

# WILLIAM BRADFORD

## Mastering Form and Developing a Style, 1852–1862

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### *Shaping the Bradford Style*

OUT OF A CROSSCURRENT of styles and traditions in marine painting, William Bradford was to chart his own course to artistic maturity and a distinctive painting style. The formative years of his career, a decade spanning 1852 to 1862, were marked by several influences, some direct, others passed down from the previous century. As with so many artists in their learning stages, the evidence is spotty and often circumstantial; the lessons were often gained from secondhand knowledge. Many sketches and early attempts on canvas no longer survive to tell of a young artist's struggles to depict what was in his mind's eye. This essay will examine the broader aspects of what Bradford *had* to learn before he could focus his aspirations to the northward.

The crosscurrents that Bradford had to navigate were an intermingling of traditions—English, Dutch, and Italian, primarily—and of the styles of marine artists popular in Bradford's time, particularly Robert Salmon and Fitz Hugh Lane. The few books of marine prints and drawing methods were also English; American books on drawing were virtually devoid of technical instruction on delineating hull forms, rigging, and sails. The learning process was thus one of studying other artists' work, copying from published sources, learning on-the-job from another artist, and trial-and-error drawing from life. Bradford seized on all of these options and, once freed of the constraints of his dry-goods business in 1852, made steady progress in the ensuing ten years. In the mid-1850s he began to travel, finding new subjects to paint along the New England coast. Bradford's success lay in his willingness to experiment with and refine his painting technique while traveling greater distances to find new subject matter. The artistic journey from New Bedford to the Arctic gave new scope to his achievements, but it was built on fundamentals of drawing technique and brushwork learned at the outset and improved through constant practice.

### *Naval Architecture and Marine Drafting*

THE FIRST PHASE of Bradford's career as an artist focused on ship portraiture, in which accuracy of hull form and rigging proportions placed heavy demands on his knowledge of these subjects. In meeting these demands, Bradford drew on a century-old legacy of ship design and drafting methods developed by the naval architects of northern Europe and passed on by artists and draftsmen schooled in these disciplines. The study of naval architecture as a science and the publication of textbooks on ship design and marine drafting were to have a strong influence on British marine painters in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The main results were greater accuracy in the rendering of hull forms and use of a wider range of settings and occasions (such as dockyard views and launching scenes) wherein to show off the artist's knowledge of ship design.

The mid-1700s saw old design methods based on empirical rules and intuition give way to mathematics and science in an effort to make desirable qualities of a ship's design more predictable and easier to replicate in future designs. Drafting of plans was closely allied to this trend as the development of a ship's hull geometry became less dependent on prescribed shapes and rules of thumb and more reliant on forms derived from mathematical formulae and the analytic geometry of complex solids.<sup>1</sup>

For most of the eighteenth century, English advances in naval architecture were modest and went unpublished, leaving other European countries an open forum for their own ideas and methods. French warship design progressed in academic circles, but did little more than to make French warships somewhat better than their English counterparts. It was in Sweden that the combination of mathematics, improved drafting methods, and experimentation made significant advances in hull design and sailing performance.<sup>2</sup>

If the eighteenth-century English literature on ship design seemed backward, it made a small but important contribution to marine

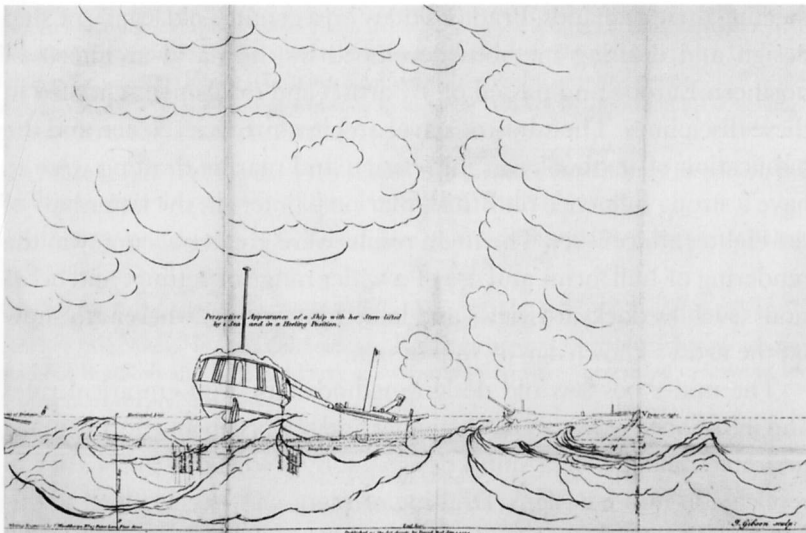
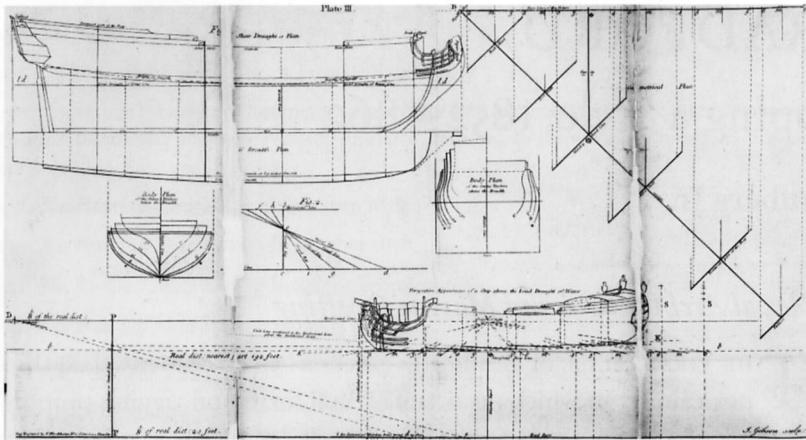


Figure 1. A. Cobin, *Short and Plain Principles of Linear Perspective, Adapted to Naval Architecture*, 4th ed. (London, 1794). Plates III and V. The five folding plates illustrate the perspective drawing of ship and boat hulls, beginning with simple geometric shapes, then going on to progressively complex hull forms and more difficult angles of view.

drafting and marine art. This appeared in the form of a small book with a long title: *Short and Plain Principles of Linear Perspective, Adapted to Naval Architecture. Containing Rules to Draw Correctly the Forms of Ships in Every Possible Position*. Written by A. Cobin and first published in the 1750s, it is better known by its third (1775) and fourth (1794) editions (fig. 1), which were issued by David Steel.<sup>3</sup> Nothing seems to be known about the author, who must have had training in marine drafting, possible employment in the English dockyards, and very likely knew marine artists, if he was not an artist himself.

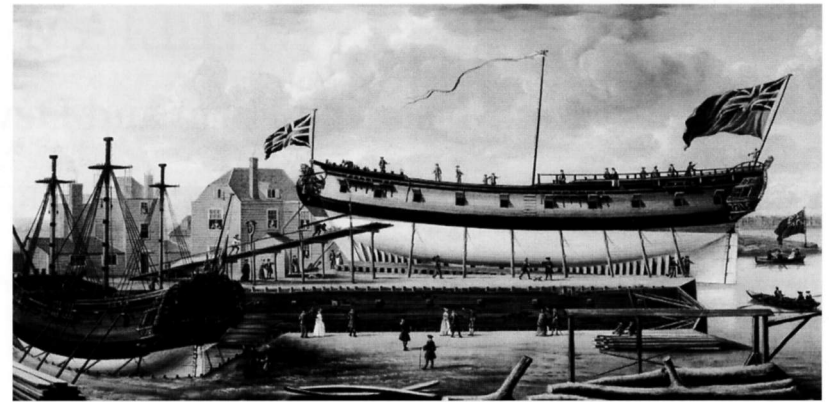


Figure 2. John Cleveley the Elder, *A Sixth-Rate on the Stocks*, 1758, oil on canvas, 26½ × 51 in. (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich)

The publisher's preface to the fourth edition reflects the book's original intended use as an artist's guide. In response to intensified interest in naval architecture, the fourth edition was dedicated to broader uses:

It is a study equally necessary both to the general painter and the naval artist.

Principally to the latter, however, the present labours will be serviceable. The study of *Naval Architecture*, now nobly countenanced, and pursued with ardor, may receive assistance from this publication, which teaches to delineate, with correctness and facility, the forms of ships in all their various positions.<sup>4</sup>

As the new marine drafting methods became established in the shipyards, their rigors offered challenges to marine artists who strove for accurate depiction of hull forms. One of the most notable among them was John Cleveley the Elder, a dockyard employee who made the most of his situation by portraying naval vessels being built, launched, and fitted out (fig. 2).<sup>5</sup> Another artist employed by the crown was one J. Marshall, whose striking "still-life" paintings of dockyard models (fig. 3) would have demanded a knowledge of the new design methods.<sup>6</sup> "Insiders" such as these must in turn have influenced their freelance counterparts. Nicholas Pocock must certainly have been aware of Cleveley's work when he painted his two views of the royal dockyards at Woolwich and Plymouth. Fueling this quest for greater accuracy were the shipmasters, naval officers and bureaucrats, and merchant vessel owners who were both the artists' clients and their most severe critics. In many cases, these clients were so demanding that the artistic qualities of the paintings were compromised.<sup>7</sup>

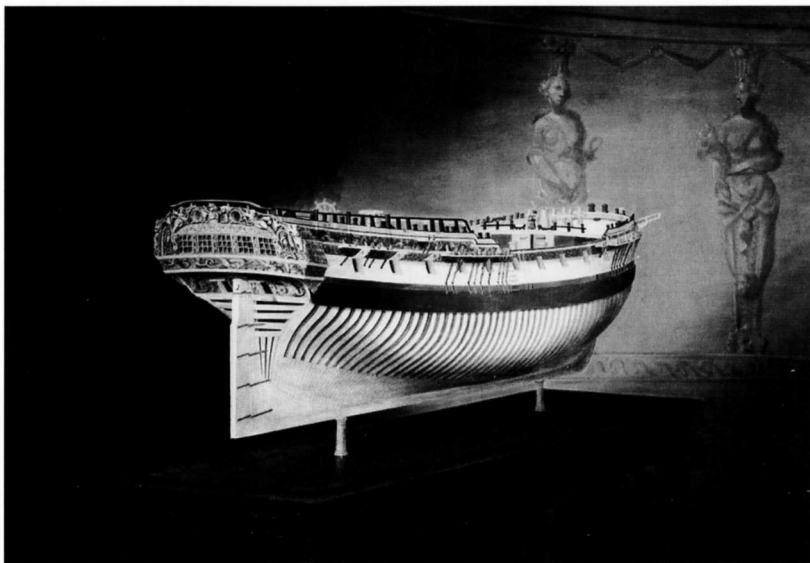


Figure 3. J. Marshall, *A Model of HMS Enterprise*, 1777, oil on panel, 20 × 30 in. (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich)

While scientific ship design made hesitating progress in England and France, the situation was very different in the Swedish navy after 1760, when Fredrik Henrik Chapman began his ascendancy as a naval constructor. Well-versed in the ship design methods of England, France, and the Netherlands, he applied his aptitudes for mathematics, geometry, and mechanical drawing to methods of ship design that were far in advance of other navies.<sup>8</sup> Part of his extensive legacy is a large atlas of ship plans titled *Architectura Navalis Mercatoria*, of 1768, whose exquisite projections of hulls in perspective made it a landmark in the advancement of marine drafting (fig. 4).<sup>9</sup> Chapman's accomplishment was not outdone in England until 1805, when David Steel published the monumental *Elements and Practice of Naval Architecture*, whose plans far exceeded what any artist would require (fig. 5).<sup>10</sup>

By 1800, the art of ship portraiture had had its fill of the science of naval architecture, and both were about to follow diverging paths. There would always be talented draftsmen among the painters, who would ensure that their ships were accurately proportioned and detailed, but a growing number—with J. M. W. Turner in the vanguard—would impart other qualities to their canvases: atmospheric effects, unusual lighting, less formal and formulaic compositions, and less dominant vessel activity. Marine painting was thus to be less ship portraiture and more seascape and harbor scene. Romantic imagery

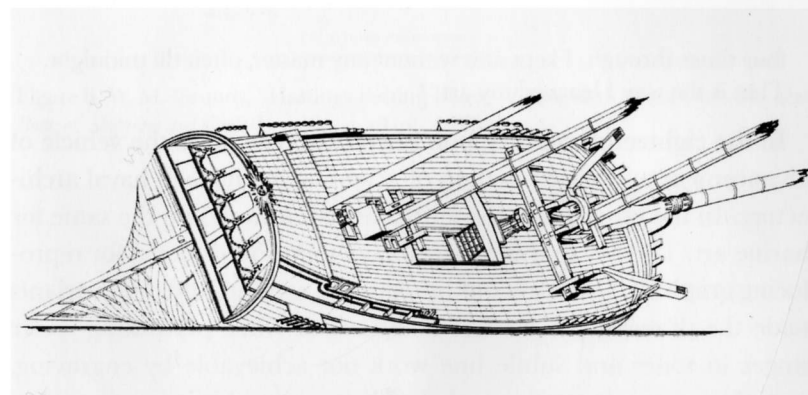
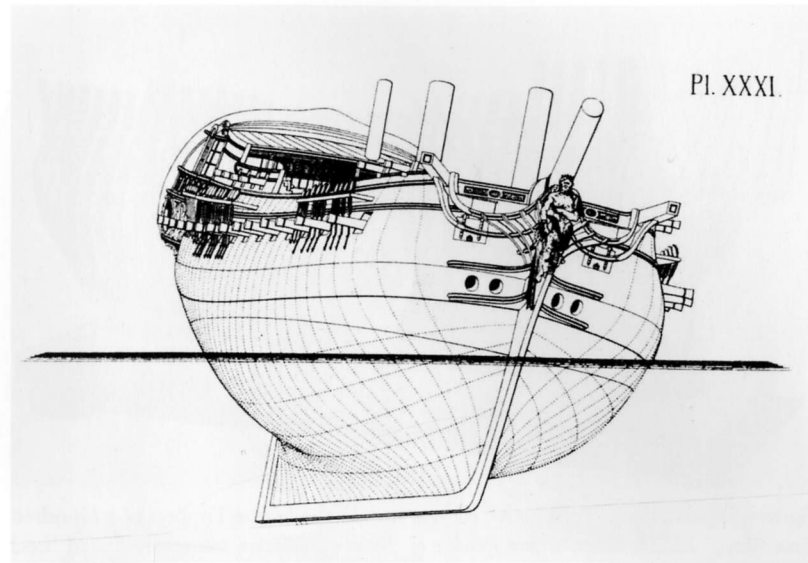


Figure 4. Fredrik Henrik Chapman, *Architectura Navalis Mercatoria* (Stockholm, 1768). Perspective views of ships' hulls from Plate XXI (upper) and Plate XXXI (lower)

would find an important place in marine art as scientific delineation retreated to more specialized niches. Both developments would leave important legacies to Bradford.<sup>11</sup>

### *Books of Drawings and Books on Drawing*

WHEN INTERVIEWED in his sixty-fifth year, William Bradford recalled his efforts to teach himself drawing:

In my youth I became a clerk in a dry goods store in New Bedford. . . . But all this time my love for drawing was growing stronger. Alone and unaided, I copied all the drawings in an English drawing-book nearly



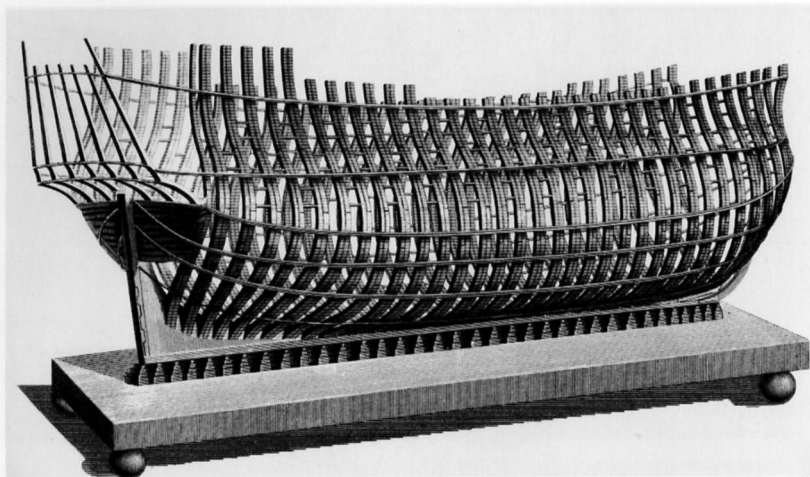


Figure 5. Frontispiece, “Perspective Appearance of the Frame Timbers of a Hundred Gun Ship,” in *The Elements and Practice of Naval Architecture*, edited by David Steel (London, 1805)

four times through. I kept at it without any master, often till midnight. That is the way I learned my art.<sup>12</sup>

In the eighteenth century, published textbooks were the vehicle of advancement and dissemination of scientific methods in naval architecture. In the nineteenth, the illustrated book would do the same for marine art. The key to this progress lay in improved media for reproducing graphics. The advent of lithography, etching, and their variants made the drawing process faster and easier while permitting wider ranges in tones and subtle line work not achievable by engraving. Faster image preparation, coupled with more durable images on stone or zinc plate, led to lower printing costs and longer press runs.<sup>13</sup> As printing costs dropped, so did the prices of individual prints and bound folios, leading to the publication of “picture books” which were affordable to a wider public. Marine artists could broaden their market by selling prints and books to people not able to afford their paintings—and they could broaden their reputations in the process.

One of the first nineteenth-century marine artists to take advantage of the “democratized” graphic media was Edward William Cooke, whose long and distinguished career as a marine painter is today overshadowed by his book *Sixty Five Plates of Shipping and Craft*, published in 1829 when he was eighteen years old. Caught up in the Romantic movement of his time, Cooke eschewed the traditional themes of naval engagements, sweeping port vistas, and formal vessel portraits

for the everyday activity of the waterfront (fig. 6). These egalitarian views of maritime life were accessible to a new generation of artists, some near at hand to the subject matter, others far away, but their message of diversity and mood was received, absorbed, and reinterpreted in constantly evolving styles.<sup>14</sup>

Cooke’s marine etchings were not the only ones offered in book form at this time. Henry Moses, who was nearly thirty years his senior, had published several books of etchings in the 1820s. Moses’s maritime interests were limited, however, and in subsequent years he was employed as an etcher at the British Museum, working on a broad range of subjects.<sup>15</sup> What is notable in many of his etchings of small boats is the subtle humor in his portrayals of the crews and bystanders (fig. 7). If depictions of naval vessels and events did not permit this form of expression, merchant craft and harbor scenes often did, as we see in the paintings of Salmon, Lane, and Van Beest. Bradford was certainly infected with this light touch, particularly during his association with Van Beest. It is also found in some of his Arctic scenes, and even more so in his sketchbooks from that period.<sup>16</sup>

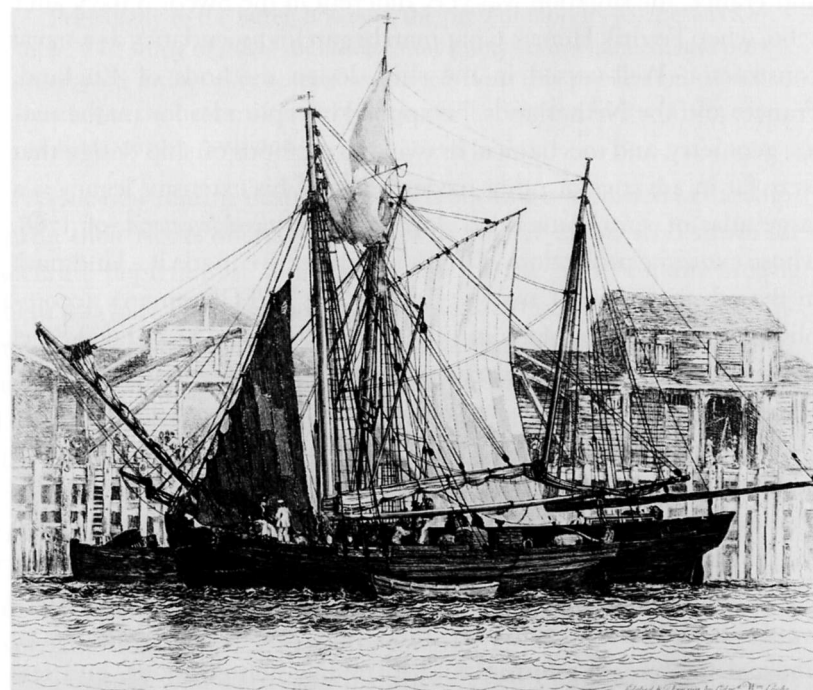


Figure 6. E. W. Cooke, “Schooner & Smack (Coasting Traders) Lying at Fresh Wharf, London Bridge,” Plate 20 in *Sixty Five Plates of Shipping and Craft* (London, 1829)





Figure 7. Henry Moses, *Rowing Boat Hero*, 1837, etching. Courtesy of Andrew Jacobson

Cooke's themes were picked up in another collection of marine views: a small book of zincographs published about 1840 under the title *The Sketch Book of Shipping and Craft*. The artist, W. M. Grundy, has not been found in available biographical references; the name may be a pseudonym for one of the publisher's in-house lithographers. In this book, the zincography process offered even greater economy of materials and production time, permitting the publication of a very cheap edition.<sup>17</sup> Grundy's subjects were similar to Cooke's etchings in composition and subject matter (fig. 8), but illustrate Dutch vessels and French and German river craft as well. The tones and textures of zincography give Grundy's drawings a very different effect from Cooke's etchings.

Books like Grundy's were more than parlor table fixtures. The views of individual craft seen at various angles and the artist's simple drawing style would have been very inviting as copying exercises for aspiring artists and art students. The twenty-four plates offered a range of difficulty, with the bow and stern views of warships posing the greatest challenges. The similarities of composition and subject matter in many of Bradford's early drawings to the plates in Grundy lead one to wonder if this book was the one he used in his nightly drawing exercises (fig. 9). Such a situation seems very likely for many aspiring marine artists of this period, both in Europe and America. Eager learners, their needs unfulfilled by the standard instruction books on drawing, would find here a wealth of images (if no instruction on technique) to copy.

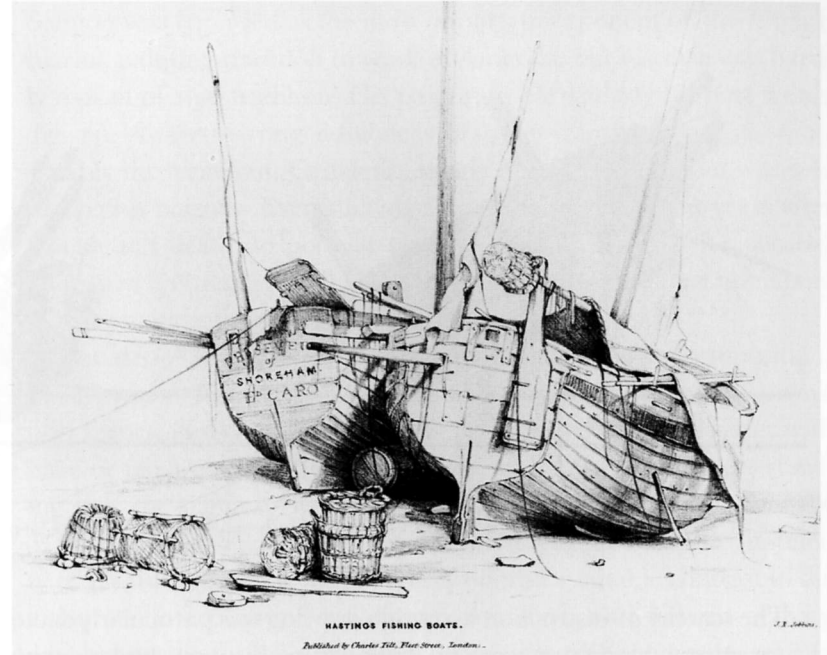


Figure 8. W. M. Grundy, "Hastings Fishing Boats," zincograph, Plate 10 in *The Sketch Book of Shipping and Craft* (London, c. 1840)

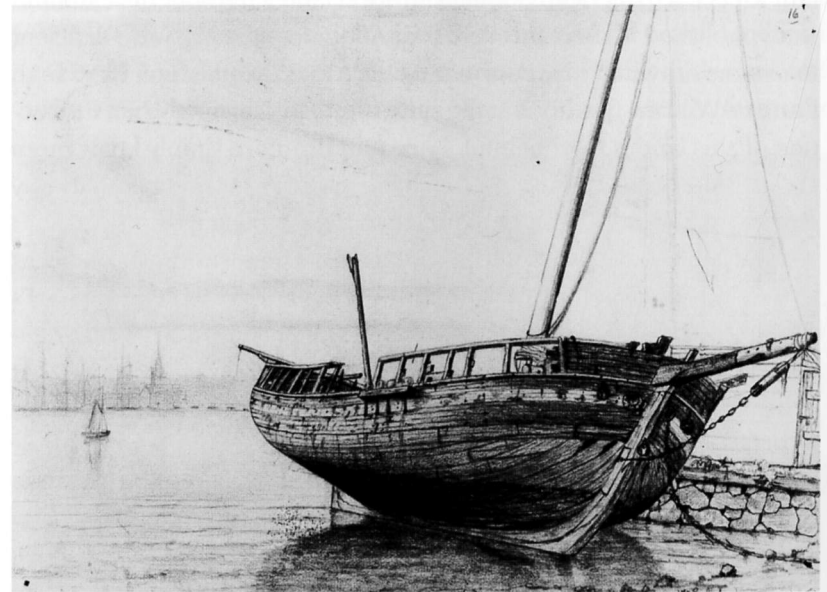


Figure 9. William Bradford, *Sloop Hulk at Wharveside*, n.d., pencil drawing, 10 × 14 in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)

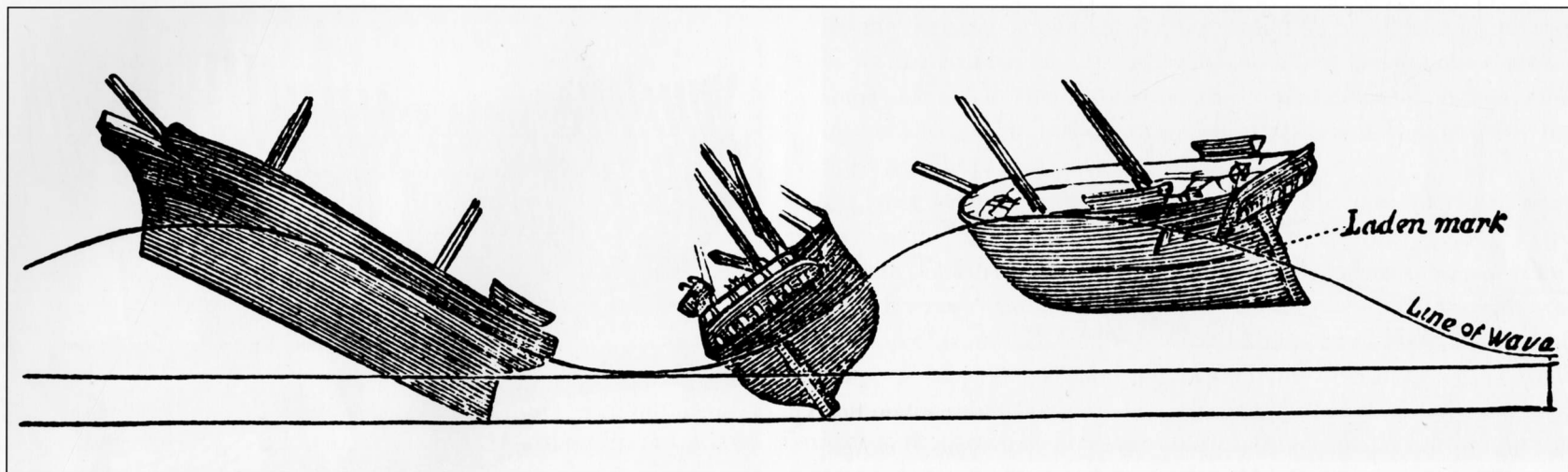


Figure 10. Diagram illustrating how a ship's hull floats in heavy seas, from J. W. Carmichael, *The Art of Marine Painting in Water-colours* (London, 1859), 21.

The scarcity of instruction in marine drawing was particularly acute in America, where there were no “schools” of distinguished painters to follow and certainly no academic training for this field. Lesson books for the classroom were plentiful; drawing was regarded as an important aspect of American public education, and a number of textbooks were published to meet this demand. All, unfortunately, were deficient in marine drawing.<sup>18</sup> Not one would have met the needs of Fitz Hugh Lane or William Bradford at the stages of their learning when instruction of this kind is most helpful. Lane and Bradford simply knew more about hull forms, rigging proportions, and the set of sails than any American authors whose books tried to deal with ships.

One later book, also English, which makes important contributions to the drawing aspect of marine painting is John Wilson Carmichael's *The Art of Marine Painting in Water-colours*. While saying little about drawing technique, he offers very important observations on how ships float in heavy seas (fig. 10) and which sails are set under certain weather conditions. First published in 1859, it came too late to be useful to Lane or Bradford, but offered in print for the first time much practical advice on weather conditions, seamanship, and hull flotation.<sup>19</sup> Previous generations of marine artists, Lane and Bradford included, had to gain this knowledge the hard way: at sea, on the waterfront, in shipyards, or in conversation with sailors and tradesmen. Carmichael's book is important for the insights it offers to this learning process.

If lithography and etching were key to making illustrated books

affordable to young artists, these media also made individual prints affordable, widespread, and thus influential. Bradford may well have been aware of Lane's lithographs before he ever saw any of Lane's paintings. Quick to capitalize on this market was James E. Buttersworth, whose ship portraits became staples in the N. Currier and Currier & Ives lithographs after 1847.<sup>20</sup> In Bradford's case, such prints would have been more a source for guidance in composition and posing a vessel. None of his surviving drawings are blatant copies of popular American prints; that practice apparently ended after his nightly rounds of copying from the English book of marine drawings. To date, only one painting attributable to Bradford is a copy of a published print, namely the Dutton lithograph of the schooner yacht *America* at Cowes (cat. 10), and even that composition was altered in several respects.

To judge from his output of sketches and paintings from the 1850s, Bradford had learned early and well from studying and copying published images, but realized the need to move on. His sketches indicate intense efforts to study and draw from life and to draw vessels with precision, giving careful attention to proportion and detail. His early clients, being vessel owners and mariners, were severe critics of the latter qualities; they might overlook a dull composition so long as the ship looked right. This mixed blessing forced Bradford to draw with care and to rein in on his imagination, but it also provided him with a clientele at a difficult stage in his career. This kept him struggling incon-

clusively with composition, color, light and shadow, and all the attendant minutiae of brush technique which, when mastered, would impart style to his work. For help and inspiration in these aspects, Bradford had to look to artists whose paintings were accessible. Most important, he needed the company of another artist for instruction and criticism.

### *Robert Salmon & Canaletto*

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to gauge fully the influence of Robert Salmon on William Bradford. Their Boston careers were separated by almost a decade, and Bradford would have known of his predecessor only from paintings he saw in public exhibitions and perhaps some privately owned examples. Much of Salmon's influence would have come indirectly via Fitz Hugh Lane, who was a lithographer at William Pendleton's studio in Boston when Salmon was living next door and providing sketches for Pendleton. Their mutual acquaintance, if nothing more, in that situation was very likely.<sup>21</sup> Salmon's influence on Lane in matters of composition was a seminal aspect of Lane's style. Lane would find his own ways of handling light and color, and would portray subjects in settings of his own choosing; however, his approach to composition, with carefully placed and balanced arrangements of foreground elements set against spacious, often panoramic backgrounds, was learned from Salmon.<sup>22</sup>



Figure 11. Robert Salmon, *Wharves of Boston*, 1829, oil on canvas, 40 × 68 in. (The Bostonian Society/Old State House)

Salmon was regarded as the most important exponent of the English marine painting tradition to work in America, but his style was hardly typical of that tradition. His paintings, particularly his port scenes (fig. 11), showed strong influences of other European artists, most notably the Venetian, Canaletto, nearly all of whose output was sold to English patrons. Even though Salmon was born seven years after Canaletto's death, so popular was the latter's work that for decades afterward it remained well known and accessible, and thus influential on the young artist.<sup>23</sup>

Canaletto's legacy to Salmon was manifold: expansive compositions having wide, often panoramic fields of view covering cities and towns, port scenes, and occasional landscapes; subdued skies and water with haze or fair-weather cloud formations, and flat water surfaces showing only the slightest ripples. His port scene of Venice, *The Bacino di S. Marco: Looking East* (fig. 12), exemplifies this approach. The simplicity of his techniques for water and sky offered a suitable contrast to the elaborate interplays of buildings, watercraft, and human activity, which were the focal points of his compositions.<sup>24</sup> Salmon made very similar use of these techniques in his early port scenes in Britain, but made less use of them in his American port scenes, and was forced to adopt more dramatic effects in his ship portraits and seascapes.

If art historians have emphasized the architectural beauty and intricacies of Canaletto's paintings, his renderings of ships and small craft were every bit as competent. One would expect correct form and



Figure 12. Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canal), *The Bacino di S. Marco: Looking East*, c. 1738, oil on canvas, 49 × 80½ in. (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Abbott Lawrence Fund, Seth K. Sweetser Fund, Charles Edward French Fund)





Figure 13. Detail of Figure 12.

proportions in the gondolas and other Venetian lagoon craft, but the hull forms and rigs of foreign deep-water sailing ships are equally convincing (fig. 13). Just as remarkable was Canaletto's mastery of hulls and rigging in perspective from every angle of view. This lesson of discipline in rendering form was not lost on Salmon, whose treatment of small craft in his harbor scenes closely followed Canaletto's. So strong is this resemblance that it is difficult to imagine that Salmon had learned to treat harbor craft this way from any other artist of his time, or from the work of earlier English marine painters.

Salmon's work in ship portraiture compelled him to deal with individual vessels in open seas, sometimes in stormy conditions, which called for more dramatic skies and wave forms. The results were mixed, the skies usually being the more convincing. Wave formations more active than a light chop did not lend themselves to Canaletto's methods; Salmon's attempts to adapt them to heavier seas produced very formulaic and unrealistic results (fig. 14). He was thus forced to

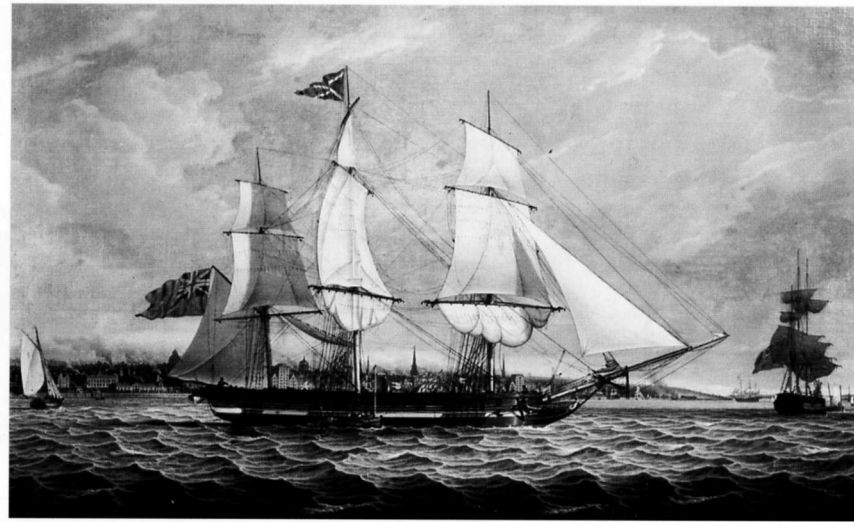


Figure 14. Robert Salmon, *English Ship in the Mersey*, 1807, oil on canvas, 26 × 41 in. (Peabody Essex Museum)

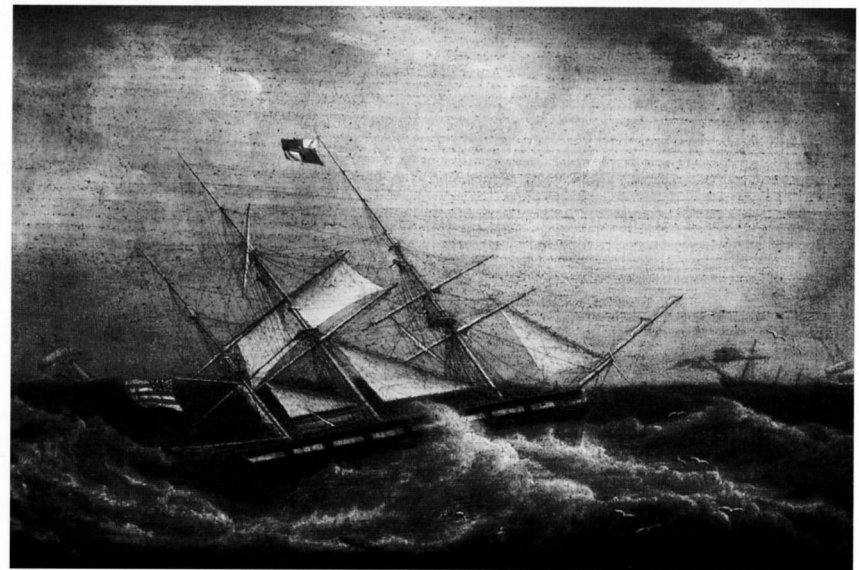


Figure 15. Robert Salmon, *Ship Sea Mew*, 1835, oil on canvas, 13½ × 19½ in. (Peabody Essex Museum)

use the conventions of other English marine painters, but seldom with the same degree of realism and dramatic flair (fig. 15).<sup>25</sup> This shortcoming may be one of a number of reasons put forward by art historians and critics over the years to explain the lack of acclaim in England for Salmon's work. Frequently, and with some justification, he

was counted out of the mainstream of English marine painting or, less charitably, regarded as a degenerate example of the tradition in its twilight.<sup>26</sup>

During his years in Boston, Salmon proved to be the right marine artist for that place and time. His scenes of Boston Harbor give that port the look of urbanity and purposeful activity that appealed to its progressive merchants and patrons of the arts. His style was to influence his successor, Fitz Hugh Lane, in ways both subtle and profound. Lane's adaptation of the Salmon style would in turn shape Bradford's striving to find a style of his own.

### *Fitz Hugh Lane*

BRADFORD LAUNCHED his career as an artist at the same time Fitz Hugh Lane's was at its zenith. Whether the two met during the New York Yacht Club's regatta at New Bedford in 1856, or elsewhere at other times, is likely but remains undocumented. What cannot be doubted is that Lane's style had a deep influence on Bradford's early work and that Lane was the conduit through which the European drafting methods, the sweeping views and perspectives of Canaletto, and the meticulous detail in Salmon's ships were handed down to him. Lane in all likelihood did not give Bradford any lessons in painting or drawing, but his work was Bradford's greatest source of guidance and inspiration in the latter's first decade of painting.

Lane has been regarded by scholars as "self-taught" because he had no academic training in drawing and painting. That description seems misleading and unfair when one considers his working environment during his fifteen-year residence in Boston. In addition to the workplace in Pendleton's lithography studio, he would have enjoyed the camaraderie and mentorship of his fellow artists,<sup>27</sup> access to drawing and reference books in the studio's library as well as in public and private libraries, and the mentorship of clients who could be valuable critics and sources of information. And Lane had Salmon to follow, whether the latter was a personal acquaintance or not. Despite the fact that artists were few in number in America, Lane was lucky to be in an area where several congregated and worked daily together, sharing their knowledge and presumably their books. Adding to this mix was Boston itself: a visually exciting and active seaport where innovative ship design, busy shipyards, and enterprising businesses made the waterfront irresistible to artists while providing a ready clientele for

their pictures. If Lane had artistic talent, it was certain to blossom in such opportune surroundings.

The importance of Lane's experience in lithography cannot be overemphasized. If not as demanding on the hands as engraving, it was still a process that required accuracy in delineation and the utmost neatness in execution. Smudges and mistakes were tedious to remove, and corrections could be spotty and detract from the continuity of lines and tones. Good lithographers were skilled draftsmen who had learned early on that a line must be drawn with precision and confidence the first time.<sup>28</sup> The strict discipline of the medium explains why Lane's pencil sketches are so free of erasures and corrections. To judge from his work on stone, Lane had learned this lesson in his first two or three years at Pendleton's studio. By 1836, when his first view of Gloucester Harbor was published (fig. 16), his technique was unsurpassed by his Boston colleagues.

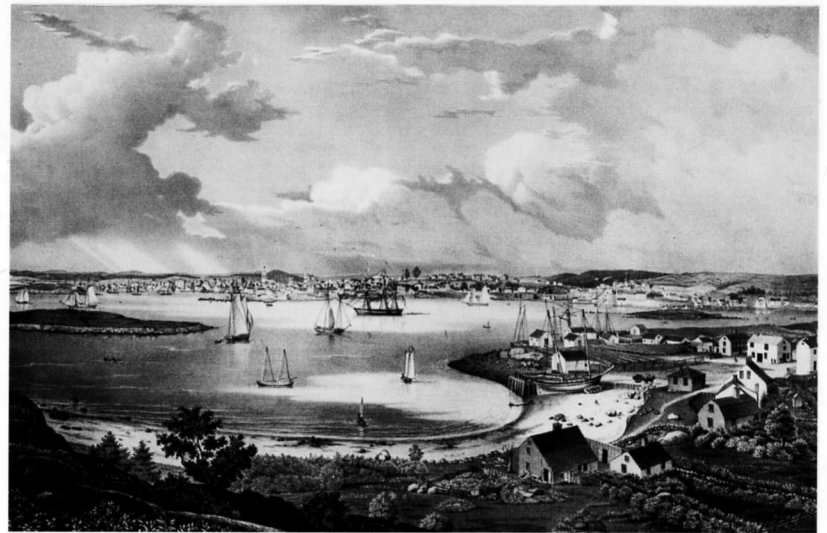


Figure 16. Fitz Hugh Lane, *View of the Town of Gloucester, Mass.*, 1836, lithograph by Pendleton from a drawing by Lane, 14 × 19¾ in. (Cape Ann Historical Association, Gloucester, Mass.)

Books on drawing instruction were certainly available to Pendleton's employees; in fact, that firm printed the illustrations for some.<sup>29</sup> In addition, Lane and his coworkers must have brought some of their own art books to work, shared them, and discussed their relative merits. Lane certainly found good ideas and instruction in drawing books for some aspects of his work, but on-the-job instruction from fellow employees would have been more expedient in many situations.



Figure 17. Fitz Hugh Lane, *Cunard Liner Britannia*, 1842, oil on canvas, 29 $\frac{1}{4}$   $\times$  41 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (Peabody Essex Museum)



Figure 19. Detail of Figure 18.



Figure 18. Samuel Walters, *Packet Ship Nonantum, Riding Out a Gale*, 1842, oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{1}{2}$   $\times$  35 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (Peabody Essex Museum)

Lane's foray into marine painting in the 1840s was probably precipitated by Salmon's return to England in 1842, leaving the field open to whoever could best fill the master's shoes. Two of Lane's early ship portraits were copied from other artists' works: *Yacht Northern Light in*

*Boston Harbor* (1845) from a drawing by Salmon,<sup>30</sup> and *Cunard Liner Britannia* (1842; fig. 17) from the background of a portrait of the packet ship *Nonantum* (1842; figs. 18, 19) by Samuel Walters. Clearly, Lane was still learning about ship portraiture, but other works from this period show progress as he benefited from Salmon's former clients, among them Boston ship-owning families with the names of Perkins, Bradlee, Cunningham, Cushing, and Forbes.<sup>31</sup>

It was in this market that Lane's art began to mature, and we see his early efforts to go beyond the conventions of ship portraiture and to depict vessels in ways more interesting to the artist than to the ship owner. After a few years, Lane must have tired of the conventional broadside views, wishing to respect the wishes of his clients, but chafing at the boredom of such formulaic representations. He tried a number of ways to enliven his subjects: posing the hull at an angle to the viewer to introduce some perspective; placing the vessel in a maneuver that permitted an unusual setting of sails; depicting the crews doing purposeful work aloft or on deck; and placing other vessels (or the same vessel on another tack) in the scene with some interaction or interesting juxtaposition (fig. 20).

Occasionally, he would place the vessel in a harbor setting with wharf activity in the foreground and carefully arranged harbor traffic in the background. These are all devices that Salmon used, but they



were employed by Lane with very different results. Salmon's harbors were crowded; even at sea, his ships were seldom out of sight of land or other vessels. Lane's ships were placed in more spacious surroundings, even when in port, and the bustle in Salmon's scenes is supplanted by light and atmospheric effects that Lane would bring to full development in his seascapes and port scenes of the 1850s. It was this treatment of space and light that Bradford tried to capture in his early ship portraits and harbor scenes.

In Lane's ship portraits of the late 1840s, and in a port scene of Boston from 1847, we begin to see the elements of luminism in a still-evolving style; however, there is another aspect of his work that was already well developed by then: human activity on board the vessels and ashore on the wharves and beaches. Lane was using his paintings to tell stories (fig. 21). This narrative quality remained in his work to the end of his life, being absent only in the most serene works of his last years. Bradford was



Figure 21. Fitz Hugh Lane, *The Fort and Ten Pound Island, Gloucester*, 1848, oil on canvas, 20 × 30 in. (Collection of the Newark Museum; gift of Mrs. Chant Owen, 1959)

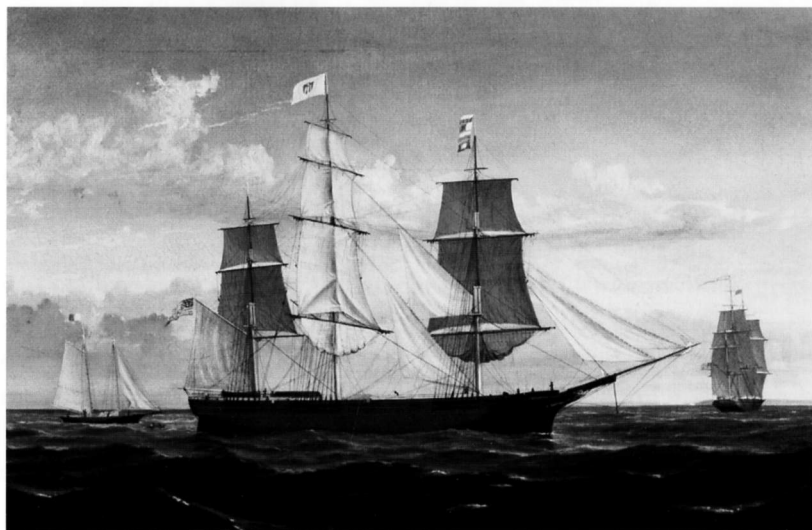


Figure 20. Fitz Hugh Lane, *Medium Clipper Ship National Eagle*, 1853, oil on canvas, 24 × 35¼ in. (Cape Ann Historical Association, Gloucester, Mass.)

slow to pick up on this aspect and needed instruction from Albert Van Beest to use it effectively.

In the early 1850s, as Lane decreased his output of ship portraits and turned more to port scenes, he often employed panoramic backgrounds on wide canvases, painting in the sea, sky, and background scenery before adding any vessels to the fore- and middle grounds. When these elements were completed and reconciled to the desired light and atmospheric effects, Lane would then make his careful arrangements of vessels and enliven them with human activity (fig. 22).<sup>33</sup> This practice is reflected in his field sketches of harbors and shorelines, which are nearly devoid of vessels; his few surviving sketches of vessels are carefully rendered studies of individual craft without background settings and very little indication of water.

As his style matured, Lane's viewpoints changed, and he sought lower elevations from which to depict his subjects. This trend is easily followed in his three lithographs of Gloucester Harbor and marks a

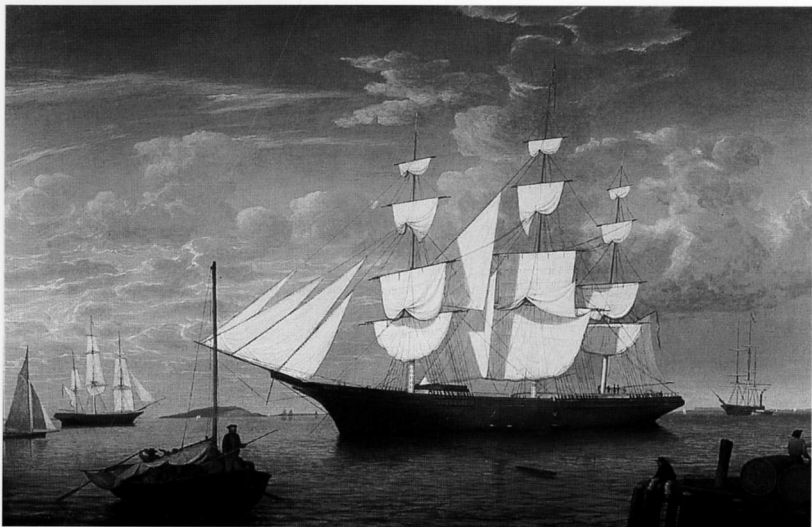


Figure 22. Fitz Hugh Lane, *Star Light in Harbor*, c. 1855, oil on canvas, 24½ × 36 in. (Private collection)

departure from the higher elevations favored by Canaletto and Salmon. This lower viewpoint was almost universally used for ship portraits, but in seascapes and harbor scenes, it compressed the elements of the lower part of the picture, reducing background scenery to profiles with the foreground elements superimposed on, and often obscuring, everything behind them. This left the sky as the largest part of the composition and the controlling element in establishing the mood of the picture. Lane was to achieve great mastery over this element, using light and atmospheric effects in a unique way, establishing in the process his style, which now epitomizes luminism.<sup>34</sup> Bradford was to borrow from Lane's methods to create these effects, using them in similar ways until what he saw on the Labrador coast and in the Arctic forced him to develop a painting style better suited to express his own way of seeing the maritime world.

### *Bradford's Early Drawings & Ship Portraits*

HAVING EXPLORED some of the most important developments in marine drawing and painting which were to have an early influence on Bradford, it is necessary to examine how they exerted this influence and how Bradford adapted them to his specific needs. The clue to his earliest efforts is Bradford's own statement that he taught

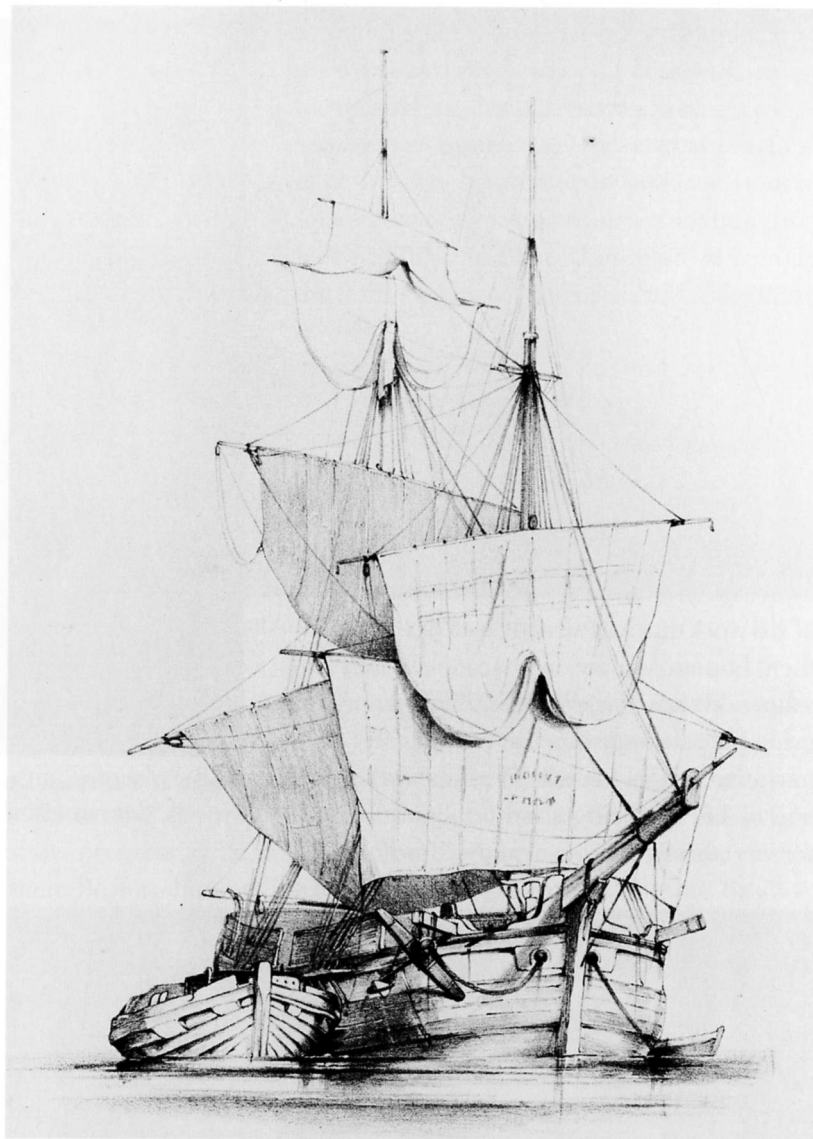


Figure 23. W. M. Grundy, "A Brig," zincograph, Plate 18 in *The Sketch Book of Shipping and Craft*

himself to draw by copying the images in an English book of marine drawings—a book whose title and author he neglected to mention.

Of Bradford's many surviving sketchbooks and sheets of drawings, none can be dated with certainty to his early years of self-training; however, the subject matter of many drawings is strikingly similar to compositions, themes, and vessel types found in books by Grundy and Cooke. Grundy's drawing of a brig at anchor (fig. 23), her sails clewed

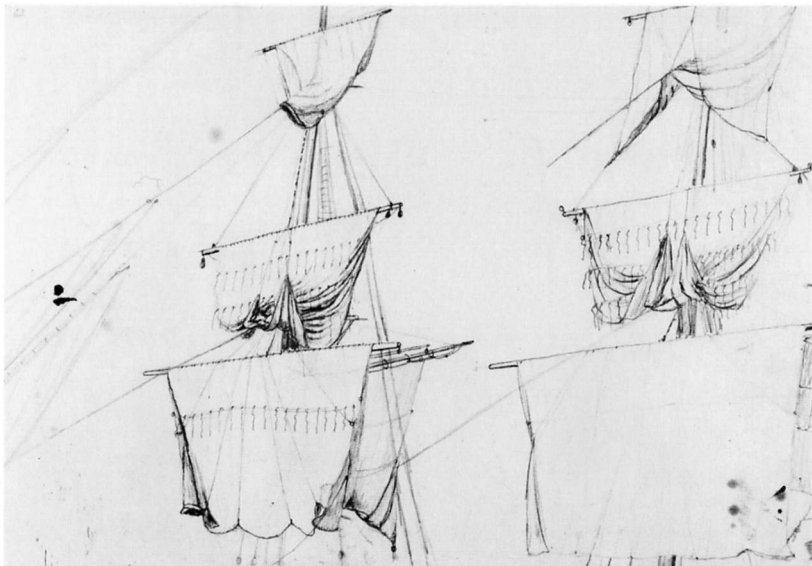


Figure 24. William Bradford, *Study of Square Sails*, n.d., pencil drawing, 10 × 17 in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)

up and hanging slack to dry in the still air, would have offered Bradford guidance in several of his efforts to depict this situation on a whaler or a clipper ship. Pencil studies of sails in this state (fig. 24) suggest that while Bradford was drawing from life, any previous practice from copying Grundy would have facilitated the delicate pencil work of shading and of delineating the seam details.

Cooke's etchings provided a wider variety of situations and vessel types, but his few broadside views of ships would have impressed Bradford with their fine proportions and minute detail. Cooke's view of the English West Indiaman *Thetis* (fig. 25) is a masterful combination of accurate delineation combined with a strong knowledge of seamanship. Bradford would have had a formidable task to copy its detail for detail, but in a simpler drawing of a merchant ship under sail (fig. 26), it is plain that he grasped the fundamentals of form and function as applied to a ship of American design. The open-sea setting and the set of the sails differ from Cooke's etching, but the drawing is lively in much the same way. The marginal sketches of clewed-up royals show Bradford's persistence in finding the correct appearances of more difficult details.

The treatment of hull forms was an ongoing exercise for the whole of Bradford's artistic career. He never stopped drawing ship and boat hulls and was ever responsive to the challenges of drawing them from

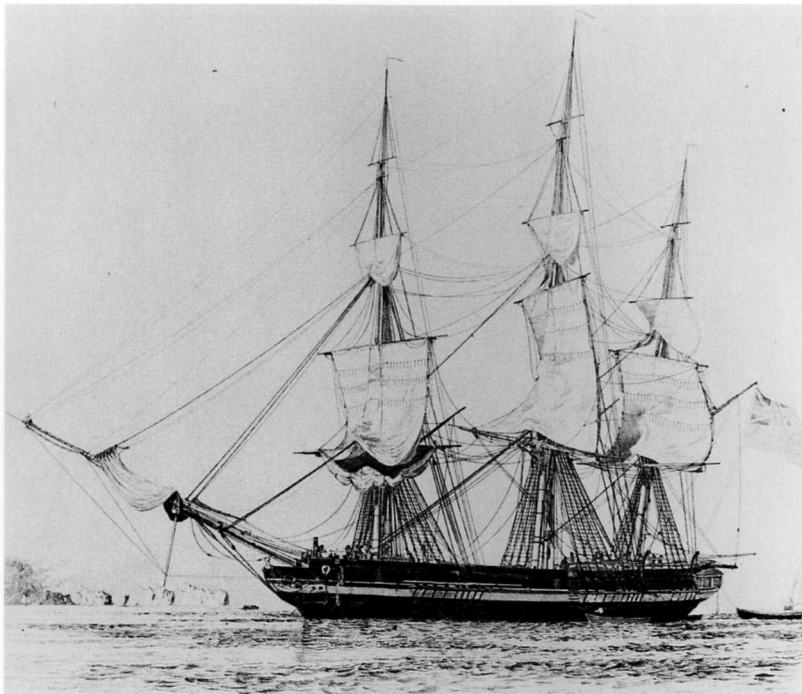


Figure 25. E. W. Cooke, "First Class West Indiaman (*Thetis*, Capt. Burton) Getting under weigh, off the Needles, I.W.," etching, Plate 29 in *Sixty Five Plates of Shipping and Craft*

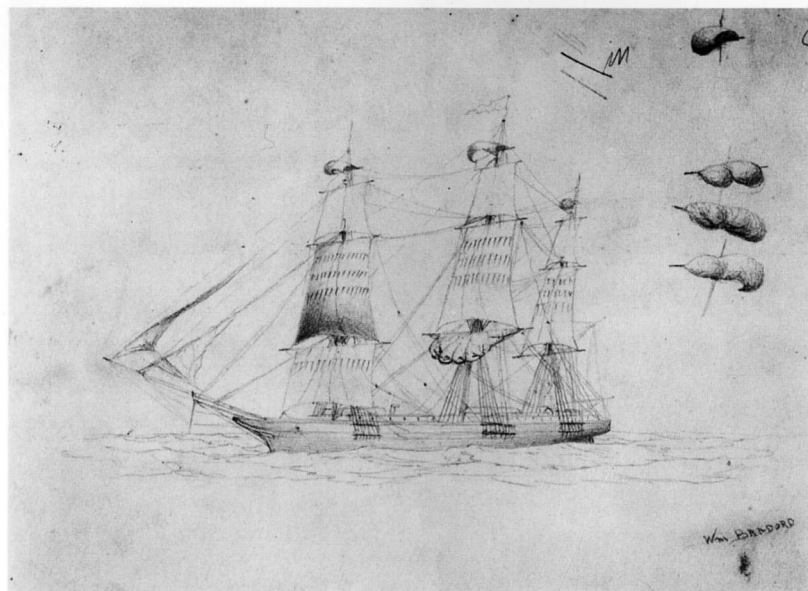


Figure 26. William Bradford, *Merchant Ship under Sail*, n.d., pencil drawing, 8½ × 11½ in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)



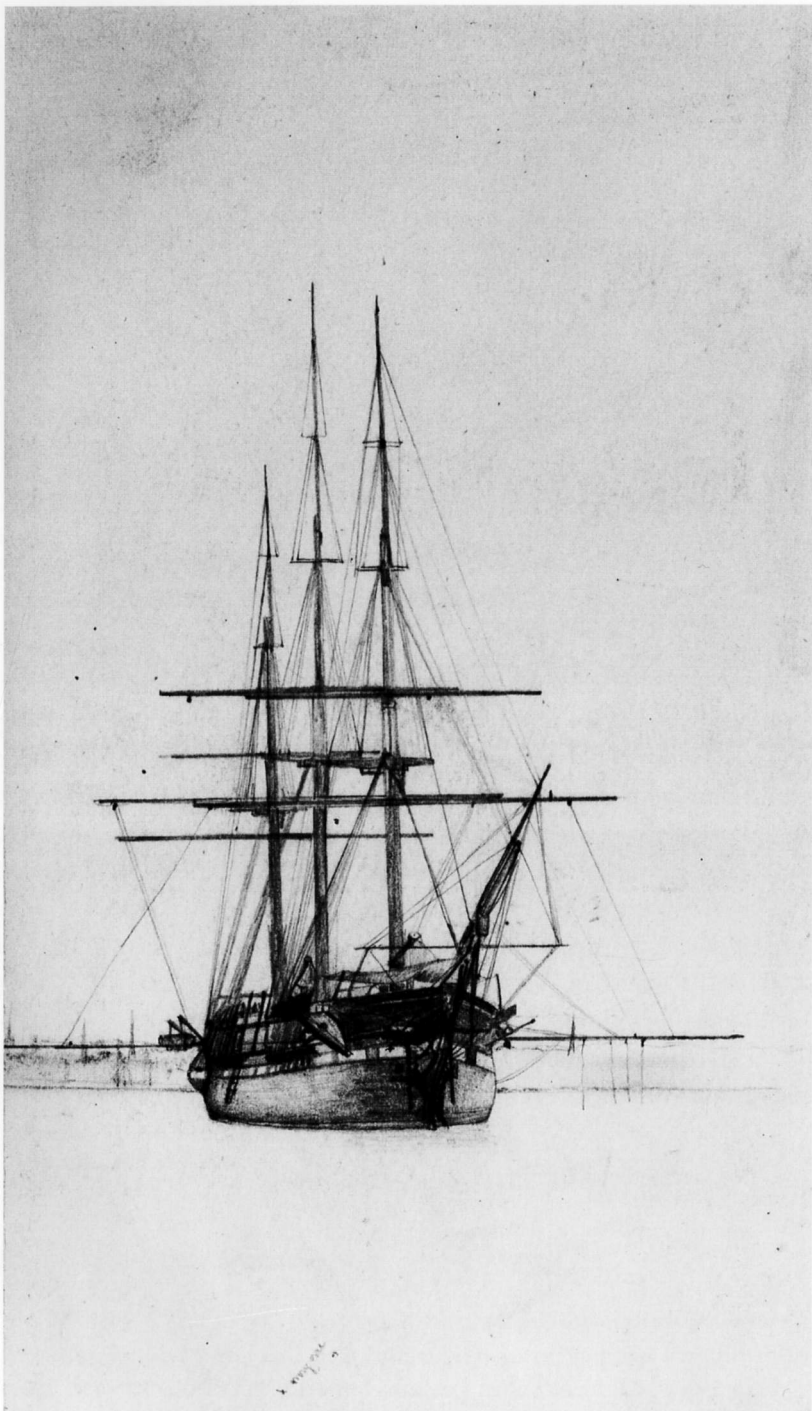


Figure 27. William Bradford, *U.S. Naval Frigate at Anchor*, n.d., pencil drawing, 10 × 5½ in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)

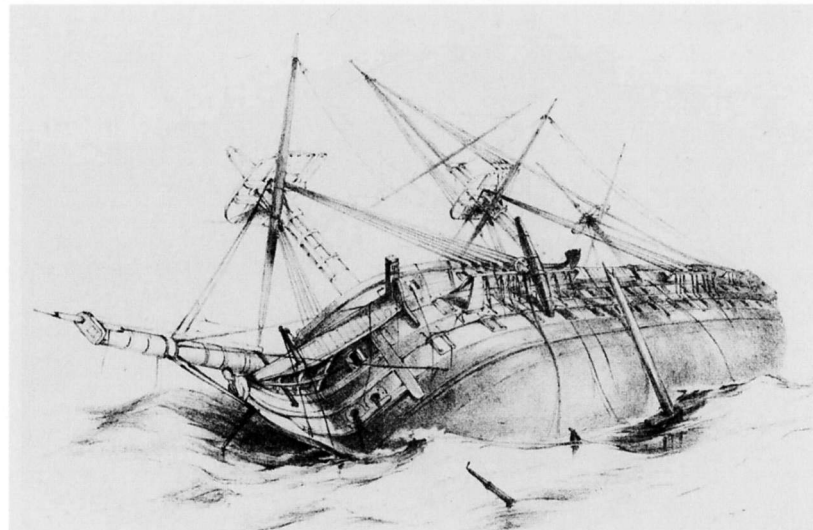


Figure 28. W. M. Grundy, "A Seventy-four on her beams ends," zincograph, Plate 23 in *The Sketch Book of Shipping and Craft*

unusual viewpoints, including some perspective views that would probably never find their way onto canvas. Still, it was valuable practice that gave the artist a keen eye for the subtleties of hull form and the always-lurking problem of getting a hull to "float" correctly *in* the water, not *on* it (fig. 27).

Like Grundy, Bradford measured up to the challenge of one very specialized subject: a ship on her beam-ends, i.e., the vessel lying on its side. Grundy's drawing of a seventy-four-gun ship of the line on her beam-ends in a storm (fig. 28) succeeds in depicting the hull shape in this situation. Bradford had neither naval background nor opportunity to observe warships at sea, but he could watch whaleships being "hove-down" at the wharves in New Bedford to have their bottoms cleaned and sheathed with copper. His bow view of such a vessel (fig. 29) shows an understanding of hull form that equals Grundy's. The shading of the hull reveals a thorough familiarity with the peculiarities of whaleship hull design and compares very favorably with photographs of this subject.

Bradford was no less exacting in his drawings of small craft. In a shaded pencil drawing of an open boat used in the Canadian coastal fisheries (fig. 30), we see the same fine eye for hull form to which has been added the complexities of hull framing, thwarts, and compartments in the partially decked interior. When compared with Cooke's etching of a beached fishing lugger (fig. 31), it is startling to see the same

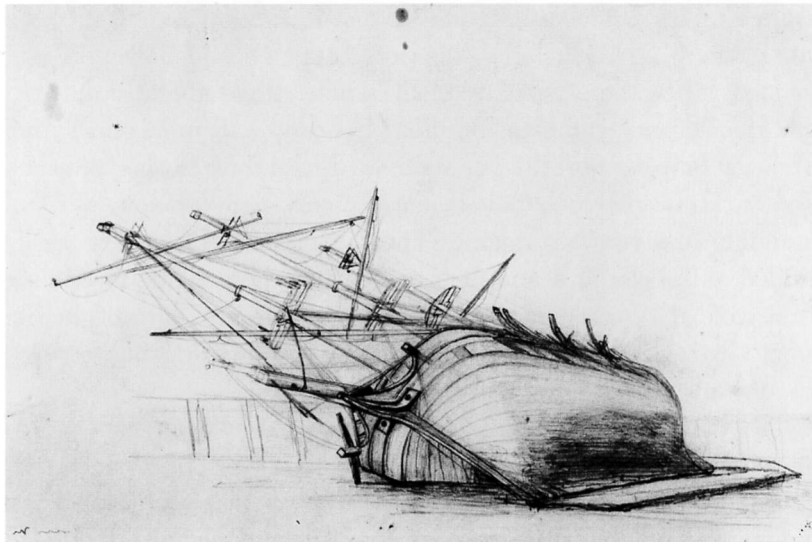


Figure 29. William Bradford, *Whaler Hove-Down, Bow View*, n.d., pencil drawing, 10¼ x 14 in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)



Figure 30. William Bradford, *Open Boat Hauled Out*, n.d., pencil drawing, 8 x 10½ in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)

deft handling of hull shapes at the same angle of view. The boats are different types and the drawings are in two very different media, but they are the results of keen observation and disciplined drawing techniques.



Figure 31. E. W. Cooke, “Lugger &c. near the Blockade Station, Brighton,” etching, Plate 2 of addendum in *Sixty Five Plates of Shipping and Craft*

At what date Bradford took up oil painting and the subjects of his first efforts in this medium are now unknown. A painting attributed to him, a copy of the Dutton lithograph of the yacht *America* at Cowes, 1851 (cat. 10, cat. 11), may be the earliest surviving example, assuming it was painted at the end of 1851 or early in 1852. Lane also copied this print at about the same time (fig. 32), which invites speculation that Bradford may have seen Lane’s version and used it as a guide for his own. Either way, he made several changes, deleting the stake boat in the right foreground and painting in his own versions of the wave patterns and clouds. In the last instance, his inexperience led him to paint the clouds moving against the wind direction as indicated by the trim of *America*’s sails—something an observant sailor would have caught and which Lane avoided in his version. The absence of the stake boat in Bradford’s painting detracts from the composition by removing an important overlap of foreground elements. There was much in the way of nautical knowledge that the young artist had to master in the 1850s decade.

A pencil drawing by Bradford of the small clipper ship *Snow Squall* (fig. 33) can also be dated to 1851–52, when this New York–owned ship



Figure 32. Fitz Hugh Lane, *Schooner Yacht America*, 1851, oil on canvas, 24½ × 38¼ in. (Peabody Essex Museum)

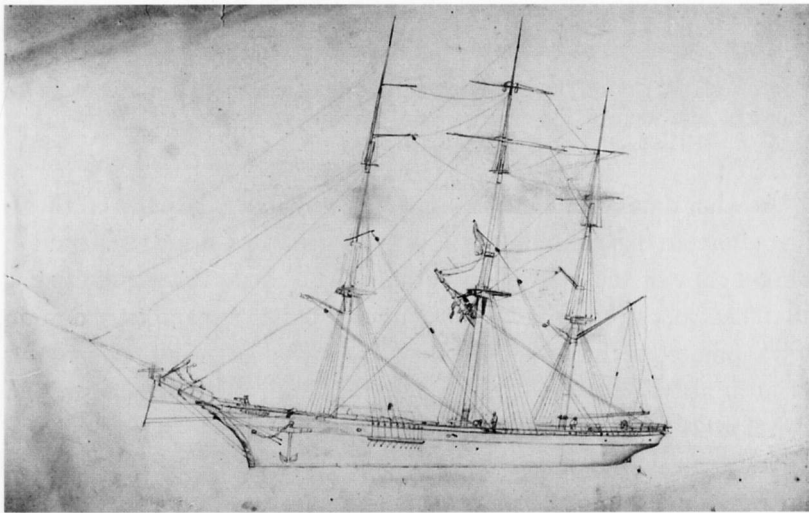


Figure 33. William Bradford, *Clipper Ship Snow Squall*, 1851, pencil drawing, 11½ × 18¼ in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)

was in Boston, fitting out and loading for her maiden voyage.<sup>35</sup> No paintings derived from this drawing have been found. Bradford's drawings of identified vessels are now rare, so this example offers valuable insight to his early drafting methods with a painting as a very likely result. What is evident is his maturity of technique. The vessel is not in a flat broadside profile, but viewed from off the bow, the perspective being subtle but deftly executed. The spar lengths were likely taken

from a table of dimensions, or even a sailmaker's plan, but they too are skillfully drawn, including the varied angles at which the yards are braced, taking the perspective of the whole into account. In much of the rigging and spar plan, Bradford has used a form of shorthand, showing only the port sides of some yards and their rigging, omitting the backstays (but not their deadeyes), and many obvious parts of standing and running rigging. These components could be easily added to the painting, and their omission in the drawing saved time and avoided a confusion of lines in the more complex parts of the rigging. Given all these omissions, it is obvious that this drawing was used as a means to an end—a painting of *Snow Squall*.

Another early drawing, of the whaleship *Jireh Swift* (cat. 3), was probably made in 1853, prior to her maiden cruise. In this example, there is very similar composition and use of perspective. All spars and rigging, but not the sails, are drawn complete and the hull is shaded to indicate the color scheme. Bradford's oil painting of this vessel (cat. 2) is available for comparison, showing that the sketch was altered very little in the transfer process. Why this later sketch is so much more finished than *Snow Squall's*, and if Bradford produced other drawings of such completeness, is a matter for speculation.

Bradford sold his first painting in 1852: a portrait of the whaleship *Jireh Perry* (cat. 1). Soon after came a commission for a painting of a clipper ship for a Boston shipowner, followed by more paintings of New Bedford whalers and Boston merchant ships for a variety of clients. Tentative lists of surviving pictures from this period suggest that Bradford portrayed both types in comparable numbers. Only a few of them are dated; others can have dates attributed on the basis of the vessel's year of building or maiden voyage, or from known dates when it was in port and thus available for the artist's inspection. In all cases, these pictures fall within a time frame of 1852 to 1857.<sup>36</sup>

Bradford's period of painting conventional ship portraits for paying customers thus appears to have lasted only five years. The work done in this time was under the influences of two peers: Fitz Hugh Lane and a Dutch newcomer, Albert Van Beest. Lane's influence undoubtedly predated 1852, diminished to some extent with Van Beest's presence, but continued to have an enduring effect on Bradford's treatment of light and skies until the 1860s. Van Beest's influence became apparent in 1854, the year he came to settle in New Bedford and began giving lessons to Bradford. The two worked together for three years, often collaborating on large harbor scenes, before going





Figure 34. Fitz Hugh Lane, *Clipper Ship Northern Light*, 1851, oil on canvas, 23 × 35 in. (India House)

their separate ways.<sup>37</sup> From 1858 onward, Van Beest's influence diminished as Bradford directed his interests northward to the Canadian Maritime Provinces whose challenges compelled him to evaluate and change his style.

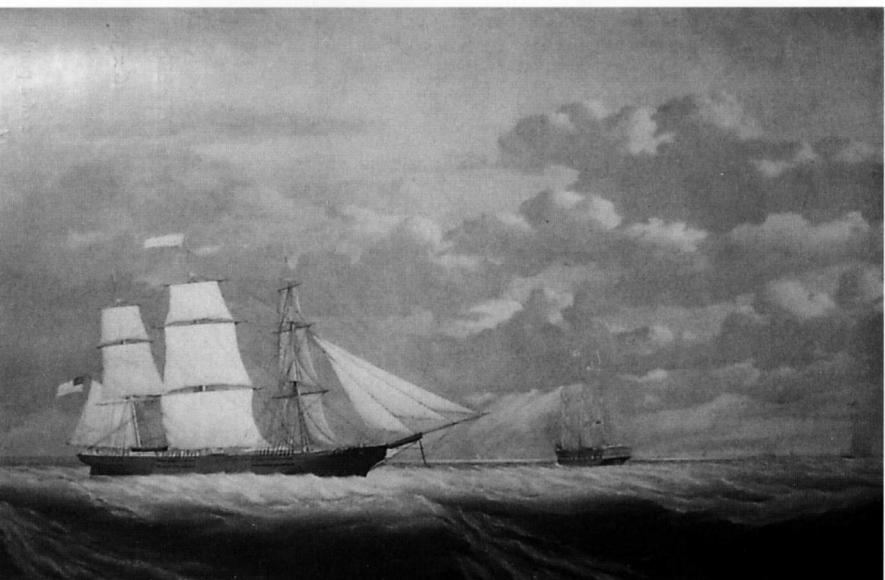


Figure 35. William Bradford, *Clipper Ship Queen of the Seas*, 1853, oil on canvas, 29 × 48 in. (Private collection)

In Bradford's clipper ship portraits, the influence of Lane is plain to see, and in at least one instance he obviously copied Lane. The *Clipper ship Northern Light* (fig. 34), built in 1851, was probably painted by Lane in the same year. It is a prime example of a formulaic approach he had adopted in the 1840s to satisfy customers with tight purse strings and dull aesthetic sensibilities. These broadsides were no doubt as loathsome for Lane as they were for Bradford, and a task to avoid when more stimulating and remunerative scenes gained popularity. Bradford's 1853 copy of *Northern Light* (cat. 9) is the same composition with the ship carrying a bit more sail. The most likely reason for this version was the shipowner's wish for a second portrait, possibly for a share owner or a New York agent. While essentially a copy, there is some attempt by Bradford to show a little originality, but the stylistic debt to Lane is overwhelming.

Bradford's picture of the clipper ship *Queen of the Seas* (fig. 35) was painted in the same year, 1853, as Lane's *National Eagle*. It is possibly his best effort at ship portraiture, combining dramatic seas and sky with the vessel in a sailing maneuver called boxing off. If the ship sailed too close to the wind or got caught unexpectedly by a sudden wind shift, the sails were taken aback and she would lose sufficient momentum to bear off and get the sails drawing properly again. To get out of

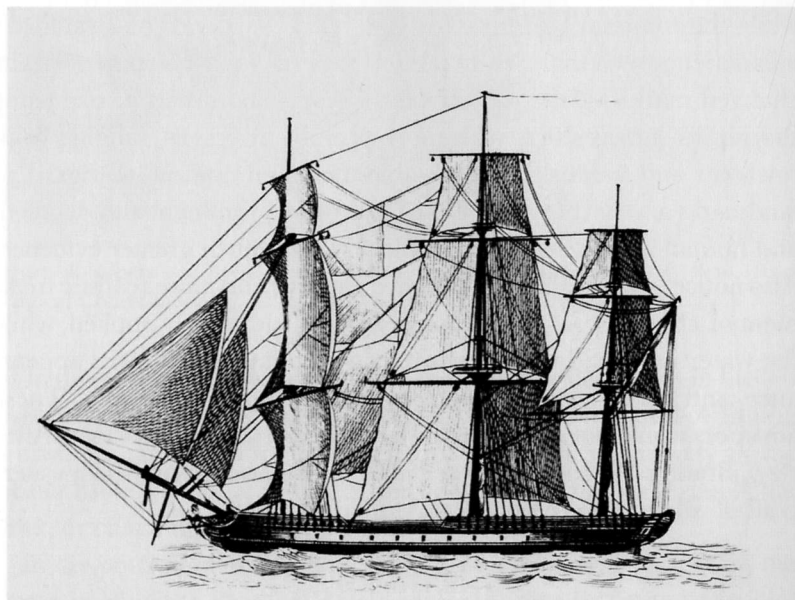


Figure 36. A ship boxing off, from a plate facing page 78 (fig. 413), in Darcy Lever, *The Young Sea Officer's Sheet Anchor* (London, 1819)

this problem, the fore sails were braced around and the head sails sheeted to weather, these measures causing them to fill aback and force the bow off to leeward (fig. 36). Once the main and mizzen sails were again drawing properly, the fore sails would be braced around to their original settings and the head sails sheeted to leeward; the ship would gather way and resume course.<sup>38</sup> It is a matter of speculation whether Bradford illustrated this event on his own initiative or if the client requested it and provided the necessary information. It is one of the few Bradford ship portraits whose narrative aspect can match that of Lane's.

Bradford's paintings of clipper ships and whalers were essentially similar in composition during the years 1852–54. In them, the ships were the dominant elements, with very minor activity going on around them and very little human activity on board. The exceptions, like *Queen of the Seas*, were few, and the portraits of the whalers, reflecting Bradford's greater familiarity with them, evolved steadily in content and composition, but the clipper ship portraits kept their sameness until Bradford stopped painting them.

Bradford's earliest portraits of whaleships, *Jireh Perry* and *Jireh Swift*, are almost identically posed at anchor with sails furled, an unusual configuration for ship portraits and rarely used by Bradford afterward. The treatment of water and sky show the strong influence of Lane, while the minimal backgrounds give telling evidence of Bradford's inexperience with that element. From 1854 on, the whaleship portraits changed markedly, the subject vessel being diminished in size while sharing its surroundings with more prominent vessels, ranging from rowboats and small sloops to sizable merchant craft of all rigs. The landmarks and harbor skylines became more prominent and detailed, and human activity ashore and afloat was in much greater evidence. Also noticeable were changes to wave patterns and more realistic treatment of choppy seas. Whitecaps were more judiciously applied, while the water itself had more transparency, lending depth to its appearance and greater visual depth to the picture as a whole. These advances would not serve the cause of ship portraiture very long. After 1857, Bradford forsook this genre in favor of seascapes in which watercraft of all types were to play very different roles.

### *Bradford and Van Beest*

A TRANSITION PERIOD, 1854–57, in which Bradford's ship portraiture matured, coincided with and resulted from a working relationship with the Dutch artist Albert Van Beest. Van Beest apparently came to New Bedford at Bradford's invitation and the two shared a studio, first as teacher (Van Beest) and student (Bradford), then as colleagues working independently or as collaborators on shared works.<sup>39</sup>

Van Beest's looser drawing style did much to free up the rigidity and fussiness of Bradford's drawing hand. Two surviving sketches of a coasting schooner under sail show how different these two artists were at the beginning. Bradford's schooner (fig. 37) is stiffly posed, her sails unhighlighted and devoid of shadows, hardly drawing a breath of wind. The hull barely seems to move in a light chop that could have been drawn by Salmon. The lifeless schooner is devoid of a crew, and there is no land on the horizon to give the viewer any bearings.

Van Beest's drawing (fig. 38), which may have been part of a lesson, makes a telling critique of Bradford's effort. In it he showed how line work and shading could bring life and tension to the scene, and how adding a crew and a deck load lent narrative to otherwise purposeless motion. Van Beest's little schooner steps along in a breeze strong enough to keep the gaff topsails furled, the rigging taut to weather and slack to leeward. The choppy waves are in broken, irregular patterns, doing away with the rhythmic monotony so prevalent in American ship portraits. The vessel has a bone in her teeth as her weather bow smacks into the sea. The sunlight creates highlights and distinct shadows on her sails, which have tension creases in their luffs and corners, and where her main sail presses against the main boom topping lift. In these two drawings, we see where Bradford's knowledge of a ship's form and rigging was already advanced, but also how much more he would have to learn to bring those ships to life.

Van Beest gave Bradford valuable training in many aspects of marine painting. As already noted, there was work to be done on drawing wave patterns and painting the water itself. The introduction of people in purposeful activity was also badly needed. Beyond this, there was a need to work on background scenery if anything more ambitious than ship portraits was to be attempted. Harbor skylines and coastal terrain were Bradford's greatest weaknesses, and Van Beest was the right mentor to fix that problem. The two worked intensively on port views of New Bedford, and this had a salutary effect on Bradford's later whaleship portraits. The clipper ship portraits he painted for

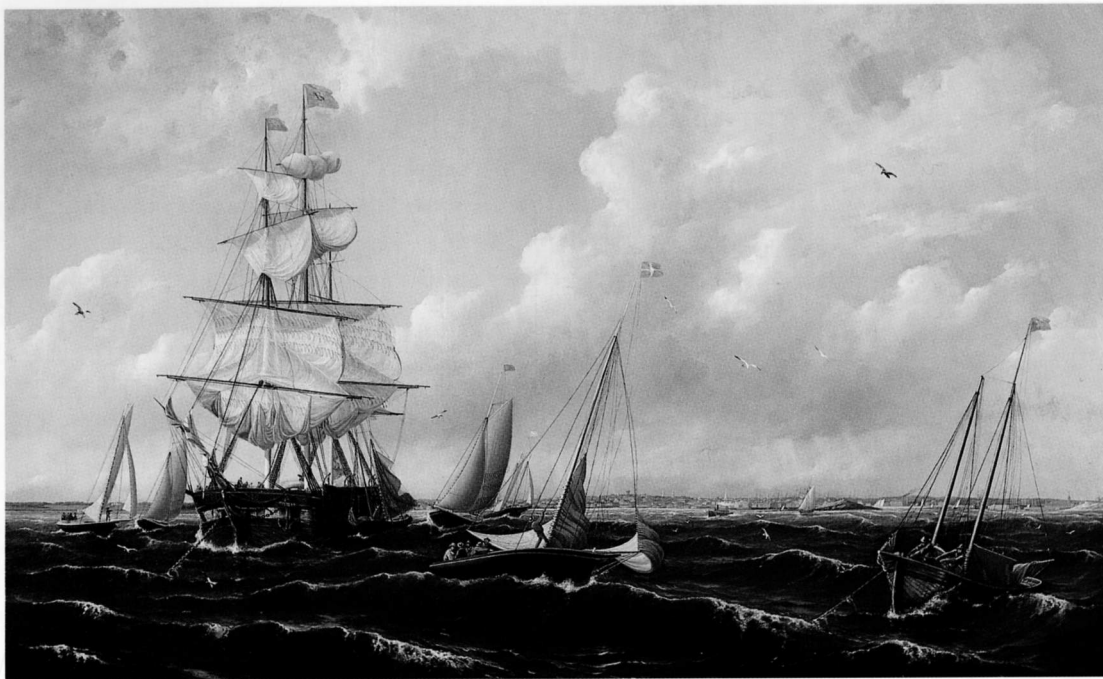


Figure 39. Albert Van Beest, *View of Shipping in New Bedford Harbor*, c. 1855, oil on canvas, 32½ × 52½ in. (New Bedford Whaling Museum)

planking, unusual iron whaleboat davits, the whaleboat cranes with slide boards, very detailed rigging, and sails hanging realistically “in the gear,” i.e., clewed up with slackened buntlines. The two sloop yachts in the right foreground are painted with similar attention to detail, as is the coasting schooner at left. While dealing with all of the surrounding components of this scene, Bradford successfully combined realism, an interesting composition, and effective use of light to convey the image of a new whaler about to begin her maiden cruise. The time of departure is anticipated as the bark, her sails unfurled, waits for the wind to shift and the tide to turn. The narrative aspect hangs on the viewer’s knowledge of New Bedford Harbor and of local weather and tides. Bradford was thinking more like a sailor and subtly weaving stories into his picture in the manner of Lane.

From the *J. D. Thompson* portrait, it was a natural transition to painting coastal and harbor scenes. Several of these were painted jointly by Bradford and Van Beest, but these collaborations are not always so identified. *The Port of New Bedford from Crow Island*, 1854 (cat. 12), is signed only by Bradford, but the hand of Van Beest is unmistakable in the rough delineation of the hull planking of the whaleship at center and

the rowing boat in the right foreground. This view is one of Bradford’s first to show concentrated human activity, but the figures and their gestures are in the style of Van Beest, if not actually painted by him. The agitated water also shows the Dutch artist’s influence in its random wave patterns and more irregular patches of whitecaps. If Bradford had indeed done all the brushwork on this canvas, it was under Van Beest’s very close supervision.

Soon after Bradford had painted this port scene, Van Beest made one of his own, *View of Shipping in New Bedford Harbor*, c. 1855 (fig. 39). It was similar in content, but composed with the whaler in the left foreground and a panoramic view of New Bedford in the right background. The hulls of the whaling bark and a two-masted boat (right foreground) are planked Dutch style, with the bottom planks feathering out to points as they rise and are joined to the wales—a feature never seen in New England vessels of this period. The rough sea and unsettled look of the sky suggest a change in the weather. The bark and the boats around it are alive with busy sailors and fishermen, adding action to a composition that leads the eye in a zigzag pattern from one craft to another. Bradford’s hand is evident in the hull forms of the sloop yachts and in the delicate detail of the vessels’ rigging and sails. Van Beest’s signature is the only one on the painting, but Bradford’s contributions are acknowledged by the initials W and B in the pennant and house flag at the bark’s mastheads.

The best-known Bradford–Van Beest collaboration is *Boston Harbor* (cat. 14), painted in 1857, the last year the two artists worked together. Unlike the New Bedford port scenes, which benefited from detailed observations of familiar surroundings, this is a less intimate view of a less familiar harbor. The uniform wave pattern over the entire harbor reverts to earlier conventions and could not have been very satisfactory to either artist. Also jarring are the stiff poses of the vessels which, while moving under a press of canvas, make no bow waves and leave no wakes in proportion to the water they are displacing. Sketches of two vessels in this picture have survived: the sloop in the left foreground (fig. 40) and the Cunard steamship in the right background (fig. 41).



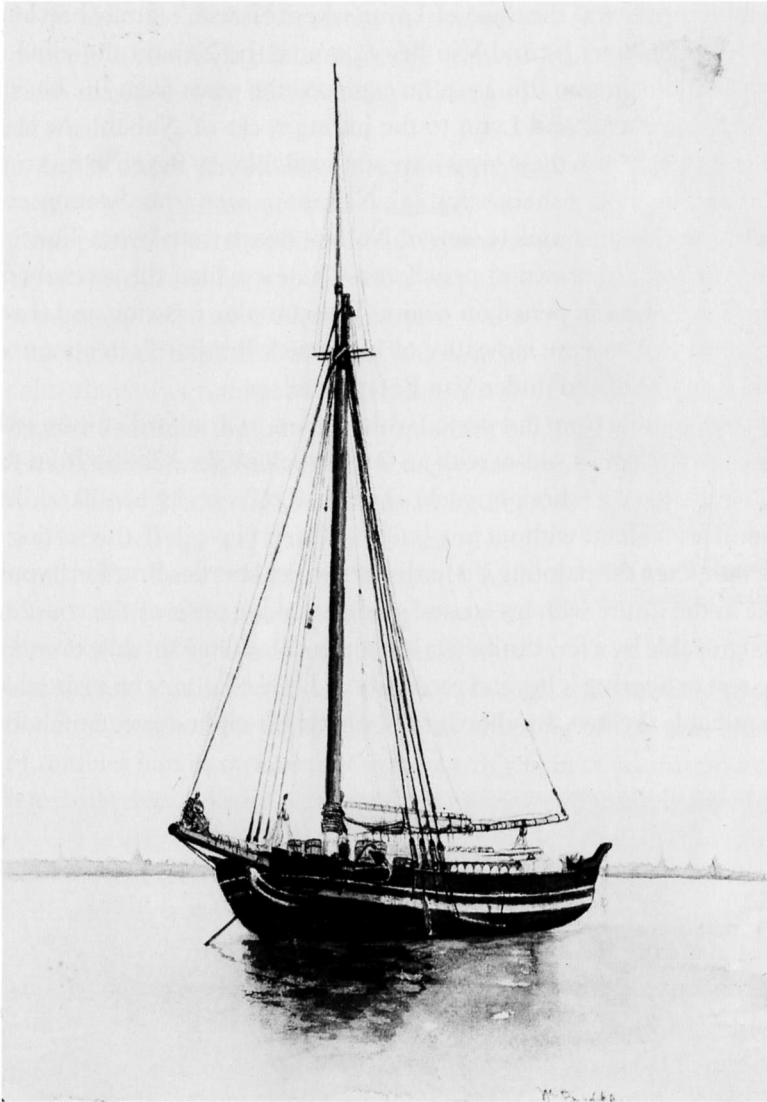


Figure 40. William Bradford, *Merchant Sloop at Anchor*, n.d., watercolor, 14 × 19 in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)

Bradford was probably responsible for all of the vessels; Van Beest, for the figures, two small boats, and the Boston skyline. The water and sky were probably worked on by both artists. The resulting picture has its charms, but more for the unexpected naïveté in its execution than for any narrative content or realism.

While Bradford focused his interest on merchant vessels and whalers, he was attracted to yachts, both for their beauty and their util-

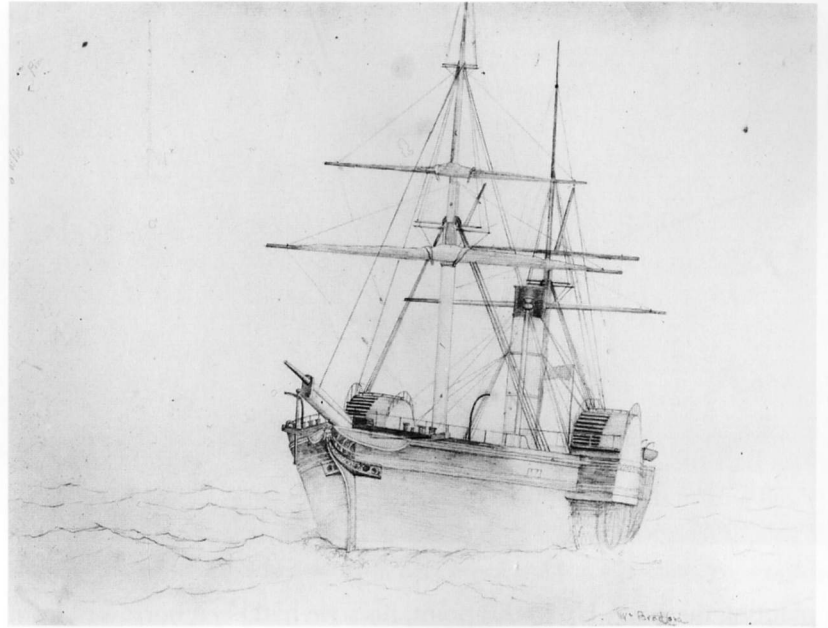


Figure 41. William Bradford, *Cunard Steamship*, n.d., pencil drawing, 11 × 14½ in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)

ity as incidental elements in a port scene, where they could fill out and unify a composition. On occasion, and sometimes quite late in his career, he painted portraits of individual yachts, such as schooner *America* (c. 1851), schooner *Clio* (1882), and sloop *Gracie* (1883). Working with Van Beest, he made voluminous sketches of the New York Yacht Club's regatta at New Bedford in 1856, which culminated in a large ink-and-wash drawing, jointly signed by the two artists (cat. 18). Bradford then made an oil painting (cat. 17) from this drawing, assisted by Van Beest. This regatta was an occasion of note because Fitz Hugh Lane was also present and making drawings of the race and some of the individual yachts. Lane later made at least four paintings of the regatta, depicting the race at different stages. His painting of the finish utilizes a different viewpoint (fig. 42), but agrees with the details in the Bradford–Van Beest drawing.

### *Venturing Northward*

By 1858, Van Beest had parted company with his understudy, leaving Bradford free to explore seaports and coastlines on his own, and to reconcile his learning experiences to his own observations and

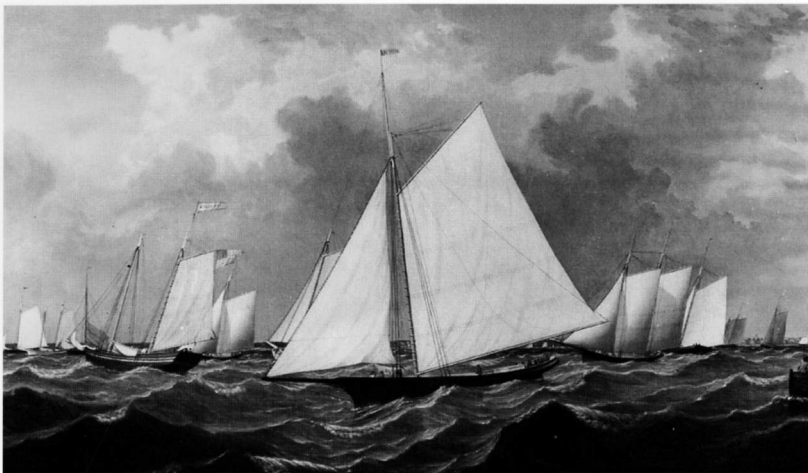


Figure 42. Fitz Hugh Lane, *New York Yacht Club Regatta*, c. 1856, oil on canvas, 28 × 48 in. (The Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vt.)

painting methods. Up to this point, his style had been borrowed from Lane and then reformed by Van Beest. It was time to develop a style of his own in subject matter that was drawing him away from New Bedford to coastal regions north of Boston. One early stopping place

on this journey was the town of Lynn, where his wife's family had long resided and where he and Van Beest painted the Nahant shoreline in 1854.<sup>40</sup> Returning to this area, he explored the coast from the beaches of Swampscott and Lynn to the jutting rocks of Nahant. At least three sketches from these visits have survived: Blaney Beach in Swampscott and its shore fisheries (fig. 43); Nahant as seen from Swampscott (fig. 44); and an incomplete view of Nahant Beach from Lynn. The first two sketches are drawn in pencil and Chinese white; the second and third have notes in pencil on colors. The complex drawing and shading in the first two are indicative of how much Bradford's treatment of land forms matured under Van Beest's tutelage.

One painting from this period which points to Bradford's future style is a coastal scene at sunset with an intense yellow sky. Viewed from the water, it shows a schooner yacht at anchor off a rocky headland that resembles Nahant without any buildings on it (fig. 45). If this setting is Nahant, then the painting is a harbinger of the liberties Bradford would take in the future with his coastal scenes: making parts of the coastline recognizable by a few distinctive buildings or landmarks while omitting the rest or altering it beyond recognition. Unlike Lane, who insisted on identifiable skylines, Bradford eschewed this discipline once he felt free



Figure 43. William Bradford, *Blaney Beach, Swampscott, Massachusetts*, n.d., pencil and Chinese white, 7 × 18 in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)

to do so. After 1860, it becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile the background scenery in his paintings with the places he visited and sketched.

In the 1860s, Bradford was to develop his own style of painting, which combined the atmospheric effects and the use of light that he adapted from Lane, but with a very different range of colors. Also important was a more realistic depiction of water which, in its calm state, was reminiscent of Lane, but in heavier seas had the translucent qualities of Van Beest's water, but not the exaggerated wave forms. His inclusion of human figures and crew activity was Van Beest's legacy, but used with more restraint. Bradford had Lane's ability to render ships with great accuracy, but as his style matured, the hulls were less sharply outlined and less detailed, though still carefully proportioned and in correct perspective. This softening of line and blurring of outlines had its own uses in the unearthly light of his Arctic scenes, but in his coastal views of Maine and the Bay of Fundy, it gave him a new approach to some subjects already made familiar through the paintings of Lane.

Bradford's painting *The Kennebec River, Waiting for Wind and Tide*, c. 1860 (cat. 24) illustrates his progress in this new approach with this Maine coastal scene. Becalmed at the mouth of the Kennebec River with Fort Popham in the center background and Pond Island Light beyond it, a large Down Easter awaits favorable winds and an outgoing tide to make her departure. A topsail schooner, two sloops, and another square-rigger are drifting with the current, their sails hanging limp and useless in the still air. The reflections of the clouds and the vessels shimmer in water as glassy and liquid as Lane ever painted; indeed, there is much in this placid scene to remind one of Lane.

But there the similarity to Lane ends, for the west bank of the Kennebec is a scenic fiction, with only Fort Popham giving the place its identity. Seguin Light would be out of range at this distance upriver, while completely missing is the Kennebec's east bank with its numerous islands and rocks, leaving the left background open to the sea. If Lane had achieved a feeling of open space by setting his vessels against

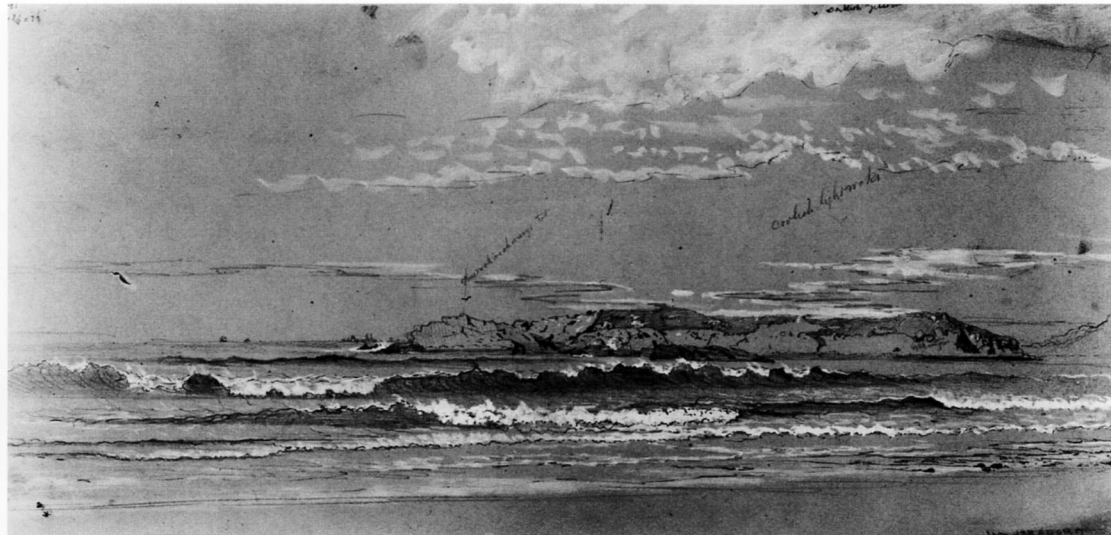


Figure 44. William Bradford, *Nahant as viewed from the Swampscott Shore*, n.d., pencil and Chinese white, 7 $\frac{1}{4}$  × 14 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum)

panoramic backgrounds, Bradford attained similar ends by omitting background scenery in part or in whole. This artistic license gave him new options and advantages in resolving problems of composition, with the important proviso that it didn't matter to the artist and client if the setting was no longer recognizable.

In his small painting *Making Harbor* (cat. 30), of 1862, Bradford offers one of the most realistic depictions of choppy seas in any of his paintings of this period. The scene is a crib wharf near Eastport, Maine, at high tide, with an approaching sloop in the foreground partially overlapping a topsail schooner astern. The lowering clouds in the west threaten to shut out the patches of blue sky, bringing with them a chilly Canadian rain. Rising winds have roughed up the sea, forming short, steep swells and ragged whitecaps. The green water has a metallic sheen, yet is still liquid and translucent; the blue water beyond it looks cold and hostile.

Bradford's vessels are drawn with care, as usual, and the lessons of Van Beest in conveying motion and tension in the hulls and rigging have been well applied. The outlines of the various images are still sharp and well defined, yet the brushwork and choice of colors are nothing like what Bradford was doing just five years earlier. The composure of Lane's imagery is not to be seen; Van Beest's techniques depicting water, sails, and human figures are all modified beyond





Figure 45. William Bradford, *Sunset Anchorage*, n.d., oil on board, 13½ × 19½ in. (Private collection)

recognition. One reason seems to be the effects of this colder, harsher environment on the artist. Bradford needed a different brush technique to deal with the turbulence of the elements; he needed a different palette of colors to deal with the starker contrasts of hue, chroma, and value which he saw in the northern latitudes. A view of New Bedford harbor painted in this way would have resulted in an unearthly,

unimaginable scene, but in his new surroundings, Bradford's newfound techniques were essential.

As Bradford ventured further northward, his style would change even more, but it was in northern Maine and the Bay of Fundy that he confronted the need for a style of his own, met its challenges, and never looked back.

## NOTES

1. Sir Westcott Abell, *The Shipwright's Trade* (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1948), 65–77.
2. Abell, *Shipwright's Trade*, 149–51.
3. A. Cobin, *Short and Plain Principles of Linear Perspective, Adapted to Naval Architecture*, 1st ed.: (London: W. Herbert, 1752); 2nd ed. (London: W. Hebert, 1756); 3rd ed. (London: David Steel, 1775); 4th ed. (London: David Steel, 1794). The date and publisher of the first edition are conjecture, as no copy has been found. The fourth edition is referred to in this essay.
4. Cobin, unpaginated preface to *Principles of Linear Perspective*, 4th ed.
5. E. H. H. Archibald, *Dictionary of Sea Painters* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1980), 83, 84.
6. Dorothy E. R. Brewington, *Dictionary of Marine Artists* (Salem, Mass., and Mystic, Conn.: Peabody Museum of Salem and Mystic Seaport Museum, 1982), 251.
7. David Cordingly, *Nicholas Pocock, 1740–1821* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1986), 65–69.
8. Daniel G. Harris, *F. H. Chapman: The First Naval Architect and His Work* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1989), 9.
9. Fredrik Henrik Chapman, *Architectura Navalis Mercatoria* (Stockholm, 1768; reprint, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971).
10. David Steel, ed., *The Elements and Practice of Naval Architecture* (London: Penelope Steel, 1805).
11. Roger Quarm, "The Art of Marine Drawing," in *Masters of the Sea* (Oxford: Phaedon Press, 1987), 33; Scott Wilcox, "The Wider Sea: Marine Watercolours and Landscape Art," in *Masters of the Sea*, 37, 40, 49, 57, 60, 61, 64.
12. William Bradford, quoted in F. H. Kasson, "William Bradford," in Leonard Bolles Ellis, *History of New Bedford and Its Vicinity, 1602–1892* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1892), Part II: Biographical, 98.
13. R. A. Skelton, "Cartography," in Singer, Holmyard, Hall, Williams, eds., *A History of Technology*, vol. 4 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958), 626. The description of lithographic techniques and their economic benefits to publishers, while concerned with advances in cartography, apply equally to the reproduction of artworks.
14. Quarm, "The Art of Marine Drawing," 32.
15. Archibald, *Dictionary of Sea Painters*, 147; Brewington, *Dictionary of Marine Artists*, 268.
16. See sketches, in John Wilmerding, "William Bradford: Artist of the Arctic," in *William Bradford* (Lincoln and New Bedford, Mass.: DeCordova Museum and New Bedford Whaling Museum, 1969), 18, 19.
17. W. M. Grundy, *The Sketch Book of Shipping and Craft* (London: Charles Tilt, n.d.).
18. Elliot Bostwick Davis, *Training the Eye and the Hand: Fitz Hugh Lane and American Drawing Books* (Gloucester, Mass.: Cape Ann Historical Association, 1993), 7–10, 12–14. The author (and organizer of the exhibition, which her essay describes) has very ably made a case for the role of drawing books as a source of instruction for Lane in all of the subjects he depicted while at Pendleton's, except for ships and boats. The best efforts of John G. Chapman and John H. B. Latrobe were, in their aspects of hull form and rigging, inaccurate and too badly proportioned to be of any use to Lane, even in his earliest years in lithography. Like Bradford, he would have had to resort to English publications for help of this nature.
19. John Wilson Carmichael, *The Art of Marine Painting in Water-colours* (London: Winsor & Newton, 1859), 20–27.
20. Rudolph J. Schaefer, *J. E. Buttersworth, 19th Century Marine Painter* (Mystic, Conn.: Mystic Seaport, 1975), 81.
21. John Wilmerding, *Robert Salmon, Painter of Ship & Shore* (Boston and Salem, Mass.: Boston Public Library and Peabody Museum of Salem, 1971), 49, 84, 85.
22. John Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 25, 34, 35.
23. Wilmerding, *Robert Salmon*, 62–64; J. G. Links, "Canaletto: A Biographical Sketch," in Katharine Baetjer and J. G. Links, eds., *Canaletto* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989), 3–15.
24. Alessandro Bettagno, "Fantasy and Reality in Canaletto's Drawings," in *Canaletto*, 40–51; Viola Pemberton-Pigott, "The Development of Canaletto's Painting Technique," in *Canaletto*, 52–63.
25. Wilmerding, *Robert Salmon*, 81, 83.
26. Wilmerding, *Robert Salmon*, 3.
27. Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane*, 19, 20, 35; Carl L. Crossman, "Lithographs of Fitz Hugh Lane," in Elton W. Hall, ed., *American Maritime Prints* (New Bedford, Mass.: Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1985), 63–65.
28. Stow Wengenroth, *Making a Lithograph* (New York: The Studio Publications, 1936), 9, 10, 18–20, 36–38, 49.
29. Davis, *Training the Eye and the Hand*, 13, 14.
30. Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane*, 34.
31. Wilmerding, *Robert Salmon*, Appendix A, 90–94.
32. Erik A. R. Ronnberg Jr, "Imagery and Types of Vessels," in John Wilmerding, ed., *Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane* (Washington, D.C., and New York: National Gallery of Art and Harry N. Abrams, 1988), 67, 68.
33. Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane*, 42.
34. Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane*, 30, 31.
35. Nicholas Dean, *Snow Squall: The Last American Clipper Ship*, (Gardiner, Maine: Tilbury House Publishers, 2001), 40.
36. Kasson, "William Bradford," 98, 99. For lists of known Bradford portraits of whale-ships and clipper ships, see Appendix B: Bradford's Known Ship Portraits in this volume.
37. John Wilmerding, *American Marine Painting* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987), 132–37.
38. Darcy Lever, *The Young Sea Officer's Sheet Anchor* (London: John Richardson, 1819), 78.
39. Richard C. Kugler, *New Bedford & Old Dartmouth: A Portrait of a Region's Past* (New Bedford, Mass.: Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1975), 101.
40. D. Roger Howlett, *The Lynn Beach Painters: Art Along the North Shore* (Lynn, Mass.: The Lynn Historical Society, 1998), 12–15.