

**LANDSCAPE**

*MASTER RESTORATION PLAN  
(Phase IV, Part 4) THE FARM*

4/15/1993

**OLANA**

**STATE HISTORIC SITE  
HUDSON, NEW YORK**



**TACONIC STATE PARK COMMISSION**



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Bureau of Historic Sites – Peebles Island, Waterford, New York 12188

April 15, 1993

**PRELIMINARY HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY**  
**The Farm**

**Olana State Historic Site**  
**Hudson, N.Y.**

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**This project was funded, in part, by the Friends of Olana.**

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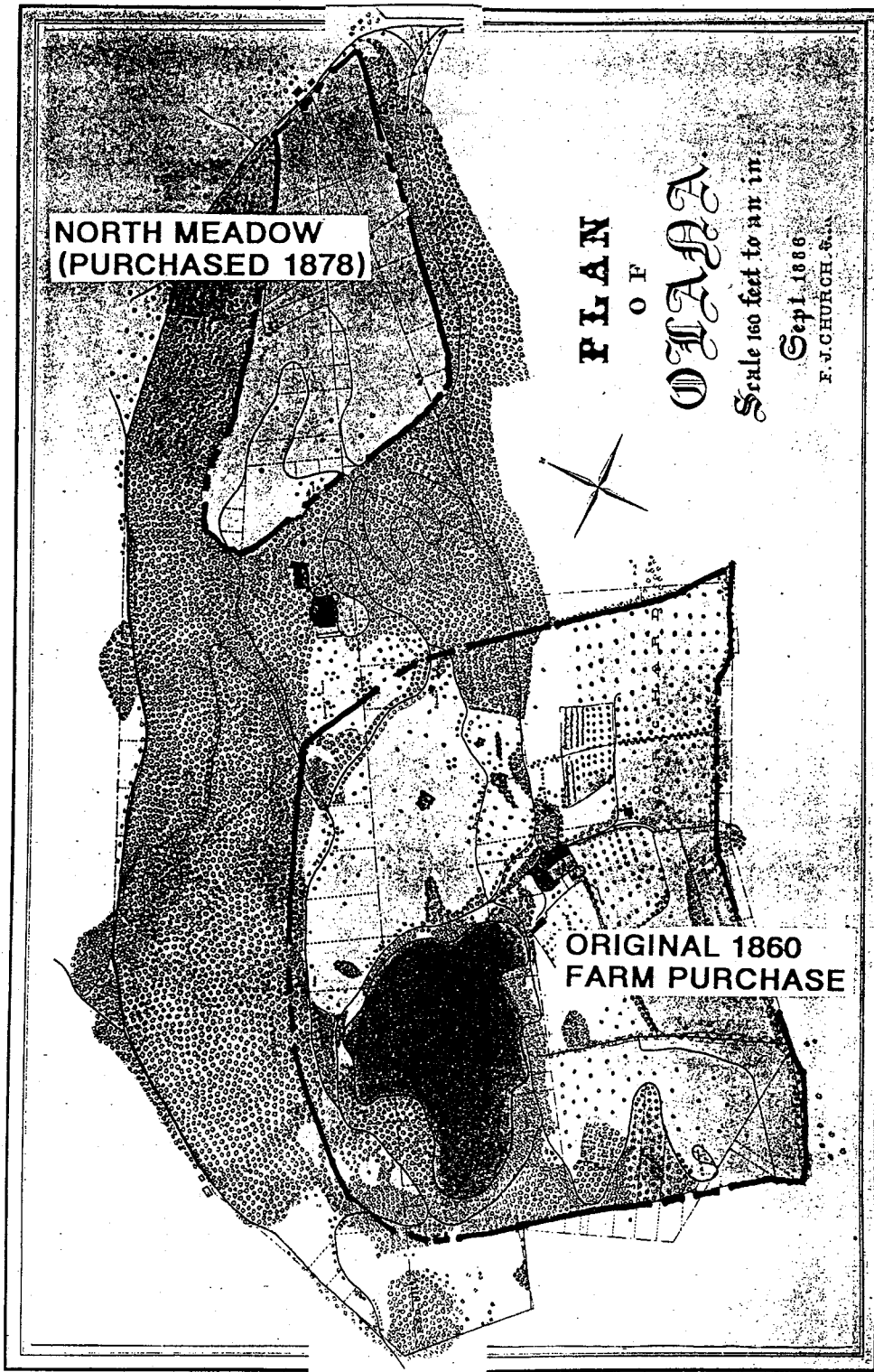


Fig. 2 - Plan of Olana, Frederic Joseph Church, 1886 (no scale).  
The plan is labeled to show the farm acreage discussed in this report.

## INTRODUCTION

### Land Area Description (see Figs. 2 and 3)

The "farm" is defined for the purposes of this report, as that part of the Olana State Historic Site that was utilized for agricultural purposes during the residency of Frederic E. Church, from 1860 to 1892. About 90 acres, at least 1/3 the total Olana property, are included in the project scope (Fig. 1).

This total consists of two separate parcels, the main farm and the North Meadow. The main farm, about 60 acres, occupies the eastern side of Levi Simmons' farm, purchased by Frederic Church in 1860. Structures include the old farmhouse, Cosy Cottage, the barn complex, and surrounding fields. The lake and South Park, originally part of the Levi Simmons farm acreage, were converted by Frederic Church to ornamental grounds and water, and their discussion in this report is limited (see South Park report). The second farm parcel included in this study is the North Meadow, about 30 acres, located at the northern end of Olana.

### Scope of Project (Work Outline)

This preliminary project marks the beginning of historic landscape master planning for the farm, as part of the overall Olana Master Plan. In developing the scope of services, it was understood that the first step would be a preliminary investigation. At the start, even the land area to be included in the farm study was unclear. As a result, the map used to define the boundaries of the farm has been modified during the course of this early investigation to reflect the final project boundaries and scope. In a like way, preliminary research has confirmed known evidence and also uncovered potential leads for further investigations.

### Methodology

The farm study is based, in part, on the Historic Landscape Research Project (Phase II), 1986. In this project, correspondence, diary and account/billing records in the Olana archive were reviewed and all material relevant to the landscape, (including the farm) was noted. In the 6 years since that study, two curators and various researchers have located new material, and gifts of letters and photographs obtained since 1986 have been added to the collection. Archivist Laura Kline, who was familiar with the correspondence files, was hired to locate any new material. At the same time, Ellen McClelland Lesser, the researcher who had done the 1986 Research Project, was hired to excerpt the newly added correspondence; and to identify oil and pencil sketches related to the farm. The index to Dr. Gerald Carr's Catalogue was used to identify relevant images. Historic photographs of the farm were carefully reviewed. The findings of previous research concerning the farm buildings and land areas were incorporated. Files at Peebles Island were scrutinized. Of particular interest was the deeds and census records research undertaken by Kristin L. Gibbons. The relationship between Frederic Church and his early property superintendent, Theodore Cole, was given special attention. Soil Conservation Service reports were reviewed and a study of the Olana farm soils was compiled.

With these tasks completed, the balance of the work effort has been used to develop the history narrative, enhance the Existing Conditions Plan and prepare a Reconstruction Plan. This plan shows the farm as it is thought to have been during Frederic Church's residence, to 1892.

### The Next Step

A draft submission of this report was submitted in March 1993, and a meeting was held at Peebles Island on April 7 to discuss it. James Ryan, Thomas Ciampa, Kristin Gibbons and Robert Toole attended.

While the report is seen as a first step in developing a Master Restoration Plan for the farm, it was decided that the draft (after some editing and additions), should be submitted as

a separate 'Preliminary Study'. The Preliminary Study does not represent an exhaustive investigation of the farm. Several steps remain before research and documentation is completed. For example, the farm's history under Louis Church's management, from 1892 until his death in 1943, has not been researched. As such, a full review of the many oral histories that have been recorded (and which might shed light on the farm's operation before and after 1892), has not been possible to date.

In the anticipated 2nd stage of the farm project, the history section would be expanded to include a detailed description of the site's evolution from 1900 to 1943 (death of Louis Church), 1943 to 1966 (acquisition by New York State), and the intervening stewardship period from 1966 to the present.

There is a need to dig deeper on the topic of aerial mapping. The 1942 aerial (Fig. 9), was an important discovery of the study. The original needs to be traced. This is important not only for the farm study, but for Olana's landscape documentation generally. In addition, Kristin Gibbons (OPRHP, Bureau of Historic Sites), provided the source of her inquiries regarding aerial photographs at the National Archive, and these should be investigated. Other mapping that has not been fully studied is included in insurance documents. These should be identified to locate (from company records) one or more of the maps, to aid the ongoing identification and analysis of the farm buildings. In general, knowledge of the farm buildings is incomplete.

Also, study of the crops Church grew is imprecise at this point. This topic is alluded to herein, but a full tabulation, being as specific as possible about what was grown, and where, is needed. A similar tabulation should also be put together for farm animals and farm equipment.

One area of particular interest is the North Orchard (see under 'Land Areas,' p. 16). At the review meeting, interest was expressed in restoring this large former apple orchard (15.5 acres). As with all such restoration efforts, there is a need to document the historic situation before undertaking actual replanting. Apple tree types, size, spacing, and orchard layout, ground treatment and maintenance practices are all issues that will need detailed discussion before an orchard restoration plan can be formulated. In a similar way, historic research needs to precede wider restoration efforts at the farm.

In another area, while much has been learned from the enlarged historic photographs studied to date, this review is not yet completed. For example, several excellent photographs exist showing the old farmhouse. These, applied to the existing ruins, should allow a reconstruction drawing to be prepared for this important building. This step is fundamental to any complete documentation of the farm.

In addition, a complete design description should be developed. This would include a full analysis of the Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road, identified in this report as complex and not clearly understood design features.

After research is completed, master planning can be started. This might initially involve a review and listing of all related issues, including optional treatments, building stabilization, woodland management, field clearing and demarcation, replanting, crop cultivation and interpretation.

When exhaustive research is completed, a full bibliography for the farm study should be prepared, to include all the historic photographs.

## SECTION 1. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Levi Simmons farm, purchased by Frederic E. Church in 1860, consisted of about 126 acres. It was roughly rectangular in shape; the long dimension, about 3,000 feet, running north to south, and the short side, about 2,000 feet, running east to west. The eastern boundary of the farm traces the edge of low marshy ground. This is the flood plain of a substantial stream that flows past Olana on the east.

From the low ground on the eastern side, elevation 200 feet, the land rises rapidly over undulating terrain, reaching a high point in the northwest corner at elevation 450 feet and near the southwest corner at elevations 350 and 340 feet, on separate small hills. While varied, and at times quite steep, the slopes are generally not excessive, allowing more than half the land to be plowed. This was important because the farm's moderate size and limitations as to soils meant that the more level land needed to be intensely worked in order to provide a family's livelihood.

While much of the Levi Simmons' farm was productive, a ten acre pocket of wetland existed in the southwest corner. The wetland was fed by runoff from the surrounding hills and several springs. Arthur Parton's 1864 painting of this area (Fig. 4) shows that the wetland had been at least partly drained. It seems channels were dug to lower the water level and to allow cultivation. Corn is shown growing in part of the drained wetland. A later account confirmed that the lake Church eventually made there was dug from a former "corn field."

The wetland also served as a catchment and reservoir, and this provided the farm with a reliable source of water, crucial given the farm's limited watershed. While the specifics of the water supply are unclear, the positioning of the barns and farmhouse, at an elevation below the wetland, and close to the drainage route, may have been related to the use of the water flow for agricultural and domestic purposes. From the marsh, run-off went directly east, skirting the barnyard area and farmhouse before reaching the east property line. Elsewhere, on the south side of Simmons's farm, was another, smaller area of marshy ground (see Fig. 3). This wetland ultimately fed an intermittent stream that drained north and then east, exiting the property about 500 feet south of the primary stream.

The slope of the land was toward the south and east, with the "Sienghenbergh" (Long Hill) giving some protection from exposure to the winter winds off the river. This orientation provided good air circulation for fruit crops, and deterred premature budding that would be vulnerable to a late frost. While generally falling toward the southeast, the land is highly varied and rolling. Areas of nearly level land are juxtaposed with slopes of 25% or more.

The North Meadow, about 30 acres, is included in this study, though it was not purchased until 1878 and does not figure in a discussion of Church's original farm, purchased 18 years before. Until 1878, the North Meadow was an upland pasture on a neighboring farm. As such, this area is not directly included in this discussion of the Simmons farm, except to say, at this point, that portions of the North Meadow are quite steep and exposed to the northwest.

The farm soils were critical to farm's productivity. Olana has thin, gravelly soils on its upland slopes and a deeper, somewhat richer soil in the more level areas. There are some low-lying areas of marsh where the soil is wet and high in organic matter. None of the soils are classified as "prime" agricultural soils by the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service.

Generally, the Olana farm soils are a silty loam, with a significant presence of shale, called "channery," in the mix.<sup>1</sup> They are generally well drained, leaving crops susceptible to drought conditions, especially in areas of thin soils on steep slopes. In turn, these soils are subject to erosion. In addition, Olana's soils tend to be highly acidic, requiring the application of lime and fertilizers for optimum productivity as meadows and pastures.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Soil Conservation Service (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture), channery soils contain at least 15% fragmented sandstone, slate, limestone, schist, or, as at the Olana farm, shale, in pieces up to 6 inches in length. A single piece is called a "chanter."

Areas of different soil types are identified on the Reconstruction Plan attached to this report.<sup>2</sup> Soils in the project area are classified today as 'Manlius' and 'Nassau' types. Manlius soils, found in the central farm area around the barnyard, farmhouse and immediate fields, are the better quality, deep and relatively rich. However Nassau soils are the more dominant, being found around the wetland basins, along the entire south side of the farm, and on the upland slopes extending north from the wetland, as well as in large isolated areas throughout the farm's interior, and in the North Meadow. Nassau soils are very similar to Manlius but inferior, being shallower, more channery in mix and so excessively drained and subject to erosion. Slopes are irregular and there are typically patches of exposed bedrock on the surface. The worst of these soils, as seen in large areas of the North Meadow, and in a more limited way on the Simmons' farm parcel, are ill-suited for crops, being best for orchard trees and woodlot. Even use for rough pastures or meadow would bring poor results unless lime and nutrients are regularly added.

A look at the expected yields from these soils illustrates their limitations.<sup>3</sup> For example, today's prime Columbia County soils are expected to produce up to 135 bu. corn per acre, while the best Manlius soils might produce 90 bu. and Nassau soils substantially less. As to hay, prime soils will produce 4 to 6 tons per acre, while Manlius and Nassau soils can be expected to yield only 2.5 tons on average. Oat, wheat and grain production is generally better, with 75 bu. of oats and 45 bu. of wheat expected from an acre of the best Manlius soil, against 80-100 bu. of oats and 50-60 bu. of wheat expected from prime soils.

To describe the usefulness of these soils as pasture, the Soil Conservation Service has developed a unit of measure called A.U.M. (Animal Units per Month). One unit is the amount of forage or feed required to feed one horse, one cow, one mule, five sheep or five goats for 30 days. Using this measure, prime soils allow 7.5-8.5 A.U.M., while the Olana farm's best Manlius soil provides about 6.5 A.U.M., and the poorest Nassau soil only 4.0 A.U.M. - less than half the optimum yield. In summary, the soils on the Olana farm could be worked for a full array of needs, but their characteristics were not suited to optimum production.

Before Church's purchase, Levi Simmons achieved modest results. A comparison of his yields to the period's expected production shows that the Simmons' farm was hard pressed to sustain even average returns for the output in cost and labor inherent in this age of hand labor and horse-power.<sup>4</sup>

As will be described, Church seems to have matched his crops according to the appropriate soils. For example, he located his kitchen garden and much of his arable ground in the best soil areas, and eventually abandoned farming in several areas of poorer soils. Still, at the time of its purchase, the limitations of the Simmons' farmland was a result of its mediocre soil quality. This no doubt decreased the farm's value as agricultural land and suggests that its earlier role as a subsistence family farm was hard, and in the end untenable. In turn, this situation may have provided the opportunity for the land to respond to new management as a gentleman's farm, whose purpose was only partially related to utilitarian farming. In the end, Frederic Church purchased the Simmons farm for the views and proximity of the Hudson River, not for the quality of the soils.

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<sup>2</sup> Soil type mapping from U.S.D.A. Soil Survey of Columbia County, N.Y., Sheet #15.

<sup>3</sup> Expected yields figures are taken from Soil Conservation Service studies issued in 1989. By comparison, Levi Simmons (who farmed the land prior to Church's purchase) produced only a fraction of what is expected from the same soils under today's husbandry practices and hybridization.

<sup>4</sup> In the table below, 1874 census information shows the average yield for selected crops in Columbia County. This is followed by Levi Simmons comparable yields.

Corn: 18.0 bu. per acre, vs. 11.1 bu. per acre (61% of average).

Oats: 22.7 bu. per acre, vs. 10.0 bu per acre (44% of average).

Winter wheat: 17.2 bu. per acre, vs. 3.0 bu per acre (17% of average).

Hay: 1.2 tons per acre, vs. 1.2 tons per acre (100% of average).



## SECTION 2 - FARM HISTORY TO 1892

In 1794, Wynson Breezy, age 55, purchased a farm lot of about 126 acres from landlord John Jay Van Rensselaer.<sup>5</sup> The 1794 deed records the metes and bounds exactly, seemingly an original description. This suggests that the sale was the property's initial subdivision from a larger holding. The boundary calculations were tied to a "new cellar," probably a reference to a new farmhouse. The existence of this building was confirmed on the first illustrative record of the farm property, a survey called the Penfield Map, dated 1799 (Fig. 6).<sup>6</sup> The map depicts the "Wynsant Brezie" farm exactly as described in the 1794 deed. Comparing the old map to the present situation, a common field line extends from the neighboring farm on the east, indicating that the Breezy parcel may have been cleared, or partially cleared, earlier, perhaps leased to an adjacent farm. The 1799 map shows a small west facing farm house had been erected near the center of the 126 acre parcel. The map also shows six trees aligned in two rows, indicating an orchard near the house, with the remaining acreage open farmland. The parcel is nestled on the south and east sides of the "Sienghenbergh" (Long Hill),<sup>7</sup> a high ridge line that separated the farm from the Hudson River to the west. From this early date, the property was consistently referred to in deeds as the "Breezy Farm."

In the first half of the 19th century, this seems to have been a typical hardscabble family farm. It changed ownership at regular intervals.<sup>8</sup> In 1802, Breezy's will describes his "lands and property," and refers to a family of 7 children. In 1817, Breezy's oldest son, Andrew, sold the farm to John Lape. In 1822, Lape obtained a narrow corridor of land (1-3/4 acres) that allowed construction of a short drive to the west, giving access to the public road (now Route 9G) and river, indicating that prior to that date the otherwise land-locked parcel must have gained access to the outside over adjacent farms. After nine years, in 1826, John Lape sold the farm to one Jacob Sharp. In 1833, Sharp lost the land for non-payment of taxes. Jonas Miller, a neighbor to the southeast, purchased the property at a tax auction and retained ownership as an extension of his own farm for twenty years, possibly with unrecorded tenants living in the Breezy's farmhouse. In 1853, Miller sold the Breezy property to Levi Simmons. In that year, Simmons and his wife were in their thirties, with several young children and a hired hand living with them. Their farm life is documented by census data for the year 1855, providing an excellent portrait of a subsistence family farm of that period.<sup>9</sup>

The census listed 100 acres of the 126 acre farm as "improved." Of this total, about 70 acres were plowed; 40 acres for oats, 7 acres for rye, wheat and buckwheat, 18 acres for corn, and a large kitchen garden that included extensive plantings of potatoes and peas as well as other vegetables. The remaining 30 acres of improved land were presumedly unplowed orchards, meadows and pastures, as well as barnyard, roads and house grounds. The pastures and meadows served livestock; about 5 dairy cows and about 6 beef cattle. There were a pair of oxen and three horses. Simmons kept about 20 pigs and maintained a chicken coop. Apparently there were no sheep. As indicated on the 1799 map, there was a small apple orchard that produced 150

<sup>5</sup> Research on the Breezy family, and early history of the Olana farm parcel, has been undertaken by Kristin L. Gibbons, Bureau of Historic Site, New York State OPRHP. Wynson Breezy is thought to have been a member of an old local family (also Bresie, Brusy, Bresy, Brisea, Brisee, and other spellings). He was born, says Gibbons, "apparently in 1739." John Jay Van Rensselaer, who never lived at the property, was the last landlord of what had been a large patent granted to his ancestor, Killian Van Rensselaer, in 1685.

<sup>6</sup> Map inscribed: "Map of Several Farms and Unappropriated lands in the Towns of Claverack and Corporation of Hudson Belonging to Daniel Penfield esq." Surveyed by William Cockburn, Fred Hauson and William Cockburn, Jr., Ad. 1799." According to Ruth Piwonka, this map was prepared to show the Van Rensselaer lands and their subdivision prior to 1799. The dates included on many of the parcels refer to lease or sale dates.

<sup>7</sup> As labeled on the 1799 Penfield Map. The prominent hill was later referred to as Church's Hill and is today simply 'Olana'.

<sup>8</sup> According to deed information (Columbia County Court House, Deed Book 13, page 283).

<sup>9</sup> Census data was researched and compiled by Kristin L. Gibbons.

bushels of fruit and 7 barrels of cider in 1855.<sup>10</sup> The "unimproved" land included small woodlots and the swampy ground that would later be the Olana lake. In 1855, the Simmons farm was valued at \$7,500.

Five years later, Frederic Church paid about \$10,000 for the farm. In addition to the small, utilitarian farmhouse (which sheltered a full cellar, as well as a loft above the first floor), the farm included some unspecified support structures, perhaps one or two small barns, several sheds and utility outbuildings, certainly an outhouse. Just after Church's purchase, a second small "house at the gate,"<sup>11</sup> was reported, presumably located where the early access drive reached the public road west of the farm.

Frederic Church married Isabel Carnes (1828-1899) two months after the Simmons property was purchased. Immediately, Church set about building what he called "a new farm house," later called Cosy Cottage. This house was completed in the spring of 1861.<sup>12</sup> Embowered in vines, shrubs and trees, this was a cottage ornée (see Section 3 - Components). One photograph shows a hammock between trees in the small lawn that fronted the cottage on the south. A separate entrance drive to the cottage was laid out from the west, to bypass the barns. A flower garden of unspecified extent and design was located nearby. A friend of the Churches suggested that the cottage had been located to catch "the first and last glances of the sun."<sup>13</sup>

The farm's history during Church's 40 year residency can be divided informally into two phases. In the first phase, specifically 1860 to 1873, the Churches lived at the cottage and enjoyed a modest farm life as agrarian operations were developed suited to the family's intentions and interests. In 1860, Levi Simmons stayed on to run the farm as stipulated in the sale's agreement, but at the start of the 1861 season Church paid off the mortgage and Simmons soon left the property.

From his earliest interest in purchasing land opposite the village of Catskill, Church had been aided by Theodore Cole (1838-1928), oldest son of the artist Thomas Cole. Soon Cole was helping to supervise Church's property from his home, 'Cedar Grove', across the river. Church's close relationship with the Cole family is exemplified by the decade-long farm collaboration between Frederic Church and Theodore Cole. Both men visited the Simmons farm in February 1860, a month before Church closed on the property. On April 2, 1860, when Church was upriver for the closing, the two men visited the farm and Cole reported "quite a tramp over it,"<sup>14</sup> no doubt discussing plans for its development. Throughout 1860, while the new cottage was being built, Church apparently stayed with the Coles at 'Cedar Grove'. A payment of \$100, for "Board,"<sup>15</sup> is recorded in 1860, and Theodore regularly noted going over "with Mr. Church to his place."<sup>16</sup> During the next ten years, while he worked his own farm, Cole made routine visits to Church's property and managed aspects of its operations. He reported on farm activities in end-of-the-year letters, and more frequently when the Churches were away. At the same time, a separate

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<sup>10</sup> Rough calculations suggest that an orchard of 20 to 30 trees would be adequate for this production.

<sup>11</sup> Letter: Levi Simmons to FEC, 3/11/1861. Note: Original and/or copies of all correspondence quoted herein are in the Olana archive, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>12</sup> The name "Cosy Cottage" was used by 1870, just prior to the Churches move to the main house. Originally, Church said he was "building a farm house," but "cottage" was used in many correspondences. The structure was designed with the assistance of architect Richard Morris Hunt (1827-95). Hunt was a New York City acquaintance of Frederic Church. He was later the champion of French classicism and the Ecole des Beaux Arts that was so influential on the architecture of 'Gilded Age' America.

<sup>13</sup> Diary of Henry Q. Mack, 10/31/1872.

<sup>14</sup> Diary of Theodore Cole, 4/2/1860. Some of Theodore Cole's letters and accounts are in the Olana archive. Those located elsewhere include account books and diaries at the Vedder Library, Greene County Historical Society. These records have been researched for references to the Olana property by Raymond Beecher, in about 1981. Copies of the excerpted material are in the Olana archive unless otherwise stated.

<sup>15</sup> Theodore Cole's account book at the Vedder Library, Greene County Historical Society.

<sup>16</sup> Diary of Theodore Cole, 4/8/1860. The comment is also made on June 9, August 4, and October 9, 1860.

farmer was hired to undertake actual farm operations at Church's "place." The farmer lived in the old Breezy farmhouse.

Changes to the farm began slowly, but were consistently carried forward over the years, so that the farm was generally made over to Church's specifications within the first decade of his purchase. At the end of the 1862 season, Theodore Cole wrote to Church and summarized the costs of the previous years work: "It all seems to be money out for you. I am sorry to say. It is astonishing how much it costs to carry a place like yours. I hope though in time you will receive a return for your outlay."<sup>17</sup> These costs were related to the improved facilities Church was developing at the farm. New buildings were being constructed, others were being improved. The cost of new plantings of orchard trees was combined with considerable expense for parkland trees, set out on the hillside west of the cottage. Also, the cost of lake development, again a notable ornamental undertaking, was also included as part of the general farm accounts.

In this period, the Civil War broke out. With so many men away, Church had ongoing difficulty finding a reliable and skilled farmer, and competent help generally. Despite fragmented documentation, it seems that after hiring two separate men during the summers of 1861- 63, an Englishman was hired in 1864, with Church saying: "I have engaged a farmer, an Englishman, to take charge of the farm [,] he is highly recommended and I hope will suit. I have not been very fortunate heretofore in my selections."<sup>18</sup> The Englishman, a "Mr. Ledford," obviously did not "suit," and in 1865 Church wrote to Theodore Cole hoping "that the [new] farmer will prove the right man."<sup>19</sup>

Despite personnel difficulties, offset to a large extent by Theodore Cole's loyal and honest involvement, Church made significant improvements to the farm. By 1867, he claimed to have constructed "ten distinct buildings."<sup>20</sup> Included in this total were the cottage, a cottage outbuilding, the studio (located in the park), a new barn, an extensively remodeled second barn, a "wagon house," a structure described as a small coachman's house, an ice house, and several other smaller sheds and specialty buildings (see Section 3 - Components). Discussing these buildings, Church commented that "they haven't cost much either,"<sup>21</sup> but as Theodore Cole attested, there were only meager returns to cover these capital outlays or even the day-to-day operations of what had been a hardscabble family farm. Church's improvements can not be measured on criteria of a subsistence farm. Rather, his was an investment in a future home and it is notable that this home was most fundamentally a farm.

Church was to be a gentleman farmer.<sup>22</sup> He had had no previous experience with farming, but he aspired to country life and took to it with complete dedication. It would be a mistake to interpret the farm as merely supportive of Church's ambition to develop a residential property, because the farm was that property during the first decade of Church's ownership. While the site's eventual landscape design encompassed other elements, including the house and its landscape garden surroundings that excluded farm views, the farm remained central to the property's sense-of-place throughout the Churches' residency there.

Church immersed himself in the development of the farm. One year, he stayed for the entire winter, but more typically he visited early in the spring before moving there with his family about May 1st. In mid-April, 1864, for example, he wrote his father that since the beginning of winter he had made three trips to the farm and "found everything in splendid progress. My new farmer [the Englishman, Mr. Ledford] promises to be a treasure so have got three admirable men

<sup>17</sup> Letter: Theodore Cole to FEC, 12/30/1862.

<sup>18</sup> Letter: FEC to Joseph Church, 2/28/1864.

<sup>19</sup> Letter: FEC to Theodore Cole, 7/28/1865.

<sup>20</sup> Letter: FEC to William H. Osborn, 10/25/1867.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Richard L. Allen, New American Farm Book, 1869. Discussing a gentleman's farm, Allen described what he termed "amateur farming" by "men who depend for a livelihood upon other pursuits." He went on to say "[the gentleman farmer] does not count the cost, and so he obtains what he wants, charges the expense to 'profit and loss' in his accounts, and lets the matter go - his enjoyment being a full compensation for the outlay." (p. 510).

on the place."<sup>23</sup> In this letter, written four years after the farm's purchase, Church goes on to describe the scene:

The grass was fresh and green around the house [cottage]. The strawberries had commenced throwing out new leaves. Vines and plants were well started[,] peas have been up some little time - about five hundred trees have been planted and about as many more will be this spring. Mr. Cole purchased for me some time ago a splendid pair of black horses at \$700. . . I found the air so invigorating there that I think it will be advantageous to take an early start [at moving up river]."<sup>24</sup>

A month later, Church wrote his father again with this description:

The farm looks better than ever before . . . . The peach [,] pear and plum trees are a sight . . . The apple trees are just beginning to come out . . . . My Muck [from the lake excavation] seems wonderfully adapted to trees and I give them liberal doses of it. . . . We have a coop of 15 chickens by the house and he [Church's son Herbert] feeds them out of his hand - He is fascinated by the horses - I have a pair of pigeons."<sup>25</sup>

The Churches took to country life with great enthusiasm. The interest was obvious when Church wrote in 1867 that "Mrs. Church has a digging fit - She flits about with a trowel in one hand and juvenile plants in the other all day,"<sup>26</sup> and describing how "I superintend my own hot bed this season and if I plant my seed right side up I may expect to see them sprout in a day or two."<sup>27</sup> Despite the self-deprecating tone, Frederic Church was serious about the farm operations. The farm was repeatedly characterized as "magnificent,"<sup>28</sup> and served as an inspiration and subject of Church's art (Fig. 1).

Prior to the 1865 season, the Churches' two young children died of diphtheria. In mourning, the Churches spent the summer travelling. The cottage was rented for the summer season of 1865 and there is little documentation for the farm during 1865 and 1866, an indication perhaps that these activities were not on the Churches' minds during this sad period.

By contrast, the 1867 season was a busy one. There was a new baby in the house and spirits were restored. Church's plans for a house at the top of the 'Sienghenbergh' moved forward when the house site was purchased in October. All summer, major renovations were made at the farm. While the documentation is vague, it seems that an older barn was remodeled and a new one built. An ice house, of unknown location, was reroofed. Church wrote that it was "delightful to see the farm alive again."<sup>29</sup> Also in the period 1865-68, a reliable farmer, George Rushway, and a coachman, Michael McKenna, were hired. Together with the oversight provided by Theodore Cole, these men proved to be the reliable staff that Church sought for the property's ongoing development and efficient operation.

After the 1867 season, the Churches sailed for Europe and the Middle East, and did not return to the property until late summer 1869, missing the 1868 summer completely. Just prior to leaving in the autumn of 1867, Church completed land purchases and was planning for the construction of a new main house. These plans were to "make my farm perfect."<sup>30</sup> As part of

<sup>23</sup> Letter: FEC to Joseph Church, 4/15/1864.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Letter: FEC to Joseph Church, 5/13/1864.

<sup>26</sup> Letter: FEC to W.H. Osborn, 6/13/1867.

<sup>27</sup> Letter: FEC to W.H. Osborn, 3/26/1867.

<sup>28</sup> Letters: FEC to Joseph Church, 2/28/1864 and Isabel C. Church to Downie, 12/13/1891.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Letter: FEC to Palmer, 10/22/1867. Erastus Dow Palmer (1817-1904) was one of Church's closest friends. A sculptor, Palmer lived in Albany. His son, Walter, was for a time a student of Church's.

these preparations, Church also acquired land to accommodate his long North Road. In 1869, on returning to the property, Church set about the major house construction at the top of the hill.

In November 1868, a year after their departure, Theodore Cole reported that "the farm[,] I think[,] may pay all expenses this year."<sup>31</sup> Three weeks later, Cole confirmed that there was "a balance in your favor on my book now."<sup>32</sup> The context for this financial success is spelled out in the Cole accounting. On the farm, the 1868 season was apparently a low-key but efficient one. With the Churches out of the country and special projects few, there was a business-like approach. Most importantly, the weather was favorable for the production of peaches.

"Expenses" in 1868 included about 33 visits to the farm by Theodore Cole, at \$5 per day, totalling about \$170; and \$684 in cash given to George Rushway. Cole also lists about \$150 in miscellaneous expenses such as seeds and bonemeal which he himself incurred. While the expenses are not itemized, the farmer, George Rushway, seems to have hired help and covered other expenses from his cash payments.<sup>33</sup> These total expenses of about \$1,000 were offset by \$850 in fruit sales, notably peaches,<sup>34</sup> and \$150 from the sale of hay. Of course these totals did not include the costs that Church had incurred in farm improvements during the previous seven years, much less his family's livelihood,<sup>35</sup> but he took pride in his balanced books, boasting to his friends that "the farm paid," and that this was "very soothing" to him.<sup>36</sup> In reply a friend wrote back:

I am glad to hear that 'Your Farm' financially 'runs itself.' I am every year more and more satisfied with your judgement and wisdom in locating and possessing, and improving, a beautiful & advantageously situated country home - particularly as I know how strongly your taste & that of Isabel was that way. . .<sup>37</sup>

Ten years after his purchase, it is useful to return to the census data to compare Church's farm operation with that of Levi Simmons. In 1869, Frederic Church's farm included about 175 acres and was valued at about \$25,000. At three times its assessment in 1855, the additional evaluation reflects the added acreage and the building improvements Church had completed by 1869. The 126 acre original farm parcel remained intact, and the 50 or so additional acres were largely woodland, not used for farming, allowing a direct comparison with the earlier situation.

There were two notable qualifications to the ongoing farm use. First, a sizable lake (8.1 acres) was taking shape in 1870 (to be completed by 1880), set in the midst of a new 30 acre woodland, developed at least partially from former agricultural land. This was an area where Simmons had possibly grazed animals and grown some corn in an otherwise unimproved marsh. Frederic Church had also determined that about 30 acres, the entire northwest quadrant of Simmons' farm, was to be parkland, anticipating his eventual house construction. Studded with Church's extensive tree plantings, this area, later referred to as the park, was used for hay production only.

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<sup>31</sup> Letter: Theodore Cole to FEC, 11/7/1868.

<sup>32</sup> Letter: Theodore Cole to FEC, 11/29/1868.

<sup>33</sup> Cole's 1868 accounting does not appear to be complete, as there is no separate listing of salaries for hired help (such as Michael McKenna), or miscellaneous farm needs left out of Cole's breakdown. Then too, \$684 is too high a figure for a farmer's salary alone. Church was prepared to pay \$350 for the English farmer in 1864 but paid only \$300, to William Donnelly, as late as 1878.

<sup>34</sup> Peaches were not widely grown in the locale because they are not considered hardy in the climate, but Church continued to grow them even after loosing whole crops to late spring frost. Apparently the 1868 season was a good one and his peaches sold very well.

<sup>35</sup> The \$1,000 farm income can be compared with Church's other earnings in 1867 which totaled \$18,620 (Letter: J. Gaul to Joseph Church, 5/26/1868).

<sup>36</sup> Letter: FEC to Palmer, 1/1/1869.

<sup>37</sup> Letter: Edward A. Weeks to FEC, 2/18/1869.

In fact, the census figures directly reflect these changes, with corn production reduced and meadow acreage expanded in the 1870 data, as compared to the 1855 situation under Levi Simmons. With Church's meadow acreage increased, plowed land decreased sharply, and this is perhaps the most significant change from Simmons' to Frederic Church's farm operation. From 1855 to 1870 plowed land decreased from about 70 to less than 20 acres, while unplowed pastures and meadows increased from 28 acres in 1855, to about 50 acres in 1870. The sharp decrease in plowing was the result of decreased grain production. Most notable was the cultivation of oats, with 40 acres given to this in 1855 but only 4 in 1870. In addition Church grew no wheat or buckwheat in 1870, while Simmons had devoted 4 acres to this cultivation in 1855. Oats, used for animal feed, as well as wheat and buckwheat, were purchased in quantity by Church to make up the shortfall in production, but extensive plowing was avoided. Restricted plowing provided an enhancement to the farm's scenic quality. For Church, a plowed field "spoils the beauty of the scene somewhat."<sup>38</sup> Limited plowing certainly reflected Church's concern for landscape gardening.

The census data shows other interesting changes in the 1855 to 1870 period. The total number of Church's farm animals remained quite similar to the totals in Simmons time, with cows, horses, oxen and a few beef cattle still present in 1870. At various times, Church also kept mules and donkeys. One telling exception were pigs, with Simmons' sizable herd of 20 reduced to 2 in 1870. There were no pigs at all in 1874. Chickens remained, and at different times, pigeons, white geese, and peacocks were in residence.

Interestingly, there was actually less pasture in Church's era than in Simmons, with only 10 acres given to grazing in 1870 compared to about 20 in 1855. Even before 1870, the limited pasture land would cause Theodore Cole to conclude that the farm "needs sadly more fall pasture."<sup>39</sup> One year Cole actually took Church's beef cattle elsewhere to graze. Initially, Church's response was to suggest fewer animals, but eventually, in 1878, this problem was alleviated with the purchase of the 30 acre North Meadow.

Church's farm was far more diverse than Simmons' farm. Church expanded Simmons' apple orchard, and increased the diversity of fruit production to include varieties of cherries, pears, plums, peaches and grapes, and bush fruits - currants and raspberries, as well as strawberries. Then too, Church's kitchen garden reflected an interest in varied crops. Varieties of vegetables and flower seeds were gathered from several sources and experiments tried with exotic varieties, as for example Mexican corn that Church obtained on his winter visits. In 1878 this was reported to be "16 feet high - my gardener measures but 5 feet and knocks off the ears with a club."<sup>40</sup>

Late in 1869, Church happily returned to the property after nearly two years absence. "Here I am on my own farm . . . About an hour this side of Albany is the Center of the world - I own it."<sup>41</sup> Shortly after his return, Church added a wing to the cottage in order to provide additional room for guests. Church's involvement with farm activities seems to increase. After the 1869 season, Theodore Cole's activities at Olana were apparently reduced, though there remains evidence of his occasional involvement with the accounts until 1871. In 1870, the farmer seems to have been a German, Johannes Dei, but he did not last long and in 1871 Church suggested his direct involvement when he said that he had "a large farm to keep an eye on."<sup>42</sup>

The second phase of the farm operation at Olana began in 1873, after the Churches moved to the main house. This period continued until about 1892 when supervision of the property was turned over to Church's son, Louis Church (1870-1943). After 1873, the property evolved as a unified landscape garden composition that combined agricultural acreage, parkland, woods and water into a single entity. After experimenting with several names, Olana was adopted as the name

<sup>38</sup> Letter: FEC to Palmer, 5/3/1871.

<sup>39</sup> Letter: Theodore Cole to FEC, 11/29/1869.

<sup>40</sup> Letter: FEC to Palmer, 10/21/1885.

<sup>41</sup> Letter, FEC to Palmer, 7/7/1869.

<sup>42</sup> Letter: FEC to A.C. Goodman, 7/21/1871.

for what was now a distinct place.<sup>43</sup> In this period, farm activities seem to have remained generally consistent with the situation in 1870, but farming was increasingly an adjunct part of sophisticated residential life in the country. The siting of the main house at the top of the hill separated the Churches to some extent from the property's agrarian roots. Despite these modifications, Frederic Church continued to refer to the property as his farm, indicating that, for him, farm operations remained at the heart of the property's purpose and sense-of-identity.

In 1878, William D. Donnelly was the farmer. He would remain the principal overseer until the end of Church's active involvement in the 1890's. During these years, Cosy Cottage was used first as a guest house, and it was occasionally rented. After about 1885, it was apparently used by farm help. In 1893, William Donnelly and his family moved there.

Despite some continued changes in the staff, the documentation indicates that in the 1870's the farm settled into a smooth operation. There is little evidence of farm development in this period, indicating that the earlier work had largely completed the improvements Church intended to make the farm "perfect." In 1880, Church spoke of building a two acre garden below and east of the lake. While it is possible that an older garden existed there, it seems likely that plots closer to the old farmhouse, as well as a fenced enclosure east of Cosy Cottage, may have served as kitchen gardens before 1880. The consolidated garden may have been related to the completion of the lake, which seems to have included a system of irrigation for the adjacent garden area.

As noted earlier, the North Meadow property (30 acres of open ground) was purchased in 1878. Taking in the north end of 'Long Hill,' the North Meadow was an important addition to Olana. At least initially it was a farm addition, used both for hay production and grazing, with animals herded from the barn complex, past the cottage to a gate in the fenced field, a quarter mile down the North Road.

The purchase of the North Meadow led to the development of one of Olana's notable ornamental roadways, the Ridge Road. Built in 1884, it was laid out at the highest elevation of the North Meadow, in an area of about 8-1/2 acres. The new road extended out from the top of the North Road (elev. 450 feet). Starting out on the east side of 'Long Hill,' it followed the 425 foot contour and wrapped around the end of the hill, returning on the west side, eventually linking with the Bethune Road further south (see plans). After road development, grazing was eliminated along the immediate road edges, with a new fence erected downhill, north and east of the Ridge Road. This restriction on grazing meant that the ground around Ridge Road quickly began to return to second growth.

A year after the Ridge Road, in 1885, Church developed a very similar road to the top of Crown Hill, a high point along the south boundary of the original Breezy farm parcel. In this case, about 17 acres of farmland, much of it former pasture, was taken out of agriculture. Together, the Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road reduced by about 25% Olana's available farmland, but there seems to have been few misgivings. Church wrote: "I have made about 1-3/4 miles of roads this season, opening entirely new and beautiful views. I can make more and better landscapes in this way than by tampering with canvas and paint in the studio."<sup>44</sup>

The layouts of the Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road are two of the most interesting examples of Frederic Church's landscape gardening. The fence lines Church constructed to limit grazing along these roads clearly show that he intended the road environs to be other than farmland. But while it may be concluded that both roads were ornamental routes, the subtleties of Church's aesthetic intent are unclear. How, for example, did Church evaluate the views created by these new road alignments? Did he intend these to remain panoramic, or were some views to be limited and composed, and if the latter, to what specific visual ends? Were the farm buildings and fields intended to be part of the scene, or to be screened from view? No doubt Church intentions would have changed over time. For example, initially the farm could not be hidden, so open was the scene. Later as trees grew, full screening would have become an option.

<sup>43</sup> Gerald Carr, "What's in a Name: The Genesis of Frederic Church's Olana," 1988 (not published).

<sup>44</sup> Letter: FEC to Palmer, 10/18/1884.



The section of the Crown Hill Road that extended out into agricultural land was initially built in an open field, so that moving along it provided the experience of moving through an upland meadow, with unobstructed, panoramic views. This was the nature of the site at that time, a situation identical to the Ridge Road which broke out into the open expanse of the North Meadow. But Church did not maintain these formerly open areas unchanged. Instead, old photographs suggest a managed approach, with second growth vegetation allowed to return to at least some areas. Given the ephemeral situation, perhaps a full understanding of Church's intent is impossible. His ideas might well have evolved over time. As it was, these ornamental road works came late in Church's life and his influence over the management of second growth vegetation lasted less than 15 years. Now, nearly 100 years after Church's death, discovering the subtleties of Church's intentions will require piecing together fragmented evidence, studying the surviving woodland, and making some assumptions.

In the context of the farm (and the limitations of this preliminary study), suffice to say here that the Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road, while effectively reducing active farmland, represent a further melding of the farm as an integral part of the total Olana landscape garden composition. With these roadworks, Frederic Church can be seen developing Olana as a Romantic period version of the "fermé ornée," the ornamental farm, with roots in the English landscape garden tradition. As such, Olana can be directly linked with other important American sites, for example Monticello and Mount Vernon, where the ferme ornée was represented in an earlier period. In 1884, a visitor reflected on Olana's mix of the agrarian and aesthetic scenery, looking out over agricultural fields, toward the Taconic Range, and reporting a "wide and fertile region that lay between, variegated with the ripening crops and the different shades of green as no Persian robe was ever decorated."<sup>45</sup> (Fig. 5)

While Church's interest in ornamental effects increased in the last decade of his life, practical farm improvements continued. In 1886, Church spoke of "raising my farm stable and adjoining building 18 inches, preparatory to putting on a large addition."<sup>46</sup> This may have been the wagon house, not shown on a 1886 Plan of Olana,<sup>47</sup> but seen in a photograph from about 1906. Church is also recorded undertaking other incidental farm improvements (repairing roofs, installing new fencing, etc.).

Finally, in 1891, Church decided that his 22 year old son Louis should be offered the position of property superintendent. Mrs. Church wrote her daughter: "There is much to be looked into at Olana - and Father can not, nor cares to, do it."<sup>48</sup> Louis arrived in the spring of 1892. He was given authority over the long term farmer, William Donnelly, and within a season his salary was doubled. Louis slowly began to undertake his own projects, few of which were directly tied to the farm's operation. As his parents aged, Louis relocated several activities, formerly related to the farm, uphill to be closer to the house. In this way a greenhouse, chicken coops and secondary gardens were developed close to the house. Recreational facilities, used by Louis's generation, were also built. A "golf links" was laid out in an unknown arrangement before the end of the century, augmenting a tennis court built earlier.

In 1899, Louis built a large dairy barn connected to the old barn. At some point the extensive orchards in the northern end of the farm were removed. Peripheral fields were periodically abandoned. In this way the North Meadow was allowed to return to second growth. All these changes took place after 1892, and some after Frederic Church's death in 1900. The farm operation at the end of Louis Church's residency is shown in an aerial photograph (Fig. 9).

<sup>45</sup> The Christian Intelligencer, 9/10/1884.

<sup>46</sup> Letter: FEC to Palmer, 6/20/1886.

<sup>47</sup> Plan of Olana, by Frederic Joseph Church. This drawing was completed just prior to the property's completion and Frederic Church's retirement in 1892.

<sup>48</sup> Letter: Isabel Church to Downie Church, 12/13/1891.



## SECTION 3 - COMPONENTS

**I Buildings.** Documentation and analysis of the Olana farm buildings is fragmentary. Cosy Cottage is the only farm related building that has been comprehensively studied, but even this important structure has not been comprehensively surveyed, nor have measured plans been prepared for it. While preliminary and partial study has been undertaken on other structures, none are clearly understood from available research, and there are several where even the use and location of the structures is unknown. This listing is compiled from all known sources, especially a State report entitled "1974, 75, and 76 Archaeological Excavations [at Olana]," by Karl G. Roenke and Gail Klimcovitz [Gail K. Matejka], July, 1979, which summarizes previous investigations.

### 1. Cottage (Cosy Cottage after 1870)

Size: Approximately 40'x18', with 12'x25' west wing.

Date: Original construction 1860-61 (architect: Richard Morris Hunt), with kitchen addition, 1861, and west wing, 1869. See: Peter Stevenson: Restoration Report for Cosy Cottage, Thesis, n.d. (copies at Peebles Island and Olana).

Present Condition: Original core is extant in much altered and dilapidated condition. Kitchen wing and west wing removed in the 1950's.

Narrative: From the perspective of the historic landscape studies, Cosy Cottage is significant as a rare surviving 'cottage ornée', especially as related to a Hudson River School artist (see Charmed Places, Sandra S. Phillips, 1988). The structure's superb siting is notable. The cottage was built at the end of the entrance road, so that it was private and separated from the farm activities to some extent. The building is oriented south with the protective hill to the north. Intended to be seen from the south, and to look out to the east, the cottage was backed by mature trees, apparently the remnants of a hedge row that extended on an east-west line, north of the cottage. The building had narrow clapboard siding, jerkin-head gables on two separated wings, and such details as hoods over the windows, and an elaborate bird feeder mounted on the south facade. These touches provide the recognizable cottage form and romantic associations.

On the south side of the cottage, a small (1/2 acre) lawn or "green" was laid out, defined by a ring road. The property's main barn was located about 160 feet south. Evergreen trees were planted at the south and southwest side of the green, presumably for backdrop and screening. Deciduous trees were planted closer to the cottage on the south. One photo shows a hammock strung between two of these trees. The service area was on the north, where a yard was formed in the 'L' of the main structure.

#### 1a. Cottage shed (privy and woodshed?)

Size: 12'x21',

Date: An outbuilding, with privy, was probably built in 1860-61.

Present Condition: A building remains in this location, though it is uncertain if this is the original 1860 structure.

Narrative: Some researchers have concluded that the existing building is original, but this is not known with certainty. Church is also known to have had a chicken coop close to the cottage, and there may have been other incidental sheds in the areas over time.

### 2. Farmhouse

Size: 18'x20' cellar, with east addition, 8'x18', west addition 18'x14', and south shed, about 8'x8'.

Date: Original construction c. 1794, perhaps earlier (see below), east and/or west addition, 1869.

Present Condition: Foundation ruin, with dilapidated wooden section on the east remaining.

Narrative: The construction date of the oldest part of the farmhouse is unclear. Paul R. Huey (OPRHP archaeologist) suggests a Colonial period date, citing "mud daub inside the wall, . . . hand wrought nails, . . . an upper sash of 8 panes (2x4 panes), . . . and smooth hewn beams" as evidence that "the house certainly could date from before the Revolutionary War." (Memorandum to Mark Lawton, June 19, 1972). Huey called for more research, but, to date, no additional research has been undertaken.

## 2a. Farmhouse shed

Size: ?

Date: c. 1794. An outbuilding, with privy, was probably contemporary with the farmhouse construction. The location of this early outbuilding is unknown.

Present Condition: Building remnants southeast of the house may be the original location of the farmhouse outbuildings, but these remnants are probably not from an original building.

Narrative: There have no doubt been several sheds, outhouses, and other accessory outbuildings associated with the old farmhouse. None is extant.

## 3. Main Barn

Size: Approximately 40'x28', with shed addition on the west, about 35'x19'.

Date: Possibly 1867, when Church mentions building a "new barn." Present structure has older timbers incorporated, so that this is perhaps a reconstructed building. If so, it might be that the farm stable (#4, below) was the "new barn" in 1867, and that this barn was a pre-1860 building, repaired in 1867.

Present Condition: Extant.

Narrative: A large, new barn was built as a south extension of this barn in 1899.

## 4. Farm Stable (Horse Barn), possibly referred to as the "Garage," "Wagon Shed," and/or "Work Horse Barn."

Size: Approximately 40'x21' (see HABS drawings).

Date: This may have been a pre-1860 building, repaired in 1867, when Church mentions "Remodeling and covering and reroofing, &c my old barn," apparently describing a building erected before 1860. Alternatively, this might be the new barn described in 1867, in which case it is likely that the main barn (#3, above) was a rebuilt barn. Shed additions attached on south and west, pre-1886.

Present Condition: Extant, but altered.

Narrative: The present building was apparently reshaped in size in the 1950's.

## 5. Wagon House.

Size: Approximately 30'x20' (based on photograph), with shed on south.

Date: Post-1886. The building is not shown on the 1886 plan, but is shown on a photograph dated c. 1904 (OL.1987.131.32a).

Present Condition: Not extant.

Narrative: The barn has jerkin-head gables.

## 6. Small Wagon House (?) may have been referred to as the 'Tool House'

Size: Approximately 13'x11'.

Date: c. 1861.

Present Condition: Not extant.

Narrative: This may be the building referred to in a bill by D. Drummond, for a "Wagon House."

## 7. Coachman's House

Size: Approximately 13'x11'.

Date: 1867. Apparently this is the "little building to accommodate a coachman," mentioned in a letter. 1870 newspapers were found on interior.

Present Condition: Not extant.

Narrative: See "Memorandum," Charles Schoeneck to Paul Huey, June 16, 1971.

Photographs show that this building had a door on its west and south sides and two windows on the south, indicating that it may have been a residence.

#### **8. Corn Crib**

Size: ?

Date: Pre-dated 1860. Referred to in 1868 as in need of a new shingle roof, as the "straw roof is full of holes," indicating that it was an older building.

Present Condition: Not extant.

Narrative: Located close to the lake shore.

#### **9. Grain House, also called the 'Granary'**

Size: Foundation ruin is about 17'x17' square.

Date: ?

Present Condition: Not extant, foundation ruin.

Narrative: Foundation located at intersection of farm and pond road (southeast corner).

#### **10. Ice House**

Size: ?

Date: Pre-1860. Church mentions reroofing an older icehouse in 1867 and notes a "new ice house" being built in 1869. It is not known if these were the same structure.

Present Condition: Not extant. Ground depression northwest of the Garden House foundation (see below), may be the location of this building.

Narrative: There is some confusion as to the location of this building. Apparently it is not the same as the Garden House (#11, below), whose foundation is extant. The icehouse, according to a later insurance map, was a smaller structure located between #11 and the Pond Road. There is a depression in this area but surface remains are inconclusive. State archaeological reports describe a foundation (#6 on their plan) as the icehouse, but this is not correctly located (if it refers to the Garden House foundation, #11, below) and the findings are unclear.

#### **11. Garden House, including Root Cellar**

Size: Approximately 24'x26' (foundation).

Date: Pre-1886. A building in this general location is shown on the 1886 Plan. This building is clearly seen on a photo of c. 1890's (Fig. 16). A root cellar of unknown location was noted in 1869.

Present Condition: Not extant, foundation ruin.

Narrative: This foundation is generally considered the icehouse, but this does not seem to be the case. The building may have had an extension on the west, perhaps #12, below.

#### **12. Engine House and Sawmill**

Size:

Date: c. 1880's, but not shown on the 1886 Plan.

Present Condition: Engine House extant, Sawmill removed.

Narrative: The Engine House was restored in 1980.

The buildings listed here are shown on the Reconstruction Plan.

**II. Land Areas.** During Frederic Church's period of residency, farm acreage was subdivided by field lines into separate areas, for different uses. Some of these areas changed configuration over time. Farm areas are listed as follows and located on the Period Reconstruction Plan.

**A. Cottage Environs .8 acres (Fig. 10)**

Included there is the immediate area around the cottage, the looping driveway, north service yard and small 'green' between the cottage and the main barn. The boundary on the east was established by a terrace, graded to allow an unobstructed views to the east (see "Cosy Cottage").

**B. Barnyard - .6 acres**

The site of the main barn and other farm buildings, set out on the south side of the farm access road, bounded on the south by the main kitchen garden and on the east by the secondary orchard. Much of this area was open ground, but a row of shade trees (elms), presumably planted by Church, provided welcomed shade in the 19th century.

**C. Main Garden - 1.4 acres (Fig. 12)**

Church spoke of laying out this garden in 1880, though the area may have been arable land much earlier. The location, close to and south of the barn complex, and in relatively good soils, was ideal. It may be that Church used the cottage orchard/gardens lot (see below), and the farmhouse lot with its separate garden, before this area came into use after 1880. A wide variety of vegetables and cutting flowers were grown in this garden.

**D. Cottage Orchard/Garden Lot - 2.9 acres (Fig. 14)**

This fenced enclosure was sited east of Cosy Cottage on an east facing slope. Photographs show varied layouts and components in this area, as befits an actively cultivated plot. The area does not seem to have been habitually plowed or grazed, though the 1886 Plan does show it as plowed ground, at least in 1886. The location, close to the cottage, seems to suggest Church's direct involvement in the area. The area seems to have been reserved for fruit production, including cherries, pears, peaches and plums, as well as grapes and such bush fruit as currants and raspberries. The cultivation of fruit was of special interest to the Churches. The fenced enclosure may have been used for other crops before the 1880 kitchen garden was developed.

**E. North Orchard - 15.5 acres (Fig. 13)**

This is one of the farm's largest single areas. The undulating ground is bounded on the north and east by a stone wall which incorporates numerous old forest trees, indicative of its role as one of the original boundaries of the Breezy farm. The west boundary line is formed by the north-south farm road, while the south abuts what appears to have been an old hedge row. This hedge row included mature trees and extended from a neighboring farm to the east. Later, the cottage orchard/garden lot ('D', above), was developed across this boundary. Space limitations in 'D' probably dictated the expansion.

The 1886 plan shows a uniform orchard in this area, with the individual trees spaced well apart. A historic photograph (OL.1987.133.11h) seems to support the depiction, but this image does not provide definitive documentation of the historic arrangement. The 1886 layout is shown on the Reconstruction Plan, with individual trees drawn with a 30 foot diameter canopy (being a mature apple tree). As was common in the period, the orchard may have been plowed occasionally. The 1886 Plan shows the area with a tan wash that indicates plowed ground.

**F. Farmhouse Lot - 3.7 acres**

The 1886 Plan shows a fence and tree lined demarcation separating this area from the North Orchard. This line is of special interest as it appears to be an old line shown to extend into the neighboring property (on the east). This area includes the old farmhouse. It may be presumed that at some earlier period the area included a separate kitchen garden, plowed fields and workyards close to the old house. This use changed over the years. The 1886 Plan shows the area

exclusively as orchard. Old photographs show the old house in a grove of mature trees on the north and west sides. Older trees were aligned along the road that led uphill toward the barnyard area. The orchard trees shown in this area on the 1886 Plan are widely spaced in a diagonal arrangement, very different from that recorded in later aerial photographs, which indicate a more closely spaced right angle layout. The accuracy of the 1886 Plan depiction is unclear on this matter. Except close to the farmhouse, the area is shown as plowed land in the 1886 Plan. The 1886 depiction has been used on the Reconstruction Plan.

#### **G. Secondary Orchard - 2.3 acres**

This fenced area was bounded on the west by the main garden and barnyard complex, on the north and east by a road, with associated fence, and on the south by a field line. The field is bisected by a drainage way that seems to have been carried underground through this area.

This fenced ground is illustrated in the 1886 Plan as arranged with orchard trees. A similar indication is made on the 1799 Penfield map, which shows six aligned trees, roughly indicating an orchard planting in this location west of the farm house. An undated photograph from the late 19th, or even early 20th century, shows no trees in this field, indicating that whatever trees were planted there had been removed by this later date. An aerial view from 1942 shows orchard trees in the south half of this area.

#### **H. Cultivated Ground - .7 acres**

Located along the east boundary line, at the farm parcel's lowest elevation, this area is labeled on the 1886 Plan "Cultivated Ground." It is distinguished from adjacent areas by the tan wash believed to indicate plowed land. The lot is isolated with a grove of trees shown along the west side, with wooded drainage ways on the north and south.

The 1874 census records indicate that Church plowed 18 acres of ground; 4 acres for oats, 6 acres for corn, 6 for potatoes, and the rest kitchen garden. The 1886 Plan indicates that approximately 22 acres were plowed, a figure close to the total recorded on the 1874 census.

#### **I. East Field - 6.0 acres**

This large, trapezoidal shaped open field is bounded by fence/wall lines on all sides, indicating its probable use as a pasture. An intermittent stream bisected the field.

#### **J. West Field - 6.8 acres.**

This irregular field is bounded by fence lines on all sides. The more substantial fieldstone wall between the east and west fields being the only exception from this pattern. At some point, it seems likely that the west field was a pasture. This conclusion is based on the presence of secondary fencing that restricted access to swampy ground along the south side of the field, and the proximity of the barnyard area. As with the east field, at least a portion of this area may have been arable land in the pre-Church period.

#### **K. Crown Hill - 17.2 acres (Fig. 16)**

As is apparent from old photographs, the terminus of the Crown Hill Road provided the best possible overview of the farm, as well as a unique long view to the main house and parkland. Crown Hill was originally active farmland, probably part of the 28 acres of the Simmons farm identified as 'pasture' and 'meadow' on the 1855 census. Portions could also have been tilled. Given the limited pastureage available in the late 1860s, it is likely that this area was valued grazing land and photographs from the period prior to 1888 (shortly after the Crown Hill Road was constructed), show a generally open scene that is only beginning to return to second growth (cedar, sumac and other small saplings), that indicate recent pasture abandonment. In 1885, Church built Crown Hill Road, a half-mile long alignment that rises 100 feet in elevation to the top of Crown Hill. There, Church provided a looping turn-around. Together with the Ridge Road, undertaken a year earlier, the 1885 construction of Crown Hill Road was one of Church's ornamental road projects, clearly intended for enjoyment alone. In 1885, the Crown Hill Road altered agricultural use of substantial acreage, as grazing was eliminated in this zone. As described

below, the purchase of additional pastureland at the North Meadow, in 1878, perhaps allowed grazing in the Crown Hill sector to be discontinued. In any event, after 1885 this lot was effectively taken out of production.

#### **L. Southeast Corner Lot - 5.0 acres. (Fig. 5)**

The configuration of this lot was a result of Church's ornamental road works. The corner lot is bounded on the east by the original east property line of the Breezy farm, and on the north by an east-west fence/wall line that seems to have been in place well before 1885 (it is shown on the 1886 Plan with substantial trees along it). By contrast, the south line, between the corner lot and the summit of Crown Hill, is a fence line only, without any associated trees, being simply a post and wire fence that traces the base of Crown Hill.

This alignment is directly related to the development of the Crown Hill Road. The fence alignment allowed the bottom of the hill to remain active farm land, probably pasture (note that the fence line overlapped the 'west field,' allowing direct access to the barn area). At the same time, grazing in the 'corner field' would not infringe on the natural landscape that was seen as the appropriate setting for the experience of visiting the Crown Hill overlook, which by extension was part of the wooded character of the Pond Road. Finally, the curving alignment of the corner lot blurred the rectilinear edge of the farm, further integrating agrarian and ornamental landscapes as was Church's goal. It seems clear that Church intended the middle ground to be wooded, with views kept open as desired.

#### **M. Ridge Road - 8.4 acres (Figs. 17 and 18)**

After the North Meadow property was purchased in 1878, a large portion of the area, at least 28 acres, was immediately available for hay production and grazing. The precipitous west slope along the side of the hill was fenced to protect livestock. The remainder was open ground. The purchase of the North Meadow alleviated any shortage of pasture, as had been expressed by Theodore Cole in 1868. After this, Church began to convert some of his farm acreage to ornamental ends. The first of these changes was the 1884 construction of the Ridge Road, which provided a loop around the north end of the 'Sienghenburgh; out from the house and along the edge of the precipitous drop along the new road. As with the Crown Hill Road, the Ridge Road resulted in restricted grazing so that the road edges and immediate environs could be returned to a natural appearance. To this end, new fence lines were constructed downhill, to the north and east of Ridge Road. The extent to which Church allowed trees to fill in the Ridge Road area is unclear. In some locations, panoramic views were maintained, while elsewhere wooded growth seems to have been encouraged as soon as road construction ended.

#### **N. North Meadow, north field - 8.5 acres.**

This area was fenced on all sides. On the north was the public road, and on the east was Church's North Road corridor, established in 1868. On the west was the fence line protecting the precipitous grade along this side of the hill. The south line was a fence that bisected the total North Meadow. This fence line followed a broad drainage swale and its alignment might have been a way to separate lower and upper sections when the area was approached from the public road (the case before Church's ownership). In any event, this fence line is shown on the 1886 Plan and remnant wires and posts are discernable today. A 1942 aerial photograph shows this field has been previously abandoned.

#### **O. North Meadow, south field - 10.8 acres. (Fig. 17)**

This area is bounded on the north by the fence dividing the north and south fields, on the east and south by the older, partial fieldstone lines delineating the north road corridor, and on the west at the edge of the precipitous slope. The south fence line was extended out from the older stone wall to trace the alignment of the Ridge Road as it curved around the contours of the hill. A photograph (Fig. 17) shows raked piles of hay in this field, indicating its use as a meadow.