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George Fisk Comfort

David Tatham

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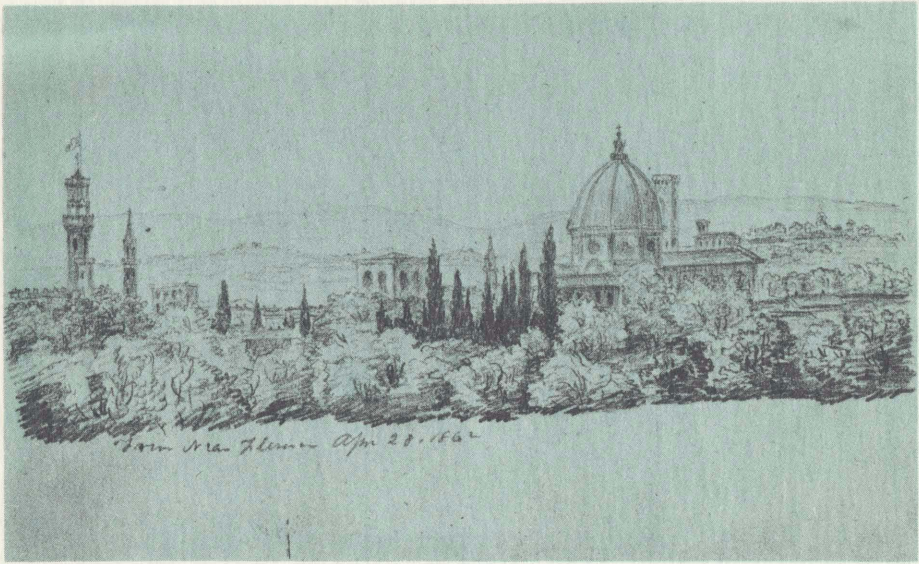


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Florence, 1862, by George Fisk Comfort. From his "Italian Tour Sketch Book" in Syracuse University Archives.

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George Fisk Comfort

by David Tatham

1973 marks the centennial of the founding of the College of Fine Arts at Syracuse University, the first degree-granting college of its kind in America¹ and in many respects the model for most of the American programs in fine arts education of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The College of Fine Arts no longer exists as an entity – it was formally dissolved in 1945² – but those schools, departments, and programs which carry on its work still bear something of the stamp of the college's founder, George Fisk Comfort (1833-1910)³. His long career, at Syracuse and elsewhere, as a scholar, educator, and organizer of the arts was devoted to nothing less than elevating the cultural level of his nation and moving it ever closer to the high level of civilization he was confident it would one day attain. At the close of his life he could claim three monuments to his labors as an advocate for the arts: the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Syracuse University College of Fine Arts, and the Syracuse (now Everson) Museum of Art. His contribution in each case was not in dollars but in ideas and unremitting labor.

When at age thirty-nine Comfort was called to a professorship at the new Methodist university at Syracuse, he had already established himself as an exceptional scholar and teacher. After his graduation from Wesleyan University in Connecticut in 1857, he taught languages and drawing in private academies while he concurrently worked on an M.A. at Wesleyan, awarded in 1860. Late that year he sailed for Europe, where he remained until 1865, studying intensively, and at first hand, the arts of western civilization, from ancient times to the present. During this long stay in Europe, Comfort toured

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¹ Yale University has sometimes been given priority in this matter, probably because a fine arts building was completed there in 1866, but the Yale School of Art did not formally open until 1879 and did not grant degrees until 1891.

² The college existed in name only between 1945 and 1971 as each of its three major units, art, architecture, and music, functioned as independent schools, each with a director. The School of Art and School of Music became elements of the new College of Visual and Performing Arts in 1971. Since 1946 the task of teaching the history of the arts has been a primary responsibility of the department of fine arts in the College of Arts and Sciences.

³ The Comfort Papers are in the Syracuse University Archives and are available for use by scholars in the George Arents Research Library.

on foot whenever possible, claiming later to have averaged twenty to forty miles a day.⁴ After a stay of five months in Rome, he walked to Florence by way of Orvieto, Assisi, and Sienna, “as railroads were but sparsely built in Southern Europe and bicycles were not yet invented.”⁵ After two years in Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor, he walked over the Alps from Lake Como to Innsbruck, and spent the next two years in Berlin with occasional visits to other places in Germany, England, France, and the Low Countries.

On his return to America in 1865, Comfort joined Allegheny College at Meadville, Pennsylvania, as professor of modern languages and esthetics, the first occasion, so far as is known, of the recognition of the field of esthetics by a professorial appointment in the United States. He had been invited to Allegheny because planning was underway there to establish the first comprehensive teaching museum of art history in America and with it the first degree-granting course in the fine arts. Comfort’s appointment signified the beginning of the implementation of the plan and also, alas, the end. The development of the museum and course of studies had depended on promised gifts from friends of the college whose wealth was linked to the Pennsylvania oil boom. When the boom collapsed in 1866, the plans for the museum and program were at first postponed and then abandoned altogether as the business interests of virtually all of the college’s chief patrons failed. Comfort was less than optimistic about his own future as a language teacher at Allegheny and made his availability as a lecturer in esthetics and art history known at other colleges.⁶

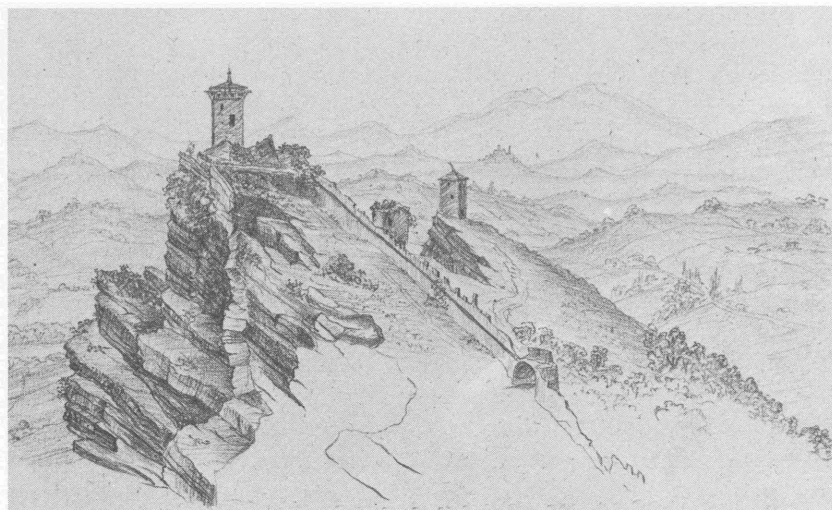
In 1868, Comfort joined Drew Theological Seminary in New Jersey as a lecturer in Christian art, a part-time association which lasted until 1874. In 1869, while living in New York, he formed the American Philological Society, an organization which is to this day one of our great learned societies. He began a series of six German language text books for Harper and Brothers, books which remained standard school texts into the twentieth century. Then in November, 1869, he was invited to address a group of prominent New Yorkers at the Union League Club on the subject of the need for a great art museum in that city.

The invitation had been extended by the publisher George P. Putnam, chairman of the club’s art committee which included the landscape painters John F. Kensett and Worthington Whitridge, the sculptor John Quincy Adams Ward, and the collector and dealer Samuel P. Avery. It seems to have

⁴Comfort to Ralph M. Comfort, December 29, 1901, Comfort Family Papers.

⁵“Biographical Sketch,” 1902, Comfort Family Papers.

⁶Comfort to President John Maclean of Princeton University, April 14, 1866, Princeton University Archives, Princeton, New Jersey.



An unidentified sketch from the “Italian Sketch Book,” 1861-62. See cover illustration, also. From Syracuse University Archives.

been Avery who recommended Comfort for the job, probably on the basis of his lectures at Drew and, evidently, at Princeton.⁷ Comfort was a dynamic and eloquent speaker, but of course these were hardly uncommon qualities among academics in an age when a command of rhetoric was a fundamental requisite for a professorship. Comfort’s special distinction, and surely the basis for Avery’s recommendation, was his authoritative knowledge of art history, rare in America in the 1860s, coupled with a first hand acquaintance with the most advanced practices in the field of public art museum operations, a knowledge gained in Berlin and London. It is doubtful that any other American was better qualified to speak to the question of what kind of museum should be established in New York and for what purposes.

⁷The notion that Comfort was a member of the Princeton faculty has appeared in print a number of times and probably derives from Putnam’s references in the report of his committee to “Professor Comfort of Princeton,” (*A Metropolitan Art-Museum – Proceedings of a Meeting – November 23, 1869*, New York: Printed for the Committee [of Fifty], 1869, pp. 6, 7). In fact, the archives of Princeton University have no record of any regular association of Comfort with Princeton, though the letter cited in the preceding notes suggests that Comfort may have given lectures as a kind of visiting scholar. If so, we probably have the basis for Putnam’s reference.

William Cullen Bryant, the sage of American literature, presided at the meeting and introduced Comfort to the gathering of three hundred or so of the city's leading citizens, most of them discomfited by what they felt was America's backwardness in matters of culture, a feeling which was a prominent part of the opinions and tastes of the Gilded Age. Although it was clear enough to anyone who thought about it that the production of American artists of genius could not be ordered, it was just as clear that the wealth of the United States, and New York in particular, could be marshalled to erect a museum building equal to any in the world and then to fill it with art treasures on a scale unmatched except perhaps by the greatest centers of culture in Europe. Such a museum would tower above the worthy but very limited collections gathered in America by individual collectors and academies. It seemed entirely reasonable to think that New York could within a few years transform itself from a provincial and perhaps philistine city in matters of art to the cultural capital of the New World.⁸ The will and resources of those assembled at the Union League Club were ample to the task, their tastes, shaped by extensive European travel, were refined, and now they listened as Professor Comfort explained how the proposed new museum (already tagged the Metropolitan) could from the outset be the most advanced of all the world's great treasure houses.

He began by underlining the inferiority of the art-life of America, in relation not only to European culture but also to American achievements in industry, commerce, and government. "Still, in no country in the world is there more native genius for art than in America."⁹ And so, by counterpoising a lamentable past with the brightest of futures, Comfort shaped his audience's determination to make up for the inadequacies of their culturally deprived forbears. He talked about the nature of collections, the place of public museums in a democratic society, the location of museums in parks and near universities, and the differences between major museums, such as New York would have, and the smaller, regional museums which he predicted would soon spring forth in such places as Bangor, Ithaca, and Ann Arbor. Indeed, he accurately foresaw a veritable sprouting of museums, large and small, across the landscape from coast to coast and believed, with his essentially American vision, that they would be vital instruments of uplift:

Many important results will be accomplished by these museums. A purer taste will be cultivated . . . chaste and tasteful ornamentation will replace the glaring colors, gaudy decorations, and bad designs that so often disfigure the furniture and walls of our

⁸ Similar notions were in the air in Boston and Chicago. A generation later, all three cities could claim that their goals had been largely achieved.

⁹ George F. Comfort, "Art Museums in America," *Old and New*, April 1870, p. [3]. This article is a revision of his Union League Club address, broadened to apply to museum interests throughout the nation.

dwelling. . . . Our streets will be filled with a purer architecture and our parks with statuary of noble motive and better execution. It will become fashionable also to visit the museums . . . and to become acquainted with every important new work of art that is received. . . . A certain portion of the vast sums . . . now spent on luxurious living, expensive furniture, costly clothing, and fast horses, will be devoted to adorning the walls of our houses with works of high art. That large part of the population which must be forever prevented from purchasing works of art for their own homes, the poor, will have free access to galleries which no private citizen, whatever his wealth, would ever be able to gather together. And who can tell in how many young minds the germs of genius will thus be developed, which will give a glory to our country and to humanity, but which otherwise would remain dormant and thus lost to the world.¹⁰

He noted that although there were state, academy, and private collections of great age in Europe, the idea of a comprehensive museum, representing the arts of all cultures and all times, was quite new and the idea that such a museum should be open to the public was newer still. The foremost such museums, he remarked, were in Berlin and London, and were less than fifty and twenty years old, respectively. A number of his listeners must have instantly concluded that it would be no major task to overtake them. Comfort closed: "In the year 1776 this nation declared her political independence of Europe May we not now begin institutions that by the year 1876 shall sever the provincial relation of America to Europe in respect to Art?"¹¹

The speech was a rousing success. A select Committee of Fifty was formed with Comfort as a key member, assigned to translate the spirit and ideas of his talk into the reality of a building, a collection, and a program. These were exciting times and it is disappointing that Comfort did not write a full memoir of it. (His attempt at a complete autobiography, started in the late 1890s, the bleakest period of his life, never progressed past his childhood.) The single notable incident that has come down to us concerns Comfort's meeting in 1870 with Tammany Hall's notorious William Marcy Tweed, then at the zenith of his power as the political boss of New York. Forty years later, Comfort recalled:

[We had a] petition . . . signed by owners of more than one-half of the real estate of New York City, to the Legislature, requesting that authority be given the city to tax itself for one-half a million of dollars for museum buildings to be placed upon a park. I,

¹⁰Comfort, "Art Museums," p. 12.

¹¹Comfort, in *A Metropolitan Art-Museum*, p. 16.

I will remember the cloud of dark smoke that hung over Pittsburg as it approached that city. Then nearly all the steamboats on the vast river system of the Mississippi valley were built.

From Pittsburg to Lancaster, our route was by canal, the great system of canals which ramified Pennsylvania in all directions was then in full use. To my child's mind even, the scenery became intensely interesting, as the course of the canal wound among the Allegheny mountains.

At Hollidaysburg I saw the first railroad in my life. A short road ran over the mountains from Hollidaysburg to Johnstown. I looked with wonder at the first locomotive I had seen as it puffed along and drew the train of cars through the tunnel at the base of the mountain. Several times the road became so steep that the locomotive was left, and the train of cars were taken, one at a time up the "inclined plane", by attaching the cars to a cable, that was moved by a stationary engine, usually at the top of the incline. Several passengers drew the cars of the company by balancing

From an autobiographical sketch in the University Archives. A page from a section describing a journey to St. Louis, Mo.

representing this Museum, and a representative of the Museum of Natural History took the petition to Albany. Tweed and [Peter B.] Sweeny were in the power then. We arrived about noon and about half past two we were told to see Mr. Tweed and Mr. Sweeny

We arrived there and we were placed in seats behind Mr. Tweed as he sat at a table, and he said: "We will see what the New York papers say about us today", and there they were, and as we handed the papers in, he looked at it a moment, saw the heading and instantly, with that celerity of action, he took it to a room, and said: "You will see Mr. Sweeny. He will take charge of this." Then Mr. Sweeny took the paper and skipped the heading, and looked at the names, and when he saw the names attached to it, then he turned back and read the heading. And as I watched his face there was not the quiver of an eye, or twitch of the muscles, but he turned quickly and said: "Please inform these gentlemen that we are the servants of the people. This is New York. New York wishes this and please inform them and say that they can see us on two or three details of the matter, and then this will go through".

We telegraphed to New York and two or three gentlemen came up, and Mr. Sweeny came and said: "This is just in our line, in line with our ideas of progress in New York City. We are the elected and official representatives of the City and you ask this sum to be given to a Museum to be built on city property. Now, as representatives of the city we must control that building," and as quick as a thought, our Committee turned and conceded that point, and the statute was passed, and with that commenced the cooperation of the municipality with the individual contributors.¹²

In his faith in the beneficent power of art, his confidence that the succeeding generations would surpass the good works and noble purposes of his own, and his belief in the ultimate perfectability of American culture, Comfort was, of course, in harmony with the popular beliefs of his time. And there is more than a little of the ring of manifest destiny to his predictions for the future of art in America. He was as surely an evangelist for the arts, as his father before him had been an evangelist for the abolition of slavery.¹³

¹²George F. Comfort, "Address . . . at the Fortieth Annual Meeting . . . of the Metropolitan Museum of Art," typescript, Comfort Family Papers, Syracuse University Archives, Syracuse, New York, pp. 4-6.

¹³The Reverend Silas D. Comfort (1803-1868). His ruling to introduce the testimony of a Negro slave in the church trial of a white church member in 1839 created a major controversy among Methodists.

Comfort was named a trustee of the new museum and a member of its executive committee. He served until December 1871 when he resigned to accept a professorship at the newly-formed (1870) Syracuse University. His departure from the Metropolitan and the comparatively cosmopolitan art world of New York for a teaching post upstate was for a variety of reasons no doubt, but certainly chief among them was his need for a steady income, for he now had a family to support. Early in 1871 he had married Anna Manning,¹⁴ and they were now expecting their first child. Further, Comfort's orphaned nine-year-old half-brother was to be adopted by the couple. Comfort's service to the Metropolitan had been largely without pay and his arrangements with Drew had never involved a full-time position. But beyond his need for funds was the challenge of the position, since Syracuse, rather more cautiously than Allegheny, was determined to establish a degree-granting college of fine arts.

His initial appointment at Syracuse was as a professor of modern languages. Then, in June 1873, the trustees established the College of Fine Arts with Comfort as its Dean. (At the outset, he was the College's sole professor as well.) Within a month, the Panic of 1873 descended and threatened the very existence of the new university, but by the skin of its teeth the institution survived the year and then the rest of the economically troubled decade, though even as late as June, 1879, Chancellor Haven considered abolishing the fine arts program in order to cut costs. The 1880s saw a more stable state of financial affairs and a period of growth for Syracuse. As enrollments increased, professorial appointments were made in the various branches of art, architecture, and music so that Comfort's faculty, which had been but a handful in the late 1870s, consisted of twenty or so a decade later. And where in 1873 his college was housed along with the College of Liberal Arts, the library, and the Chancellor's Office in the just-completed Hall of Languages, the first University building on the Hill, by 1889 the College of Fine Arts had as its home the magnificent new John Crouse Building. At that time, Crouse College (as the building has ever since been called) was the largest single university building in America and was easily the Hill's most prominent landmark, as it is today.

Under Comfort's guidance the practice of the arts flourished. Print-making and sculpture joined drawing and painting. Comfort himself painted an impressive view of Tivoli (private collection), the only known oil painting by his hand. With a concert hall and rehearsal rooms available at Crouse College, the music program grew in size and quality. Drafting rooms for the department of architecture expanded in the Hall of Languages.

¹⁴ Anna Manning Comfort (1845-1931), whom George had met in 1867, was a physician (one of the first women ever to practice in the state of Connecticut), a feminist, and a poet.

The University's art collections also grew. In 1890 Comfort delivered a major address¹⁵ at a convocation in the Crouse College auditorium celebrating the opening of the Wolff-Leavenworth collection of engraved portraits, the first great gift of art to the University and still one of its chief treasures, containing as it does among its twelve thousand prints, engravings by such varied masters of printmaking as Durer, Rembrandt, Hollar, Gravelot, George Stubbs, and Peter Pelham.¹⁶

There is precious little information about the day to day experience of students and faculty in the college during the Comfort years. We know that enrollments blossomed and students (by the 1890s) thought of their Dean as a dear old man. But we have virtually no information, for instance, about (Thomas Francis) Frank Beard's years as a professor of esthetics in the early 1880s. Beard (1842-1905) was a member of the noted family of American artists, and was among the nation's foremost political cartoonists, a bitter and capable rival of the formidable Thomas Nast. At Syracuse Beard seems to have taught drawing and painting, leaving in 1884 to assume the editorship of *Judge* magazine for the presidential campaign season. His worldly ebullience and Comfort's other-worldly seriousness must have provided amusing contrasts in the compact world of the Hall of Languages in the early eighties.

In 1879, 1887, and 1891, the Dean and his family traveled to Europe with students and toured in rather more comfortable circumstances than he had known during his long, solitary tour of 1860-1865. Then, at fifty-nine, an age when most men would be thinking of easing their pace and resting on such laurels as they had managed to acquire, Comfort announced that he had accepted a new position. Against the advice and entreaties of his wife, friends, colleagues, and students, he had decided to leave Syracuse in order to found, at a handsome salary, a college of fine arts in Texas. The college was to be the cultural cornerstone of a new port city to be built at LaPorte, near Houston, by private interests. It was doubtless in his mind that there would be money enough at LaPorte — it had been promised — to provide what Syracuse's painfully limited resources had never allowed in the way of a teaching museum, visiting professorships, and time and money for travel, and he may also have thought that the establishing of a center for the arts in the South, culturally the least developed region of the nation, would be a fitting capstone to his career. Too, his salary would at last allow him to build at least a small estate

¹⁵George Fisk Comfort, *Address . . . at the Opening of the Wolff-Leavenworth Collection of Engravings*, Syracuse, New York: Currier Printing Co., 1890.

¹⁶The engravings were collected by Dr. Heinrich Wolff (1793-1875), professor of medicine at the University of Bonn, Germany, and were acquired in 1889 by Mrs. Harriet Leavenworth of Syracuse to be presented to Syracuse University in memory of her late husband Elias Warner Leavenworth. For a catalog of the collection see Gabriele Erika Kopbauer, "Wolff-Leavenworth Collection," M.A. Thesis, Syracuse University, 1965.

for his wife and two sons. And so he divided the academic year 1892-93 between his duties at Syracuse and his planning for the Southern College of Fine Arts and then in 1893, moved to Texas. But late in 1893 the development bubble burst, the grandiose plan for the development of LaPorte evaporated, and by July 1894 the Southern College of Fine Arts which had never assembled a faculty or enrolled students, died without ever really having been born. Its Dean was without a job; his former position at Syracuse University had been filled. The savings which he had invested in the LaPorte scheme had evaporated with the rest and so, in 1894, began long years of genteel poverty, heartbreak, and ignominy.

After the Comforts returned to Syracuse, they declared bankruptcy with debts of \$4,345. They took rooms at the Empire House, a hotel at the corner of North Salina and Genesee Streets. Their income between 1895 and 1900 consisted of what little their son Ralph, in New York, was able to squeeze out of his earnings as a beginning architect and what few fees Anna



The Comfort family in Venice. From Syracuse University Archives.

Comfort was able to collect as, after many years, she resumed a limited medical practice. Deprived of their home, their standing in the community, and support of old friends, they were virtually destitute and very nearly outcasts from the University community where the former Dean's return to the Syracuse locale seems to have been viewed as a local embarrassment. The terms of bankruptcy deprived the old scholar of even his books, the most steadfast of his friends. He wrote to his son,

My Dear Ralph:

Today has been a field day with me – with my emotions. I have surrendered my library, though it has gone hard with my feelings. I somehow had hoped to keep it . . . but I have given it up, and with a good deal of heart sorrow. My intellectual life for over thirty years was locked up with that library. I bought the books here and there, in Europe and in America, when I was a young man and when an older man. I have used them in writing my books and in getting up my lectures. It was . . . hard to give it up, but it is done and my mind is calm. Let it go!¹⁷

Comfort hoped that he might be invited to return to the Syracuse faculty, either as a professor of modern languages or, when his successor as Dean of the College of Fine Arts, Dr. Leroy Vernon, died suddenly in 1896, as Dean once more. But nothing of the sort happened. The new Chancellor, James Roscoe Day, and Comfort exchanged cordial letters, but kept their distance and it soon became clear that Day was seeking men much younger than Comfort for his faculty. Inquiries to other universities brought no encouraging responses. His age and the local disdain for the folly of his Texas venture effectively walled him off from participation in the academic life which had sustained him for all of his adult years and which was, in fact, the only life he knew. Then, following Commencement in June 1896, when new appointments went to younger men and it was clear that what little hope he had for a return to the University was ill-founded, he wrote to his son Ralph that he at last saw an opening in the city. Ralph asked what it might be and received the following reply:

My Dear Ralph:

First of all I will speak of what "opening" may occur for me here. I intend trying to cut a hole in a wall and thus to create an opening. That is to say, I am thinking of starting a movement for founding an Art Museum here, similar to the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York, with myself as its head or "Director."¹⁸

¹⁷ Comfort to Ralph M. Comfort, February 29, 1896, Comfort Family Papers.

¹⁸ Comfort to Ralph M. Comfort, June 10, 1896, Comfort Family Papers.

This is precisely what came to be though the progress was painfully slow with four years passing between Comfort's organizational meetings of 1896, and the actual opening of the Museum, housed on the second floor of the new Onondaga County Savings Bank Building on Salina Street, on November 20, 1900.

For ten years Comfort mounted a series of diversified exhibitions, remarkable in content in view of the meager resources available to him. The annual winter shows always included a few borrowed old masters – Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Poussin, and Tiepolo were represented – as well as a broad range of British and American painters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from Hogarth through West and Copley to Turner, Inness, and Homer. In the spring of 1906 there were, successively, shows of Eskimo carvings, the efforts of art students from grade school through university levels, and the history of photography including recent work of central New York photographers and engravers – this last when Alfred Stieglitz's Photo-Secession was still struggling to gain popular acceptance of photography as an art. In 1907 the museum featured as its summer exhibit forty paintings by the American artist Eastman Johnson from the collection of William B. Cogswell of East Syracuse. The Central New York Society of Artists, which Comfort had organized in 1901, had periodic showings. Museum attendance rose from a very healthy 40,000 in 1901 to over 70,000 by 1907.

By any measure he was an energetic and innovative director and that he succeeded in making the museum work should have surprised no one who knew his talent for getting things moving. Frank Smalley, one of Comfort's pupils in 1872-74 and later Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Syracuse, wrote in 1904, "He is the best and most resourceful organizer I ever knew"¹⁹ Yet for all of his clearly evident accomplishments with the museum he was paid scarcely a subsistence salary – the entire museum was desperately underfunded. He cast covetous glances at vacant directorships of museums in Boston, Worcester, and even at the Metropolitan, but in vain. When in 1906 the museum relocated to the newly built Syracuse Public Library on Montgomery Street, the second floor of which had been planned as a home for the museum, Comfort at age seventy-three must have known that his chances for yet another career were hopelessly thin.

In January 1910, he received an invitation to attend a meeting in New York marking the Metropolitan's fortieth anniversary. He gladly accepted and then, as the sole living founder of the museum, he volunteered to give a little talk at the meeting about the beginnings of the institution. The Metropolitan responded that the talk would be welcome and encouraged him to consider writing a fuller memoir at a later date. On February 21 he gave his talk,

¹⁹ Smalley to J.P. Morgan as President of the Board of Trustees, Metropolitan Museum of Art, December 5, 1904, Comfort Family Papers.



Dr. Comfort in the Museum of Fine Arts, Syracuse, shortly after the opening of the Museum. From Syracuse University Archives.

smartly garbed (he had written to Ralph for money for a new suit of clothes, "from overcoat to my skin!").²⁰ We have already heard his anecdote about Tweed and Sweeny. Now his ripe age became an advantage of sorts as the assembled trustees and friends of the Metropolitan showered him with respect and plied him for anecdotes of the museum's early days and his own long struggle to broaden and deepen an understanding of the arts in America.

After his talk, he and his wife stayed on with their son in suburban New Jersey while he visited galleries in New York to arrange loans of paintings for the next season's exhibitions at his own museum. If during these weeks he made a beginning on a written history of the early days of the Metropolitan, there is no record of it. On May 5th he died without having returned to Syracuse.

The Comfort Family Papers consist of correspondence, day-books, publications, clippings, photographs, and other material related to four generations of Comforts. Dean George Fisk Comfort's grandfather, the farmer John Comfort (1776-1850), and father, the Reverend Silas Comfort (1803-1868), are represented as is his son, the architect Ralph Manning Comfort (1872-1954) who assembled the collection and arranged for its presentation to Syracuse University. The collection as a whole documents in one family much of the range of the unending social change which characterized American life during the lifetimes of those represented in the collection. The heart of the collection consists of Dean Comfort's letters and other manuscripts relating to him, and the papers of his wife, Anna Manning Comfort (1845-1931).

²⁰ Comfort to Ralph M. Comfort, February 1, 1910, Comfort Family Papers.