



Gardner's Beacon™



CAPE ANN AND SALEM PLANTER

Thomas Gardner Society, Inc. Founded 2010



[Volume XII -- Issue 2](#) -- Fall 2022

An anticipated time has arrived after decades of discussion and planning. Our [Essex County post](#) provides a timeline of the entities who will party over the coming years. This year, we saw the 400th of Weymouth's start. Next year, January 1st, [Gloucester](#) starts their festivities, some of which have already started. The significance of Gloucester comes, in part, from being the site where the [Cape Ann party](#) of Thomas Gardner landed. We have followed the planning activity and will support these through special research during this coming year.

It will be 2026 when Salem will be the feted town. We have touched upon that theme over the years in terms of motives, events, and those who will be remembered. For instance, using research reports from Sidney Perley's, [The Essex Antiquarian](#), we looked at [Massey's Cove](#) which was the original site where Roger Conant set up his crew after moving over from Cape Ann.



Massey's Cove, 1626

In our posts over the last twelve years, we have looked at families, places, and things with respect to Salem, Essex County, and Massachusetts, particularly regarding the ensuring several 100 years until now. Our interest will continue. Fortunately, we have had the opportunity to follow families over the years as they spread out from New England, including studies related to the [Frontier Century](#) and the [large interior](#) of the United States.

The next section looks at one family that came about five years after the Cape Ann start. There are many such families, but this one has had relationships with the region and its families from the early times. After that, the remaining articles cover research that has been done since our last issue in March of this year as well as bring forward work from the past.

We have twelve years of our work to review. Over the years prior to our start, there were many sites on the web presenting information about Gardner families. Too, we have had sufficient inquiries to consider that our work has a scope of "[All things Gardner.](#)" We started, and have pending, further work about Gardner families who reside

outside of the U.S. For instance, one family lives in Dorset, England.

As with the last issue of Gardner's Beacon (GB), we will provide a PDF with links which can be read on-line or printed. This allows us to reference supporting material directly. This time, we will also provide a mobile version.

Rev. Higginson and family

[Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) gave us a 19th Century version of his family. He and Dr. Frank (Gardner author) were instrumental in establishing the [Old Planters Society](#).

One of our goals is to resurrect that activity as part of the 400th activities. But, in looking at the Colonel's family, we go back to [Rev. Francis Higginson](#) who arrived after John Endicott but before John Winthrop. The Rev. brought over 300 souls to Salem in the fleet that came with him. This fleet arrived in 1629. They had a hard winter and lost some of the new arrivals. This was to repeat itself within the next year when Winthrop came with his crowd.

One of the things that we have been doing is adding links to WikiTree in order to coordinate updates using documents that have support. Reference to these will appear in the posts and in reports, such as those in our GB issues and in The Gardner Annals. One approach will be to follow collateral families whether as in-law or by marriage. For example, [Hannah \(Gardner\) Higginson](#) died while her children were young. Her husband's next wife was the ancestor of Col. TW. We used the Col. to discuss blended family situations that are the topic of the next section.

Getting back to the [Col. TW Higginson](#), he was a supporter of John Brown (of abolitionist fame) as a member of the [Secret Six](#) which group consisted of New Englanders. The Col. brought supporting resources to [bleeding Kansas](#) and donated his files to the [Kansas Historical Society](#). He was a "white commissioned officer with the 1st South Carolina Volunteer Infantry, one of the first regiments in the US Army made up entirely of black men." Also, he encouraged "poet Emily Dickinson with whom he corresponded for 25 years."

Blended families

One decision that we made was to follow relational links that were to cultural associations, as well as, to family ties.

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We have centuries to cover while being cognizant of the changes that occurred over that long frame of time. Generations will be one focus. In case of the Higginson family, Rev. Francis is considered the first; Col. TW is the [8th generation](#) as we can see from his own research (see his book – showing the step relationship between [Hannah Gardner and the Col.](#)).

As a reminder, the 5th generation was core to the U.S. Revolution (250th coming up in a few years, see [SAR/DAR](#)); the 8th did the Civil War.

From the start, we have been putting together a list of [descendants of Thomas Gardner](#) of Salem using what has been available. Many times, we have tried to add items from lists done by other researchers. An example is [Brig. Gen. Joseph Gardner Swift](#) who was on several lists, but we could not prove the relationship. Being of Essex County and Nantucket, the Gen. has loads of aunts and uncles from the area in his extended family, but we have found only Gardner cousins.

Another example is [Col. WJ Worth](#) (our original post dates from 2012) who has a similar mix from areas with lots of Gardner families. In this case, it is a “step” situation as we saw with Col. TW Higginson. And, it was a little earlier. His ancestor, John Worth, married Miriam Gardner who was the daughter of Richard (son of Thomas and Margaret) and [Sarah Shattuck](#). Mariam had children but died early. John had two more wives the last of whom was the ancestor of Col. Worth.

As we looked at the pedigree of both Worth and Swift within the contexts of their extended families, we found and counted Gardner relationships within a few generations for both. The results: Worth (111) and Swift (160+). Yet, neither of these had Thomas as ancestor.

Roger Conant

One of our goals has been to include Cape Ann families in our research. Many of these families intermarried; but, some families are better documented than others.

So, a descendant of Thomas Gardner can be a descendant of [Roger Conant](#), too. One approach is to research individuals as they appear in the news or in other media. Below, we will look at a couple examples.



First, though, we will point to the [Descendants of Seeth](#) post which is one of the lists that we have started for the children of Thomas. Seeth married Joshua Conant. Her son, Joshua Conant, married Christian More, but he died young. Her descendants came from her marriage with John Grafton.

Technology: We have taken this topic as being important going forward, for several reasons which we will look at, and discuss, in detail. ‘Technology’ can have several uses for us. We would be interested in changes in technology over time. As the saying goes, technology is great, when it works. If technology quits working, many times we are out of luck and reduced to earlier methods, if we can remember them. Technology can deal with tools. Of late, computational tools are at the forefront of the attention of many. We will have an interest in that. We have had posts on the topic over the years. Examples: [Gairdner Foundation](#) (Mar 2022); [Current challenge](#) (Jan 2022); [How dumb is AI?](#) (Oct 2021); [Technology and content](#) (Sep 2020); and more.

The New Yorker wrote of [James Bryant Conant](#) who was a Head of Harvard which motivated a look at his pedigree. He descends through Roger’s son, Lot. Having made that connection, we started to research the Heads with respect to their relationship with New England and, perhaps. Essex County and will report on this continuing work.

Later, we saw a book review that mentioned [Richard Perry Conant](#). After a little searching, we established that he was a descendant of Roger, again through Lot. The book, *Riverman: An American Odyssey*, looks at Conant’s travels by canoe along the [rivers of America](#), some of which we had researched.

This link provides more information about the [Conant Family](#).

Pony Express

We will continue to look at technology. An early example deals with the movement of goods and news in the wide interior expanse. Before the railroad and shortly after, there were two ways from the area of western Missouri to San Francisco. Both carried mail and small goods. One carried larger freight and people. These were the [Pony Express](#) and the [Butterfield Overland Mail Trail](#). Folks from New England were involved with both accomplishments.