



Gardner's Beacon

CAPE ANN AND SALEM PLANTER



Thomas Gardner Society

Founded 2010

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Thomas Gardner came over, with his wife, Margaret, and the Cape Ann crew, under the auspices of the Dorchester Company. The company was principally the result of the efforts by Rev. John White, a rector in Dorchester, Dorset. Irrespective of whether Rev. John and Thomas were related, as some have proposed, Rev. John figures heavily in anything dealing with those early days.

The newsletter is sponsored by the Thomas Gardner Society (ThomasGardnerSociety.org).

By the time Rev. John got Dorchester Company off the ground, New England had been a regular fishing spot for decades so was well known. The fact that the Plymouth Colony, despite early problems, established a foothold on the new continent also contributed greatly to the interest. It would turn out that the success at Cape Ann (survival) and Salem encouraged the later phenomenon called the Great Migration to New England.

Fishing, farming, and such

One major issue was that the ocean voyage to the fishing sites took a couple of months or so. This voyage resulted in, essentially, lost time with no fishing going on. Rev. John's thought was to remove this loss of time by using a permanent settlement. Too, crews had to be gathered together every year. Many who took the opportunity were trying to save money in order to establish themselves with land in England. Others may have been trying to get enough to obtain their own ships and boats. The majority of the crewmen were fifteen to twenty years old and looking for economic opportunities or adventure.

So, as the Dorchester Company got its start, Newfoundland was already an example of successful colonization and had been so for a very long period. In Maine, the Sagadahoc attempt demonstrated success several ways including the building and launching of an ocean-going vessel. The colony, located at Popham, survived a Maine winter without any major issues. The colonists returned to England only because the leader had a death in the family; his absence left too big of a void to fill at the time.

Additionally, there was the issue of pay. The master of the ship would receive his income on selling the product that they brought back from New England. The method of payment for the crew varied, but, in many cases, it was based upon a percentage of the overall take (usually leaving sufficient profit for the master).

Prior to the 1623/24 efforts, Cape Ann and the surrounding areas had been visited several times by English explorers, including mapping efforts by Capt. John Smith. Too, there had been discussion, amongst Capt. Gosnold's crew in 1602, about their potential to attempt colonization in the area of Cape Cod.

Some of the early attempts at creating a colony tried to combine fishing with farming so that the fisherman could have their own provisions as well as excess that they could ship back. The Cape Ann crew had this idea, with Thomas in charge of the plantings and John Tylly as head of fishing. Too, early colonization attempts tried to accomplish fur trading.

Annual fishing

One motive for the Dorchester effort of Rev John was productivity. The idea was to create a permanent settlement in the Cape Ann area that could ship back its product and shorten the travel time. From the beginning of the fishing efforts in New England, crews would leave England in the spring in order to fish and to cure over the summer. Then, they would return later in the year, autumn, to England with their product.

The earlier efforts did not become permanent for various reasons that we will look at in order to be thorough in sketching out the early days.

The ships used in these annual endeavors, between thirty and eighty tons, were manned by crews of twenty to forty, mainly younger men and boys. The large ships carried the necessary provisions and equipment, including material for fishing boats. These boats were assembled when the crew arrived at the fishing site in the spring. The work during the summer would then be split between catching fish and then doing the salting.

Thomas' and Margaret's Times (Annals)

- 1497** -- John Cabot reported to England about the North American coast.
- 1517** -- Fifty ships were fishing along the Newfoundland banks this early.
- 1578** -- Between England, Spain, Portugal, and France, there were 350 boats fishing in the area.
- 1600** -- Thousands of Englishmen were fishing bays and coves.
- 1602** -- Captain Bartholomew Gosnold discovered what became known as Cape Ann. Also Gosnold named Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard;



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1607 -- Sagadahoc (Popham) colony started and spent the winter. The fork was introduced into English society from Italy.

1608 -- Sagadahoc (Popham) colony abandoned.

1614 -- Captain John Smith maps out the area of Cape Ann (named by Prince Charles).

1621 -- Ten to twelve ships are fishing around Monhegan.

1628 -- Washington Street laid out in Salem "perpendicular to the old Indian trail."

1622 --Wessagusset colony established by Thomas Weston.

1623 -- Cape Ann crew left to overwinter. Shakespeare published. A major fire breaks out in the Plymouth colony.

1624 -- Manhattan Island purchased (on the behalf of the Netherlands).

1625 -- A dozen harbors supported fishing between Cape Code and Penobscot Bay. By the time Roger Conant gets to Cape Ann, there are fifty people in the area.

1626 -- Sir Francis Bacon dies in North London.

1627 -- France and Spain agree "to fight Protestantism"

1627/28 -- Salem's deadly winter. Dr. Samuel Fuller comes up from Plymouth to help.

1630 -- John Winthrop arrives and dines in the great house in Salem. The "Wampanoag Indians" introduce popcorn to the pilgrims.

1640 -- Population in the colonies thought to be less than 6,000.

1648 -- Reverend John White dies in Dorchester, England.

1675 -- Population in the colonies reaches 50,000. The King Philip's War breaks out in the colonies.

John White: (1575-1648) Born in Oxfordshire, John attended New College, obtaining a M.A. in 1601. He was appointed as rector in Dorchester. Due to the success of the Plymouth colony, John was inspired to establish a colony in Cape Ann. The area had first been visited in the early 1600s. The on-going fishing trade provided the motivation as this was a commercial venture. It was not an exercise in religious expansion though John was a Puritan.

John organized supporters for the company and funded the 1623/24 venture that was led by Thomas Gardner and John Tylly. For several reasons (future Beacon article), John decided to have Roger Conant take over the effort in 1625. Roger's brothers were supporters of John's efforts and known to John.

When it became clear that Cape Ann was not a suitable location, John supported the effort to move to Salem. Then, he kept interest up enough for the eventual start of the Great Migration to New England.

John, then, is definitely the Father of Massachusetts.

Academia/Science:

- Timothy Folger (c 1700)
- Nathaniel Bowditch (c 1770)
- Charles Sanders Peirce (c 1830)
- Frederic Ward Putnam (c 1830)
- Elliott P. Joslin (c 1860)
- Gilbert H. Grosvenor (c 1870)
- Julian L. Coolidge (c 1870)
- Frank A. Gardner (c 1880)
- Alfred L. Gardner (c 1930)
- ...

Gardner's 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
2	June, 2013	Spirit of Independence
3	Fall, 2013	Dorchester Company

We are inviting contributions of articles in regard to the Thomas Gardner families.
Contact: algswtlk@thomasgardnersociety.org

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