

Sharon Worley, "Fitz Hugh Lane and the Legacy of the Codfish Aristocracy" *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* Volume 32, No. 1 (Winter 2004).

Published by: Institute for Massachusetts Studies and Westfield State University

You may use content in this archive for your personal, non-commercial use. Please contact the *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* regarding any further use of this work:

masshistoryjournal@westfield.ma.edu

Funding for digitization of issues was provided through a generous grant from MassHumanities.



Some digitized versions of the articles have been reformatted from their original, published appearance. When citing, please give the original print source (volume/ number/ date) but add "retrieved from HJM's online archive at <http://www.westfield.ma.edu/mhj>.

Editor, *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*
c/o Westfield State University
577 Western Ave. Westfield MA 01086



Fitz Hugh Lane and the Legacy of the Codfish Aristocracy

By

Sharon Worley

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

The New England coast is dotted with historical societies which house collections of artifacts and antiques marking the passage of time and documenting the achievements of their host town residents. These living time capsules came into vogue in the late nineteenth century as the foreign trade which formerly provided the primary source of livelihood for harbor towns diminished and the accoutrements of sail-powered shipping became outmoded. The ports which once provided entry for overseas manufactured goods previously unavailable domestically became symbols of a bygone romantic era in which ancestors sailed to exotic destinations. This economic fact together with a sense of national history, which had been created over the brief duration of a century, encouraged the creation of these social repositories. The historical society not only provided a popular means for defining community identity, but also enabled local families to participate in the national

¹ Alfred Mansfield Brooks quoted in "Gordon W. Thomas to Address Scientific Association Monday," *Gloucester Daily Times*, June 21, 1952.

historical process by contributing relics from their own economic and genealogical past. Few, of these towns, however, were fortunate enough to count among their residents an artist of Fitz Hugh Lane's talent and stature who recorded with such precision both the idealistic spirit and the actual structure of the town's pre-industrial state.

Gloucester's sense of historical identity was first articulated by Lane's contemporary John James Babson, who published his comprehensive history of Cape Ann in 1860. The meticulous detail of Lane's Gloucester paintings was matched in Babson's voluminous work which traced the region's history from its earliest seventeenth century English settlers to their present day descendents. Like many of Cape Ann's residents, both Lane and Babson could trace their ancestry back to early settlers. Babson was descended from a Salem widow and midwife Isabel Babson who came to Gloucester after 1637. Lane was descended from a blacksmith Samuel Lane whose family had left Falmouth, Maine and were given grants of land on Cape Ann by 1708. Both Babson's History and Lane's paintings represent significant historical markers. Created in the period preceding the eve of the Civil War, they served to document the growth and expansion of Cape Ann from its inception as part of an English colony to a prosperous town in an independent union. Lane presented Gloucester as an idyllic microcosm of the United States.

Between the years 1925 and 1971 the Cape Ann Historical Association assembled the largest and finest collection of work by the Gloucester marine artist Fitz Hugh Lane (1804-1865). 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 curator from 1951 to 1963. Brooks was descended from a prominent class of seafaring families known as the "Codfish Aristocracy." Many of these families traced their ancestry to the earliest English settlers of this country's oldest fishing port. Following the Revolution they amassed their wealth through foreign trade and fishing. Lane captured the prosperity of these seafaring families in paintings of Gloucester Harbor which included merchant ships and fishing schooners like those they owned and sailed. These families purchased paintings by Lane which were passed on to their descendents together with family portraits, ship portraits, souvenirs from overseas voyages and other historical artifacts. Brooks knew many of their descendents and encouraged them to donate their Lane paintings to the Museum. Like Brooks, they also donated family heirlooms which

served to illustrate every aspect of the rich culture Lane represented in his art.

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. 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-nineteenth 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 Association's 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

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.

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 made by members of the codfish aristocracy came from Brooks' distant cousins Lucy Brown Davis (1836-1926) and her half-sister Catalina Davis (1853-1932). In addition to their family's legacy of art and heirlooms, they left a bequest for the construction of a new gallery in which to house them which was completed in 1936.⁴ They donated a portrait of Lucy's mother Lucy Kinsman Brown (1817-1836) together with federal period furniture which belonged to their grandparents. One piece was a Chippendale oxbow drop front desk dating to 1790, and made locally in one of the nearby coastal towns such as Salem or Newburyport.⁵ Other objects included a Hepplewhite card table and sofa dating to 1790, and a Sheraton sewing table and mirror from 1810-1815. In addition, the sisters donated two paintings by Lane: *Stage Rocks and the Western Shore of Gloucester Harbor* (1857) and *Three Master and Lumber Schooners Heavy Seas* (1850s), and one unfinished painting of a ship in a harbor by his pupil Mary Mellen (1817-1885).

Following the death of his first wife, William Fuller Davis (1809-1884) sent their daughter Lucy to be raised by her mother's parents.⁶ When Davis remarried Harriet Mason (1824-1874) and had a second daughter Catalina in 1853, Lucy returned to her father's house and was raised together with her sister. In 1859, the Davis family moved into a new house at 47 Pleasant Street which remained the sisters' permanent residence. Both 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,

³ Cape Ann Historical Association minutes.

⁴ CAHA minutes, 1936.

⁵ Broke Jobe and Myrna Kaye, *New England Furniture: The Colonial Era* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984), 236-238.

⁶ Lucy Brown Davis and Abigail B. Brown obituaries, CAHA biography files.

and after their father's death in 1884, they returned to Gloucester and shared the house he built at 47 Pleasant Street.⁷

The women became active in the Association early in its development at a time when its cultural mission was much broader and included natural history, science, world history and literature in addition to local history. While both women spent much of their adult lives traveling abroad, they remained active members of the Association. 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 1912.⁸ 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.⁹

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

⁷ "Lucy B. Davis Dies at Home," (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.

⁸ CAHA minutes.

⁹ CAHA Accession Book I, 1929, 52 (#551 originally donated 1896).

Zealand and Tasmania.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

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. His father, grandfather and great-grandfather had all been Gloucester 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 sail-maker, 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.¹²

Davis's sketchbook of sail plans from 1845 is the earliest documentary source on Gloucester's sail-making industry in the Museum's collections. It includes sail plans for schooners in the local fishing fleet as well as for the Brig *Cadet*, a portrait of which Lane painted about the same time. One of the sail plans includes an illustration of the schooner which has been rendered with such precision,

¹⁰ Catalina Davis, "Letter from a Gloucester Lady Travelling in Russia," *Cape Ann Advertiser*, December 9, 1888; Lucy Brown Davis, "Pen Pictures in 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.

¹¹ CAHA accession records.

¹² 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 (1863-1876) 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.

Lane may have drawn it himself.¹³ A collaboration between the two seems likely since Lane's drawings and paintings of vessels reveal a professional knowledge of rigging and vessel construction.¹⁴

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 undertaker at his shop on Front Street (now Main Street) across from the Old Corner Bookstore.¹⁵ When Lucy's mother died shortly after Lucy's birth, she was sent to live with her grandparents until her father remarried Catalina's mother Harriet Mason.

Harriet was the daughter of Alphonso and Lucy Stratton Mason. The Masons were a prominent Gloucester family descended from Hugh Mason who emigrated from Ipswich, England to Watertown, Massachusetts in 1634. Alphonso's father John Mason was a surveyor who made maps of Cape Ann. Together they operated the Gloucester House, a three story brick hotel on the corner of Washington and Main Streets built in 1810. In 1849, Alphonso's brother Sidney Mason built a large ocean front hotel in Gloucester called the Pavilion. Sidney commissioned a painting of Gloucester Harbor by Lane in 1852 which included the Pavilion and the Gloucester House on the far left hand side. The painting was later donated to the city of Gloucester in 1913 by Catalina's cousin and Sidney's granddaughter Mrs. Julian James. (Figure 1) The city in turn deposited the painting at the Cape Ann Historical Association.¹⁶

¹³ I am grateful to Erik Ronnberg, Jr. for this observation.

¹⁴ Lane's father Jonathan Dennison Lane was also a sailmaker.

¹⁵ See Lucy Brown Davis and Abigail B. Brown obituaries, CAHA biography files.

¹⁶ Alphonso spent the early part of his career working as a bank officer in Cambridge, MA. He returned to Gloucester in 1830 where he spent the last 10 years of his life until his death aboard the steamer *Lexington* which caught fire on Long Island Sound in 1840. Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester*, 561; "Painting by Lane of Town in 1852 Presented by Washington Lady As Memento of Her Grandfather Mason," unidentified article, 1913, *Authors and Artists of Cape Ann* scrapbook, CAHA.

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 Puerto Rican mansion as having "large, high ceilinged rooms, long passages to a courtyard, and servants lodged in various quarters."¹⁷ Mason met his first wife Marequita Benito Dorado in Puerto Rico while serving as the United States consul from 1820 until 1835. Although he lived outside of Gloucester he remained in close contact with his family there. He sent his daughter Catalina to the same Charlestown convent school which Harriet's sister Lydia Ann (1822-1907) attended.¹⁸ 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."¹⁹ The sisters evidently treasured the experience as Harriet named her daughter Catalina after her uncle's plantation Santa Catalina. Lydia Ann went on to attend State Normal School in Framingham and became a teacher in Gloucester. In 1851 she married a member of another prominent merchant family, Gloucester historian John James Babson.

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. 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

¹⁷ Gay Wilson Allen, *Waldo Emerson: A Biography* (NY: Viking Press, 1981), 180-181.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Sarah G. Duley, "In Memoriam: Ann Mason Babson, February 19, 1822-January 11, 1907," Sarah G. Duley scrapbooks, vol. D, 14, CAHA.

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 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 1846.²⁰ The 1850s marked an era of decline in Gloucester's foreign trade. Within a decade, Gloucester's monopoly on the trade of dried salt fish for molasses from the Dutch colony of Surinam in South America would be eclipsed by the abolition of slavery. Larger ports such as New York and Boston dominated foreign 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. Thus, by the time of Lane, the town had recognized its own nostalgic value, and its portrayal by citizens, both linguistic and visual, reflected an emerging historical identity which would attract tourists.

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.²¹ Gloucester's historic sites together with its beautiful scenery created a market for entrepreneurs like Mason

²⁰ *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.

²¹ 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.

who added to the historic value of the town by building a landmark hotel at the same time he tapped into the tourist market.

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. (Figure 2) The local paper referred to the hotel as the "crowning exploit of the year" and "an edifice of beautiful proportions."²² Elsewhere it was noted that the hotel was built "without any regard to expense, and with sole reference to comfort, beauty and convenience."²³ 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).²⁴ 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

²² 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.

²³ "Summer Retreat," 1850, unidentified newspaper clipping, Fitz Hugh Lane archives, CAHA.

²⁴ John Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane* (NY: Praeger Publishing, 1971), 42.

Cape Ann in 1623 for the book he had written on the same subject.²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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.²⁷

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 descendants of families who had been active in Gloucester's nineteenth 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.²⁸

Brooks' affiliation with the Museum began in the 1920s 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.

²⁵ Ibid., 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.

²⁶ *Paintings and Drawings by Fitz Hugh Lane at the Cape Ann Historical Association* (Gloucester, MA: Cape Ann Historical Association, 1974), 18.

²⁷ John James Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester, Cape Ann* (Gloucester, MA: Procter Brothers, 1860).

²⁸ Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*.

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 macrocosm of history's great works of art and monuments to the microcosm 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.'"²⁹

In 1939 he gave a talk at the Association on the history of Gloucester between the years 1827 and 1840.³⁰ 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 seventeenth and early eighteenth 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.³¹

²⁹ Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "The Pearce-Parrot Garden," *The Essex Historical Collections*, July 1944, 283.

³⁰ "Verbal Picture Gloucester Life 100 Years Ago," September 1939, unidentified newspaper clipping, *Cape Ann Historical Association* scrapbook; CAHA minutes, 1939, 32.

³¹ Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "The Gloucester Model," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, January 1940, 43-45.

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 seventies 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.³²

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 (1811-1900). Living close by were his grandmother's sister Lucy Davis Rogers (1814-1907) and their aunt, Sarah Somes Mackey (1789-1888). All three women were intricately entwined in Gloucester's maritime history as the daughters

³² 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.

and wives of sea captains and merchants and they passed on their family history to Brooks.

Brooks' grandmother was the daughter of Captain Elias Davis, Jr. and Abigail Somes Davis. Elias Davis, Jr. was a sea captain as well as the son and grandson of sea captains. His father Elias Davis, Sr. sailed ships to Europe, Asia and South America, and after twenty years at sea he accumulated enough wealth to build his house at 27 Pleasant Street. About the same time Abigail's father Captain Samuel Somes died on a voyage returning from Russia, and his widow commissioned a nearly identical house next door to the Davis house. The Davis and the Somes families traced their ancestry to Cape Ann's earliest settlers. The Davis's were descended from John Davis who settled on Cape Ann as early as 1656. The Somes were descended from Morris Somes who moved to Cape Ann by 1646. Both Elias Davis and Samuel Somes served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, and aboard privateers. In 1780, Davis was given command of the privateer *Fair Play* while Somes served aboard the privateer *America*.³³

Brooks inherited a wealth of historical artifacts from both families which he donated to the Museum upon the death of his wife Ruth Steele Brooks in 1971. These objects, which have now returned to their original setting in the Davis house, include a portrait of Captain Elias Davis painted in Antwerp and a portrait of Captain Samuel Somes made in St. Petersburg, Russia. A portrait of one of Davis' ships, the *Corporal Trim*, painted in Marseille is displayed together with passports issued to Elias Davis and Elias Davis, Jr. and signed by the presidents John Adams and James Madison. A sampler made by Davis' daughter Mary provides a family record with the dates of birth of the parents and their children, and is displayed together with the cradle used by Elias Davis, Jr. In another room hangs a mourning piece embroidered by Sarah (Sally) Somes upon the death her father Captain Samuel Somes when she was nine years old.³⁴

A third branch of the family, the Mansfields, were involved in Gloucester's fishing industry. Brooks' grandmother was married to

³³ Babson, , 75-78, 160-162; Joseph E. Garland, *Guns Off Gloucester* (Gloucester, MA: Essex Country Newspapers, Inc., 1975), 213-214.

³⁴ See Sharon Worley, *Stepping Out of the Frame: The People in the Portraits* (Gloucester, MA: Cape Ann Historical Association, 1994).

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.³⁵ Living next door were his uncle Alfred Mansfield and his cousin Samuel Mansfield who also became an important donor to the Association's Fitz Hugh Lane collection.

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.³⁶ 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.³⁷

³⁵ Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*; Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester*, 75-78, 160-162.

³⁶ The house was built from two Federal period houses Rogers moved from Beacon Hill in Boston to Gloucester by barge. One house was designed by Charles Bullfinch in the 1790s and the other was built in the 1820s. Rogers used the 1820s house for the first floor and the Bullfinch house as the second floor. See Kathleen Howley, "Beacon Hill's Gift to Gloucester," *Boston Sunday Globe*, October 5, 1992.

³⁷ Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*, 52.

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.³⁸ At one time, Rogers and Woodbury were co-owners of the Surinam brigs *Adriatic* and *Sarah Ann*.³⁹

Rogers entered the trade in 1832 and by 1846 imported twelve cargoes from Surinam in one year. One of these cargoes was aboard the ship *Pleiades* contained well over 590 hogsheads of molasses and was reported to be the largest cargo ever imported. The Gloucester trade peaked in 1857 with the arrival of twenty 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.⁴⁰ 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 1876.⁴¹ Shortly after Brooks became curator in 1952, the city deposited the painting at the

³⁸ "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.

³⁹ Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*, 62-69.

⁴⁰ 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).

⁴¹ Tibbets, "Fitz Hugh Lane," *Authors and Artists of Cape Ann* scrapbook, CAHA.

Museum together with Sidney Mason's painting of Gloucester harbor by Lane.⁴²

In the same year Brooks donated his Lane painting, Roger Babson (1875-1967) donated two Lane paintings.⁴³ 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 1919.⁴⁴ 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 1930.⁴⁵ He was also interested in acquiring early seventeenth century tools and domestic implements used on Cape Ann for the Association, and one of the rooms in the Museum's Elias Davis house was devoted to his collection.⁴⁶

The Lane paintings Babson donated to the Cape Ann Historical Association, *Babson and Ellery Houses, Gloucester* (1863) and *The Babson Meadows at Riverdale* (1863) had been commissioned by his great uncle Nathaniel Babson (1810-1863). He gave them as parting gifts to his daughters Emma and Maria when they moved to California with Emma's husband William Friend in 1869. When the paintings were offered for sale by distant relatives in California, Roger Babson purchased them for the Association. *Babson and Ellery Houses,*

⁴² CAHA minutes, September 5, 1952.

⁴³ "Historical House Adds Paintings Fitz Lane," *Authors and Artists of Cape Ann* scrapbook.

⁴⁴ Albert J. Rossi, "Roger Babson, 91, Succumbs in Florida," *Boston Herald*, March 6, 1967.

⁴⁵ Jeer Demsey, "Rockport's Oldest Monument," *Cape Ann Summer Sun*, August 18, 1989; Babson, *History of Gloucester*, 59-61.

⁴⁶ "Cape Ann Scientific, Literary and Historical Association," 1936, unidentified article, *Cape Ann Historical Association* scrapbook.

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. Gustavus operated the family farm represented in the paintings, and his son, also name Nathaniel, owned a dry goods store in town.⁴⁷

Roger Babson's great uncle Nathaniel Babson (1810-1863) was a painter and store owner. He was also interested in the abolition movement and was instrumental in bringing lecturers to town. His father, also named Nathaniel, was a sea captain and a member of the merchant class who brought prosperity to Gloucester's Codfish Aristocracy. He traded with Europe and owned several vessels. Some of his letters to his wife Eliza informing her of his experiences overseas have been preserved and provide a good description of the kind of romantic imagery Gloucester residents associated with the dangerous and heroic profession of sea captains. On November 5, 1816 he wrote to her from Gibraltar telling her of his dangerous passage there:

I embrace the first opportunity to inform you that I have arrived here in safety after a blustering passage and being in the most imminent danger. I left Boston on the 17th in the morning and nothing particular occurred till the 25th when I took the most tremendous gale that ever I experienced. I saw nothing but death before me before me as it was, for I thought it impossible for the vessel to survive the gale. I met with some disaster, lost part of my bulwarks and main top gallant mast but by the blessing of God I was preserved and brought here in safety on the 17th of October....

I now take leave of the dull scene and am going to take view of a pleasanter prospect and fancy myself at home in the society of you and my dear children sitting

⁴⁷ *Paintings and Drawings by Fitz Hugh Lane at the Cape Ann Historical Association*, 36, 44.

round the stove with a good crackling fire to make ourselves happy and comfortable.⁴⁸

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 1900.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ Like Brooks, she was descended from two old Cape Ann seafaring families. She and Roger Babson shared the same ancestor, midwife Isabel Babson of Salem (1637). 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.⁵¹

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 five portraits, seven ship portraits, plus numerous mementos from overseas voyages. Their history was particularly well documented by diaries and letters which Isabel preserved and donated to the museum. For example, she donated the portrait of her father's cousin Ernest Lane together with a portrait of his

⁴⁸ Letter from Captain Nathaniel Babson (1784-1836) to his wife Eliza Gorham Low (1786-1862), November 5, 1816, reprinted in Robert Babson Alling, *Robert Babson Alling's Ancestors, Descendants, and Close Relations* (Chicago: privately printed, 1930), revised edition, 1959, 50, 52-53, 73-74. *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, 101-102, 157.

⁴⁹ Isabel Babson Lane (1878-1960) obituary, *Gloucester Daily Times*, August 18, 1960.

⁵⁰ CAHA minutes.

⁵¹ Babson, 59, 111.

ship *Zephur*. The ship's portrait was painted in Messina, Sicily in 1860 and depicts Guiseppe Garibaldi's attack on the city's port which occurred while Lane was there. The scene is presented as a joyous patriotic event with people dancing on the shore because Garibaldi united modern Italy under one ruler. In a letter to his sister, Lane reported that 70 people, including 36 children, had taken refuge on board his ship during the attack. He went on to describe the attack:

Such a confusion you never heard. I remained in the port until the 25th, in the mean time Garibaldi had arrived within 8 miles, and fought two battles with success...I considered it prudent for one to get out of the port and ready for sea. I did so and on the morning of the 27th, Sunday, I was awakened about 1/2 past 3 with musketry and cannon shots close by. I went on deck...[where] I could see the flashed and hear the war cry of thousands in close and fierce combat. As soon as it was light I saw the soldiers of Naples flying before the charges of the determined hero of the Alps and at 10 in the forenoon he was in the heart of the city and surrounded by thousands of armed men ready to lay down their lives in defense of their brave deliverer....The troops retreated into the Palace and castle, and all Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday the fighting continued in different quarters of the city. The castle all this time [kept] throwing shell into the town destroying houses and killing women and children....I am tired and sick of keeping this hotel. The *Zephur* decks look much like a country picnic and such noises, children from 3 weeks old up to 17. Won't I be glad when I see them leave.⁵²

Lane also kept a diary of his voyages in which he noted that as he was leaving the Mediterranean, the Civil War broke out in the United States. In order to avoid Confederate privateers in the Atlantic, he was instructed

⁵² Letter from Ernest Lane to his sister, Palermo Bay, June 6, 1860, CAHA archives.

by the ship's owners to take general cargo to San Francisco instead of returning to Gloucester.⁵³

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.⁵⁴ 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). (Figure 3) 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 and is the epitome of luminism. Lane's preparatory drawing indicates that at least two paintings were commissioned. One was commissioned by Florence Foster, a friend of John James Babson, his wife Lydia Ann Mason Babson and Lucy Brown Davis, who accompanied them on a trip to Europe in 1871.⁵⁵ Foster was also a friend of Isabel's mother and wrote a personal inscription in her friend's autograph album in 1863 expressing the neo-platonic religious sentiments typical of the period.⁵⁶ Whether it was her painting which made its way to Isabel's family is unknown.

⁵³ Memoirs of Captain Ernest Lane (1831-1886), CAHA archives.

⁵⁴ Finney-MacDougal, *Babson Genealogy*, 33, 55, 95.

⁵⁵ The other copy was made for Benjamin K. Smith. *Paintings and Drawings by Fitz Hugh Lane At the Cape Ann Historical Association*, 28; Sarah Duley, "Ann Mason Babson," Sarah Duley Scrapbooks, CAHA.

⁵⁶ Isabel Babson (1848-1917), autograph album, June 1863, CAHA archives.

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 1858.⁵⁷ 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.

Women like Isabel Babson were often active in the Lyceum and devoted more time to pursuing the relationships between nature, aesthetics and metaphysics. One of Lane's pupil's Mary Mellen (1817-1885) belonged to this milieu, and was also the wife of a Universalist minister Charles W. Mellen. The Mellens moved to Gloucester in the 1840s.⁵⁸ Mary was Lane's most gifted pupil and collaborated with him on some paintings and made copies of others.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ "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. See Sharon Worley, "Mapping the Metaphysical Landscape of Cape Ann: The Reception of Ralph Waldo Emerson's Transcendentalism Among the Gloucester Audience of Reverend Amory Dwight Mayo and Fitz Hugh Lane," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*, Vol. XXIX, no. 2, Summer 2001, 137-169.

⁵⁸ By the time of Lane's death in 1865, the Mellens were living in Taunton, MA. where Charles Mellen (1818-1866) was the pastor of the Universalist church. "Death of a Clergyman," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, Oct. 22, 1866; "Mrs. Mary B. Mellen," *Taunton Daily Gazette*, February 13, 1886.

⁵⁹ Michael Moses, "Mary Blood Mellen and Fitz Hugh Lane," *Antiques*, November 1991, 827-837; Phebe H. Hanaford, *Daughters of America* (Augusta, ME: True & Co., 1882); Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "A Communication," *Essex*

One of the paintings by Lane she copied was a still life which he gave to another pupil, Harriet Mason, in 1849.⁶⁰ Another painting by Mellen, *Field Beach* (c. 1849) at Stage Fort Park closely resembles one by Lane: *Stage Fort Beach* (1849) but with the alteration of several details. Mellen included a man greeting two women sitting on the ground overlooking the harbor in the foreground, and a couple standing on the shore on the far right hand side. The inclusion of women is significant as it represents a visual counterpart to their literary appreciation of nature.

Mellen's painting *Field Beach* was donated together with a painting by Lane *Looking up Squam River from 'Done Fudging'* (1850s) by Jean Stanley Dice.⁶¹ The paintings were found in the house of her great grandfather William Parsons II (1815-1882), who lived at 61 Middle Street. Parsons was the senior partner of the fishing firm William Parsons, 2nd & Co. in East Gloucester which had been founded by his father. He also served as a director of the Gloucester Mutual Fishing Insurance Company for eleven years. The Parsons were descended from Jeffrey Parsons, who settled on Cape Ann as early as 1685. His second wife Mary Eliza Somes was the daughter of Captain Isaac Somes, who was Brooks great-great uncle.⁶²

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 1723.⁶³ 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) which survived the fires of 1830 and 1864 (which destroyed most of the buildings). He owned an insurance agency, and was active in civic

Institute Historical Collections, January 1960, 73-74; Laura S. Hersey, "Mary Mellen," *The Gloucester Universalist Newsletter*, March 1993.

⁶⁰ Wilmerding, 42.

⁶¹ Mrs. Preston W. Die (Jean Stanley) donated the paintings in 1964.

⁶² Babson, 122; William Parsons, 2nd, obituary, biography files, CAHA.

⁶³ Babson, 285-286.

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.⁶⁴ George Stacy's mother, Harriet Gilbert Stacy, was descended from John Gilbert who moved to Gloucester from Wenham in 1704.⁶⁵ 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.⁶⁶

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. 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. The Stacys...consisted of the fine-looking father, Samuel, who had an insurance agency, his much younger, willowy wife, Harriet, their handsome son, George, the well-known hotel man-to-be, and their beautiful daughter, Eliza.⁶⁷

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

⁶⁴ Samuel A. Stacy (1819-1895), obituary, October 21, 1895, biography file, CAHA.

⁶⁵ Babson, 240.

⁶⁶ Harriet Gilbert Stacy (1822-1900), obituary, January 29, 1900, biography file, CARA; Brooks, annual report, December 1, 1950, CAHA minutes.

⁶⁷ Brooks, 25-26.

taught in Gloucester public schools until her marriage in 1899.⁶⁸ 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.

The artifacts the couple donated represented their family's involvement in Gloucester's rich heritage. Items included were the desk on which Gloucester volunteers signed up for service in the Civil War, a spinet piano made by John Osborne in Boston in the early nineteenth century, and two water buckets, one with the name Stacy and the other with the name Gilbert painted on them. In addition they gave federal period furniture such as a mahogany Hepplewhite secretary desk (c. 1790), country Chippendale chairs (c. 1790) and a Sheraton mirror (c. 1815) with a scene of the battle at sea between the *Constitution* and the *Guerriere* during the War of 1812.

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 1923.⁶⁹ 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

⁶⁸ CAHA minutes; Jane Parker Stacy (1863-1948), obituary, January 3 & 5, 1948, *Gloucester Daily Times*.

⁶⁹ George Odiorne Stacy (1860-1928), memorial service essays, biography file, CAHA.

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 become known to be enjoyed.⁷⁰

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.⁷¹ 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.⁷² 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.⁷³

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

⁷⁰ "Our Town," *The Telegraph*, June 6, 1846.

⁷¹ Ruth Steele Brooks, "Side Lights," in Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*, 199.

⁷² "Mrs. Carrie Mansfield, Former GHS Teacher, Died Today at Hospital," *Gloucester Daily Times*, February 24, 1949.

⁷³ CAHA minutes.

friend Joseph L. Stevens who was the executor of the artist's estate. Mansfield donated most of the drawings to the Museum in 1927, and the rest arrived as part of his bequest following his death. 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 great and ever-lengthening book *Our Fathers Have Told Us*.⁷⁴

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.⁷⁵ 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.

⁷⁴ Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "Fitz Lane's Drawing's Drawings," *The Essex Institute Historical Collections*, January 1945, 83-86.

⁷⁵ Wilmerding, 18-19; Letter from Elias David Knight to Joseph L. Stevens, Jr., August 15, 1869, CARA archives.

Another Lane painting Mansfield donated was *Gloucester Harbor* (1847). (Figure 4) 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.”⁷⁶

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 as well as that of his patrons, the Staceys:

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....The Stacys were very kind, aiding him as time went on in selling painting 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.⁷⁷

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

⁷⁶ Letter from Joseph L. Stevens, Jr. to Samuel Mansfield, October 17, 1903, CAHA archives.

⁷⁷ Letter from Joseph L. Stevens, Jr. to Samuel Mansfield, October 17, 1903, Fitz Hugh Lane archives, CAHA.

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.⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁹

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....⁸⁰

Steven’s daughter Helen Babson Stevens donated the painting to the Museum in 1933. The other four paintings Lane gave to Stevens were

⁷⁸ Joseph Lowe Stevens, Jr., obituary, biography file, CAHA.

⁷⁹ CAHA minutes.

⁸⁰ Letter from Fitz Hugh Lane to Joseph L. Stevens, Jr., 1857, CAHA archives.

given to the Association in 1964 by the widow of Steven's son George B. Stevens who 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.⁸¹

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.⁸²

⁸¹ "Late George B. Stevens 'Dean' of Cape Ann's Musicians," (1865-1940) obituary, unidentified newspaper clipping, Authors and Artists of Cape Ann scrapbook, CAHA.

⁸² Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "Village and Small-Town Museums," *Museum News*, March 1, 1952.

Upon Brooks death in 1964 at the age of 94, his successor Hyde Cox noted in the president's report that Gloucester had lost one of its most distinguished citizens:

Alfred Mansfield Brooks knew more than anyone living about Gloucester's past, in which his ancestors played an important part, and he cared as much as anyone living about its present and its future....He [worked] courageously in the public good in the 18th century American tradition to which he was so close. One of his close relatives [Sarah Somes Mackey], who influenced his life until he was nearly 21 years old, was born in 1789, the year George Washington was elected President. No wonder he seemed so close to Adams and Jefferson in his standards of public conduct....⁸³

Following the death of his wife Ruth Steele Brooks in 1971, Cox oversaw the packing of hundreds of items included in the Brooks bequest which were transported to the Museum. He told the movers to leave the portrait of Captain Elias Davis aside and on the final day he personally transported the portrait from Brooks' house back to the Elias Davis house where it had originally hung 170 years earlier. "For me it was the moving symbol of an event," he wrote. "The end of one thing [and] the beginning of another."⁸⁴

⁸³ Hyde Cox, president's report, February 10, 1964, CAHA minutes.

⁸⁴ Hyde Cox, president's report, May 10, 1971, CAHA minutes.