

# CAPE ANN Museum

## Library & Archives

1+ 978-283-0455 x19

library@capeannmuseum.org

---

### PRIVATE LIVES, PUBLIC HOUSE: THE STORY OF THE FAMILIES WHO LIVED IN THE WHITE-ELLERY HOUSE LECTURE FINDING AID & TRANSCRIPT

- Speakers:** Stephanie Buck and Martha Oaks
- Date:** 4/3/2010
- Runtime:** 1:00:58
- Camera Operator:** Bob Quinn
- Identification:** VL21; Video Lecture #21
- Citation:** Buck, Stephanie, and Martha Oaks. "Private Lives, Public House: The Story of the Families Who Lived in the White-Ellery House." CAM Video Lecture Series, 4/3/2010. VL21, Cape Ann Museum Library & Archives, Gloucester, MA.
- Copyright:** Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be addressed to the Librarian/Archivist.
- Language:** English
- Finding Aid:** Description: Karla Kaneb, 4/20/2020.  
Transcript: Monica Lawton, 5/6/2020.

---

#### Video Description

This lecture is the first of many events planned by the Cape Ann Museum in 2010 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the White-Ellery House. In this presentation, archivist and librarian Stephanie Buck recounts the life of the Reverend John White (1677-1760) for whom the house was built in 1710. As the pastor of the

27 Pleasant Street, Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930 USA

+1 978-283-0455

[capeannmuseum.org](http://capeannmuseum.org)

First Parish Church in Gloucester, White lived in the house until 1733. Curator Martha Oaks picks up next when ownership is transferred to the Ellery family in 1740, several generations of which remained at the house until it was given to the museum in 1947. From early colonial times to the building of Route 128, this deep dive into the archival collections of the museum highlights the changes that have been experienced by the people of Gloucester as personified in this remarkably well-preserved historic structure.

---

### Subject list

Reverend John White	Martha Oaks
Lucy Wise White	White-Ellery House
Abigail Blague White	First Period Architecture
Alice Norwood White	First Parish Church
Captain William Ellery	Fourth Parish
Abigail Allen Ellery	Land Bank of 1740
Ida Beeman	Ellery's Furniture
Stephanie Buck	Route 128

---

### Transcript

0:14 Linda Marshall :

Happy Easter, everybody. Welcome to the Cape Ann Museum. My name is Linda Marshall. I'm the Director of Programs and it's very nice to be back in the Folly Cove Auditorium. We've been closed for the past few months, so it's nice to resume our programming. We wanted to welcome you to the first program in a series this year celebrating 300 years of the White-Ellery house.

There is a handout available, which I hope most of you picked up, which shows all sorts of upcoming programs that are scattered throughout the rest of the year. You're going to find everything from lectures to a birthday party on June 5, to panel discussions, exhibitions and even a tavern night, so please stay tuned throughout the rest of the spring for more details about that.

Also, briefly, I want to mention that Sea Arts has some cultural evaluation surveys which are out on the table. If you could please, at the end of the program, just take a few moments to fill those out. We very much appreciate that. They're involved in a cultural study with UMass on the economic impact of the arts on Cape Ann. So that kind of information is very helpful for all of us.

Over the past three years, the museum has been working very diligently to stabilize and preserve the White-Ellery house and the barn and to make the entire site not only a vital and vibrant part of the museum but also of the greater Cape Ann community. And this year's celebration acknowledges the important role that the house has played and continues to play in the long and rich history of Gloucester and Cape Ann.

1:54

This morning's lecture, *Private Lives, Public House*, will be co-presented by Stephanie Buck and Martha Oaks.

Stephanie Buck is the museum's librarian and archivist, and she has researched Gloucester's history for more than a decade. She's the co-author along with Sarah Dunlap of *Fitz Henry Lane, Family and Friends*, which was published in 2007; as well as the Mary Blood Mellon chronology, which was included in the museum's 2007 exhibition catalog for *Fitz Henry Lane and Mary Blood Mellon, Old Mysteries and New Discoveries*.

2:30

Martha Oaks is the museum's curator. She has a long professional history on Cape Ann. She was curator here at the museum between 1981 to 1991. She then served as director of the Sargent House Museum for 15 years until her return here in 2007. She holds a master's degree from Boston University in American and New England studies and she's also the author of numerous publications on the art and history of Cape Ann, including *Gloucester Mid-Century*, *The World of Fitz Hugh Lane* (good thing you're laughing!); the *History of the Gloucester Fisherman's Institute*; and *Adolph Gottlieb on Cape Ann*. I'm certain you're going to enjoy what I think is a very rare opportunity to hear from both Stephanie and Martha in our single program. So please join me in welcoming both of them to the podium.

3:41 Stephanie Buck:

Good morning, can everybody hear me?

I'm Stephanie. I'm starting out this and I am going to be talking about the Reverend John White. He was minister of the First Parish on Cape Ann for almost 60 years, and he lived in the White-

Ellery house for 23 of those years. There are no known images of him or his family; and the few writings that he left are for the most part on religious topics. His obituary in the Boston news described him as an amiable gentleman, whose religious zeal was like a heavenly flame found by divine grace.

In the next half hour, I hope to expand that image to include the human side of this man of the cloth.

4:28

First, a little background history. Before the separation of church and state, the meetinghouse was the geographical, social, spiritual and civic center in the community. The newly settled town's first duty was to organize the church, build a meetinghouse and hire a minister. It was expected that this minister would remain as the town's pastor for as long as he was able to perform his duties. And these duties were to advise on questions of faith; to preach every Sabbath - morning, afternoon and sometimes evening; to give a lecture once a month between April and October; and to give aid and comfort to the sick and dying. In return, the minister would be provided with a house, a garden plot and a salary. This last, which came from taxes levied on the parishioners, was always a lengthy and intensely debated issue.

5:26

Gloucester got off to a rocky start with its ministers. First to be permanently settled was the Reverend Richard Blynman, who arrived in 1642 and left after eight years of almost constant bickering. Second was Reverend William Perkins, who lasted five years under the same duress before giving up and moving on to Topsfield. After Mr. Perkins left, the pulpit was filled by two elders, Thomas Millet and William Stevens, who fought so much over who should preach when, and who should get paid what, that the town split into two factions and the General Court was called in to legislate a truce. The town was reunited with the arrival of Reverend John Emerson in 1661, and he remained peacefully as its minister until his death in 1700 - just long enough to see a new meetinghouse erected at the green.

6:18

History eternally repeats itself, so it'll be no surprise for you to hear that due to a lack of available funds, the town was unable to provide a competitive wage package, which adversely affected its search for a new pastor. Early in 1701, they made an offer to Reverend Jabez Fitch of Cambridge, who flatly refused. Next, they approached Reverend Joseph Coyt in Connecticut, who actually visited in the middle of July, but left after three weeks having found, as he tactfully remarked, that the town was under "some uncomfortable circumstances."

Selectmen cast around again and arrived at a shortlist of four men, one of whom was Reverend John White, then chaplain at the fort in Saco, Maine. At the time the Indians were gearing up for another round of attacks, which became a third French and Indian War, later known as Queen Anne's War. Outposts like Saco were very vulnerable, and perhaps this looming danger influenced Reverend White's decision to accept their offer. He arrived in Gloucester in the fall of 1702, and was ordained in April of the following year. He was only 25 years old, just four years out of Harvard and relatively inexperienced.

7:30

By the time of Reverend White's arrival in Gloucester, officiating at marriages and baptisms had been added to the minister's duty list, and everyone was still expected to attend meeting every Sabbath. However, very few were actual members of the church proper — that is, were owners of the covenant, able to take communion and to vote on church matters. To achieve this status, you had to experience a personal encounter with God called a saving grace, and make a public confession of your sins.

8:00

When Reverend White came here, the owners of the covenant numbered just 21 men and 49 women. It is surely a testament to his influence that by the time the parish split in 1742, this number had risen to 260.

The church elders set his salary at 65 pounds the first year, planning to extend it to 70 pounds for the next two years, then 80 pounds a year for the remainder of his time. As his ministry lasted much longer than anyone anticipated, the amount was increased periodically, although not without extensive discussion. For instance, once when he asked for a raise, it was debated for 10 months before being agreed to, and the deacons were sternly reminded to make sure they passed the collection box in the gallery as well as on the floor of the house.

There was also lengthy debate about whether to set aside a piece of land and build a house on it for him, or give him 100 pounds and let him find for himself. The latter was decided on and Reverend White started to look for somewhere to live.

9:05

Two months later he married Lucy Wise and the need for a permanent home became more urgent. He soon bought a house with a barn and some land near harbor swamp, paying 163 pounds in silver for it. Can everybody see where the harbor swamp is on that map? It's sort of the area of Burnham's field down to Washington Street these days.

Lucy was the oldest daughter of Reverend John Wise at Ipswich, a Congregational minister noted for his political activism, especially in his outspoken stance against Governor Andros' levy

of a tax, without first having called an assembly to debate it — essentially British taxation without representation, a plaint that was almost 100 years before its time. Lucy's mother was Abigail Gardner, granddaughter of one of the Dorchester company who came to Cape Ann in 1623. It is not known if Lucy inherited any of her father's fire, although her tombstone claims she was industrious.

10:05

Reverend White and Lucy had been married for a year when just before the birth of their first child, a son, the whole town was thrown into turmoil when pirates were sighted hiding out on Eastern Point.

The crew of a Boston-based trading ship, who had mutinied and spent the winter in the West Indies, happily relieving unwary vessels of their cargoes of gold and silver, sailed boldly into Marblehead harbor in June of 1704, and were astonished to discover that there was a price on their heads. They fled in all directions, 10 of them to Gloucester. In hot pursuit came two regiments of foot soldiers out of Salem, and a third troop who had commandeered a shallop and set sail up the coast.

As the militia approached, news came that the pirates had been seen escaping in a vessel that had been lying off Bass Rocks, and the foot soldiers were turned back. But the men of the shallop came on and were met in Gloucester by the commanding officers who were determined to continue the hunt. However, it quickly became apparent that men, who were soldiers, not sailors, were very reluctant to take to the boat again. By dint of who knows what inducements, a crew was finally cobbled together and they set off just after sunset, rather ignominiously having to row themselves out of the harbor as the wind had dropped.

11:15

Samuel Sewall, who was one of the officers involved, wrote in his diary that Reverend White kept a vigil all that night, diligently praying for the safe and victorious return of the voyagers. Early next morning, his prayers were answered with the news that the fugitives had been captured without a shot being fired. With it came the intelligence that two of the pirates had literally missed the boat and were still holed up somewhere on Cape Ann. The women gathered up their children, barred the doors, while the hue and cry went out. But with no avenue of escape, and no help to be had, the men were quickly caught and carried off to Boston to await their fate. And the excitement finally waned.

By 1710, Reverend White and Lucy had had four children, three boys and a girl, and had buried one of them. They also had at least one servant in residence, an Indian boy called Prin, and their house by harbor swamp was feeling rather overcrowded. In March, Reverend White petitioned the selectmen to give him to grant him a, to quote, “small parcel of land between

the meetinghouse and the creek to set a house upon.” They agreed dependent on him leaving a sufficient cartway to go under the brow of the hill to the dock, and Reverend White began building what we now call the White-Ellery house.

12:35

In 1716, those parishioners living on the west side of the river, tired of the weekly ferry trip, succeeded in getting set off to form their own church, Second Parish. This led to an increase in the rates of the remaining First Parish residents and a consequent reduction in the amount of money deposited in the collection box.

Although Reverend White’s salary had been raised to 90 pounds per annum, this loss of additional income, combined with the increase of his family by the births of two more children, made it difficult for him to make ends meet. This may explain why he mortgaged all his property to the province trustees of the Mass. Bay legislature for a five-year loan of 250 pounds, which actually took him 10 years to pay off. Then to add to his fiscal woes, paper money was depreciated in 1722, and he despaired of his salary covering, as he put it, “the price of the necessaries of life.”

13:30

In 1723, with eight children to feed, house and clothe, Reverend White tried to sell his homestead to his parishioners, but they refused to consider it. So he and Lucy struggled on in the house by the creek.

Four years later, on March 5, 1727, Lucy White passed away. She was 46. Her tombstone in the First Parish burial ground read, “Here lies buried the body of Mrs. Lucy White, the exemplary, industrious and virtuous consort of the Reverend Mr. John White.”

At the time of her death, Reverend White and Lucy had had 11 children, nine of which were still living, and five of them were under the age of 10 — which may go far to explain why just six months after Lucy's death, Reverend White married the widow, Abigail Mather Blague.

14:25

Abigail's father was Reverend Increase Mather, a devout Puritan, sometime president of Harvard, and pastor of Boston's North Church; and her mother was Mary Cotton, daughter of another Puritan divine, Joseph Cotton. Prayers in the Mather household were held every morning, noon and night.

Given their family backgrounds, Lucy and Abigail must have been as far apart as chalk from cheese. For instance, during the Salem witchcraft hysteria, Reverend Wise, Lucy's father, risked

his own neck by leading a protest over the accusation of John Proctor, while Reverend Mather, who could have exerted his considerable influence to stop the slaughter, merely advised the courts to use caution when considering spectral evidence.

15:11

The two men had also been at loggerheads over church autonomy, and the extent to which the laity should have a voice in church affairs. Abigail's father was strongly in favor of putting all the power in the hands of the clergy, while Lucy's father believed in democracy. Perhaps the words on their tombstones tell the story: Lucy was exemplary and virtuous. Abigail was simply pious.

15:37

Reverend White and Abigail had been married just one month when Cape Ann was struck by an earthquake. There had been one previously in 1717, which had shaken the earth, the rocks and the houses, and had sounded like great thunder, but this one was far more frightening. It started about 10 o'clock at night with a brilliant flash of light followed by a thunderous rumble that grew in intensity until the ground heaved so much that people couldn't stand upright and houses reeled and swayed.

According to local diarist, Mr. Parsons, strong aftershocks continued until daybreak. Although no one was injured, the event was so terrifying that the meetinghouses were packed for weeks afterwards, and Reverend White and his fellow pastors called for atonement with passionate sermons and days of fasting.

Several years later, Reverend White, who believed that the world was going to end consumed in fire in the not too distant future — 1736 to be exact — reminded his parishioners of the terrors of that day and the horrors of that night when you felt the shakes and heard the roars of the earthquake.

16:43

The year after Reverend White and Abigail were married, his two oldest boys, John, a tanner, and William, a carpenter, moved to Falmouth, Maine.

And yet another section of the parish stretching from Annisquam to Sandy Bay was allowed to separate and form its own church, Third Parish. This again reduced the number of people supplying his salary and put an extra strain on the remaining parishioners. Plus the meetinghouse was beginning to show its age and becoming more expensive to maintain. The window glass was constantly being replaced, the old squeaky floor re-nailed, and several gallery seats fell apart completely and had to be rebuilt. Town meetings were still had held there too. And with the population growing, it was evident that the spacious 40 foot square building

erected in 1700 was no longer big enough; and the question of whether to enlarge the current meetinghouse or build a new one came up for discussion.

17:35

In January 1729, the parish held their first official meeting on the subject. And after heated debate, it was agreed that a new structure was the better plan. But consensus could not be reached on where to build it nor how to pay for it, which delayed the move for almost a decade. And even then it came about by default when a small group of harbor residents, tired of both the arguments and the weekly trek to church, just built a new meetinghouse on Middle Street and offered it to the parish.

It was an imposing building, 90 foot long by 60 foot wide, with a tall tower topped by a 70-foot spire, and it seated 600. The inside was equally impressive, and the congregation's view of the pulpit was an awe-inspiring pyramid of dignitaries, with the four deacons at the base, two elders on a balcony at the midpoint, and the minister, Reverend White, perched high above the floor at the apex.

18:30

Several of the elders and most of the parishioners, many of whom now lived in the harbor area of town, were delighted with the building and there was a majority vote to accept the offer. They announced that Reverend White would give a lecture on the new meetinghouse on Thursday, September 28, 1738, and that the public worship of God would be continued in the said house for the future as it used to be in the old meetinghouse.

This move gave rise to a long series of protests and counter-protests to the general court by those disgruntled by the high-handedness of the harbor group, and the treachery of their co-parishioners in giving into the allure. The old guard centered in the green especially felt they were losing control of their church, and by extension, of their position in the town. They expressed these feelings by claiming that having to travel more than a mile to weekly meeting would create a hardship for them, especially in the winter.

19:20

One group wanted to be allowed to join the recently formed Third Parish, another wanted to separate into a completely new parish and a third wanted to stay put and hire a second minister to preach in the old meetinghouse.

Those who favored the move to the harbor objected to all these requests on the grounds that any one of them would again increase the parish tax rate. In December 1742, an exasperated general court ordered First Parish to be divided into two distinct precincts, and hammered in

the final nail by stating that the southerly portion in the harbor was to retain the title of First Parish while the old center of town was to be known as Fourth Parish.

20:00

In the midst of all this upheaval and fractious discontent, Reverend White, who was a hired servant of the parish, had no say in the proceedings whatsoever. He continued to preach on Sundays, lecture on the occasional Thursdays, and ride his Sorrell horse, with a distinctive white blaze on its forehead, on his appointed rounds, visiting the sick and dying.

He did make one anticipatory change, however. In 1733, he sold his house, barn and garden, the White-Ellery House, to Ezekiel Day in Holden for 550 pounds, and bought a small house with a barn and orchard and several acres of mowing land on burying-ground lane, now Centennial Avenue, from John Matchett, mariner, for 180 pounds.

This exchange had two immediate benefits — his new property was not too far removed from either the green or the harbor, and gave him some extra money that enabled him to send his two younger boys, Benjamin and Samuel, to his old alma mater, Harvard.

21:06

After graduating, both boys returned to Gloucester where they taught school for a while before moving away. Both pre-deceased their father, dying in their 30's. The middle boy, Thomas, did not go to college and moved to Maine around 1738.

21:21

In October 1743, the covenant of the newly-formed Fourth Parish was signed by 17 men, and the Reverend John Rogers from Kittery, Maine was invited to be their pastor. Reverend John Rogers was a follower of the “New Light movement” which had arisen as a reaction to a reformation known as the Enlightenment or Arminianism. Arminians believed that man was capable of improving his lot through reason and experience, which is in direct contradiction to the Calvinism of the Puritans who believed in predestination.

21:54

The New Lights called for a return to Calvinism. Reverend John Rogers was a large and robust man given to loud ranting sermons peppered with violent gestures, his hands punching the air around him — a young and exciting newcomer. Within two months of his ordination, 76 women asked to be dismissed from First Parish to his church. How many did so for purely religious reasons, and how many because he was a stimulating speaker and an exceedingly eligible bachelor, remains speculative.

In the meantime, the aging Reverend White continued to preach his middle- of-the-road congregationalism to his flock in the harbor. He was opposed to Arminianism, the followers of which he described as the children of Belial and what he referred to as quasi-Presbyterianism. And while he welcomed reform, he also had little patience with the excesses of the New Lights, who were given to public transports of terror and joy. He wrote a little book called *New England's Lamentations*, in which under the heading “the danger of Arminian principles,” he warned his fellow pastors that “it would be better to be chimney sweepers all your days, than to have scores and hundreds of damned wretches cursing you in hell for guiding them the wrong way.”

23:09

And when talking of his own experience with the overly excitable New Lights, he once remarked, “We find that strong but short terrors succeeded with ravishing joys, are no certain evidence of salvation. As to visions, we have had enough of them. So until such time as in a sermon, I declared my sentiments concerning them, and so far as I can understand, there has never been one since. Our congregation has been disturbed and interrupted by outcries, but I labored to suppress them.”

In 1741, Reverend White found himself interceding on Gloucester's behalf with the provincial authorities, when the town was requested to contribute to a relief fund for Charleston, South Carolina, which had just suffered a devastating fire. He wrote in response that Gloucester was surely not obligated to send aid as it was totally impoverished, due, as he put it, “by reason of the war with Spain, and the fear of war with France, and the smallness of the price of fish, and the dearness of salt. Our people are scattered abroad in the world to get their bread, many pressed, many serving as volunteers in His Majesty's service.”

24:17

The Spanish war he was referring to — dubbed my favorite name for a war if there can be such a thing, The War of Jenkins Ear — began in 1739, after a certain Captain Robert Jenkins, who claimed his ear had been cut off during a skirmish with a Spanish naval patrol, exhibited the seventh member to the House of Commons in England. There was a public outcry and England declared war on Spain.

Georgia and South Carolina immediately invaded the Spanish colony of Florida by land, while the Spanish retaliated by attacking the two British colonies from the sea. The net effect on Cape Ann was a severely curtailed Southern trade route, and a notable reduction in both the able bodied male population and the income of those remaining.

25:02

Reverend White's extra cash from the sale of the White-Ellery house didn't last long, and in 1740, in the midst of the parish battle, when some of those crying for separation refused to pay their First Parish rates, he was faced with the prospect that his salary might have to be cut. He commented, "the difficulties I have labored under some years past, are such as to occasion at times serious thoughts of trying some other place or some other business to support my family."

So it is understandable that when a banking scheme that promised him a steady income was proposed, he quickly signed on. Known as the land bank, it was formed by a group of Boston men who envisioned a credit union that would encourage the development of agricultural and manufacturing enterprises. Using their land as security, they proposed to issue 150,000 pounds and notes of credit as long-term loans at 3% interest, with the principal be paid back in 20 annual payments of either the bank's own notes or in manufactured goods or produce. Eighteen men in Gloucester, including Reverend White, signed on as shareholders.

26:09

Unfortunately, the scheme had political implications that didn't appeal to certain other business factions, and a move was made to block the bank. At first, those opposed simply refused to accept the bank's notes as valid payment for goods and services rendered. Then they got them to the attention of the British Parliament, who invoked an act which regulated corporations, and the bank collapsed.

By 1744, Reverend White's family had shrunk appreciably. Daughter Lucy had married long ago and since died, while daughter Hannah had recently married Deacon Nathaniel Haskell. The boys had all moved away and the oldest John had also died. Only daughters Abigail and Mary remained at home, and Mary was about to marry David Allen.

Perhaps with only women in the house, he felt the need for male companionship. So in February he and his wife Abigail contracted with the overseers of the poor to house and educate an 11-year-old boy called Joseph Preston, whose father was deceased. Joseph was to be trained as a cordwainer, a shoemaker, a particular skill Reverend White is not known to have possessed. But there were many others in town who did.

27:15

The contract contained an interesting clause that young Joseph was not to be sent to sea unless he particularly requested to go, and his mother gave her consent. This may have arisen because King George's War had just broken out, and the waters off New England were swarming with French privateers, which as Reverend White said, "were apt to break in upon our fisheries and

break them to pieces. They lie near the road where we have our European merchandise and they can sally out and take our commercial vessels.”

Four years later, Abigail Mather Blague White died at the age of 71. Her gravestone reads “Here lies buried the body of Mrs. Abigail White, the late pious consort of the Reverend John White.”

28:00

Back when he had married Abigail so soon after Lucy's death, Reverend White had young children in need of a mother. He didn't have the same excuse for his equally rapid third marriage to Mrs. Alice Norwood, just six months after Abigail's passing. He was 71. She was 62. Alice was the widow of Caleb Norwood, and the mother of six adult children. She and Caleb had lived in Boston for several years and kept a tavern there. Caleb died in 1735 and Alice returned to Gloucester. A few years later, she and Deacon Ebenezer Parsons announced their intention to marry, but some disagreement arose and Mr. Parson married a Mrs. Todd from Rowley.

Reverend White's marriage to Alice was, in a sense, another rung up on the social ladder for him. He had gone from marrying Lucy, the daughter of a country parson; to Abigail, the daughter of an influential Boston minister. And now Alice, the daughter of Samuel Danelle of York, court judge, representative to the Mass. legislature and province councilor. For all that, Alice, who outlived Reverend White by three years, is not buried with him.

29:10

In 1750, Reverend White celebrated his 72nd birthday. He had been pastor of First Parish for almost 50 years, but was no longer in the best of health. To relieve him from some of the pressures of his job, the parish started inviting ministers to come and take the pulpit for several weeks at a time. These men needed paying, and the good citizens who provided them with food and board needed reimbursing, so the decision was made that it would be cheaper in the long run to install a permanent assistant for him.

They first offered this position to his grandson, Reverend Samuel Moody of York, Maine, son of his oldest daughter Lucy. Reverend Samuel Moody had occasionally assisted his grandfather in the pulpit before, but a small and influential group of parishioners formally protested his appointment, claiming that Reverend White was still able to perform the most important duties of the past, namely giving the sacrament and officiating at marriages.

30:05

Unvoiced was perhaps some concern of the Reverend Moody's rather flamboyant mode of dress, and his fits of severe shaking when called upon to preach. There was even a fear that

these aberrations would grow worse, given that his father, Reverend Joseph Moody, was known as “Handkerchief Moody,” because he perpetually veiled his face with a black silk handkerchief, and seldom spoke except to turn his face to the wall while he prayed or sermonized.

Babson, in his history of Gloucester, rather charmingly explains that, before he married Lucy, Reverend Joseph Moody had been bewildered by the attractions of a Miss First, which apparently had a lasting and unfortunate effect on him.

30:48

Nothing more was said on the subject, and in the summer of 1751, Reverend Samuel Chandler was asked to come. The elders bickered with Reverend Chandler over his salary for several months before reaching an agreement, and he ran into the same trouble with his living arrangements as Reverend White had so many years before. At first he lodged with various people, including Reverend white, while the parish discussed the merits of building him a house as originally proposed, or giving him 150 pounds to find his own, until they discovered that it would actually cost the parish 200 pounds to build. They gave him 150.

In October 1752, Reverend Chandler raised the frame of his house on Middle Street, just a few hundred yards to the west of the new meetinghouse. He treated about 70 friends and acquaintances who had assisted in the enterprise, to toddy and flip and white bread and cheese, a very temperate repast when you consider that the decade before, the raising of the spire for the new meetinghouse had been lubricated with the consumption of almost three gallons of rum.

31.54

On a snowy Wednesday in January 1760, Reverend White came in from the cold, propped his cane in the corner, dusted the snow off his hat and coat and hung them on their pegs; straightened his wig, changed his outdoor shoes for a pair of pumps, and walked slowly into the parlor. He drew the curtains, lit the candles, took his glasses out of his pocket, and picking up a book from his desk, settled down in his favorite chair in front of the fire. A short time later, he passed quietly from this world to the next. He was 83.

The Boston news reported that he was decently interred on the Monday following at the expense of the people in his charge, whose love he justly deserved and largely possessed. The parish had voted to pay 20 pounds towards his funeral, and his stone in the First Parish burying ground read: “Here lies the remains of that zealous, faithful and excellent divine, the Reverend Mr. John White, who died January 16, 1760, in the 83rd year of his age and the 58th year of his ministry.”

33:28 Martha Oaks:

I just changed the PowerPoint. We've all had to learn how to use all this equipment. It's been quite a struggle. And this is the most elaborate production we've done, with two back-to-back talks.

So, I'm going to drop back to the house, now that we've heard the rest of the story about Reverend White's life. I start off with this 1851 map showing the Ellery house location right here, which is now where route 128 comes into Gloucester. And as I look around the audience, I think most of you have been in the house in the last couple of years and are familiar with it. But this gives you an idea of how far that site was located from the harbor village area.

34:37

We are fortunate in our collection here at the Cape Ann Museum to have a lot of documentation about the White-Ellery House and the town green area, including two lovely oil paintings by Fitz Henry Lane. This one done in 1863 hangs upstairs in the gallery and is of the Riverdale area, which is the general neighborhood name for the town green today. This was done about where Poles Hill is, with Washington Street in the foreground looking over the marsh towards the Riverdale mills. And again, this is 1863.

35:12

Also, in the archives is this wonderful hand-drawn map by John Mason from 1823 showing the same area. The hospital is up this way, and we would be standing here looking down towards where Grant Circle is now, and this is the Ellery house.

This is the yellow gambrel roofed house next door to the Ellery house that we call the Babson-Alling house, and the meetinghouse behind, where Reverend White started off, and it's interesting, the pound here for wayward animals. But you can see the Ellery property is just the little segment here, surrounded by town-owned land with a public landing right alongside, and the creek in the front, and the common areas in the back here behind the house.

36:06

And this is the second view of the same area by Lane, again done in 1863. This shows the Babson-Alling house and behind the trees — I'm not sure why — but that is the White-Ellery House tucked in there behind. And then in the front, the creek, and on the left hand side of the painting the flat-bottomed barge, used to carry hay that was pulled along on the marsh, called a gundalow, which was the common means of transporting goods and sometimes animals on the Annisquam River.

But fortunately, Lane also left us a pencil drawing of the Ellery house, and he did this for John James Babson's 1860 history of Gloucester, showing the front facade of the Ellery house as it would have looked in the late 1850s.

36:58

After John White sold the Ellery house, as Stephanie said, it was kept as a tavern for about 10 years and then sold in 1740 to the Ellery family and six generations of the Ellery family lived in the house from 1740 until 1947, when the house was taken by eminent domain and given to the museum and relocated slightly.

The first generation of the Ellery family is represented by Captain William Ellery, whose gravestone we see here from the Centennial Avenue burial ground, where John White is buried. He was a merchant. He was involved in the separation of the First Parish — the folks that moved down to the harbor versus the ones who stayed at town parish, the town green — and he flip-flopped back and forth until he finally decided in 1740 he was going to stay in the old town green.

He married Abigail Allen, whose family owned the yellow house next door to the Ellery house. William Ellery kept the Ellery house as a tavern for a few years and then made it his permanent home.

38:14

He had a whole raft of children, including one named Benjamin Ellery, and we're fortunate to have in our archives, Benjamin's account book from the mid 1770s. And on these two pages, he lists all of his children. Like the Whites, they all seem to have had a lot of children.

He also in this book keeps track of his trade. He called himself a yeoman, and he did a lot of trading back and forth and bartering with his neighbors. He had at least one gundalow, the flat-bottomed boat that he would let out to people in exchange sometimes for goods, sometimes for money. It's a fascinating account of what the economy was like in that area of town in the 1770s.

38:58

This is one of the earliest photographs that we have of the White-Ellery house. We think it dates to about the 1870s — this is when it was still located right on the creek before it was moved across the street to its present location. This is an interesting picture. If it's 1870s, the house is already 150 years old, as you can tell from the photograph. It has a big, tall foundation, making room for a cellar under the first floor and also keeping the house out of the damp marshland which must have been very damp there.

39:36

It's fun to zoom in and take a look at some of the faces. We don't know who these people are — obviously members of the Ellery family — but all of these photographs have been very helpful to us as we've done restoration work on the outside of the house the last couple of years, guiding us as to what the original windows might have been like, when the house was clad in clapboards, and when it clad in shingles. So they've been very helpful.

This photo was taken a few years later. And if you look carefully, it's hard to tell but this window has been changed and enlarged. And you can see what a big foundation it has lifting it out of the wet ground. And also someone's planted some fruit trees in the front of this, which we see again and again in the photos.

40:18

It is a large house, and as far as we can tell, except for this little segment on the side, it was built all at once. It has a big central chimney and four rooms — 2 rooms on either side and then a big kitchen in the back, and the same formation upstairs. We think the little side part was added on probably 50 years later. In this photo the photographer is stepped back enough that you can see the town landing to the left. Stephanie talked about this — when he was originally given the land, very carefully in the back they divided it off so there was a public passageway behind the house and then down the side here to get into the tidal waters. You can see the yard carefully marked off with the stone wall.

41:07

A few years later, the fruit trees have gotten quite a lot bigger, and it is still occupied by the Ellery family. I think we're into the third or fourth generation. They were primarily farmers. The branch of the family that moved downtown — and there was a branch that did — got involved in the shipping trades and became quite well to do.

This (photo) shows again that large foundation. The preservation consultant that has been working on the house with us... He and I are beginning to wonder if at some point the house might have been lifted up a little bit, because it's quite an awkward situation with the front door stepping out and then dropping down like that. But so far, we haven't found any evidence.

41:50

And again, this is the rear of the house, and you can see the fence marking off public access to the water from the back of the Ellery family. This gives you a lovely view of the big sweeping roof that you can still see today when you come up behind the house.

We've had fun exploring various branches of the Ellery family. This is a photograph of Main Street in Gloucester in the 1870s, done from a stereopticon card that shows Ellery's furniture shop on Main St., probably about where the Curtain Shop is now.

42:25

This was a business started by Benjamin Franklin Ellery, who was the fourth generation connected with the house. He decided to move downtown just after the Civil War. He was a carpenter by trade, like his father had been, and he specialized in coffins. He and his family, amazingly, moved into 27 Pleasant St., which is our little museum house up on the front here — it was a two family house for a good part of the mid-1800s — and he ran this prosperous business up on Main St.

43:04

We have a wonderful selection of photographs in our archives, including one of his son, Benjamin Franklin Ellery, who chose to go by the name Frank, who was also in the furniture business and then became an alderman. This is the house that Frank the son built on Exchange St., near the railroad tracks and the train station in 1882 — quite a luxurious new house compared to the old Ellery house where his uncle was still living.

43:40

These are the children of Frank Ellery, and this is a photo taken of them at Revere Beach in the 1890s, and they are with their maternal uncle. This son is William Ellery, who was born in 1880 and died as a young boy when he was fooling around with a handgun in 1896. This is his younger sister, Susan, who died the same year of a burst appendix. And this is their older brother, James Benjamin Ellery, who was born in 1876, went to M.I.T. and became a chemist, and became the family genealogist. We have volumes in our library that he put together about his family.

44:40

This is a photo of him a few years later. He was a member of the Gloucester R.O.T.C. and this is his graduation picture.

And the other branch of the family that didn't move downtown — that stayed up at the Ellery house — fared alright.

This is John Ellery — who was born just before the Civil War — and his wife Sarah, inside the Ellery house, in one of the front parlors. He was a carpenter by trade, like his father.

45:15

This photograph shows four generations of the family sitting out in front of the house. Again, you can see that funny staircase added to the front door because of the big, high foundation. On the left is John, the carpenter father, who died in 1906; and one of his sons, named John George Ellery, who was an engineer on the Boston & Maine Railroad; and one of HIS sons, John Elmer Ellery, who became an accountant. It is interesting to look at the changing jobs of people in Gloucester over the years and the generations. We don't know what child that is on his lap, so we don't know what they did with themselves.

And this is Sarah, John's wife, in front of the house. She apparently was quite an antiquarian. We found newspaper clippings from 1892, when Gloucester was celebrating its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and she opened up the Ellery house and had an ad in the paper saying people could come through and visit for 25 cents. We also have a photo of how she decorated one of the front parlors in anticipation of people coming through.

46:27

Around 1900, Sarah apparently fell and broke her hip, and one of her granddaughters moved in. This is Ida Beeman, and this photo was taken right behind the Ellery house. You can see her chicken coops to the left, there. She took care of her grandmother for the next 10 or 20 years.

This is a photo of her that one member of the Ellery family provided us a copy of showing Ida in the Ellery pasture, which I'm not sure where that was.

Then, by the 1920s, after Sarah Ellery died, the Beeman family — this would be the grandchildren — moved into the house. And this is a back view of it. It's interesting to see the lay of the land — how it was built right into the hill there and the Babson-Alling house on the other side of Washington Street. And if this was a little clearer, you'd be able to see the Maplewood Avenue school in the distance.

47:30

In 1945-46, plans were unveiled showing Route 128 coming into Gloucester and the plans showed it coming over the Annisquam River and right down through the front yard of the house. And by that point, the house was in quite sad shape.

Alfred Mansfield Brooks, who was the president of this organization at that time, felt strongly that the house should be preserved. It was taken from the Beeman family, and given to the city of Gloucester, and then turned over to the museum with the proviso that it be moved in one

month's time out of the way of the highway. So it was jacked up, as you can see, and moved, turned about 90 degrees and moved out of the way.

And it's interesting — Ida Beeman, who was the young girl who went to help with her grandmother, wrote a little narrative about what it was like when the house was taken, and she was forced to move out. And this is something that's in our archives now. She wrote, "Did you ever have the experience of emptying out an old house which was occupied by several generations, each leaving as they passed, their mark?" She says, "I cannot describe the heartache involved. I will try and relate my experience. It's a long story, but I'll try to cut corners and tell it the best of my ability. It won't be like Mr. Garland's stories, but in my humble way, I'll try." I thought that was a lovely connection.

48:58

To mark where the house had originally been — I'm not sure who put it there — but there's a bronze tablet directly across Washington Street from the present day location of the Ellery house. It's hard to see in this slide, but it shows the Ellery house in its original position with John White's meetinghouse behind it in the town green. And this was done by Harriet Hyatt Mayer, the sister of Anna Hyatt Huntington, a very well known sculptor.

So, if you cross the street from the Ellery house, you can find this in the woods. And very interestingly, this is Ida Beeman in 1960 with her husband after the house had been moved and restored. I guess she felt more fondly about it by that time.

And now just a few pictures to finish up, of the interior, which again, I'm sure most of you have seen it. We've done a lot of work on the exterior and nothing inside, because what's perhaps most important about the house is the relatively untouched condition inside.

49:58

This is the kitchen... and one of the front parlors. It's got quite a lot of decorative painting in the kitchen, that's very early — sponge painting on the walls and on the ceiling. And then this is one of the upstairs rooms with false grain painting across the entire wall, which is really quite lovely.

And then my final picture is the, let's see, it must be the seventh, eighth and ninth generations of the Ellery family who came to visit last summer. And they're shown just outside the door of the house.

50:35

I'll stop with that.

Does anyone have questions for either Stephanie — maybe you can come back up, Steph — or for me?

50:55

Unknown Speaker: Are you able to dial back your slides toward the beginning — it might be helpful to look at the third slide which shows the map in detail of the area, so that we can get a sense of where the house was moved to and the 90 degree flip.

51:12

Martha Oaks: I'm not sure we'll be able to see... maybe from the hand drawn one. (Pause)  
Sorry, I'm sure there's another way to do this.

So, using this little gadget, this is the Babson-Alling house, the yellow house, that's always been in its same location. This is the little barn that's having work done on it now, which has always in the same location, and the Ellery house is now right here; and this is Poplar Street and this is Washington continuing up here. And so the Ellery house was picked up, turned and moved right up into this location here. And a new foundation was built.

People frequently ask when they come in the house now about what's underneath it, and it's the 1950 Foundation. So there's no exciting archaeological finds to be had underneath there. And so it's been here since then.

52:27

Unknown speaker: Are we correct to think that the front of the house, which faced South originally, now faces West?

Martha Oaks: Yes.

Unknown speaker: And it was located more or less on the island, that you can vaguely see, with Washington Street running on either side of that island?

52:45

Martha Oaks: Right. It's right in line with the barn, right here. There are some photos that do show the road going on either side of the barn. There've been fences put up now and the shrubbery is sort of grown up, so it's hard to imagine now, but photos do show the road splitting and going between the barn and house this way.

53:06

Unknown speaker: Maybe it's not a fair question, but one advertisement for the virtues of exploring across Washington Street and looking for that plaque — which was put there at the time of Gloucester's Tercentenary in 1923 — is that you get a sense of the lay of the land, which is visible in one of the later pictures. It really was a fairly stark grade change between where the church was and where the Ellery house is, and you if you poke around up there you can see that with the construction of 128 today, how stark that that grade change was.

Martha Oaks: There is one photo from the back of the house that shows it really dropping off there.

53:50

Unknown speaker: And it's so stark because if you see most of the photographs that show the marsh, it all looks so flat, but it really isn't.

Martha Oaks: Yes, Bob?

54:01

Bob: It would be nice to have a pull away of what it is now and put it on top of that.

Martha Oaks: That's beyond my computer skills. (laughter). Yes, Mike?

Mike: Where would the Friendly's be?

Martha Oaks: Well, now, the rotary is right here, so Friendly's would be over here. I think when 128 was built, there probably was a lot of filling that took place in the marsh.

Unknown Speaker: Where was the church?

Martha Oaks: Right here... meetinghouse... so it was behind the house.

54:33

Unknown Speaker: What happened to the meetinghouse?

Martha Oaks: The meetinghouse was taken down, I think in the 1840s. They'd rebuilt it a couple of times, and then finally they took it down. It's interesting — One of the early generations of these Ellery children, Samuel, who stayed at the Ellery house and didn't move away.... in 1840, he was paid \$15 a year to ring the bell in the church, and to take care of the meetinghouse but I think it was shortly after 1840 that they just didn't have the funds to maintain it, so it was taken down.

55:07

Unknown Speaker: Where was the water, Martha...can you show pretty much how it flowed?

Martha Oaks: Well, there's the creek here and then, the Annisquam River is out here to the right. And this creek sort of winds up and goes... I think it's still runs alongside 128. It's very damp in that area. And then of course, the marshes are behind where Poplar Street is now. This was largely tidal in the front here.

55:39

Unknown Speaker: Martha, back in the 1950s, the creek was still existing, and when they put in a new sewer line through there, the construction firm Zoppo came to town and put a pipe to carry the creek underneath, and a lot of people were unhappy with that. There were signs put up turning the name backwards, so it became "Oppoz Zoppo."

56:10

Martha Oaks: When you walk up, there's a field that goes from the yellow house sort of up 128. And when you walk in that field, there are a couple of sinkholes or something that appear to go I don't know where — I assume they go down into that creek. There's also one in the little barn in the basement level that just seems to just go, so I think it's probably still there.

Anyone else (have any questions) for me or for Steph?

56:36

Unknown Speaker: Do you know when the ROTC started?

Martha Oaks: No.

Unknown speaker: I suppose way back?

Martha Oaks: I don't know. Does anybody know when the Gloucester ROTC started? Mike?

56:46

Mike: When you're done with this slide, I was wondering if you could go over to the house on Exchange Street and then show the house in the background that looked like it was under construction? Was it on Commonwealth Avenue?

Martha Oaks: I don't know. I don't remember what house that is being built, do you?

Martha Oaks: Wilber, what were you going to ask?

57:04

Wilber: Do you know when the Ellerys first came to Cape Ann?

Martha Oaks: Oh, heavens, I don't remember. Do you remember it, Marie, when they came? This is Marie Ellery Blanding. Generation six or seven or something like that.

Marie Ellery Blanding: It goes way back — 17-something.

Unknown Speaker: 1641

57:35

Martha Oaks, showing the house on Exchange St.: So this is 1882 or 83, somewhere in there. It's 24 Exchange Street. So we're looking... What are we looking at? Commonwealth Avenue, maybe? It's hard to tell, there's absolutely no trees, as you can see. I'm sure if we pulled out an Atlas, we could figure it out.

Unknown Speaker: Is it still there?

Martha Oaks: The house? I think so. But I haven't gone by. Bill?

58:00

Bill Cross: A question for Stephanie. What do you make of the 1733 sale and how it relates to the 1738 repositioning of downtown Gloucester to be centered on Middle Street? John White would seem to have been arguably the most important man in town. So it's sort of hard to think of him as being a passive participant in these fierce debates over where Gloucester should be centered.

58:32

Stephanie Buck: I don't think he was a passive participant, but he certainly had no... I mean, he could talk about it and he could give his opinions, but he had no vote. And I would say that he moved up town a little bit so that whichever way it fell in the end, he would be relatively close to both of them.

And he obviously had been, for reasons that we don't know, trying to get out of the White-Ellery house for 10 years anyway, because he tried to sell it to the parish in 1723.

59:05

Bill Cross: But that wasn't perceived as an act of betrayal to the parish interests at all? It was regarded as a perfectly reasonable thing given his financial circumstances?

Stephanie Buck: Yes.

Bill Cross: So it was a kind of act of fence-sitting as that debate was heating up?

Stephanie Buck: Yes, definitely. That's how I would interpret it anyway —Yes.

59:32

Unknown Speaker: Regarding.: My guess is that (the house under construction behind Exchange St.) is Commonwealth Avenue because the building in the back under construction would be the retirement home that's up on the knoll above Summer St. Right up on the top where there are condominiums now... with apartments.

59:55

Unknown Speaker: Regarding the question about how old was the ROTC... I think in the '60s, they had a 100th anniversary, and they had a big parade downtown. I can't remember the date, but it was in the '60s I guess, so take 100 years back from that and it would be the Civil War.

1:00:15

Martha Oaks: Anyone else? We'll be having the house open again this summer. As Linda said there are several events planned. We thought we'd have one or two more contemporary art installations, and we're playing around with some other ideas; and we'll conclude this season with an attempt at a tavern night, since it was a tavern for a few years. So...we'll keep you up to date.