

Josiah Wolcott:

Artist and Associationist

Known largely as an applied artist, Josiah Wolcott brought to his best-known work a profound sense of mission—to “assist mankind in their forward progress.”

The well-known utopian community of Brook Farm was founded in 1841 in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. Community members, led by the transcendentalist Unitarian minister George Ripley, dedicated themselves to creating an ideal community where intellectual life and physical labor would blend harmoniously in an agrarian setting. John Sullivan Dwight, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Charles Dana were members at an early date.

As the community grew and became better known, it attracted a number of visitors, including the artists William Wetmore Story (1819–95), John Sartain (1808–97), and Benjamin Champney (1817–1907).¹ If these artists painted views of Brook Farm, these works are not known to have survived. Indeed, the only known extant paintings of the community were made by the comparatively unknown artist Josiah Wolcott.²

Heretofore familiar only among a few art historians as an ornamental and

portrait painter working in New England in the middle third of the nineteenth century, Wolcott is now known to have been personally engaged in Fourierism and Associationism, the utopian movements that gave life to Brook Farm. For Wolcott, Associationism clearly held the promise of a better life—spiritually, socially, economically—for himself, his family, and his society. It provided the impetus for his major artistic work, both the historically invaluable topographical views of Brook Farm and the final scene in his publicly acclaimed panorama, *Mirror of Slavery*. The artist’s personal interest in these movements and the art that he made in response add an important dimension to Brook Farm scholarship and to an understanding of the Associationist movement, most particularly in New England.

JOSIAH WOLCOTT: AN OVERVIEW

Josiah Wolcott was born in Stow, Massachusetts, in 1814. His father, also named Josiah, was a wheelwright descended from Captain Jonathan Wolcott of Salem Village,

Massachusetts.³ In 1820, when rural New England was in the midst of economic depression,⁴ the family moved to Boston and settled in the North End, where the senior Wolcott continued his trade.

This move into Boston had a profound effect on the young Wolcott. Not only did it help mold his philosophy, but also it helped direct his artistic career. Boston in the early decades of the 1800s had a flourishing art, music, and theater culture. In 1827, one of the nation's first public art galleries opened at the Boston Athenaeum, then located on Pearl Street just a few blocks from the city's North End; between 1833 and 1837 Bostonians could there view the works of Rembrandt, Rubens, Rembrandt Peale, Thomas Cole, John Singleton Copley, Chester Harding, Robert Salmon, Washington Allston, Alvan Fisher, and Thomas Doughty. Fisher and Doughty had studios in Boston in the 1830s. From 1832 to 1837 Doughty offered instruction in drawing and painting.⁵ Wolcott wrote of his artistic training and study with Doughty in an 1853 letter:

At the age of sixteen I was apprenticed to the chair-painting business in Boston, under an excellent master. Always having a strong taste for drawing and painting, I was not long satisfied with being merely a chair-painter, but sighed for something higher. I obtained some instruction from Mr. Thomas Doughty, then in Boston, a gentleman now well known all over the Union as one of our very first artists. My leisure time was devoted to practicing on his instructions, instead of being wasted in the low pursuits of my fellow-shopmates.⁶

Wolcott's known landscape paintings bear similarity to the work of both Doughty and Fisher: like them, he often enlivened scenes with red-jacketed figures and depicted skies filled with warm, diffused light. In 1837 three of Wolcott's paintings were accepted for inclusion in the Boston Athenaeum exhibition. These works, described in the Athenaeum catalogue of that date simply as "landscape," were listed for sale by the artist.⁷

Two paintings Wolcott created in 1837 are candidates for the ones he exhibited at the Athenaeum. One of them, identified as a "New England Landscape" in the Inventory of American Paintings, was discovered by a former owner in fact to be based on the engraving after William Henry Bartlett, *The Lake of Lucerne from the Righi*, from *Switzerland Illustrated*, published in London in 1836 (fig. 1).⁸ Like many contemporary artists, Wolcott turned to prints as a source for some of his art. His extremely faithful copy of this engraving suggests not only what subjects appealed to him but also one method he might have used to sharpen his artistic skills.

The second candidate is a similar subject in what appears to be a genuinely American setting (fig. 2). Here the influence of Doughty is evident. The composition of lake, wooded banks, and mountains reveals Wolcott's awareness of the conventions of the picturesque landscape tradition.

Although no one has fully studied his life and work, Wolcott is known to have created other landscape or topographical paintings, including *Monument Rock*, *Sierras*, which he exhibited at the 1874 Massachu-



Fig. 1. *William Henry Bartlett, The Lake of Lucerne from the Righi, in Switzerland Illustrated (London, 1836); courtesy Boston Athenaeum.*



Fig. 2. *Josiah Wolcott, untitled landscape, 1837; courtesy Gallery Forty-four Fine Art, New Hartford, Connecticut.*

setts Charitable Mechanic Association Art Exposition. He is also known to have painted at least two portraits, those of Emilia and Abel Houghton, now in a private collection.⁹

Despite Wolcott's interest in "something higher," economic circumstances, his 1838 marriage to Mary B. Phinney, and the subsequent need to support a family may

have directed him to seek steady employment first in applied art. In 1835 he received a diploma from the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association "certifying," he wrote in 1853, "to exemplary conduct and superior ability as a workman."¹⁰ In that year Wolcott listed himself in the Boston city directory as a painter, suggesting that he may have just finished his train-

ing under Doughty.¹¹ Four years later, however, he called himself a chair painter, the trade in which he had apprenticed, and continued to list himself as one until 1843.¹² Wolcott then turned to sign and ornamental painting, which, he wrote, “gave me more scope for taste and skill than my previous occupation, besides furnishing an opportunity to acquire more knowledge of art, as my ambition was always to excel in whatever I undertook. I never rested satisfied until I had gained some new lesson of an artistic character.”¹³ Wolcott was an ornamental painter almost to the end of his life. Entries in the Boston Street Books for 1845 and 1846 identify him as a “journeyman painter,”¹⁴ which may indicate that he was then employed in the shop of another ornamental painter. By 1847 he was associated with Lorenzo Somerby in an ornamental, sign, and standard shop at 5 Water Street in Boston.

Wolcott was also a skilled designer

and illustrator. Sinclair Hamilton has traced with great care the work Wolcott did for *The Carpet-Bag*, a weekly publication of amusing social criticism first published in Boston on March 29, 1851.¹⁵ Wolcott designed the masthead (fig. 3) and drew illustrations to complement the “tales, essays, poetry, mirthful sketches, anecdotes, oddities, [and] humorous paragraphs” that filled the paper.¹⁶ In their inaugural issue, editors S. W. Wilder and B. P. Shillaber introduced Wolcott to readers:

The name—“THE CARPET-BAG”—we have adopted as expressing the miscellaneous character of a good paper, into which are crowded a variety of things, necessary for comfort and happiness while on the highway of life. . . . We think the introduction of a picture in each number—or at least occasionally—will add to the interest of the Carpet-Bag. For this department we have engaged the services of Mr. J. WOLCOTT, the designer of the heading and



Fig. 3. *Josiah Wolcott, masthead for The Carpet-Bag, first published March 29, 1851, showing Mrs. Partington at left; courtesy Massachusetts Historical Society.*

other illustrations of the present number. He has a peculiar genius for designing, and we expect many rich things from his pencil.¹⁷

The illustrations Wolcott made for *The Carpet-Bag* in its first year show not only his ability as a designer but also his skill with genre scenes (fig. 4). According to Hamilton, Wolcott was “clearly the creator graphically of Mrs. Partington and hence indirectly of Aunt Polly in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.” The last engraving of Aunt Polly in the American Publishing Company’s 1876 edition of Twain’s book is almost identical to Wolcott’s image of Mrs. Ruth Partington in the June 28, 1851, issue of *The Carpet-Bag*.¹⁸

Yet Wolcott is best known for his two Brook Farm views, both frequently reproduced in books and articles about the utopian community.¹⁹ Historians familiar with the life of the fugitive slave Henry “Box” Brown are probably also aware of the panorama, *Mirror of Slavery*, which Brown commissioned from Wolcott in 1849–50.²⁰ Before 1991, however, no one had connected Wolcott’s diverse body of work to any other aspect of the artist’s life and times. In that year, an exhibition catalog published jointly by the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, identified Wolcott as a charter member of the Boston Religious Union of Associationists and provided the critical connection between the artist’s work and his ideas.²¹ As the Brook Farm views and the slavery panorama suggest, Wolcott was a passionate and determined artist, deeply involved in some of the key social movements of his time.

WOLCOTT, BROOK FARM, AND ASSOCIATIONISM

Wolcott and his art take on special significance when they are seen from the vantage point of Associationism, a communitarian philosophy that in New England drew on Transcendentalism and some of the ideas of the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier. Reacting in part to the disruption wrought by the Industrial Revolution and rising immigration upon relatively homogeneous, agriculturally oriented societies, Associationists sought to answer competitive capitalism and social disintegration by establishing cooperative communities where people of all backgrounds would work together in harmony; by so doing, they would achieve human perfection and realize a kingdom of heaven on earth where love and unity would reign.

Many people of middle-class and artisan background were particularly drawn to Associationism because it seemed to bring a familiar stability to their increasingly fragmented lives. As historian Carl J. Guarneri observed, many hoped “to recapture the larger social nexus of family, church, and village in a modern and more egalitarian setting.”²² It seems likely that Wolcott had these desires in mind when he turned to Brook Farm in 1843.

Founded by Ripley and his wife Sophia two years earlier, the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education was established just a few miles outside Boston on the 170-acre Ellis family farm. In a November 1840 letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ripley explained the goals of the community:



Fig. 4. *Josiah Wolcott, A Concord of Street Sounds, in The Carpet-Bag, July 15, 1851; courtesy Massachusetts Historical Society.*

to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible, in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom, by providing all with labor, adapted to their tastes and talents, and securing to them the fruits of their industry; to do away with the necessity of menial services, by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all; and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life, than can be led amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions.²³

As the number of members of Brook Farm grew, additions were made to the original Ellis farmhouse. This building, dubbed the Hive, became the heart of the community. Soon new structures were erected on the rolling landscape. The first was the Eyrie, the home of George and Sophia Ripley and the site of musical evenings. The many-gabled Margaret Fuller cottage with the huge swing by its side quickly followed, as did the Pilgrim house, home of a number of Brook Farmers, of the laundry, and later of the editorial offices of the Associationists' newspaper, *The Harbinger*.²⁴

Wolcott's first known painting of

Brook Farm reflects this landscape (fig. 5). Dated 1843, this painting is important for its topographical detail and for the romantic mood it reflects. If the account of Brook Farm in the July 1844 issue of *The Phalanx*, the Fourierist newspaper, is accurate, Wolcott depicted the architectural elements with care: he showed the Eyrie to be “fawn-colored,” the cottage in a “sober burnt umber,” and the Pilgrim House as white, just as the newspaper described them.²⁵ Wolcott’s use of the rainbow is reminiscent of that in Bartlett’s *The Lake of Lucerne from the Righi* (see fig. 1). Here it almost certainly symbolizes the unity, harmony, and promise of the community.

The year 1843 was a turning point for Brook Farm as many of its members recognized the need for a broader economic base, a more formal means of organization, and a closer communal focus. By that time Albert Brisbane, a frequent visitor to the community and an American-born disciple and translator of Fourier, had begun to help meld the European utopian socialist movement with American Transcendentalism.

In December 1843 Wolcott and the sculptor Joseph Carew joined several members of Brook Farm in signing the call for a Boston convention to “cheer our hearts by a united contemplation of the

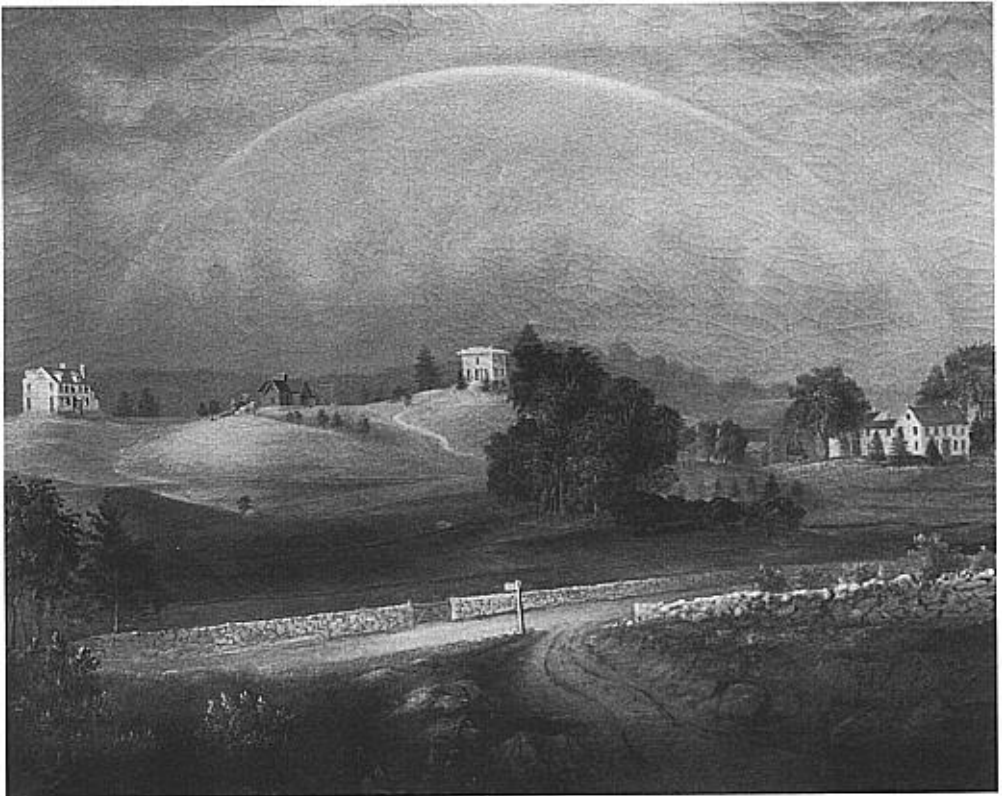


Fig. 5. *Josiah Wolcott, Brook Farm, 1843; courtesy Mrs. Robert B. Watson.*

wonderful progress in our own and other countries of the great TRUTHS of Social Science discovered by CHARLES FOURIER.²⁶ As a result of the convention, which took place at Boston's Tremont Temple on December 26 and 27, the New England Fourier Society was formed January 15, 1844; Wolcott served on its executive committee for two years.²⁷

On January 18, 1844, the members of Brook Farm adopted a new constitution and renamed the community the Brook Farm Association for Industry and Education. As the communitarians expanded into a Fourier-inspired model "phalanx," they divided the department of industry into three primary series—agricultural, domestic industry, and mechanic arts—and welcomed craftsmen into their ranks. A large workshop was built to provide space for the new trades. In July 1844 plans were drawn and a foundation dug for a large unitary dwelling, or phalanstery, to provide living and meeting space for 150 people.²⁸

According to the Brook Farm ledger, which contains some of the financial records of the community between November 1844 and October 1846, Wolcott bought shares in Brook Farm and received interest on them.²⁹ That Wolcott became a shareholder indicates his support of the community and his probable intention to move there with his wife and infant son George once the phalanstery was completed. Wolcott's exposed status as an ornamental painter dependent on economic circumstance in a rapidly changing Boston made him a perfect candidate for Brook Farm; the community held the promise of economic security in an open and sympa-

thetic environment. It allowed Wolcott, who may have been ambivalent about being an artisan rather than an artist, the freedom to express himself according to his own talents and desires.

The May 28, 1845, edition of *The Phalanx* announced that the Brook Farm Association for Industry and Education had been reorganized as the Brook Farm Phalanx. Its new constitution stated its purpose as "the organization and pursuit of Industry in the following departments viz: Domestic Services, Agriculture, Manufactures, Commerce, Education, the study and application of the Sciences, and the study and application of the Fine Arts; in accordance with the system of Association and the laws of Universal Unity as discovered by CHARLES FOURIER."³⁰ Fine arts was added to the community's agenda just when Wolcott was most heavily involved; he may have played a role in having the activity incorporated into the new constitution, just as he may have anticipated a role in the new department.

On October 19, 1845, Wolcott joined the Brook Farm committee on religion to make arrangements for worship under the direction of William Henry Channing. Two of its members were appointed to "wait on Mr. Rogers, and arrange with him to have a large room at this end of the Phalanstery, in the second story, finished off immediately (by Christmas) as a consecrated place of worship for the time being, to be used for no other purpose."³¹ Whether the plan was carried out is unknown. Fire engulfed the phalanstery on March 3, 1846, just as it neared completion, and dealt the community a severe

financial blow from which it was unable to recover; the fire contributed to Brook Farm's dissolution in the fall of 1847.³² After the phalanstery burned, Marianne Dwight wrote, "A part of the stone foundation stands like a row of gravestones,—a tomb of the Phalanstery—thank God, not the tomb of our hopes!"³³

Wolcott's second painting of Brook Farm (fig. 6) is undated, but from architectural evidence it is clear that it was painted a year or more after his first. Visible behind the complex of the Hive and barn is the rooftop of the workshop built to accommodate Brook Farm's expanding industries. On the hillside below the Eyrie are the foundation stones of the phalanstery. These stone pillars may either

be the supports of that structure when it was under construction or what remained of the building after the disastrous fire.³⁴ Together, Wolcott's two paintings of Brook Farm show its evolution from a loosely organized transcendentalist community to one that embraced many of the organizational and philosophical tenets of Associationism. In rendering these views Wolcott applied his artistic talent both toward documenting the community and conveying his personal commitment to its ideals.

The philosophy of Brook Farm was kept alive after the fire by two organizations, the Boston Union of Associationists, founded November 30, 1846 as an auxiliary of the American Union of Associationists, and the Boston Religious Union of



Fig. 6. *Josiah Wolcott, Brook Farm, about 1844-46; courtesy Massachusetts Historical Society.*

Associationists, founded January 3, 1847. Like William Henry Channing, Francis Gould Shaw, Joseph Carew, John Sullivan Dwight, and John Codman, in whose family the second Brook Farm painting descended, Wolcott was a member of the Boston Union of Associationists. The breadth of his interests and his commitment to Associationism can be gleaned from the fact that he served as the group's treasurer and one of its directors as well as on three of its subcommittees—the Group of Study and Indoctrination, the Group of Guaranties, and the Group of Practical Affairs. At these and other meetings, Union members explored the tenets of Associationism as well as the issues of poverty, slavery, protective unions, and the formation of communal households.³⁵

On January 3, 1847, Wolcott became a charter member of the Boston Religious Union of Associationists, which met under the Christian umbrella to discuss the ideals of Associationism. At the first meeting, Wolcott, John Dwight, and Mary Bullard (who had often participated in musical evenings at Brook Farm and who later married Dwight) were charged with arranging music for the group's public and private meetings. Wolcott hosted some of the religious union's meetings at his home at 33 Kingston Street. James T. Fisher's meeting minutes attest to his active participation: at the March 21, 1847, meeting, Wolcott spoke "in some experience which he had undergone from the regions of almost entire religious scepticism [*sic*] to the full reception of the doctrines of association."³⁶

Wolcott put his artistic talents to work on behalf of both of the Boston Asso-

ciationist organizations. On March 17, 1847, the Boston Union of Associationists' executive committee voted "to appropriate fifteen dollars from any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to repay Mr. Wolcott for said amt., advanced by him to purchase materials for the large Painting."³⁷ The subject and purpose of this "large Painting" are unknown, although the painting may have been for Brisbane's use in one of his lectures in Boston around that time, or it may have been for display at the Boston festival celebrating Fourier's birthday on April 7, 1847;³⁸ sculpture, paintings, and banners figured prominently in the decorations for such festivals. Wolcott purchased two tickets to the festival, which the April 17, 1847, issue of *The Harbinger* described in detail. In September of the same year, the union discussed the question "of adopting some badge or sign to be constantly worn by Associationists, & a general desire for something of that kind was manifested by persons present. Josiah Wolcott proposed a design for a badge that would suit him. It is a circle, containing a beehive in the centre with lines radiating from it."³⁹ There is no evidence, however, that the badge was ever created.

The account book for the Boston Religious Union of Associationists notes that on June 20, 1847, three dollars was "Paid J. Wolcott for 2 Boxes for coll. at Door," no doubt the boxes in which the union collected donations at its public meetings. In December 1847 the Boston Religious Union of Associationists paid "Somerville & Wolcott" ten dollars for "painting Signs." In the same month the Boston Union of Associationists

paid the firm four dollars for "Signs for Bromfield Room."⁴⁰

Associationism was clearly a driving force in Wolcott's life. His involvement not only offers insight into his personal life but also demonstrates his sensitivity to and concern for the social, economic, and spiritual circumstances of those around him. In his role as an Associationist he came in contact with numerous prominent individuals engaged in social reform. Nowhere was his concern for a more just world better demonstrated than in his publicly acclaimed and widely viewed *Mirror of Slavery*.

WOLCOTT AND THE *MIRROR OF SLAVERY*

Henry "Box" Brown's *Mirror of Slavery* was one of the first abolitionist panoramas, a huge canvas of, reputedly, fifty thousand square feet.⁴¹ On its surface were forty-six scenes divided into two sections. These scenes, "designed and painted by J. WALCOTT, from the best and most authentic sources of information," gave an "iconoclastic retelling of the slave's story."⁴²

Henry "Box" Brown was born into slavery about 1815 on a plantation outside Richmond, Virginia. As a boy, he was first a house servant and then worked in a Richmond tobacco factory. While in Richmond, Brown married and had three children.⁴³ In 1848, when his family was sold to a Methodist minister, Brown sought to escape from bondage. In 1849, acting upon a "heavenly vision," Brown had constructed a box "3 feet 1 inch long, 2 feet wide, 2 feet 6 inches high."⁴⁴ On March 29 that year, with the help of Richmond shop-

keeper Samuel A. Smith and Smith's free-born black employee, James Caesar Anthony Smith, Brown was sealed in the box and shipped by Adams Express to Philadelphia. There, after a twenty-seven-hour journey, he was liberated from his confines in the Anti-Slavery office of William Still and James Miller McKim (fig. 7).⁴⁵

Brown's means of escape, his suffering during the journey in his "coffin," and his "resurrection" from the box quickly made him a hero among abolitionists. Still and McKim sent Brown on to Boston, and, like such other fugitive slaves as Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown, he began speaking on the antislavery lecture circuit. William Wells Brown introduced him at the annual Anti-Slavery Convention of the New England States in Boston in May 1849. Later that year he wrote his autobiography, published by Brown and Stearns.⁴⁶ At the close of 1849, J. C. A. Smith followed Brown north, and by January 1850 they were touring together on the lecture circuit; they appeared that month before the Anti-Slavery Mass Convention of Abolitionists of the State of New York in Syracuse and entertained the group with songs.⁴⁷

A number of fugitive slaves commissioned panoramas to complement and help sell their narratives, illustrate their lectures, and rally support for the abolitionist cause.⁴⁸ These large canvases were rolled onto wooden rods held upright and rotated to pass each scene before the audience as a lecturer's narrative unfolded. This mode of entertainment and instruction was popular by midcentury: in December 1848

Caleb P. Purrington and Benjamin Russell's panorama, *A Whaling Voyage Round the World*, made its debut in New Bedford, where it was painted and where Brown had spent most of April 1849 in the home of abolitionist Joseph Ricketson.⁴⁹ Sometime between Brown's arrival in Massachusetts and the January 1850 Syracuse convention, Brown commissioned his own panorama, as the reporter covering the convention for the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* noted:

Mr. BROWN has a very fine lithograph descriptive of his egress from the box at Philadelphia, in which he came from Richmond, and also

a song to the tune of "Uncle Ned," which is descriptive also of the expedition, and is both touching and witty. Brown is getting up a PANORAMA OF SLAVERY which is to be done by an artist in Boston from Browns description, and is soon to be ready for public exhibition. Brown is a man of most decided character; and it is difficult to believe that one year ago he was a chattel!⁵⁰

What brought Wolcott and Brown together is unknown.⁵¹ That Wolcott was sympathetic to Brown's proposal is suggested by his involvement with Associationism and the acquaintance he made



Fig. 7. The Resurrection of Henry Box Brown at Philadelphia, lithograph, registered January 10, 1850; courtesy Library of Congress.

through Boston Associationist groups with such advocates of abolition or antislavery as William Lloyd Garrison, Francis Gould Shaw, and James T. Fisher. An April 1850 article in *The Liberator* described the first invitational showing of the panorama:

On Thursday and Friday evenings, last week, a considerable number of ladies and gentlemen assembled at the Washingtonian Hall, in Bromfield street, by special invitation, to witness a Panorama of Slavery and the Slave Trade, which has been for several months in process of completion by the artist, Mr. JOSIAH WOLCOTT, who has been employed for that purpose by the celebrated HENRY BOX BROWN. Considering the difficulties to be overcome, the time spent upon and the sum paid for it, it is very creditable to the industry, zeal and talent of the artist; and we trust, as it is the design of Mr. Brown to exhibit it in various parts of the country, this novel mode of advancing the anti-slavery cause; by a faithful delineation to the eye of the traffic in human flesh, will be very successful. Some portions of the Panorama are very well executed. The last scene particularly, which is a view of a township, according to a plan of Charles Fourier, and given by the artist to indicate his idea of the fruition of emancipation.⁵²

No part of the panorama is known to have survived, and no detailed published description of *The Mirror of Slavery* is known to exist. Yet its imagery was broadly described in contemporary newspapers, and it is possible to speculate about the source of some of it. Advertisements for the panorama and a brief article in *The Liberator* listed the subject of each scene:

PART I.

The African Slave Trade.
 The Nubian Family in Freedom.
 The Seizure of Slaves.
 Religious Sacrifice.
 Beautiful Lake and Mountain Scenery in Africa.
 March to the Coast.
 View of the Cape of Good Hope.
 Slave Felucca.
 Interior of a Slave Ship.
 Chase of a Slaver by an English Steam Frigate.
 Spanish Slaver at Havana.
 Landing Slaves.
 Interior of a Slave Mart.
 Gorgeous Scenery of the West India Islands.
 View of Charleston, South Carolina.
 The Nubian Family at Auction.
 March of Chain Gang.
 Modes of Confinement and Punishment.
 Brand and Scourge.
 Interior View of Charleston Workhouse, with
 Tread mill in full operation.

PART II.

Sunday among the Slave Population.
 Monday Morning, with Sugar Plantation and
 Mill.
 Women at Work.
 Cotton Plantation.
 View of the Lake of the Dismal Swamp.
 Nubians, escaping by Night.
 Ellen Crafts, Escaping.
 Whipping Post and Gallows at Richmond, Va.
 View of Richmond, Va.
 Henry Box Brown, Escaping.
 View of the Natural Bridge and Jefferson's
 Rock.
 City of Washington, D.C.
 Slave Prisons at Washington.
 Washington's Tomb, at Mount Vernon.

Fairmont Water Works.
 Henry Box Brown Released at Philadelphia.
 Distant View of the City of Philadelphia.
 Henry Bibb, Escaping.
 Nubian Slaves Retaken.
 Tarring and feathering in South Carolina.
 The Slaveholder's Dream.
 Burning Alive.
 Promise of Freedom.
 West India Emancipation.
 Grand Industrial Palace.
 Grand Tableau Finale—UNIVERSAL
 EMANCIPATION.⁵³

Brown seems first to have presented his panorama in Boston, at Washingtonian Hall on Bromfield Street. On April 29, 1850, the *Boston Daily Evening Traveller* noted that Brown “has made himself a part of one of the finest panoramas now on exhibition. This is not a mere delineation of landscape, but a succession of scenes of human action, addressed to the whole mind, and especially to the highest faculties. . . . It is at once a superior picture and a useful lesson.”⁵⁴ The next day, the *Boston Herald* noted that the panorama “is becoming the topic of conversation in all parts of the city and vicinity” and noted that Daniel Webster, then staying at the Revere House, had received a complimentary ticket to view it and hear Brown’s lecture. “At this particular time some portions of the exercise may not be uninteresting to the honorable Senator,” the *Herald* speculated, no doubt an allusion to Webster’s infamous speech, delivered a little more than a month earlier in Congress, in support of the Compromise of 1850 and its provisions for the return of fugitive slaves.

On May 1, the *Herald* noted that the demand to see this “great production of art” was so insistent “in some of the neighboring towns” that Brown decided to tour it for most of May and then return with it to Boston May 28, for the week-long Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society annual meeting. The newspaper described the work in some detail:

In this exhibition, scenes of the African Slave Trade, and a variety of circumstances connected with it, are here described by the skill of the artist in such a manner, as not easily to be misunderstood. The scenes of Slavery at home—here in the United States—covering the most prominent facts relating to this “peculiar institution” are here very pointedly expressed. This is no fancied sketch, but one which many stand ready to vouch for its reality.⁵⁵

Accompanied by J. C. A. Smith and Boston African American printer Benjamin F. Roberts, Brown showed the panorama in Lynn, Springfield, and Worcester.⁵⁶ On May 22, both the *Springfield Daily Post* and the *Daily Republican* announced the panorama’s four-day showing in Springfield. A letter to *The Liberator* from Worcester dated May 25, 1850, described the work, on view for ten days in that city:

The painting is well executed and gives general satisfaction. The description of the various scenes was very handsomely done by Benjamin F. Roberts, a colored man from your city, and the whole passed off in good style.

Sunday evening, the gentlemen belonging to the Panorama gave an entertainment at the City Hall, which was highly creditable to

themselves. Mr. Roberts' lecture was on the 'Condition of the Colored Population in the United States.' The house was thronged and all went away satisfied. Henry Box Brown related many incidents about the peculiar institution, and sung several pieces of sacred music. . . . What makes this enterprise more interesting is the fact that the whole is conducted by colored men.⁵⁷

The attempt of two slaveholder agents to return Brown to Richmond on August 30, 1850, and the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in September brought an abrupt end to Brown's tour.⁵⁸ Taking the panorama, he and J. C. A. Smith soon emigrated to England. There Brown rewrote his narrative for an English publisher,⁵⁹ and the two men continued to display the panorama under the partnership of Brown and Smith.⁶⁰ On July 25, 1851, they dissolved the partnership, but Brown kept *The Mirror of Slavery* and continued to exhibit it in England for at least four more years. American newspapers noted the success of Brown's overseas efforts:

HENRY BOX BROWN is still in England, employed in exhibiting his Panorama of American Slavery. The *London Empire* notices him as follows.

. . . During the exhibition Mr. Brown gives a vivid and genuine description of each passing scene and occasionally intersperses some 'nigger' songs. We may remark that, in our opinion, such an exhibiton is infinitely preferable to a theatrical one; that it is a most effectual mode of instructing the generation to come on the appalling subject; and that it deserves, nay more, it demands the support and encouragement of all Christians and every lover of freedom.⁶¹

Acquiring a panorama of his own, Smith continued on the lecture circuit as well.⁶² Whether he or Brown returned to the United States is unclear, though the historian R. J. M. Blackett has noted that Brown and his second wife, an English woman, "added a panorama of the Indian Mutiny to their lecture schedule" in the late 1850s.⁶³ Intriguing entries in *The Liberator* suggest that the panorama may have been sent back to the United States and used by the former fugitive Anthony Burns, whose capture in and attempted extradition from Boston in 1854 had inflamed the city and garnered national attention.⁶⁴ In 1858 Burns toured New England with the *Grand Moving Mirror of Slavery*, which a letter to *The Liberator* from Lewiston, Maine, described as an "exhibition giving truthful representations of slavery, by one of the best artists in America." Designed to raise money for Burns's continued study for the ministry, the panorama was owned by A. Herriman, Josiah P. Longley, and Alonzo Garcelon, all of Lewiston, Maine.⁶⁵

The *Mirror of Slavery* was a remarkable work whose influence was far-reaching. The selection, title, and arrangement of its individual scenes, the combination of African and American images drawn from historic and contemporary sources, the rhythm of landscape, figure, and genre painting, and the juxtaposition of scenes for ironic effect attest to the breadth of education and sophistication of those involved in its conception and design. A number of lithographs and engravings widely circulated in the first half of the nineteenth century may have been the basis for some of the scenes, including *The Resurrection of*

Henry Box Brown at Philadelphia (see fig. 7), Jail in Washington, (fig. 8), and *The Tomb of Washington, Mount Vernon* (fig. 9).⁶⁶ It is impossible both to identify the exact sources of the imagery for the panorama and to know which images and ideas were contributed by Brown, Wolcott, or others interested in the work. However, *The Liberator* directly attributed the last scene to Wolcott alone.

This final scene, “Universal Emancipation” depicted in a Fourierist community, is surely the greatest confirmation of Wolcott’s espousal of Associationism. It is likely that this image of harmony, brotherhood, and well-being was inspired by Jules Arnout’s lithograph, *Excursions en Harmonie, Vue Générale d’Un Phalanstère ou Village Sociétaire Organisé d’après la Théorie de Fourier* (fig. 10). Wolcott would have seen this

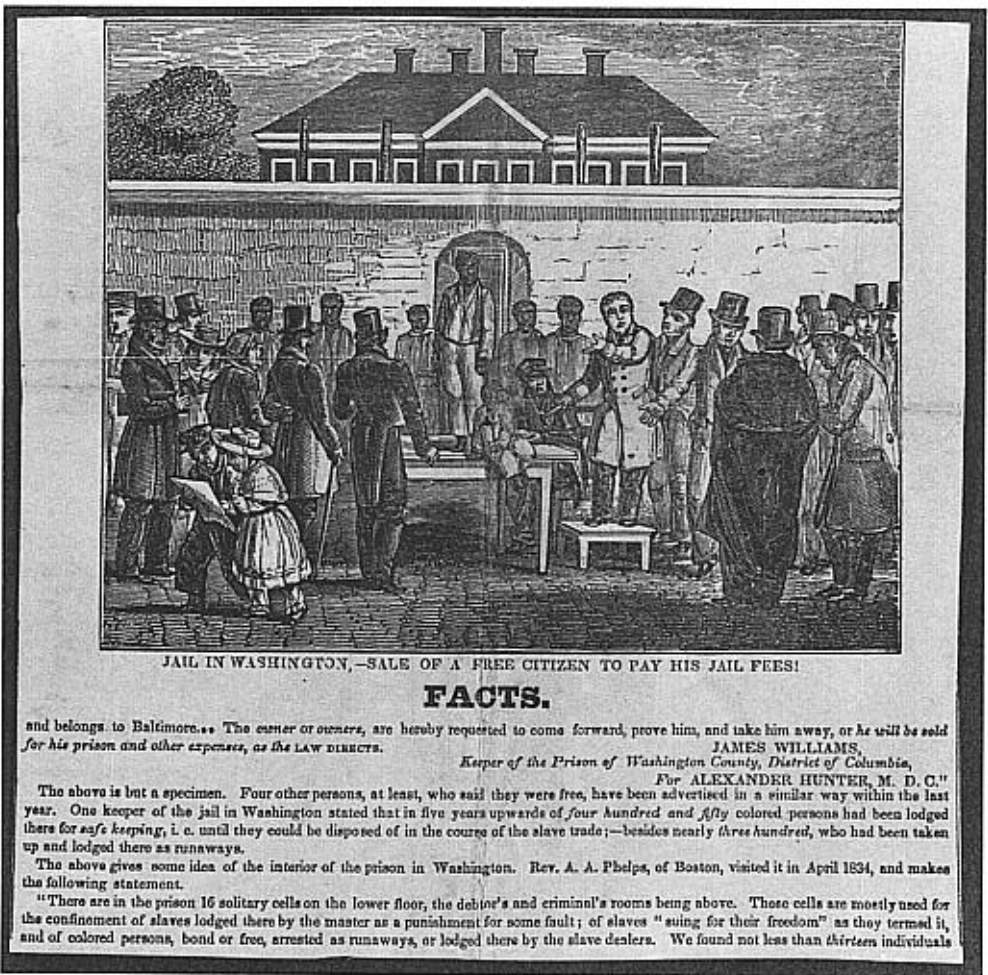


Fig. 8. Jail in Washington,—Sale of a Free Citizen to Pay His Jail Fees, vignette from *The Slave Market of America*, broadside, 1836; courtesy Boston Athenaeum.

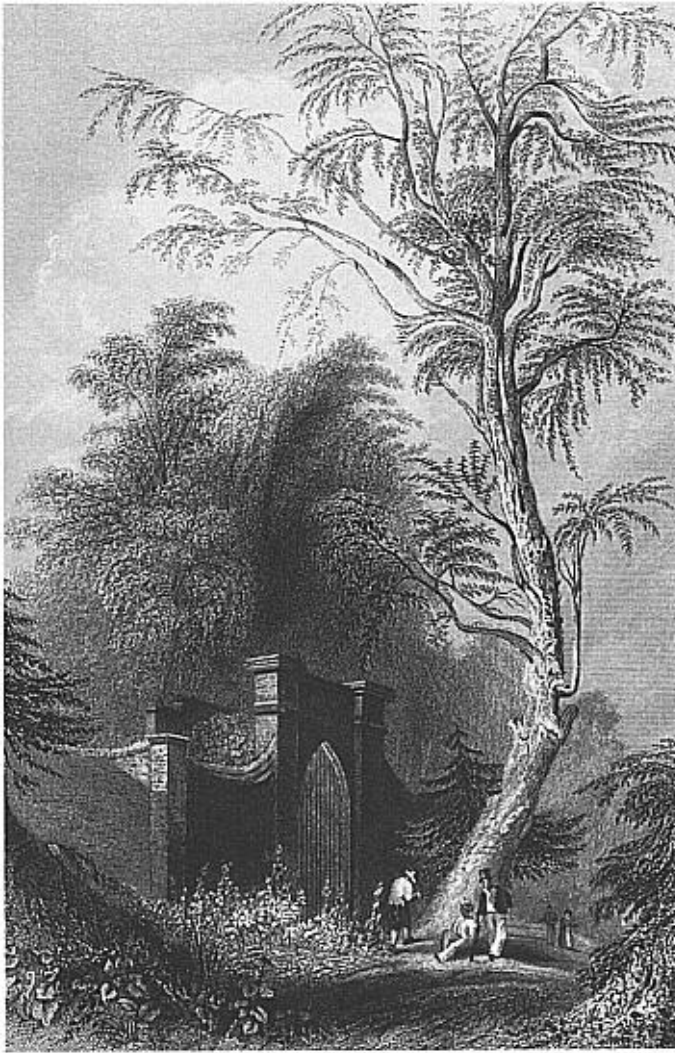


Fig. 9. The Tomb of Washington, Mount Vernon, engraving by James Archer after William H. Bartlett, 1850. An identical impression of this engraving was reproduced in Nathaniel P. Willis, *American Scenery* (1850); courtesy Boston Athenaeum.

image either during Brisbane's lectures or in the company of John Sullivan Dwight.⁶⁷ Like some other Associationists of his day Wolcott undoubtedly believed that the solution to the evils of slavery lay in the gradual and peaceful reconstruction of society according to Fourierist principles.⁶⁸

WOLCOTT AND SPIRITUALISM

In the early 1850s Wolcott became attracted to spiritualism, a movement that, like Asso-

ciationism, held that "humans were perfectible and nature benign."⁶⁹ Others of his circle, including Ripley, Brisbane, Horace Greeley, and William Henry Channing, were also drawn to the movement, as was Andrew Jackson Davis, the so-called "Poughkeepsie Seer." Ripley favorably reviewed Davis's *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind* (1847) in *The Harbinger*. Wolcott's letters to the spiritualist John W. Edmonds

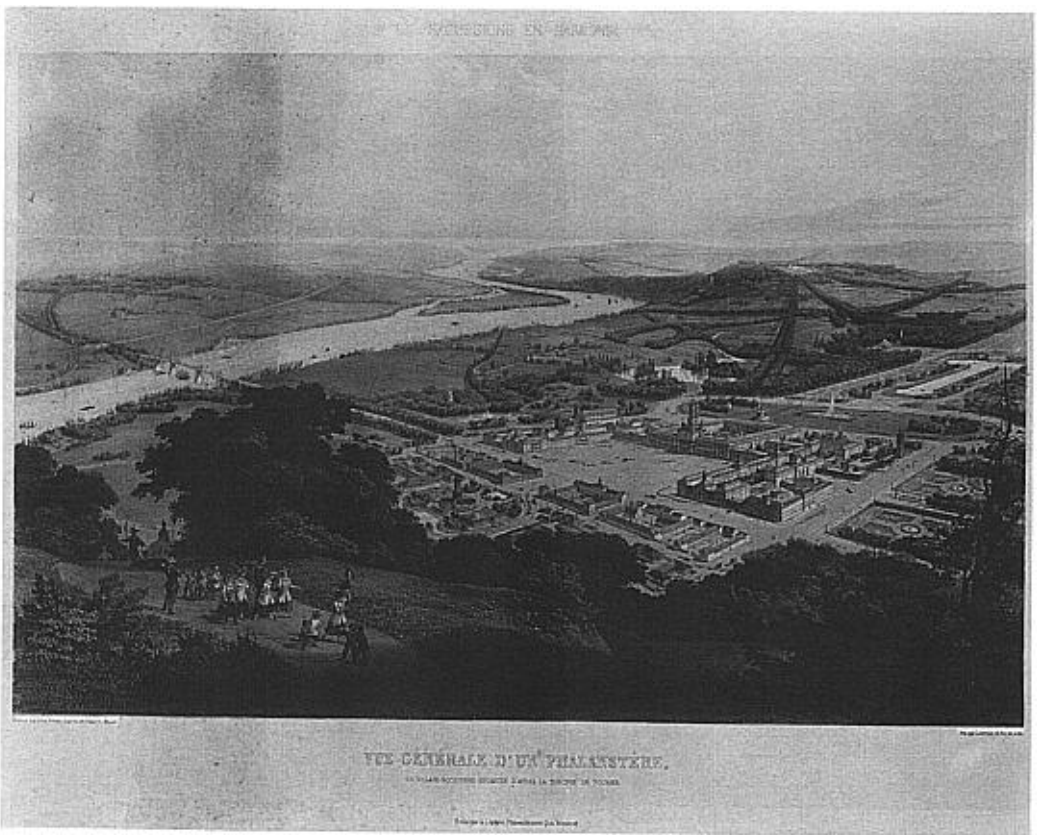


Fig. 10. Jules Arnout, *Excursions en Harmonie, Vue Générale d'un Phalanstère, ou Village Sociétaire Organisé d'après la Théorie de Fourier*, about 1844; courtesy Harvard University Libraries.

document his familiarity with Davis's writings, which called for a philosophy of "Reason, Humanity, and Brotherhood."⁷⁰ Undoubtedly Wolcott found in spiritualism many of the same ideas that had appealed to him in Associationism, and it may have given direction and hope to his own life.

That Wolcott was familiar with spiritualist "sittings" is clear in his 1851 drawing to illustrate an article entitled "Rapology" in the first issue of *The Carpet-Bag* (fig. 11). Wolcott attended a number of sittings between 1851 and 1853, but

according to his own testimony a sitting in Concord, New Hampshire, in March 1853 affected him profoundly:

Last March, one evening, at a party in this place, a sitting was held, in which I joined, supposing it to be merely in sport. We had not sat five minutes before my skepticism was dumb-founded. I arose overwhelmed with shame and confusion, determined to test the matter fully. I tried many experiments of my own invention, but always with a satisfactory result. I soon became convinced that *some* intelligent agent with a will of its own, independent of all

persons present, was the cause of the demonstrations. I was more surprised at these results in this place, where the people have little more spirituality than New Hampshire granite.⁷¹

Growing more intrigued by spiritualism, Wolcott attended another sitting in Boston in June 1853, where he claimed to have been “presented with a view of a picture of singular beauty and composition.” He immediately set the vision down on canvas, and in other sittings, he claimed, he was told how to improve the work in such a way that he was able to create a painting “so much more perfect than I thought myself capable of producing.” He described to Edmonds how the spirit “manifestation” guided his work:

During the painting of these pictures I felt an unusual glow of enthusiasm and most thrilling pleasure. My hand seemed to move with unusual ease and freedom. . . . Something keeps saying within, “Paint! Paint!! Paint these Pictures!!!” The spirits insist upon it that I must give up my present employment and paint the pictures they present me, that the world may have some visible representations of the glories of the future life.⁷²

In reply Edmonds could only encourage Wolcott, for to him the endeavor in which the painter was engaged was nothing short of a “stupendous work of regenerating mankind.”⁷³

One of the images Wolcott received through a medium was “Invitation to the



Fig. 11. *Josiah Wolcott, The “Sitting” at the House of Simon Jones, Esq., illustration in The Carpet-Bag, March 29, 1851; courtesy Massachusetts Historical Society.*

Spirit-Land,” which Edmonds used, at Wolcott’s suggestion, as the frontispiece for his 1853 volume, *Spiritualism* (fig. 12). His letter explaining the origin of the painting was reprinted in the book:

Last June [1853]. . . at a sitting the medium, after passing into a state of partial trance, said she seemed to be in a large gallery surrounded by pictures and portfolios of drawings. ‘She felt impelled to come to me,’ she said, and immediately a very strong mesmeric influence came over me with irresistible power. Her forehead was pressed upon mine with such a force she could not get it away for a few minutes, during which time the subject of the tinted sketch was daguerreotyped upon my mind with remarkable vividness. The two statues appeared

beckoning with their hands and pointing away over the sea. The gondola appeared laden with passengers, and sailed away to strains of most bewitching music over the sea, and vanished.

Next a thin white cloud like a gauze veil descended from the upper right-hand corner to the position in the sketch, and assumed the form represented, beckoning and pointing away over the sea. I can never forget the impression that picture made upon me. The light was a clear beautiful sunset. The figure was clear and transparent, with the distant clouds and mountains being distinctly visible through the folds of drapery. I should call the picture ‘THE INVITATION TO THE SPIRIT-LAND.’⁷⁴

However preoccupied he was with higher concerns, the need to support

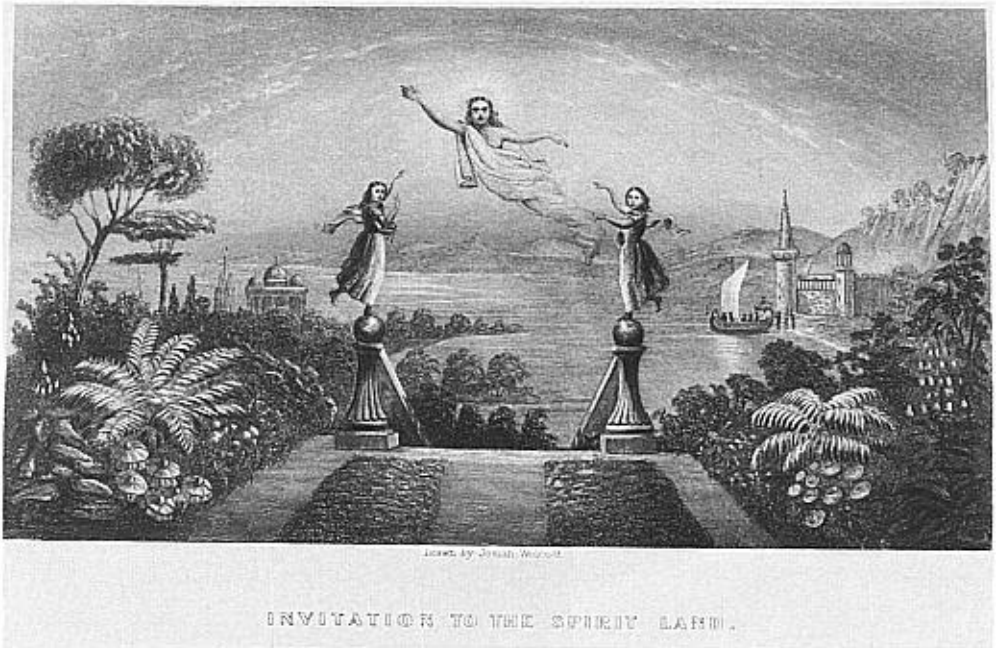


Fig. 12. *Josiah Wolcott, Invitation to the Spirit-Land, frontispiece in John W. Edmonds and George T. Dexter, M.D., Spiritualism (1853); courtesy Boston Athenaeum.*

himself and his family was clearly never far from Wolcott's mind. In one letter to Edmonds he spoke of the growing interest in spiritualism as a potential market. "The time has come, I think, when pictorial illustrations will be demanded for the numerous publications on this subject, and some one of artistic skill, and knowledge of spiritual things will be required to furnish them," he wrote. "I have already some knowledge of drawing on wood for engraving, which might be turned to some account."⁷⁵

During this exchange of letters with Edmonds, Wolcott was living in Concord, New Hampshire. As he disclosed to Edmonds, he had been summoned to Concord in November 1851 "to do the ornamental work on coaches and omnibuses which requires to be of a high character, and must compete with similar work produced in New York." For his work he received "fifty per cent higher pay than any other in the place." Wolcott admitted that his "object in coming here into this comparatively benighted region was mainly to get more knowledge of natural scenery and get further practice on some peculiar parts of ornamental art."⁷⁶ While working for J. S. Abbott and Company, makers of the famed Concord Coach,⁷⁷ he painted views of the "State House, Depot, and Main street, and a likeness of Gen. Franklin Pierce" on the panels of the first omnibus in Concord.⁷⁸

After the Civil War Wolcott added the painting of theatrical scenery to his offerings, as his advertisement in the 1866 Boston city directory documents (fig. 13).⁷⁹ He received the imagery for this

advertisement at various spiritualist sittings in 1853. First he received the image of a "small plaster medal, bearing a figure in armor, with a shield inscribed with the word ONWARD." Later the imagery of a knight and castle came to him, and he was told that the knight was his guardian spirit. This figure, Wolcott told Edmonds, assured him that he need "apprehend no fear from boldly advancing and defending these new views of spiritual existence." The figure, Wolcott stated, pointed to "this sentence written through my own hand: 'You are on the right road. *Onward* and *Upward*, progress.'⁸⁰

A handful of additional works of fine art Wolcott painted have been identified in public and private collections in New England. Their subjects—the Tuttle House, a popular seaside hotel located midway on the stagecoach line between Boston and Neponset (1844); a topographical view of the Merrimack River with Concord in the background (1847);⁸¹ a log raft on a river (1849); visitors enjoying the Flume in the White Mountains (1862)—indicate Wolcott's love of the topographical view, of romantic landscape painting. His delight in nature is particularly evident in his depiction of the Flume. One of his reasons for going to Concord, he told Edmonds, was "to get more knowledge of natural scenery." He stated in a later letter, "I have not been idle, but have stored my mind with much valuable material for future use. Every cloud, hill, tree, bush, running stream, or other natural object, seems to have a charm which I did not see before. An increased store of sketches can testify to that."⁸²



Fig. 13. Advertisement for Josiah Wolcott, Boston Directory (1866); courtesy Boston Athenaeum.

Wolcott's last known painting is one he completed in 1878 of a section of the Green Mountains. On the stretcher is written, "Mt. Mansfield from Sunset Hill, Stowe, Vt., painted by J. Wolcott, 1878" (fig. 14). This painting clearly shows the fertile fields of the Little River valley and the well-known peaks of Camel's Hump and Mt. Mansfield. Here as in other work, Wolcott seems to have filled his painting with a transcendental vision, the depiction of a harmonious relationship between man and nature.⁸³

On June 18, 1885, Josiah Wolcott died of "old age" at his office at 13 Tremont Row. His passing at the age of seventy-one was noted on the front page of the *Boston Daily Globe* two days later. Wolcott is buried with his wife, their two sons, and a number of their grandchildren in a plot that belonged to their son George Wolcott in Belmont, Massachusetts.

In the last of the published letters to Edmonds Wolcott wrote, "You may feel per-

fectly free to use, as you see fit, any letters or my name, if it will be the means of assisting mankind in their forward progress."⁸⁴ To this end Wolcott dedicated his life, whether the goal was expressed by Associationists, abolitionists, or spiritualists.

Wolcott's response artistically and philosophically to Boston's changing social and economic condition opens a new window on the city's history and the extent and character of utopianism's influence. His vision of a better world and his ability to give that vision pictorial representation are lasting legacies. ✱

Formerly an elementary schoolteacher in the Boston area, Nancy Osgood now lives in Norwich, Vermont, where she tutors children with reading disabilities. She became interested in Josiah Wolcott when she was a volunteer with the Harvard Field School in Historical Archaeology at Brook Farm.



Fig. 14. *Josiah Wolcott, Mt. Mansfield from Sunset Hill, Stowe, Vt., 1878; courtesy Fruitlands Museum, Harvard, Massachusetts.*

NOTES

In addition to those mentioned below, many people have generously guided my research and offered suggestions. Most particularly I want to thank Robert Preucel, Peter Drummey, Michael Wentworth, and Trevor Fairbrother for their unfailing support and encouragement. I am grateful to Clive Russ for photographing figs. 1, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, and 14.

1. Lindsay Swift, *Brook Farm* (1900; reprint, Secaucus, N.J.: The Citadel Press, 1973), 204–5. Other artists known to have visited Brook Farm include Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813–92) and Alfred T. Ordway (1819–97).
2. These two views are in the collections of Mrs. Robert Watson (fig. 5) and the Massachusetts Historical Society (fig. 6).
3. Arthur Stuart Walcott, *The Walcott Book* (Salem, Mass.: Sidney Perley, 1925), 120.
4. Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 12.
5. Jonathan P. Harding, "The Painting Gallery," in *A Climate for Art: The History of the Boston Athenaeum Gallery, 1827–1873* (Boston: Thomas Todd Company, 1980), 10, and Robert F. Perkins, Jr., and William J. Gavin III, *The Boston Athenaeum Art Exhibition Index, 1827–1874* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press for the Library of the Boston Athenaeum, 1980), 11–124. Fisher maintained a studio in Boston from 1831 to 1852.

6. John W. Edmonds and George T. Dexter, M.D., *Spiritualism* (New York: Partridge and Brittan, 1853), 1:487. Transcriptions of the correspondence between Edmonds and Wolcott in August 1853 appear in the appendix, prepared for the volume by Nathaniel P. Tallmadge. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for *Old-Time New England* for alerting me to this exceedingly important exchange of letters. The correspondence had been brought to the reader's attention by Kate Southall, who discovered it while working on a film about nineteenth-century spiritualism for Varied Directions International, Camden, Maine.
7. Perkins and Gavin, *Boston Athenaeum Art Exhibition Index*, 154. No further information about these paintings survives. Wolcott spelled his surname with an "o" or an "a." Most of his paintings bear the signature, "J. Wolcott."
8. William Beattie, M.D., *Switzerland Illustrated by a Series of Views Taken Expressly for this Work by W. H. Bartlett, Esq.* (London: George Virtue, 1836), 2:opposite 117. Bartlett had been in North America in 1836 and 1837 making drawings for his better-known volume *American Scenery*, edited by Nathaniel P. Willis and published in London in 1840. The Inventory of American Paintings, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., has a photograph of the Wolcott painting based on this engraving. Gary Kraidman is the former owner who discovered this image to have been the source of Wolcott's view, but the work's current owner is unknown.
9. In addition to the three Boston Athenaeum landscapes, George C. Groce and David H. Wallace, *The New-York Historical Society's Dictionary of Artists in America, 1564-1860* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957), 698, mentions the two Houghton portraits by Wolcott. The 1992 Artist Index of the Inventory of American Paintings lists eight landscape or topographical paintings by him, including the two Brook Farm views and the painting after Bartlett, and James L. Yarnall and William H. Gerdtts, *Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues* (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall and Co., 1986), 5:3991, cite the exhibition of his "Monument Rock, Sierras."
10. Edmonds and Dexter, *Spiritualism*, 1:487.
11. Frank H. Goodyear, Jr., *Thomas Doughty, 1793-1856* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1973), 17.
12. *Boston Directory for the Year Commencing July 1, 1835* (Boston: Charles Stimpson, Jr., 1835), 364; see also *Boston Directory 1839*, 421; 1840, 439; 1841, 476; 1842, 506.
13. Edmonds and Dexter, *Spiritualism*, 1:487.
14. Boston Street Books 1845, 1846, Ward 9, pages 15 and 16, respectively; handwritten volumes in Office of City Clerk, Archives and Management Division, City of Boston, Hyde Park, Mass. That Wolcott was regarded chiefly as an ornamental painter until his death is apparent in his front-page obituary in the *Boston Daily Globe*, June 20, 1885, which identifies him as such.
15. Sinclair Hamilton, *Early American Book Illustrators and Wood Engravers, 1670-1870* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), 2 (supplement):152-53.

16. *Boston Directory for the Year Commencing July 1, 1851* (Boston, Mass.: Sampson Davenport and Co., 1851), 35.
17. *The Carpet-Bag*, Mar. 29, 1851, 5, Massachusetts Historical Society.
18. Hamilton, *Early American Book Illustrators*, 2:152–53; see also the 1958 edition of this title, 92–93. The engraving of Partington appeared on the first page of *The Carpet-Bag* 1, 13 (June 28, 1851). Who made the engraving on page 274 of the 1876 edition of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is not known, although Hamilton has speculated that the creator may have been Frederick M. Coffin. A number of other and quite different illustrations of Aunt Polly appear in the same edition, some of them bearing the name or initials of True W. Williams.
19. The Wolcott view of Brook Farm now in the collections of Mrs. Robert B. Watson has been reproduced in Edith R. Curtis, "A Season in Utopia," *American Heritage*, April 1959, 58–59, on the jacket of Edith R. Curtis, *A Season in Utopia: The Story of Brook Farm* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1961), and in Margaret C. S. Christman, *1846: Portrait of the Nation* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Portrait Gallery, 1996), 156. The other view, in the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, has been reproduced in *Witness to America's Past: Two Centuries of Collecting by the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society/Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1991), 32, 163; Sterling F. Delano, *Brook Farm: A Retrospective and Celebration* (Villanova, Pa.: Falvey Memorial Library, Villanova University, 1991); and Carl J. Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 222. An 1894 copy by F. C. Sanborn of the second Brook Farm painting appears as the frontispiece in John T. Codman, *Brook Farm: Historic and Personal Memoirs* (Boston: Arena Publishing Company, 1894) and again, copyrighted by M. G. Cutter, in Mary Crawford, *Romantic Days in Old Boston* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1910), 39. "Josiah Wolcott, 1845" was carefully written in the lower left-hand corner of Sanborn's copy.
20. R. J. M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), and C. Peter Ripley et al., eds., *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, vol. 1, *The British Isles, 1830–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 174–75 n.11, mention Brown's panorama but do not mention or connect the work to Wolcott. I am indebted to Cynthia Griffin Wolff of MIT for tying the panorama to Wolcott, an assertion she later corroborated in "Passing beyond the Middle Passage: Henry 'Box' Brown's Translations of Slavery," *The Massachusetts Review* 37, 1 (Spring 1996): 42–44, n. 13, n. 17.
21. *Witness to America's Past*, 164. Brenda M. Lawson wrote the entry on Wolcott in this publication.
22. Guarneri, *Utopian Alternative*, 65.
23. George Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nov. 9, 1840, quoted in Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *George Ripley* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882), 307–8.
24. Swift, *Brook Farm*, 26–33.
25. *The Phalanx* 15, July 27, 1844, 220.

26. This "Call to the Friends of Social Reform in New England" appeared in the Fourierist newspaper *Brisbane* had founded, *The Phalanx* 3, Dec. 5, 1843, 44. The December convention elected Brook Farmers George Ripley and Charles Dana officers; William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass attended the meeting. See *The Phalanx* 4, Jan. 5, 1844, 46.
27. *The Phalanx* 20, Dec. 9, 1844, 308, and 21, Feb. 8, 1844 [sic], 309. George Ripley was named president of the New England Fourier Society. Guarneri, *Utopian Alternative*, 232.
28. Guarneri, *Utopian Alternative*, 57–58.
29. See entries naming Wolcott (Walcott) in the Brook Farm ledger in November 1844 (page 5), April 1845 (page 72), July 1845 (page 117), and October 1845 (page 171). The ledger is in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
30. *The Phalanx* 23, May 28, 1845, 343.
31. Amy L. Reed, ed., *Letters from Brook Farm, 1844–1847*, by Marianne Dwight (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.: Vassar College, 1928), 123–25. Who Mr. Rogers is not precisely known, but he was probably a carpenter from Roxbury who helped build the phalanstery.
32. The City of Roxbury purchased Brook Farm and used it as the site of an almshouse from 1849 to 1855. The Unitarian Rev. James Freeman Clarke then bought the property and lent it to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1861; it became known as Camp Andrew and served as the encampment for the Second Massachusetts Regiment of Infantry. From 1871 to 1971 the site housed the Martin Luther Orphans' Home. It is now owned by the Metropolitan District Commission. None of the buildings from the short-lived utopian period survives; the Hive, the community's focal point, burned on Aug. 8, 1854. See *Boston Evening Herald*, Aug. 9, 1854, 4.
33. Reed, ed., *Letters from Brook Farm*, 148.
34. The Massachusetts Historical Society assigns the date 1844 to this painting because it is the earliest possible time it could have been painted. See *Witness to America's Past*, 164. This oil-on-panel painting is unsigned. It is attributed to Wolcott because of its provenance and because of information written on the back of the panel that identifies him as the artist. On the back too is a rough pencil sketch of the Hive and the names of the various buildings in the painting. In the center is written "Phalanstery." Underneath "Phalanstery" is written "being built," with a line drawn through. The date "1845" was, as note 19 points out, marked on the copy of this painting reproduced in John Codman's 1894 book. Codman was a former owner of the painting. Many thanks to Anne Bentley for helping to verify this information.
35. Records of the Boston Union of Associationists, 1846–47, Houghton Library, Harvard University. See especially the records of the subcommittees listed. For a history of the Boston Union see Sterling F. Delano, "The Boston Union of Associationists (1846–1851): 'Association Is to Me the Great Hope of the World,'" in *Studies in the American Renaissance 1996*, ed. Joel Myerson (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia), 5–40.
36. Record of the proceedings of the Reli-

- gious Union of Associationists, Boston, Sunday, Jan. 3 and Mar. 21, 1847, Massachusetts Historical Society.
37. Records of the executive committee of the Boston Union of Associationists, Mar. 17, 1847, 2, Houghton Library.
 38. Records of the Boston Union of Associationists, Mar. 10, 1847, 8; *The Harbinger* 4, Feb. 27, 1847, 192. Documents indicating that Wolcott bought tickets for the Fourier birthday celebration are among the union's papers at Houghton Library.
 39. Records of the Boston Union of Associationists, Sept. 8, 1847, 39.
 40. Account Book, Boston Religious Union of Associationists, James T. Fisher, treasurer; Treasurer's Account, Boston Union of Associationists, Dec. 29, 1847, Houghton Library.
 41. Ripley et al., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 1:174–75 n.11.
 42. The quote about Wolcott is from *The Liberator* 20, 17, Apr. 26, 1850, 67. On the panorama as an “iconoclastic retelling,” see Wolff, “Passing beyond the Middle Passage,” 31. Many thanks to Cynthia Wolff for guiding me to the *Liberator* issues that discussed Wolcott and the panorama.
 43. Ripley et al., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 1:174–75 n.11.
 44. Henry “Box” Brown, *Narrative of Henry Box Brown* (Boston: Brown and Stearns, 1849), 59, 92.
 45. Ripley et al., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 1:174 n. 11, 298 n.2. Samuel Smith was imprisoned for seven years for helping Brown, while lawyers for J. C. A. Smith were able to secure his release. See the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* 37, Feb. 7, 1850, 145, which in a report of the convention in Syracuse stated, “Mr. BROWN said he was shipped from Richmond by a white man. Smith for assisting was taken up and put in prison—had six lawyers and got clear—cost him \$900—was born a freeman—had free papers.”
 46. *National Anti-Slavery Standard* 2, June 7, 1849, 5; Brown, *Narrative of Henry Box Brown*.
 47. J. C. A. Smith to Gerrit Smith, Aug. 6, 1851, quoted in Ripley et al., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 1:295; on the Syracuse convention see *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Jan. 31, 1850, and Feb. 7, 1850. Upon his return to Boston, Brown wrote the abolitionist and philanthropist Gerrit Smith asking him “please to lend me the some [sic] of one hundred & fifty dollars, until I can get out my panorama and I will faithfully return the same amount to you again soon and you will do me a great favor [sic]”; Brown to Gerrit Smith, Feb. 1, 1850, Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University. Brown asked Smith to direct his reply to 21 Cornhill in Boston, the location of the offices of *The Liberator*. Whether Gerrit Smith lent the money is unknown. Both Brown and J. C. A. Smith continued to keep in touch with Smith. See Ripley et al., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 1:298 n.2.
 48. Robert L. Hall, “Massachusetts Abolitionists Document the Slave Experience,” in *Courage and Conscience: Black and White Abolitionists in Boston*, ed. Donald M. Jacobs (Bloomington: Indiana University Press for the Boston

- Athenaeum, 1993), 83.
49. Thanks to Judy Downey at the Whaling Museum of Old Dartmouth Historical Society, New Bedford, for researching the date of the panorama's debut in that city.
50. *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Feb. 7, 1850, 145. It is quite possible that the lithograph Brown had with him is the one reproduced here as fig. 7. Bernard F. Reilly, Jr., *American Political Prints, 1766–1876* (Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1991), 333, notes that the Library of Congress's "impression of *The Resurrection* was deposited for copyright on January 10, 1850." Wolcott may have used this lithograph as the basis for the scene, "Henry Box Brown Released at Philadelphia," in the panorama.
51. Ripley et al., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 1:174–75 n.11, notes that Brown's panorama, "apparently . . . fifty thousand square feet in size," was "painted by Boston artists." The latter claim was reiterated with a citation to Ripley in Jack Salzman, David Lionel Smith, and Cornel West, eds., *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History* (New York: Macmillan Library Reference USA, Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1996), 1:446. That the panorama was painted by "several of the most skillful artists in Boston" is confirmed in the *Boston Daily Evening Traveller*, Apr. 29, 1850. However, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Feb. 7, 1850, clearly states that one artist was involved, as does an article in the *Boston Herald*, May 1, 1850; two issues of *The Liberator*, Apr. 19 & 26, 1850, cite Wolcott as the sole artist of the panorama.
52. *The Liberator* 20, 16, Apr. 19, 1850, 62.
53. *The Liberator* 20, 19, May 10, 1850, 75.
54. *Daily Evening Traveller*, Apr. 29, 1850.
55. *Boston Herald*, Apr. 30 and May 1, 1850.
56. J. C. A. Smith, who later inserted "Boxer" into his name to signify the role he played in "boxing" Brown, undoubtedly helped to operate the panorama. See J. C. A. Smith to Gerrit Smith in Ripley et al., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 1:293–97. According to *ibid.*, 298 n.2, Roberts wrote a "formal narration for the scenes" in the panorama and at times appeared with Brown and Smith. On Roberts's participation, see also Hall, "Massachusetts Abolitionists," 85. The author knows of no surviving copy of Roberts's narration. His efforts to enroll his daughter Sarah in Boston's segregated schools in the late 1840s and 1850s attracted much publicity as well as the legal services of Charles Sumner, and his suit against the Boston city schools instigated their ultimate integration in 1855. See Charles Sumner, *Argument. . . against the Constitutionality of Separate Colored Schools, in the Case of Sarah C. Roberts vs. the City of Boston, Before the Supreme Court of Mass., Dec. 4, 1849* (Boston, 1849); *Report of the Colored People of the City of Boston on the Subject of Exclusive Schools. Submitted by Benjamin F. Roberts, to the Boston Equal School Rights Committee* (Boston, 1850); Hall, "Massachusetts Abolitionists," 85, and Dorothy Porter Wesley, "Integration versus Separatism: William Cooper Nell's Role in the Struggle for Equality," in Jacobs, *Courage and Conscience*, 211.
57. *The Liberator* 20, 22, May 31, 1850, 87. A notice that Brown's panorama was coming to Worcester appeared in *The Massachusetts*

- Spy*, May 8, 1850, and a longer review was printed in the May 15, 1850, issue.
58. *National Anti-Slavery Standard* 17, Sept. 19, 1850, 66.
 59. Henry "Box" Brown, *Narrative of the Life of Henry "Box" Brown: Written by Himself* (Manchester, Eng., 1851).
 60. On the partnership, see Ripley et al., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 1:293-97, 298 n.2, 299 n.6.
 61. *National Anti-Slavery Standard* 41, Mar. 3, 1855.
 62. Ripley et al., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 1:293.
 63. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, 210.
 64. Hall, "Massachusetts Abolitionists," 90-91.
 65. *The Liberator* 28, 36, Sept. 3, 1858, 143 and 28, 38, Sept. 17, 1858, 151. For notices of the "Mirror of Slavery" in Portland, Maine, see *Maine Temperance Journal*, Sept. 2, 1858, and *Maine Daily Advertiser*, Sept. 7, 1858. Ripley et al., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, vol. 4, *The United States, 1847-1858* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 396 n.3.
 66. Many thanks to Catharina Slautterback at the Boston Athenaeum for helping determine possible sources of the scenes in the panorama.
 67. Delano, *Brook Farm*. An entry in the Boston Public Library card catalog for this same lithograph states, "On the back [of the lithograph] is the following note in pencil: 'Phalanstery. Presented to John S. Dwight by Albert Brisbane in 1844. One of two copies brought by Mr. Brisbane.'" Wolcott, Brisbane, and Dwight were all members of the Boston Religious Union of Associationists.
 68. Guarneri, *Utopian Alternative*, 254.
 69. *Ibid.*, 350.
 70. *Ibid.*, 349; Edmonds and Dexter, *Spiritualism*, 485. The letters between Wolcott and Edmonds make clear that Wolcott was familiar with the *Shekinah*, a 1853 volume that explored the nature and mission of spiritualism. See S. B. Brittan, ed., *The Shekinah* (New York: Partridge and Brittan, 1853), 3:18.
 71. Edmonds and Dexter, *Spiritualism*, 483.
 72. *Ibid.*, 483-84.
 73. *Ibid.*, 486.
 74. *Ibid.*, 488. This image was reproduced on the title page of Bret E. Carroll, *Spiritualism in Antebellum America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).
 75. *Ibid.*, 492.
 76. Edmonds and Dexter, *Spiritualism*, 487.
 77. Carroll, *Spiritualism*, 487. Wolcott lived in Concord from 1851 to 1853 and again in 1855-56. *Concord Directory* (Concord, N.H.: Charles L. Wheeler, 1853), 88; David Watson, *The Concord Directory* (Concord, N.H.: Merriam and Merrill, 1856), 80.
 78. The carriage was owned by George Dane of the Pavilion Hotel. See Nathaniel Bouton, *History of Concord, from Its First Grant in 1725, to the Organization of the City Government in 1853, with a History of the Ancient Penacooks* (Concord, N.H.: Benning W. Sanborn, 1856), 494.
 79. Wolcott used his 1866 advertisement in Boston directories until 1874, changing only the spelling of his name (from "Walcott" to "Wolcott") and the address of his studio. From 1877 to 1882, he listed himself in the business section of the director as a "scenic painter."

80. Ibid., 484, 489. In a letter dated Aug. 10, 1853, Wolcott told Edmonds that he was familiar with A. J. Davis's latest book, probably *The Present Age and Inner Life* (1853). On page 130 of this work, Davis presented a "Table of Media," a scale showing "the relative positions of the many and various offices of the spiritual army." The twenty-four media are divided into four strata—Outward, Inward, Onward, and Upward. Wolcott probably considered himself a Pictorial Medium, able to depict spiritual truths, in the Onward stratum, No. 16.
81. This painting, in the collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society, is said to have been painted for Lewis Downing, Jr. (1820–1901), of the stagecoach firm Abbot and Downing. See *The Decorative Arts of New Hampshire: A Sesquicentennial Exhibition* (Concord: New Hampshire Historical Society, June 28, 1973), entry 99.
82. Edmonds and Dexter, *Spiritualism*, 487, 491.
83. This painting has been reproduced in "Fruitlands: Preserving New England," *Colonial Homes*, October 1996, 73.
84. Edmonds and Dexter, *Spiritualism*, 492–93.