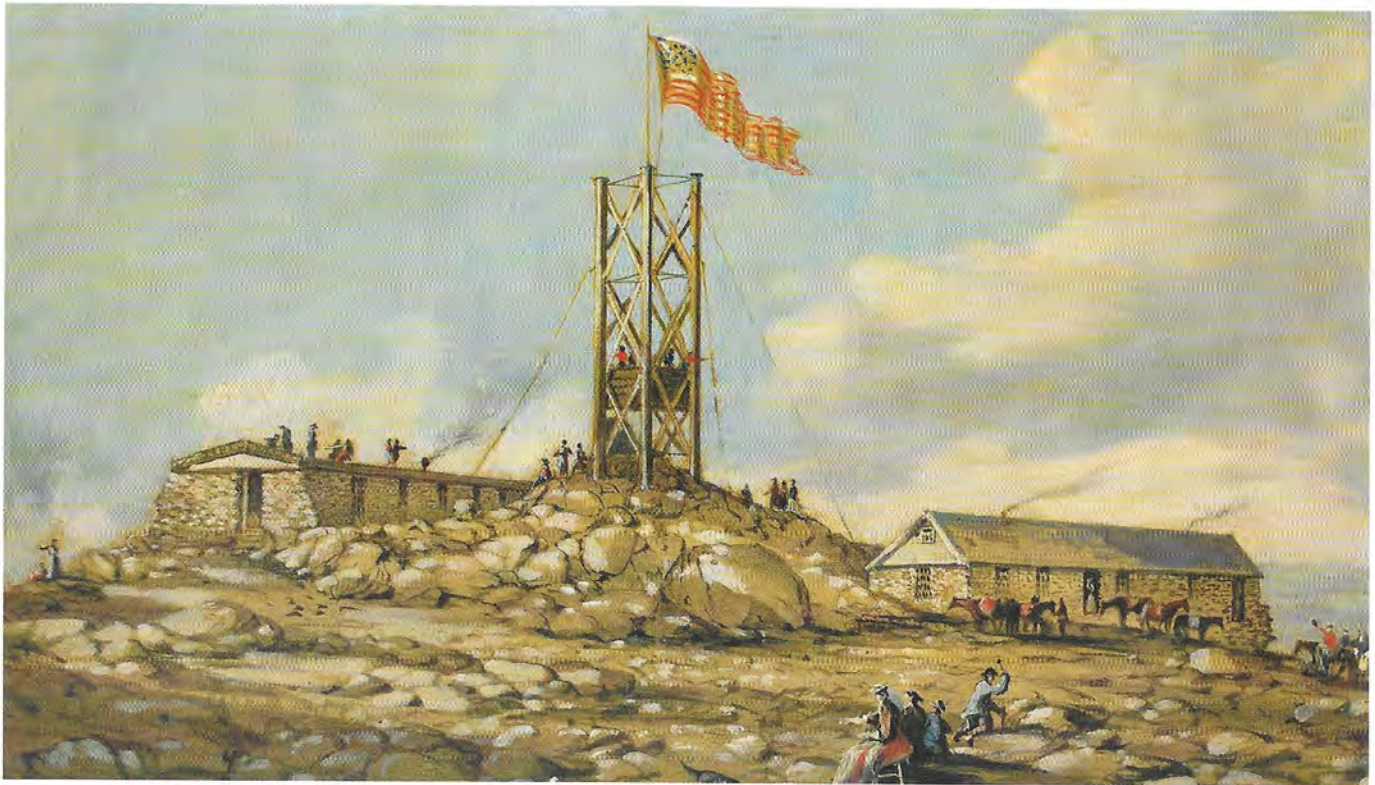


## ITEMS CONSERVED, LOANED FOR MOUNT WASHINGTON EXHIBITION



*Summit of Mount Washington*, 1856, a painting attributed to John Denison Crocker (1822–1907), was conserved by the Society in 2012 and is currently on loan to the Currier Museum of Art. John Hubbard Spaulding (1821–93), builder of Tip-Top House (left) and the painting's owner, noted that the observatory featured at the center of the painting had been a failure, "as most people felt that they were high enough without being carried any higher." Gift of Martha Abbott Hill and Bartlett Cushman Hill, descendants of John Hubbard Spaulding.

The New Hampshire Historical Society recently worked with the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) to conserve a register for the first guest house for visitors to the top of Mount Washington. The register records the names and hometowns of people who visited the Mount Washington Summit House from 1852 to 1853. Some guests also made further notes in the register, most of which describe their travel to the summit. Other annotations include pencil drawings, short poems, and a September 1852 entry that describes viewing the northern lights.

The Society gave priority to conservation of the register in preparation for its loan to the Currier Museum of Art for its exhibition *Mount Washington*:

*The Crown of New England*, on view from October 1, 2016, to January 16, 2017. The register is one of several items from the Society's collections loaned for the exhibition, and its condition needed to be stabilized before even a limited period of public display. NEDCC's conservation of the register included surface cleaning and treatment to reduce discoloration and acidity, as well as mending tears, losses, and folds to stabilize the manuscript for years to come.

The conserved register will be displayed in context with a rich selection of historic prints, vintage photographs, scientific reports, guidebooks, and paintings, all of which illustrate the importance of the

continued on page 5

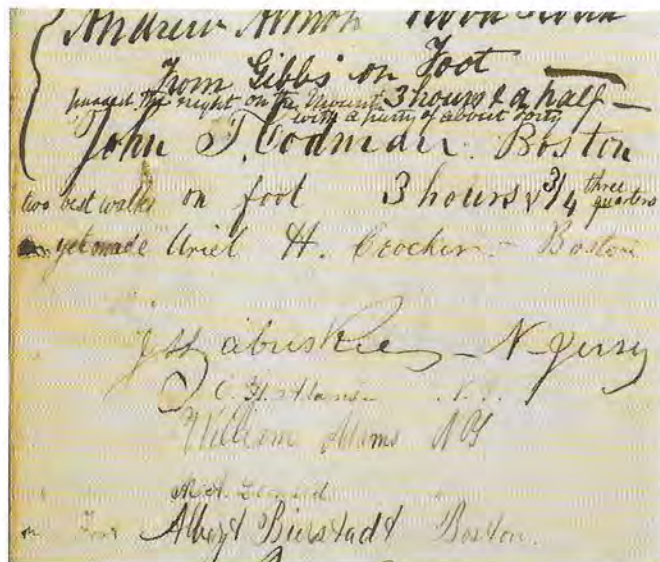


# MOUNT WASHINGTON continued from page 1

mountain. "People are fascinated by the beauty and majesty of Mount Washington, and for good reason," says Andrew Spahr, Currier director of collections and exhibitions. He notes the historical impact of the mountain: "This exhibition will present major paintings by Thomas Cole and John Kensett that helped alter the course of American art in the 19th century, as well as prints, photographs, and early guide books that made the region one of the most popular tourist attractions in America in the mid-1800s."

The Summit House register has a special connection with an item featured in the exhibition, *The Emerald Pool* by Albert Bierstadt, on loan from the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Virginia. This impressive painting won a medal at the International Exposition in Vienna in 1873 and subsequently toured the United States and Europe, but the exhibition marks its first return to New England since it was painted in 1870. Bierstadt worked on the piece while staying at Glen House near Pinkham Notch; his 1852 signature in the register shows that his interest in the region had been piqued years earlier.

While physical conservation improved the register's condition and allows for limited display, the object remains fragile, particularly along its original leather spine. The Society's goal for conservation projects is twofold: to extend the physical lives of objects and to ensure future access for researchers and the public. With this in mind, the conservation process for



The signature of artist Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902) appears in this register for the Summit House, where visitors to Mount Washington from 1852 to 1853 recorded their names, hometowns, and other observations. Bierstadt was among many artists of the period inspired by the beauty of the White Mountains. Gift of Martha Abbott Hill and Bartlett Cushman Hill.

the register included digitization of each page. The resulting set of high-resolution images will be easily accessible to researchers via the Society's online collections catalog, enabling the Society to limit future use and handling of the object. This process has resulted in the register's display in a public exhibition and a new digital resource for researchers, making this another conservation success story.

