

THE SERIES PAINTINGS OF FITZ HENRY LANE: FROM FIELD SKETCH TO STUDIO PAINTING

Travers Newton, Marcia Steele



1. Fitz Henry Lane, *Boston Harbor*, ca. 1846, oil on canvas, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (Ohio), 26 x 41 1/4"

Background

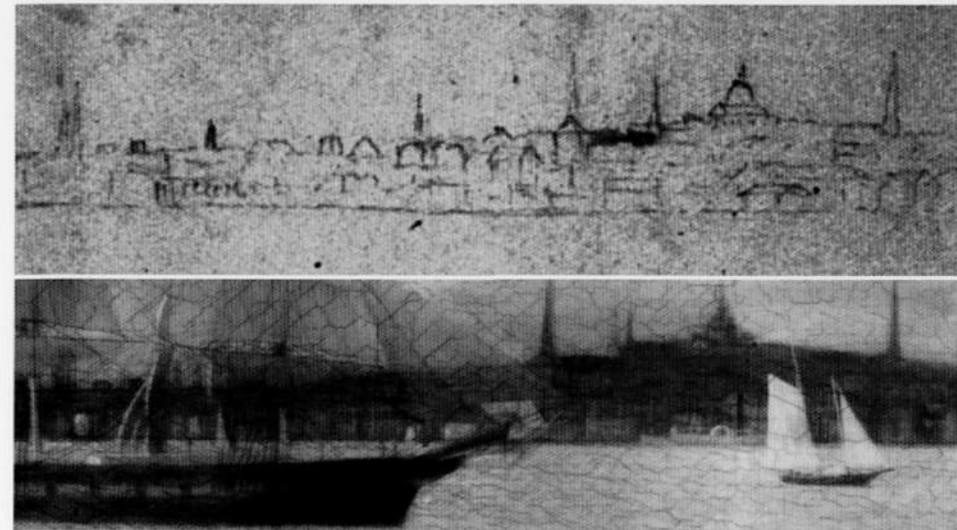
The Museo de Arte Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid is the only European institution that owns paintings by the esteemed American marine artist Fitz Henry Lane.¹ Lane's *Old Fort Gloucester* from the Thyssen collection along with other works by F.H. Lane can be seen as "series paintings" as they relate to locations portrayed by the artist. In Lane's case, "series paintings" can be defined as a pair or group of paintings in which the artist rendered nearly identical backdrops while changing foreground ships and marine activities, and altering the atmosphere. Until recently, the role that Lane's drawings play within his artistic production has been minimally explored. It is known that his drawings were extensively annotated by Lane's friend Joseph Stevens, who accompanied him on his sketching travels.² These annotations include references to date and location as well as sometimes noting the recipient/commissioner of a painting or paintings after the drawings. Through technical analysis of the paintings, it is clear that Lane's sketches and drawings were a vital component of his working method. Infrared reflectography (IRR) of his paintings reveals that he initially drew in contours of the landscape and buildings with outlines similar to those found in the field sketches done on site. With this analytical technique, light that contains some infrared radiation illuminates a painting while a camera or instrument sensitive to that radiation "sees" below the paint surface and can detect initial underdrawing by an artist.³ In Lane's case, the background and ships are often extensively rendered in black drawing material. These hidden underdrawn compositions provide a new understanding of his working method. They also make comparisons between preliminary drawings on paper and the final painting much more informative. Microscopic examination of the paintings' surfaces and radiographic images of the pictures give further insights into Lane's exacting working methods.

Lane's ability as a draughtsman was refined in his lithographic training, which influenced his later career as a painter. In making a lithograph, the skill of the artist is crucial in that the drawing on stone should be done without erasing.⁴ The importance of lithographic contour and line is reflected in Lane's drawings and his ability to work in wide tonal ranges is realized in his paintings. Undoubtedly, his experience as a lithographer familiarized him with the advantages of repeated imagery. The fact that he was crippled as a child also limited his ability to travel to a wide variety of

locales, and likely necessitated that he refer back to sketches done in the field for his paintings.

The only known portrait of Lane is a graphite drawing from 1835, made by his lithographer colleague Robert Cooke.⁵ It captures the well-dressed 31 year old artist near the ocean, with a lighthouse in the distance, clutching a folder of loose papers that one can conjecture contains either field sketches or lithographic prints. Cooke aligned Lane's shoulders with the horizon of the ocean, anticipating what would become the main theme of his drawing and painting. Two of Lane's paintings portray an artist seated outdoors in the foreground, sketching. In his most recent publication, Lane scholar John Wilmerding makes a case that these are self-portraits. In several other paintings, he conjectures that small vessels containing two figures could represent Lane being rowed by Stevens.⁶ Since some of Stevens' inscriptions on the drawings state that they are done from vessels, this conjecture is a distinct possibility.

Making field sketches based on direct observation from nature was an artistic innovation in America in the 1820's started by the first generation of Hudson River School landscape painters, which included Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, Alvan Fisher and Thomas Doughty. Lane's familiarity with the work of these artists began at an early point in his artistic career. He moved from Gloucester to Boston in 1832, where these artists showed their work at the Atheneum as well as at local galleries and dealers. Lane trained at the lithography firm of William S. Pendleton. He may have met Doughty there, as Doughty lived nearby while the firm produced his lithographs.⁷ At that time, lithographs were an extremely popular form of mass reproduction. The firm that Lane worked for started in 1825 and by this time was producing large numbers of prints of historical and geographical subjects as well as sheet music. One of Lane's first lithographs, of his hometown of Gloucester circa 1835, shows his ability to capture detail in a process which pre-dates photography. Sold by subscription, the lithograph captured the townscape from an elevated vantage point above the horizon. From this elevated view, Lane would visually swoop-down and document portions of Gloucester, Boston and Maine at eye level, often in groups of paintings that re-used similar backgrounds. Meticulous renderings of a place were a vital component of his imagery. Throughout his later career as a painter, he continued to depict familiar harbors and towns, where viewers could easily pinpoint a steeple or hillside. Influenced by mass production through his early training as a lithographer, Lane must have recognized the value literally and figuratively in repeating a common theme in his paintings. He might re-use a certain setting which appealed to local residents, and could concentrate on particular ships or atmosphere at the request of a patron. Rather than viewing his process as a form of mass production, it might be helpful to view the background of his paintings as a theatre set, while the foreground ships, sailors, water and light are the actors, exploring the different activities and moods of a particular place.



2. Comparison of details of the skylines of Lane's drawing of *Boston Harbor* and the infrared image of the painting in The White House Collection. Infrared image of the White House painting courtesy of Pam Betts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Since almost all of Lane's writings are lost, his methods and motives for creating repeated images or series paintings are not entirely known. Lane left us few clues as to his everyday comings and goings. Only a small number of personal correspondence has survived, as well as contemporary newspaper articles, and to our knowledge Lane never kept a journal or diary.⁸ Historians have noted that both Lane and his mentor Robert Salmon were influenced by the compositions of Antonio Canaletto. Between 1827 and 1840, a dozen views of Venice attributed to Canaletto were exhibited at the Boston Athenaeum.⁹ Canaletto was a prolific artist who skillfully reused historic background settings, while altering the arrangement of foreground ships and figures.

Lane's debt to Canaletto, as well as to the founder of the Hudson River School, Thomas Cole, has been discussed elsewhere.¹⁰ In 1828, Cole exhibited two sets of series paintings at the National Academy of Design in New York, *The Garden of Eden* and *The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*. These two groups are "series paintings" in the more conventional sense as the subjects are interrelated and comprise a story. Cole's compositions were based on John Martin's mezzotint illustrations of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* published in 1827.¹¹ Cole's 1836 series of five paintings titled *The Course of Empire*, has also been cited as an influence on Lane.¹² It depicts man's transformation of a pristine natural setting into a metropolis, which eventually falls into ruin.

In 1840, Cole painted a series of four paintings titled *The Voyage of Life*. They were



3. Fitz Henry Lane, *Boston Harbor at Sunset*, 1850-55, oil on canvas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 26 1/2 x 42".

divided into *Childhood*, *Youth*, *Manhood*, and *Old Age*. Lane almost certainly saw these paintings, as they were featured in the 1843 exhibition at the Boston Art Association, held in Chester Harding's Gallery, 22 School Street.¹³ Lane was a member of this association, and contributed a painting to the same exhibit (n. 52 *Lying to for a Pilot in Boston Bay*, present location unknown). Cole's series was featured in the exhibition catalogue with a two page interpretation of the paintings written by the artist.¹⁴ This subject by Cole must have impressed Lane, as the following year he exhibited his own group of five paintings, also entitled *The Voyage*. They were divided into *The Departure*, *Fine Weather*, *Stiff Breeze*, *Storm and Wreck*, *Calm After the Storm*.¹⁵ Since these paintings have not been identified, it is difficult to know how closely Lane was following Cole's series. Still, given the similarity of the title, theme, and number of paintings, the group was clearly a type of homage to Cole.¹⁶

Before seeing Cole's series in 1843, there was a series of seascapes by Thomas Doughty that Lane likely saw at the first exhibition at Chester Harding's Gallery in 1834. The show was organized by Doughty and Alvan Fisher, who sought an alternative venue to the annual exhibition at the Boston Athenaeum.¹⁷ At the Harding Gallery exhibit, Doughty included three seascapes which were from a series of five views of Long Beach, Nahant, north of Boston.¹⁸ Doughty began this series with a small oil field sketch. He then painted four larger versions of the same view, altering the foreground figures, the crashing wave, and the distant clouds. In two versions he added a coastal ship with a somewhat unusual lateen sail, which is in the process of



4. Fitz Henry Lane, *Boston Harbor at Sunset*, 1850-55, oil on canvas, Collection of Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, 29 x 39 1/4".

lightening (or floating) a cask ashore. In this respect, as Doughty re-used the same setting, Lane's "series paintings" follow a similar path. In addition, Doughty's depiction of the crashing wave in this series had a stylistic influence on Lane. The similarity of the breaking waves in his paintings *Ten Pound Island from Pavilion Beach*, and *Salt Island* has been recognized.¹⁹

In summary, Lane's familiarity with Canaletto, Cole and Doughty's series paintings had an influence on his own repetition of particular scenes. However, in Lane's case, like Doughty, he did not continue with a series that related in a linear fashion. Instead, he created several paintings from the same viewpoint with nearly identical backgrounds. These views were derived from sketches that were done at a specific place and time. The reasons for creating these series views and working methods will be explored in the following sections. Lane would enlarge and reuse the backgrounds of Boston Harbor, Gloucester Harbor and its environs, New York Harbor and the coast of Maine, for several subsequent views. Methods of enlargement or transferring a drawing to canvas used by artists during Lane's time include: copying free-hand, tracing, gridding the drawing and canvas with either threads or graphite lines, and using a pantograph.²⁰ The only optical device known to have been owned by Lane was a spyglass, mentioned in his will which he must have used for scrutinizing distant details of both landmarks and ships.²¹

From some of the paintings examined, Lane's use of various drafting tools and methods for enlarging were revealed and will be discussed in the following sections.

Boston Harbor Series

Lane trained and worked with other artists in Boston between 1832-48. The top floor of the building where he was situated between 1845-48 had a view of Boston Harbor and East Boston in the distance (16 Tremont Temple just below the Statehouse.) Boston Harbor is the first location for "series paintings", where he reused familiar backdrops as settings for marine activity in a harbor. In order to portray Boston Harbor, Lane traveled across the bay to East Boston, where he could view the city skyline and incorporate identifiable sights in the background of his marinescapes. East Boston was also the location of the departure depot for the railroad line running north through Gloucester up to Maine. In his lithograph of Boston from 1837, Lane placed the city's most recognizable landmark, Bullfinch's Statehouse dome (built 1795-7) in the center of the horizon. Lane repeated this placement in his lithograph *View in Boston Harbor*, circa 1838. In 1842, Lane exhibited the painting *A View in Boston Harbor* at the Boston Artists Association, showing his early interest in the subject for oil paintings.²² His picture *Boston Harbor with the City in the Distance* was in the 1847 Albany Gallery Exhibition (fig. 1).²³ This painting was acquired by The Cleveland Museum of Art in 2004. As the title implies, the town and buildings are less distinct, but still the statehouse firmly identifies the port. He continued to paint some of his largest paintings of Boston Harbor even after returning to his hometown of Gloucester in 1848 (for a chronology of the paintings of Boston Harbor see footnote 24).

Of the known nineteen paintings of Boston Harbor, most retain the familiar backdrop. However, some are simply portraits of important ships or historical events.²⁴ Throughout his career, he worked from or referred to a sketch done in the field, sometimes in a boat. Often these were panoramic views sketched on adjacent single sheets, and marked at the overlapping joins with "X"s used as registration marks for reassembling in the studio, so the final vista often included two to four sheets. He probably had several methods of transferring these drawings onto canvas.

Of the drawings reproduced in the catalogue of the Cape Ann Historical Museum (where the majority of known drawings by Lane are housed), most do not have indications for transfer or enlargement. However, seven out of one hundred and one published by the Cape Ann Historical Museum are gridded for enlargement into paintings. An additional fourteen have vertical lines dividing the composition.²⁵ Curiously, in one drawing he made for the lithograph *Castine from Hospital Island* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), Lane noted that a house was a "little high 1/92 in", indicating that he also may have used magnification, or a very precise tool for measuring distance and height.

In the case of the drawing for the Boston Harbor series, Lane carefully depicted the statehouse, church steeples and hillsides along the distant horizon. Of the paintings examined, the underdrawing found in the painting of Boston Harbor in The White



5. Fitz Henry Lane, *Boston Harbor*, 1859, oil on canvas, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth (Texas), 40 x 60".

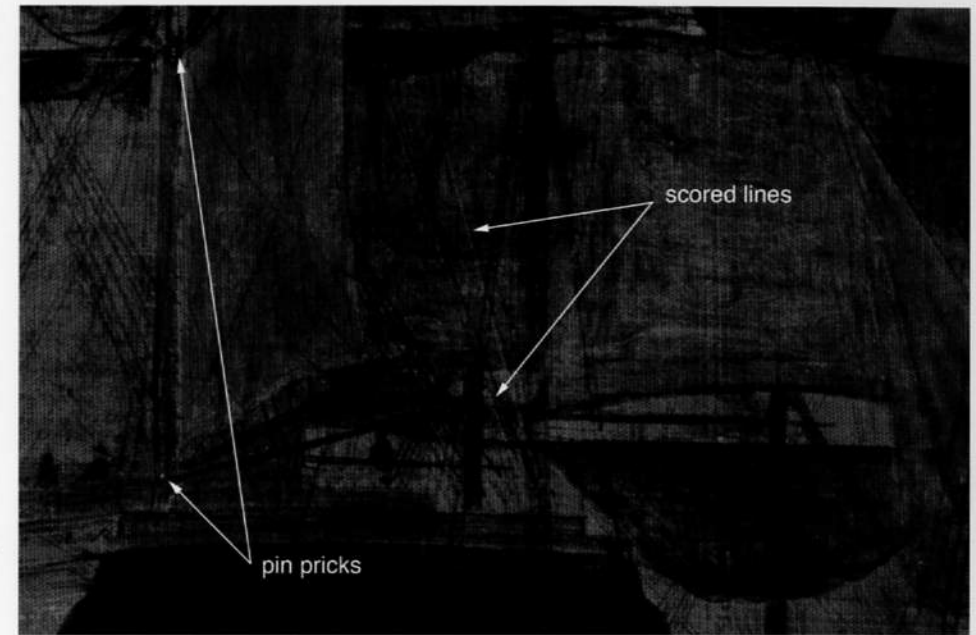
House Collection most closely follows this drawing (fig. 2). The other four paintings examined may have used this as a reference, or used another drawing from a nearby location which is now lost.²⁶ These include two paintings of *Boston Harbor at Sunset*, one in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the other in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Julian Ganz (hereafter referred to as MFA and Ganz) (figs. 3 and 4). Together with the versions in The Amon Carter Museum and The Cleveland Museum of Art, the ships in all these paintings are positioned in a diagonal fashion, leading the viewer's eye back to the Statehouse dome. The Amon Carter Museum picture provides a prime example of his use of ships and sails as compositional devices. (fig. 5) In the foreground of the picture, Lane used the complex method of establishing space through shadow, by contrasting dark, near sails with those in the distance which are illuminated by sunlight reflected from the water. The multi-layered group of ships on the left depicts another partially hidden steamboat pushing a schooner out to sea, with the sails of at least three other ships behind the schooner. The distant ships are indicated by contrasting scale and values of light and dark. In addition, apprehension is created compositionally by the anticipated trajectories of the schooner and the cask-laden rowboat in the foreground, both of which appear to be on a collision course with the approaching steamboat. Thus, Lane created tension with a complex play of light and dark as well as through composition and perspective.

In the Ganz, MFA and Cleveland paintings, Lane positioned either a floating cask or

men rowing a small sloop in the foreground just to the left of the statehouse. A man wearing a red shirt and yellow hat, in the process of rowing or steering, is also visible in all three compositions. The repetition of this motif in several other paintings may hold some significance beyond the colorful detail. Perhaps it signifies a sailor of a particular rank, or from a particular place, or someone known to Lane, such as Stevens who sailed with him on his drawing expeditions as Dr. Wilmerding has suggested. The larger compositions of the MFA and Ganz images enabled him to increase the amount of detail of the ships and sails, and bring them closer to the viewer. The tighter and more colorful rendering of the ripples of water and deep foreground shadow in both paintings create dramatic effects of light. This is amplified by the vast glowing sky and backlit clouds.

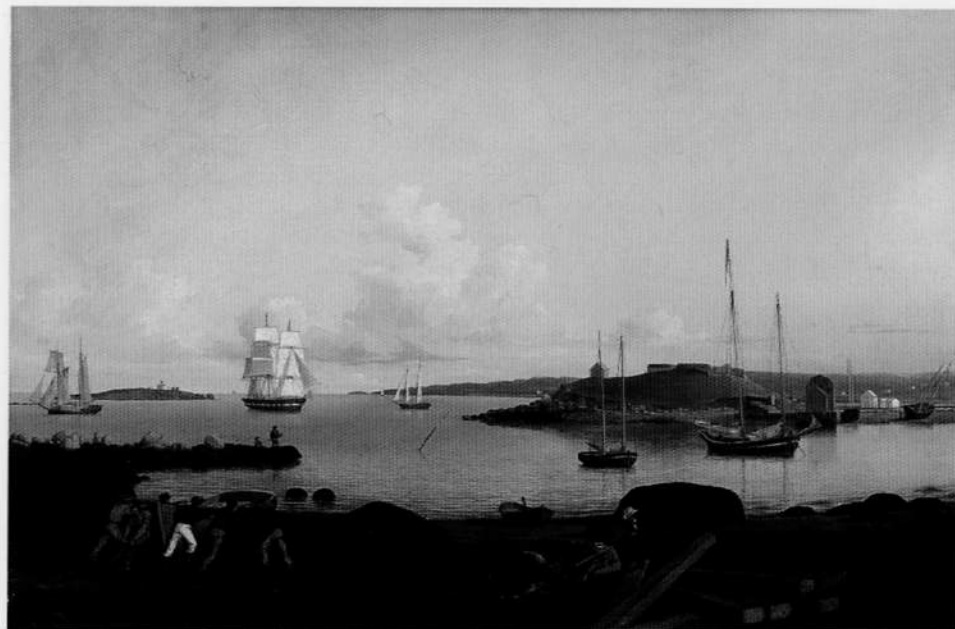
Microscopic examination of the paint layers of his compositions reveal that Lane was adept at painting with glazes for dark hulls and sails as well as using the thicker opaque paint in the brightly lit sails. Reflections in water are handled similarly in many pictures where Lane used opaque parallel brushstrokes, and in some areas scratched into the wet paint with a tool or tip of a brush handle, to create the effect of small ripples in the water. Infrared examination of the Ganz painting gives a sense of how Lane generally built up his paint layers, working in the sky from the sun outward in sweeping, yet carefully placed arcs of brushwork. Lane masterfully blended gradations of color above the horizon line to create glowing skies. Unlike the painstaking underdrawing seen in buildings and ships, the clouds and water are rarely indicated in the drawings or paintings. Perhaps this spontaneity accounts for the evocative nature of ocean and atmosphere.

Precise measurements made in the MFA and Ganz paintings between the top of the Statehouse dome and the horizon line, as well as the distances between various prominent landmarks (such as the church steeples) reveal that the contours on the horizon align closely to one another. Lane seems to have worked-out the placement of the most important ships in all of the paintings before drawing the horizon line. Infrared examination reveals that the horizon is drawn up to the outline of the more prominent ships, and then stops and continues on the other side. The use of abundant underdrawing in the larger vessels and sails is also seen. Both infrared and microscopic examination of the paintings of Boston Harbor indicate that Lane was experimenting with a variety of media for the underdrawing in the ships. While this media has not been analyzed, it is clear he used a dry drawing medium (probably black chalk, graphite, or lithography crayon) for the rigging on the largest/closest ships, finer outlining for the distant ships and masts, and liquid washes for the modeling under the ship's hulls. As in most of his paintings examined with IRR, the figures are underdrawn in a rather stiff manner, similar to the way they appear in the paintings. Curiously, of the known Lane drawings, there are very few depictions of figures or sailing vessels. Since his father was a sail-maker and he grew up in Gloucester,



6. Detail of transmitted light image of *Boston Harbor at Sunset*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, showing pinpricks for placement of masts and scored lines for placement of rigging. Image courtesy of Sandra Kelberlau, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; annotations courtesy of Howard Agriesti, CMA Photographer.

ter, Lane was clearly familiar with all kinds of vessels. He is well-known by ship historians for his detailed, precise depiction of all facets of ships including rigging.²⁷ This suggests that Lane must have employed working drawings of ships and sails, which are now lost, or perhaps worked from scale models or published drawings. Evidence suggests that in three of the paintings (Cleveland, Ganz and MFA), Lane may have first set the horizon line, as well as vertical ship masts and sails, with pins, which also could have been used to hold working drawings or silhouettes. Tiny holes can be seen with magnification and also appear as black dots in the X-radiographs where the paint in the sky has been pushed aside by a sharp tool creating a small void. Once the first layers of paint were applied (such as in the background sky), Lane used a straight edge and finely-pointed instrument to score the malleable paint for ship rigging. These are most clearly seen when light is transmitted through the back of the canvas (fig. 6). These extremely fine lines are in effect, another form of preparatory underdrawing. This precise design is closely followed by thinly painted lines for rigging and sails, which appear to be done freehand. In some cases the painted lines deviate slightly from the straight scored lines. In these initial stages of his painting method, Lane's precise and steady hand is evident and must have grown



7. Fitz Henry Lane, *The Fort and Ten Pound Island*, 1847, oil on canvas, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, 19 3/4 x 29 1/2"

out of his lithographic training. The pinpricks and scored lines may indicate Lane's use of ruling pens, which were made in several patterns and sizes to give a range of line thickness. It became common practice to incorporate a pricker or protracting pin into the handle, which could be used to set endpoints to the ruled line or to take dimensions off scales. Some ruling pens were made with the reverse end arranged as a crayon holder.²⁸

Lane used his technical abilities to create paintings featuring a particular vessel for a specific owner. The painting in the Amon Carter Museum is a case in point. While small steamships are visible in many of his Boston Harbor pictures, there are few where it is centrally placed in this case.²⁹ The provenance of the painting in Texas provides the reasons for the prominent position of the steamship. The painting remained in the family collection of the original owner, William Henry Hill of Brookline and Royalston, Massachusetts, who likely commissioned it from Lane. Hill was President of the Boston and Bangor, Maine Steamship Company when Lane produced this painting.³⁰ His company was formed in 1824, ten years after Fulton's first steamship was built. The Amon Carter painting, signed and dated 1856, predates the completion of the railroad line to Maine when the steamship was still the main means of transportation between the two cities.³¹ "It would appear likely that Lane was crafting a commissioned work for Mr. Hill. The key is identifying the



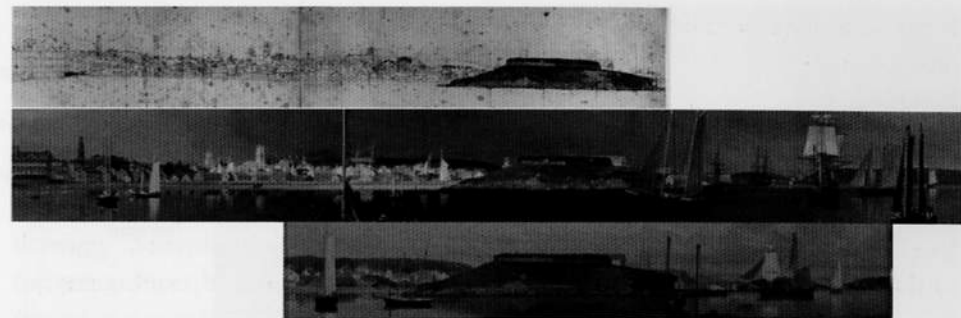
8. Fitz Henry Lane, *View of Gloucester Harbor*, 1848, oil on canvas adhered to masonite, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (Virginia), 27 x 41".

steamer. One conjecture is that it is the property of the Boston and Bangor Steamship Company, and the painting itself is either a) a portrait of the operation in action, or b) served as an advertisement for the company itself.³² Lane's initial underdrawing of the steamship might provide further clues about the steamship, as he originally drew two steam pipes, whereas in the final painting, there is only a single stack. Lane continued to paint Boston Harbor throughout his life. He exhibited paintings of Boston Harbor at the Boston Athenaeum in 1858 and 1864, the year before he died. Understandably, it remained a popular subject and one he could portray with verisimilitude. Whether he painted Boston Harbor by commission, or through interest and proximity, or a combination, the scene became one of his signature motifs.

Old Fort, Gloucester, Series

Lane's hometown of Gloucester was the subject of many of his paintings. Like Boston Harbor, Gloucester Harbor provided a setting with which he was intimately familiar, where the light, atmosphere and intense shipping activity of a busy port could be captured in a meticulously painted surface. Just after Lane painted his first view of Boston Harbor in 1842, he began a series of images of Fort Defiance in Gloucester Harbor.³³

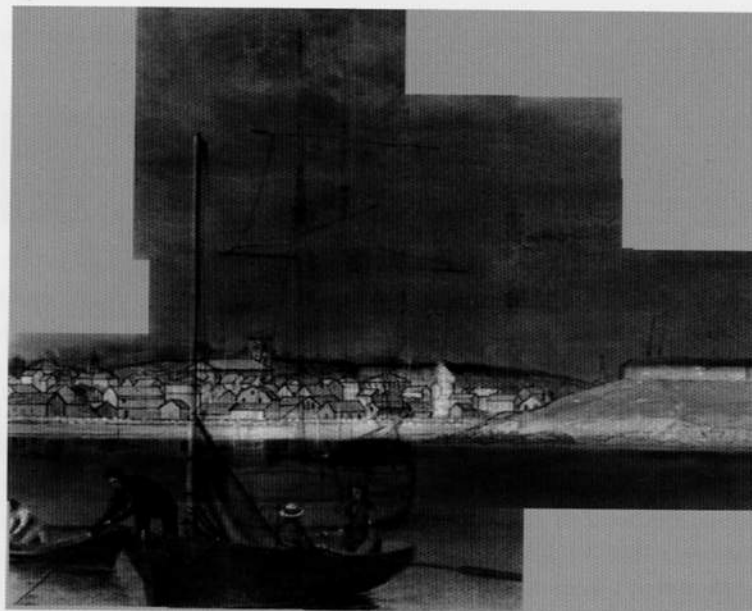
It has been suggested that one of Lane's series of Gloucester Harbor views was based on a small oil sketch from the 1840's in the collection of The Cape Ann Historical Museum, although it is possible that Lane may have made a drawing that is lost.³⁴ Unfortunately, there are not many small oil sketches that are known, but they may have provided an interim step from drawing to canvas focusing on color and composition. In the large painted versions from the Thyssen Museum (fig. 7) and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (fig. 8), the viewpoint is slightly shifted and moved further back from that seen in the small oil sketch. In the Thyssen painting (1847), he added a foreground beach with men launching a boat, while others examine fish near off-loaded lumber. In the Virginia painting, done the following year, the foreground scene shows men cleaning fish, carrying filets, and a fisherman with a basket of oysters. Infrared examination of the Virginia painting reveals one of the few instances where a vanishing point and orthogonals are seen under the paint layers. When they are found, underdrawn perspective lines seem to be used primarily for foreground elements such as the beached vessel in this painting. These lines helped Lane with the more extreme foreshortening of compositional elements. He may also have used a different type of drawing material not visible in IRR, or strings drawn out and pinned for setting the perspective of the more distant ships and landscapes. This vantage point held special significance for Lane, as in 1849 he built a stone house just above this spot. The house is indicated as "Lane and Winter" on a 1851 map of Gloucester, as he owned it with his sister Sarah Ann and her husband Ignatius Winter.³⁵ Lane was also interested in recording the Old Fort as it existed before new wharves and warehouses were built below it starting in 1848.³⁶ A related painting from a slightly different vantage point, from 1848, is in the collection of the Newark Museum. It portrays shipbuilding in the foreground with the Old Fort in the distance. The activities in the foreground were everyday tasks that Lane found important to record accurately. Lane's paintings of the Old Fort represent a nostalgia, and perhaps longing for earlier times. Contemporary newspaper accounts praise Lane's paintings for showing how the Fort looked before falling into disrepair.³⁷ In 1854, Lane made a study on paper of the Old Fort, viewed from a boat (fig. 9), with the town of Gloucester in the distance. Like the drawing of Boston Harbor, it is missing the right sheet, as suggested by the incomplete "X" registration marks found on the edge of what would have been the center sheet, and more complete compositions that include the right side missing from this drawing. This drawing is fairly unique, in that some areas have been painted with watercolor. It was the basis for at least two paintings, one at The Cape Ann Historical Museum and the other at The Sargent House Museum. The drawing is nearly the same size as the painting at The Cape Ann Historical Museum as the width of the fort is nearly identical in each.³⁸ The drawing itself contains three different grid systems. One is a scale in the upper left, with two sets of markings above and below a ruled horizontal line. The other



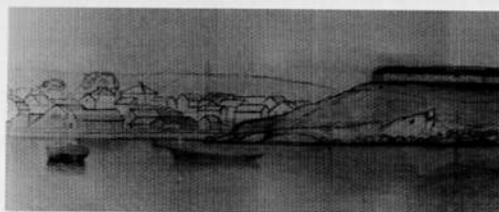
9. Horizon line details of *Gloucester from the Outer Harbor* drawing and the derivative paintings at The Cape Ann Historical Museum painting (center) and The Sargent House Museum painting (bottom).

two are vertical systems containing lines evenly spaced across the horizon. The more extensive vertical grid system was measured at equal distances (7 cm) and initially set with small tick marks below the fort and town; Lane then used either a straight edge or a T-square to draw the straight vertical lines through the marks. The artist may have used a caliper to measure distances against this grid, as there are pressure-point marks on the drawing, and pinpricks are found in the painting from The Sargent House Museum that correspond to the placement of the vertical lines in the drawing. A second grid system across the right side of the composition has lines drawn free-hand at 6 cm intervals. These lines are gone over in places and have a sketchy quality but are still fairly delicate. Lane may have employed the lines to guide him through sections of the vista at the site. These lines could have helped him keep his eye focused on a specific area, much like the window grid framing device recommended in Chapman's *American Drawing Book* of 1847: "The eye is on the level with the first bar of the sash of the window, equivalent to our line of the horizon; the point on this line directly opposite to the eye is the point of sight, to which point the lines of the eaves of the houses...are directed in their receding terminations."³⁹ In addition, the painting from the Sargent House Museum has diagonal lines scored into the ground which meet at a point on the horizon just below the right edge of the fort, which according to Chapman's drawing book would indicate not only the point of focus, but also indicate the distance of the viewer from the fort, and thus help Lane establish the scale of the two boats in the foreground.

Examination of the drawing with transmitted light shows a watermark that indicates Lane used Whatman paper made in 1847. It also reveals that he put tiny pinpricks at the numbered marks of the scale in the upper left.⁴⁰ This ratio between the upper and lower ruled marks is 1:1.5 (roughly the same found in the drawing of Boston Harbor and the painting at the White House collection done from it.) Of the two



10. Infrared details comparing the underdrawn island tip and buildings in the paintings at Cape Ann Historical Museum (top) and The Sargent House Museum (bottom).



paintings examined based on this drawing, neither seems to have employed this scale. The Cape Ann Museum picture is nearly 1:1; the Sargent House Museum painting has been enlarged 125% from the drawing, making it one fourth times larger. When the latter painting is enlarged to this extent, one can see how closely the three images match (fig. 9).

The images of underdrawing detected with infrared reflectography in both paintings show how exactly he followed the contours of the buildings and island in his initial recreation of the image on the paintings. In addition, this is one of the few instances where an entire large vessel is underdrawn and then not realized in the final painting (fig. 10).

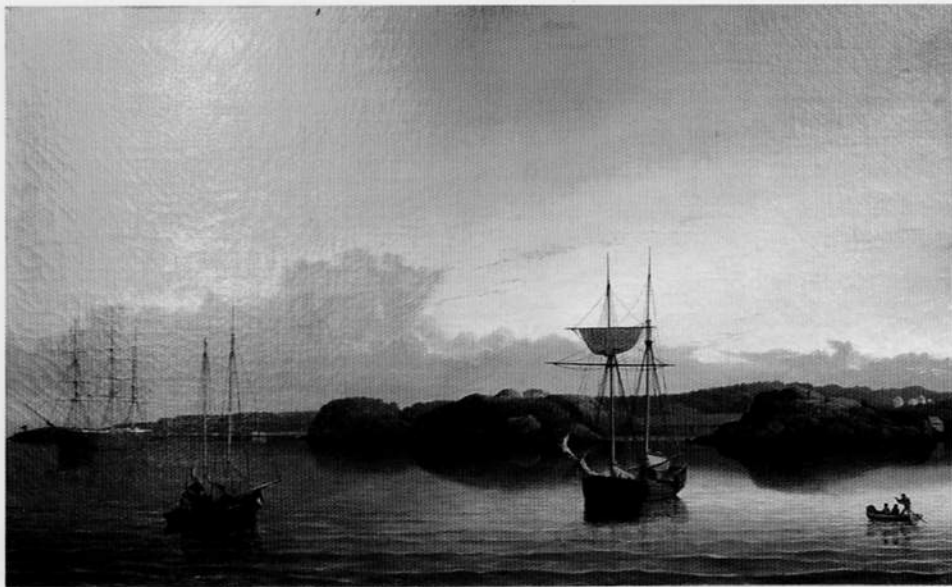
In this series of the Gloucester Harbor scenes, the complexities of his working method become more apparent. He relied on a small oil sketch for one set and on a very complete drawing and corresponding underdrawing for the other. Clues from the drawing and paintings reveal that Lane used a variety of tools and methods to achieve scale, perspective and detail in the final compositions.

Stage Rock Series

In 1857 Lane made two field sketches of a small, natural harbor near Gloucester which is known as "Stage Rocks" or "Gloucester Outer Harbor". His friend and companion Joseph Stevens Jr. noted on one of the drawings, "Sketched from a lumber loader vessel for a painting ordered by John P. Piper and another from the scene for Captain Frank Dale and his wife." In a letter to Stevens, Lane wrote about this drawing: "Yesterday I made a sketch of Stage Fort and the surrounding scenery, from the water. Piper has given me an order for a picture from this point of view, to be treated as a sunset. I shall try to make something out of it, but it will require some management, as there is no foreground but water and vessels".⁴¹ The painting *Stage Rocks and Western Shore of Outer Harbor* derived from this drawing is in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington (fig. 11).⁴² Later that same year (1857), he drew the site again from a more distant point for a painting for Mrs. William Davis.⁴³ Lane used the other drawing, done from the same angle but further away for *Western Shore of Gloucester Outer Harbor* at The Cape Ann Historical Museum (fig. 12).⁴⁴ This site held special social significance for Lane, as in 1623 the field behind the little harbor was the first permanent settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and later was the site of the first house, meeting hall, church and school of Gloucester.⁴⁵

While both drawings are undated, the one done from the further distance is regarded as the first.⁴⁶ The style and quality of line of the two drawings differs considerably. This is partially due to Lane's vantage point in each. In the earlier drawing, where Lane was situated further away and at a higher elevation, he is more attentive to capturing the topography and distances between hillsides with shading. In the second version, done from the lumber schooner, Lane is much closer to the shoreline. This drawing is executed in a style more typical of Lane, which is much looser with less attention to shading, and more focus on contours. It carefully delineates the rocks and treetops almost exclusively in outline with occasional shading using a sketchy return stroke. The closer perspective enabled Lane to more fully explore the complexity of the coastline. In this drawing (for the NGA painting), there are two vertical lines, drawn freehand through the horizon on the right sheet. These may indicate possible locations and heights of ship masts which were used for reference in the painting. One of the vertical lines roughly corresponds to the area between the masts of the main foreground ship in the painting. In the other drawing, done from a further distance, he fully sketched the hull and mast of a schooner at the far shoreline, giving a sense of scale. The painting from this drawing eliminates the far left point of land, allowing Lane to hone in on the details of the shoreline and focus on the activities of the vessels in the harbor waters.

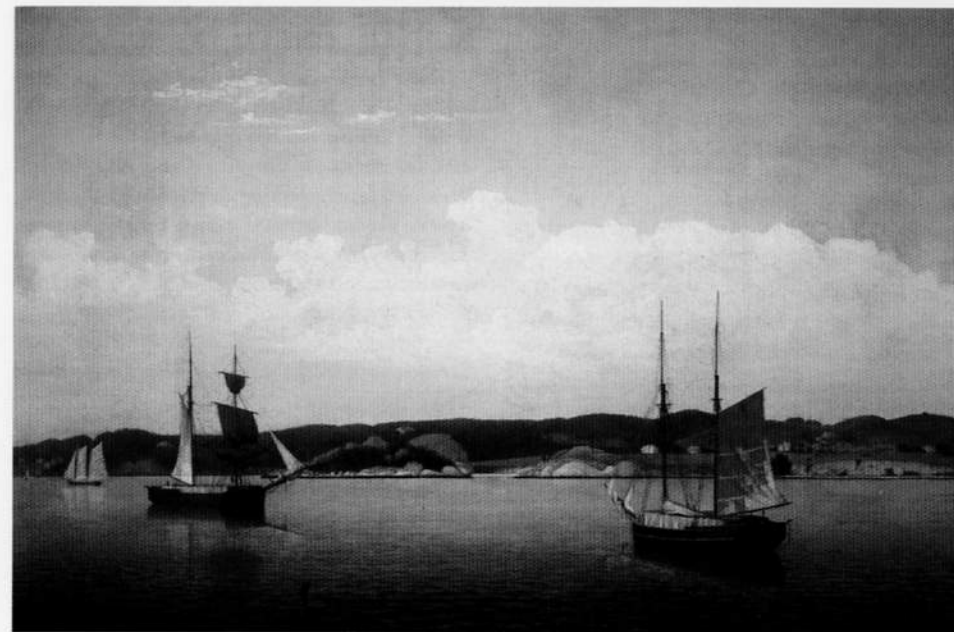
Examination of the National Gallery painting in infrared reflectography yields insights into Lane's use of the field sketch for the painting, this time working in a



11. Fitz Henry Lane, *Stage Rocks and Western Shore of Outer Harbor*, 1857, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 24 1/4 x 39 1/4".

one-to-one scale. The drawing on paper is a fine graphite delineation, with only a few alterations in shape. For the underdrawing on canvas, Lane used a tool that was rather blunt in some areas, which skipped over the canvas weave in the outlines, much like a black, wax-based crayon. The texture of the canvas in effect caught the thicker drawing material, giving it a rough quality. This is not like his use of graphite, where the lines are generally much smoother and thinner. The infrared image also shows that Lane reworked the outlines of the roofs and hills, in a process of self-correcting or copying, which lacks the freshness of the field sketch. Furthermore, it confirmed that Lane drew outlines of the foreground ship on top of finished landscape painting, so it may have been an afterthought.

The ship on the far left was underdrawn in an earlier stage of the painting process, as the water is painted up to the contours of the hull. Here Lane sketched-in the rough location of the ship, and then set the forms with tiny punctures and scoring. These pinholes may also have been used to hold down a small straight edge, which could have guided the artist's hand as he inscribed portions of the ship's rigging into the soft paint. These inscribed lines were covered with thin layers of paint, and yet still remain visible to guide later stages of painted rigging. By reducing the length and height of the yardarms, he moved the ship slightly away from the viewer, creating a greater sense of space.



12. Fitz Henry Lane, *Stage Rocks and Western Shore of Gloucester Outer Harbor*, oil on canvas, Cape Ann Historical Museum, Gloucester (Massachusetts), 15 1/2 x 23 1/2".

Conclusion

This ongoing research into Lane's working methods indicates that he used detailed panoramic field sketches to create the backgrounds for his paintings. In several instances, he created paintings for particular friends, patrons or ship-owners. In many cases, he would refer back to the same drawing for more than one picture, creating a "series" of paintings defined by different light, colors and ships. Seemingly, he used different methods for transferring the drawing to the painting. Sometimes, he used grids or vertical lines. Small pinpricks and scored lines aided him in the placement of the horizon line and details of sails and vessels. A 1:1 relationship between the painting and the preliminary drawing is found as well as a 125 or 150 percent enlargement of the drawn image. He did not always remain exactly true to the drawing. For example, he moved architectural elements such as steeples to accommodate the composition of the ships and give balance to the scale of the painting. Although he may have used drafting instruments to enlarge the image, his experience with lithography perfected his skills as a steady draughtsman and could have enabled him to enlarge an image freehand. The possible use of sighting devices for his drawings and the significance of incised lines and pinpricks in his paintings remain topics to be explored further.⁴⁷ Analysis of his palette and layering technique as well as use of perspective also are subjects for more extensive investigation.

Acknowledgements

Professor Henry Adams, former Curator of American Art at The Cleveland Museum of Art, was responsible for bringing Lane's painting of *Boston Harbor* to the CMA, and has continued to encourage our technical research. CMA Director Timothy Rub, former Director Katherine Lee Reid and present Curator of American Art Mark Cole have also supported the project. Erik E.R. Ronnberg has been an invaluable source of information about Lane, his depiction of ships, and local geography. The former Curator of the Cape Ann Historical Museum in Gloucester, James Craig, facilitated examination of numerous paintings and drawings there and has shared his knowledge about the area and the artist. John Wilmerding has generously responded to our questions about the artist and various collections. We are grateful to the conservators, curators and directors at the following institutions that we visited for our research. Without their generosity, with the artwork as well as time and equipment in the conservation labs, this paper would not be possible: Cape Ann Historical Museum, The Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid, The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., The Amon Carter Museum and The Kimbell Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, The Shelburne Museum, Vermont, The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem and The Timken Museum, San Diego.

Mr. and Mrs. Julian Ganz, The Sargent House Museum in Gloucester, and The White House Collection, Washington D.C. generously allowed their paintings to be transported and examined at museum conservation labs.

For archival and historical research, we thank the Boston Athenaeum, Bostonian Society, The Massachusetts Historical Society, The Harvard University Art Museums, and The Peabody Essex Museum in Salem.

We thank our colleague, Cleveland Museum of Art Paper Conservator Moyna Stanton for undertaking the examination of Lane's drawings and for sharing many important insights with us. Cleveland Museum of Art Chief Photographer Howard Agriesti was instrumental in helping with images and sizings and comparisons in Photoshop. Chris Edmonson at the Cleveland Muse-

um of Art's library assisted us with many requests. We are grateful to Maria de Peverelli of the Thyssen-Bornemisza Foundation for her help with this article, and to the Thyssen family for making this publication possible.

Finally, we thank Veronika, Titus and Miriam Bosshard for supporting this volume, which we would like to dedicate to the memory of our friend the late Emil Bosshard, who truly was a gentleman and a scholar.

1) During his lifetime (1804-1865), Fitz Henry Lane's work was patronized largely by New England ship-owning collectors. Following his death, Lane's reputation fell into steep decline until he was re-discovered partly by the Boston collectors Maxim and Martha Karolik in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Many of the major paintings by Lane currently housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston were donated by them. John Wilmerding's book on Lane published in 1971 and subsequent research on the artist culminated in a major exhibition at the National Gallery in 1988, both of which increased appreciation for his work. More recently, James Craig's book, *F.H. Lane, An Artist's Voyage Through 19th Century America* published in 2006, presented new biographical and historical information, lending new insight into Lane's drawings, paintings and lithographs. In 2007, John Wilmerding published *Fitz Henry Lane and Mary Mellen, Old Mysteries and New Discoveries* in conjunction with an exhibition exploring the artistic relationship between Lane and his one documented student.

2) J. Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane*, New York: Praeger, 1971, p. 51. J.A. Craig, *Fitz H. Lane, An Artist's Voyage through Nineteenth Century America*, Charleston (South Carolina): The History Press, 2006), 87.

3) Infrared images were obtained using a Mitsubishi M 700 thermal imager with a Germanium lens, sensitive to the infrared range of 2.2-5 microns. Infrared refers to invisible radiation, located just beyond the red light in the visible part of the electromagnetic spectrum. Equipment that detects what is visible in the longer wavelengths can be used to detect underdrawings and compositional changes below the paint surface. In the infrared examination of paintings, radi-

ation from the near-infrared region (about 750-2,500 nanometers) is detected. Infrared reflectography was developed to overcome the limitations of infrared photography (IRP) in revealing underdrawing by penetrating farther into the infrared part of the spectrum. Recent digital cameras are equipped with infrared detectors that are sensitive up to 1,500-2,500 nanometers; filters can be used to further regulate the wavelength of study. Some detectors see far into the thermal range 1,200-5,900 nm and can be used in examining a wider range of artwork (for more information see: "Conservation Feature-Finding the Pieces to the Puzzle" <http://www.clevelandart.org/exhibcef/battle/html/> and http://www.art-test.com/art-diagnostics/IR_method.htm).

4) S. Wengenroth, *Making a Lithograph*, London: The Studio Limited, 1936, pp. 16, 20. In this manual, tracing on stone is described: "Unless you are certain of your ability to draw your pencil outline without need of erasing, it is better to trace whatever outline you need on to the stone...A control of the technical qualities of tones that are obtainable on the stone, their fineness or coarseness, their richness, luminosity and variations of value, will be of great aid in producing a first-rate lithograph...The two methods of working-in line and in tone are very characteristic of the medium." While this book is not contemporary to Lane's time, the processes involved in lithography remain the same.

5) Cooke was the chief draughtsman at the lithography firm of William S. Pendleton in Boston, where Lane trained. Craig, 47.

6) J. Wilmerding, *Fitz Henry Lane and Mary Blood Mellen, Old Mysteries and New Discoveries*, New York: Spanierman Gallery, 2007, p. 16.

7) S. Pierce and C. Slautterback, *Boston Lithography*, Boston: The Boston Athenaeum, 1991, pp. 5-8; F. Goodyear, *Thomas Doughty, Exhibition Catalogue*, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1973.

8) J.A. Craig, p. 10.

9) R. Perkins and W. Gavin, *The Boston Athenaeum Art Exhibition Index 1827-1874*, Boston: Library of the Boston Athenaeum, 1980.

10) J. Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane*, p. 35, and J. A. Craig, pp. 56, 57.

11) L.L. Noble, *The Life and Works of Thomas Cole* Boston: Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 61 and E. C. Parry III, *The Art of Thomas Cole*

Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1988, pp. 87-88.

12) J.A. Craig, 71.

13) *Chester Harding Gallery Exhibition Catalogue*, Boston: Harding's Gallery, School Street, 1843, collection Boston Athenaeum.

14) *Ibid.*, Cole wrote: "The boat, composed of Figures of the hours, images the thought that we are borne on the hours down the Stream of Life...The gorgeous cloud-built palace...is emblematic of the day-dreams of youth, its aspirations after glory and fame...Youth is forgetful that he is embarked on the stream of life [which] increases in swiftness as it descends towards the great Ocean of Eternity...Trouble is the characteristic of the period of Manhood...The boat is there, plunging amid the turbulent waters...and the Ocean, dimly seen, figures the end of life, to which the voyager is now approaching...The stream of life has now reached the Ocean, to which all life is tending...The voyager looks upward to an opening in the clouds, from where a glorious light burst forth, as if to welcome him to the Haven of Immortal Life".

15) J.A. Craig, p. 71 and *Chester Harding Gallery Exhibition Catalogue*.

16) J.A. Craig, p. 72.

17) *Chester Harding Gallery Exhibition Catalogue*, 1843. In an 1843 letter from Thomas Doughty to Asher B Durand, he wrote that the Athenaeum had made an agreement with a "picture dealer" from New York which allowed him to control the best walls of the exhibit. (Archive of American Art, Smithsonian Institution).

18) T.N. Maytham, "A Trove of Doughtys," *Antiques Magazine* (November, 1965), pp. 681-685.

19) J.A. Craig, pp. 68-70, figs. 37-39. Both John Wilmerding and James Craig cite Cole and Doughty's work in Maine in the 1830's as an inspiration to Lane. This same 1834 exhibit included a painting of Maine by Doughty, *Mouth of Penobscot*.

20) Based on a parallelogram, a pantograph has a pointer at one end which traces the drawing and a pencil at the other end draws and enlarges the same image on another surface.

21) A copy of Lane's will from the collection of The Cape Ann Historical Museum was provided to us by Erik Ronnberg, Gloucester marine historian.

- 22) Exhibition Catalogue from the Boston Athanaeum 1842, Boston Artists' Association, provided by Katarina Slutterback.
- 23) 1847 *Albany Gallery Exhibition Catalogue*, Lane "Boston Harbor with the City in the Distance", Albany (New York): Albany Gallery, No. 136.
- 24) Chronology of Paintings Related to Boston Harbor by Fitz Henry Lane. Undoubtedly, there are more in existence than those listed below:
1. 1845 *Northern Light in Boston Harbor*, 18-3/4 x 26-1/4 inches, The Shelburne Museum (see J. Wilmerding 1971; Powell, *The Boston Harbor Pictures of Fitz Hugh Lane* (catalogue 26), Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1988).
 2. 1846 *Boston Harbor*, 17 x 27-1/4 inches, Cleveland Museum of Art (see 1847 Albany Gallery Exhibition Catalogue, Number 136).
 3. 1847 *Ships Leaving Boston Harbor*, 20 x 30 inches, Shelburne Museum (See *Paintings at Shelburne Museum 1976*; Antiques, November 1960, page 454).
 4. c 1847 *Boston Harbor*, 9-1/2 x 13-1/4 inches, IBM Gallery, New York (see Wilmerding 1971, Number 25).
 5. 1848 *Britannia Entering Boston Harbor*, 14-3/4x19-3/4 inches (ex-Vose Gallery, Collection Mr. and Mrs. Roger A. Saunders, see Powell catalogue 30).
 6. 1848-1849 *The Constitution in Boston Harbor*, 15-3/4 x 23-1/4 inches, Hunter Museum of American Art, (*Hunter Museum Catalogue of American Collection*, 1985, page 60).
 7. 1850-1855 *Boston Harbor at Sunset*, 26-1/4 x 42 inches, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Karolik Collection. (see *Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane* 1988, Powell catalogue 24).
 8. 1850-1855 *Boston Harbor at Sunset*, 24 x 39-1/4 inches, Ganz Collection, ex-Sotheby Catalogue 2103, 1962 lot 185 (see *Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane* 1988, Powell catalogue 25).
 9. 1851 *Southern Cross Leaving Boston Harbor*, 25-1/4 x 38 inches, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts (see Powell catalogue 31).
 10. 1852 *Boston Harbor*, 23-1/4 x 34-3/4 inches, State Department Collection (*Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane 1971* Powell catalogue figure 3).
 11. 1853 *Ships Winged Arrow and Southern Cross in Boston Harbor*, 24-1/8 x 36-1/4 inches, Cincinnati Art Museum (ex-Hirschl & Adler, Exhibition catalogue 1973, Number 65).
 12. 1853 *Boston Harbor*, 32 x 49 inches, Bostonian Society, Old State House, Boston, Massachusetts.
 13. 1853 *Boston Harbor*, 25-1/4 x 39-3/4 inches, Dr. E.P. Richardson, Brookline, Maine (see *Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane 1971*; Powell catalogue, page 28).
 14. 1854 *Boston Harbor*, 23-1/4 x 39-1/4 inches, White House Collection, Washington D.C (see Powell, cata-

- logue 29).
14. 1859 *Boston Harbor*, 40 x 60 inches, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas (see Powell, fig. 5).
 15. 1863 *Merchantmen off Boston Harbor*, 24-1/4 x 39-1/4 inches, Shelburne Museum (see Wilmerding 1971, page 455).
 16. 1863 *Brig Antelope in Boston Harbor*, 21-1/4 x 36 inches, Museum of Fine Art Boston, Karolik Catalogue 1949, Number 185.
- Sources:
Fitz Hugh Lane, John Wilmerding, NY, 1971.
Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane, National Gallery of Art Exhibition Catalogue, 1988 essay *The Boston Harbor Pictures* by Earl Powell.
Inventory of American Painting, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
- 25) Of the 35 drawings examined, none had indications that the reverse had been chalked for transfer. Cleveland Museum of Art Paper Conservator Moyna Stanton did the examination of Lane's works of art on paper. Drawings gridded for paintings include CAHA 21; *Gloucester Outer Harbor* (the corresponding painting at the Metropolitan Museum has a grid under the paint layers.); CAHA 28 *Norman's Woe*; CAHA 34 *Westward View from Near East End of Railroad Bridge*; CAHA 36 *View Across the Marsh*; CAHA 44 *View in Town Parish*; CAHA 85 *View of West Beach Beverly*; CAHA 88 *Fremont's Encampment*.
 - 26) When the drawing is enlarged, it matches the underdrawing of the buildings precisely. The scale however is not one to one, but slightly more than 1:1.5 suggesting that Lane may have used drafting tools to enlarge the drawing onto the canvas. His use of optical devices and drafting tools is an ongoing topic of research.
 - 27) E.A.R. Ronnberg, "Imagery and Types of Vessels", *Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane*, New York: Harry N Abrams, Inc., 1988, pp. 61, 64, 67.
 - 28) Ruling pens from M. Hambly, *Drawing Instruments 1580-1980*, London: Sotheby's Publications, 1988, pp. 57-58.
 - 29) The painting in the White House Collection also has this attribute.
 - 30) Hill was also President of Foster's Wharf Company in Boston. Foster's Wharf specialized in packets sailing to Liverpool, England. More importantly, a steamship from the Boston and Bangor Steamship Company left Foster's Wharf for Maine every afternoon at five pm in the summer, and semi-weekly in the winter (www.libraries.mit.edu and www.ostonhistory.typepad.com).

- 31) The importance of the emergence of steamships was reflected not only in their role as a mode of transportation and obvious sign of industrialization, but also in the news stories at the time. The dangers of fires aboard were real. Accompanying images of the disasters were depicted in lithographs, which connects historically with Lane and his early training at Pendelton and Moore. In his article, *American Ship Portraits: The romantic Fallacy*, John O. Sands noted that a lithographic image of a steam boat on fire, *The Awful conflagration of the Steam Boat Lexington*, of 1840, was the print which made Nathaniel Currier (who also worked at the Pendelton studio where Lane trained) a household word. It capitalized on the public's ambivalent feelings toward steam navigation: people were both fascinated by its power and terrified of its hazards.
- 32) Personal communication James Craig.
- 33) The fort was first built by the British in 1703, and was originally called Fort Ann. During the Revolutionary War with Great Britain, the earthen fort was known as Watch House Neck or Point. The town granted the property to the Federal Government in 1794, when the French engineer Bechet Rochefontaine was hired to supervise the fortification of New England against British warships. The plan specified that the fort be reinforced with stone walls, including an order for 20,000 bricks. Some of these were to be used for a blockhouse where ammunition and muskets would be stored. The fort was reactivated during the War of 1812 with Britain, and named Fort Defiance. It would not be used again until preparations began for the Civil War. Fort Defiance documents provided by Jim Craig.
- 34) E.E.R. Ronnberg, "Views of Fort Point" *Cape Ann Historical Association special editions*, April, July and September 2004.
- 35) E. Garrity Ellis, "Cape Ann Views", in *Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988, p. 24.
- 36) E.E. R. Ronnberg, "Views of Fort Point" *Cape Ann Historical Association special editions*, 2004.
- 37) E. Garrity Ellis 1988, pp. 19-44.
- 38) 10.5 cm in drawing, 10.8 cm. in painting. When the painting at Cape Ann is sized to match the drawing, it is reduced about 5%. This discrepancy could also be a result of slightly inaccurate measurement.

- 39) J.G. Chapman, *The American Drawing Book*, New York: J.S. Redfield, 1847, p. 131.
- 40) Examination made of the drawing at The Cape Ann Museum by Moyna Stanton, Conservator of Paper at The Cleveland Museum of Art.
- 41) Fragment of a letter from Lane to Stevens at the Cape Ann Historical Museum.
- 42) See F. Kelly, *American Masters: The John Wilmerding Collection*, Washington D.C.: Washington National Gallery of Art, 2004, 91. The whereabouts of the painting made for Dale is not known.
- 43) Stevens noted, "Picture painted from this sketch for Mrs. William Davis." Perhaps from this sketch Lane made his painting to represent the "Landing at Cape Ann".
- 44) Erik E.R. Ronnberg has triangulated Lane's locations for the two drawings, the first done in the middle of the bay, the second, looking across from Fort Point, about thirty feet above sea level (personal communication).
- 45) M. Ray, S. Dunlap, *Gloucester Massachusetts Historical Time Line 1000-1999*, Gloucester (Massachusetts): The Gloucester Archives Committee, 2002, pp. 5-6.
- 46) Unpublished communication from Erik E.R. Ronnberg based on annotations on the drawings.
- 47) K. Quinn, S. Kelberlan, J. Woodward, "Rediscovering Fitz Hugh Lane's View of 'Coffin's Beach'", *The Magazine Antiques*, July 2006, 66-69.