



Gardner's Beacon

CAPE ANN AND SALEM PLANTER



Thomas Gardner Society

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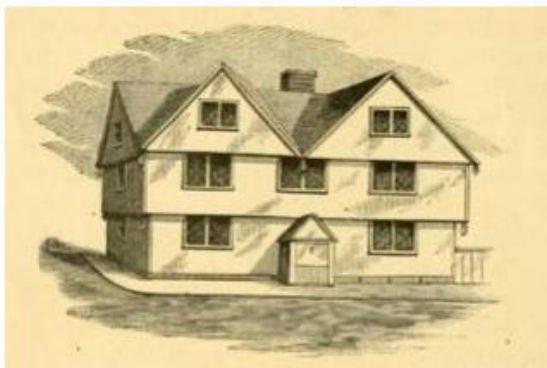
-- Fall, 2011

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

According to the *American biography: a new cyclopedia* (1922) - Volume XII, Thomas and **Margaret** are associated with the "most famous colonization" movement of the seventeenth century. They came over as members of the historic "Dorchester Company" with Thomas leading the expedition. They arrived in 1624 at Cape Ann in a vessel "chartered for their use" by Rev. John White. According to this article, Thomas was a man "so well endowed mentally and so highly esteemed by the company that he was placed in leadership over the pioneer enterprise." Thomas oversaw the "planting of the new settlement" at Cape Ann.

As history tells us, the "hardships at Cape Ann were too great to overcome." For one thing, we know that the soil was poor for farming and grazing. Too, the abundant fishing was too far distant due to competition to be effective. However, the little colony did sustain itself quite well.

And, they built, among other structures, a house which we will call "**Margaret's house.**" That was her domain. There has been much written about the Company and Cape Ann which we will address fully in time. But, let's take a moment to look at things from **Margaret's** perspective.



Consider, **Margaret** had married Thomas and already had a couple of children when she found out that they were uprooting themselves and were moving to the unknown of New England. And, some of the tales at that time told about the many tragedies of Plymouth and the hardships of the new world.

Even under the auspices of the Company, this was a major undertaking. Thomas and **Margaret** did come better prepared than did some of the earlier groups. In fact, they carried the making of the house along with supplies necessary to establish a colony.

We can imagine what she thought when she landed and saw the wilds of Cape Ann. Granted, there were fishermen in the area from Plymouth, Nantasket, and thereabouts. But, the only buildings would have been very rough shacks. Higginson's description from a few years later can be used to imagine what she felt.

Margaret's house was finished in 1624. From what we know, it was three story and quite remarkable for the place and time. Higginson thought that it was a nice house.

Evidently, John Endicott liked **Margaret's** house, too. He confiscated the thing and had it moved to Salem for his own use. Some say that the timbers from this house are still in an existing building in Salem. That would make for an interesting story.

What was the status of the house as the group went to Salem? Endicott didn't show up into a little later. That little gap of time will offer another interesting story to unravel.



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When political and religious forces in England caused Roger Conant to show up and to assume leadership, Thomas and **Margaret** showed their character and continued to help establish the colony which was trying to sustain itself, plus ship extra production goods back to England, in an area that could not support such an endeavor.

It was a year after Conant's arrival that the group moved to what became Salem. This move uprooted **Margaret**, and her children, again, to essentially another unknown situation. We know that she and Thomas were successful at the new location. Their children, and progeny, are proof.

Margaret died early having seen her oldest children into early adulthood. She joined the church after her husband did; her motivation would have been her children's welfare and future given that the social focus necessitated involvement with the church. The thought was that you were nothing until you joined the little 'social' thing. Needless to say, it was quarrels of this type that caused a lot of the migration, and it carried over to these shores.

Margaret did hold out for about 16 years which shows that she was ahead of her time. Both Rev. Stephen Bachiler and Rev. John Wise were supporters of Church and State separation, unlike those who took control in Massachusetts.

That Thomas and **Margaret** could be so successful, while being off the radar, shows a lot about who they were. We intend to look at that more closely as we go along.

Note: This article uses the framework set by Frank A. Gardner, M.D. who wrote the two main Gardner books, authored several articles, was a member of the Essex Society, and helped bring forth information about the old planters.

Sarah Gardner (ca 1631-1686, Salem, MA) Sarah was Margaret's oldest daughter. She, and brother John who was born in Cape Ann, have the distinction of being bom into pre-Endicott Massachusetts.

Sarah would have been pre-teen when her mother died, and she would have had Damaris Shattuck as a step-mother.

Sarah married around 1650 Benjamin Balch, the son of John who had been with Thomas and Margaret as part of the Cape Ann party. The house of Benjamin and Sarah, part of which was built by John, still stands in Beverly.

Sarah is the matriarch of the Balch family which has been quite prominent in U.S. military history.

Miriam Gardner (ca 1634-1664, Salem, MA) Miriam would have been very young when her mother died. She married John Hill around 1657, and they had two daughters. Miriam married into the Haskell family; Susannah married Thomas Dow.

Seeth Gardner (ca 1636-1707, Salem, MA) Seeth was Margaret's youngest daughter. Her mother died when she was still very young. Seeth married first Joshua Conant, the son of Roger who had been with her parents at Cape Ann. Their first child was bom in 1657; she has many Conant descendants. She married second, in 1659, Joseph Grafton.

Note: We intend to research more thoroughly the lives of Miriam, Seeth, and the other children.



Margaret's descendants, brief list:

- Mrs. Daniel Tyler (ca 1790s)
- Lucretia Coffin Mott (ca 1793-1880)
- Mrs. Ralph Waldo Emerson (ca 1810s)
- Lilla Cabot Perry (ca 1848-1933)
- Anna Parker Lowell (ca 1856-1930)
- Edith Roosevelt (ca 1861-1984)

Isabella Stewart Gardner (ca 1840 - 1924, Boston) Isabella's Stewart line, by tradition, dates back to King Fergus (500 AD). She married John Lowell Gardner in 1860. They were avid art collectors. Isabella founded the Isabella Stewart Gardner in Boston which contains their collection.

This issue is the third of a long series, we hope. We are inviting contributions of articles in regard to the Thomas Gardner families. Contact: algswtlk@thomasgardnersociety.org