



Claude Haton/Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

Field director **Scott Padini**, of **Landmark Archeology**, **Altamont**, excavates along a submerged wall at **Cedar Grove**, the home of **Thomas Cole**, in **Catskill**.

## Cedar Grove restoring scenic landscape wall

Archeologists visit Thomas Cole House to guarantee precision

By **Jim Planck**

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Administrators and directors of Cedar Grove, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, home of the famed American landscape artist, are continuing the effort to restore the site to its 19th century appearance.

The newest part will be reinstallation of a scenic stone wall, brick entrance columns and a white picket fence, and archeologists were on site this week to help ensure everything goes where it should.

"It's part of a large site-work project," explained Cedar Grove executive director Elizabeth Jacks. "We're doing a lot of stuff."

The current work is being performed by a team from Landmark Archeology, of Altamont.

"They are digging," said

Jacks, "to locate the original foundation of the stone wall and of the brick piers, because we want to install them on the exact spots where they used to be."

Jacks said the stone wall once ran along the entire length of the property's border with Spring Street, and that

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the brick piers, also on Spring, stood as entrance columns to Cedar Grove's carriage entrance.

"One of our main goals is to give visitors a sense of Thomas Cole's world," said Jacks, "so that when they arrive here, people should feel transported back to earlier times."

"It's part of our educational effort, that people learn about the history of the area," she said, "and this shows, also, what this part of Catskill used to look like."

Jacks said both landscape elements are depicted in an October, 1848 sketch of Cedar Grove that was drawn by Frederic Church, which she noted was also the year that Cole died.

She said the facility continues to research exactly when both elements were removed, but noted the brick columns still existed in 1905, as they are shown in a photograph by early 20th century Catskill photographer Charles Van Loan.

Jacks said the archeological

team started on Monday and will finish up sometime next week, weather permitting, and that the reconstruction of both landscape elements may be completed by the end of the 2009 construction season.

She said the main overall project, of which the site work is part, is being paid for from a federal transportation appropriation grant.

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*To reach reporter Jim Planck, please call 518-943-2100, ext. 3324, or e-mail [jplanck@thedailymail.net](mailto:jplanck@thedailymail.net).*