# *Cape Ann Views*

ELIZABETH GARRITY ELLIS

IT IS UNLIKELY THAT FITZ HUGH LANE KNEW Christopher Cranch's *Illustrations of the New Philosophy.* Sketched on scraps of paper and enclosed in letters of the late 1830s and early 1840s, the cartoons circulated among a small band of Harvard graduates who had journeyed West during the years of political and religious crisis and rallied to the new faith of Ralph Waldo Emerson.[1] The most amusing of the drawings were based on *Nature* of 1836, Emerson's first declaration of the Transcendentalist program. Four years earlier he had resigned from the Unitarian ministry, repudiating the "dead forms" of its "historical Christianity." Instead, he proposed a new revelation, founded not in doctrine or tradition but in the immediate apprehension of the divine in nature. Cranch seized on Emerson's anecdotes of beholding God and nature face to face and in January 1839 sketched *Nature*'s most famous passage (fig. 1):

> Standing on bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.[2]

Emerson had borrowed the image from Plotinus, adapting the ancient mystical harmonies to the American condition of newness.[3] For a country still inventing itself from a miscellany of facts, he revealed an intrinsic spiritual order in a sublime act of perception.

If Cranch's top-hatted creature towering over field and hills was unknown to Lane, the image has nonetheless dominated discussions of the luminist paintings the artist produced from the mid-1850s until his death in 1865. It is in Emerson's account of these decades of "a new consciousness" that art historians have found the language and meaning of Lane's radiant coastal views. The crystalline light and patterned geometries of shoreline and boats in such paintings as *Brace's Rock,* 1864 (cats. 21, 22, and 23) and *Stage Rocks and the Western Shore of Gloucester Outer Harbor,* 1857 (fig. 2) have come to assume the order and spiritual tenor of the Transcendentalist's vision.[4]

Lane's luminist style had, of course, a history of its own—having evolved over a period of almost two decades, from the conventions of Anglo-Dutch marine and landscape paintings seen by the young artist in Boston and formalized in the illustrations of drawing books[5]; from the "graphic power" and implicit design of John Ruskin's descriptions of nature[6]; and, especially, from Lane's work throughout his career as a lithographer making topographical views of his native Gloucester. The maplike accuracy of the prints and paintings on which they were based, like *Gloucester Harbor from Rocky Neck* of 1844 (cat. 2) had established Lane's local reputation and gained him notice in Boston newspapers. "Select your own subject, some point of interest upon our ocean borders, and set the artist at work," advised the *Evening Transcript* in October 1850.[7] In preparation, Lane navigated the beaches and granite outcroppings of Cape Ann, making pencil sketches of outlines and details that he transferred to canvas along a measured grid. He became the taxonomer of the Gloucester coast.

In the process, Lane took possession of it. The compositions of *Brace's Rock* and *Stage Rocks* derive from sites on the Massachusetts shoreline but are conceived in pictorial terms, as Lane adjusted the elements of the scene away from the specific toward abstract patterns of shape and thin color. Thus his art of

Catalogue 7, detail

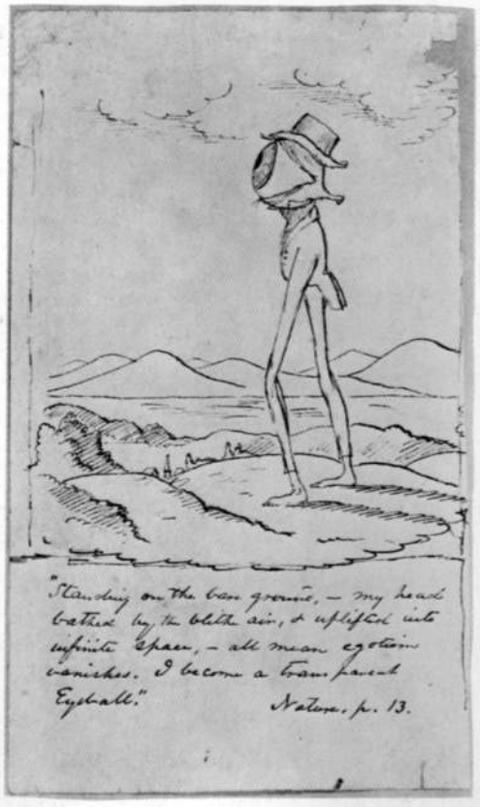



fig. 1. C. P. Cranch, *The Transparent Eyeball from "The New Philosophy" Scrapbook*, 1839, pen on paper [Harvard College Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts].

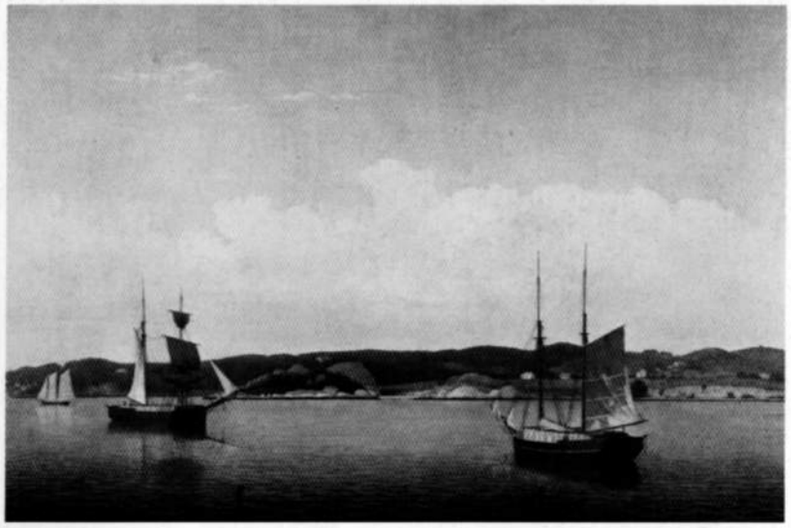
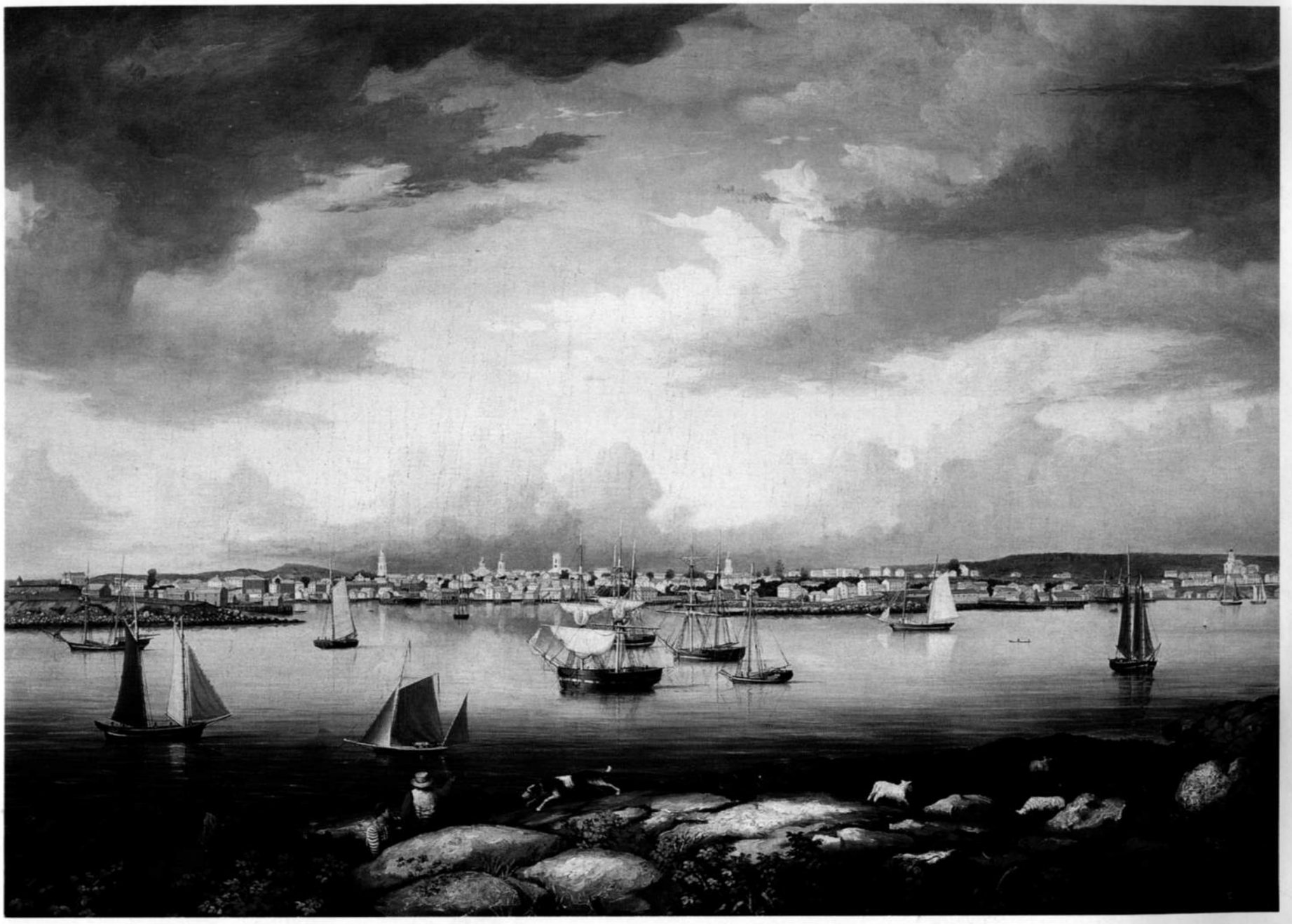


fig. 2. Lane, *Stage Rocks and the Western Shore of Gloucester Outer Harbor*, 1857, oil on canvas, 15 1/2 x 23 1/2, [Cape Ann Historical Association]

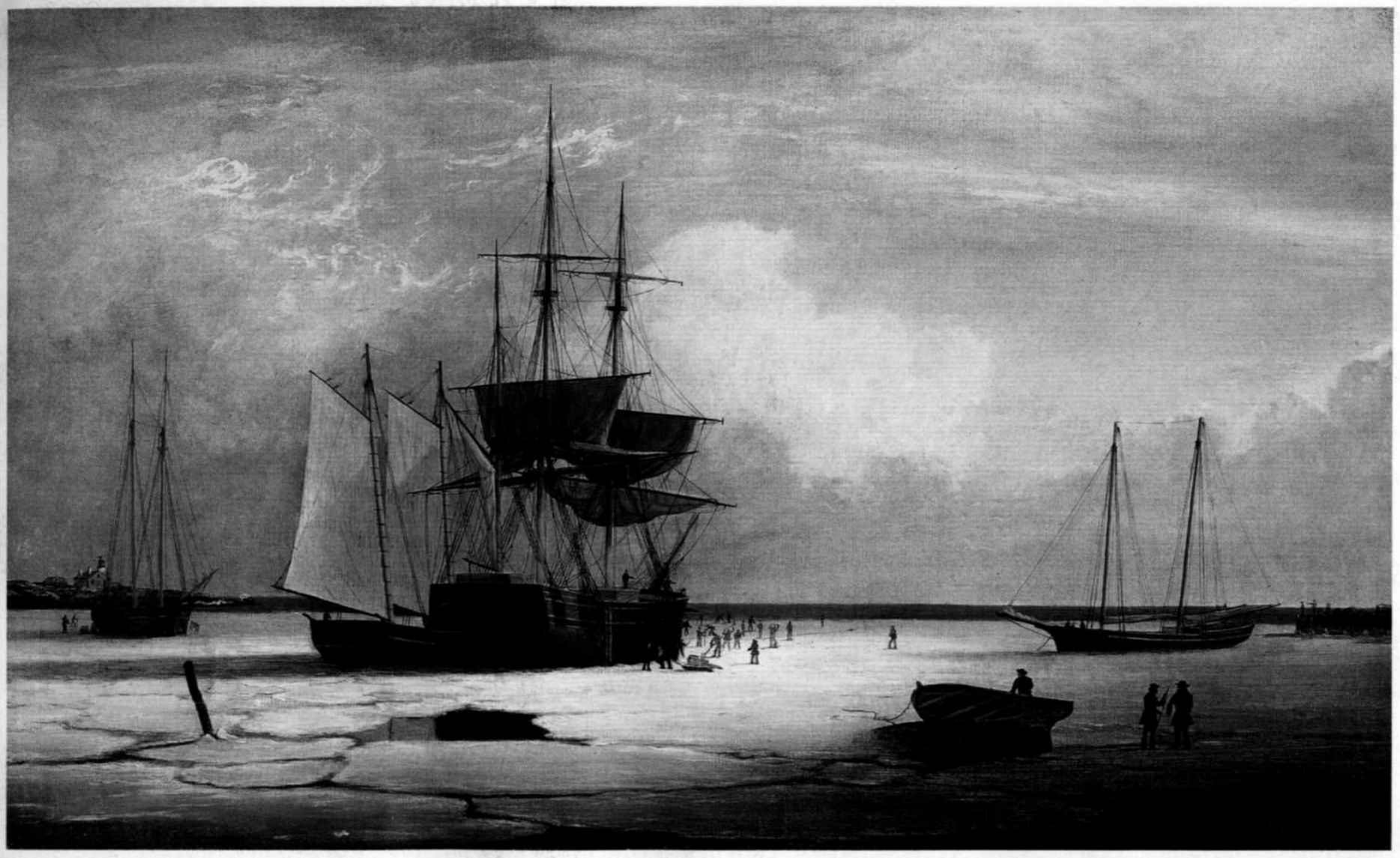
description yielded to a formal style that was at once intensely objective and suffused with feeling: the ordinary, familiar shapes of the shore world are immediately recognized, but their meaning is released by their ordering on the canvas. Barbara Novak has likened this paradox to the "Emersonian tolerance of contradiction."[8] Whether there is direct connection with Emersonian Transcendentalism is, however, uncertain. Rather, as Novak has argued, we can claim affinity.[9] But to align the structured vision of Lane's small paintings only with Emerson's record of "consciousness" is an incomplete study of both artists, for it tends to remove them from history and to emphasize form over content. It is in terms of their historical context that Lane's Gloucester subject matter and his relationship to Emersonian ideas can be more fully discussed.

In his study of the period of American romanticism , Michael T. Gilmore observed that what established Emerson "as a truly 'representative man' of Jacksonian America" was his ambivalence toward a world that had become a marketplace.[10] From about 1815 to the Civil War, the scale and character of American enterprise were radically and permanently transformed. The rise of manufacturing and a national network of railroads, the expansion of banks and of credit, and the shift of population from farm to factory and city produced a new economic order and market society in which "people and their surroundings were brought under the dominion of exchange."[11] Under this market regime, labor became a commodity. Land came to be seen as an object of speculation. Even literature was part of trade, promoted and circulated by publishing houses. The young Emerson recoiled from the "noisy readers of the hour" and defined the "*new views* here in New England" as a reaction against the instability of the market: "What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us, is Idealism." In other times the hunger for spiritual truth made philosophers or prophets; "falling on . . . commercial times" this hunger "makes the peculiar shades of Idealism which we know."[12] The later Emerson found reassurance in the market system and defended "the laws of nature" that "play through trade . . . The counting-room maxims liberally expounded are laws of the Universe."[13] Throughout his life, in different and complex ways, Emerson confronted and was deeply marked by his "commercial times."

Indeed, the very first "use" of nature that Emerson considered in *Nature* appears under the heading of "Commodity." As



cat. 2. *Gloucester from Rocky Neck*, 1844, oil on canvas, 29 1/2 x 41 1/2 in. [Cape Ann Historical Association]



cat. 3. *Ships in Ice off Ten Pound Island,* 1850s, oil on canvas, 12 x 19 3/4 in. [Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, M. and M. Karolik Collection]

commodity—"cities, ships, canals, bridges, built for him"[14]—nature was briefly reconciled with man. But the union was temporary and its value artificial; in the mart of trade, all of nature, all meaning, was negotiable. The fault lay within. Because men generally relate to nature as commodity (if men "looking at the ocean can remember only the price of fish," Emerson later wrote[15]), they fail to see its spiritual side and "are as much strangers in nature, as [they] are aliens from God."[16] It is this sense of alienation that the sublime intimations of *Nature* finally overcome: in dazzling moments, the influx of spirit reveals a "radical correspondence between visible things and human thoughts" and prophesies "a correspondent revolution in things." By grasping "that wonderful congruity" between mind and nature, man can change and impose absolute order on the world.[17] Yet, as Gilmore noted, even here, Emerson was impli-

cated in the marketplace: revelation is a transaction, an exchange of matter for meaning.

This equivocal harnessing of "economic categories . . . to the operations of the Soul" persisted in Emerson's later writings but grew gradually less critical, as, with age and prosperity, he acceded to the processes of the market.[18] Indeed, after 1840, he would come to rely less on the self, as his Transcendentalism shaped its "radical thrust to the curve of earth."[19] R. A. Yoder's beautiful image charts the shift in Emerson's thought: his retreat from the power of visionary moments toward a kind of truce with "eternal Fact" that acknowledged an unalterable disparity between the mind and nature. He wrote in "Experience" in 1844:

> I know that the world I converse with in the city and in the town is not the world I *think*. I observe that difference, and shall observe it. One day I shall know the value and law of this discrepance.[20]

Having renounced the power to redeem nature, Emerson took up a detached position from which to observe it. His reach diminished, he patiently collected glimpses of the world around him and discovered that "Metamorphosis or Flux" was its "true pattern:" "That rushing stream will not stop to be observed."[21] The processes of nature and society demanded a conscious effort extended in time. Thus, as Emerson came to terms with his "commercial times," he also turned increasingly to the historical imagination, to history conceived as the process of events. It was only through time and in time that meaning could be found.

In 1849 Lane permanently left Boston for the town of his grandfathers. His return was speeded by a branch of the Eastern Railroad that was extended to Gloucester in 1846 and opened the port the following year to commercial development. After years of declining fishing revenues, the construction of the railway formed a critical link with the new technology of icing the catch aboard vessels when they were at sea. It connected the fisheries with western markets, attracted capital that gradually transformed the industry into an entrepreneurial venture that by 1860 would eclipse the Surinam trade as the town's economic mainstay, and led to a boom in the construction of wharves and factories along the waterfront. A "slight advance . . . in the value of real estate" noted by the *Gloucester Telegraph* in June 1846 marked the beginning of two decades of speculation and rising land prices.[22]

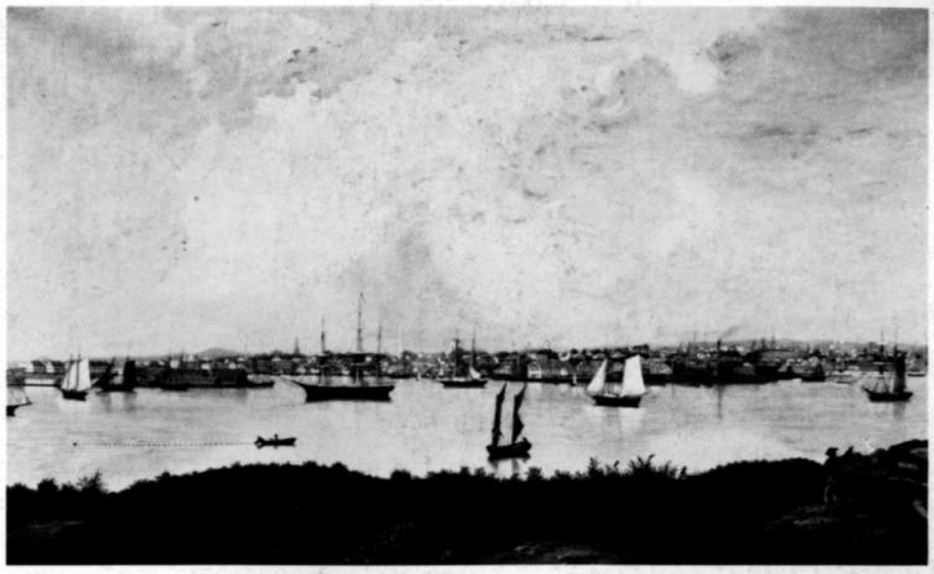


fig. 3. Lane, *View of Gloucester*, 1855, colored lithograph, 21 3/4 x 35 1/2 [Cape Ann Historical Association]

The views Lane made after his return were part of this market economy and activity. They were, in effect, articles of commerce, whose value and meaning depended on the circumstances in which they were produced and of the visible world they recorded. Underwritten by subscriptions advertised in the newspaper, lithographs like *View of Gloucester*, 1855 (fig. 3) were distributed from the bookstores and printing shops of friends. The paintings occasionally were sold by lottery. On 21 September 1859 the *Gloucester Telegraph* reported a drawing of "five oil paintings" among the subscribers to the print: "No. 125 took the first picture, being the original from which the view of Gloucester was engraved." (The second picture raffled was possibly *Ships in Ice off Ten Pound Island*, 1850s (cat. 3), described as "a winter scene, giving a representation of cutting vessels out of the ice.")[23]

*View of Gloucester* describes a world of exchange. From the shadowy pasture of Rocky Neck, the figures at lower right direct our attention to a panorama of harbor activity. As they point both within and beyond the edges of the scene, the print seems a fragment of a world ordered around human measure and use. The patterned shapes of sails, riggings, and boats stretching across the Inner Harbor are repeated in the steeples

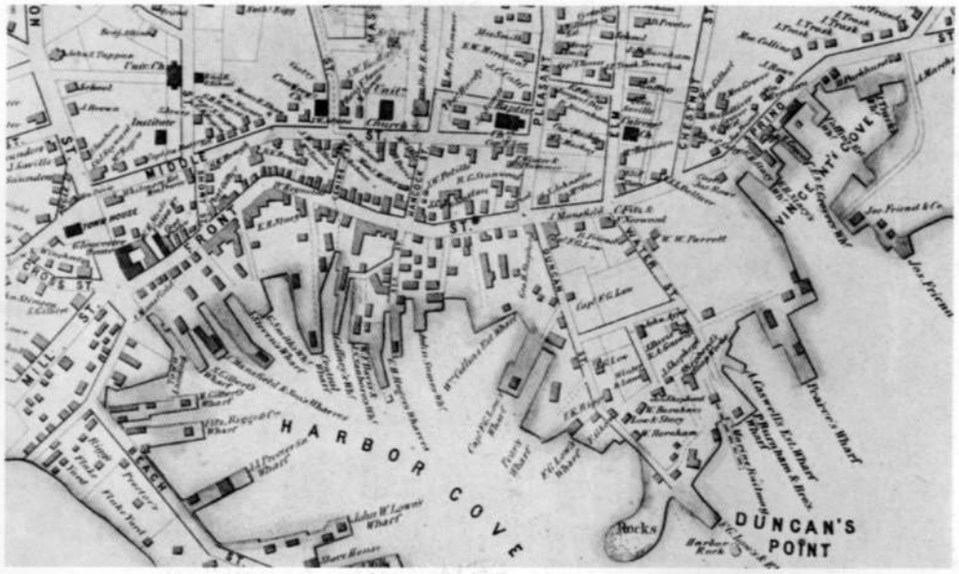



fig. 4. Map of *Gloucester Harbour Village*, 1851 [Cape Ann Historical Association]

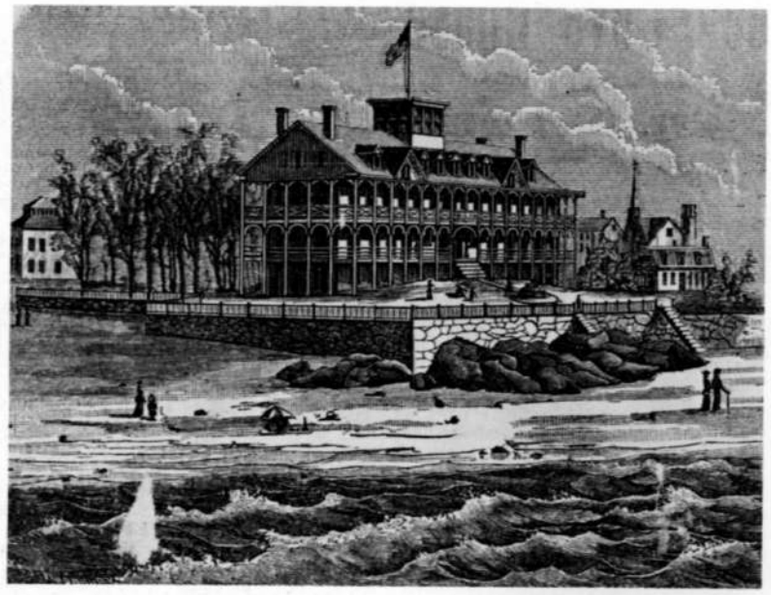
and gambrel roofs of the buildings set in terraced rows along Front and Middle Streets (fig. 4). Masts line up with chimneys; caulking and fish glue factories, marine railways and fishing schooners are clearly and evenly illuminated as harbor and shore work in tandem. *View of Gloucester* was an update of the harbor inventory found nine years earlier in *View of Gloucester from Rocky Neck* (fig. 5) (based on *Gloucester Harbor from Rocky Neck*.) Lane profiled the town from the same vantage point, retaining the same balance of shore to sky, of particular buildings to geometric boxes, but he carefully, and knowingly, added the new construction on Fort Point and Duncan's Point. The artist's studio on the top floor of his house on Duncan's Point had put him at what a local historian would describe in 1860 as "the centre of a seat of the fishing business, which, for activity, enterprise, and extent, has no equal on this continent."[24]

Lane's commercial vision was made explicit by the genre elements that he introduced into many of his Gloucester views of the 1840s and early 1850s. In *The Fort and Ten Pound Island, Gloucester, Massachusetts*, 1847 (Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection) and *Gloucester Harbor*, 1847 (cat. 10) the contours of the beach and Ten Pound Island form a stageset for figures who unload fish or transact business. In *Lanesville, the Mill*, 1849 (cat. 4) they announce the presence of industry: an old horse and

fig. 5. Lane, *View of Gloucester from Rocky Neck*, 1846, colored lithograph, 21 1/2 x 35 1/2 [Cape Ann Historical Association]

wagon driven along the road at the right of the sawmill lead us into view of the railroad where, as the *Telegraph* pointed out, "the locomotive, pouring out from its smoke pipe, a dense black cloud, is just coming in sight."[25]

The marketplace of Gloucester also defined a view of the town painted in 1852 for the merchant Sidney Mason, a Gloucester native living in New York. One of Lane's largest works, *Gloucester Harbor* (cat. 7) scans the shore from the wide angle of the Outer Harbor—an expanse that is charted and contained by the traffic of boats. At the center foreground the taut line of a trawl holds a Chebacco boat in place, part of the catalogue of Gloucester vessels disposed across the harbor, as space is identified by function. A flood of sunlight bleaches the houses above the shore as the deep blues of clouds and the plane of water, verticals of mast and line, and the scallop pattern of the clouds perform an aesthetic function. But Lane's eye was still in the service of accounting, and the patterns form a backdrop to the shipping. *Gloucester Harbor* was one of at least three works commissioned by Mason in the early 1850s that together represented the commercial corners of his world: Lane also painted a New York view and *St. Johns, Puerto Rico*, 1850 (The Mariners' Museum), which shows men logging mahogany in the harbor of San Juan, where Mason had lived from about 1820 to 1835, served as U.S. consul, and made his fortune.[26]



SUMMER RETREAT.—As the warm weather approaches, city people wish to be informed of all arrangements being made at the watering places for their accommodation during summer months. They will be welcome here; and to those who have already visited Gloucester and vicinity, nothing need be said of its superiority over other places in New England as a summer retreat. Its cool breezes, romantic scenery, beautiful harbor, hard, white sand beaches, and bracing air, are temptations that cannot well be resisted. If besides these attractions, strangers can be assured of good hotel accommodations, no more can be required. Three hotels will be opened here this summer, the Pavilion, Gloucester House, and Union House; of these we propose at present to speak only of the Pavilion, reserving a description of the other houses for another number.

fig. 6. From *Boston Evening Transcript*, advertisement for The Pavilion, 1849 [Cape Ann Historical Association]

*Gloucester Harbor* also recorded an aspect of the Gloucester economy that is perhaps less conspicuous to modern eyes. Along the shore at the far left stands the two-story Pavilion, one of the first of the hotels that began to dot the Cape Ann shoreline in the late 1840s and 1850s (fig. 6). With the coming of direct rail service, tourists had followed. "Even now strangers are beginning to visit us," reported the *Telegraph* in 1846, "the facilities for getting here being so abundant."[27] By the end of the decade, newspapers and travel guides were promoting Cape Ann as a summer resort:

> Projecting farther into the broad Atlantic than any promontory of New England, [the Cape] breasts the purest waves and courts the freshest breezes, while, unlike other portions of our coast, its soil is luxuriant and well wooded, and its scenery blends, in charming unity, the wild, the rugged, the romantic and the pastoral. No where else upon our seaboard has nature been so prodigal of her charms.[28]

The first visitors stayed at boarding houses, but with the opening of the Pavilion in June 1849 a new standard of comfort was established. Designed by a Boston architect for Sidney and his brother John Mason, the hotel featured elegant sitting rooms, gas lamps and all the amenities demanded by "those who require luxury."[29] Boating and swimming were at the front door. New shops opened nearby. By September, the hotel's fashionable status was secure and its unusual double piazza a local landmark[30]—though it would offend the New York art critic Clarence Cook. When visiting Lane in 1854, Cook deplored the "ugly, yellow" hotel sunning "itself on the rocks where I used to sit hour by hour watching the lapsing waves upon the beach below."[31] The critic's grumbling aside, Lane made pencil sketches of the Pavilion on its curving sweep of beach and included it in several paintings of the early-to mid-1850s.

As Lane sketched, the hotel was transforming the beach into a site for spectacle. Alfred Brooks called the Pavilion "Gloucester's first conspicuous monument of the profitable and ever-increasing business of housing and feeding the summer people."[32] It represented a business that quickly became a lucrative part of the town's development—and made a commodity of both the scenic landscape of Cape Ann and the act of observing it. "To those who . . . are not fond of entire seclusion, and like the excitement of company," the March 1849 *Pictorial National Library* advised, "this hotel is an excellent stopping place and starting point" for a tour of the attractions found along the eighteen-mile coast of the Cape.[33]

Lane took many of these "points of interest" as his subjects. He drew and painted several views of the Bass Rocks and Little

Good Harbor Beach, a stretch of coast east of town singled out by guidebooks for its rocky shore and sunset views of Salt and Milk islands. The area had already attracted the attention of developers. Beginning in 1846, the pasture rights to the land were bought up by George H. Rogers, a Gloucester merchant who had made his money in the Surinam trade and

> foresaw the advantages this beautiful tract offered as a future seashore resort, and at once began the improvement of the property by laying out avenues and roadways, cutting up the pasture into suitable building lots and otherwise greatly enhancing the values of the premises, expending vast sums of money in the work.[34]

Rogers' holdings in the area eventually included a hotel and more than 250 acres before he sold out in the 1860s.

*Sunrise through Mist, Pigeon Cove,* 1852 (cat. 42) represents an area farther north along the Cape at Rockport. Known to sailors for its stone breakwater and safe harbor, by the late 1840s Pigeon Cove was claimed by travel writers for its "prospect" and pleasant boarding houses.[35] Within a generation, the tourist's view would become a major commodity: "the scene of fishermen at the wharves, and of stone-sloops loading with granite to take to Boston and other cities, is entertaining to those who have not often looked upon it."[36] During the early 1850s local investors banking on the extension of the railroad to Rockport began to buy tracts of land along the shore and a decade later divided nearly 150 acres into building lots for summer homes.[37]

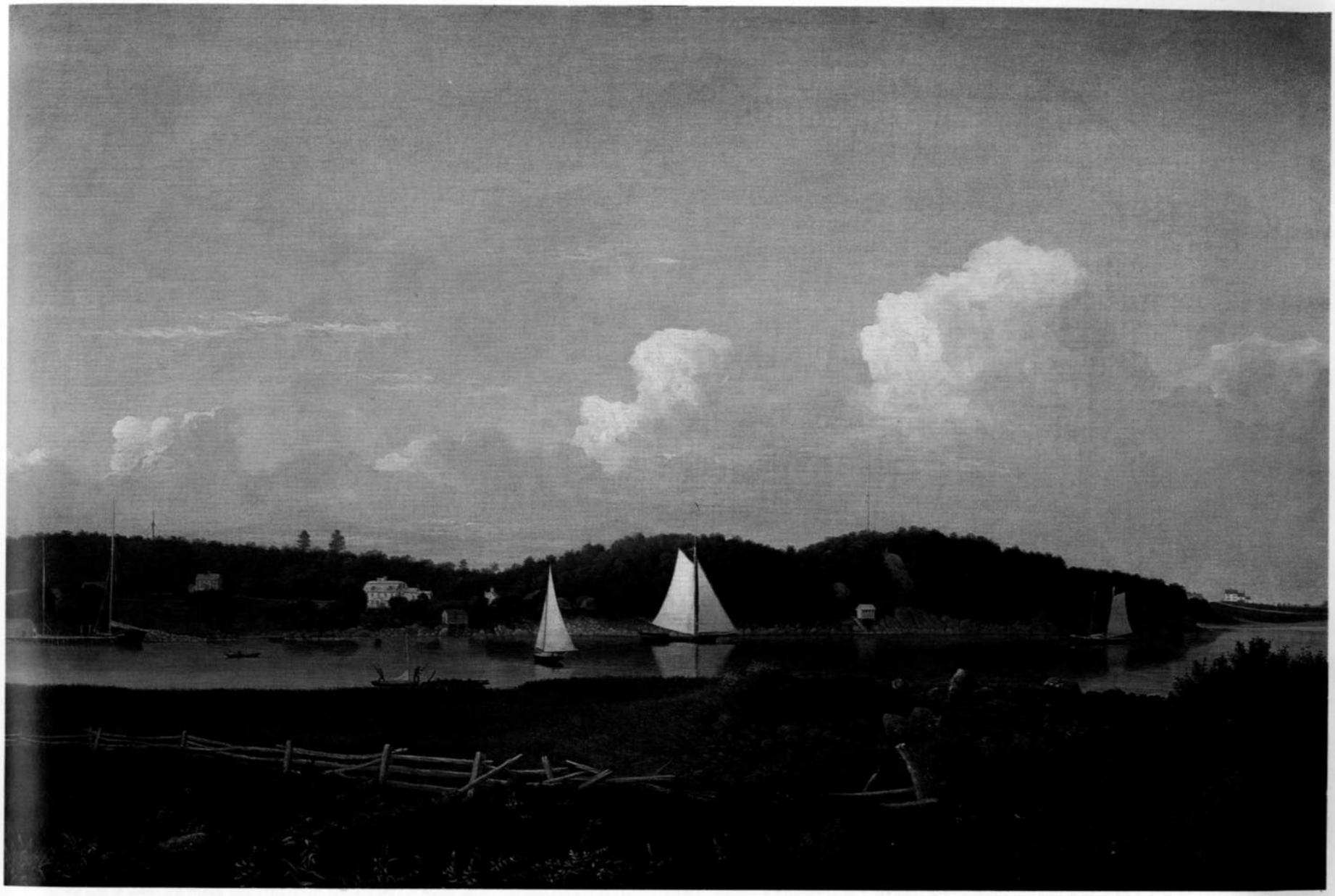
Lane also painted the coast between Gloucester and Magnolia, a section of Cape Ann that by 1860 was "widely known as one of the leading fashionable Summer resorts."[38] As if anticipating the market, *Fresh Water Cove from Dolliver's Neck, Gloucester,* early 1850s (cat. 8) surveys the coast as property: from the fenced pasture of the foreground, the white diagonals of sailboats lead the eye across the cove to the houses along Western Avenue. The largest, "Brookbank," was the summer residence of one of Lane's important patrons, Samuel E. Sawyer.

These views had obvious appeal for investors[39]—and for the artist who, by selecting them, participated, however indirectly, in their appreciation. Lane may, in fact, have profited directly from the real estate market. The value of the granite house and studio that he built on Duncan's Point shortly after his return to Gloucester (whose roofline was said to be modeled on the House of the Seven Gables of Nathaniel Hawthorne's tale)

fig. 7. Lane, *View of Gloucester Harbor,* late 1850s, oil on canvas 24 1/8 x 36 1/4 [Mr. and Mrs. Glen Rosio].

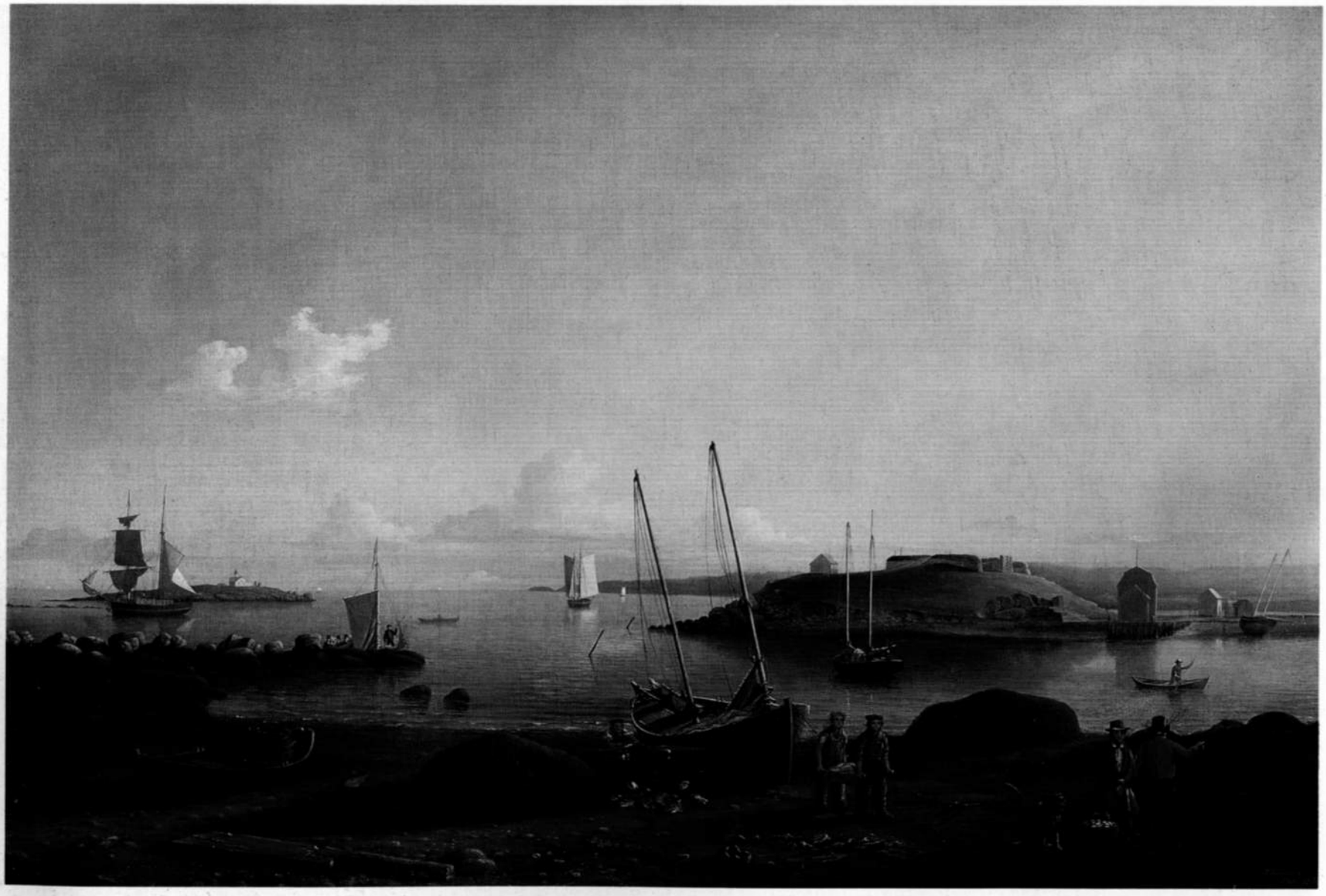
more than doubled during the thirteen years following its completion.[40] It was not the first time he had shared his Gloucester patrons' financial concerns. In 1840, when still living in Boston, Lane had supplied Gloucester's Whig merchants with a banner for an election parade protesting the Democratic administration's proposed change in the calculation of fishing bounties. From Gloucester Harbor the famous sea serpent was shown rearing its head from the water as the caption announced: "The Deep has Felt the Attack Upon her Interests and Sends Her Champion to the Rescue."[41]

fig. 8. Lane, *Dolliver's Neck and the Western Shore from Field Beach,* 1857, oil on canvas, 18 1/2 x 32 3/4 [Cape Ann Historical Association]



cat. 8. *Fresh Water Cove from Dolliver's Neck, Gloucester,* early 1850s, oil on canvas, 24 x 36 in. [Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, M. and M. Karolik Collection]

Lane's Gloucester subjects of the late 1840s and early 1850s were records of these interests. Yet by the mid-1850s, when his luminist style emerged, his subjects also began to change. The resorts of summer tourists and developers give way to different areas or views of the coast. When Lane returned to Dolliver's Neck in 1857, he sought a new vantage point and vision: *Dolliver's Neck and the Western Shore from Field Beach* (fig. 8) records the stretch of coast between Stage Fort and Mussel Point; the summer houses along Fresh Water Cove are less conspicuous, anecdote is subdued, and the details of the



cat. 6. *Gloucester Harbor,* 1848, oil on canvas on panel, 27 x 41 in. [Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Williams Fund]

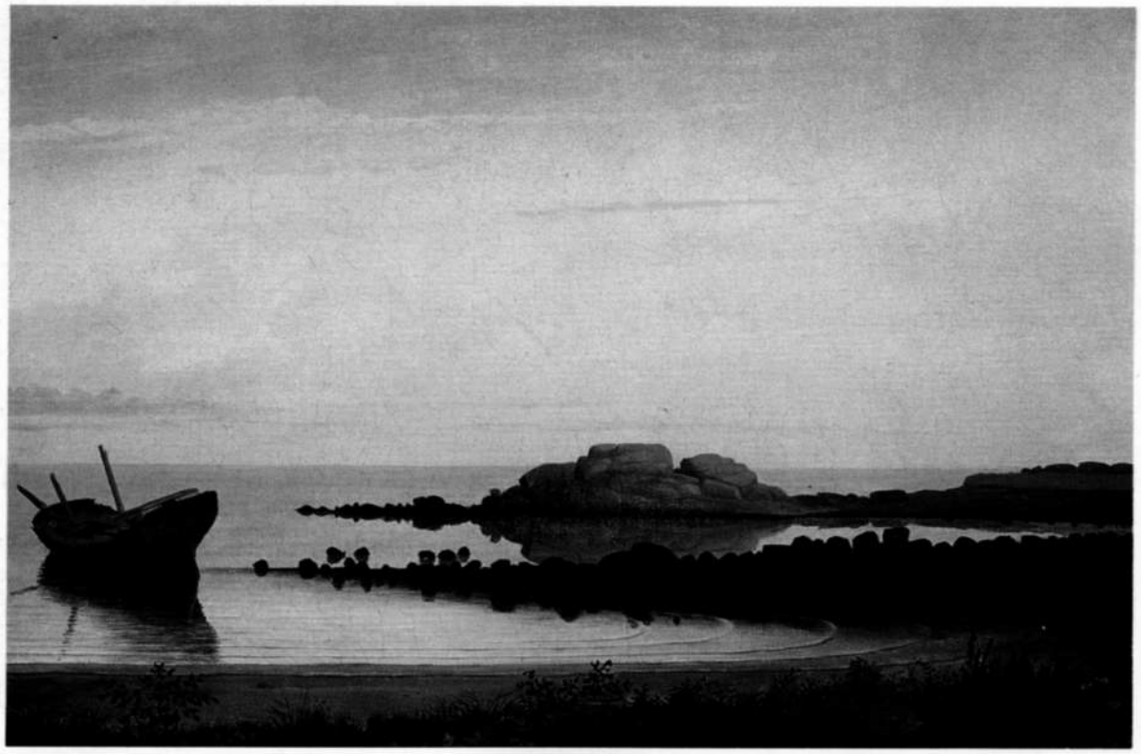
landscape—the fissures in the rocky shore, the wooded hillside—are more selectively observed and rendered. The detail and dark weight of the rocks at the lower left seem at once to condense and foil the larger arc of sand. The distance of the solitary pine from the scumbled trees in middleground, clearly indicated in the pencil sketch Lane made of the site, is uncertain. The eye focuses on pieces of nature that combine less as a map of the site than as formal patterns and contrasts, of dark against light, diagonals against horizon line, green against purple tones.

The new direction of Lane's art is suggested by his discussion of the painting in a letter to his patron and friend Joseph Stevens, Jr.:

cat. 42. *Sunrise through Mist*, 1852, oil on canvas, 24 1/4 x 36 1/4 in.
[The Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont]

Since writing you last I have painted but one picture worth talking about . . . The effect is a mid day light, with a cloudy sky, a patch of sunlight thrown acrost the beach and the breaking waves. An old vessel lies stranded on the beach with two or three figures, there are a few vessels in the distance and the Field rocks likewise show at the left of the picture. I think you will be pleased with this picture, for it is a very picturesque scene especially the beach, as there are many rocks which come in to destroy the monotony of a plain sand beach, and I have so arranged the light and shade that the effect I think is very good indeed.[42]

This description is rare for Lane, and his meaning is not made clear. "Very picturesque" may refer to the artist's expressly pictorial concerns, as he shifted his attention beyond the describing of topography to the aesthetic effects of variety and roughness (the rocks which relieve "the monotony of a plain sand



cat. 23. *Brace's Rock*, 1864, oil on canvas, 10 x 15 in. [Mr. and Mrs. Harold Bell]

beach") and the arrangement of "the light and shade." It may also suggest a new level of meaning. The distance essential to perceiving these pictorial possibilities was tied to an emotional detachment from the site. In the neutral territory of his studio, Lane constructed the painting, balancing observation and design, topographical fact and invented color and effects of light. The formal patterns of *Dolliver's Neck and the Western Shore from Field Beach* are not static—for example, the intense contrast of dark and light undoes the measured distance between the Field Rocks and the beach. The tenuous balance of contrasts that define the image suggests the succession of moods and moments that made up Lane's knowledge of the scene, the fluid process that is the province of memory. This may account for the "old vessel . . . stranded on the beach": not included in the preliminary drawing of the site, the boat may serve as a kind of marine ruin, with its associations of time and imaginative return.

We should not make too much of Lane's remark. By the mid-nineteenth century the picturesque was so popularized a term that it had lost precise meaning, especially in American aesthetic thought and travel writing. But at its most significant, as in J. M. W. Turner's *Picturesque Views in England and Wales* (1825–1838), which Lane may well have known, the picturesque referred to topographical scenes that sought at once to describe present appearance and to evoke past history. Having set nature above art as the standard of landscape painting, the picturesque taste combined precise observation of details with an attention to private meaning and formal effect. Thus, J. D. Hunt's observation that the aesthetic had its most "pervasive moment" at a time when scepticism about the readable syntax of painting had left "unresolved any fresh means of linking mental and emotional explanations to visual experience"[43] may have particular relevance for Lane. In paintings like *Dolliver's Neck and the Western Shore from Field Beach*, Lane shed art historical or graphic convention and narrative content for both a more abstract formalism and implicit awareness of time.

Old or wrecked vessels occupy many of Lane's luminist paintings of Cape Ann. In the several views of Brace's Rock painted in 1863–1864 (cats. 21, 22, and 23), an abandoned boat, in various stages of decay, shifts position in the shallow water. Lane

painted the several versions as commissions from Gloucester patrons, and in each version the attenuated shapes of the rocky outcropping and its reflection remain almost constant. But the images are subtly different: the cloud forms and the intensity of colors in the late afternoon sky, suggesting specific meteorological moments, change; the small boat, gradually stripped down to a wrecked hull, changes direction and angle to form different patterns with the lines of rocks and horizon. Each small image is partial, as Lane consciously constructed each in relation to the others. Their serial form—no less than the ruined boat—suggests the presence of time in the landscape and arouses an awareness of the local history and meaning of the site. During the 1860s, Brace's Cove was an increasingly rare part of the Cape Ann coastline: relatively inaccessible, it was off the tourist map and not for sale. Local memory and sentiment were built into the rocky shore.[44]

The conscious evocation of time in the Gloucester landscape may also inform the several views of Stage Fort and the Stage Rocks that Lane painted from about 1855 to 1862. In two views of 1857 (fig. 2), the artist presents, through shifting vantage points, the site where "Massachusetts began her history."[45] Three years earlier the Boston historian J. Wingate Thornton had published *The Landing at Cape Anne* [sic], documenting the effort from 1623 to 1625 to establish a plantation and fishing base on the spot.[46] Part of Thornton's account was based on the research of John J. Babson, a Gloucester banker and civic leader who supplied an appendix describing the topography of the shore. It was probably Babson who introduced Lane to Thornton in late 1857 or early 1858, a meeting that resulted in a history painting of the landing intended as a frontispiece to a second edition of the book. Lane wrote to Thornton on 11 January 1858:

> Yours of the 6th came duly to hand and I will answer that I shall be happy to do anything in my power to give you a representation of the scene of the first landing at Cape Ann. The greatest part of the shore, I expect, has undergone but little change, as it is mostly granite rock, the beaches no doubt have incroached [sic] upon the land, since that time, and in fact, within my own remembrance I know much to be the case, to the extent of quite a number of feet, but still the main features of the locality must be nearly the same.
>
> With the stile or model of the vessels, of that time, I am entirely ignorant, and if you, in your researches have ever come acrost [sic] any drawings or engravings of vessels of that period, and would procure me a sight of them, so that I could introduce them into the picture, it would help me out very much—I will consult with Mr. Babson, and when the weather becomes favourable I will get him to go to the ground and with his help, I think we can give a sketch which will not be far from the truth at any rate, I will do my very best[47].

Lane completed a version of the painting by July and sent it to Boston. The picture, now lost, was probably more conventionally narrative than Lane's luminist canvases, but, even here, the artist's letter suggests that he saw the boats as temporal markers within a landscape that was a container of history and the processes of nature.

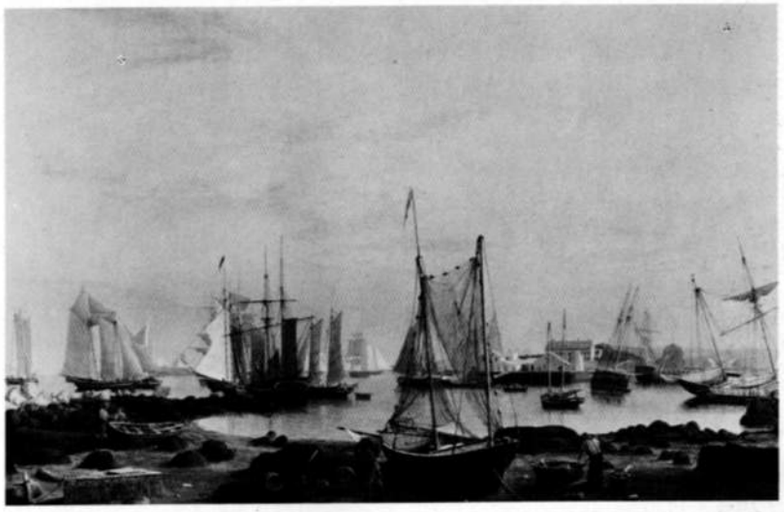


fig. 9. Lane, *Gloucester Inner Harbor,* c. 1850, oil on canvas, 24 x 36 [The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia]

Lane's historical imagination is also evident in what is perhaps his most frequent Cape Ann subject, the view of the Old Fort and Ten Pound Island from the shore of Gloucester Inner Harbor. He painted the scene throughout his career but especially from the late 1840s to early 1850s. Works dating from these years, such as *Gloucester Inner Harbor,* c. 1850 (fig. 9), carefully record the development of Fort Point, much of it owned by George H. Rogers. In a work of about a decade later, *The Old Fort and Ten Pound Island, Gloucester* (fig. 10) this construction has disappeared, as has most evidence of commercial activity. The painting is a luminist work whose classic order and deliberate pattern of boats and reflections and clouds John Wilmerding described as "controlled selectivity in the service of the pictorial statement."[48]

Lane was no less selective in his depiction of the harbor land-

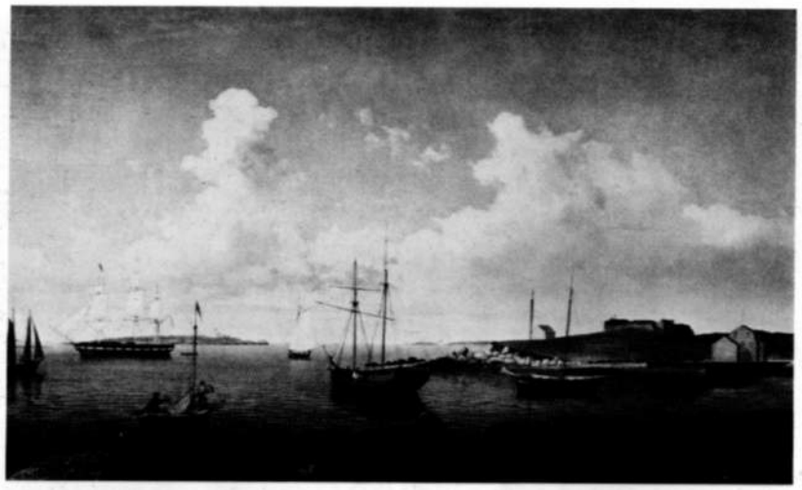


fig. 10. Lane, *The Old Fort and Ten Pound Island, Gloucester,* 1850s, oil on canvas, 22 x 36 [Cape Ann Historical Association, deposited by Addison Gilbert Hospital, Gloucester]

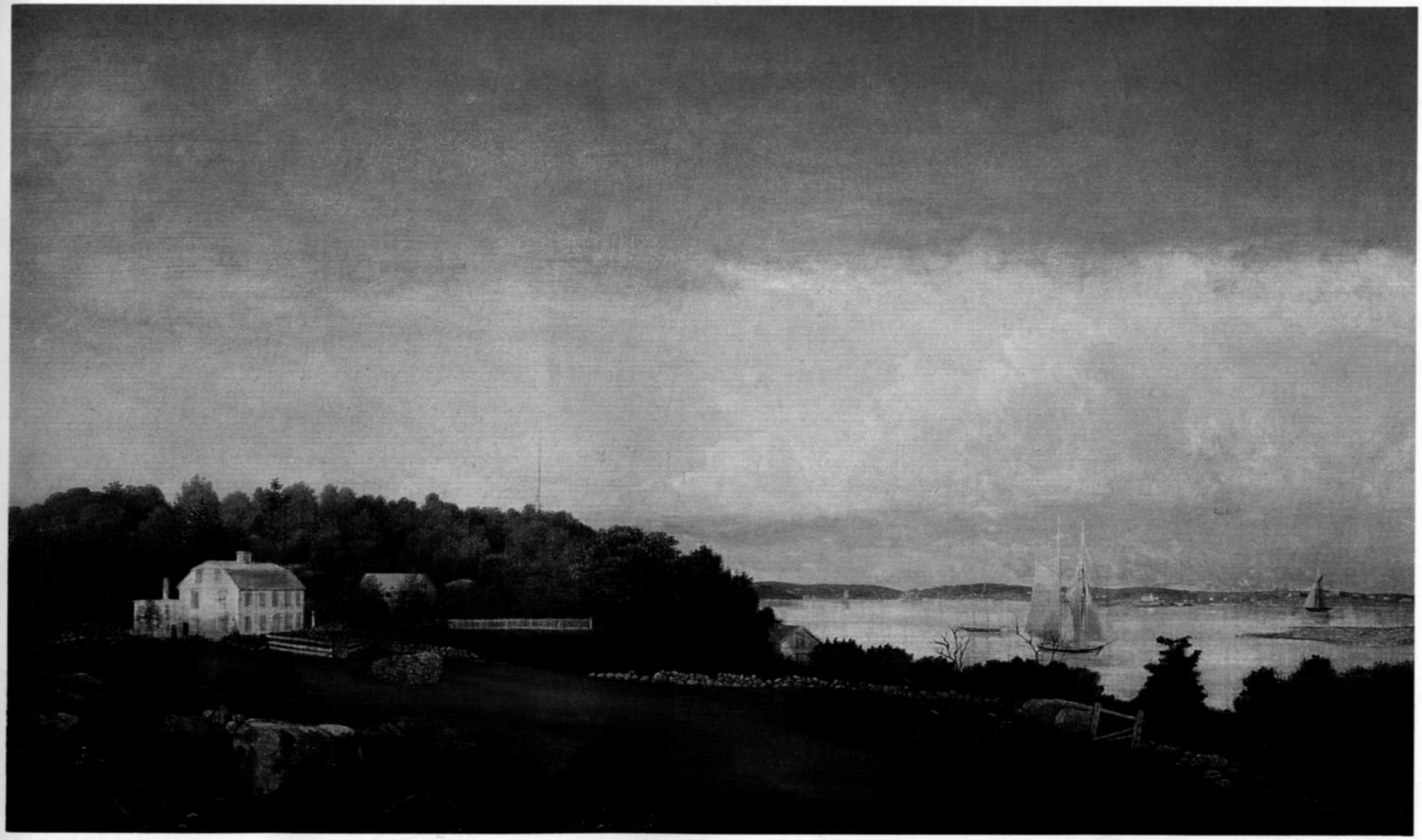
fig. 11. Lane, *View of Old Fort and Harbor, 1837,* c. 1860, lithograph, 4 x 6¾ [Babson, *History of Gloucester*]

scape. As the *Telegraph* of 30 June 1860 described, the painting is an historical recreation of the site. The dark foreground rocks, "Cunner's Rocks," had long been covered by Parkhurst's Wharf. The point is shown without the construction of the 1850s, "unobstructed by any building, and undisturbed by any roadway." On top of the hill the decaying ramparts of the fort appear "with a distinctness and a completeness which brings former times at once to the memory. The brick house, even then in ruins, yet presented a more defined outline and added greatly to the picturesque effect." Lane's nostalgic vision also extended to the craft in the harbor. The newspaper observed "one of the red-tipped fishing boats that used to frequent our harbor in the days before the breakwater was built at Rockport. A little way off lies at anchor an old fashioned banker 'washing out,' which presents a good contrast to the model clippers of the fishing fleet of today."[49]

The alterations to the site in *The Old Fort and Ten Pound Island, Gloucester* were probably connected with an illustration Lane was preparing for Babson's *History of the Town of Gloucester, Cape Ann,* published in 1860. The same features of the Old Fort are found in the lithograph representing the site in 1837 (fig. 11).

More generally, Lane's historical vision may reflect the antiquarian sentiments he shared with local patrons who, like the artist, had family ties to the early history of Gloucester. Both Babson and Stevens devoted much of their attention to historical research,[50] and the *Telegraph* praised *The Old Fort and Ten Pound Island, Gloucester* for "preserving so accurately the features of a view . . . which can never again exist in reality" and proposed a "subscription to purchase it for the Public Library Room, or some other suitable place." A strong localism and attachment to tradition had characterized Gloucester since the eighteenth century, but in the mid-1850s these feelings became acute, as many natives sensed their old world slipping away under the very forces of development and population growth from which they had profited. Babson's *History* noted the influx of Irish and Portugese immigrants—"before 1840, there were few persons of foreign birth or parentage residing in Gloucester"—and cautioned readers of their high birthrates: "Some of these infants are born to an inheritance of vice and ignorance" as "the historian must not fail to warn those who are beholding this with indifference."[51] By 1860, a later chronicler complained, "old customs and pleasant associations [were] rapidly becoming dim in the dissolving view of time."[52]

In his luminist paintings of Cape Ann, Lane seemed to turn away from the commercial shore world he had described earlier, into a world of memory and time. He represented, often in successive images, parts of the Cape Ann coastline unaffected by commercial development or laden with history, and thus may have recovered for his Gloucester patrons the associations of a



cat. 14. *Sawyer Homestead,* 1860, oil on canvas, 23 1/2 x 40 in. [The Board of Trustees of the Sawyer Free Library]

more secure and stable past. This strategy was a familiar and influential one during the 1840s and 1850s: Yoder has described it as the "variegated fabric of Romantic and Conservative ideas."[53] By 1840 the poet H. W. Longfellow had begun to pen historical ballads about picturesque sites in New England, and in 1851 Nathaniel Hawthorne defined the project of *The House of the Seven Gables* as "an attempt to connect a by-gone time with the very Present that is flitting away from us." Living in what he took to be a "weightless" present, Hawthorne had found in New England history "an occasionably usable past."[54] This strategy, as we have seen, was also to be found in the ways of Fitz Hugh Lane's influential contemporary Emerson, in his retreat from the "transparent eyeball" to the stoic observation of the processes of nature.

1. F. DeWolfe Miller, *Christopher Pearse Cranch and His Caricatures of New England Transcendentalism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951).
2. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* in *Essays and Lectures*, ed. Joel Porte (New York, 1983), 10.
3. See Irving Howe, *The American Newness. Culture and Politics in the Age of Emerson* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1986), 3–26.
4. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Historic Notes of Life and Letters in New England," quoted in F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance, Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (London and New York, 1941), 6. For Lane and Emersonian Transcendentalism, see Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism, and the American Experience* (New York, 1969), 110–112; also John Wilmerding, "The Luminist Movement: Some Reflections," in *American Light: The Luminist Movement, 1850–1875* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art] (Washington, 1980), 97–99; Earl A. Powell, "Luminism and the American Sublime," in *American Light*, 68–94; Roger B. Stein, *Seascape and the American Imagination* (New York, 1975), 55–62.
5. Lisa Fellows Andrus, *Measure and Design in American Painting 1760–1860* (New York, 1977), 244–260.
6. On Ruskin's "graphic power" and complex understanding of perception, imagination, and truth to nature, see Elizabeth K. Helsinger, *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1982); for Lane and Ruskin, see Wilmerding, "The Luminist Movement", 108–113.
7. "Paintings," in *Authors and Artists of Cape Ann* (album of miscellaneous newspaper clippings), Cape Ann Historical Association, Gloucester; *Boston Evening Transcript*, 28 October 1850.
8. Barbara Novak, "Nature's Art," in *The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection. Nineteenth-century American painting* (London, 1986), 30.
9. Novak, "Nature's Art," 30. The possible sources for Lane's direct knowledge of Emerson's ideas include the artist's association in Boston in the 1840s with former members of Brook Farm; his friendship with the Rev. William Mountford, a Unitarian minister who, after his move from Gloucester to Boston in the 1840s, became something of a Transcendental hanger-on; and Emerson's lectures at the Gloucester Lyceum, for which see Marshall W. S. Swan, "Emerson and Cape Ann," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 121 (October 1985), 257–268. Emerson corresponded with the head of the Lyceum, Dr. Herman Davidson, a close friend of the artist.
10. Michael T. Gilmore, *American Romanticism and the Marketplace* (Chicago, 1985), 19.
11. Gilmore, *American Romanticism*, 4.
12. "Spiritual Laws" (1841), reprinted in Porte, ed., *Essays and Lectures*, 317; "The Transcendentalist" (1842), reprinted in Porte, ed., *Essays and Lectures*, 193, 198.
13. "Wealth" (1860), reprinted in Porte, ed., *Essays and Lectures*, 1000.
14. *Nature*, 13. My discussion is strongly indebted to Gilmore.
15. "The Method of Nature" (1841), reprinted in Porte, ed., *Essays and Lectures*, 126.
16. *Nature*, 42.
17. *Nature*, 22, 48, 44.
18. Gilmore, *American Romanticism*, 30.
19. R. A. Yoder, "Transcendental Conservatism and *The House of the Seven Gables*," *The Georgia Review* 27 (spring 1974), 34, and "The Equilibrist Perspective: Toward a Theory of American Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism* 12 (1973), 705–740.
20. "Experience" (1844), reprinted in Porte, ed., *Essays and Lectures*, 491–492.
21. Yoder, "The Equilibrist," 708; "The Method of Nature," 119.
22. For Gloucester's commercial development, see John J. Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester, Cape Ann, Including the Town of Rockport* (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1860); *The Fisheries of Gloucester from the First Catch by the English in 1623, to the Centennial Year, 1876* (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1876); James R. Pringle, *History of the Town and City of Gloucester, Cape Ann, Massachusetts* (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1892); Joseph E. Garland, *Down to the Sea: The Fishing Schooners of Gloucester* (Boston, 1983); Paul Johnston Forsythe, *The New England Fisheries* [exh. cat., Peabody Museum of Salem] (Salem, Massachusetts, 1984), vii–xi; "Our Town," *The Gloucester Telegraph* (6 June 1846).
23. *Gloucester Telegraph* (21 September 1859).
24. Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester*, 569.
25. "Paintings by Fitz H. Lane," *Gloucester Telegraph* (4 August 1849).
26. John Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane, 1804–1865, American Marine Painter* (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1967), 17.
27. *Gloucester Telegraph* (6 June 1846).
28. F. A. Durivage, "Cape Ann Sketches," *The Pictorial National Library* 2 (March 1849), 143.
29. Durivage, "Cape Ann Sketches," 143.
30. James F. O'Gorman, "The Pavilion that Sidney Built," *North Shore* (10 January 1976), 3–5.
31. Quoted in William H. Gerdts, "The Sea Is His Home: Clarence Cook Visits Fitz Hugh Lane," *The American Art Journal* 17 (summer 1985), 47.
32. Alfred Mansfield Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*, ed. Joseph E. Garland (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1974), 162.
33. Durivage, "Cape Ann Sketches," 143–144.
34. John S. Webber, Jr., *In and around Cape Ann: A hand-book of Gloucester, Mass., and its immediate vicinity* (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1885), 29–30; for Rogers, see Brooks, *Gloucester Recollected*, 62–74.
35. Durivage, "Cape Ann Sketches," 145.
36. Webber, *In and around Cape Ann*, 56.
37. Marshall W. S. Swan, *Town on Sandy Bay* (Canaan, New Hampshire, 1980), 138–164; Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester*, 465.
38. Webber, *In and around Cape Ann*, 32–35.
39. For example, Rogers owned at least four of Lane's paintings: see "Sale of Lane's paintings" (12 May 1871), *Authors and Artists of Cape Ann*.
40. Alfred Mansfield Brooks, "The Fitz Hugh Lane House in Gloucester," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 78 (1942), 281–283. Deeds and liens to the property and house dating from 1849–1859 are in the Essex South District Registry of Deeds, Salem, Massachusetts.
41. Pringle, *History of the Town and City of Gloucester*, 109–110.
42. Fragment of letter in Cape Ann Historical Association.

43. John Dixon Hunt, "Picturesque Mirrors and the Ruins of the Past," *Art History* 4 (September 1981), 256–257. It is significant that both the primacy of sight and concern with a new relationship between the verbal and visual found in Ruskin's *Modern Painters* were substantially derived from his education in the picturesque: see Hunt, "*Ut pictura poesis*, the picturesque, and John Ruskin," *Modern Language Notes* 93 (1978), 794–818.
44. Joseph E. Garland, *Eastern Point* (Peterborough, New Hampshire, 1971), 57–94.
45. Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester*, 34.
46. John Wingate Thornton, *The Landing of Cape Anne; or, The charter of the first permanent colony of the Massachusetts company* (Boston, 1854). See John Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane* (New York, 1971), 72–74.
47. Lane to Thornton (11 January 1858), in John Wingate Thornton Papers, New England Historic & Genealogical Society, Boston. The Thornton Papers also contain an undated letter to Thornton from N. D. Cotter, Picture Frame Manufactury & Art Repository, 272 Washington Street [Boston], informing him that "M[r] Lane has left with me a Painting of the first landing at Cape Ann, which he would like you to look at."
48. Wilmerding, *Fitz Hugh Lane*, 42.
49. "A Fine Painting," *Gloucester Telegraph* (30 June 1860).
50. For Stevens, see F. A. Sharf, "Fitz Hugh Lane: Visits to the Maine Coast, 1848–1855," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 98 (April 1962), 111–113.
51. Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester*, 563–564.
52. Pringle, *History of the Town and City of Gloucester*, 112.
53. Yoder, "Transcendental Conservatism," 33.
54. See Helen Archibald Clarke, *Longfellow's County* (New York, 1909); Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (New York, 1982), 2; Howe, *The American Newness*, 4.