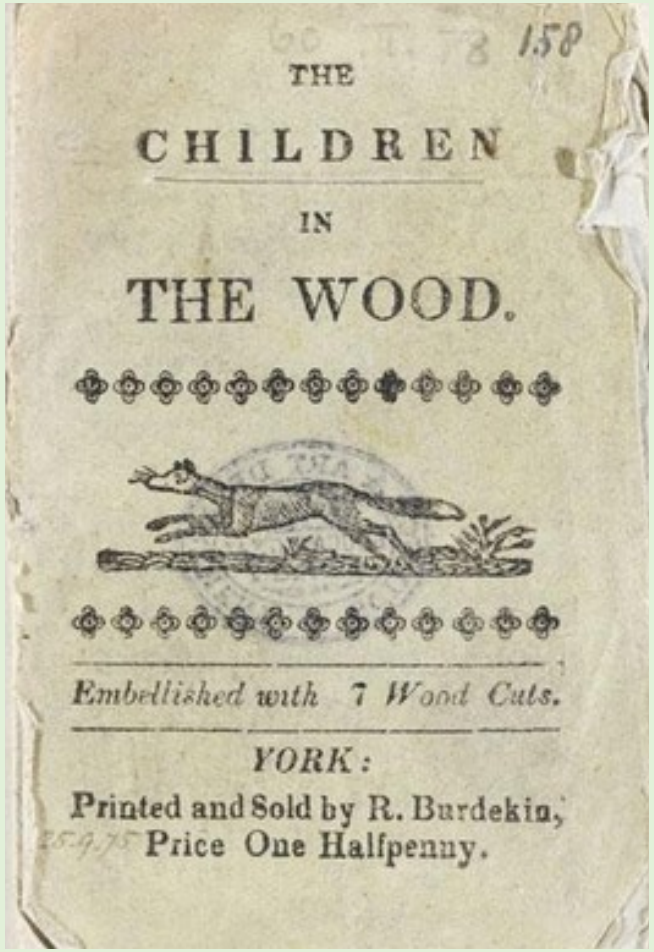
Penmanship: Once the secret written language of educated elites.

Printed matter, chapbooks and broadsides for the common folk



It gave me great pleasure to find you approv'd of the dress I have put my Men into.—Caprice and Whim had no share in it—on the contrary, 'tis evident I think, that Soldiers in such a dress, are better fitted for the active Service we are engaged in;

13th July 1758 G. Washington



158

THE

CHILDREN

IN

THE WOOD.

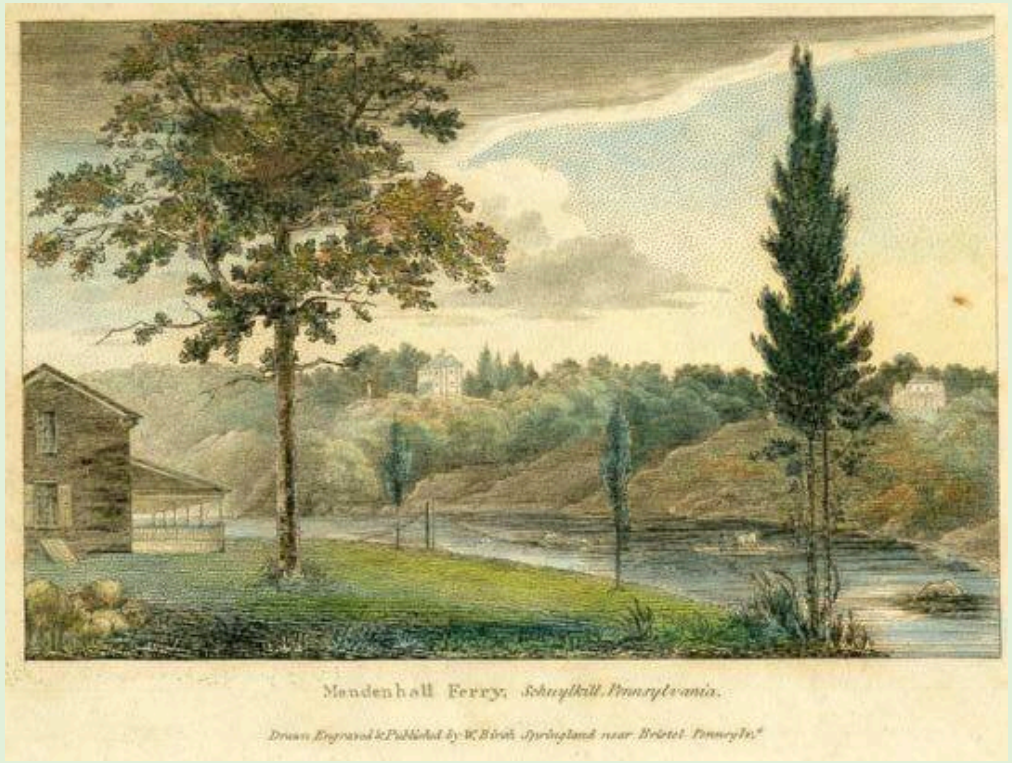
Embellished with 7 Wood Cuts.

YORK:

Printed and Sold by R. Burdekin,

Price One Halfpenny.

Rivers: Birthplace of American Landscape Art
Prints by William and Thomas Birch, Philadelphia





Early Views of the Hudson Highlands

Charles Willson Peale.

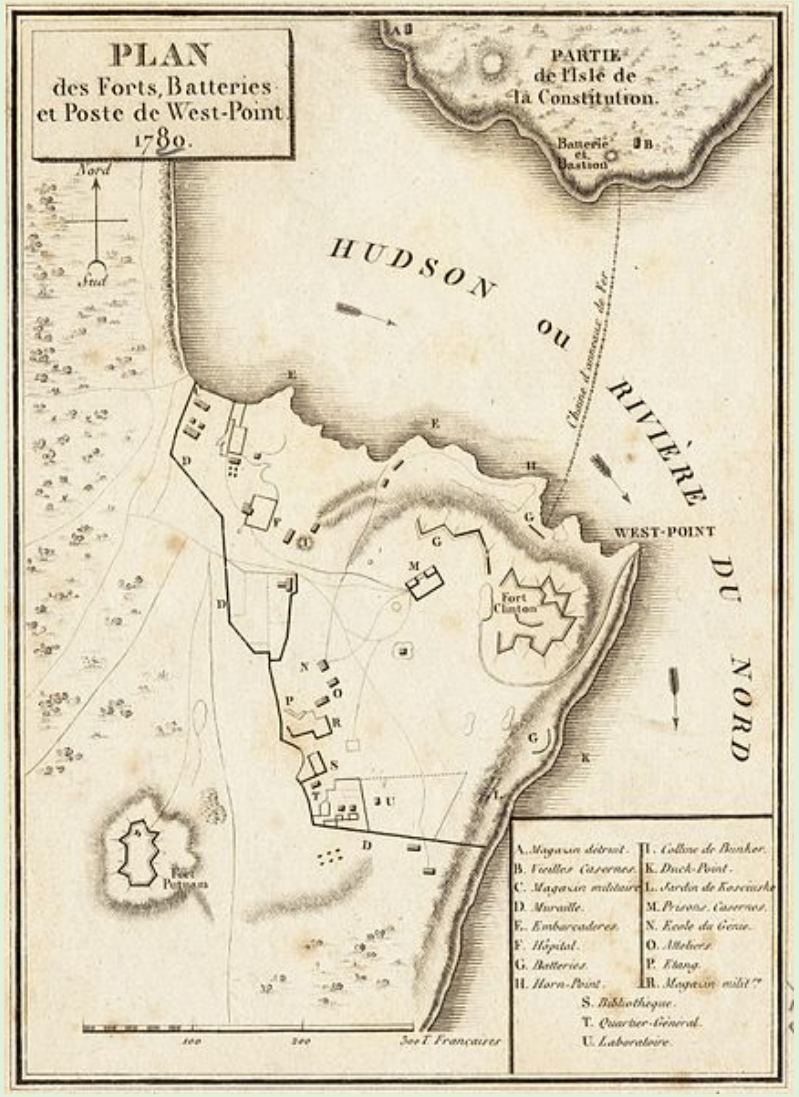


Thomas Doughty

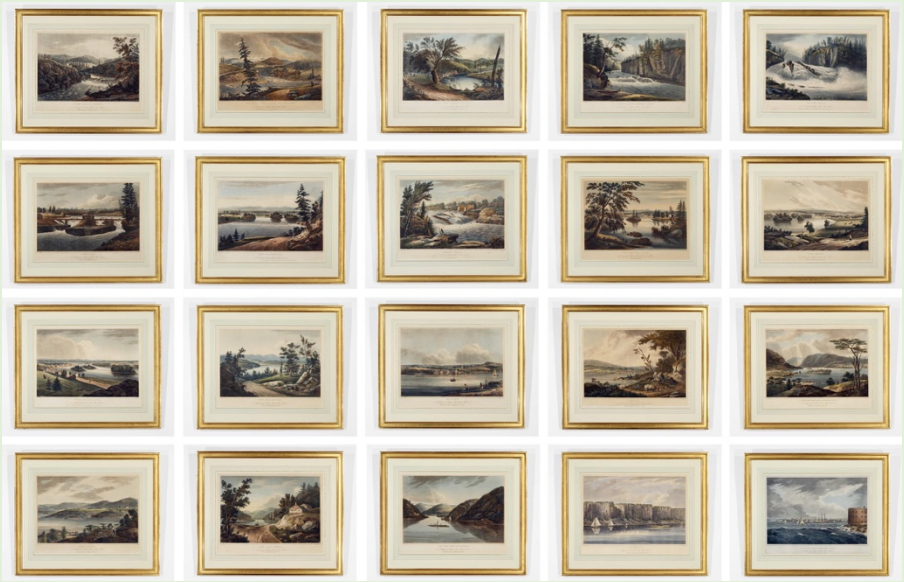


Thomas Cole. View of Fort Putnam 1826





William Guy Wall: *Hudson River Portfolio,* 1821-1825









William Guy Wall: *Hudson River Portfolio* 1821-25
Canonical picturesque scenery



William Guy Wall: *Hudson River Portfolio.* 1821-1825
Hydropower: harnessed (left) and untamed (right)

*Glenns (*sic) *Falls*



Hadley Falls

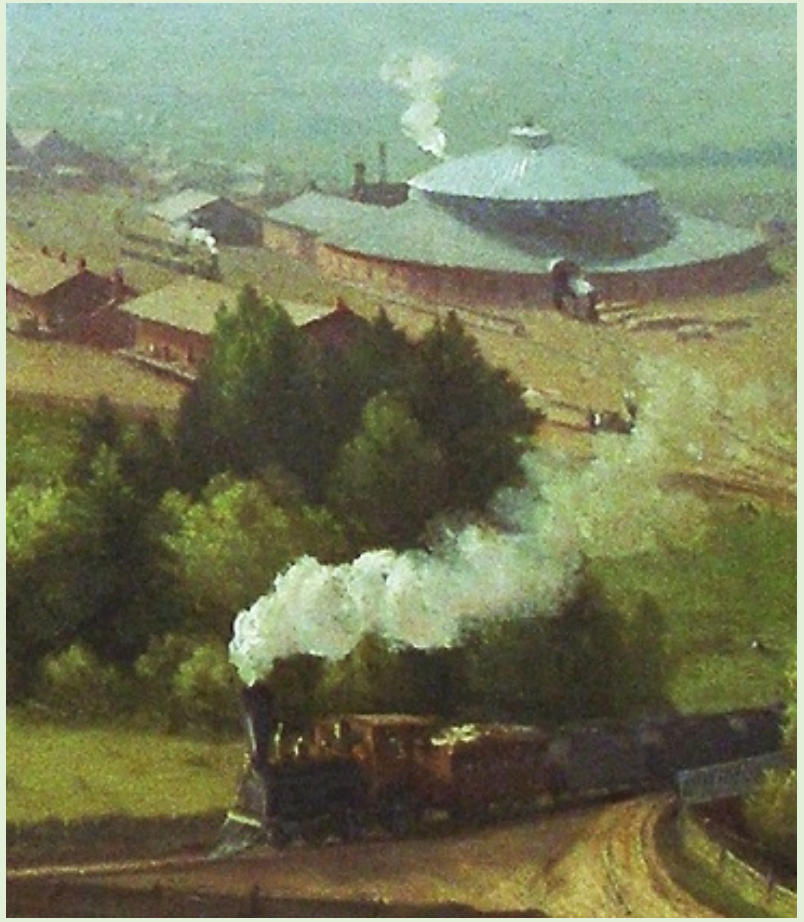


Plein-Air Painting in the White Mountains: Winslow Homer Like the Hudson Valley, part of the American *Grand Tour*

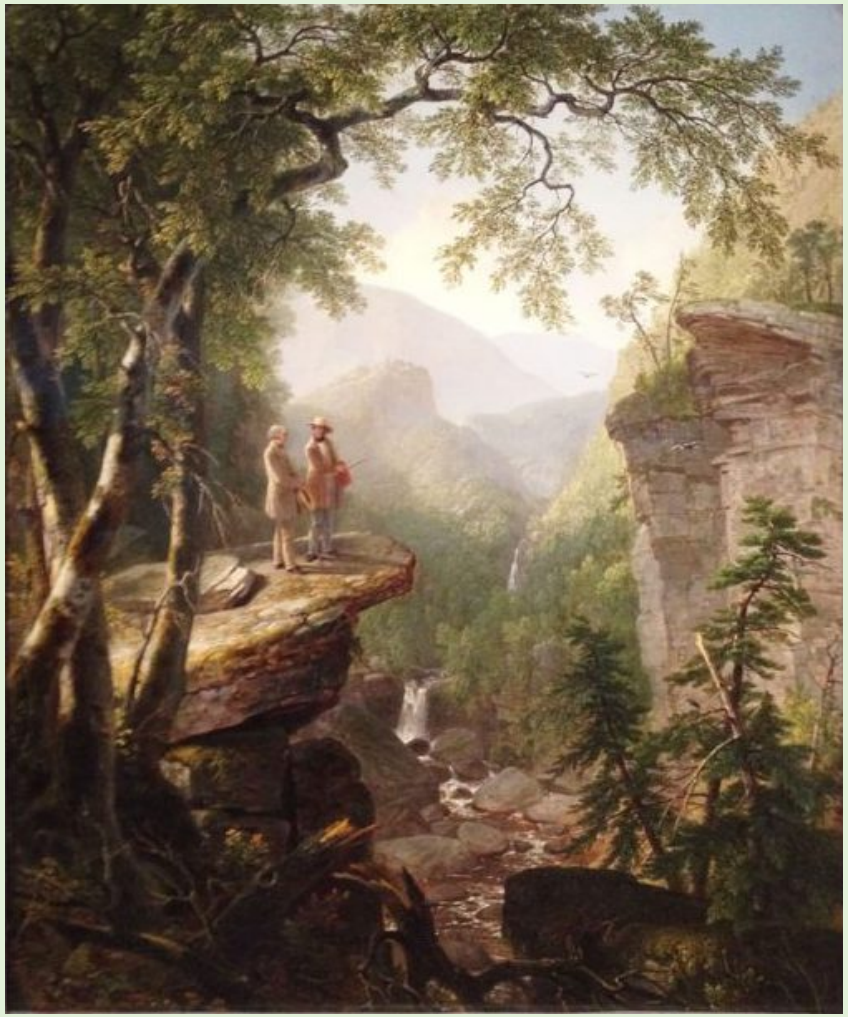


Art and the Environment George Inness. *Lackawanna Valley*. 1855 (The landscape consumed by industrial transportation)





Kindred Spirits. Asher B. Durand. 1849
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Bentonville Arkansas
William Cullen Bryant (left) Thomas Cole (right)





Frederic Church. Niagara Falls. 1857
(19th-century equivalent to the I-Max experience, presented as a ticketed spectacle)



Selling the idea of national parks to the U.S. Congress

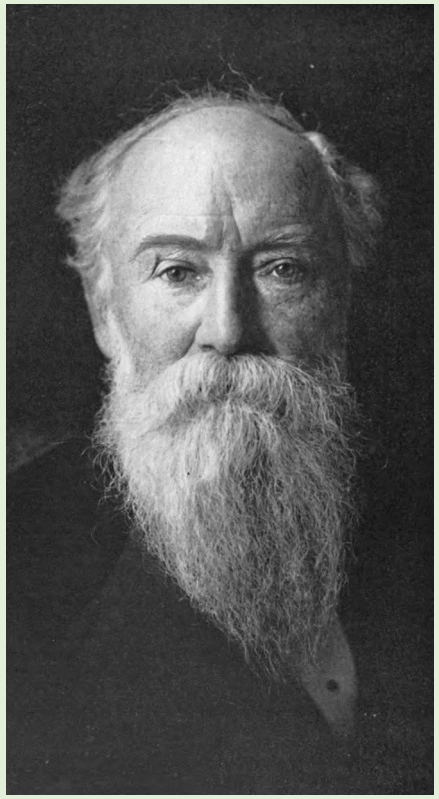
Albert Bierstadt
Yosemite.



Thomas Moran
Yellowstone



Naturalist and Author JOHN BURROUGHS (1837-1921)

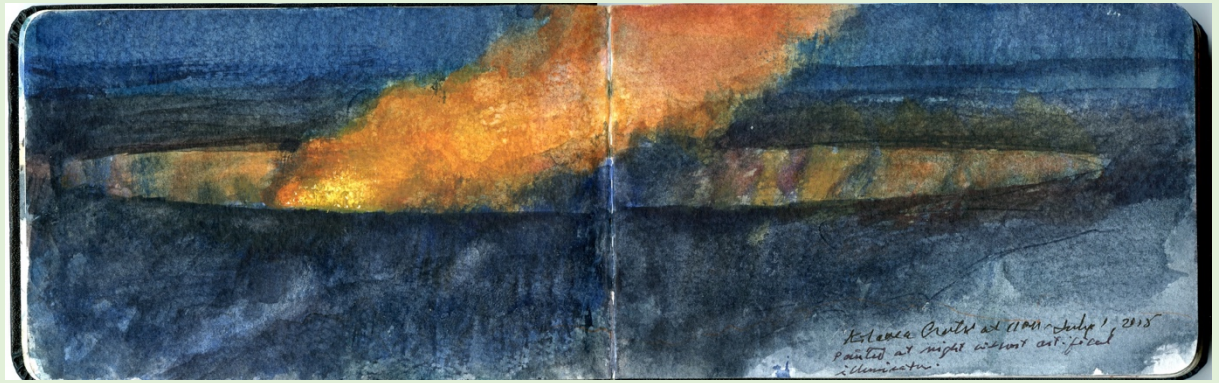




James Lancel McElhinney. *Grave of John Burroughs*. Journal-painting.

Art-Making as a Mode of Personal Engagement: JLM in the Field: The Summit of Kilauea, July 1-2, 2015







James Lancel McElhinney

Kilauea Kulaniapia: Big Island Sketchbook. 2015

On View at Gerald Peters Projects, Santa Fe

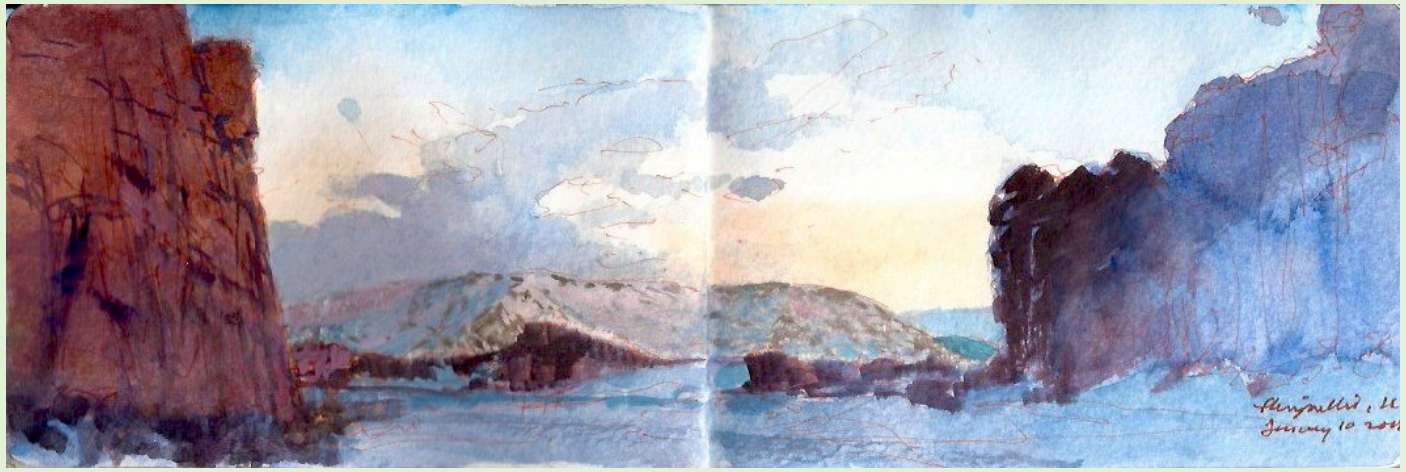


James Lancel McElhinney

Atop Eyafjallayokull Volcano, Iceland: Gullfoss (top) Thingvellir (bottom)





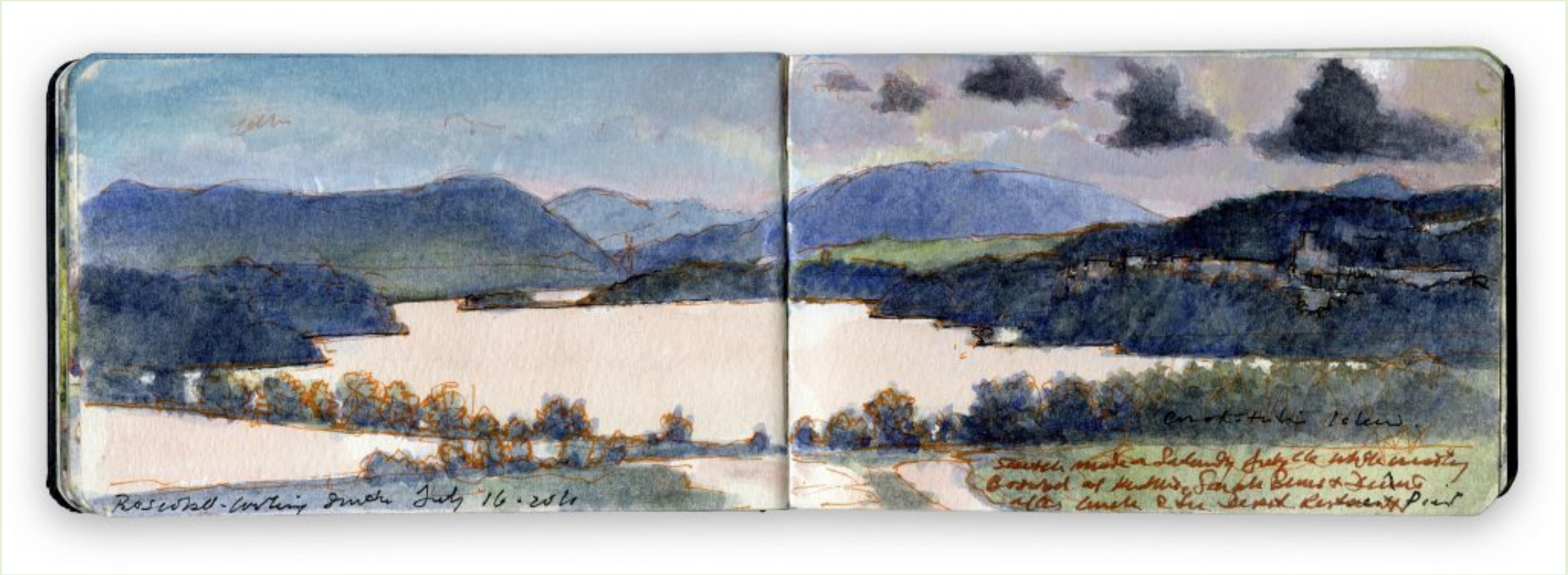


James Lancel McElhinney

Macchu Picchu, Peru



Looking South from Boscobel. James Lancel McElhinney
Hudson Highlands. North River Suite Volume One.
Needlewatcher Editions. 2017



James Lancel McElhinney
Hudson Highlands: Volume One, North River Suite. 2017
Needlewatcher Editions. New York



HUDSON HIGHLANDS

A SUITE OF ARCHIVAL DIGITAL PRINTS
OF
JOURNAL PAINTINGS
BY

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NORTH RIVER SUITE, VOLUME ONE

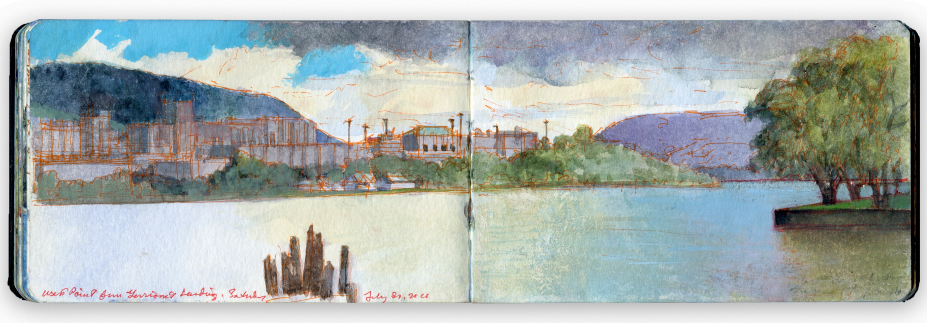
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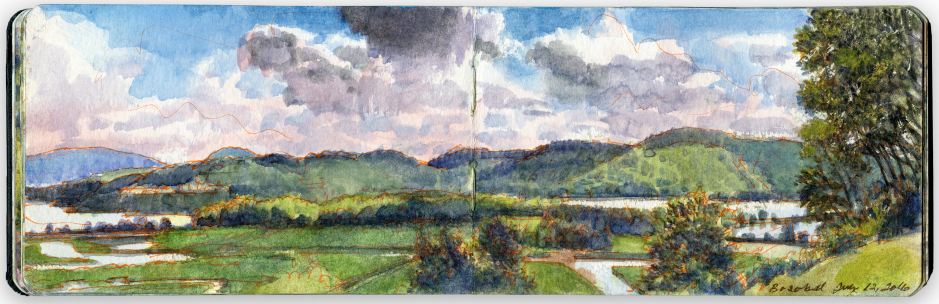


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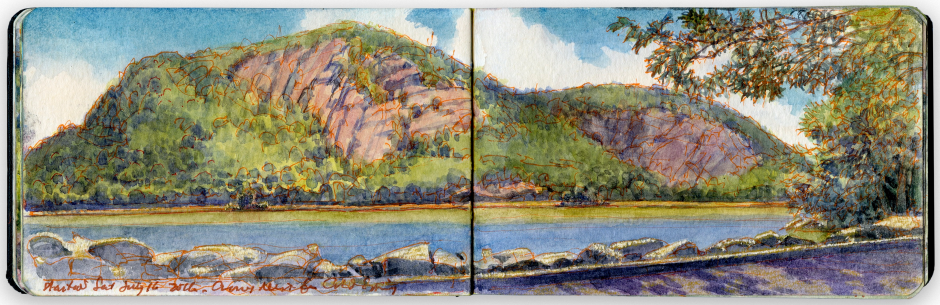




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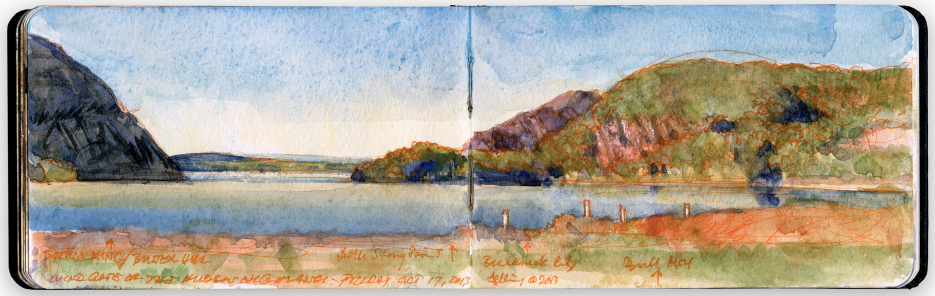




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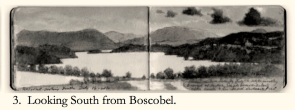
James Lancel McElhinney



1. South Gate from Bear Mountain.



2. West Point from Garrison's Landing.



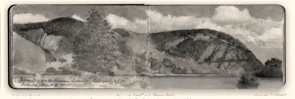
3. Looking South from Boscobel.



4. Western Highlands from Boscobel.



5. Crow's Nest Mountain from Cold Spring.



6. Storm King from Cold Spring Village.



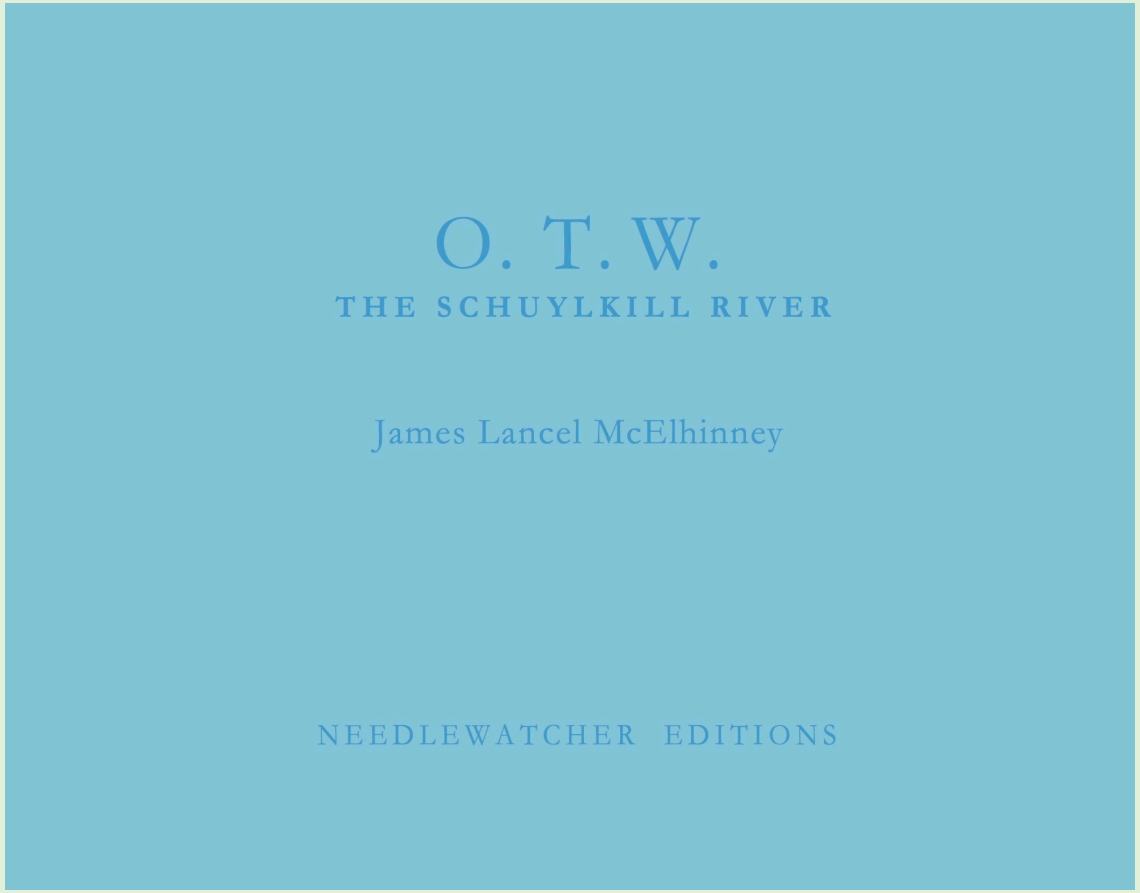
7. North Gate from Cold Spring Park.

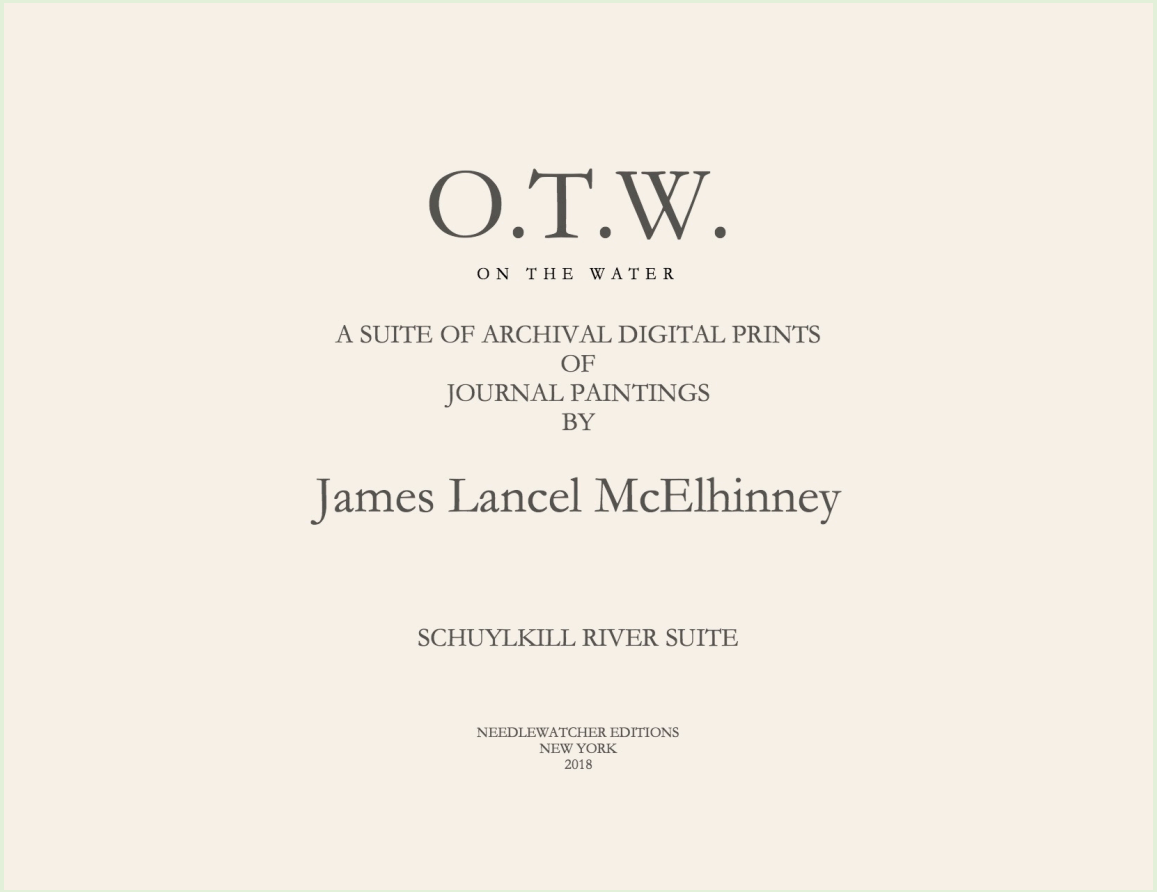
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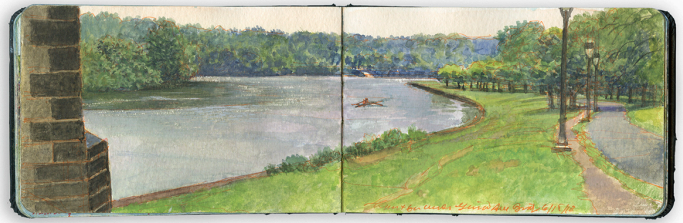
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2017

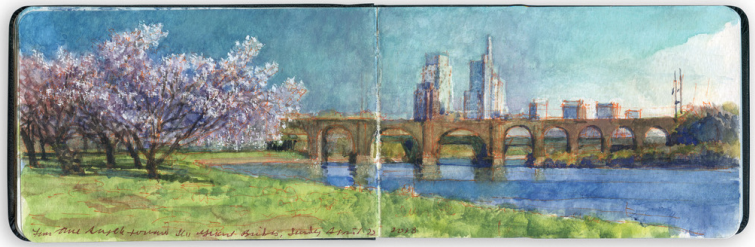
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O.T.W. On the Water: The Schuylkill River
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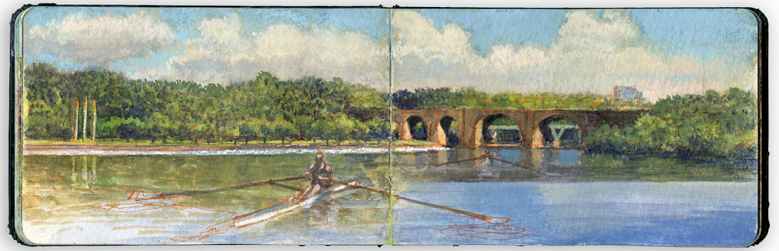


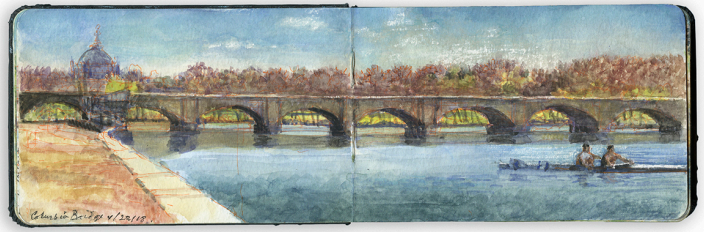


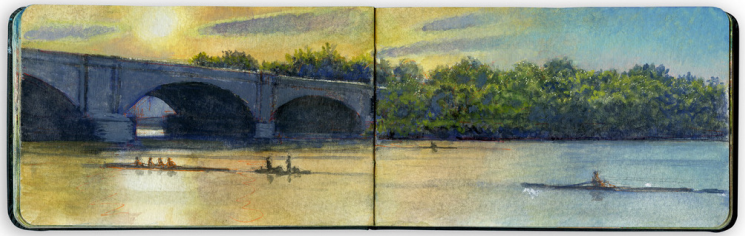
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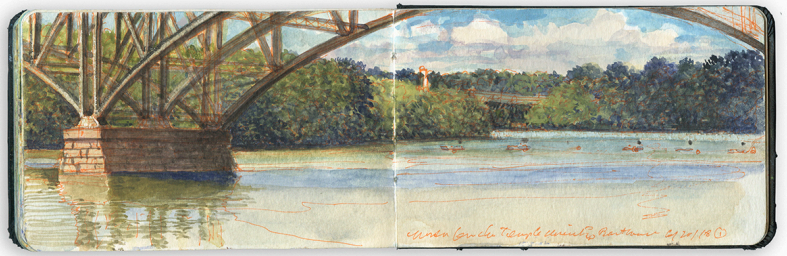


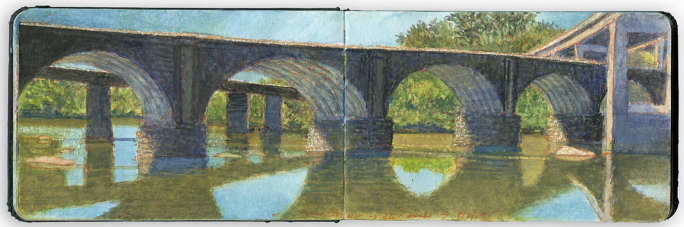












O.T.W. (On the Water) THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER
by James Lancel McElhinney



North from Below the Railroad Connecting Bridge | Looking South from Three Angels. | Lone Oarsman Passing Three Angels



Columbia Bridge, Sunset | A Double Approaching Columbia Bridge | Looking North from Temple University Boathouse



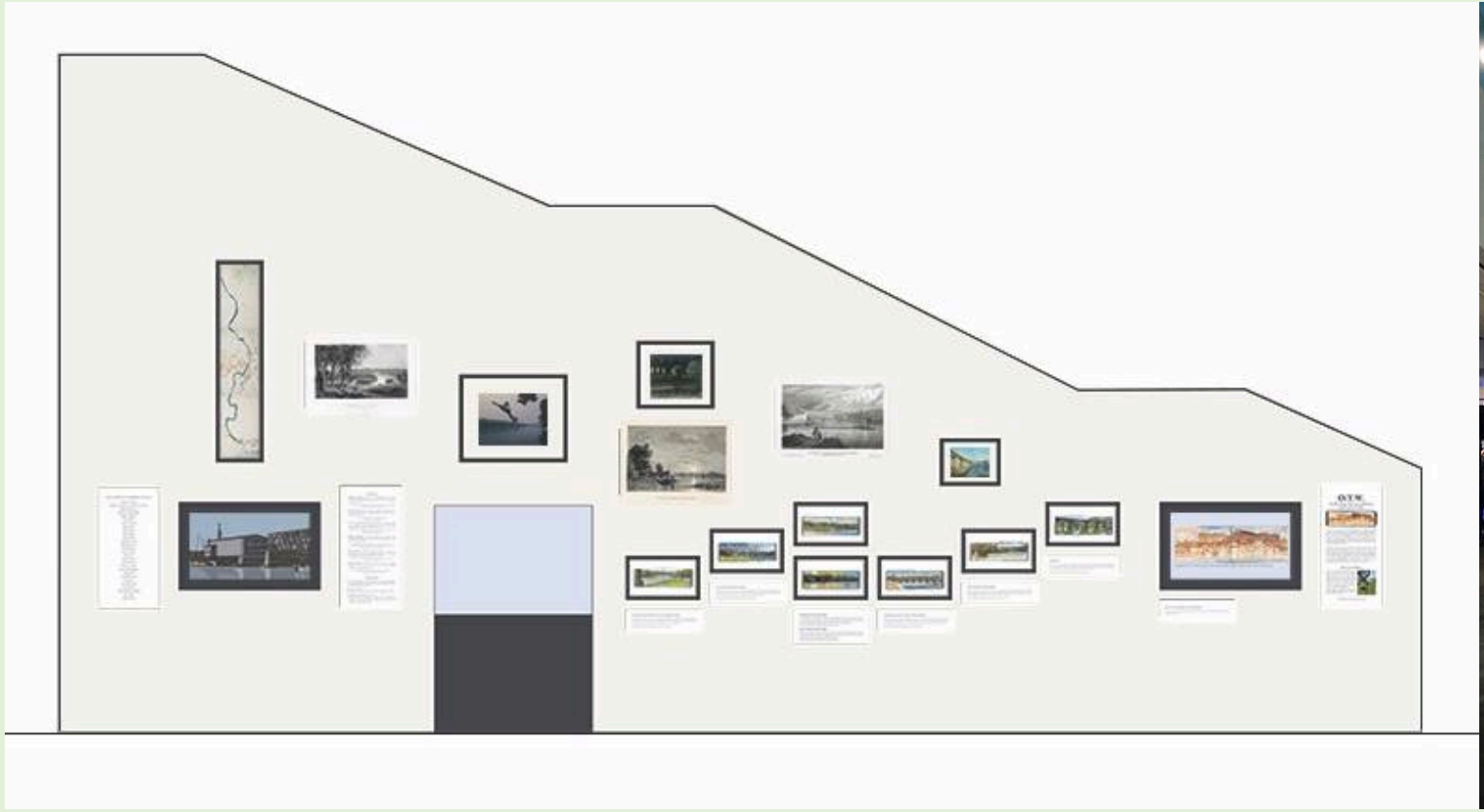
7. North Gate from Cold Spring Park.

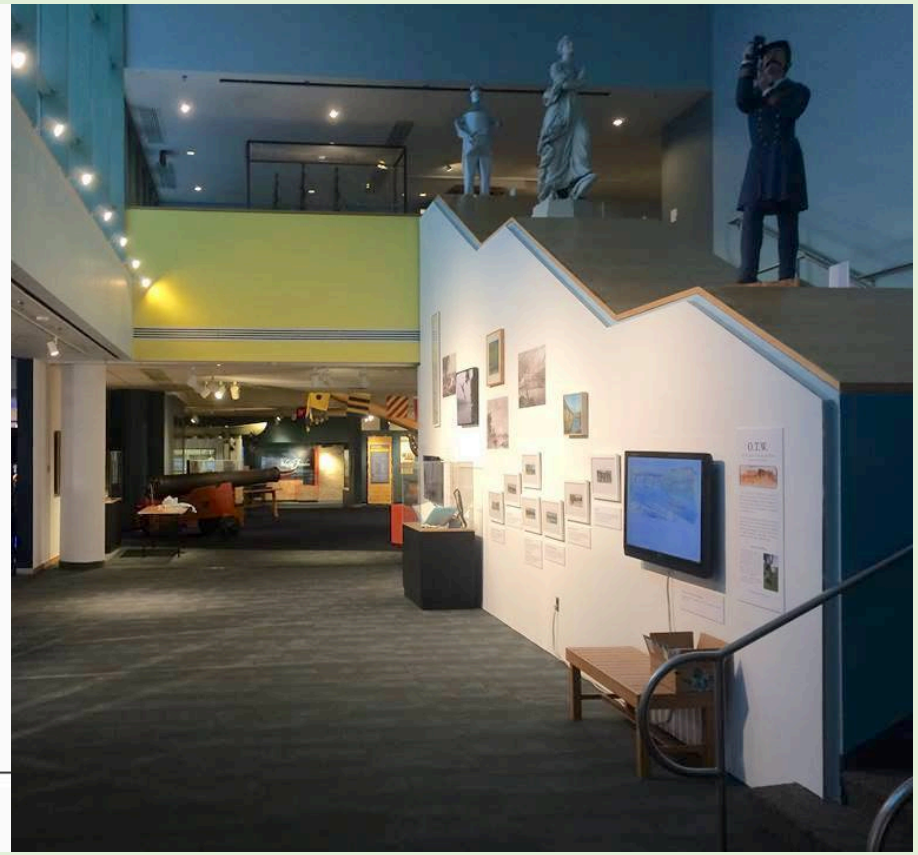
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NEW YORK
2018

On The Water: The Schuylkill River: An Installation by James Lancel McElhinney
INDEPENDENCE SEAPORT MUSEUM, PHILADELPHIA. OCTOBER 24, 2018-January 5, 2020





http://www.mcelhinneyart.com/virtual-tour-water-schuylkill-river-independence-seaport-museum-philadelphia-september-2019/

James Lancel McElhinney

Grand River Sketchbook. 2019

Exhibited in ***Reimagining New Mexico*** at Gerald Peters gallery, Santa Fe. June 28-August 3, 2019



James Lancel McElhinney
Grand River Sketchbook. 2019
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GRAND RIVER

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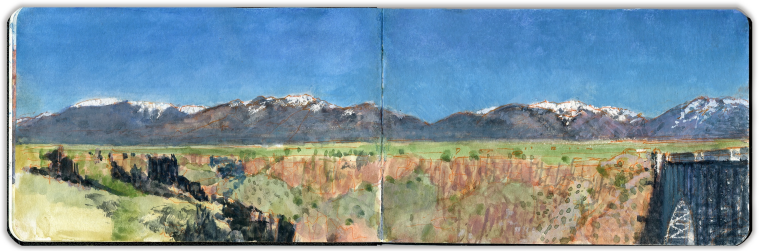
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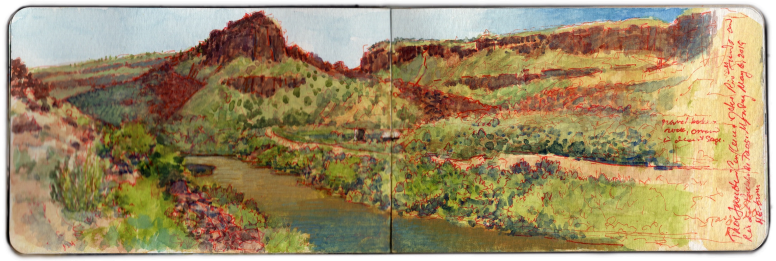
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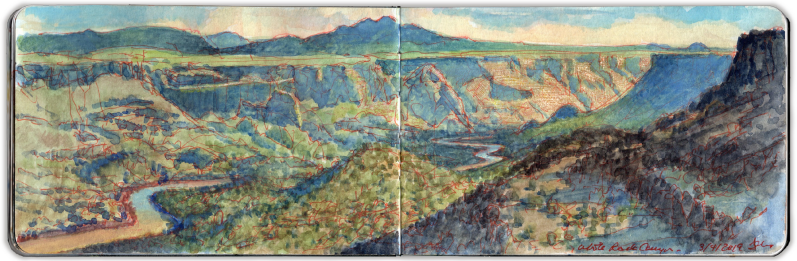


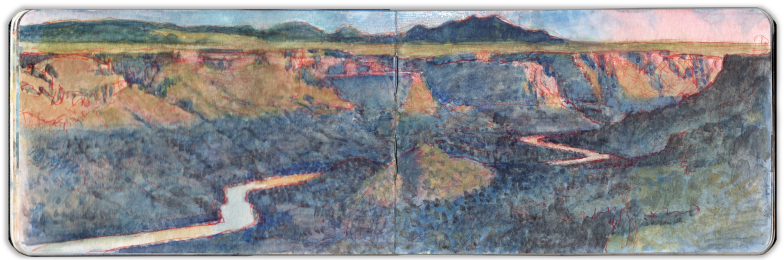


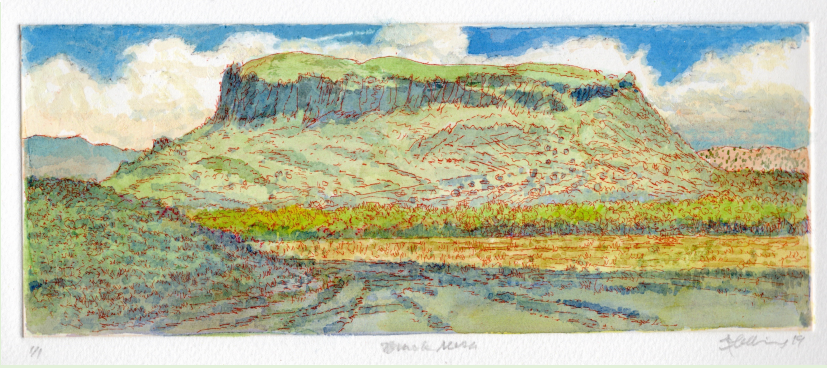












James Lancel McElhinney

Grand River Sketchbook. 2019

Monoprints produced with Hand Graphics, Santa Fe





James Lancel McElhinney

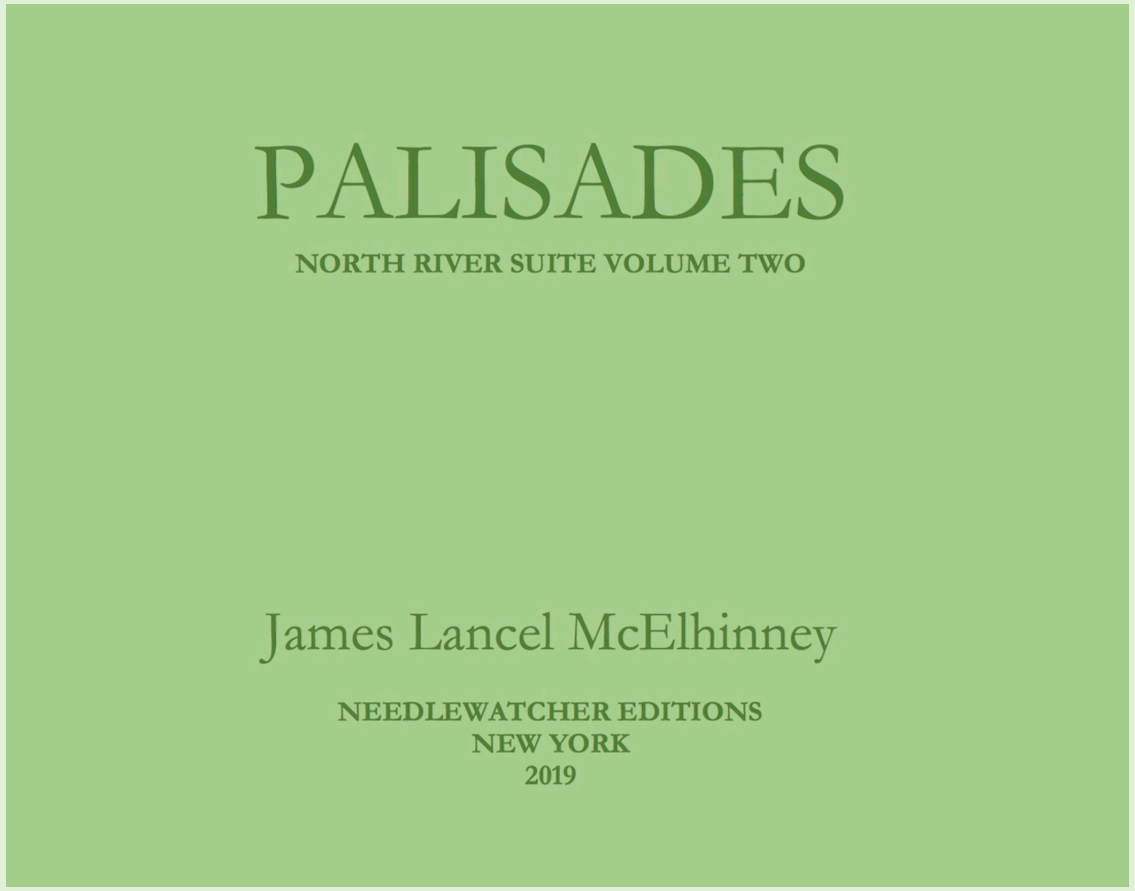
Grand River Sketchbook. 2019

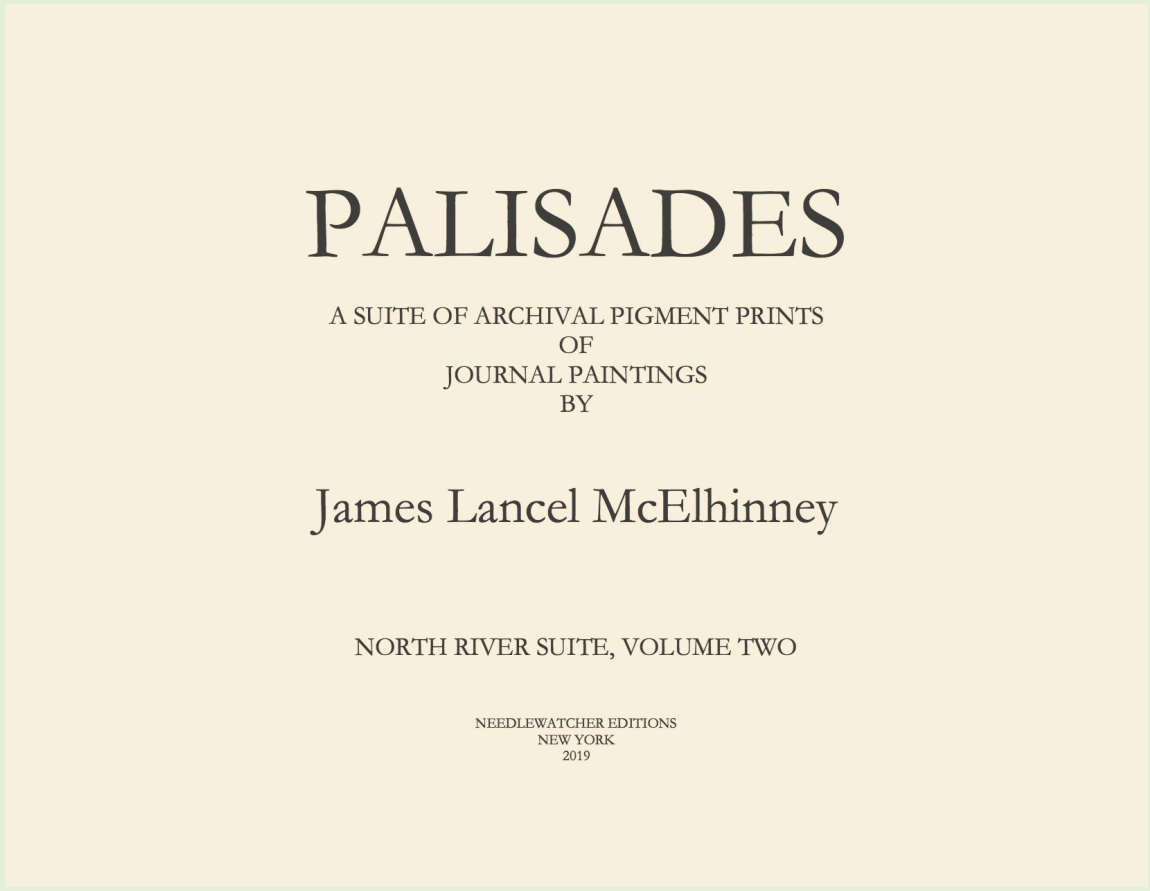
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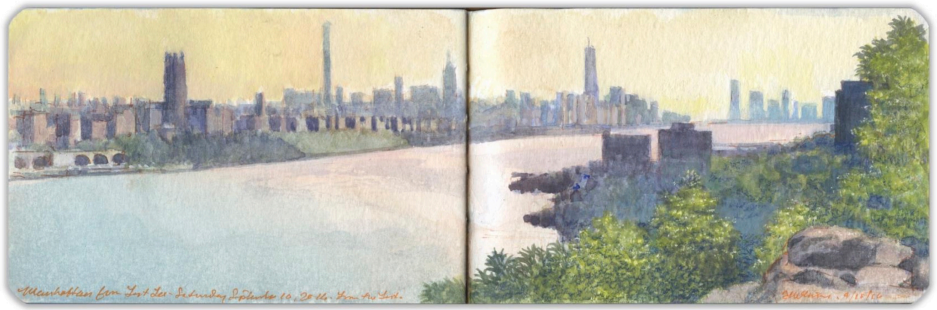


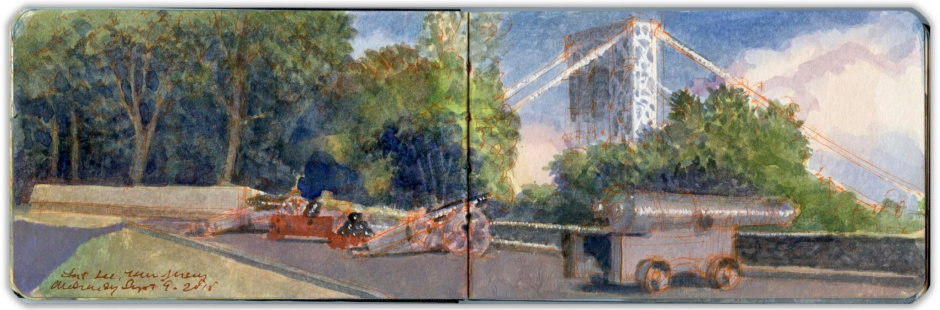


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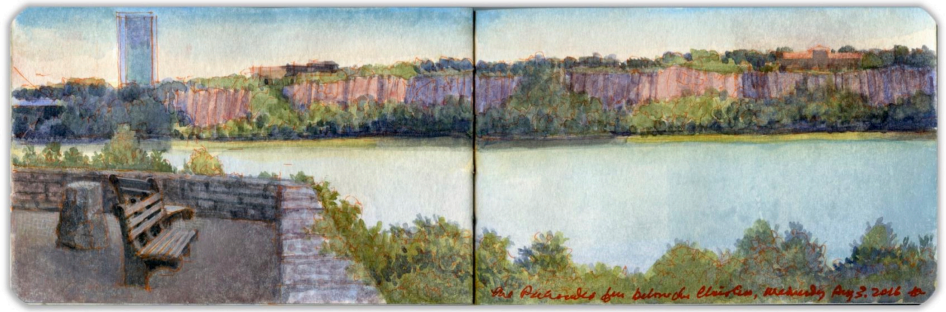


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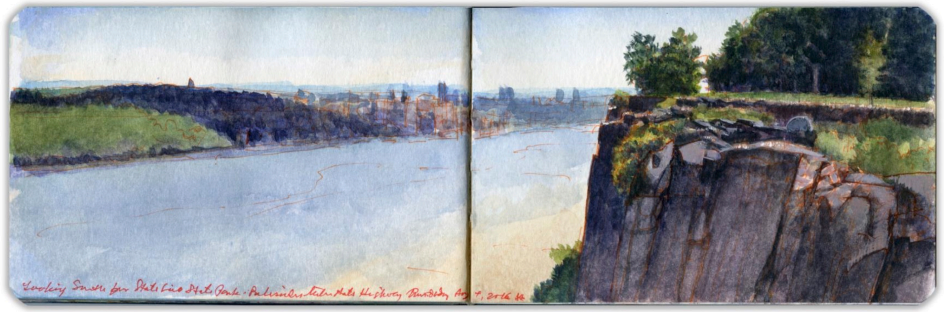




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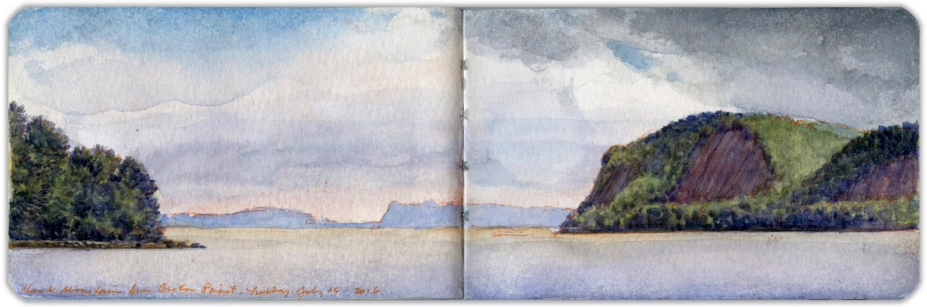
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PALISADES

James Lancel McElhinney



A. Manhattan from Fort Lee

The Lenni Lenape called the Palisades "Weehawken" ("rocks that look like trees"). On a grassy ledge, just north of the western portal of the Lincoln Tunnel, Vice President Aaron Burr mortally wounded former Secretary or the Treasury Alexander Hamilton in a duel fought on July 11, 1804. The site is six miles downstream from this overlook. The southern end of Fort Lee State Park is marked by a steep declivity, a break in the sheer precipice that girds the western bank of river. Across the Hudson, northern Manhattan landmarks such as Riverside Church and Grant's Tomb are visible, with the towers of Midtown and Lower Manhattan beyond.

A century earlier, Fort Lee had become a major center of motion-picture production. William Fox established Fox Film Corporation in 1915. Young Thomas Hart Benton worked in Fort Lee as a scenic artist. Film crews shot cliffhanger endings along the Palisades for serials like The Perils of Pauline. Despite the sylvan setting, there was a constant roar from the bridge. Clouds rolled in from the west. A soft rain threw the distant skyline out of focus.



B. Revolutionary War Battery, Fort Lee

From Fort Lee, atop the Jersey Palisades, George Washington watched in horror on November 16, 1776, as British and Hessian troops overwhelmed Continentals who had taken cover in Fort Washington, a large earthwork occupying the highest point on the island of Manhattan. Shortly thereafter, Redcoats led by Charles Cornwallis scaled the Palisades a few miles to the north, intending to trap Washington with a flank attack. Washington executed a brilliant withdrawal across New Jersey and into Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Five weeks later he crossed the Delaware and fell on the Hessian garrison at Trenton, winning a stunning victory for the patriot cause.

Construction of the George Washington Bridge, which opened in 1932, carved a ditch through the basaltic diabase cliffs to accommodate the roadway. In 1937 New York and New Jersey created the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, with Monument Park (Fort Lee) as its southernmost terminus. For the bicentennial of the American Revolution, parking lots and an interpretive center were built. Earthworks were restored to re-create the feeling of an eighteenth-century fort. When I first visited the site, in the 1990s, the fiberglass revetments had faded and were cracking. Recent improvements replaced these with timbers. A blockhouse and cabin were built, along with a coastal battery. On the anniversary of the battle, artillerymen fire salutes from the cannons, rattling Manhattan windowpanes.



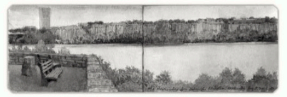
C. The Heather Garden, Fort Tryon Park

Northern Manhattan possesses nearly five hundred acres of parklands, divided primarily between Highbridge Park, Fort Tryon Park, and Inwood Hill Park, along with smaller parks and green spaces scattered across the island above 155th Street. Since the 1970s, nonprofit conservancies have played a key role in locating non-government funding for the maintenance and improvement of New York parklands. The New York Restoration Project planted one million trees, making New York one of the greenest cities in the nation. The Heather Garden and Alpine Garden in Fort Tryon Park attract thousands of visitors every year.



D. The Jersey Palisades from below The Cloisters

Shaded by rocky outcroppings, an esplanade runs along the bluff, offering spectacular views of the Jersey Palisades—a sheer wall of basaltic diabase sill. One hundred yards southeast of this prospect stands The Cloisters—a facility operated by the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a museum of medieval art, comprising reconstructed enclosures, gardens, and chapels collected by sculptor George Grey Barnard that later were acquired by John D. Rockefeller Jr. and reassembled atop North Hill in Washington Heights by architect Charles Collens. The site was previously occupied by an estate owned by industrialist, harness-racing enthusiast, and art collector Cornelius Billings. The rocky, vertiginous terrain known today as Fort Tryon Park is crisscrossed by stairways, trails, woodlands, and clearings laid out by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. Trails descend to Broadway and Dyckman Street, where pedestrians and bicyclists can access a trail that leads downstream to the Battery. This view is from a ledge on the northwestern shoulder of North Hill, near the site of the advance of Hessians led by Johann Rall on November 16, 1776. Wildlife has returned to the park. While visiting, I have seen various avian species, including bald eagles, as well as woodchucks, skunks, raccoons, and worrisome reptiles.



E. Yonkers from State Line Park

The Palisades Interstate Park Commission was created in 1900 by a mutual agreement between the states of New York and New Jersey to preserve the natural environment on the right bank of the Hudson River and to protect the Palisades from being quarried like Hook Mountain, an extension of the same basaltic sill that rises up from the northwestern shores of Tappan Zee. The parklands atop the Palisades are traversed by the historic Long Path, now part of the Empire State Trail. A short distance south of the boundary line between the two states, the trail reaches State Line Overlook, which is also accessible from the northbound lanes of the Palisades Interstate Parkway. A large parking lot serves the café, visitor center, and bookstore. The path at this point is macadamized. Several walled promontories have been built at the very edge of the cliffs. Looking north across the river one finds the village of Hastings-on-Hudson, with Dobbs Ferry beyond. To the south are wooded hills occupied by Lenoir Preserve, Untermeyer Gardens, and Trevor Park. Beyond, the warm tones of the masonry and tall buildings mark the location of downtown Yonkers. Taking note of the number of passing ships and oil barges, I tried to envision the Hudson in 1820, with a quotidian flotilla of several hundred steamboats and sailing vessels plying its waters, a major artery of trade and empire.



F. Looking South from Lamont Weather Station at Piermont

Piermont jetty juts into the stream by the marsh at Sparkill. Below Tallman Bluff, the western shore becomes a wall of tall basalt. At its foot, thickly wooded margins shade heaps of giant rock fall. Slipping past the eastern shore, past stately homes of patriots, poets, and robber barons, past Manhattan, the harbor islands, and the Narrows, past Brooklyn's sandy beaches, through Raritan Bay, and beyond Sandy Hook, the Hudson disappears into the Atlantic Ocean. The river is 507 miles long. At a rate of flow averaging three miles per hour, a specific volume of water takes one week to move from the source to the sea. It is intermittently navigable above the tidewater stretch of the river but famously is fraught with treacherous tides and currents. Its indigenous name, Mahicanituck, is translated as "waters that are never still," or "the river that flows both ways."



G. Hook Mountain from Croton Point

Extending from Nyack to the Tors towering over West Haverstraw, Hook Mountain is considered part of the Palisades that ends just south of Piermont. The name of this sheer basaltic escarpment crowned by a narrow ridge was inspired by its appearance on maps—an inverted hook, with its point at High Tor.

Located just north of the mouth of Croton River, the hilly peninsula known as Croton Point reaches out from the left bank in a southwesterly direction. Marking the division between Tappan Zee and Haverstraw Bay, the land is maintained by Westchester as a county park. The name is an Anglicization of Kenoiin—the name of an indigenous tribal leader who lived near the mouth of the eponymous river during colonial days. The cluster of trees seen to the left is Crawbuckie Park. Far in the distance, across the Tappan Zee, is Tallman Mountain, the northern end of the Palisades. Traveling upriver, the lower Hudson is a series of seas and bays, from Raritan Bay through the Narrows, from the harbor into North River channel. Beyond lies Tappan Zee, Haverstraw Bay, and Peekskill Bay. To be precise, the Hudson is not a river here but a tidal estuary reaching another 130 miles upstream.

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