

FITZ HUGH LANE AND THE LEGACY OF THE CODFISH ARISTOCRACY

To gather together and keep these bonds, these links in the continuing story of man upon our particular part of the earth...is the sole reason for the existence of the Cape Ann Historical Association and its collection.¹

Alfred Mansfield Brooks

The Cape Ann Historical Association houses the largest and finest collection of work by Gloucester's native artist Fitz Hugh Lane (1804-1865). The collection consists of 36 paintings, a number of lithographs and over 100 drawings, as well as several paintings by his pupil Mary Mellen. Many of Lane's paintings were donated to the Museum by descendents of the artist's patrons. These patrons were members of the so-called "Codfish Aristocracy" a prominent class of seafaring and merchant families who amassed their wealth through foreign trade and fishing. Lane captured the prosperity of these seafaring families in his paintings of Gloucester harbor which included merchant ships and fishing schooners like those they owned and sailed.

The early members of the Association passed on an oral history together with their heirlooms from an era which changed dramatically from the time they were children. Over the course of single generation, rapid technological advances turned objects used by their parents into museum artifacts signifying their participation in the founding and growth of a community. Nowhere is this period of Gloucester's history more accurately represented than in Lane's paintings.

The majority of donations by descendents of the Codfish Aristocracy were made between the years 1925 and 1964. This was accomplished primarily under the leadership of Alfred Mansfield Brooks (1870-1963), a retired art history professor who served as the Museum's president from 1940 to 1951 and as curator from 1951 to 1963. Tracing the history of the donors of Lane's paintings to their ancestors who commissioned them provides the unique opportunity to simultaneously examine the history of the town and the growth of the Museum's collection from the perspective of individual families.

The Cape Ann Historical Association first formed in 1875 under the name of the Cape Ann Scientific and Literary Association “for the local and general advancement of scientific and literary knowledge.” It was an outgrowth of the Gloucester Lyceum which sponsored lecture series and was host to such luminaries of transcendentalism in the mid-19th century as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Oliver Wendell Holmes among others. Lane himself had been a member and a director of the Lyceum as were several founding members of the Cape Ann Scientific and Literary Association. While the Association was similar to the Lyceum in providing public lecture courses, it broadened its mission to include assembling collections.²

In 1925 the Association purchased the former home of sea captain Elias Davis at 27 Pleasant Street as a permanent home for their collections. The rooms in the house were devoted to the Associations various collections including natural history, ship models, toys and dolls, period furnishings and a library. The importance of preserving the legacy of Gloucester sea captains was recognized by the Museum, and they elected a committee comprised of their descendents to be in charge of acquiring and displaying their artifacts. The early collection consisted of an unimpressive array of disparate items from unrelated sources such as a backgammon board, a Chinese chair, a sailor’s chest and an unframed oil portrait of an unknown man.³

The first major bequest to the Museum was made by Lucy Brown Davis (1836-1926) and her half-sister Catalina Davis (1853-1932). Their gift included two paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane, *Stage Rocks and the Western Shore of Gloucester Harbor* (1857) and *Three Master and Lumber Schooner in Heavy Seas* (1850s), and one unfinished painting of a ship in a harbor by Lane’s pupil Mary Mellen. They also donated numerous heirlooms, furniture, and family portraits documenting their family’s history in Gloucester. In addition they left funds for the construction of a new gallery in which to display their gifts which was completed in 1936.⁴

The sisters were both well educated. Lucy graduated from Salem State Normal School and became a teacher, first in Gloucester and later at a private academy in Washington, D.C. Catalina attended the Academy of Visitation in Georgetown. Neither married, and after their father’s death in 1884, they returned to Gloucester and shared the house he built 47 Pleasant Street.⁵

They became active in the Association early in its development at a time when its cultural mission was much broader and included natural history, science and world history and literature in addition to local history. Catalina was one of the original members and first joined in 1875. From 1912 to 1919 she served as curatrix of the Association's collections. The objects she was in charge of reflected the diverse interests of its members and included such items as a petrified mastadon's tooth and Zulu spear, as well as a pair of pistols used by a Gloucester native at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Lucy joined the Association in 1904, and served as its corresponding secretary from 1910 through 1912.⁶ The earliest item that she donated to the Association was a Guy Fawkes Bible of Common Prayer which was first published in 1662 to celebrate the restoration of Charles II.

The sisters love of travel to exotic locations coincided with the early concerns of the Association. They both wrote travel articles which were published in the local papers. In 1888 Catalina's "Letter from a Gloucester Lady Travelling in Russia" described her visits to the Imperial Treasury, the Romanoff House and the Kremlin, while Lucy's "Pen Pictures of Mexico" gave an account of her travels in Mexico. Lucy had been entertained in the highest diplomatic circles including audiences with the Chinese empress Psi An and the pope. Her zeal for travel never diminished, and by the time of her death she had visited nearly every major civilization. When she was nearly 90 she made her second tour of South America and crossed the Andes. In 1923 she gave a lecture for the Association on her recent travels through Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania.⁷ Other members of the Association shared similar interests. For example, Mary Brooks traveled throughout South America collecting native artifacts which were put on display at the Association. Another member Mrs. William Jelly assembled a collection of over 600 baskets from her travels around the world which she later donated to the Museum.

The wealth which enabled them to pursue a life of leisure was acquired by their family's business interests in Gloucester. The Davis sisters belonged to a prominent Cape Ann family whose ancestor John Davis settled in Gloucester as early as 1656. Their father William Fuller Davis was descended from three generations of sea captains. Davis, in contrast, remained ashore working in Gloucester's burgeoning fishing industry which eclipsed foreign trade by the end of the century. Beginning as a sailmaker, Davis soon purchased a wharf and fishing fleet. He achieved an influential

status in the field, serving as the Inspector General of Fish and director of the Gloucester Mutual Fishing Insurance Company.⁸

The sisters' mothers also came from old Cape Ann families. Lucy's mother Lucy Kinsman Brown was the daughter of Major Ephraim Brown, an officer in the local militia, and Hannah Kinsman Brown. Major Brown worked as a cabinet maker and had a shop on Front Street (now Main Street). When Lucy's mother died shortly after her death, she was sent to live with her grandparents until her father remarried Catalina's mother Harriet Mason.

Like the Davis family, the Masons were among the early 17th century settlers on Cape Ann. They were descended from Hugh Mason who emigrated from Ipswich, England to Watertown, Massachusetts in 1643 and moved to Cape Ann soon after. Harriet's grandfather John Mason was a United States surveyor who made maps of Cape Ann. He operated a three-story brick hotel called the Gloucester House together with Harriet's father Alphonso Mason. Alphonso's brother Sidney was a successful merchant who served as the American consul in Puerto Rico where he owned a mahogany plantation. He also has business interests in Gloucester, and built a large ocean front hotel, the Pavilion, there in 1852.⁹

The opulent lifestyle which Sidney Mason enjoyed on his Puerto Rican plantation influenced the entire Mason family. It was also a reflection of the kind of wealth Gloucester merchants amassed through their trade with the West Indies and the Dutch colony of Surinam. Ralph Waldo Emerson's brother Edward who worked as Mason's secretary described his mansion as having "large, high ceilinged rooms, long passages to a courtyard, and servants lodged in various quarters."¹⁰ Harriet Mason's sister Lydia Ann, and perhaps Harriet herself, lived on the plantation for three years, where according to a friend she "enjoyed exceptional social and musical advantages."¹¹ The sisters evidently treasured the experience as Harriet named her daughter Catalina after her uncle's plantation Santa Catalina.

Sidney Mason commissioned at least three paintings by Lane representing the harbors of New York, San Juan, Puerto Rico and Gloucester where he conducted business. His painting *Gloucester Harbor* (1852) was donated to the city of Gloucester in 1913 by Sidney's granddaughter and Catalina's cousin Mrs. Julian James.¹² The city in turn deposited it at the Cape Ann Historical Association.

The painting is one of Lane's finest and most dramatic depictions of Gloucester harbor. It includes all the elements which contributed to Gloucester's economic prosperity: foreign trade, fishing and tourism. Scenes such as this appealed to merchants like Mason whose fortunes were made from maritime commerce. Lane, however, transforms a precise topographic record of the town's mercantile trade into an ideal vision of aesthetic harmony.

The center foreground is occupied by a Chebacco boat used in coastal fishing around Cape Ann. The net, marked by a string of buoys, has been cast in a semi-circular pattern which echoes the forms of the billowing clouds above. The stark contrast between the blue and white clouds is mirrored in the gleaming white buildings of the town and the dark translucent surface of the water. The juxtaposition of the fishermen casting the net with town beyond suggests that the labors of the fishermen reap the bounty of the town's prosperity.

The harbor is filled with examples of the various types of vessels used in Gloucester's maritime trade. To the right of the Chebacco boat is schooner used for long distance trips to Georges Bank and the Grand Banks. Next to the schooner is a brig used in foreign trade. In 1850 there were 184 vessels registered in Gloucester. Sixteen were barques and brigs engaged in foreign trade. The majority were schooners and smaller vessels used in the fishing industry which rapidly expanded following the first railroad connection with Gloucester in 1846.¹³ The 1850s marked an era of decline in Gloucester's foreign trade. Larger ports such as New York and Boston took over much of the trade, while manufactured goods which had previously been imported were now produced in the United States. The romance, however, of travel to foreign ports continued to occupy the imagination of the town's citizens long after it had ceased to be a viable occupation.

Located just to the right of the town is a historic monument to Gloucester's participation in the Revolutionary War. Fort Port, with the ramparts of a fortification erected during the war, marked the site where a landing party from a British war ship was intercepted and defeated by the townspeople. The fort was built afterwards. Although Gloucester was never attacked again, it served as a proud reminder of the role they played in the birth of a new nation.¹⁴

The seaside community was just beginning to attract summer tourists, and Mason's Pavilion Hotel located on the far left hand side, was the first major investment in this fledgling business. The architect S.C. Bugbee, under Mason's direction, created a Caribbean ambiance with the construction of the elegant two story piazza. The local paper referred to the hotel as the "crowning exploit of the year" and "an edifice of beautiful proportions."¹⁵ Elsewhere it was noted that the hotel was built "without any regard to expense, and with sole reference to comfort, beauty and convenience."¹⁶ It was the third hotel to open in Gloucester. The red brick Gloucester House previously owned by Mason's father and brother, is visible just to the right of the Pavilion with the spire of the Universalist Church rising between the two.

The Lane paintings which the Davis sisters donated to the museum were also acquired through the association of family members with the artist. Catalina's mother Harriet took art lessons from Lane, and not long after her marriage she commissioned a painting from him, *Stage Rocks and Western Shore from Gloucester Harbor* (1857).¹⁷ The painting includes lumber schooners in the harbor carrying wood for vessels and buildings which suggests the economic prosperity taking place on shore. Located in the distance is Stage Rocks, a tract of land on the outer harbor where the English Dorchester Company landed in 1623 for the purpose of establishing a fishing colony. Contrasting the two evokes the sense of pride and historical awareness Lane and his patrons must have felt when they viewed images of the land their ancestors had turned from wilderness into a thriving community in the preceding two centuries.

Cape Ann's historical significance was becoming a subject of interest among scholars at this time. Lane was commissioned by historian J. Wingate Thornton to illustrate the first English landing at Cape Ann in 1623 for the book he had written on the same subject.¹⁸ According to a notation made on the drawing for Harriet's painting, Lane used the same scene as the basis for his illustration of Thornton's book.¹⁹ The first comprehensive history of Cape Ann from the time of the Dorchester landing was published just three years later by Harriet's brother-in-law John James Babson. Lane also provided illustrations for this publication.²⁰

In 1937, one year after the Davis sisters' new addition to the Museum was completed, their distant cousin Alfred Mansfield Brooks retired to Gloucester. He had been raised in Gloucester by his grandmother Abigail

Somes Davis Mansfield, and was acquainted with the descendents of families who had been active in Gloucester's 19th century maritime commerce. After receiving his master's degree in fine arts from Harvard University, Brooks taught art history at Indiana State University, and later at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania.²¹

Brooks affiliation with the Museum began in the 1920's when he started giving lectures during his summer vacations. His topics were drawn from his general interests as an art historian and included such subjects as "Ruskin's letters to his friend William Ward" and "The Value of the Knowledge of Architecture to the Layman." In gratitude the Association made Brooks and his wife Ruth Steele Brooks honorary members. Brooks was elected to the Board of Managers in 1938. He served as president from 1940 until 1951, and as curator from 1952 until 1962. From the time Brooks retired to Gloucester in 1937 until 1964, a year after his death, the Museum's collection of Lanes grew from four paintings to 27, plus over 100 drawings.

Following his retirement, Brooks directed all his scholarly efforts towards documenting Gloucester's history and the Museum's collections. Through lectures and articles he continually worked to increase the community's awareness of their rich historical past, and remind them of the Museum's role in preserving that past. Brooks' enthusiasm encompassed the entire range of the Museum's holdings which as a whole provided an animated reconstruction of local history. One senses his delight in turning from the macrosm of history's great works of art and monuments to the microsm of common pins, silver fruit knives and button hooks where he rediscovered his childhood in relics of Gloucester's past. In writing about Gloucester's bygone gentility, Brooks referred to items such as paintings, furniture, glass and china, as "tangible mementos...which constitute a library of social history. 'When a man understands the art of seeing,' says Victor Hugo, 'he can trace the spirit of an age even in a knocker on a door.'"²²

In 1939 he gave a talk at the Association on the history of Gloucester between the years 1827 and 1840.²³ Shortly after his nomination as president later that year, Brooks published an article on the Museum's model of Front Street (now Main Street) which had been carved about the same time the street was destroyed by fire in 1830. The model was carved to scale by John James Saville who rendered with remarkable accuracy the placement of doors, windows, chimneys and other details which could only be captured in

three dimensions. As Brooks pointed out, the model served to record architectural developments in New England coastal towns in the late 17th and early 18th centuries from gambrel roofed houses to three-story Federal period hip-roofed homes like the Museum's own Captain Elias Davis house. The building owners were as familiar to Gloucester residents of the 1830s as they were their descendents living in the 1930s and included names like Gilbert, Low, Mansfield, Stevens, and Babson.²⁴

One of the early acquisitions recommended by Brooks as president was a set of 150 lantern slides comparing views of Main Street taken in 1860 and 1940. Funds for the purchase were provided by the William Fuller Davis Fund left by Catalina and Lucy Brown Davis. The purchase was indicative of the Museum's active role in reconstructing and recording the dramatic historical changes that had occurred over the course of a single generation. Brooks wrote an article for the local paper to advertise the Museum's slide presentation for the public. He appealed to persons in their 70s who had witnessed these changes to participate in the show and help answer questions. Brooks also spoke of the need for a new history of Gloucester which would document the period since John James Babson's *History of Gloucester* was published in 1860:

*The great majority regard history as essential...because history is the record of what men think and do - their actions and the stage, house, street, town in and on which they act. And this great majority realizes that history from time to time must be brought up to date...It is now 80 years since Mr. Babson wrote his monumental book...[and] another history of Gloucester will be due in the course of another half century...which brings me to my point. Everything done from now on to record the present with exactitude, and to check the past, will be of invaluable assistance to our future historian.*²⁵

Brooks' interest in Gloucester's history had deep family roots. Although his father, George Byron Brooks, was a native of New Hampshire, his mother Abigail Mansfield could trace her ancestry to Gloucester's early settlers. When his mother died shortly after his birth, Brooks' father sent him to Gloucester where he was raised by his grandmother Abigail Somes Davis Mansfield. The Davis and Somes families first settled on Cape Ann in the mid-17th century. Abigail was the daughter of Elias Davis, Jr., a third generation sea captain whose father, Elias Davis, Sr., built the Museum's

historic house in 1804. Her mother's family the Somes were also sea captains and they lived next door to the Davis family. Both the Davis and Somes families were engaged in foreign trade with Europe, Asia, South America and the West Indies. Brooks inherited numerous family and ships portraits, furniture and objects brought back from overseas voyages which he left to the Museum as bequest. A third branch of the family, the Mansfields, were involved in Gloucester's fishing industry. Brooks' grandmother was married to Alfred Mansfield who ran the family business James Mansfield & Sons founded by his father in 1795. Brooks grew up in the Mansfield house on Front Street (now Main Street) above the wharf from which they operated their fleet of fishing vessels.²⁶

When he retired to Gloucester, Brooks moved into a red brick house at 21 Middle Street which had been built by his great uncle George Rogers.²⁷ Rogers was married to Brook's grandmother's sister Lucy Davis Rogers, and he owned one of the several Gloucester firms which dominated trade with the Dutch colony of Surinam. It was the most lucrative foreign trade Gloucester had to offer prior to the abolition of slavery in Surinam in 1863. Gloucester merchants traded dried salt fish for molasses. The fish was used to feed the slaves and the molasses was converted into rum in a Gloucester distillery.

As a boy, Brooks often spent time at his Aunt Lucy's house which was decorated with objects brought back from Surinam by his uncle. Dutch silver and Delft pottery were the most common souvenirs. When Brooks questioned his aunt about a pair of tall silver candlesticks, she explained that they were used as payment for goods since there were no banks or paper money in Surinam:

*Much Dutch [silver] plate...went from Holland to Paramaribo [Surinam] in trade, and our Gloucester goods sent to Paramaribo were often paid for in part with this plate and silver...I remember seeing your Uncle George's men pushing wheelbarrows of specie or lugging a sailor bag of plate up Short Street...These candlesticks came out of such a bag.*²⁸

Brooks first gift to the Museum in 1937 was a Fitz Hugh Lane painting of a Gloucester brig engaged in the Surinam trade. The painting *A Rough Sea* (1860) had been commissioned by Rogers' partner Obadiah Woodbury. Woodbury also commissioned a companion painting *A Calm Sea* which was later donated to the Museum by a descendent Alice P. Woodbury.²⁹ At one

time, Rogers and Woodbury were co-owners of the Surinam brigs *Adriatic* and *Sarah Ann*.³⁰

Rogers entered the trade in 1832 and by 1846 imported 12 cargoes from Surinam in one year. One of these cargoes which was transported aboard the ship *Pleiades* contained well over 590 hogsheads of molasses and was reported to be the largest cargo ever imported. The trade peaked in 1857 with the arrival of 20 vessels carrying imports of 5,000 hogsheads of molasses and 1,000 hogsheads of sugar valued at \$400,000. Rogers owned six of those vessels, one of which *California*, Lane included in a painting the same year.³¹ The painting *Three Master on the Gloucester Railway* (1857) was commissioned as an advertising sign for John Trask's paint shop at Burnham Brothers Railway. The *California* is represented on the marine railways next to a schooner, and both vessels are receiving fresh coats of paint by workmen. Trask donated the painting to the city of Gloucester in 1876.³² Shortly after Brooks became curator in 1952, the city deposited the painting at the Museum together with Sidney Mason's painting of Gloucester harbor by Lane.³³

In the same year Brooks donated his Lane painting, Roger Babson donated two Lane paintings.³⁴ Babson grew up in Gloucester, the son of a dry goods store owner. After graduating from M.I.T. he became a successful economist and statistician. He settled in Wellesley where he founded Babson College of Business Administration in Wellesley in 1919.³⁵ Although he lived outside of Cape Ann, Babson maintained a deep interest in his family's early history. The Babsons were descended from Isabel Babson, a widow and midwife who moved to Gloucester from Salem after 1637. Roger's interest in his family's early history on Cape Ann led him to purchase the cooperage and tool shop built by Isabel's son James Babson in 1658. He furnished it with authentic tools, and opened it to the public as a museum in 1930.³⁶ He was also interested in acquiring early tools and domestic implements for the Association, and one of the rooms in the Museum's Elias Davis house was devoted to his collection.³⁷

The Lane paintings Babson donated to the Cape Ann Historical Association had been commissioned by his great uncle Nathaniel Babson. He gave them as parting gifts to his daughters Emma and Maria when they moved to California with Emma's husband in 1869. *Babson and Ellery Houses, Gloucester* (1863) and *The Babson Meadows at Riverdale* (1863) represent

the family home and farm which had been inherited by Nathaniel's mother Eliza Gorham Low Babson. The property later passed to Nathaniel's brother Gustavus who was Roger Babson's grandfather. When the paintings were offered for sale by distant relatives in California, Roger Babson purchased them for the Museum.³⁸

The next group of Lane paintings to come into the Museum's collection were donated by Roger Babson's distant cousin Isabel Babson Lane. Isabel was a local school teacher who joined the Association in 1900.³⁹ She served as curator from 1926 to 1930, and on the Board of Managers from 1936 to 1939, and 1943 to 1946. From 1949 to 1951 she served as second vice president. During the 1940s, while Brooks was president, she began loaning numerous family artifacts to the Museum which she later donated.⁴⁰ Like Brooks, she was descended from two old Cape Ann seafaring families. She and Roger Babson shared the same ancestor Isabel Babson. The Lanes were descended from John Lane who moved from Falmouth, Maine to Gloucester in 1700. Fitz Hugh Lane was a distant relative descended from John Lane's brother Samuel.⁴¹

Isabel's father Gustavus A. Lane, Jr., her grandfather, Gustavus A. Lane, Sr. and her great grandfather Gideon Lane were all sea captains as were many other members of the Lane family. The Lane family heirlooms Isabel donated included 5 portraits, 7 ship portraits, as well as numerous mementos from overseas voyages. Their history was particularly well documented by diaries and letters which Isabel preserved and donated to the museum.

The Babsons were also sea captains engaged in foreign trade. Isabel's great-great grandfather William Babson, Sr. was a sea captain, and served aboard privateers during the Revolution. Her great grandfather William Babson, Jr. was a merchant who owned shares in a number of vessels, while her grandfather Edward Babson was a sea captain in the Surinam trade.⁴² In the late 1840s Edward Babson commissioned Lane to paint a portrait of the brig *Cadet* which he owned together with several family members including his brother John James Babson, Gloucester's historian. Edward also made an illustration of the *Cadet* in his journal of navigational courses. Isabel donated his journal and his Surinam account book along with his portrait and Lane's painting of the *Cadet* to the Museum.

Isabel donated two other paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane: *Ten Pound Island from Pavilion Beach* (1850s) and *The Western Shore with Norman's Woe* (1862). The latter painting lacks the commercial harbor activity and buildings that typified Lane's earlier paintings of Gloucester. Instead a lone sloop sails toward the barren shore while the distant sails of another are faintly visible in the center of the horizon. The entire painting is permeated by a tranquil pink hue, and conveys a quiet meditative stillness. Lane's preparatory drawing indicates that at least two paintings were commissioned. One was commissioned by Florence Foster, a friend of Isabel's mother.⁴³ Foster wrote an inscription in her friend's autograph album in 1863 expressing the neoplatonic religious sentiments typical of the period.⁴⁴ Whether it was her painting which made its way to Isabel's family is unknown.

The Western Shore With Norman's Woe is representative of Lane's later paintings which reflect the transcendentalist's view of nature as an expression of divinity. The leader of the movement, Ralph Waldo Emerson, frequently lectured at the Gloucester Lyceum between the years 1846 and 1863. Other Lyceum speakers associated with the transcendentalists included Thoreau, William Henry Channing, James Freeman Clarke, Orestes Brownson, Horace Mann, Edward Everett, Richard Henry Dana and Theodore Parker. Lane served on the Lyceum's Board of Director three times: in 1849, 1851 and 1858. Many of Lane's friends and acquaintances were also involved in the Lyceum. In 1849 his closest friend Joseph L. Stevens, Jr. was the Lyceum's recording secretary and Edward Babson's brother John James Babson was president.⁴⁵

Emerson and Thoreau were controversial figures whose departure from traditional christian theology led to frequent attacks by Gloucester's press and conservative ministers. Stevens later recalled the reaction of Rev. Josiah K. Waite, minister of the Gloucester First Parish Unitarian Church, to a Lyceum lecture by Thoreau in 1848:

Our minister did not take kindly to transcendental thought and mystical speech. When Thoreau was a rising star he gave before the Lyceum his most noted lecture. Pastor Waite's face showed signs of disapproval until the close. Then he said vigorous things to those around him about atheism, pantheism, feeble imitation of Emerson and the like. Agnosticism had not its present standing in our vocabulary, else it must also have been called into service.⁴⁶

In contrast, the minister of the Gloucester Universalist Church Rev. Amory D. Mayo often incorporated transcendentalist ideas into his sermons. In a sermon he gave on religious literature in 1846, Mayo recommended Emerson as one of several contemporary writers who were superior sources of spiritual enlightenment as opposed to the “prosaic style” and “narrow and constrained” sentiment of traditional writers.⁴⁷ As the Lyceum’s corresponding secretary, it was Mayo’s responsibility to invite speakers to lecture at the Lyceum. Between 1846 and 1853, Mayo wrote seven letters to Emerson asking him to give lectures, and in 1853 he offered to have Emerson stay at his house because Dr. Herman Davidson, with whom he usually stayed, was ill.⁴⁸

Mayo’s philosophy appealed to a broader audience in Gloucester than that of Emerson or Thoreau because he used transcendentalist thought in support of traditional theology rather than as a substitute. He also extended his theology to art and provided a metaphysical framework in which his parishoners could elevate themselves spiritually through an aesthetic appreciation of their natural surroundings on Cape Ann and its reflection in Lane’s paintings. The Babson’s were members of the Universalist Church, and Edward and John James Babson’s sister Annette kept a diary in which she recorded her thoughts on many of Mayo’s sermons. After attending one of his sermons in 1849 she wrote:

Mr. Mayo...preached...on the beauty of holiness - the beauty in Nature, Art and Life...He thought that we were all more affected by beauty than we were oft to suppose - that it influenced us to refinement, purity and finally to PIETY. He disclaims against those who whine about Nature in a sickly sentimental strain and prayed that no one word of his should ever [encourage] such nonsense. He took a Christian view of it and urged us to cultivate a love of nature [and] art because it was an emanation of the beautiful spirit of God [and] because it would lead us up to the creator. After tea my brothers W[illiam] and J[ohn James] accompanied me to Bass Rocks. I do not often walk on Sunday but a storm last eve I knew had agitated the waves and I thought a Sabbath twilight in view of the scene would be awfully holy. I turned from the written page to read from the book of Nature.⁴⁹

The aesthetic and spiritual inspiration Mayo and the Babsons found in nature around Gloucester was mirrored in Lane's paintings. In one journal entry Annette wrote that she had just visited Lane's studio where she saw a magnificent painting of Stage Fort Park:

After dinner we went to Lane's, our native artist, and saw a lovely picture taken from my favorite spot - 'Stage Rocks'! The shore, the ocean, the beach, the rich sunset radiance falling upon all with dark shadows here and there all made up a perfect picture. E. Somes walked with me to the spot whereon he stood to sketch it. No one could mistake it - so true to nature he has drawn it.⁵⁰

Edward's daughter Hannah recorded another of Mayo's sermon's in which he discussed the roles of nature, art and literature in religion. In all categories he distinguished between the letter and the spirit. One who understood the letter only and not the spirit would view nature simply as a utilitarian vehicle for growing crops or catching fish. In contrast, one who perceived the spirit in nature "lifts up the thin veil that is between this and another world and sees the Eternal One in all his glory." The same held true for art and literature where one who perceived only the letter would view it critically pointing out technical deficiencies. Whereas one who saw the spirit "when he gazes upon a beautiful work of art...feels overpowered by his emotions, and all around him is solemn and full of sublimity."⁵¹

Another large bequest which came to the Museum in the 1940s was donated by George and Jane Parker Stacy. It included four paintings by Lane as well as numerous pieces of federal period furniture which had been in the Stacy family since they were made. The Stacys were an old Cape Ann family descended from John Stacy who settled in Ipswich by 1690, and opened an inn in Gloucester in 1723.⁵² George Stacy's father Samuel, who purchased the Lane paintings, grew up in the family's pre-revolutionary home on Front Street (now Main Street). He owned an insurance agency, and was active in civic affairs serving on the school committee and the building committee for Town Hall among others. He was also a director of the Gloucester Lyceum and Sawyer Free Library.⁵³

George Stacy's mother Harriet Gilbert Stacy was descended from John Gilbert who moved to Gloucester from Wenham in 1704.⁵⁴ Her cousin Addison Gilbert was a well known philanthropist who built Gloucester's

Addison Gilbert Hospital. He also left funds to the Cape Ann Historical Association which were used to purchase the Captain Elias Davis house.⁵⁵

The Stacys were one of the families Brooks had known since his youth. Since George Stacy was close in age, he frequently visited their home where he saw family heirlooms representing generations of life in Gloucester like those he was accustomed to seeing in the homes of his own relatives. Among the items the Stacy's gave to the Museum were leather fire buckets with the names Stacy and Gilbert painted on them. Another historic piece was the desk on which Gloucester volunteers signed up for service in the Civil War. Their collection of Lane paintings, however, made the greatest impression on him:

*The Stacy house at 7 Angle Street...was full of eighteenth-century mahogany furniture. But several of the best Fitz Hugh Lane paintings of sea, shore and vessels that I knew well brought it up to date in my young eyes.*⁵⁶

The Stacys became involved in the Association through George's wife Jane Parker Stacy who joined in 1901. Jane was the daughter of sea captain John Parker. She graduated from Salem Normal School, and taught in Gloucester public schools until her marriage in 1899.⁵⁷ George was a hotel entrepreneur who recognized the need to accommodate growing numbers of summer visitors attracted to Cape Ann at the turn of the century. He opened his first hotel the Hawthorne Inn in 1891 in East Gloucester. In 1897 he built the Moorland Hotel at Bass Rocks which was followed by the Colonial Arms in 1904.

Stacy's most enduring gift to the city was Stacy Boulevard along the harbor entrance to the city. In 1908 he joined the Board of Park Commissioners and advocated a plan for creating a parkway and esplanade between Blynman Bridge and the Tavern. The project took 15 years to complete, and coincided with the 300th anniversary of the founding of Gloucester in 1923.⁵⁸

Most notable among the Lane paintings the Stacys donated is *Gloucester Harbor From Rocky Neck* (1844). The bequest is a fitting memorial to George Stacy who did so much to develop and promote Gloucester as a summer resort area. In 1846 the local paper reported commented on the

special combination of Cape Ann's characteristics which made it so attractive to summer visitors:

Owing to the prosperity of the fishing business last season, and the notoriety which Cape Ann is gaining as a watering place, our little village has presented rather a thriving appearance this spring. Quite a number of dwelling houses have been erected in various places; two or three new wharves have been run out; and many new vessels have been added to our fleet...As a fashionable watering place our Cape is destined to become one of the most frequented. The facilities for fishing and bathing, and the many pleasant rides and picturesque views, need only to beome known to be enjoyed.⁵⁹

Lane captures all of these attributes in a large panoramic view. He presents a serene image of Gloucester with blue sky and large billowing clouds above. The carefully delineated clusters of white buildings across the horizon suggest the growth and affluence of the town resulting from a strong maritime economy. Ships and schooners peacefully glide across the harbor. A small sloop approaches the shore ferrying a group of passengers from Gloucester. An idyllic pastoral quality is evoked by two men enjoying the view from the shore of Rocky Neck in the foreground, while a third walks by with his dog and two sheep.

The Stacy bequest was followed by that of Samuel and Carrie Mansfield in 1949. Samuel Mansfield was Brooks' cousin and grew up living next door to him. His father operated the family fishing business James Mansfield & Sons after the death of Brooks' grandfather.⁶⁰ Samuel owned a local insurance agency. His wife Carrie Parsons graduated from Smith and Radcliffe Colleges and became the head of the German and Spanish department at Gloucester High School.⁶¹ They became active in the Association following their retirement. Both served on the Board of Managers, and Carrie was the Museum's curator from 1933 until 1945. They lived in her family's historic house built in 1765 at 90 Middle Street, and included it in their bequest.⁶²

Their entire gift consisted of four Lane paintings and over 100 drawings which they donated to the Museum over a number of years. Samuel Mansfield acquired these items directly from Lane's closest friend Joseph L. Stevens who was the executor of the artist's estate. When the Mansfields presented the Museum with 80 drawings in 1944, they were put on display

and Brooks published an article on them in the *Essex Institute Historical Collections*. Brooks called attention to not only their aesthetic value, but also their important historical value in accurately representing Gloucester's topography from a bygone era:

*These drawings...show the "lay" of the land now built over, and the look of streets...and seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings that are gone...Also the ancient appearance of docks, wharves and cranes...These drawings are intimate records of shipping...of seashore, waterfront and countryside...quite changed from what they were during the first half of the last century and earlier before the present, mechanistic civilization had taken entire possession of the land of the Puritan...When all is done and said these Lane drawings in themselves constitute a brilliant if brief chapter in the the great and ever-lengthening book "Our Fathers Have Told Us."*⁶³

In 1924 Mansfield donated the first Lane painting to come into the Museum's collections. It is a rare watercolor by the artist who worked almost exclusively in oils, and Lane's earliest dated painting. Entitled *The Burning of the Packet Ship Boston* (1830), the painting depicts a packet ship which was struck by lightning while sailing for Charleston to pick up a load of cotton. The ship's first officer Elias David Knight made a sketch of the disaster which Lane used for his painting.⁶⁴ Both Knight and the ship's captain Harvey Coffin Mackey were residents of Gloucester. Mackey, in fact, was Brooks' great uncle, and married to his grandmother's aunt Sarah Somes Mackey.

Another Lane painting Mansfield donated was *Gloucester Harbor* (1847). The drawing which corresponds to the painting identifies the viewpoint as *Looking Outward from Head of Harbor*. Five Pound Island with its fish flake racks, is located in the center of the harbor and is surrounded by fishing schooners like the ones owned by the Mansfields. In a letter to Mansfield in 1903, Stevens offered to sell him the painting of Gloucester Harbor for \$150 and referred to it as the "only important painting of Gloucester Harbor that Lane never duplicated."⁶⁵

Stevens' friendship with Lane became so close that he recalled the genesis of many of the artist's paintings. After Lane's death, he made valuable notations on a number of the artist's drawings indicating the names of patrons for which paintings were made. In his letter to Mansfield, Stevens described

his relationship with Lane:

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...⁶⁶

Stevens was born in Castine, Maine but moved to Gloucester as a young man to work in his uncle's dry goods store. He began visiting Lane at his studio in 1848 when the artist returned to Gloucester after working as a lithographer in Boston. The friendship between the two grew, and in 1848 they made the first of several trips to Maine where Lane sketched scenes of the coast.

It was undoubtedly Stevens who first encouraged Lane to join the Gloucester Lyceum where Stevens was recording secretary. Stevens interest in public education continued throughout his life. When the Lyceum merged with the Sawyer Free Library, Stevens was the library superintendent.⁶⁷ In 1892 he helped found the Cape Ann Historical Society which was the first institution devoted solely to the "purpose of ...investigating...the history of Cape Ann and collecting, holding and preserving documents, books, memoirs, relics...illustrating its history and that of individuals or families identified with it." When the Society disbanded in 1903 they transferred their collections to the Cape Ann Scientific and Literary Association.⁶⁸

Lane gave five paintings to Stevens as tokens of their friendship which Stevens' children later donated to the Museum. Three of the paintings bear personal inscriptions from Lane to his friend. For example, *Study of Vessels* (1857) has the following inscription on the reverse: "Fitz H. Lane to his friend Joseph L. Stevens, Jr., Gloucester, February 14, 1857." In the same year Lane gave Stevens and his wife Caroline the painting *Dolliver's Neck and the Western Shore From Field Beach* (1857) as a going away present for the couple who moved out west for two years. Lane wrote a letter to the Stevens in which he described the painting:

Since writing you I have painted but one picture worth talking about and that one I intend for you if you should be pleased with it....The effect is midday light, with a cloudy sky, a patch of sunlight thrown across the beach

*and breaking waves. An old vessel lies stranded on the beach...I think you will be pleased with this picture, for it is a very picturesque scene..*⁶⁹

Steven's daughter Helen Babson Stevens donated the painting to the Museum in 1933. The other four paintings Lane gave to Stevens were given to the Association in 1964 by the widow of Steven's son George B. Stevens. George Stevens was as actively engaged in the cultural life of Gloucester as his father had been. After graduating from Harvard University he became a music teacher in Gloucester. He played the organ at the First Parish Church while still a student, and later served as the choir director and organist at the Universalist Independent Church. He shared his father's interest in public education, and was a director of the Sawyer Free Library. He was also an active member of the Cape Ann Historical Association where he served on the music committee organizing concerts.⁷⁰

This core of early donors comprised of the Davis sisters, Brooks, Babson, Lane, the Stacys, the Mansfields and the Stevens is unique in that they represent a continuous participation in the community from its early settlers until the formation of the Cape Ann Historical Association. By pooling their ancestors' oral and archival history, heirlooms and Lane paintings illustrating life in Gloucester from times past, they formed the basis of an outstanding local collection with international importance. In an article on "Village and Small-Town Museums," Brooks noted the important role played by these small organizations which may begin with no more than "a few rooms, in which are gathered all sorts of objects having a historical association with the community and countryside:"

*But no matter how small, it performs an important service not only at home but often abroad, by preserving precious and invaluable things that might otherwise have been thrown away and lost forever. It may be little more than a communal attic, but attics contain treasures on which a very small museum may well build an enviable reputation...It is saving at least some of the records of the past and establishing a background without which there can be no foreground for the picture of our life.*⁷¹

Sharon Worley
Curator
CAPE ANN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

- ¹ Alfred Mansfield Brooks quoted in "Gordon W. Thomas to Address Scientific Association Monday," *Gloucester Daily Times*, June 21, 1952.
- ² "Sixty Years of Cape Ann Scientific Association: An Address of Reminiscence Given by Miss Susan Babson Before the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary and Historical Association," unidentified article, Cape Ann Historical Association scrapbook.
- ³ Cape Ann Historical Association minutes.
- ⁴ "Dedicate Lucy B. Davis Annex With Ceremony," *Gloucester Daily Times*, July 6, 1936.
- ⁵ "Lucy B. Davis Dies at Rome," (1836-1926), obituary, CAHA scrapbook; Catalina Davis, (1853-1932), obituary, *Gloucester Daily Times*, October 21, 1932; Alfred Mansfield Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected: A Familiar History*, Gloucester, MA: Cape Ann Historical Association, 1974, 213-217.
- ⁶ CAHA minutes.
- ⁷ Catalina Davis, "Letter from a Gloucester Lady Travelling in Russia," *Cape Ann Advertiser*, December 9, 1888; Lucy Brown Davis, "Pen Pictures of Mexico: Cape Ann Lady Gives Impressions of Wonderful Country," *Gloucester Daily Times*, March 28, 1906; Lucy Brown Davis, "Antipodean Reminiscences or Splinters from a Traveler's Log," unidentified article, Catalina Davis scrapbook, CAHA.
- ⁸ William Fuller Davis (1809-1884) was the son of Captain Soloman and Nancy Fuller Davis. Davis also served as the director of the Gloucester National Bank (1863-76) and Chief Engineer of the Gloucester Fire Dept. (1845-49). Obituary, biography files, CAHA. John James Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester, Cape Ann* (1860), Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1972, 75.
- ⁹ Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester*, 561; Cassie Mason Myers Julian-James, *Biographical Sketches of the Bailey-Myers-Mason Families 1776-1905: Key to a Cabinet of Heirlooms in the National Museum, Washington*, privately printed, 1908, 113-118.
- ¹⁰ Gay Wilson Allen, *Waldo Emerson: A Biography*, NY: Viking Press, 1981, 180-181.
- ¹¹ Sarah G. Duley, "In Memoriam: Ann Mason Babson, February 19, 1822 - January 11, 1907," Sarah G. Duley scrapbooks, vol. D, 14, CAHA.
- ¹² "Painting by Lane of Town in 1852 Presented by Washington Lady As Memento of Her Grandfather Mason," 1913, unidentified newspaper clipping in Artists and Authors of Cape Ann scrapbook, CAHA.
- ¹³ *The Fishermen's Own Book*, Gloucester, MA: Procter Brothers, 1882, 100-101; *The Fisheries of Gloucester From 1623 to 1876*, Gloucester, MA: Procter Brothers, 1876, 46.
- ¹⁴ James R. Pringle, *History of the Town and City of Gloucester, Cape Ann, Massachusetts* (1892), Gloucester, MA: Ten Pound Island Book Co., 1997, 76-77.
- ¹⁵ James F. O'Gorman, "The Pavilion that Sidney Built," *This Other Gloucester: Occasional Papers on the Arts of Cape Ann Massachusetts*, Gloucester, MA: Ten Pound Island Book Co. 1990, 34.
- ¹⁶ "Summer Retreat," 1850, unidentified newspaper clipping, Fitz Hugh Lane archives, CAHA.
- ¹⁷ John Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane*, NY: Praeger Publishing, 1971, 42.
- ¹⁸ Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane*, 72-74; Fred W. Tibbets, "C.A.S. & L.A. Weekly Column on Matters of Local History: Fitz Hugh Lane," unidentified newspaper clipping in Artists

and Authors of Cape Ann scrapbook, CAHA.

¹⁹ *Paintings and Drawings by Fitz Hugh Lane at the Cape Ann Historical Association*, Gloucester, MA: Cape Ann Historical Association, 1974, 18.

²⁰ John James Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester, Cape Ann*, Gloucester, MA: Procter Brothers, 1860.

²¹ Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*.

²² Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "The Pearce-Parrot Garden," *The Essex Historical Collections*, July 1944, 283.

²³ "Verbal Picture Gloucester Life 100 Years Ago," September 1939, unidentified newspaper clipping, Cape Ann Historical Association scrapbook; CAHA minutes, 1939, 32.

²⁴ Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "The Gloucester Model," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, January 1940, 43-45.

²⁵ Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "Photos Will Show City Now and Generations Ago: Historical Association Sponsoring Unusual Display of Before and After Views," *Gloucester Daily Times*, March 22, 1940.

²⁶ Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*; Babson, *History of Gloucester*, 75-78, 160-162.

²⁷ The house was built from two Federal period houses Rogers moved from Beacon Hill in Boston to Gloucester by barge. Kathleen Howley, "Beacon Hill's Gift to Gloucester," *Boston Sunday Globe*, October 5, 1992.

²⁸ Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*, 52.

²⁹ "Historical House Adds Paintings by Fitz Lane: Marine and Two Landscapes by Late Gloucester Born Artist Among New Acquisitions," 1937, unidentified newspaper clipping, Authors and Artists of Cape Ann scrapbook, CAHA.

³⁰ Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*, 62-69.

³¹ Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "Gloucester and the Surinam Trade," *The Essex Institute Historical Collections*, July 1953, 288-291; "The Surinam Business," unidentified newspaper clipping, Cameron scrapbooks, vol. 18, CAHA; Cornelis Ch. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in Surinam 1791/5-1942*, Assen/Maastricht, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1990.

³² Tibbets, "Fitz Hugh Lane," Authors and Artists of Cape Ann scrapbook, CAHA.

³³ CAHA minutes, September 5, 1952.

³⁴ "Historical House Adds Paintings Fitz Lane," Authors and Artists of Cape Ann scrapbook.

³⁵ Albert J. Rossi, "Roger Babson, 91, Succumbs in Florida," *Boston Herald*, March 6, 1967.

³⁶ Jennifer Demsey, "Rockport's Oldest Monument," *Cape Ann Summer Sun*, August 18, 1989; Babson, *History of Gloucester*, 59-61.

³⁷ "Cape Ann Scientific, Literary and Historical Association," 1936, unidentified article, Cape Ann Historical Association scrapbook.

³⁸ *Paintings and Drawings by Fitz Hugh Lane at the Cape Ann Historical Association*, 36, 44; Catherine Finney-MacDougal, *The Babson Genealogy, 1637-1977: Descendants of Isabel Babson who arrived at Salem, Massachusetts in 1637*, Watertown, MA: Eaton Press, 1978, 59, 101, 157; Robert Babson Alling, *Robert Babson Alling's Ancestors, Descendants, and Close Relations*, Chicago: privately printed, 1930, 52-53, 73-74.

- ³⁹ Isabel Babson Lane (1878-1960) obituary, *Gloucester Daily Times*, August 18, 1960.
- ⁴⁰ CAHA minutes.
- ⁴¹ Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester*, 59, 111.
- ⁴² Finney-MacDougal, *Babson Genealogy*, 33, 55, 95.
- ⁴³ The other copy was made for Benjamin K. Smith. *Paintings and Drawings by Fitz Hugh Lane At the Cape Ann Historical Association*, 28.
- ⁴⁴ Isabel Babson (1848-1917), autograph album, June 1863, CAHA archives.
- ⁴⁵ "Syllabus of Exercises Before the Gloucester Lyceum," *Gloucester Telegraph*, December 1, 1849; Marshall W.S. Swan, "Emerson and Cape Ann," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, vol. 121, no. 4, October 1985, 257-268; Mary Foley, "New Discoveries in American Art: Fitz Hugh Lane, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the Gloucester Lyceum," *American Art Journal*, vol. XXVII, no. 1&2, 1995-96, 99-101.
- ⁴⁶ Joseph L. Stevens, Jr. essay on Gloucester's First Parish Church, 1879, CAHA archives; for contemporary reviews of Thoreau's lecture see Peter Anastas, "Thoreau - Lyceum Lectures and Private Impressions: Some Historical Notes on Thoreau's 1848 Gloucester Lecture and his return to Cape Ann Ten Years Later," *Essex Life*, Fall 1983, 99-146.
- ⁴⁷ Annette Babson (1815-1884), journal, Sunday September 6, 1846, CAHA archives.
- ⁴⁸ The letters from Amory D. Mayo to Ralph Waldo Emerson are preserved in Houghton Library at Harvard University. Dr. Herman E. Davidson (1815-1890) was active in the Lyceum serving terms both as corresponding secretary and director. He was also a patron and friend of Fitz Hugh Lane.
- ⁴⁹ Annette Babson, journal, Sunday September 23, 1849.
- ⁵⁰ Annette Babson, journal, Monday September 22, 1849.
- ⁵¹ Hannah Stanwood Babson (1834-1909), journal, February 24, 1850.
- ⁵² Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester*, 285-286.
- ⁵³ Samuel A. Stacy (1819-1895), obituary, October 21, 1895, biography file, CAHA.
- ⁵⁴ Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester*, 240.
- ⁵⁵ Harriet Gilbert Stacy (1822-1900), obituary, January 29, 1900, biography file, CAHA; Brooks, annual report, December 1, 1950, CAHA minutes.
- ⁵⁶ Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*, 25-26.
- ⁵⁷ CAHA minutes; Jane Parker Stacy (1863-1948), obituary, January 3 & 5, 1948, *Gloucester Daily Times*.
- ⁵⁸ George Odiorne Stacy (1860-1928), memorial service essays, biography file, CAHA.
- ⁵⁹ "Our Town," *The Telegraph*, June 6, 1846.
- ⁶⁰ Ruth Steele Brooks, "Side Lights," in Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*, 199.
- ⁶¹ "Mrs. Carrie Mansfield, Former GHS Teacher, Died Today at Hospital," *Gloucester Daily Times*, February 24, 1949.
- ⁶² CAHA minutes.
- ⁶³ Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "Fitz Lane's Drawing's Drawings," *The Essex Institute Historical Collections*, January 1945, 83-86.
- ⁶⁴ Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane*, 18-19; Letter from Elias David Knight to Joseph L. Stevens, Jr., August 15, 1869, CAHA archives.
- ⁶⁵ Letter from Joseph L. Stevens, Jr. to Samuel Mansfield, October 17, 1903, CAHA archives.

66 *ibid.*

67 Joseph Lowe Stevens, Jr., obituary, biography file, CAHA.

68 CAHA minutes.

69 Letter from Fitz Hugh Lane to Joseph L. Stevens, Jr., 1857, CAHA archives.

70 "Late George B. Stevens "Dean" of Cape Ann's Musicians," (1865-1940) obituary, unidentified newspaper clipping Authors and Artists of Cape Ann scrapbook, CAHA.

71 Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "Village and Small-Town Museums," *Museum News*, March 1, 1952.