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LANE LITHOGRAPHS: AN OVERVIEW LECTURE FINDING AID & TRANSCRIPT

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Video Description

Offered in conjunction with the exhibition *Drawn from Nature and on Stone: The Lithographs of Fitz Henry Lane*, which was on view at the Cape Ann Museum from October 7 through March 4, 2018, this lecture features John Wilmerding, retired Deputy Director of the National Gallery of Art and a noted Fitz Henry Lane scholar. Wilmerding traces the evolution of Fitz Henry Lane's artistic style from his early work in sheet music covers to his mid-career panoramic harbor views to his later and more sophisticated maritime compositions. While placing images of Lane's lithographs and paintings side by side with those of potential influential contemporaries

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such as Robert Salmon and John Quidor, Wilmerding presents accepted facts and poses intriguing new questions that warrant further research, demonstrating that an art historian's work is never truly finished.

Subject list

Fitz Henry Lane	lithography
Fitz Henry Lane Online	19th century American art
Robert Salmon	John Wilmerding
John Quidor	

Transcript

00:21 Ronda Faloon

Good evening everyone, whose idea was it to start at five o'clock on a beautiful Friday afternoon! I thought on October 27 we would be in the middle of a snowstorm or something. I didn't think it would be so lovely. I'm Ronda Faloon. I'm the Museum's Director, and I'd like to wish a warm welcome to all, to Dr. Willmerding, to the exhibition curator Georgia Barnhill, our visiting scholars, to the Director of Fitz Henry Lane Online, Sam Holdsworth, and to all the others of you in this room who've contributed to Lane scholarship over the years. I once read that history really never says "Goodbye." It just says, "See you later," and over time we revisit, we reconsider, and we investigate anew, and so it is with Fitz Henry Lane. For the past fifteen years, the Museum has been at the forefront of investigations into Lane, and the impetus for this began right here in this room. In 2004, in honor of the 200th anniversary of Fitz Hugh Lane's birth, Dr. John Wilmerding, an early scholar of Lane's work presented a talk here in the auditorium. He commented that many mysteries still remained about Lane, about his work and his life. Why did he change his name from Nathaniel Rogers Lane to Fitz Hugh Lane? What was his artistic relationship with his student Mary Blood Mellen? And over the course of a few months as a result of inquiries made by our by our librarian and archivist, we discovered that Fitz Hugh Lane was really Fitz Henry Lane. And in 2007, we hosted an exhibition curated by Dr. Wilmerding and a symposium that brought Mary Mellen's work to the forefront. In 2010 under the direction of Sam Holdsworth, we launched Fitz Henry Lane Online, a web-based resource that over time will become a full catalog raisonne of Lane's work. And earlier this month we celebrated the opening of Drawn from Nature and on Stone, an in depth exploration of Lane's work as a lithographer curated by Georgia Barnhill. And tomorrow, seven scholars will present new research on his craft and on his times. The Cape Ann Museum has been collecting, documenting, and preserving Lane's work for nearly a century. We're proud to serve as the Center for Lane Studies, and we look forward to revisiting, reconsidering, and continuing to investigate Lane's life, his accomplishments, and his influence for years to come. Sam

Holdsworth, a board member of the Museum and Director of Fitz Henry Lane Online deserves a long introduction in his own right, but I'm saving that for another time. He has kindly agreed to do the honor of introducing Dr. Wilmerding, and so please join me in welcoming Sam Holdsworth to the podium. Thanks.

(Applause)

03:07 Sam Holdsworth

It is my great pleasure tonight to introduce Mr. Wilmerding. He has played the pivotal role in Lane scholarship since 1960 as the seminal art historian, scholar, and writer on Lane and has effectively brought Lane out of the shadows and into the forefront of 19th century American art through his work. And his work on Lane, which numbers now four books, numerous articles, curation of the only major retrospective of Lane's work at the National Gallery in Washington in 1988, has had an enormously beneficial impact both on the Cape Ann Museum and certainly on Gloucester itself. And just try to provide a little background because beginnings are always interesting and John's intersection with Lane and Gloucester began via a fascinating series of circumstances, nothing is a straight line as one can imagine from a distance. But as a junior at Harvard in 1958, with an interest in art and literature, he was casting about for a thesis subject. To say American art was under appreciated at Harvard in this time is an understatement. It didn't exist, except for a single professor, Ben Rowland, who gave a one semester course once every five years. This is like the mating cycle of a panda. And even that, I think was controversial, I'm sure, at the Board. But even up until the late '70s, doctoral theses on American art were not accepted unless it was a direct comparison made with European art. Very hard to imagine. But true enough, so John had the good fortune to hit on that five year cycle and take the course, and without that happy timing and accident, he might be giving a lecture on Bronzino this evening in another museum. But he did, and he was intrigued with American art in part because his grandmother Electra Havemeyer Webb, the founder of the Shelburne Museum in Vermont, was building her American paintings collection at this time, which included several Lanes and numerous other under-recognized American painters, many of them acquired directly from Maxim Karolik. John managed to get Ben Rowland to be his advisor on this thesis and began looking for a subject. He was initially drawn to marine art as he had been a sailor since boyhood and remains such, and thought that was a good genre to look into. He settled on Fitz Hugh Lane at the time, though not knowing a lot about him. In part due to visits he was making to a friend in Gloucester, Eloise Weld, and sailing in the harbor with she and her father Phil Weld in his catboat, he may not have initially realized what a good choice Lane was. But for the next two years, he had unlimited access to the collections and archives of first the Cape Ann Museum via Hyde Cox, who embraced the project wholeheartedly and gave him unlimited access to all the paintings and the ninety plus drawings of Lane and the related archives here at the Museum. And this was in the day that those were very hard to access. The MFA in Boston was another resource with the Karolik collection of fifteen-plus Lane paintings that he had access to. And third was Charlie Childs at the Childs Gallery, who handled a steady stream of Lanes that had been pulled from New England homes. The Childs Gallery has sold over 170 Lanes over the course of their time, which is really an extraordinary number. And

Childs was very conversant with it, and I think, was happy to share his knowledge. And also the Essex Institute in Salem, which at the time, and that was part of Peabody Essex Museum, but they initially published his thesis in parts as part of their quarterly newsletter. And then in 1964, they published an edited and expanded version of that same senior thesis, which became the very first monograph on Lane, the *Fitz Hugh Lane*, the little blue book, as we call it. And I will speculate a bit here, and maybe John can answer this question later. But I wonder if John as he began work, thinking Lane was indeed a skilled marine artist who certainly knew his boats, rigging and sails, and I wonder then, in looking more closely as he began to see more and more paintings, how he then incrementally realized the much greater scope and ambition of Lane's work, and how masterfully executed it was. How it appeared to incorporate many elements of the transcendentalist movement of the time, how the subject turned from boats and harbor to harvest a purely lightened atmosphere, and how far it went beyond any traditional artisanal view of marine painting.

08:09

Lane takes an extraordinary leap from the early ships portraits of the 1840s to his late luminous work of the 1860s. And this remarkable artistic progression certainly would not have been the case if John had chosen a marine painter like Buttersworth, Bradford, or Jacobsen, all of whom were capable marine painters, but certainly didn't go to where Lane went. Fortunately for us, he did choose Lane, and that senior thesis led to an expanded monograph on Lane in 1971, a reprint of which the Museum has published recently. And then it culminated in the catalogue of the only major Lane retrospective, which John curated at the National Gallery in Washington in 1988. Many of you probably saw it at the MFA in Boston, a remarkable show that only he could have pulled together, and I doubt we'll see that kind of collection of Lanes in one place again. So amidst all of this, there is an additional enormous career that Mr. Willmerding has had, one as a professor, first at Dartmouth and then later at Princeton. Second, as a curator, initially curator of American Art at the National Gallery, and then Deputy Director for ten or twelve years. He's curated numerous gallery shows, as well as museum shows on multiple subjects around the country. He is also, as you well know, an author. More than twenty-five books on subjects as diverse as Robert Salmon and Richard Estes, and Robert Indiana, and many others. Also a collector, he has, he just donated a major collection of American art to the National Gallery, of folk art and Americana, and a library to Shelburne, and continues collecting pop art and god knows what else in his spare time. And so it gives me enormous pleasure to introduce him here. Mr. Wilmerding has a very special place in Gloucester and certainly at the Cape Ann Museum. It is said that an artist via their work, whether consciously or unconsciously, explains or reveals much about their time and their place to their audience. And in the case of Lane, Dr. Wilmerding has assumed that role and by his scholarship, his lectures, his lucid and poetic writing about Lane's work, has revealed this great artist at a time when he was really only marginally known, and to the greater, he's revealed Lane to really the greater art world, the public, and certainly to Gloucester itself. And for this, we owe him a great debt of gratitude and appreciation. And it is my great pleasure tonight to introduce him on the occasion of the first ever show of Fitz Henry Lane lithographs.

11:12 John Wilmerding

Thank you so much for that very generous introduction. And it gives me all the shivers to return to this podium. Because for me, of course, this is ground zero. This is where my, in effect, professional career was birthed almost sixty years ago, hard to believe. And Sam was pointing out the permutations of this institution. And the first thing I should do is compliment everybody here, and all of its recent history. Because when I first walked in the door here, I guess it was Hyde Cox, or maybe Phil Hofer, who had introduced me to the then elderly curator Alfred Mansfield Brooks, who was the one who really cared for these collections. It was really only the historic house upstairs, this expanded building, the galleries, all were to come a good deal later. It was then the Cape Ann, as you know probably, Literary Historical or Scientific, Literary and Historical Association, which was a terrible mouthful when you were writing your footnotes. But as I recall, I don't think the building, the Association, was even open to the public, or had any public access. You simply came if you knew the collections, made an appointment, and then you could come see what you want. After I'd gotten going, basically Alfred Brooks gave me a key to the front door and said come work whenever I wanted. And so that's that's how it all started. So you know, all these years later and everything we've all accomplished, Cape Ann has grown into a really professional, lovely regional museum, now doing first rate publications, and with what is upstairs, a really remarkable professional museum exhibition, and Georgia Barnhill, whom you've heard of is here, she has really moved the work that I guess I began, on Lane's prints and Lanes generally, to a whole new level. And literally, in some ways she ought to be speaking because she now knows more about Lane prints than I do. So this is a kind of threshold moment where I'm sort of being nudged offstage, and it is very satisfying in many ways to see a younger generation of scholars beginning to work on Lane and carry the work forward, not just in the print area, but most triumphantly of all is the work that was mentioned that Sam Holdsworth has done here. I mean, I'm barely computer literate. And what he has done in organizing the catalog raisonne in itself is one of the great triumphs to my mind. It's one of the very best catalog raisonnés certainly of an American artist and possibly anywhere of an artist that now exists, imaginative, interdisciplinary, moving far beyond just the recording of date and size and medium, and is really going to be the foundation. In a way we're halfway through. You probably know we've recorded, I say we, I can barely take claim, we've recorded virtually all of Lane's works that we know about in public collections, and the hard work now comes in the other half of his career, works in private collections, many of which, given the Lane market and privacy of collectors, even I don't know where some of his greatest works are, they are buried elsewhere. We hope to track them down and record them. But clearly that enterprise is going to be the foundation of everything going forward. So, you know, we can use this moment in a way as this sort of transitional point from the past to the future, and it's great being part of it. Let me then turn, Sam asked if I would do by way of an introduction to the symposium in which you'll hear a lot more, again, going beyond anything that I've done, to

15:55

just giving an overview, my sense of an overview, of the lithographs that you can see upstairs, and while two early music sheets are on the screen here, I guess, I don't know how much to assume, but I think for the record, it's worth quickly summarizing a couple of things about the

lithographic process. Because it is the most modern of printmaking techniques until the digital age, being invented in Germany at the last year's of the 19th, of the 18th century, coming to America in the first years of the of the 19th century, and replacing and making possible whole new approaches to printmaking, that hadn't been available with earlier methods, the most notable ones being etching and engraving. There was also woodcut. All of those earlier methods, as you probably know, required gouging into either wood or a metal plate, or in the case of etching, gouging, and combined with drawing on a surface, and then, a waxy surface, cutting into it, and then having acid bite into the stone. So there was a labor involved that was greatly simplified in moving to the lithograph. The other was the printing aspect of itself, by definition with printing presses or hand rolling or whatever, one had to force the paper into those gouged out lines. So, this meant for the most part, a very limited edition could be produced before the lines broke down, and the artist either reworked them in later states, like Rembrandt and others. So, there was there was a kind of rarefication there, there was difficulty involved. With the lithograph we move into what's called the planographic process. That is to say, it is one flat surface. You don't have to press or dig or gouge or bite into the metal plate. It involves polished stone, clearly polishing a broad surface of stone,

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drawing on it with a greasy crayon. And what's remarkable is, to go and get ahead of ourselves here, is Lane's ability to draw with not only as it were a broad brush, but with very precise fine pointed instruments. But the point is that, nice pun there, the point is that it is drawing on the stone with a greasy crayon. Then the producer or the designer or the artist or the printmaker would moisten the surface with water, the water would adhere or be absorbed into areas that had not been drawn. But leaving obviously the greasy part of the drawn part free, then you ink it with a grease-based ink or something of that sort, the ink would naturally be picked up with what is drawn, but would be repelled by whatever surface had moisture on it. Very simple idea, but it transformed printmaking in the sense that, then all you had to do is put a sheet of paper across that surface. There was no digging or pressing, you could roll out many more copies. And if you wanted to proceed further, you simply redrew and re-inked. So the number of copies that now are made possible itself was really important for the whole function of prints. And the fact that much of this development coincides with the first, what, third of the 19th century, particularly when America turns to landscape and to nature as the great subject of national identity, that would be the subject for the 19th century. And so now lithography makes possible the wish that now rises for owners of estates, for city fathers, towns of all sizes, who wanted to document a view of their landscape, their homestead, a matter of civic pride, so to speak, a form of advertising, if you will, and this is exactly what Lane when he reaches his mature, exactly what he takes advantage of, and does for Gloucester and the other New England towns where he works, really provides a body of imagery that now can be sold very cheaply. It's a piece of, you know, I won't dismiss it as a piece of paper, but you know Lane's early lithographs, uncoloured, 25 cents, even, and this we're still trying to sort out the confusion because later ones, he often hand-tinted with watercolor. And then there are a number of cases, I'll show you a couple, where he actually painted over in oil, the lithograph, and had it framed as a painting.

So that stage was often \$25. So he was, Lane had a wonderful intuitive sense of, as it were, of market and selling to a real range of financial levels.

22:01

The other thing to say at the outset, and I think it's, we almost take this for granted now, but I say it here at the outset, because even though many of these don't reach the, call it the sublimity, of the late, the last oils, where he's truly a transcendent artist and brings into the flesh, oh, one of the great artists of his generation. Nonetheless, I want to argue and have from the beginning, that the process of learning printmaking and lithography specifically are absolutely fundamental to everything that follows. And Lane, yes, I guess he had, we believe an early talent for drawing. We don't know exactly what his early training was. It was said that he wandered around the shorelines sketching, clearly he was good, beginning to be good enough at some point in the late '20s, early '30s, to have an aspiration to make his way back to Boston, and to get employment in the great lithography shop of Pendleton. So there was some impulse to go there, and obviously was even good enough by that point to get employed and begin the career that largely starts with these very small scale, so-called music sheet covers. Now, one final point in this regard, printmaking and lithography, of course, to begin with, trains you in two very specific ways. One, the emphasis on draftsmanship, on line, and of course that's when all of it came together, the confluence with Lane's extraordinary ability, some intuitive, obviously some developed, some learned. However you define it, it is this sense of line that we later see, of course, in the rigging and other other details, but also you have to think, and as line, as outline, Lane understood contours. And the other aspect of lithography and printmaking, of course, is modeling, shading. This is a medium explicitly based on lights and darks, and Lane was able to learn and later exploit them when it comes to model figures or buildings or to draw a sky, to understand the so-called graphic aspect, the black and white and all of the shades in between. And so if you think of that, when you go upstairs, not only the print exhibition, but across the whole permanent collection, you can see that sensibility underlying all of his, really all of his oil paintings, his ability in detail, and this is what we've learned finally distinguishes him from his followers like Mary Mellen and Bradford and the Elwells here in Gloucester, and sets him apart. Certainly, when he brings those talents to marine scenes and paintings of vessels. So with that introduction, just keep those, in a sense, principles in mind.

25:34

Lane begins then, first in Gloucester, I'm convinced, unless we can turn up evidence otherwise, the coincidence is too important to overlook. That is to say, come the early 1830s, here I am already forgetting my own dates, I need to consult myself, the year that he goes to the Massachusetts General Court and petitions to change his name. We still don't know why he gave Rogers up, or even where Fitz Hugh, I'm sorry, we're Fitz Henry—I don't know where any of them came from. But we still don't know, you know, why he chose that name. In a way, that's not the point. The point here is the moment that he does it, because within a year he is employed and beginning to make his first prints, and not long after, able to sign them FH Lane, or Fitz H Lane, and L, very, very soon. So somehow, I guess I'm fairly certain, that was no

accident, that choosing a new name, in a sense as other artists have done, Mark Twain being the most famous, or Walter Whitman going to Walt Whitman, Lane is choosing as it were an artistic identity, in some sense separating himself from his family and joining the community of would-be artists. Unless we can turn up something else that explains it, that really does make sense. So in the early '30s, he gets his way to Boston, is employed by Pendelton, and assigned what is, in a sense, the standard beginning work for artists, namely doing these small music sheet illustrations. His first ones, these are not the very first, are quite simple, no elaborate framing devices, but fairly soon, within a year or two, he's doing images like this, *The Mad Girl's Song*. And is that Ellen's? Oh, *The Song of the Fisher's Wife*, where again, it's not only the little vignette that's rather nicely handled, but also these marvelous details where in a sense, you see hints of the future, the marine elements, and really quite wonderful line drawing here that surrounds, you know, a fairly straightforward, rather syrupy, romantic kind of assignment. But already in these first works, or really earliest works, you can see that sense of handling light and shade. And the various gradations in between understanding the figure. As I say, you know, as, on the one hand, the figure as a silhouetted form, and yet also these displays, what shall I say, of pure line work, pure linearism. I want to spend a moment however, on these early works, because in some ways this is an area where I think we can all do a little bit more work, particularly on this period of the early '30s, is, and we know some of it, Lane in the context of what he might have seen, what was going on. Boston has now, you know, emerged as the major art capital, certainly well before New York, rivaled only by Philadelphia, with two of the grand old names of the Federal period, namely Gilbert Stuart settling in his last years here, and here, Washington Allston, the other great painter of the new romantic style of painting moving away from neoclassicism. I just show you one of Allston's allegorical figures. I just wonder whether there isn't, you know, here's a young, as I say, certainly aspiring draftsman, young artist. Allston as I say was the grand old man in American painting in Boston up until the 1830s. And so, I suspect he may have had an eye out and absorbed something of what he would have seen at the Athenaeum or elsewhere in the city.

30:21

The other is less of a connection. Oh, I should say before leaving, I'm sorry, before leaving Allston, there is the point to be made, I'm not showing you the slide of it, Allston was not only a great figure painter, sort of an allegorical painter. There are at least several major landscape and sunset paintings, the most famous being the one now in the Boston Museum collection called *Moonlit Landscape*, which looks directly forward to Lane's moonlight, first to Salmon's moonlight paintings a few years later the next decade, and then Lane. So I think, as I say, the Allston connection is worth doing a little bit more digging. I make this comparison because one of the great genre painters of the period, I haven't done the homework yet on how well-known if at all he was in Boston, but certainly is a key figure, but more to the point, Lane's gesture here in *The Maniac*, this kind of gesturing of the, not just madness, but of the sublime, comes right out again of the vocabulary of landscape combined with genre painting. This is John Quidor, *The Money Diggers*, and I may even date to the '20s. It just struck me as a variant of this, again, this kind of sublime composition, sort of, over these overdramatic gestures, my point simply being, that this language of description particularly for figures was very much in the air, very much

available. Whether there's a specific link to these two images, as I say, leaves the issue open. And then we'll come back in a moment, I've mentioned Robert Salmon or Salmon has been mentioned. Just reproductions of several other types of imagery and no immediate chronological order because these are already relatively early works in the '30s and '40s. The illustration for Oak Hall, I'm just fascinated, both of these were folded images into the frontispieces of either books, magazines, or advertising pamphlets. The *Oak Hall*, very rare lithograph, I'm sure more will turn up, and you can see the creases, it was folded up into several things and then packed into the front of the of the pamphlet. An advertisement clearly for this haberdashery, gentleman's haberdashery, in Boston. Interesting from Lane's point of view, because of course, he is here embracing the new Gothic Revival, the marvelous painting of the perspective of the ceiling line there. Let me just get my pointer here. But also the detailing of the facade, all of this wonderful sort of Gothic work, the windows there, in the very background, link that ceiling, the groin ceiling, I wonder, links to—is it, who is the genre painter in the Boston Museum, *The Dinner Party*? Henry Sargent, thank you, Henry Sargent, so again, I'm just speculating here on what Lane knew of artists, fellow artists that work in Boston. The *Bark Antelope* on this, on the right hand screen, is one of, still I think, Georgia Barnhill and I were upstairs trying to sort some of this out before the talk, the *Bark Antelope*, or the *Demi Steam Bark*, was known in several different versions, several different states. We've got to do some measurements, but I think also in different sizes, we need to establish whether only one plate was used, or typical often for Lane, working in different modes. In any case, this particular version came out of the Robert Bennet Forbes book on accounts of his worldwide sailing voyages and travels. The one upstairs is clearly established as done for the nautical magazine. And keep this in mind, and when you go upstairs,

35:07

the typography along the baseline is entirely different. So clearly he was either working for two different formats, so we don't know the circumstances, but that's the wonderful thing about an exhibition like this with all of its new scholarship, it's already setting in motion issues that we can pursue further. And then some, and in a way I discovered this early, and I think there's no question Salmon comes to Boston, and as you may, and not surprising when I'd finished my first Lane project, the next book I worked on was the monograph on Robert Salmon, because he was the most important predecessor for Lane and for American marine painting, born in the 17-, about 1775, really the generation of Constable and Turner, well established as an artist by the turn of the 19th century, painting harbor views, coastal views, city views, around southern Scotland and the entire lower coast of England. Not only doing city views, harbor views, but also marine scenes like this. For what again, we don't know the exact circumstances but again, probably not surprising, I guess, by 1829, you know, Salmon's in his early 50s or more. A well, as I say, well-established artist, makes the decision to come to Boston. Now, artists of course were coming from both England and the continent. Thomas Cole already at 18-, what 1804, and then others, Michel Garnier comes, artists import, I suspect, fleeing the Napoleonic Wars. But in Salmon's case, my guess is as an established marine painter, learning something about the New World, decides he will make a new career for himself doing marine subjects in one of the great cities of the English Empire, former English Empire, namely Boston. Any case, he's here by 1829

and does his first great panoramas of Boston Harbor, several thought to be theater backdrops, given their size. Boston has one, New Britain Museum has one. We're going to learn a lot more about Salmon for the first time since, I again, worked on him back in the '70s. I believe the New Britain Museum is organizing a big Salmon retrospective a couple of years hence. And that will probably show us a lot more. In any case, Salmon gets work as I say in the theater profession, begins to sketch around parts of Boston, kept an important appendix of many of his patrons, kept a very detailed list of subjects and even sizes of works. It's an invaluable resource. The original is now in the Boston Public Library Rare Book Collection. And it tells us about patronage in this, in the end of the Federal period. And Salmon like Lane really needs to be looked at much more thoroughly from a point of view of material culture, what they tell us about real estate, landscape development, of ownership, let alone all the industries from boat building and so forth that we've started to identify in these pictures. So here's another lithograph music sheet, this called *Alcohol Rocks*, when the ship *Temperance* off the coast there watches the wreckage of the *Intemperance*

39:29

on shore. So here are these sort of little moralistic themes that he's still, in a sense, his early bread and butter. But the whole idea of the composition of the shipwreck is again, deeply embedded in many, many pictures that Salmon had done, and in his American career, his career in Boston now, very critically, from 1829 to 1844, when he disappears from Boston, and we're not absolutely sure will return, some think to his native England, there are two amazing 1845 paintings of Palermo and southern Italy. And whether these were done from, again, Italian views, or whether Salmon actually went somewhere on the continent, we don't know. But in that key period between as it were 1830 and '29 and '45, fifteen-year period, this is of course, the key period when Lane comes into his early maturity, both as a graphic artist and the beginnings, on the end of that period, of his first, no accident I think, the very moment that Salmon leaves Boston, we have Lane's first dated paintings of Gloucester Harbor, a couple upstairs, among the earliest works the boy on the dock on the wonderful barrel with his name and the date on it. So those are more than coincidences. Now. He could have also have seen various other shipwreck scenes in engravings or even loaned paintings, whether after the order of the originals or after artists. I mean, I'm thinking of the French painter Joseph Vernay, we can probably call to mind several others, but again, I think Salmon is a bedrock for many of these images. Salmon again, as I've said, Salmon himself not doing a music sheet cover, but a fire department certificate, the burning of the old Statehouse there, and, but it's a certificate, the same sizes as a music sheet. So here again, even the subject matter, the burning of buildings in Boston, no doubt led to Lane taking on, we believe, a copy after somebody else's print, but does it himself, the burning of buildings in, this is in Canada, St. John's, New Brunswick, the burning of the buildings there. So the whole idea again of the fire scene. I'm just going to show you two or three pairings here to make my point. One of the first Lanes I encountered in my grandmother's collection at Shelburne, and I'm beginning to wonder whether I really have a memory, but I believe when I first saw this was when she first got it from Maxim Karolik, and I guess that this could be confirmed by x-radiography, but before it was relined, there was an inscription, "The Yacht Northern Light in Boston Harbor, after a Painting by Robert Salmon." So

it's one of the linchpins for the beginning of the Boston Harbor imagery by Salmon. There's no question it's by Salmon, I mean, it's, in a way, it looks like a Salmon. The water looks like Salmon. But it is one of Lane's first marine subjects. So it's a painting where you could explore in a way the framing edges of large crop vessels, something of the awkwardness, those Salmon-like waves and so forth, all of which Lane absorbs and adapts into his own early paintings. So in a way at this moment, then it's not just Salmon as an artist, it is the threshold really of Lane moving forward, both as a graphic artist and the intersection now, the overlay, with his paintings. And here on the right one of Lane's lithographs which you can see upstairs, the *Boston Light Infantry Captain Austin's Quick Step* with the

44:09

soldiers marching in the foreground. And again, what one would describe as a classic Salmon view, constructed view, of the Constitution and old Statehouse. They're in the background, which would lead to one or two other Salmon paintings, but also the many famous Lanes of the next few years. To make my point, there of course is one of the view of Boston Harbor from Constitution Wharf by Salmon there on the left, and a lithograph now from Lane's more mature period moving into the 1840s of Boston Harbor. This, intriguingly, is done in two slightly different sizes. This has got the so-called Tiger Boat Club here in the foreground. There is a different boat in the foreground of the other version, probably two different commissions. One, and one of the great contributions that Georgia Barnhill has done for us in the title, and in the research for this exhibition, is sorting out Lane's, in a way, three distinct roles in working on lithographs. One, where he actually says or inscribes "drawn from nature," or occasionally "after a painting by Lane," which then confirms that the original drawing was Lane. In other cases, the inscription "on stone" or "F H Lane delineavit (drew) on stone." And those are cases again, where it might have been his original that he translated or turned over and had supervised. And then the third category, where his lithographic firms with Scott and Bufford and others, where he appears to be a kind of entrepreneur making and publishing other people's drawings under the rubric, under the name of his firm. So he obviously had a hand in it, but where they were not necessarily his original designs. So there's still a kind of complexity here that is going to take us further to sort out, but we've now begun to in a sense see the different roles that he played in this printmaking process. But here is Salmon looking forward to one of Lane's great subjects, and dare I show you the obvious, leading now within a matter of years, to Lane's wonderful paintings, particularly of Boston Harbor there, the one in Los Angeles, the original Ganz painting. And then this remarkable singular picture on the right, the *Sweepstakes in New York Harbor*. The only painting, well, again, we haven't done x-rays on the one at the Met that also was relined. But this one in the Museum of the City of New York, and I saw it all those years ago, and I, in a way for obvious reasons, because it was the only painting I ever saw that has an inscription, both on the back and is signed on the front, Fitz Henry Lane. And I remember the curator there asking me to come look at it. And I was dumbfounded because there is no question that the entire signature is absolutely in his handwriting. Well, mind you, you know, if you've inherited, as it were, the received information from the great John Baur, the author of the Karolik collection, the various art historians who had researched before me, including Barbara Novak, nobody questioned "Fitz Hugh Lane," and we'd only seen

at the most inscriptions saying “Fitz H Lane,” so “Hugh” was natural. And it never occurred to me. I mean, my explanation at the time was, well, maybe this is a reference to a nephew. There was a Lane nephew, I think, fought in the Civil War here in Gloucester. I didn't know what to make, except that to say it was real. But because I'd see no other examples, I let it sit back on the, you know, the walls of the City Museum, and went on with Lane work. But had I been a better, I suppose, art historian or investigator, I would have tried to have run that down, because they did know both the owner of the vessel and the captain,

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one of which, or both of which, both of whom, would have commissioned this. So there's some interesting history behind it. In any case, it's a slightly different version of some of the other ship portrait harbor scenes, particularly done in Boston, that derive directly as I say, from the Salmon model. Then we come to the early landscapes. He is now able, as it were, to begin to work on his own still within the, as it were, the Pendleton, Boston, umbrella. Now executing his first view, two of which are upstairs, of Gloucester Harbor in 1836. Really his first established full scale view on a, you know, medium-sized plate moving beyond clearly the scale and the limitations of music sheet covers, I early realized in looking at it, that it has a kind of primitivism in the little birds-eye figures that, I mean these little tiny stick figures, scale is all out of whack here, this view looking across Gloucester Inner Harbor to the western shore. As I pointed out at the time, two different points of view, merged together, that is to say we're looking directly across at the far shoreline. But in the foreground, we're clearly at an elevated view, looking down on the buildings and the beach.

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And so here is Lane in really his first ambitious effort, trying to do something of a much more sweeping scale, wanting to include, as he will in so many of his works following, include every house, every piece of property that he knew existed there on the far side This kind of documentary function of lithography and of view painting as it were. But then of course, the other thing we're so aware of is the composition built around those dramatic ovals of light and dark, the curves of the beach and the flashes of sunlight across the water in the lower half of the of the composition. And then this great opening of the sky, as if some kind of, you know, annunciation is about to occur in the sky, and clearly wanting to balance the two to tie it together. What one realizes when we go to the next step, is this was a very typical kind of view painting with the horizon in the exact middle of the picture so that he could afford to explore as I say and document two very different viewpoints. But as we know what happens now is he gradually begins to lower the viewpoint as he becomes interested in what will be his great subject, namely light and air itself. The Bowdoin College lithograph is a case almost certainly I think, the argumentation goes, that this is not actually drawn by him, but based on somebody else's and then published by Lane. And again, if one thinks it has that in mind, the slightly primitive figures, the sort of mechanical row of trees, is not up to Lane, as we know, by mid-career, but nonetheless part of, as I say, his whole enterprise. And then by ten years later, 1846, having left Pendleton and beginning to work on his own, then in collaboration with John W. A. Scott, is clearly capable now at coming back to Gloucester, of course to work, is able to

get patronage. Now again, one of the things I should just set in motion here with the oil painting side by side with the lithograph. I think Georgia Barnhill is very convincing to argue that in most cases, Lane's paintings of these views are based on a lithograph that he did, probably some kind of subscription. And then somebody in the town was willing to commission a painting from that view. But I have to wonder in some instances whether the reverse was the case, whether he might have done an oil painting and enough, you know, maybe for a private commission, and enough people liked it, that that then led him to undertake the lithograph series. I don't think we'll know for sure. But again, it's another way I've tried to understand his permutation back and forth between print and painting. One other point before moving to a couple of other examples is that,

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when he does do two versions, and one is derived from the other, and I won't say copied, because clearly the two foregrounds, while they're the same proportion, are very different. And assuming the print came first, he's reworked the painting in the foreground on the right. The arrangements of vessels, the cityscape is more or less the same. The point is that as he moves from one version to the other, there's a new kind of originality in the second version. The horizon line is still fairly high, but now he's given himself over, particularly in the painting, to really experimenting with cloud studies, with being becoming interested, as I have argued, in the background, that our interest is just on the moment of beginning to shift from foreground to middle ground to background. They're all held in balance here very clearly, at this moment in 1846, that are a remarkable advancement in sophistication over the 1836 version. It led to a kind of, not fair to say formula, but compositional type that he now uses for several other views in New England, New Bedford, and Newburyport. Same kind of curving, sweeping foreground, various vessel types and Lane's interest, of course, is in a sense, talking about material culture, the economics of the period, this remarkable growth of maritime commerce up and down, certainly the New England coast, in the decades following the war of 1812, is the great age of shipbuilding in Boston, of commerce up and down the coast. And particularly the view on the right, where you have now the introduction of the steamer and Lane tracking as it were, the transition in the age of sail to the age of steam. Then there, and then of course, the third in the series now fifteen or sixteen years later, 1859, the final view of Gloucester known in various versions, a lithograph with tinted paper, in some instances as this one here, there in the left, painted over in watercolor or tinted in watercolor, but there will be other versions painted over in oil. One such case is the *National Lancers on the Boston Common*, which he clearly, is not just painted in watercolor, but painted fully in oil to look like an oil painting. And there's certain confounding issues here that I think still need sort of a certain amount of sorting out. And so there are several others, now, there seems to be a kind of procedure forum of success doing an oil painting, obviously for one kind of patron. And then, the lithograph here, we're looking at Baltimore Harbor. And again, I don't think we know, probably—Lane didn't actually go to Baltimore, he could have, wouldn't have been easy. Did he do that view after somebody else's sketch, and then did his own painting here on the right again, with a slightly different configuration of figures in the foreground? But it became almost a kind of common procedure. And so here I wonder, because this is different from each of those three pairings, the view of

Norwich, Connecticut. The lithograph there, or colored lithograph on the left, and the oil painting, which appropriately at least in these images are matched up side by side and indicate that they are exactly the same size.

58:39

Um, I'm just gonna set the water here. There. Where do I put it? Oh, it's over there. Thank you.

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They're exactly the same size, which leads me to wonder is this, we need to get the owner to do some conservation either x-ray or pinprick, is this possibly a lithograph painted over as a painting and framed as such. It's mounted on canvas, but that was often the case. Because, even the foreground, so much of the detail is close to identical. I'm just throwing that out, as, in a way, pure speculation. Along with the 1859 Gloucester painting, 1855 is the masterpiece, the view of Castine and by this moment, of course, he's on his own. He paints now, he's moved back to to Boston. I mean back to Gloucester, sailing the New England coast with his friend Joseph Stevens. And painting this absolutely glorious, luminous view, low horizon, tour de force sky in both cases, brilliant draftsmanship. Lane at his very greatest, both as a printmaker and as a painter. What a great conclusion to the career. And I guess the final little footnote I would make is, it starts all over again with Winslow Homer. And it's not just that Homer comes to Gloucester in 1873, but one has to wonder if Homer's first music sheet covers in Boston in 1850 weren't being done at the very moment that Lane was there, and prompted somehow Homer to get interested in coming to Gloucester. I leave that to you to think about. Thanks very much.

(Applause)