

## HOUSES ON THEIR ORIGINAL LOTS

The hospital was built three stories tall with a cement veneer. It was designed to have a roof garden and accommodations for the help. A very large elevator, big enough to hold a hospital bed, was installed. Heating and cooling systems kept the hospital, with its thirty-three beds, at seventy degrees all year long. These features were very advanced in 1910.

The most innovative feature of all was a garage door opening onto School Street as an ambulance entrance. The ambulance could drive right inside the hospital to discharge its patient. Then it could be spun around on a turntable in the floor and ready to drive back out of the building after the patient had been removed and whisked away.

This was a state-of-the-art hospital with only the latest and best for such an early period. It was innovative, up to the minute and very avant-garde for its time. The reasons for its demise are not clear. The rooftop garden was later enclosed to create a fourth floor in the building that has sheltered many, many people in its long life as the Lorraine Apartments.

### WHITTEMORE HOUSE

179 WASHINGTON STREET, CIRCA 1700

Located midway between the Harbor Village and the Up in Town Green, somewhat beyond the fringes of the Harbor Village is the old Whittemore house. What must have been a lonely farmhouse isolated from close neighbors when it was built is worthy of inclusion because it is one of only a handful of surviving first period houses, particularly in this part of town. The house was strategically located along what was the path from the Green to the Harbor Village. It is also of special interest because it belonged in the Lane family in the nineteenth century. The right-hand front room was where family member Fitz H. Lane (Uncle Fitz) painted when he lived here. The association with Lane, in combination with the extreme age of the house, makes it one of the outstanding Gloucester houses. It is the earliest house featured in this book.

In 1990 this house, along with the other houses in Gloucester identified as first period (before 1725), was named to the National

Register of Historic Places. The Whittemore house was reviewed, researched and analyzed by architectural historian Ann Grady of Lexington

The construction of the Whittemore Lane house dates to about 1700. It is of plank frame construction, which was so common on Cape Ann at that time period. A plank frame house with its vertical planking, with lath and plaster applied directly to the outside sheathing, created dramatic effects with framing exposed on the inside. This heavy framing included the main sill of the house being elevated as a ledge around the outside walls at floor level. Not only did all this timber framing of the post-medieval period soon go out of style, but these houses also had less protection from the weather than a studded wall with air space between the outer walls and the plaster.

In the nineteenth century, the Whittemore house had newer walls framed on the inside, with studs and lath obscuring the old exposed sill and other framing elements. Double-hung windows replaced casement windows and eventually, when fireplaces were no longer necessary for heating and cooking, the big central chimney was removed.

The left front room of the house, with its bedroom chamber above and a small entry hall, represents the first and oldest stage of the house. This front room was called the hall and the bedroom was called the hall chamber. Later, but still within the first period, another downstairs room and additional upstairs chamber were added on the right side, leaving the big chimney in the middle of the house. This newer room was the parlor and the room above the parlor chamber. The one-room-deep early houses are commonly referred to as "hall and parlor" houses. A saltbox lean-to was later added in the rear, along with more additions in the ensuing years.

Edward H. Lane, a nephew of Fitz H. Lane, wrote, from the memory of his childhood in this house, a fascinating tale published in the *Gloucester Times* in 1917, reproduced below. Mr. Lane takes us back to a stormy winter night in Gloucester, in which the reader is an imaginary guest of the Lanes. What follows is a vivid portrayal of life in an old Gloucester house in the nineteenth century, with all its discomforts, its customs and



The Whittemore house, at one time the home of Fitz H. Lane, was built circa 1700 of plank frame construction. *Courtesy of Sharon Howard.*

the food offered to a guest. It describes the fireplace and all its accoutrements in detail. The description is undoubtedly a more accurate and less romanticized portrait of life in an old house than the frequent interpretations written during the last century influenced by the Colonial Revival period.

*Whittemore House*

*By Edward H. Lane*

*January 20, 1917*

***The Old Fashioned Settle and Fireplace***

*I will give my readers an invitation to visit in imagination, the old Whittemore house on Washington Street, where I was born and pass an evening with us, sitting on our old fashioned settle drawn up before a good fire in the open fireplace and listen while I give a description of the old house, and the appearance of Washington St.*

*My description of the old house and what it contained in those days would not be complete if I failed to mention the old fashioned settle, which at that time was an important piece of furniture on cold and stormy nights in winter.*

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Today the Whittemore house is home to Double Exposure, a photography studio and store. *Photo by M.R. McCarl, May 2007.*

*As you are our guest for the evening, you can see that it is made of plain boards, and is shaped something like an old fashioned sofa. It has a high back and ends, with a seating capacity for five people. The seat on which we are sitting is the cover to the wood box beneath and the high back, the top of which, if far above our heads, prevents the cold air in the further part of the room, from cooling our back when it is drawn up before the fire.*

*A northeast snowstorm is raging outside, you can hear the snow sifting in around the windows, and our seven-by-nine panes of glass are frosting up fast. We will put in a big backlog, and you can see how the fire is fixed for a cold winter night.*

*We will have to move the settle back from the fire for a short time, in order to get the log in at the back of the fireplace. First we draw off of the wood and embers forward on the hearth and clean out the ashes at the back of the fireplace, then the back log is put in, and the andirons are shoved up hard against it, then the second log almost as large is put on top of the back log, while a third one of smaller dimensions is placed on top of the second. Then all of the ashes are put back, and a smaller log called a forestick, is put across*

*the andirons in front, next to the iron forestick, which is always there, and the embers placed on top of the wooden forestick and we have a good fire for the whole evening*

### ***How Evening Guests Were Entertained***

*Now that the fire is fixed for the night, we will draw the old settle up again toward the fireplace and keep warm. How light the room is since we made the new fire, and just look at the tallow candle on the table, its light is so dim since the fire blazed up, you can scarcely see it.*

*Father has gone in to the other room for something, but it is so cold there, he won't stay long. I thought so, here he comes back again, with a basket and pitcher, and is going toward the cellar door. We are going to have a treat, tonight, because you have accepted our invitation to sit on the old settle with us, the old settle of 70 years ago. Our treat will be apples, cider and baked potatoes. The apples and cider came from the other side or what is called at the present time West Gloucester, and sometimes West Parish, but the people 70 years ago called it the other side, meaning the other side of the river.*

### ***Some Peculiarities of the Old Whittemore House***

*Now while we are having our apples and cider, and the potatoes in the ashes on the hearth will be roasting and while they are roasting, I will give you a description of the old house when my father bought it, and some of the changes made by him at different times since. It formerly had two windows in each room, one in the side and, a style that seemed to be quite prevalent at the time in which it was built. Later on, the windows in the western chamber and the room below it looked onto Washington Street, the lower room facing Oak Grove Cemetery.*

*Above the sills in each room on the lower floor was a large beam that came out about six inches into the room, where I often sat when a child and look at the blazing logs in the old fireplace. To hide this beam, and make the room look more finished, a second set of studs were put up flush with the beam, and after being lathed and plastered, making a double set of laths and plastering the rooms looked more cozy, and was much warmer in winter, on account of the extra thickness. Each room had an old fashioned fireplace in it, those on the lower floor being*

*built inside of a larger one, which was formerly made for the regular four feet cord wood lengths, there being plenty of wood no doubt near the house, when it was built but as the wood grew scarce, it was cut into shorter lengths for the sake of economy and a smaller fireplace was built inside of the larger one to accommodate it.*

*There is a large beam running through the center of the ceiling in the four principal rooms of the old house and some of the doors are hung with the old fashioned "L" and "H" hinges.*

### **The Huge Old Chimney and its Fireplaces and Accompaniments**

*The old chimney which was torn down about 50 years ago [circa 1860] measured each dimensions up to where it had tapered off above the fireplaces at the second floor and came through the roof about four feet square; each fireplace having a separate flue, of which there were five. There was a large brick oven in the eastern room on the ground floor at the left of the fireplace that would hold 12 pots of beans and brown bread and sometimes with our own baking and what the neighbors brought in to have cooked, the oven was full.*



The Whittemore house fireplace once contained implements such as a tin kitchen and Dutch oven. *Author's photo.*

*All of our food until I was 10 years of age was cooked in the fireplace or brick oven and the pot hooks and trammels above, tongs andirons and bellows with foresticks and backlog were familiar names to me. In those days as we also used the tin kitchen, Dutch oven and Yankee baker.*

### **How the Meat Was Roasted in the Tin Kitchen**

*The tin kitchen was a tin arrangement about three feet long, half as wide and about 18 inches high with an open exposure on the side facing the fire, while the opposite side which was rounded, had a large door in it, in order to baste the roast inside while cooking. The roast to be cooked was impaled on an iron spit running through the tin kitchen, a hole in each end supporting the spit, one end of which was bent in the shape of a crank in order to turn the meat around while cooking so that it would cook evenly. There was also a dripping pan in the bottom of the kitchen in which the gravy was made.*

*The cook with this arrangement kept one busy most of the time turning the spit in order to have the roast evenly cook and "cooked to a turn" was a common expression in the days of long ago with many people after eating a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, and to hear this expression often, was very flattering to the cook, implying that had she given the spit one more turn or failed to give it just the required number, the roast would have lacked the savory taste that every one desired.*

### **Bread was baked in the Dutch oven and Yankee Baker**

*The Dutch oven was a cast iron kettle about 15 inches in diameter and six inches in depth, with four short legs. This was used to bake bread in, and was set on the hearth near the fire between the andirons. It was furnished with an iron cover; the top of which was piled high with live coals and the heat from them with a good fire in the fireplace baked the bread very nicely.*

*The Yankee Baker was an improvement over the Dutch oven, and was also a tin arrangement about three feet long, and made somewhat in the shape of a triangle with three legs about six inches in length. It had a sheet iron pot in the small end to hold charcoal, the fuel mostly used to bake the bread, and was used in the summer*



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time, when there was very little or no fire in the fireplace. It was placed on the hearth in a position that the draught would draw the fumes of the charcoal up the chimney.

### **Manifestation of the Old Fashioned Hospitality**

While you have been sitting on the settle gazing at the blazing logs in the fireplace, and listening to my description of the old clock on the wall behind minutes bringing the hands on the face, to indicate the hour of 10:00 P.M. and the storm outside which is still raging with unabated fury, gives me the impression that you will have to stop for the night and tomorrow listen to my description of a part of Washington Street in 1847.

If a lady reading these lines, is with us tonight, we will give her the best room that the old house affords, which will be our front chamber. Just a moment while I light another candle. This way, please, through the entry leading to the front stairs. The door we just passed leads into my Uncle Fitz's painting room which is 16 feet square and the one above it, which you will occupy, is of the same dimensions.

If a gentleman reader wishes to stop with us tonight, we will give him a nice bed in the attic. Come this way, we will go up the back stairs. I will lead off with the candle, you follow me and my brother will bring up the rear.

What, you say these stairs are narrow? Levi Brackett, the Riverdale miller, and Daniel Hodgkins, the old time miller of Annisquam have carried a good many bushels of corn and meal at different times on their shoulders up these stairs and neither of them were very small men so I think we can manage to get up.

### **The High Post Bedstead with its Sagging Bottom**

That door at the left at the head of the stairs, leads into my father's bedroom, where there is a high-posted canopy bedstead, with sagging bottom. The high posts are carved in imitation of a rope and have an iron spindle on the top of each post to hold the canopy frame, which you will see under the eaves in the attic when we get there as canopies are going out of style.

The sagging bottom is made of duck, a piece about four inches wide with a row of eyelet holes near the edge about three inches

apart being nailed in the sides and ends of the bedsteads, and a larger piece for the middle with a corresponding number of holes being laced to it with a cordline.

You will find it more difficult to get into the attic, as we have no stairs leading to it the only means of getting there being a ladder nailed to the boards covering the big chimney. The ladder is so close to the boards that there isn't much room for your feet so you will have to put them sidewise on the rungs in order to get up. There you are, all right.

What's that you say about the snow, lots of it up there? There always is during a storm like this. You see that the old house is boarded up and down, the boards running from the ridgepole. When it rains and the roof leaks, the water runs down the boards and drops off, but during a snowstorm the snow sifts in and comes down in piles just as you see it tonight. Look at that big pile under the eaves. Do you see those two flour barrels beside the chimney? They are used for putting the snow in after a storm like this. Now you can take the high bed and my brother and I will occupy the trundle bed.

Good morning. The storm has passed off during the night we are going to have a fine day. Now we will go down stairs and see how breakfast is baked in the fireplace and impress you with the appearance of this part of Washington Street 70 years ago.

### **An Old Time Breakfast Bill of Fare**

The old settle is drawn away from the fire this morning to make room around the fireplace for cooking the breakfast, and the table is set in the middle of the floor. The teakettle on one of the hooks hanging to the crane in the fireplace is throwing jets of steam from its nose while the coffee pot, with its regulation quantity of coffee and molasses is boiling on a trivet at the side of the fireplace.

A piece of dough rolled to the thickness of pie crust on the center piece of a flour barrel head, leaning against two flat irons on the hearth is baking before the fire. This is what we called scalt cake, and scalt cake toast is what we shall have for breakfast. My Uncle Fitz always gave it the name of a leather johnnycake because of its soddened appearance.

## ANTIQUe HOUSES OF GLOUCESTER

*The Dutch oven between the andirons with its cover loaded with live coals has got some nice cakes baking inside so when they are taken out you can have your choice, scall cake toast or hot cakes from the Dutch oven. Do you see that unpretentious little iron kettle with three short legs at the left hand side of the fireplace? That is called a joba kettle and no fireplace 70 years ago would be fully equipped without one. This morning it is filled with minced fish and with the fish and other things that have been mentioned, you will have a breakfast such as we have 70 years ago.*

*Now that we have had a good breakfast we will draw the old settle up again towards the fire and I will try and impress you with the appearance of Washington Street before the steam cars came to town in 1847.*

### THE JOSEPH CLOUGH HOUSE

47 PROSPECT STREET, 1750

Nestled between larger and newer houses on Prospect Street is an ancient house. A casual glance might leave one with the impression that it is very plain, with little character, as it sits right on the sidewalk. This house is not what it appears. What you see is really the back of the house, a custom dating back to the eighteenth century in Gloucester, when every house faced south toward the harbor, even if that meant orienting the back of the house toward the street.

Prospect Street was just a path connecting the settlement at the Up in Town Green with the Harbor Village. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the path was called Back Street. Below and parallel came Middle Street. Running along the harbor was Fore Street, now Main. Fore, Middle and Back Streets were connected by two other paths that later became Pleasant Street and School Street. In the 1700s, there was a windmill on Prospect Street between School Street and Church Street. An early school—the Collins School—replaced the windmill in the 1820s. The Collins School was replaced by McPherson Park. This neighborhood was known as Windmill Hill.



The house built by Joseph Clough, bricklayer, in 1750, located at 47 Prospect Street. It would be a good restoration project because the fireplaces and paneling are still there, waiting to be uncovered. *Photo by M.R. McCarl, May 2007.*

Around 1750, a young man named Joseph Clough, fairly recently married and a young father, purchased a piece of land near the windmill and built the house he would own for the rest of his life. Joseph Clough was a bricklayer.

His wife, Susanna Tarbox, died after several years and he married Abigail Stacy in 1760. Shortly thereafter she, too, passed away. Joseph's third wife was Martha Honnours, whom he married December 31, 1761. Three wives in about thirteen years. From these three marriages came numerous children, possibly as many as a dozen.

Joseph died in 1793 and the house descended to his daughter, Anna Wallis, and his son and namesake, Joseph, who was married to Jenny Mann that same year. The second Joseph died in 1796. Later in 1796, Jenny Clough sold her half of her father-in-law's house to John Dennis. It appears that she no longer needed her husband's half of the house. She had married Joseph's brother Elias and moved across the street.