



# Gardner's Beacon

CAPE ANN AND SALEM PLANTER



Thomas Gardner Society

Founded 2010



Volume III -- Issue 1 -- March 2013

One could say that New England, in a romantic sense, started with the mishap of the Mayflower, and its crew, in landing at the wrong spot. Such a view might, also, consider that the little group might have, by fortune, stumbled upon an area where they were able to start a new life, albeit requiring help from a few friendly natives who were already there. After their initial time of trial and hardship, this little group's efforts began a society that, with some fits and starts, evolved into a great country.

That initial landing by the Mayflower party is celebrated with a national holiday, every year. The story is drummed into the minds of children all across the country.

Now, a mere few years after the Mayflower group, there was another group that was somewhat smaller and that landed where they were supposed to, namely Cape Ann. This new group's intent was to start a settlement, but the little group has the privilege of being forgotten, for the most part.

Why? Many who wrote of this group did not have kind words, including Rev. John White himself in his *Plea*. Rev. White will feature as a central character: history tells us that he got the funding together for the Cape Ann group; too, one of the leaders in the group, Thomas Gardner, may have been related to the Rev. And, Rev. White was not the only one who wrote of the Cape Ann venture as a dismal failure. Unfortunately, very little of the material was written by anyone who was there.

Some, such as Rev. Hubbard, were able to talk directly with the principals involved. To wit, he talked to Conant, Gardner and others. In fact, the Rev. Hubbard's writing (from about the 1680s, but not published until the early 1800s) is only the second reference to Thomas, after John Endicott's mention in a 1629 report to London.

One thing to remember is the fact that Thomas and his crew (with Roger Conant) spent several years in New England, in a somewhat successful manner -- despite the protestations of Rev. White who never put his self on the proverbial line. For instance, they were able to feed John Winthrop home-grown strawberries from Cape Ann when he arrived in 1630. Another thing to keep in mind is that both Rev. Higginson and Endicott wrote back about the Salem area in somewhat glowing terms. In fact, there

would have been no Winthrop, otherwise. The idea of New England being suitable for permanent settlement was very much iffy, at best, until those reports prior to 1630. The Mayflower experience had not been a big seller. As we will see below, there had been many other prior attempts in both South and North Virginia.

In short, from that early time at Cape Ann, we have many questions that remain to be answered. The approach will be to collect all available information, correlate disparate views, look for new information, and start a re-construction that will be justified and published in the public forum. Of course, such an effort is not to be taken lightly nor done without proper care.

### Origins of New England

The romantic notions mentioned above might stress that the Mayflower group stepped off the boat into an unknown area. But, that is not so; one factor that had delayed earlier settlement attempts was the area's popularity with the native population and the potential conflict with those natives. There had been continual exploration, and many settlement attempts, in the years prior to the above two landings.



Pinnace under sail

Early exploration, say John Cabot's time, with an English backing was sparse, to say the least, for a long while. England was otherwise occupied -- warring with Spain, for example. Around the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, England decided to put more resources toward the New World even if the motivation might have been to outstep Spain.

Actually, an early (multi-national) settlement up north was well established by 1588, including having English residents. All in all, though, there was slow movement and progress in the large area called Virginia.

In the States now-a-days, the settlement in Virginia, namely Jamestown, is well-known. In fact, the Queen visited to help us celebrate its 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary. But, as we know, this attempt had its problems, too.

Prior to Jamestown, there were several attempts further to the

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north, in the vicinity of modern Maine. Then, we know about the lost colony to the south of Jamestown that occurred earlier under Sir Walter Raleigh (in the 1580s).

New England, in the early time, included North and South Virginia. Jamestown was in the latter. Using New England for the northern part, and Virginia for southern, came at a later point.

### Over years and years

Many historic writings about New England are in the Annals format which we will follow, again (see Beacon, Vol. II, No. 6). There are holes which we intend to close up, as we can, in the future. Too, this issue is a continued look at events and times before, and up to, the 1623/24 arrival.

### *The Legacy of Thomas and Margaret, in the Annals format*

#### Pre-1580 --

There had been regular exploration before and after Columbus. Verrazano explored the Maine coast for France while Gomez did so for Spain. Cabot roamed the area.

#### 1580s --

At Newfoundland, several thousand people from England, France and Portugal had established themselves. The Earl of Northampton, with 40 others, had a patent for 46 to 52 deg north.

John Davis tried to find the Northwest Passage.

Of early settlements, we can point to Sir Walter Raleigh's attempt in Roanoke, North Carolina. He made several attempts before conflicts with Spain proved too troublesome. An interesting point is that Sir Walter retired to Sherborne which is where some claim Thomas originated. Did these families know each other?

Brownist Congregationalists have to leave and to go to the Netherlands.

Mary, Queen of Scots, beheaded (ordered so by Queen Elizabeth I)

Spanish Armada headed to the English Channel.

#### 1590/91 --

William Shakespeare wrote Richard III.

There was a record made for Thomas Gardner being born in Sherborne.

John White, governor of the Colony of Roanoke, went to England for supplies. When he returned in October of 1590, he found his colony deserted.

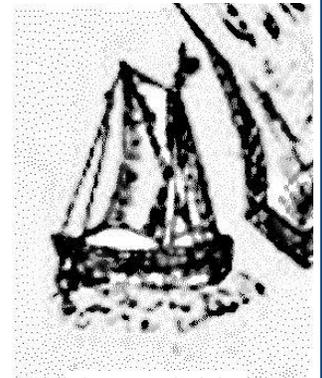
#### 1602 --

Queen Elizabeth died; King James I crowned; Puritans put on notice.

Captain Bartholomew Gosnold reached Maine and came south to Cape Cod. Being in the early summer, the area was very pleasant with an abundance of fish. They explored the area and provided some of the names that we use today, such as Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard. Gosnold had enough people with him to start a colony, but most didn't want to stay in the area given the problems.

#### 1607 --

Gosnold captained one of the ships that went to Virginia with the intent to settle the area. Hence, we have the story of Jamestown. Gosnold noted that some of the natives had items that indicated the prior visits by Europeans. The group had problems in the beginning; some were on the verge of leaving but reinforcements from England saved the day.



**Pinnace, Virginia,  
1607 drawing  
(built in Maine)**

About the same time as the Jamestown effort, a group went to Maine under the command of Sir John Popham. This group made some significant strides. They had a fort and other buildings in place. Plus, they built and sailed a ship (a pinnace, named Virginia, which later sailed to Virginia and to

England) Whereas Jamestown, and later Plymouth, lost a lot of people, the Maine group lost only one person, it is believed, in the year that they were in Maine. The group returned to England since one of the leaders had a death in the family and had to return to England.

#### 1609 --

The pinnace, Virginia, was at Jamestown since the Popham group split up. John Ratcliffe went out with the pinnace to trade with the Indians. Several of his party were killed.



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## 1610 --

In the Newfoundland settlement, "a regular government had been formed in 1610." John Guy came to Conception bay, where John Cabot had visited in 1497 while exploring for Henry VII of England, with thirty nine people and started a fishing settlement.

## 1614 --

Captain John Smith explored Maine as his men fished the area. Smith was the first to use New England rather than North Virginia. He wrote that there are "two fishing seasons in the Gulf of Maine" and suggested fishing stations.

## 1616/17 --

Nicholas Hobson tried to establish trade in the Martha's Vineyard area, but hostility by the natives caused the party to go back to England.

There is a marriage recorded in Sherborne for Thomas Gardner and Margaret Frier.

## 1619 --

Thomas Dermer started trading at Monhegan.

In the period from 1608 to 1619, fishing trips from England became a regular occurrence.

## 1620 --

There was a severe frost in England. The Thames was frozen. One farmer lost almost 20,000 sheep.

This narrative would be remiss without a mention of the Mayflower trip and arrival.

## 1621/22/23 --

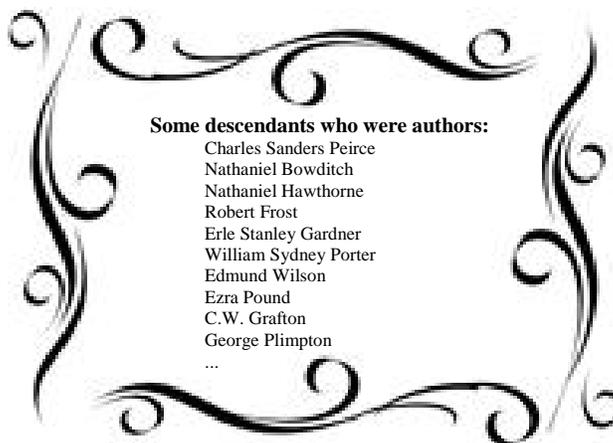
Who was first? Ferdinando Gorges claimed to have established plantations prior to 1620.

Rev. John White began organizing "Dorchester Adventurers" to put a fishing station at Cape Ann.

First Thanksgiving held at Plymouth.

A small group overwinters at Cape Ann.

**Observations from an interested Thomas Gardner descendant:** it seems he was a literate man who was charged with authority in overseeing the Cape Ann venture. This alone indicates he may have been a cut above the common man. With that said, how and where did he receive an education? His uncle was the Rev. John White, so was he chosen because of his family's connection to the Rev or was his selection based on his worth or merit? These questions lead me to believe he at least had had more advantages in his life. If his father had any standing in the area where Thomas Jr. (Dorchestershire?) was from there should be English records either from the churches or records from the shire where the family was from, perhaps, providing clues to the parentage of Thomas Sr. which may link the family closer to one of royal descent. Interesting prospect and may be one worth trying to pursue. English records have become available online in limited quantities perhaps over time one may surface that pertains specifically to the Salem, MA Gardner family.



### Some descendants who were authors:

- Charles Sanders Peirce
- Nathaniel Bowditch
- Nathaniel Hawthorne
- Robert Frost
- Erle Stanley Gardner
- William Sydney Porter
- Edmund Wilson
- Ezra Pound
- C.W. Grafton
- George Plimpton
- ...

### Gardner Beacon, Issues

No.	Issue date	Title/topic
1	Spring, 2011	Thomas and Margaret Gardner
2	Summer, 2011	Gardner Patriots
3	Fall, 2011	Margaret's House
4	Halloween, 2011	Gardners & 1692
5	Winter, 2011	New England Christmas
1	February, 2012	St. Valentine's Day
2	Spring, 2012	Gardners and the sea
3	Summer, 2012	War of 1812
4	September, 2012	Houses
5	Halloween, 2012	1692, again
6	Winter, 2012	Celebrations, Annals
1	March, 2013	Before the Arrival

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We are inviting contributions of articles in regard to the Thomas Gardner families.

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