

*Excerpted from*

# WINSLOW HOMER



THE NATURE OF OBSERVATION    ELIZABETH JOHNS

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## THE NATURE OF MIDLIFE

In the work of Erikson, Levinson, and others, and in our common experience, midlife presents more challenges than we might have imagined. As early as the late thirties but more typically at about forty, we may suddenly realize that we have already lived more than half our lives. That realization can bring on a crisis if the dreams of youth and the ambitions of early adulthood are as yet unfulfilled. In midlife we come to terms with the fit between our material achievements and our emotional lives, reassessing our careers and accepting or modifying the companionship we might enjoy henceforth. We may reevaluate family expectations and our comparisons of ourselves with our siblings. If we look at Homer's departure from New York with these points in mind, we can imagine that he met the onset of midlife with a mixture of anxiety over his disappointments, courage to abandon the life he had established in New York, and hope that he had found a new direction.

After his ship docked in Liverpool, Homer stayed briefly in London. Then he headed to Cullercoats, a fishing village just north of Tynemouth on the northern coast. Although we do not know just why Homer chose this particular village, Cullercoats had had an artist colony since the 1820s and was gaining popularity as a summer resort for English families from London.<sup>1</sup> In a place dominated by the ocean, the villagers lived in and out of fog and gale winds for much of the year. The winters were frigid: the sea churned continuously and devastating storms struck without warning. Unlike other shores Homer knew, this one, with the rhythms and unpredictability of its ocean, provided recreation only grudgingly. Instead it offered sustenance, and it brought death: the villagers who made their living from the sea died in its

fierce storms. Was this why Homer chose Cullercoats in the first place? Was this why he stayed when he had found it—to see hard realities he had not known? Unswayed by the rush of other artists to the pleasant fields of northern Holland and Brittany or the drenched sunlight of southern France, he settled in to live, work, and make his friends on this cold shore of the harsh North Sea.<sup>2</sup>

The robustness of the women in Cullercoats attracted Homer immediately. An article in the *Magazine of Art* in 1882 described their labor: “The women are the working bees. Stout, hardy creatures, with petticoats of blue flannel, and such common agreement in their style of dress as to seem as if they wore a uniform; they stand on the beach in the morning fully equipped for a hasty journey to town. When the boats come in, the men hand the fish over the side and then lounge carelessly home. The women then divide the catch according to the share of the boat which is owned by their ‘men,’ and, swinging their laden creels on their backs, trudge off to the nearest station, to spend the day in hawking fish from door to door.”<sup>3</sup> A later commentator described Homer’s attraction to these women: “Of course the fishermen themselves were an exciting group to portray, but Homer sensed more poetic beauty in the robust fisherwomen who were continuously engaged helping to beach the cobbles, landing the catch, sorting it, placing a heavy load in their creels, and then, with a creel slung on their shoulder and a basket on their arm, climbing the steep slope and travelling along and on to the train and away some ten miles or so to adjoining towns to hawk the morning catch of fresh fish.”<sup>4</sup>

Women had been fundamental to Homer’s emotional life in his earlier career, and they were to be so here. Their attractiveness for him was both cultural and personal. One can imagine the impact of their physicality on so small, slender, and fastidious a man. They presented every contrast imaginable to his own person and to the social class of his family and his viewers. Brawny, smelling of fish, weighing as much as two hundred pounds, with enormous physical strength and endurance, they must have seemed astonishing. A few years before Homer arrived, a group of them had saved the crew of a ship in devastating weather, dragging “the life-boat, in a blinding storm of snow and sleet, three miles along the coast to the rescue of the crew of a ship wrecked near St. Mary’s Island.”<sup>5</sup> Tested psychologically by the harsh realities of the sea, they were the female counterparts of the fishermen Homer had known at Gloucester, unpretentiously close to the grain of life.

Homer had shifted his attention from the life of the genteel to that of the earthy—from the work of the parlor and garden to that of the earth and sea. He reveled in the women’s dis-

tinctiveness, telling friends in Cullercoats that he had come there to work because of them. The American girls who had dominated his work, he saw as all alike. But the bodies and costumes of these Cullercoats fishwives awed him. “Look at the fishergirls . . . in this picture I am painting; there are none like them in my country in dress, feature or form. Observe the petticoat that girl is wearing,’ pointing with his brush at the one to which he referred, ‘No American girl could be found wearing a garment of that colour or fashioned in that style.’”<sup>6</sup> Perhaps Homer sought and found in these women, in watching their daily routines, in talking with them while they posed for him, and in being aware of the tragic events they endured, the exteriorization of qualities he was coming to recognize as necessary for his own survival.

Village life restored his sociability. He matter-of-factly brought with him to the village the elegant clothes in which he had gone about his work even in his apprenticeship. Cullercoats residents commented on them, and before long, he exchanged his “short-tailed coat and high silk hat” for the garb of the villagers, “a fisherman’s blue woollen jersey and a nondescript felt hat.”<sup>7</sup> His earlier affability blossomed again, along with the sense of humor that had always endeared him to family and friends. The fisherman A. B. Adamson, who had known Homer in Cullercoats, reported that he liked to talk, was good at billiards and would play with the villagers, occasionally danced, and was “an inveterate smoker . . . [with a] preference for a pipe.” “He had quite a fund of humorous stories at his command and never displayed any hesitancy in their narration. In turn he seemed to enjoy listening to a good story well told.” On occasion, Adamson remembered with pleasure, Homer “would really unbend and act with the spirit of a school boy.”<sup>8</sup>

Once again filled with hope and spirit, Homer picked out the women when he went to work with his pencil and his brush, translating into sketches the noise and bustle on the Cullercoats shore at dawn when the fishermen came in and their wives and daughters gathered in the night’s catch. Always, he looked toward the sea: the human activity takes place against, and in, the drama of the North Sea. In even his early Cullercoats images the sky and fog and atmosphere and sea and light have an enveloping quality. Within it the people stand out, their bodies and the details made clear with pencil—hair reflects light, clothing is blown about, red neckerchiefs are prominent, the shoes are worn, the bodies are solid. At first, Homer made the figures slender and delicate, like the women he had drawn on Boston streets and upstate New York farms. In *Four Fisherwives* (1881; see Plate 16), for instance, the young girls with their baskets, one with a child on her back, walk across the middle ground of the shore, the turmoil of beached boats and busy men and women in the background subordinated to



57 Winslow Homer, *Perils of the Sea*, 1881, watercolor over light sketch in black chalk, 14 5/8 × 21 in. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts.

their imposing presence. The beach is wet, covered with pools of water—perhaps the tide has just gone out or rain fallen—and clouds scuttle across the sky. The dominant gray of the picture is interrupted only by the white of the young women’s aprons and the red of their neck gear and scarves. Homer depicted young women in their quiet daytime activity too, in such watercolors as *Mending the Nets* (1882; National Gallery of Art, Washington), in which somewhat sturdier women with unforgettable profiles concentrate on repair work. And he caught the stress of the entire community in response to disaster. In *Perils of the Sea* (1881, Fig. 57), the fishermen gather during a fierce storm to devise a plan to rescue colleagues not

yet returned. The skies are almost black; the sea is boiling. In the foreground, on the walk above the rescue station, are two women, their faces pinched, their eyes fixed on the distance, sisters to the American women who had waited out the perils of their husbands and brothers and sons in the Civil War.

Homer soon moved beyond his preoccupation with the youth of some of the Cullercoats wives, capturing in many of his images what souvenir tourist photographs revealed: the large angular bodies, sharp facial lines, and hard skin of the middle-aged fishwives. No longer a young man, he attended now to the strains of living through several decades. In *Fishwives* (1883; see Plate 17), for instance, he paid tribute to the stalwart power of three women who seem to be in their middle years: against a lowering sky and blowing wind, they plant their feet in the wet sand. Two of them look out to a boat fighting the wind; the other, hands on her hips and a basket on her back, faces into the fierceness as though alone. With only a few washes of color, Homer drew these women's bodies, the water, the clouds, and the shore into a sturdy complementarity. They respond to nature's force with their own.<sup>9</sup>

At midlife, attuned to the inexorable elements of his own life—circumstances he had challenged and realized he could not control—Homer did not sentimentalize the harshness of these villagers' lives. Unlike some of the local artists who created heart-rending images of poverty and distress, Homer simply presented this harshness and gave the results to his viewers to ponder. For instance, soon after arriving in Cullercoats, he witnessed a major wreck and its aftermath. A ship had foundered off the coast, and in gale conditions rescuers risked their own lives to bring safely ashore the crew and the wife of the ship's captain. Unknowingly, however, they left one person onboard. Witnesses remembered that when Homer heard about the wreck, he ran to the beach to witness and sketch the entire rescue. He chose in his picture to depict the moment when, the rescuers, having realized their oversight, once again launched the boat into the stormy sea toward the lone figure on the deck of the *Iron Crown* frantically waving to attract attention. Earlier, Homer had depicted men struggling to secure the sails on a tossing ship and, in another image, "The Wreck of the 'Atlantic'—Cast Up by the Sea" (*Harper's Weekly*, April 26, 1873), a woman lying dead on the shore. Now, a larger meaning of the human endeavor struck him: his watercolor *The Wreck of the "Iron Crown"* (Fig. 58) imparts at once the deadly danger of the sea and the human imperative to rescue.

On this shore of the North Sea Homer saw more clearly than ever before the tragedy that is integral to life and the generous human response to it that enables those who suffer to endure. The accessibility of life at Cullercoats to watercolor studies that also conveyed some of



**58** Winslow Homer, *The Wreck of the "Iron Crown,"* 1881, watercolor and gouache over charcoal, 20 1/16 × 29 1/8 in. Carleton Mitchell Collection, on extended loan to The Baltimore Museum of Art.

that life's mysteries encouraged him to stay on after the summer. Having experienced Gloucester only in the relatively benign summer season, he remained in Cullercoats through harsher months and perhaps learned the most there from autumn and winter tempests.

During the winter of 1882 and the succeeding months, Homer began to extend what he had first tested in his watercolors at Gloucester—a fluid, dynamic materiality—this time with fully developed figures. His pictures convey the heavy moisture of the atmosphere in which he breathed and saw and sketched, the feel of the wind against the cheek; for viewers who have visited a fishing village, they even intimate the aroma of salt and fish. He created

the figures with a linear confidence that seems simply to have been waiting to be called on. In his illustrations and then his early watercolors over drawings, he had presented bodies and fences, trees and rocks with an experienced eye. At Cullercoats, however, he picked out the very heft of his models, their weight against the sand, their heavy clothing whipped about in the wind. He gave the women the solidity of sculpture, and each watercolor has the rhythm and design of an intricately planned oil painting. Over guidelines of pencil, his washes of grays and dark blues seem to rush over the paper like the fast-running currents offshore and the swift-moving clouds in the sky. He lifted the ground of his pictures—the white paper itself—right into his image. Rather than figure against ground, or figure becoming part of ground, ground became one with figure. Both participated equally in the ongoing life of the universe.

In these lovingly designed bodies, Homer gave muscle and flesh to women as he had never done before. Perhaps he was able to register their physicality because he was away from “home,” and the women were not his neighbors, cousins, or fellow citizens. He had never been inattentive to women’s bodies, reveling in the delicacy of his women in gardens in the 1870s, but in painting the Cullercoats fisherwomen, Homer perhaps discovered his own very physical presence. He too was flesh. And in the Cullercoats women he may have seen what he was coming to realize was his own role. They—and he—were the worriers, the supporters, those who observed what they loved. The work he had chosen as an artist depended on his being an active observer, a register, a part of the community but in some ways apart from it, as though, like the women, he lived in a separate sphere of obligation and meaning. Did the Cullercoats women also suggest to him a plot of women’s lives—an emotional course, a physical cycle—that he had not seen so clearly before and that somehow illuminated the plot of his own?

With impressive results accumulating from what engaged him at every level of his being, and surely buoyed by the friendly Cullercoats community, Homer regained confidence in his potential as a businessman. Like his brothers, he thought of his work as business, not distinct from his work as artist, but at its foundation. He sent instructions to his dealer, J. Eastman Chase, in New York. First establishing contact with Chase in September 1881, he wrote in October with his characteristically concise humor: “My dear sir: By Dec. 1st I will send you some watercolors—large size & price.”<sup>10</sup> He followed through, putting into Chase’s hands thirty watercolors, accompanying them with an invoice and directions to “put them before the public in any way that you think best . . . in a portfolio—or have an exhibition.”<sup>11</sup>

Homer had also been scouting the art market in England and had found a picture he was quite sure was by Corot that he thought Chase might be able to sell.<sup>12</sup> Although we know nothing further of the Corot, we do know that by March 1882, after Chase had exhibited the pictures to good, even astonished, reviews, Homer judged that at last he had some capital—both literal and figurative. Drawing on the business acumen of his brothers, he decided to make his work scarce and thereby secure its value. Instructing Chase to “stop all sales,” he informed him that he was giving his brother Charles the unsold watercolors that the dealer still held: “I propose making a ‘corner’ in my work by giving everything away where it will never come on the market again.”<sup>13</sup> With resolution that shows his eagerness to appear successful, Homer made sure that nothing coming off his easel from then on entered a backlogged inventory.

The twenty months Homer spent in Cullercoats became the most important time span he had experienced. It confirmed for him what he had had to let go, and it restored his optimism. His full sensory experience of life at Cullercoats enabled him to put persuasively into his pictures the ongoing processes of matter. After he returned for good to the United States in November 1882 and visited his family over Thanksgiving and Christmas, he began to translate his sketches and drawings into large exhibition watercolors that would build on this solid ground.

He had left behind the realm of American genre painting, and his critics had to follow his lead. In response to the exhibition of these watercolors by Chase in February 1883, they tried to specify Homer’s achievement. Virtually all felt that he had transformed the potential of watercolor itself, turning what many had considered a medium “better fitted for girls than for men,” into a “man’s art,” with a “virility of resource.”<sup>14</sup> Surely Homer conceived it this way himself, matching the hard themes of his watercolors with a vigorous handling of the medium. Marianna Griswold Van Rensselaer delighted in his “linear beauty” and “well-balanced composition,” qualities that made his watercolors “*pictures* in the truest sense.” He was distinct from all other artists because he belonged to neither the groups who had won their reputation before the Civil War nor those who had returned from Munich and Paris in the late 1870s; he also distinguished himself by his clear nationality. This, she proclaimed, was a stunning gift amid art that was “eclectic and cosmopolitan,” detached from specific place. Homer expressed his rootedness and individuality, in her opinion, in an independence of style whose weight depended absolutely on its message. And his message, she pro-

posed, was one of feeling: “He has invented in some sort a language of his own. It is not polished, not deft and rapid and graceful. We could never care for it in itself and apart from the message it delivers. . . . No artist has a more personal message to deliver than Mr. Homer . . . [His works are always] the record of strong artistic *feeling* expressed in strong, frank, and decided ways.”<sup>15</sup>

Such a response owed much to the stunning effect of Homer’s Cullercoats women, creatures who inhabited, not drawing rooms, but the everyday world of physical work. That Homer had drawn and painted women since the beginning of his career had been noticed only occasionally (except by his friend Eugene Benson). Suddenly, it seemed significant. Almost without exception, reviewers extolled the health and size of the fisherwomen, using such terms as “robust,” “brawny,” “stalwart,” “sturdy daughters of the coast,” and even “she-Vikings.” They seem to have seen the artist’s pictures of the women as Benson had—as alternatives to current ideals for American and English womanhood. For negative contrast, they fastened on the works of Edwin Austin Abbey and James McNeill Whistler, who depicted an ideal English type. One reviewer crowed: “Look from these women of Homer’s, sturdy, fearless, fit wives and mothers of men, to the dolls which flaunt their millinery all around the walls and you are no man yourself if you do not find rising within you a sentiment of personal regard and admiration for the artist who can honor woman so by his art.”<sup>16</sup> They found him observant of the very way women’s bodies are put together. “They are firm, sure human bodies, known truly and drawn carefully, then clothed.”<sup>17</sup> “Mr. Homer seems to have observed the fish-wives of the little seaside town unusually closely; his women are women all over, in the way they stand, sit, hold their hands, use their back and shoulders in carrying heavy weights, such as baskets of fish and the like.”<sup>18</sup> In reviewing Homer’s exhilarating *Inside the Bar* (see Plate 18), one critic vividly evoked the fishwife’s physicality: “His girl in ‘The Incoming Tide’ steps along the sand as gracefully as two hundred pounds weight of healthy human flesh with a hamper at its back, can move.”<sup>19</sup> An exhibition watercolor painted back in New York as a powerful summary of all he had witnessed, it evoked from another reviewer an appreciative description. “Mr. Winslow Homer has painted a fisherwoman striding along a pier toward the men who are about launching a life-boat. Her pose is vigorous and spirited, draperies blown out by the wind, and hair streaming.”<sup>20</sup>

Besides the physicality of the Cullercoats women, critics noted Homer’s devotion to water, wind, and the effects of the sun. If they themselves were not steeped in the physical experience of sea, clouds, and storms, they nonetheless developed a vocabulary to invoke it. One



**59** Winslow Homer, *The Gale*, 1883–93, oil on canvas, 30 1/4 × 48 5/16 in. Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

celebrated “the truthfulness of the storm-charged atmosphere” in *The Gale* (1883–93, Fig. 59),<sup>21</sup> and another, “the expression of the nearly-spent fury of the storm on the white foaming sea.”<sup>22</sup> Still another critic elaborated: “The picture . . . is full of the wild, salt freedom of the sea and storm. The leaden clouds race by in lowering legions; over the reef the fierce surf breaks in sheets of pelting spray; there is real wind in this picture, and one can understand the effort it puts that brawny woman to to poise herself, shoulder against it, with all her muscles set and her blood glowing.”<sup>23</sup> A scale of action that far transcended human knowledge inspired not just awe but terror. Mesmerized by the sheer power of the ocean to which Homer’s pictures allude, one critic wrote, “*Inside the Bar* is remarkable for the feeling of wildness; it suggests superbly the terror and the savage grandeur of the turbulent sea in a day of storms

on a sad, desolate, iron-bound coast.”<sup>24</sup> And yet another pointed to each detail with which Homer evoked this dynamism: “the seething sweep of the sea, . . . with all its pitiless power and deathful majesty. The heavy and tumbled rain clouds, drifting and rolling close to the sea; not mere repetition of any cloud forms, but actual evidences of the heavy gloom and impenetrable mystery that is in them. The ragged and shattered rocks . . . painted with all their bitter and savage ruthlessness.”<sup>25</sup>

And Homer pointed to the mystery of the natural world. His brushstrokes that did not quite define a tossing wave or scuttling cloud, colors that overlay and modified what he had put down earlier, compositions that conveyed a universe always in motion—all these pushed his pictures toward metaphysical inquiry. He painted, as Marianna Van Rensselaer insisted—he *felt*—the strangeness of the earth and winds, ocean and light, plants and animals and human beings.<sup>26</sup>

Reviewers, sharing with the artist a profound awareness of the physical world, praised his work as that of a true realist. He was *not* an interventionist, altering what he saw to convey his reaction to it. One particularly eloquent critic professed his weariness of “insolent, conceited affectation by men who force themselves full before all those who see their pictures, saying ‘This was the noble emotion that this tempest caused—this the sensitive passion that this sunset created in me.’”<sup>27</sup> Another critic declared, “There is nothing personal, or rather, subjective, in his work. . . . He must give the essential nature of what he sees. He gives the true import . . . and leaves you there, saying nothing of the effect of the scene upon himself.” The writer went on to link Homer with spiritual nature, which human beings could find beneath material nature: “He simply says, ‘This is the hidden character of the sea—today this is the inner nature of the clouds—this the deeper meaning of these ragged rocks. See and feel for yourself what they can tell you.’ In other words, he reads below the external manifestation of Nature, finds the soul of the scene, and leaves the men who see his work to feel in themselves all the superhuman exultation that comes in a mighty tempest, all the quiver and anguish of a winter wreck, and the weary gloom and misery of a dreary, heavy landscape; and then again, all the clear, keen joy of a bright, hard beach in the flashing morning.”<sup>28</sup> The more dynamic the natural scene—the fiercer the storm, in Homer’s work and in the world—the more powerfully it argued for the ongoing processes that cannot be seen.

It was this very “absence” of Homer in his pictures that had bothered reviewers of what some had called his genre paintings, others his “purely American subjects.” In those earlier figural works, they had not found the stereotypes or emotional content that signaled the

artist's prejudices and therefore offered the comfort of social agreement. Some reviewers applied such objections as well to the Cullercoats pictures of figures and sea. Wanting images to express a clear moral, or at least class sympathy, they railed at Homer's ostensible neutrality to the hard work of his Cullercoats folk. One of them complained: "Mr. Homer rarely shows any didactic purpose or emotional quality in his water-colors . . . he seldom thinks of using [tones and effects] to awaken a sentiment or inspire a thought above that of beauty for itself alone. So we find in his pictures in this instance not all we should like to see in them. [Although] he gives reason for the supposition that the life of the fisher-folk is not altogether agreeable, he yet does not seem to get into sympathetic relations with the people, and apparently misses his opportunity of showing that they have their joys and sorrows, their loves and bereavements, like people better circumstanced."<sup>29</sup>

Such voices were in the minority, however. As time passed, more critics deplored a homiletic and sentimental rhetoric because it separated human beings into observers and observed. As one reviewer insisted, sympathy for the laboring classes meant, not causing the viewer to set them apart as "other," but rather, like Homer, being faithful to the truths about human life that underlie mere circumstance of class and toil. These viewers were made uncomfortable by poetry and novels such as those by Charles Kingsley, contrasting his sentiment-dripping poem "The Three Fishers" with Homer's dignified depictions of the people at Cullercoats. They defined realism as painting that trusted viewers to respond emotionally and reach their own conclusions about any relation to a transcendent ideal. A packaged reading of feeling in the picture gave viewers a minor role, short-circuiting the spirit that could unite an artist with sensitive and thoughtful viewers of a picture.

The amusement with which Homer had once drawn pedestrians and tourists and farmhands had yielded to the conviction that the artist might best withhold his judgments. As an "honest" observer—thus critics saw him—he recounted the physical circumstances in which human hardship or joy or thoughtfulness occurs. He presents the "soul of the scene," not because he lacked sympathy with the situations he was depicting, but because he engaged profoundly with them, placing them in a larger universe beyond easy explanation.

Critics saw a necessary relation between this capacity of Homer's and his own life. They pointed to his maturity as the outgrowth of hard experience. One of them hinted at the change: "Travel and change of outlook have benefited his art immensely in one way, that is to say, in technique, and perhaps it has also deepened his seriousness."<sup>30</sup> Another felt that Homer had emerged from a long period of experimentation: "No American artist displays

more independence of style. There has always been a daring originality about his conceptions which served to attract attention and respect and to make a vivid impression on the memory. But for some time the evidence of experimenting to find the just field for the development of his genius was interesting rather than attractive. . . . Now he reappears in our exhibitions and startles us with works which show that he has at last found the subjects and the method for adequately expressing the restless yearnings of a vigorous artistic nature.”<sup>31</sup> And finally, one critic explicitly addressed Homer’s emotional history: “A man evidently of deep sensibilities and an unusual capacity to enjoy and suffer, he is yet one who thoroughly perceives the somewhat tragic element which shows itself as underlying nearly every life. One may often gain a fair index of the experience of a painter by studying his pictures . . . we cannot avoid the conclusion, in studying Mr. Homer’s pictures, that in them is the hand of a man to whom fortune has not been altogether kind, and who has had his power to sympathize with others cultivated by personal experience of the hard side of life.”<sup>32</sup>

Cullercoats had brought Homer’s emotional history to full expression, and watercolor had enabled him to give it form. He fulfilled his desire to live, not in the supercharge of commerce and business or even romance, but in the presence of the mysterious power of nature; and he discovered a unique way of being in the world.

Back in New York after a twenty-month period that had reoriented him, Homer sought what he now needed to sustain both his life and his work as an artist. Amid the humanity bustling about each day and the social requirements of the professional artist he could find no space for contemplation or time for the self-directed work of Cullercoats and, before that, Gloucester. The growing association of his family with Prout’s Neck, Maine, provided an alternative. Prout’s Neck was a promontory of land ten miles from Portland that pointed south toward the open Atlantic, its east side on the ocean and its west side on Saco Bay. According to family tradition, Charles and the senior Homer (and presumably Winslow and his mother as well) had been discussing the idea of a “Homer colony” in the undeveloped area there since the family visit in 1875 to Arthur and Alice during their honeymoon at a local hotel. As a first step, in 1882 Arthur built a summer home there for his own family, and then in early 1883 Charles financed the purchase of an unfinished house along with most of the property on Prout’s Neck. Designating his father the owner of the house and developer of the property, Charles arranged for the architect John Calvin Stevens to complete the house along the lines of a fashionable “cottage.”<sup>33</sup> Homer’s father, his grandiosity as head of the family