

✓
"The Art Quarterly"
v. xv n. 4
(winter 1952)

FITZ HUGH LANE, GLOUCESTER ARTIST, 1804-1865

By GENE E. McCORMICK

WITHIN the past few years the name of Fitz Hugh Lane has begun to draw attention, primarily among art dealers who have recognized the fine artistic merit of his work. Yet his work has still to receive its due publicity and to be understood in its important role in the course of American painting. Therefore, the aim of this presentation is to revive an ancestor whose painting was eclipsed by the popularity of romanticism and hidden away by contemporary criticism. Lane's stark realism, his positivistic mode of vision, failed to produce the glamour for which the Victorian eye searched. Moral inspiration could not be found in the handiwork of God when reduced to such bald terms. Because Lane refused to follow the dual goal of a moral veneer overlaying a descriptive naturalism, he was dispensed with as superficial, if not deceitful, and was soon forgotten.

James Jackson Jarves, the crusader for Quattrocento art, had much to do with this loss. In his book *The Art Idea*, written in 1864, he denounced the tradition of "tonal realists" when he keenly observed:

... To such an extent is literalness carried, that the majority of works are quite divested of human association. "No admittance" for the spirit of man is written all over them. Like the Ancient Mariner's "painted ships upon a painted ocean" they both pall and appall the senses. The bareness of thought and feeling become inexpressibly wearisome after the first shock of rude or bewildered surprise at overstrained atmospheric effects, monotonous in motive, however dramatically varied in execution. The highest aim... seemingly is intense gradations of skies and violent contrasts of positive color. The result is destructive of any suggestion of the variety and mystery of nature. We get coarse paintings, pitched on a wrong key of light and color, hastily got up for market, and sold by scores...¹

One would think Jarves had Lane particularly in mind when he burst forth with this volley. However, Jarves meant this to fit the art of Heade, Suydam, Hinckley and Hope as well; and although he may not have been categorically referring to them, the works of Bingham and occasionally those of Mount and Kensett are closely related. Although all these men worked along similar lines, conceiving of space as a graded atmospheric envelope enshrouding carefully placed objects, they seem never to have had any contact with one another. They ignored the moral sentiment expected of painting and simply

enjoyed translating what they saw. Their attachment to their environment was deep and direct; their growth native and spontaneous. These features best apply to the work of Lane, and it is in his work that we find the culmination of meticulously controlled space and luminous color power. For this reason he should serve as an introduction to a study of all these men who were working quietly and simply, forming a tradition of painting in the American scene yet to be fully discovered and explored.

Fitz Hugh Lane was born in Gloucester, Massachusetts, December 18, 1804, into a family of old New England heritage.² He was christened "Nathaniel Rogers," but as he once said to a friend, "Damned if I wouldn't change that name," and so he did—to "Fitz Hugh"—as he was known for the rest of his life. About 1806 he was struck with infantile paralysis which left his legs permanently crippled. As a youth Lane worked for various firms in Gloucester where he attracted attention with his drawings, and while at the firm of Clegg and Dodge of Sea Street, a Mr. W. E. P. Rogers showed his drawings to Pendleton, the first commercial lithographer in the country.³ Pendleton invited Lane to be his apprentice, and so at the age of twenty-eight Lane left for Boston to join the firm.⁴ There he associated with another apprentice, John W. A. Scott, with whom he was later to form his own establishment. After Pendleton closed shop in 1837, Lane did lithographic work for the publishers Keith and Moore of Boston for the next few years. It is not until 1841, however, that we find Lane mentioned for the first time in the Boston Business Directory, where he is listed as a "marine painter." In 1844 he moved to Tremont Temple and in the following year Scott's address is given as the same, so, although the firm of Scott and Lane is not listed as such until 1847, it is safe to assume it was at least under way by 1845. While working for Pendleton and during the years on his own, Lane painted and made lithographic views of Gloucester which he sold by subscription to the town folk. He utilized this source of income throughout the rest of his life.

During the forties and fifties Lane's works were exhibited extensively. Almost continuously from 1841 until his death his works were displayed at the Boston Athenaeum, where he saw practically all that the cosmopolitan art world had to offer.⁵ His paintings were also shown at the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association in 1841 and 1844, at the Harding Gallery in 1844, at the New England Art Union in 1851, and Leonard Gallery in 1859. His art was exhibited in New York at the American Art Union in 1849, and at the National Academy of Design in 1859. In 1848 Lane was made an

honorary member in 1850. Since that his work as a dealer was

By 1849 Lane had a bachelor's degree from Gloucester College. His contributions to the banners and other contributions to the marshal, John W. Winters, of that year. Lane's home address was Winters built in excellent

Details of Lane's life find that certain are his drawings. L. Stevens, and when occasionally painted.⁷ However, according to friends made. They rented Penobscot trips were in September made from with the slo help Lane the craft w inconvenie portant he light and accepted h

honorary member of the Albany Gallery of Fine Arts and exhibited there in 1850. Since his art enjoyed this wide a dispersion, there is no reason to doubt that his works were shown very frequently and in many other places. Lane's dealer was W. Y. Balch of Williams and Everett of Boston.

By 1849 Lane was back in Gloucester and there he passed the rest of his bachelor days. The first mention of him after leaving Boston we find in the Gloucester Telegraph in its issue of July 7 of that year which describes Lane's contribution to the July Fourth parade. For this parade he painted numerous banners and was in charge of floral decorations. So highly received were Lane's contributions that he was given the honor of riding in the carriage of the parade marshal, John S. Piper, who later was to buy paintings from him. By August of that year Lane had a studio on Elm Street, open to the public, while his home address shifted frequently until he and his brother-in-law Ignatius Winters built in 1850 a stone house on Ivy Court. The house still stands today in excellent condition and is just as enigmatic as unusual.⁶

Details about Lane's life during the fifties are sparse indeed, but we do find that certain activities of his are quite accurately recorded. These records are his drawings, on many of which Lane's close friend and confidant, Joseph L. Stevens, Jr., (who received the drawings after the artist's death) noted where and when the drawing was done, who accompanied Lane on the trip and occasionally the person or persons for whom a painting of the scene was painted.⁷ The drawings which are left to us today bear no dates before 1850; however, many are undated and thus some may be earlier. In any event, according to information on some of the drawings, Lane, Stevens, and various friends made trips along the Maine coast in 1850, 1851, 1852, 1855, and 1863. They rented a small craft, sailed to Maine and explored the waters in the Penobscot Bay region, Castine, Blue Hill, Owl's Head, and Mt. Desert. These trips were always made in August, except in 1855 when the journey was made in September, and seemed to have been elaborately planned. One drawing made from off shore is entitled *Our Encampment* and shows a pitched tent with the sloop "General Gates" riding at anchor. On these trips Stevens would help Lane select sketching spots. Lane would also sketch from the stern while the craft was under way. The extent of these trips, the planning involved, the inconveniences and discomforts Lane may have experienced, reveal how important he felt it was for him to go to Maine in order to capture the effects of light and air. And alone with friends, surrounded by an environment that accepted him, he must have enjoyed these excursions. The extreme delicacy

and spaciousness in his drawings reveal a sensitivity that could only come out in utmost peace and contentment.

An interesting facet of Lane's biography is the possibility that he may have gone to the West Indies. There is no evidence to prove this, but a painting entitled *St. John's, Porto Rico*, in the Mariner's Museum at Newport News, Virginia, appears to be an authentic Lane, and therefore suggests such a trip. The painting was done for a Sidney Mason, a famous trader of Gloucester who owned mahogany plantations in the Indies.⁸ Lane's affiliation with the Mason family was very close, as a letter to Lane from Mason's daughter Harriet explicitly states. In this letter she profusely thanks the artist for a still-life he painted for the family and for his offer to instruct her in drawing. Therefore, it is possible that Lane was offered a voyage aboard one of Mason's ships bound for the Indies. Once aboard, the sea was as much his as anyone's. Of course, it is also possible Lane could have made the painting from an engraving, but the exactitude with which he rendered this city portrait and imbued it with his usual "atmosphere of place" would definitely suggest that the painting came from personal experience. So far, no drawing has been found for this picture, and just when Lane made this hypothetical trip cannot be said, although the style of the painting is similar to that of the early or mid-fifties.

Important biographic details from the last years of Lane's life have yet to be discovered. The *Gloucester Telegraph* of 1864 records Lane's difficulties with his brother-in-law Ignatius Winters, who also got into trouble with Stevens, Lane's perennial companion. What the family trouble was is not known, but in 1864 Winters was ejected from the Stone House after Lane had obtained right to the security of mortgage. Also in 1864 occurred one of the worst fires in Gloucester, which burnt out Main Street entirely and cost Lane over 200 lithographic views when J. S. E. Rogers's printing shop burnt down. Evidently Lane was still drawing upon subscriptions as a source of income as late as this.

In the spring of 1865 Lane fell ill, but upon recovering he resumed painting. However, he was forced to stop again because of a serious fall from which he never recovered. He died August 13, 1865.⁹ Left on his easel was a partially finished painting for Mrs. G. E. Rogers of Gloucester.

Lane's will is very interesting. For one thing, it reveals he had little regard for his immediate family, two-thirds of his estate going to Stevens, one-third to a Mrs. Elizabeth A. Galacer, who was perhaps his housekeeper. To a Mrs.

Mary B
has yet
Further
executo
those da
years, it

A frie
recollect
4 inches
deep set
and he
Lane wa
parties v

To th
Lane wa
graph of
town and
That Lar
that to a

explaini
that the p
so fascin
in the wi
It repres
drawn w
coloring
and consi
to be a v
painting'

when we
pure ima
existed be
case the a

As an a
Unfortun
and treat
"marine"

Mary B. Mellen of Taunton, Massachusetts, he left a self-portrait. The picture has yet to be found, and Lane's connection with the Mellens is still a mystery. Furthermore, contrary to common belief Lane did not die a poor man, for his executors valued his total estate at a fraction under \$4,900, no mean sum in those days. Considering that Lane drew from commissions for about thirty years, it would seem he did well as an artist.

A friend of Lane's, John Trask, gave to Emma Todd in 1885 some personal recollections of Lane as a man.¹⁰ Trask says Lane was a small man, 5 feet 4 inches tall, weighing about 120 pounds. He had a light complexion and deep set, intense eyes. His disposition was "nervous, quick, and dyspeptic," and he was prone to moodiness with his close friends. Trask mentions that Lane was a neat and tasteful dresser, and also says that he was fond of evening parties with his friends and enjoyed "getting up tableaux" with them.

To this account by Trask an unidentified hand has added in writing that Lane was a strong spiritualist. This was not impossible. The *Gloucester Telegraph* of May 30, 1857 speaks of some active spiritualists who have come to town and challenges any scoffer to disprove the sect's powers of conjuration. That Lane may have been influenced by this group is suggested by the fact that to a painting for a Mr. John S. Webber of Gloucester he added a letter explaining the origin of the painting.¹¹ The letter, carefully phrased, says that the picture was suggested to Lane by a dream, and that the brilliant color so fascinated him that he attempted to reproduce it. The painting was done in the winter of 1862. It has not been located but the drawing for it exists.¹² It represents a dismayed and beached hull (one of his rare ship drawings) drawn with an elegant and poised line, usual to Lane's style. It is likely the coloring is the important difference, since Lane stresses this feature in his letter, and considering the phase his painting was in at the time, this work may prove to be a valuable find. In any event, that Lane so documented this "dream painting" might indicate his interest in spiritualism. This becomes important when we realize that this "dream painting" points out that Lane could rely on pure imagination, and that such a source denotes the strong association that existed between his art and his own intense visual sensitivity. In this particular case the association was purely visionary.

As an artist Fitz Hugh Lane has been traditionally called a "marine painter." Unfortunately, this has engendered the belief that repetition in subject matter and treatment characterizes his work. Of course, in the strict sense of the term "marine" he did paint many ships at sea, usually in stormy weather. He is also

known to have painted yacht races. But the number of these marine paintings is outweighed by his shore and harbor scenes in which his city and ship portraits form some of his finest works. However, besides this large class of marines he did paint some landscapes, many of which are yet to be found. Lane frequently painted portraits as well, although none has been found so far except a copy of an eighteenth century original.¹³ He did banner painting if we recall, and he was not adverse to sign painting. He also painted at least one still-life. Since much of his work was commissioned, there is no reason to doubt that there was a wide range in his entire art production.¹⁴ Finally, although Lane was a prolific painter, it is through his lithography that he is best known today. We shall not discuss it here, but Lane should be recognized as one of our finest lithographers. In that role also he exercised varied expression in commemorative and illustrational material.¹⁵

Lane's painting falls into three distinct periods on the basis of dated works available today: from the mid-thirties to 1850; from 1850 to 1856; and from 1856 to 1865. At the time of this writing there are 100 extant paintings known and at least an approximate 270 altogether.¹⁶ Many in both Maine and California have yet to be recognized. The most significant period is the second, from 1850 to 1856, during which he attained his highest control of design and tonal weighing, and in which he explored most fully various technical approaches. However, throughout all three periods we find that Lane was concerned with simplification. His *Maine Inlet* (Fig. 1), dated in the thirties on the basis of costume, announces the limits within which he was to work for the rest of his life: balanced composition; planar space control; subtle gradations; complex lighting effects; and a restricted range of hues.¹⁷ He becomes more refined in his *Fresh Water Cove from Dolliver's Neck, ca. 1849* (Fig. 2), the most impressive feature being his control of space in which he integrates discipline with expansiveness.¹⁸

It is not until his second period that Lane develops his luminous tones. His *New York Harbor Scene*, signed and dated 1850 (Fig. 3), is an amazing departure from his previous work for this reason.¹⁹ Here buttery afternoon light permeates a humid, hanging atmosphere, suffusing the entire view with its golden tone. Lane has established a system of contrasts, in reflecting and absorbing surfaces, in varied directions of ships, and in tones, in order to allow the magic of his light to work. By his tonal relativities Lane creates an elastic depth that develops a spaciousness commensurate with the vast number of objects enfolded within it. The integrity is complete; the economy deceptive.

It is no
simplicity
ing meas
on panels
between
delicacy i
and firm

If Lane
weighing
object, an
find him r
same time
ing the "a
scenes pur
Grounds

Howeve
light in or
(Fig. 5),
places glar
Such plast
marine pic
to attempt
passed into
5) as Lan
becomes in
abandonec
The issue h
carry out th

The pai
highly div
reveals the
ter of a sce
Desert, Ma
embodime
large, unfu
elegantly o
suavely un

It is not through light alone, however, that Lane can suggest his remarkable simplicity. It is also due to his intimate feeling for form. This particular painting measures 36 x 60 inches, yet the scale is precisely the same as he maintains on panels 7 x 9 inches. This mastery of scale in translation, this poised control between detail and general form, is actually the secret of Lane's effect. Such delicacy in handling is purely elegant and is invariably handled with sureness and firmness of craft.

If Lane was struggling to clarify the nature of environment through tonal weighing and luminosity, it is not strange to find him experimenting. Light, object, and space are his fundamental tools. In the following year, 1851, we find him now trying opaque effects, cool hues, and wintry light. And yet at the same time the drive for clarity and breadth continues. Thus, Lane was examining the "atmosphere of place" under the light of different seasons. In his winter scenes purity of volume becomes even more impressive, as in his *Off the Fishing Grounds* and *Ships in Ice Off Ten Pound Island, Gloucester* (Fig. 4).²⁰

However, in seeking breadth of space Lane was not content with defining light in one manner. *Full Rigged Ship to the Lee Shore*, signed and dated 1851 (Fig. 5), displays broken color in the stormy clouds; scumbled impasto replaces glaze and the brush expresses itself plastically in textural suggestions.²¹ Such plastic brushwork is rare in Lane. He seemingly preferred to paint his marine pictures in this idiom, for a dated one of 1856 shows that he continued to attempt such an approach, although the major trend of his work had already passed into another phase. Charles D. Childs has referred to this painting (Fig. 5) as Lane's own quiet approach to impressionism. This painting, therefore, becomes important when we realize that Lane, in his devotion to precise finish, abandoned this approach to achieve luminosity on more consistent grounds. The issue here was crucial to Lane, but he turned away from it and so failed to carry out the logical conclusions of his art.

The paintings we have discussed so far in Lane's second period display highly diversified approaches, within the range of about a year. Each painting reveals the particular method Lane employed for capturing the essential character of a scene. But when Lane completed his *View of Southwest Harbor, Mt. Desert, Maine* (Fig. 6), signed and dated 1852, he probably attained full embodiment of his ambitions.²² Ignoring his glazes and impasto in favor of large, unfused areas of brilliant, positive color, he succeeds in creating an elegantly ordered space drama in which abstract design and representation are suavely unified. His brilliant light binds objects to predetermined positions,

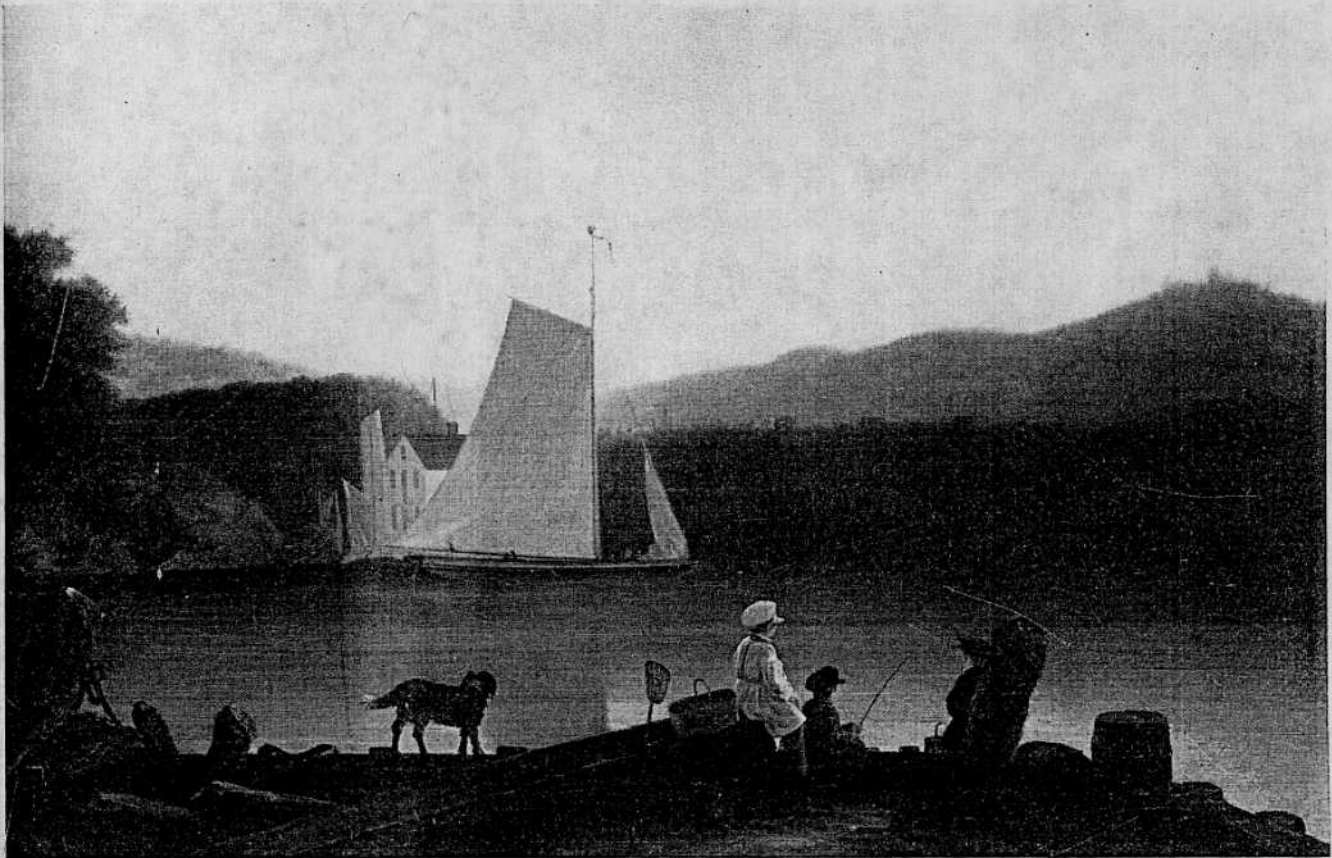
as specimens to be analyzed in the magic of atmospheric envelopment. The immaculate, almost clinical quality inherent in Lane's craft now expands over the entire picture plane so that space, light and object become fused into a single prismatic lucidity. The atmosphere has become pellucid and an eerie quietude falls in a muffling hush on the whole scene. It seems to be waiting for something to happen, so stilled is the fragment of time. Thus Lane has expressed the starkness of his intense vision, has infused a purity into the "variety and mystery of nature." Such a trait, characteristic of all of Lane's paintings, finds its supreme revelation in this canvas.

In his attempt to create such universality it is interesting that Lane apparently had little use for the human figure, beyond its function to establish scale for the spectator. Objects, ships especially, invariably display a far more credible vitality. Thus, it is fundamentally space, light and object that engross Lane, the statement of nature without the intrusion of people. Jarves may have been appalled at the lack of the "human spirit" in work such as Lane's, but it would seem that Lane explored a scene to discover its immutable and primal sanities. This is the motivation behind the artist's steady quest for simplification.

As has been pointed out, much of this quality depends upon Lane's piercing vision and keen visual memory. The rest depends upon method. The drawings reveal that Lane had a definite method for controlling a view, by establishing coordinates for easy transference of the scene onto canvas or stone. He also used a simple perspective system: by running lines from a segment of the coordinate to the vanishing point on the horizon, he achieved precise placement of objects in space. Invariably Lane uses the shore line as his horizon line, so that we find his shores always at eye level, as in Fig. 6. Finally the fact that his drawings are usually formed on a series of cards attached in line, that the pencil line is an unbroken, unreinforced, continuous contour, that his drawings are merely contour lines, suggests the hypothesis that he might have used a camera *lucida* or a camera *obscura*. If so, it is likely he used such a device first and established his reference grille afterward.

We have proof, however, that Lane went beyond these means to construct a rational control of his picture plane. In a drawing called *Looking up Portland Harbor*, dated August, 1863, there is an *x* mark in the water to the lower right with the notation that the steamer "Harvest Moon" is to be placed there, revealing Lane's habit of not drawing in his ships. Lane had in this case a unique method for putting in his ships. He used a professional photograph of the "Harvest Moon," and by ruling on it coordinates to a $\frac{3}{8}$ inch scale and number-





*Fig. 1. FITZ HUGH LANE, A Maine Inlet
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, M. and M. Karolik Collection*

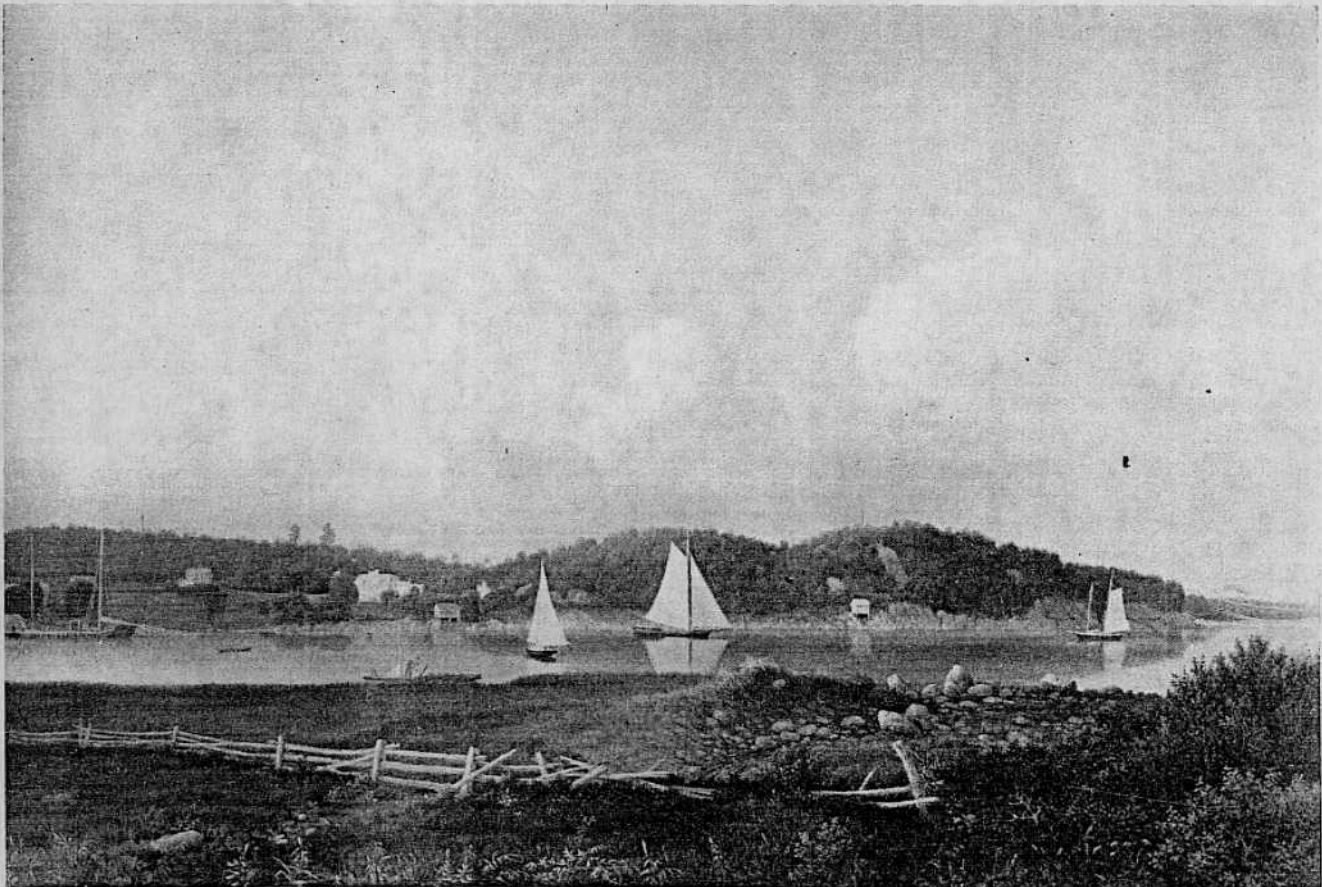
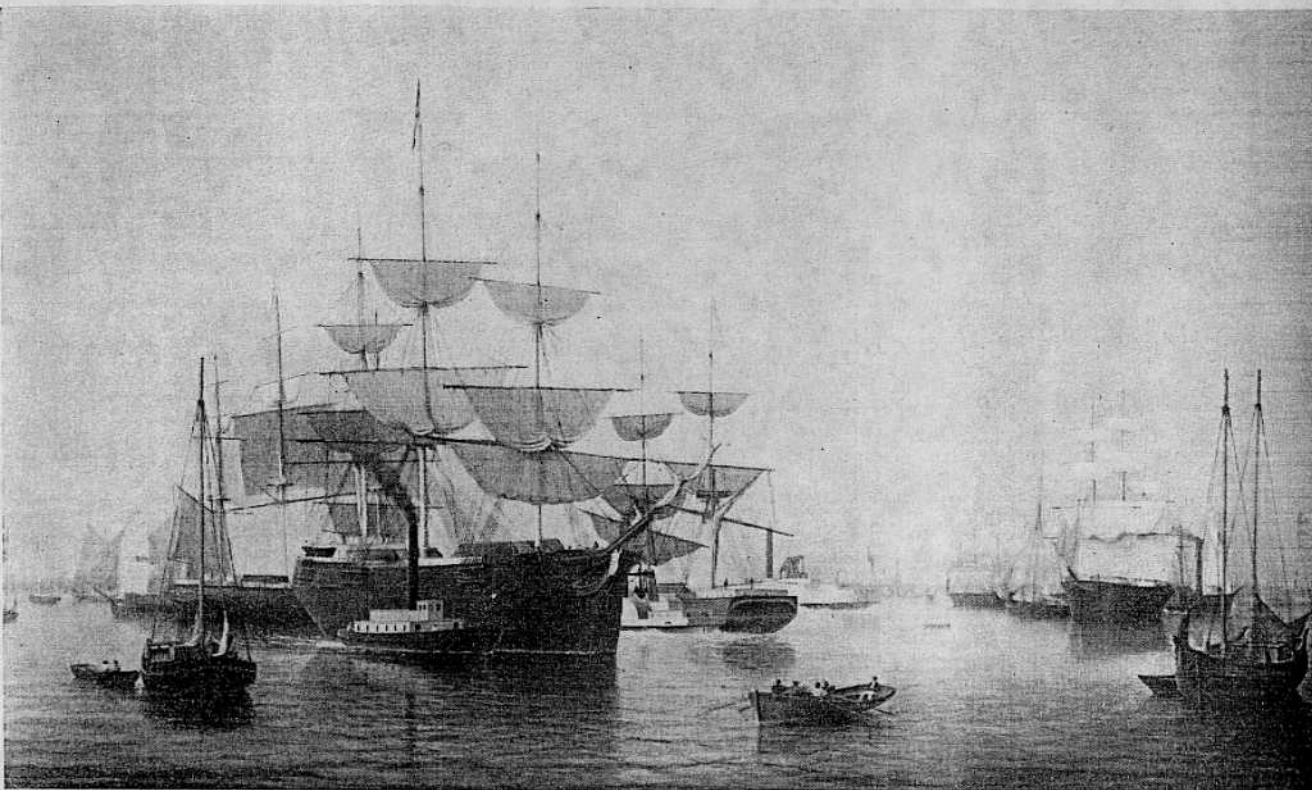
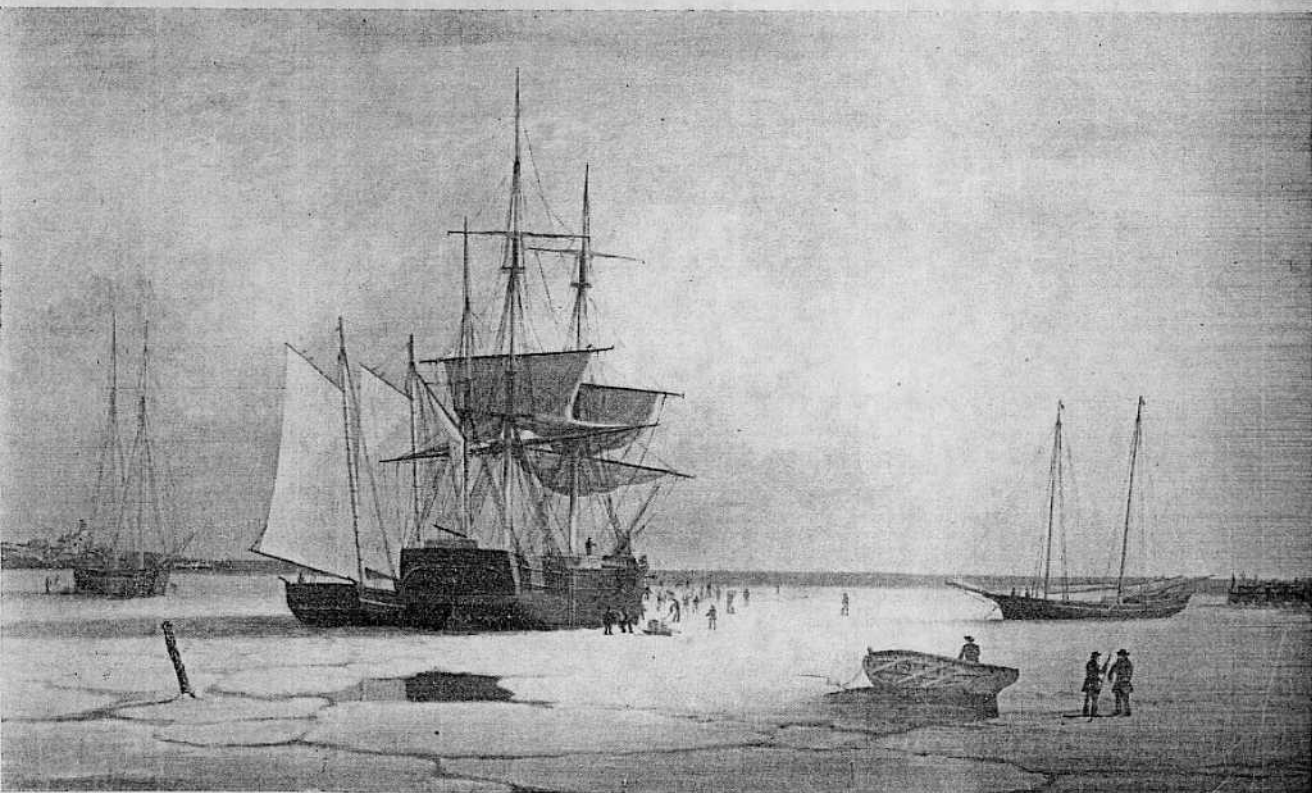


Fig. 2. FITZ HUGH LANE, Fresh Water Cove from Dolliver's Neck, Gloucester



*Fig. 3. FITZ HUGH LANE, New York Harbor, 1850
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, M. and M. Karolik Collection*



*Fig. 4. FITZ HUGH LANE, Ships in Ice off Ten Pound Island, Gloucester
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, M. and M. Karolik Collection*

ing the

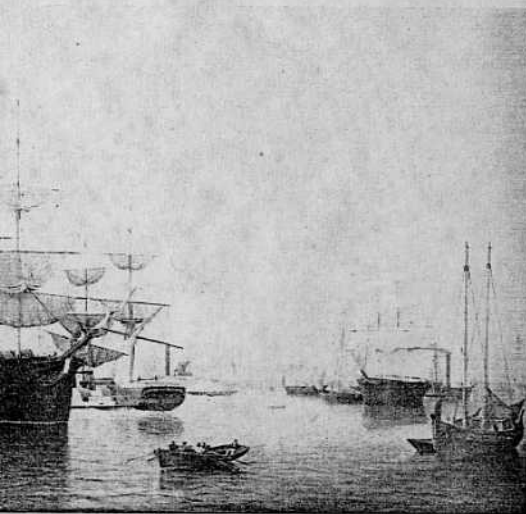
This
evidenc
exploit
scenes a
painted
tion of
racy, for
freezes
missed t

In the
idiom in
moved in
1856, reg
ing heav
Gloucester
fully dev
purer dis
have shift
ground c
we find a
economy
between
turesque
ever prese

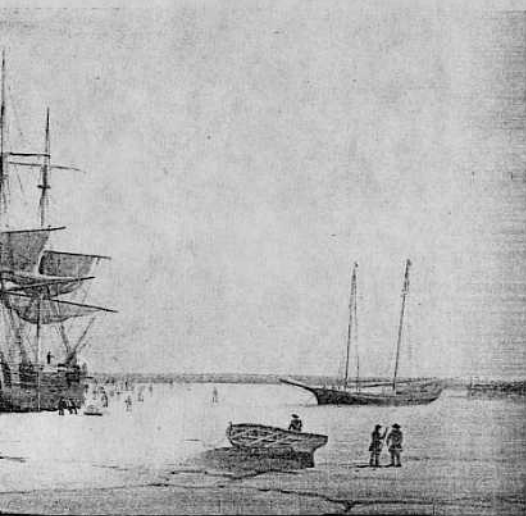
Variou
already e
Its value n
ation and
its empha
a heighte

Moreov
need to ke
tight desc
now appe
work was

But per



J.M.W. TURNER, *New York Harbor, 1850*
 Fine Arts, M. and M. Karolik Collection



ing them, he could transfer the ship to the painting with utmost precision.²³

This use of the photograph by Lane is important, for it is the first concrete evidence that any of the tonal realists used the photograph.²⁴ Lane was quick to exploit it. In 1860 a man by the name of Thorn had been taking photographs of scenes around and in Gloucester that Lane himself had at one time or another painted, so it is likely Lane used the photograph earlier than 1863.²⁵ His utilization of the photograph, however, means more than a device for greater accuracy, for it also captures exact value relationships, and in its fragment of time freezes them into a lasting form. Lane's keen perception would not have missed that.

In the second period of his art Lane drew the utmost from the particular idiom in which he chose to work. By 1856 that idiom had changed and Lane moved into his last phase. His *Off Mt. Desert Island* (Fig. 7), signed and dated 1856, registers shifts to more violent gradations, dramatic colors and encroaching heavy foreground detail.²⁶ In his work *Brace's Rock, Eastern Point, Gloucester* (Fig. 8), dated 1863 by a drawing of that year, these changes are fully developed.²⁷ Although this painting reveals Lane as still searching for a purer distillation, it is apparent he has lost his control of space. His tonalities have shifted into abrupt gradations and raw hues and he has emphasized foreground detail so that depth is suggested by sharp contrast. In these extremes we find an extravagance hardly compatible with the painting's severe, poetic economy. An unpleasant dualism appears in this period, defined by opposition between large areas of hot color and metallic detail, between a broad picturesque dramaticism and a harsh reportorial handling. The meticulous touch, ever present, here loses its buoyancy and ease; the craft is beginning to run dry.

Various factors may have caused this development. For one thing Lane, already equipped to learn from the photograph, was prepared to combat it. Its value relations and abstract principles of composition were a point of inspiration and at the same time a serious challenge to his art. He had to surmount its emphasis of detail and outstrip its gradations, with the result that he gained a heightened effect, but one no longer related to actuality.

Moreover, by now a well-known and accepted artist, Lane may have felt the need to keep abreast of prevailing tastes in the art world. The brown sauce, the tight descriptiveness, the lurid light found in popular painting of the period, now appear in his art. Certainly, by the early sixties the style of Lane's previous work was going out of fashion.

But perhaps the strongest cause for this final development in Lane's art is

within the art itself. What Lane achieved in the early fifties was the zenith of style and a method. He could go no further—unless he developed into impressionism. He was prepared for impressionism as a point of view; his visual intensity, his fervid pantheism, his concern with the problem of time, his experiments with the same scene under different lights of day—all attest to that.²⁸ In fact, it has been pointed out, he attempted obvious impressionistic techniques in various paintings. But his drive for immaculate finish and his love of complete form expressed in meticulous craft prevented him from taking that direction. Refusing to go further, and faced with a technical impasse, Lane reverted to the past to refine the impossible. This conservatism inevitably produced rigidity, and the poise of the hushed moment fled from him forever.

In this last period his light changes from the broad flood of an early afternoon to the fleeting moment when the sun throws out its last ruddy glow before setting. The arbitrary quality in this period denotes a departure from his earlier pantheistic intimacy, a divergence of his personal experience from reality. Behind these forces which brought Lane to the last phase of his artistic development may very well lie his possible connection with spiritualism. The mystery of twilight now so absorbs Lane that his brush transports us into a mystical reality, into a scene distilled by the impulses of the artist. In this phase Lane no longer feels the need to express the visual impact of the outside world; the desire now comes to explore the nature of that experience itself. Whatever may be said about Lane's vision outrunning his artistic capacity, it cannot be denied that he ultimately achieved an understanding of that vision, that he finally grasped that which was perennial in the observation of the visible world: the intensity of self.

In summing up our discussion of Fitz Hugh Lane and his art, it is undeniably true that a rich field awaits the person who continues research. Lane's art, like Ingham's, is mysterious in its origin and displays itself almost fully developed from the start. Self-taught and impervious to external influences, Lane pursued an ambition to seize the impact of his fleeting visual experience and extend it into a timelessness. To achieve that end he experimented widely and skillfully, displaying great versatility. Lastly, although caught in an ironic twist in the last years of his art, he heralded a new aesthetic in American painting which W. Allen Gay and James Hamilton explored further toward impressionism. Thus, while the art of Lane is the complete embodiment of a mode of vision, it also stands on the threshold of a new point of view and technique. Hence, the art of Lane is important in its implications for American art.

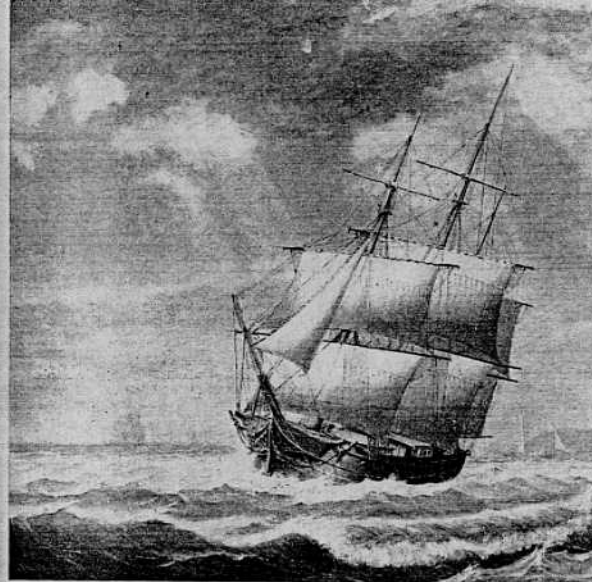


Fig. 5. FITZ HUGH LANE, *Full Rigged Ship to the L*
Private Collection

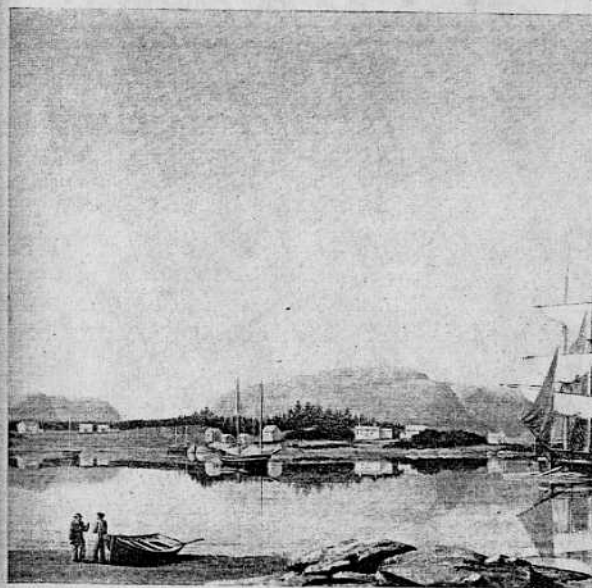


Fig. 6. FITZ HUGH LANE, *View of Southwest Harbor, Mt. Des*
Private Collection

Lane achieved in the early fifties was the zenith of
and go no further—unless he developed into impres-
sionism as a point of view; his visual inten-
s concern with the problem of time, his experiments
different lights of day—all attest to that.²⁸ In fact,
e attempted obvious impressionistic techniques in
ive for immaculate finish and his love of complete
us craft prevented him from taking that direction.
aced with a technical impasse, Lane reverted to the
e. This conservatism inevitably produced rigidity,
moment fled from him forever.

nt changes from the broad flood of an early after-
when the sun throws out its last ruddy glow before
y in this period denotes a departure from his earlier
ergence of his personal experience from reality.
rought Lane to the last phase of his artistic develop-
ossible connection with spiritualism. The mystery
Lane that his brush transports us into a mystical
ed by the impulses of the artist. In this phase Lane
express the visual impact of the outside world; the
the nature of that experience itself. Whatever may
outrunning his artistic capacity, it cannot be denied
an understanding of that vision, that he finally
ennial in the observation of the visible world: the

sion of Fitz Hugh Lane and his art, it is undeniably
the person who continues research. Lane's art, like
ts origin and displays itself almost fully developed
nd impervious to external influences, Lane pursued
act of his fleeting visual experience and extend it
ve that end he experimented widely and skilfully,
Lastly, although caught in an ironic twist in the last
a new aesthetic in American painting which W.
ton explored further toward impressionism. Thus,
complete embodiment of a mode of vision, it also
new point of view and technique. Hence, the art
mplications for American art.

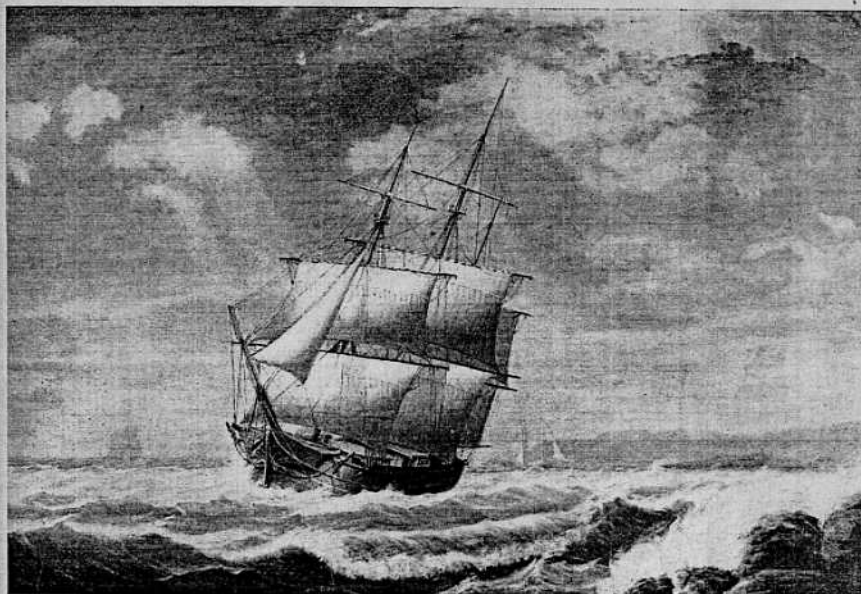
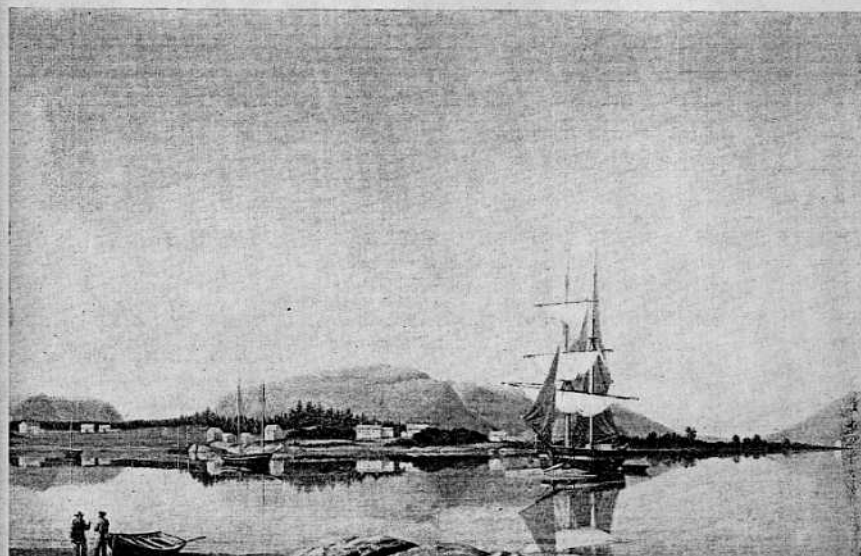


Fig. 5. FITZ HUGH LANE, *Full Rigged Ship to the Lee Shore*, 1851
Private Collection



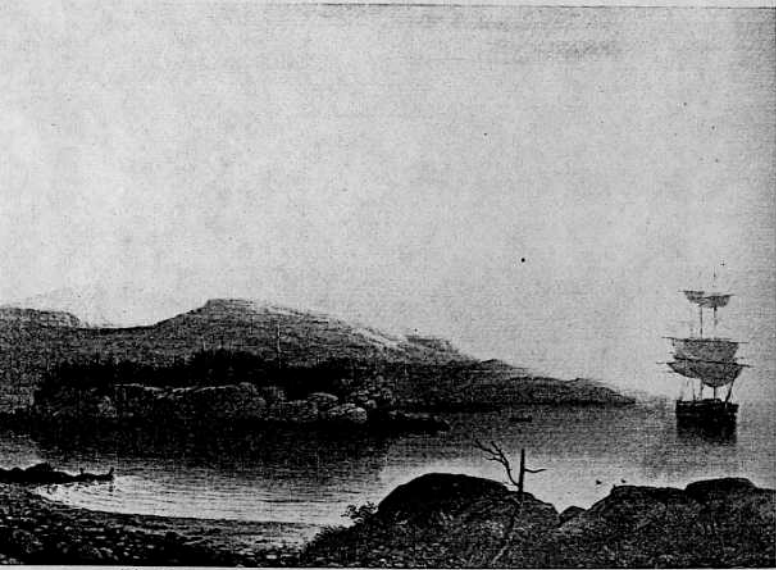


Fig. 7. FITZ HUGH LANE, *Off Mt. Desert Island*, 1856
Brooklyn Museum

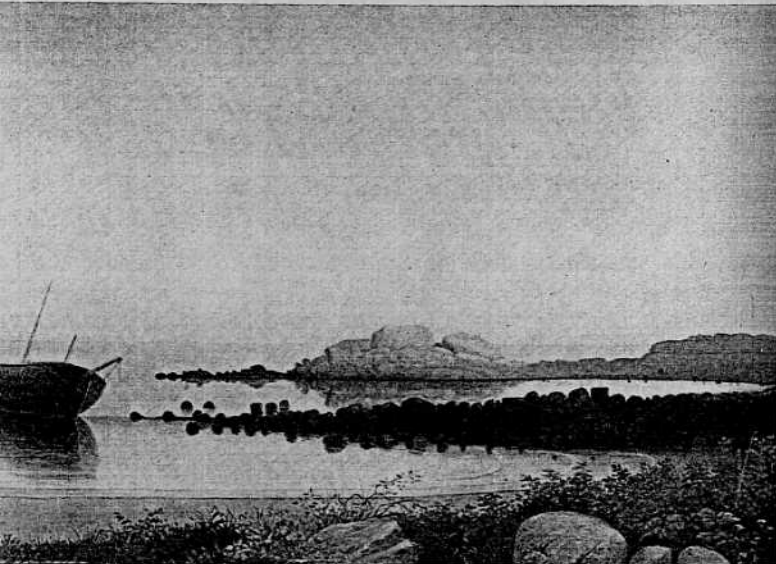


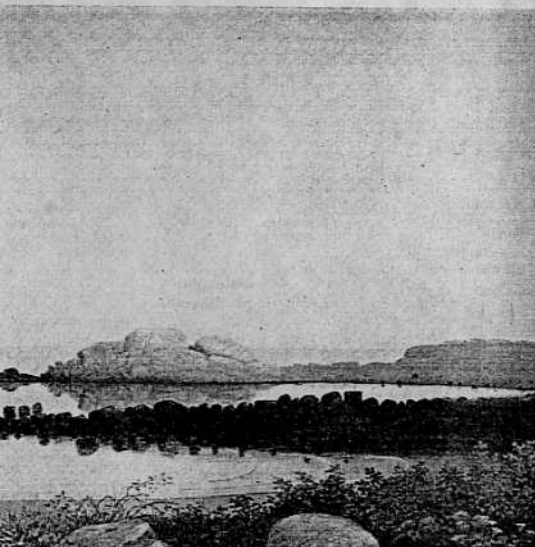
Fig. 8. FITZ HUGH LANE, *Brace's Rock, Eastern Point, Gloucester*
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, M. and M. Karolik Collection

But Lane's significance extends beyond his being a p
sionism, for he forms a fundamental point of contact with
of Eakins, Homer, the Immaculates and Andrew Wyeth,
artistic ambitions into a long tradition. Actually Lane is o
modern realists in his drive for discipline and rational o
vision, in his integration of design and representation, in
visible world. Because of this connection with the art of t
Hugh Lane, and others of the same artistic environment,
In carrying out such a study of an obscured tradition it ma
perspective is needed in our definition of nineteenth cen

¹ James J. Jarves, *The Art Idea*, New York, 1864, p. 236.
² *Vital Records of Gloucester, Massachusetts to 1850*, Topsfield, Mass., Histori
³ Harry T. Peters, *America on Stone*, New York, 1931, pp. 313-314.
⁴ J. J. Babson, *History of Gloucester*, Gloucester, 1860, p. 258. For the geneol
family this work ought to be consulted. Also see the author's *Notes and Ad*
Gloucester, 1876.
⁵ The works shown at the Athenaeum during Lane's life that might have interes
Dutch marine painters, the Van Veldes, Backhuysen and Cuyp. However, th
conjectural at present. For other artists whose works (if not authentic, at lei
undoubtedly saw, consult Mrs. Mabel M. Swan, *The Athenaeum Gallery, 1827-*
as an Early Patron of Art, Boston, 1940, pp. 193-290.
⁶ For information on and illustration of the house, consult Alfred M. Brooks,
in Gloucester," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 1942, LXXXVIII, 281-28
⁷ These drawings are preserved in the collection of the Cape Anne Scientific
Gloucester, hereinafter referred to as CASLA. For further discussion of the
"Fitz Lane's Drawings," *op. cit.*, 1945, LXXXI, 83-86.
⁸ Information from the files of the Frick Art Reference Library.
⁹ The date is found in Lane's will, now in the Essex County Court House, Sale
in the *Gloucester Telegraph*, Wednesday, August 16, 1865, gives the same d
¹⁰ In *Authors and Artists of Cape Anne*, vol. II, CASLA, which is a loose-leaf
paper clippings, many undated and unidentified, and other miscellany. Pages a
hereinafter will be referred to as *A.A.P.2*. At the present this is the only real sc
and should be accepted until disproved. Lane's change of name is mentioned
that "Nathaniel Rogers" was Lane's original name is corroborated by *Vital R*
op. cit.
¹¹ This letter is preserved in the collection of CASLA.



FITZ HUGH LANE, *Off Mt. Desert Island, 1856*
Brooklyn Museum



But Lane's significance extends beyond his being a precursor of impressionism, for he forms a fundamental point of contact with the past for the art of Eakins, Homer, the Immaculates and Andrew Wyeth, thus extending their artistic ambitions into a long tradition. Actually Lane is one of the first of our modern realists in his drive for discipline and rational order, in his uncanny vision, in his integration of design and representation, in his attachment to the visible world. Because of this connection with the art of today in America, Fitz Hugh Lane, and others of the same artistic environment, deserve serious study. In carrying out such a study of an obscured tradition it may be found that a new perspective is needed in our definition of nineteenth century American art.

¹ James J. Jarves, *The Art Idea*, New York, 1864, p. 236.

² *Vital Records of Gloucester, Massachusetts to 1850*, Topsfield, Mass., Historical Society, 1917, I, 418.

³ Harry T. Peters, *America on Stone*, New York, 1931, pp. 313-314.

⁴ J. J. Babson, *History of Gloucester*, Gloucester, 1860, p. 258. For the genealogical background of the Lane family this work ought to be consulted. Also see the author's *Notes and Additions to Gloucester History*, Gloucester, 1876.

⁵ The works shown at the Athenaeum during Lane's life that might have interested him were the 17th century Dutch marine painters, the Van Veldes, Backhuysen and Cuyp. However, their effect upon Lane is only conjectural at present. For other artists whose works (if not authentic, at least their generic styles) Lane undoubtedly saw, consult Mrs. Mabel M. Swan, *The Athenaeum Gallery, 1827-1873, The Boston Athenaeum as an Early Patron of Art*, Boston, 1940, pp. 193-290.

⁶ For information on and illustration of the house, consult Alfred M. Brooks, "The Fitz Hugh Lane House in Gloucester," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 1942, LXXVIII, 281-283.

⁷ These drawings are preserved in the collection of the Cape Anne Scientific and Literary Association of Gloucester, hereinafter referred to as CASLA. For further discussion of these drawings consult Brooks, "Fitz Lane's Drawings," *op. cit.*, 1945, LXXXI, 83-86.

⁸ Information from the files of the Frick Art Reference Library.

⁹ The date is found in Lane's will, now in the Essex County Court House, Salem, Mass. Lane's death notice in the *Gloucester Telegraph*, Wednesday, August 16, 1865, gives the same date.

¹⁰ In *Authors and Artists of Cape Anne*, vol. II, CASLA, which is a loose-leaf notebook compiled of newspaper clippings, many undated and unidentified, and other miscellany. Pages are not numbered. This work hereinafter will be referred to as *A.A.v.2*. At the present this is the only real source on Lane's life available, and should be accepted until disproved. Lane's change of name is mentioned by Trask in his account, and that "Nathaniel Rogers" was Lane's original name is corroborated by *Vital Records of Gloucester, Mass., op. cit.*

¹¹ This letter is preserved in the collection of CASLA.

¹² On the back of the mounted drawing is a copy of the letter with the notation added that Lane spent the summer of 1862 with Dr. and Mrs. Hermann E. Davidson during a break with his brother-in-law, and that the picture was painted that winter. *A.A.v.2* mentions that Dr. Davidson was so impressed by the painting he persuaded Lane to sell it to him instead.

¹³ Now in the possession of Wm. S. Webber of Gloucester, signed and dated on the back: "Copied from the original in the possession of Mrs. Collins by Fitz Hugh Lane, September, 1851." The portrait is of Capt. John Somes, 1730-1795, and is handled in a dry and awkward, though rugged, manner. The problem is intriguing because in Lane's time there was a portrait of Capt. Somes by Copley in Gloucester, which since has been mutilated and destroyed. Information in conversation with Alfred M. Brooks, director of CASLA.

¹⁴ A Boston critic quoted in the *Gloucester Telegraph* issue of June 30, 1858, says of Lane: ". . . he is so versatile in his choice of subjects that it sometimes seems impossible that his various pictures are by the same hand . . ." Apparently then, Lane's range was appreciated in his own day. Lane was also highly regarded, for the same critic also said: "Fitz H. Lane is unquestionably the best marine painter in the country . . . Lane has never had but two competitors, and they are both dead, . . . Birch . . . and Salmon . . ."

¹⁵ For discussion of Lane's lithography, consult Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 261; and Benj. Champney, *Sixty Years of Art and Artists*, Woburn, Mass., 1900, pp. 10, 99.

¹⁶ Computed on the basis of paintings mentioned in catalogues, newspapers, photograph collections and drawings that may have had paintings made from them. In regard to this last group, many drawings were specified as having been painted, while others were not, although there are several instances to indicate drawings not so noted were painted, and thus many unspecified drawings are included in my check list for various reasons. While overlappings in computation were unavoidable, attempts were made to eliminate them where proof was certain.

¹⁷ Now in the Karolik Collection, Boston Museum of Fine Arts (hereinafter referred to as BMFA).

¹⁸ Dated on the basis of an article of September 22, 1849, unidentified in source in *A.A.v.2*. This work is also in the Karolik Collection, BMFA.

¹⁹ In the Karolik Collection, BMFA.

²⁰ The former is now in the collection of BMFA, while the latter belongs to the Karolik Collection, BMFA.

²¹ In a private collection.

²² In a private collection.

²³ In the collection of CASLA.

²⁴ Information in correspondence and conversation with Mr. John I. H. Baur, Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the Whitney Museum of Art.

²⁵ An article in the *Gloucester Telegraph* of July 30, 1860, mentions Thorn and the views he had photographed.

²⁶ In The Brooklyn Museum.

²⁷ In the Karolik Collection, BMFA.

²⁸ Lane painted twice a scene of Norman's Woe, Gloucester, and both paintings, signed and dated 1862, are identical in size and detail, varied only by an hour's difference in light. Since it was Lane's custom through commissions to paint several pictures from the same scene, it is likely he varied each one in this manner to prevent repetition and to satisfy his patrons. Both of these paintings well illustrate Lane's final phase. In them he spots in arbitrary red touches in the deep shadow areas and uses minute single strokes to define every leaf and petal in the foreground.

THE CO IN THE

N
OW
co
di

America offer

over a genera

and the Free

Nelson Gall

The Detroit

Cincinnati A

ing. It is a gr

Mr. Philip R

may well pro

of Chinese p

astronomical

completely u

famous and

All the ma

scape, figure

represented s

of Cincinnati

tions and the

gaps which f

contains sple

entirely the f

perhaps not

very characte

likely to see.

out the grou

The most f

now in Cinci

the great Sur

Painted in in