



In regard to Lane's Court Harbor  
picture & a brief summary  
of his relations with  
Lane.

Mr Samuel H. Mansfield

J. L. Stevens

Gloucester  
Mass.



Boston, Oct. 17, 1903.  
 Dear Mr. Mansfield

The minimum price given the silver-tongued was, "to the best of my knowledge and belief," \$200. I think no specific commission was named, but I had in mind \$25 as about what I should be expected to pay. The painting would thus net about \$175. It is offered you for \$150 on as long time and in as many notes at 3% interest as you choose. These terms are at your option till Dec. 1, or, if you prefer, till Jan. 1.

I believe this to be the only important painting of Gloucester Harbor that Lane never duplicated.

Maybe it will interest you to know something of my early experiences in picture ways.

If any art-love was born in me it might have died of inanition without home influences. A school girl painting of my mother's, made here in Boston, had a place of honor in "the best room", where it was my boyish admiration. It is now honored on my sister's walls.

My father hung a notable series of steel engravings in the sitting room during my childhood, that were potent educators. They are carefully preserved in my present



lastings room. My grandfather had a pair of striking French prints so attractive to my child eyes that I kept in touch with them ever after, and on the dispersion of seven years ago secured them for my lastings room, where they will hang till I am gone. Perhaps my hands saved them from burning in a great fire during a home visit fifty odd years ago. For I saved much.

'Squire Williams of our village had a painting of his native Woodstock, Vermont, that I looked on admiringly at every opportunity. Returning from a Gloucester visit while I was still under the roof-tree, father brought a print of Lane's first Gloucester view, bought of the artist at his Fremont Temple studio in Boston. An extra dollar had been paid for coloring it. For a few years it was a home delight and now is a cherished memorial in our Milton dining room.

But I had seen before that a Gloucester view that has clung to memory, now 69 years. I spent a summer there as one of Frederick Parker's school boys. 'Squire Phelps' step-son John Foster was a skilled draughtsman. He drew, in color I think it was, a picture of the town in a conch shell. Wonderfully true and fine I thought it and still think

it was. The great art event of my native town was the coming of "Death on the Pale Horse." I was too young to visit the exhibition, but my little ears took in greedily the town talk it made.

Two landscape paintings hung in the sitting room at Gloucester, I think when my life there began. In lieu of something better they served a good purpose as objects of much study urging on admiration. They were painted by F. J. Somerby, a sign and fancy painter in School or Court Street, Boston, of whom I suppose my uncle bought them. Many years later, before or after marriage I cannot say, I asked him to sell them to me. He graciously consented, for 1.00 each, that I should own them.

While I lived in the western half of the Capt. Jos. Foster house on Middle Street, and John H. Stacy in the eastern, possibly while I was breaking up, Sarah Stacy asked that I would give them to her. I did. And still in my heart is a warm corner for those daubs.

I had been a few years in Gloucester when Lane began to come, for a part of the time a while, if I remember rightly. He painted in his brother's house, "up in town" if there was. I recall visits there to see his pictures.



But it was long after, that I could claim more than a simple speaking acquaintance. The Stacys were very kind, aiding him as time went on in selling paintings by lot. I invested in a view of Gloucester from Rocky Neck, thus put on sale at the old reading room, irreverently called "Wisdom Hall." And they bought direct of him to some extent, before other residents. Lane was much my senior and yet we gradually drifted together. Our earliest approach to friendship was after his abode began in Elm Street as an occupant of the old ~~Frankiss~~ <sup>Nymphas Stacy</sup> house, moved there from Pleasant. I was a frequenter of this studio to a considerable extent, yet little compared with my intimacy at the next and last in the new stone house on the hill. Lane's art books and magazines were always at my service and a great inspiration and delight - notably the London Art Journal to which he long subscribed. I have here a little story to tell you. A Castine man came to Gloucester on business that brought the passing of \$60 through my hands at 2 1/2% commission. I bought with the \$1.50 thus earned Ruskin's Modern Painters, my first purchase of an art book. I dare say no other copy was then owned in town. If you have not read what that eloquent writer says of clouds,



be exhorted to do so.

Lane was frequently in Boston, his sales agent being Balch who was at the head of his guild in those days. So in my Boston visits I was led to Balch's fairly often - the resort of many artists and the depot of their works. Thus through Lane in various ways I was long in touch with the art world, not only of New England but of New York and Philadelphia. I knew of most picture exhibits and saw many. The coming of the Dusseldorf Gallery to Boston was an event to fix itself in one's memory for all time. What talks of all these things Lane and I had in his studio and by my fireside!

For a long series of years I knew nearly every painting he made. I was with him on several trips to the Maine coast where he did much sketching, and sometimes was his chooser of spots and bearer of materials when he sketched in the home neighborhood. Thus there are many paintings whose growth I saw both from brush and pencil. For his physical infirmity prevented his becoming an out-door colorist

During my two-and-a-half years' absence in the West



he kept me so well informed of studio doings that on the resumption of Gloucester home life there were few broken threads to pick up with him. The beginning of my work in Boston some months later changed our relations somewhat without narrowing them.

And so our companionship went on through after years to that sad day when I watched the drawing of his last breath.

Sincerely yours  
Joseph L. Stevens



Received from Samuel  
H. Mansfield and given  
to Th. C. & S. E. & H. A. Sept.  
19. 1949  
Africa Mansfield Brooks