George Washington Lane, fisherman and mariner, was born in Gloucester in 1834, the son of Lazarus and Ruth Morgan (Stanwood) Lane. He married, 14 November 1858, ANNA ELIZABETH ANDREWS, daughter of Isaac and Christine Eleanor (Torrey) Andrews, of Guysborough, Nova Scotia; they had two children, of whom one survived, before the outbreak of the Civil War. With a large contingent of Gloucestermen Lane was mustered into Co. D. of the Thirty-Second Mass. Volunteers on 14 November 1861 and was discharged on 28 December 1864. Upon his return to Gloucester they had six more children. George Washington Lane was lost on Georges’ Bank with the fishing schooner George B. Loring, of which he was master, in the gale of 20/21 Feb 1879, with his brother Joseph Lane and brother-in-law Reuben Ellis.

After the first letter, which illuminates his first months of duty in Boston Harbor staffing a prison camp (and which was obviously written for him by someone else), the other six letters in this group date from December 1862 through April 1863, when Lane’s regiment remained around Fredericksburg, Virginia.

1 Edited by Elaine Tucker Taylor of Barrington, R.I. and Nathaniel Lane Taylor of Providence, R.I., from copies of the original letters, which are in possession of Anne V. Middleton of Yarmouthport.
1. Fort Warren (George’s Island, Boston Harber), 18 February 1862.

Fort Warren, Feb. 18th, 1862

My Dear Anna, 3

I received your kind letter with a great deal of pleasure, and thank you very much for writing to me. As I have a few leisure moments and will improve them by writing a few lines to inform you how I am getting along.

Last Saturday Friday morning the Doctor gave me my discharge from the Hospital, and I assure you I felt as happy to get out as a bird to be liberated from its cage. I went to my quarters and being yet quite lame, I could not easily climb to my birth, so I exchanged with a man, that had a lower birth until I get better. I feel quite weak yet, though much better. My wound has healed well, but I feel rather stiff and lame yet.

The Doctor was so unfeeling as to report me for duty, but I told the Captain that I did not feel able to do duty by any means.

I have just got so that I can creep round a little and get to using my legs again.

Even the Captain asked me if I could go on drill, or on dress parade, but he got the idea from the Doctor that I was stronger than I really was.

The Captain promised me that I should come home after I got out of the Hospital, but he has failed to fulfil his promise. His excuse was that he could not let me go home yet awhile, because it would prevent my taking such medicine as I would have to take.

I spoke to Capt. Draper about being reported for duty, and that I was not able, and he told me if I was not, that I must keep quiet until I did.

2 This letter is in a different hand than the others, and was undoubtedly written by a practised letter-writer for GWL. Fort Warren, on George’s Island in Boston Harbor, was a prison camp for Confederate soldiers. GWL was posted there on 14 November 1861 and injured himself there on 27 January 1862.

3 These letters are all addressed to GWL’s wife, Anne Elizabeth (Andrews) Lane (1837-1913), originally of Guysborough, Nova Scotia.
We are going to be paid off the 1\textsuperscript{st} of March, and then I shall try to come down, if possible.

We have had great rejoicing at the Fort today over the news from the battles at the South, and the taking of Fort Donaldson by our troops. Immediately upon hearing the news our Companies all collected in the Square and gave three rousing cheers for the Victory.

Then we fired twenty one guns and after that the Band played the ‘Star Spangled Banner’ ‘Dixie’; and Hail to our Chief. In the evening we had a grand illumination of all the Quarters.

Two or three more such victories and the war will be over and we shall in a short time be restored to our families and homes.

I send my best love to you Dear Anna and lots of kisses for you and little Anna.

Do write as soon as you can, so I will now close by wishing you a good night and pleasant dreams.

From your loving husband

George W. Lane

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Dear Anna i Was glad to get a letter from you i have got those things that you sent i Was rel glad of them i think you have done Well to send them things and money i think you nead the money bad your self Anna you have got

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4 This letter describes the recent sack of Fredericksburg, beginning 13 December 1862.
a good heart to send it to me i hope i shal be paid of first of next month
Anna you dont no how much i think about you And little Anna i think how i
should like to be With you i shal be glad When i git home to live happy
together again Anna i have not had time to write they keep us at it all the
time about something all the time Wee have had to build a log hut to live in
Wee have had awful cold weather it would freeze our water solid in our canties
every night before Wee got our hut bilt Wee have got a fire in it Wee live
little warmer then Wee did Wee have cold long enough i hope Wee shal live
Warmer then Wee have Wee have had a hard fite in fredrick sity since i wrote
to you last our regiment had putty hard fitting for two days they was six
Wounded and one died yesday the ball went through his mouth and came out of
his neck Charley Lane\(^5\) was wounded in his grounds very bad When Wee went
across the river it sounded to me like a thunder storm the balls and shels was
flying around us like hail i was in the ranks long side of Charley Lane gest
before Wee got to the battle ground Wee took our napsacks of and put them in
a pile and the captain\(^6\) told me and ed ellen to stay by the things and gard
them Wee had to lay on our backs all the time to gard them it was the
hardest battle ever was none for the time it lasted the shels tore the hole
sitty all to pieces all the folks left the sity and the soldgers took
perseson of the houses every man had a house of his one wee stop three days
and live high then retreted back to our old camp ground Were Wee started from
before Wee went over to the sity the soldirs they would go in the houses
they would say i am agoing to shit they would doe there buisness on the floor
they would say this is nothing but a seesch\(^7\) house any how they was most every

\(^5\) Charles F. Lane, mustered into Co. D. 2 December 1861; wounded; later transferred to 21st Regiment; discharged December 1864. Possibly a nephew of Fitz Hugh Lane (son of his older brother, Edward).

\(^6\) Edward H. Allen, mustered into Co. D. 22 November 1861; discharged 12 May 1864.

\(^7\) ‘seesch’ = Secessionist, or rebel.
thing in the houses they Would take bedded bedsted and Cane seat Chare to build there fires to Cook With i have got a Cortain as big as a bed quilt it is like one of them table Cloths it is Wollen and linen With red Camrick and a large fringe round it Anna i Was glad to hear that you are Well and little Anna i think if you ar bording with jim\(^8\) i think it Was the best thing you could doe my paper is fol this is from husband that loves you George W Lane

Write as soon as you get this and I Will Write two as soon as i Can GWL\(^9\)

3. Windmill Point Army Hospital, Lancaster County, Virginia, 26 January 1863.

Wind Mill Point gen hosspittol\(^10\)
Monday Jan the 26 1863

Dear Anna i now Write you a few here lines to let you no that i ant very Well i have the piles and by spels the dierer and a pane in my back about all the time When the army movd they sent about two thousand of sick men We have ben hear about ten days there is about 80 men died all Wee Wee have had to eat since We Come is hard bread and some tea Without sugar Wee Was hear four days before the Doctors look at us the men Was diing for Want of grub to nerishment them you dont no how the sick is use hear they ar use like dogs i hope they Will be a day When Wee shal get home out of it Anna i Wish i had harkend to you i should ben better of the they ar paying out of our brigad i believe to day i hope they Will come down hear to pay us i shal

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\(^8\) Jim: not otherwise identified. See letters 3 and 4.  
\(^9\) Added in corner margin over date line.  
\(^10\) Windmill Point Hospital, in Lancaster County, Virginia, at the mouth of the Rappahannock.
be glad When Wee ar paid of so i Can send you it  i no you nead it  i shal try to send it the safest Way that i Can  i Wish i Could git my discharge to git out of the servis  i Would be glad of it  i think they Will discharge a lot of us soon  they sed as much as they Woud  i dont want you to send any more letters to the Rigment i Want you to send them to this hosspittol i Will send you the Directsion how to direct the letters to me  When i left the Rigment to go to the hosspittol i did not have time to speak to fred nor the rest of any one  fred Was Well and biley Was Well When i left i hope it Wont be great many Weeks before i shal se you and Anna  i Wish i Was With you now so i Could git some nerishment to eat  giv my love to jim and unice and margret and henery send my love the old Women and the old man and uncle [——] Nehemiah and ant and all the rest of the folks i Want you to Write as soon as you Can  When you Write to your Mother Send my love to her and all the rest of the folks  til them that i hope i shal se them next summer if i live tel jim that i Wish i had some of his Clam Choudars  i think they Would go Well i Dont think of any more to Write at presant and i am tierd of Writeing any more  i send my love and a kiss to you and little Anna you must Excuse my Writeing it is bad Write as soon as you git this dont Write to the Rigment this is from your husband that loves you

11 Fred is unidentified. Billy: probably William Thurston, mustered into Co. D. with GWL, was wounded in the neck, 25 May 1864. Billy Thurston was a nephew of Nathaniel Thurston, GWL’s step-father. Thurston Genealogy, 2d ed., 197-8, 297. See letter 4.
12 Anna’s brothers and sisters: Eunice Talbot, b. 1839; Henry Torey, b. 1843; Margaret Jemima, b. 1846; and James Buckley, b. 1848.
13 Probably Nehemiah Stanwood (1800-1879), son of John Morgan and Mary (Lurvey) Stanwood and brother of GWL’s mother Ruth (Stanwood) (Lane) Thurston. Nehemiah is also an ancestor of the editors: his daughter Catherine (Stanwood) Lewis m. 2d Elias Daggett; their daughter Henrietta Daggett m. John Franklin Tucker; their son Benjamin Franklin Tucker married GWL’s daughter Nellie Mae.
14 Jim: probably the man with whom Anne was boarding; see letter 3.
4. Near Falmouth, Virginia, 17 February (?) 1863

Camp Near Felmouth
Tuesday 17 1863

Dear Anna i Was With great pleasure i received your kind letter And i
Was glad to hear that you and Anna Was Well since i Wrote to you Wee have
ben sent to our rigment hosspositols Anna i dont think that think that i shall
be dischargd now i am giting some better i have got the piles yet i hope i
shall git better soon Wee fard hard in the last place Wee Was they Was a great
talk about it Wile i Was Wee Was to that place they Was 2 hundred and 20 men
died in one month i Was glad to git back Wile i Was gon the regment got paid
of so i mist giting mine i am in hopes of giting paid of nex month if you
send me any thing send it to the rigment there half of the Company is out five
miles making Rods Biley Thurston17 is out there With them Fred18 is Well and
hearty Wee have Cold and snowey Weather

Anna i hope Wee all shall be home By June if Wee then Dont i supose Wee
shall have to stay our three years Wee Cant have it much harder then Wee have

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15 Return address is written on reverse in a separate hand.
16 Falmouth is just across the Rappahannock from Fredericksburg, where
the union troops had fallen back after having been repulsed from the city. In
1863 the 17th fell on a Tuesday in February, March and November.
17 Billy Thurston: see letter III.
18 Fred: not identified; see letter III.
had it but i hope it Wont be long. Before i shal se old Cape Ann Were i shall be my one man once more there is six of our men has Come Back from the hosspittols they have ben gon since last summer i thought that Tom Pool\textsuperscript{19} Would Work him self out of it he Wont half so sick as the rest of us i Was a bout as Wee thought about him he has got the rite Cut for that he Did not se much hard ship he had it very easy What time he was with us

George Blacford\textsuperscript{20} is our Nurs in the hosspittal he is a tip top Nurs they all like him first rate he is Mary Thurston Brother i Want you to send me some large sise nedels send them in a letter they ar scarcl out hear there ant but three Core left hear they ar firs third and fifth i send my love to jim and unic and henery and margaret\textsuperscript{21} and love to all the rest of the folks send my love to your mother and all the rest of your folks send my love to Elisa Roger\textsuperscript{22} i have no more to Write at preant excose my Writeing for my hand shakes i send my love to you and Anna and a kiss two now good Night this is from husband that loves you George W Lane

to Anna E Lane

5. Near Fredericksburg, Virginia, 24 March 1863?

\textsuperscript{19} Thomas Pool, mustered into Co. D. 13 January 1861; discharged 13 January 1863.
\textsuperscript{20} George Blatchford of Company H.; mustered 11 August 1862; discharged 21 January 1864. Mary Thurston, otherwise unidentified, must be of the family of GWL’s step-father, Nathaniel Thurston, and the Billy Thurston of note 2
\textsuperscript{21} Anne’s siblings; see letter III.
\textsuperscript{22} Elizabeth Rogers: not otherwise identified.
Dear Anna,

I was glad to receive your letter and I was glad to hear that you are all well and I can say that I feel very smart for me the Captain has detail me for a cook in the Company. It is a good easy job for me. The Captain details five men every day to fetch wood for as to cook. With Sam been he wishes he could be detailed every day so they would have not have to drill. The boys looks rit smart all but Dick. Dick Powers is going to be discharged. The present that I told you that I was going to try to send home to you sargent Dolliver. I got him to carry for me but when Captain see it he wanted to buy it and called me up to his tent and asked me what I would take for it. I told him I did not care about selling it. I asked him what he would give for it. He said he would give me ten dollars for it. I told him to take it. He said he would give me ten dollars for it. I told him to take it. He is going to pay me as soon as he gets the money. I want you to go down to Squam and see the present. I pick it up on the battlefield to Fredricksburg. Anna, if you have any little to send me go down to the harbour as soon as you get this letter. He can't stop two or three days in Cape Ann. I send my love to you and little Anna and a kiss. Anna, if I live to get on home I shall take that ten dollars and by you a present. I have no more to write at present. Anna, I hope the war will be over by July so we can live happy together once more. Anna, I wish you would send another ten cent sample so I can...
send a letter to your mother send me a piece of tobacco no more to write
at present this is from your husband that loves you and the little one

George W. Lane

george w. lane is my name
and with my pen I wrote the same


Camp Near Fredericksburg
Friday April 17 1863

Dear Anna i Write you a few lines to let you no that i am Well and i
hope it Will find you the same i have sent you one hundred dollars by express
the ten dollar bill is yours it is the ten dollars that i got for your present
that i got on the battle field but i Want you to keep it til i Come home and i
Will by you a present With it Anna i Want you to keep fifty dollars of it if
you Can i am in hopes if i and you lives that Wee Will move down east and buy
a small boat and go fishing so i Can be to home With you i belive i Can do
better at that then i Can to go to Georges to sofer in the Winter tel
henery to be saving of his money and Wee Will buy a boat togeather and i
think he and i Will doe Well i dont think jim Wod live Cape ann i have
just got my likeness taken to send you i dont no how you Will like it all
the solgars ses it is the best one that has ben taken in Camp

29 On reverse in a different hand; possibly added later by GWL (same
hand that wrote the Anna E. Lane endorsement at beginning of letter).
30 Georges’ Bank, where GWL fished.
31 Henry: possibly Anne’s brother, 20 years old at the time of writing.
32 Jim: possibly either Anne’s other brother, or the man with whom she
was boarding; see letters II, III.
Coningham ses if you Could se me now you Will like to hug me of Coningham is a great solger he paid me of like a man the ten dollars for that thing i Want you to go down to squam to se that thing i sold him git Mary tarr\(^{33}\) to go With you Anna i Want you to Write as soon as you git this and let me no if you got the money i sent you i hope it Will go safe to you i Want you to send me your likness and Annas send it in a small frame so i Can take good Care of it Anna how i long to se you and little Anna little Anna will be growd up pretty large by the time i se her i kep four dollars of the money i took one dollar to git my likness taken and i bot some tobaco and somethings to eat some that Was paid as much as me all they sent home was eighty dollars i think it is a shame i Want to send all i Can bill\(^{34}\) ses he ant agoing to send Cad but 25 dollars and he is agoing to send the old som [?] to keep for him and he is agoing to keep ten or fifteen for him self i dont oe no man a cent i have paid them all of i dont Want you to tel anybody about bill because he Wil be at me about it

i could Write before because i had no paper nor envolopes i Want you to Write oftener so i Can Write oftener to you i send my love to jim and eunice and Margret and henery\(^{35}\) and all the rest i send my love to you and little Anna a kiss no more to Write at presant this is from your husband that loves you\(^{36}\)

\(^{33}\) Mary Tarr : not otherwise identified.
\(^{34}\) Bill: probably William Thurston again; see letter III. Cad [?]: not identified.
\(^{35}\) Anne’s siblings. See letter 2.
\(^{36}\) Signature and eight-line postscript and marginal note faintly visible, possibly legible on original.
7. **Near Fredericksburg, Virginia, 20 April 1863.**

Camp Near Fredricksburg  
Monday April 20 1863

Dear Anna i now Write you a few lines to let you no that i am Well and i hope it Will find you the same  i Was sory to hear that Anna Was sick  i hope nothing Will hapen her  i feal bad about her  i hope the next letter i git she Will be better  i Wade yesterday  i Wade one hondred and 59 pounds  i dont believe you Could tel me if you met me  i hope i shal be as Well this sommer as i am now  i shal be satisfide With my health i soppose  Wee shal March very soon i soppose  We shall have to go Crost the river to takel the rebs  i inspeck Wee shall have some fitting to Cross the river  they talk some of braking up our brigade to fil up an[...] other brigade the 14 of new york regmints  time is of the first of may  they ar in our brigade the ninth of Mass is agoing to leve us to join genrel Cockrin they Were the best rigment in the brigade  the tops is all moveing a round hear  i am in hopes the Warr Will be over this sommer and Wee shall all Come home safe once more to old Cape Ann  i Want no how you like the likeness i had took  sam been had his took the same  Anna i Want you to send me a lite hat to Wear in room of a Cap and a pare of braces to Ware on my pants  i Want you to send them by male and jam them up small and live the ens of the package open so they Can  What it is they Wont Charg you so much postage  i dont Want you to send me my portfolio i have bot one to day  i Want you to send me your and Annas likeness i should like to se you and little Anna first rate  i is a long time since i have seen you my dear  i hope it Wont be long before i se you all and have a good time you they ant five minets in the day but i am thinking you and little Anna Anna keep of a good heart  i am in hopes be With this sommer and go don to se

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37 Cockrin: probably Brigadier General Michael Corcoran.  
38 Sam Bean: see letter V.
your Mother With you and have a good time all the folks send my love to lizzy rogers\textsuperscript{39} and jim and eunice and margaret and henery and love to all the rest the folks i send my love and a kiss to you and little i have no more to Write at presant this is from you husband that loves you and the little Child

George W Lane

Two Anna E Lane

\begin{quote}
\textit{i am going to send you the hard tack song about the army}\textsuperscript{40}

\textit{send me a sheet of Emery Cloth}\textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{39} Elizabeth Rogers: see letter IV.
\textsuperscript{40} Postscript under endorsement.
\textsuperscript{41} Added on reverse. Also, 3- or 4-line address or postscript faintly visible, possibly legible on original.