



Gardner's Beacon

CAPE ANN AND SALEM PLANTER



Thomas Gardner Society

Founded 2010



Volume I -- Issue 4 -- Halloween, 2011

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

Thomas and Margaret were in the 1st generation of the newcomers to a continent that seemed to have unlimited potential. They brought some of the 2nd generation; others were born in the new land. Much has been said about the arrival of the immigrants and the successful establishment (after much trial and tribulation) of the culture of New England.

We have some writings that were first-hand observations (Higginson, et al) to reference. The 2nd generation, such as Rev. Hubbard, added in some information (for example, the 1st reference of the roles, in Cape Ann, of Thomas Gardner and John Tylly). We have look-backs from several generations on, such as Hawthorne's works.

In all, there are sufficient holes left in the information to allow speculation to this day. Such is the wont of human nature that, one might think, no amount of information would forestall further looks.

One event that has been much scrutinized, both academically and popularly, is the mania associated with Salem in 1692. Namely, the witch trials. Let's note that 'Salem' in this context denotes the Village (subsequently split, Danvers, etc.) and the surrounding areas. Even the esteemed of Cambridge were pulled into the fray.



We can look at the event by associating Gardner

involvement. So far, we have not seen that any Gardner was directly involved as a defendant or prosecutor. The relationship to the event's main participants is what we can look at.

Thomas was not there. But, he did witness many events in the new world in his time that pertain to what went on in 1692. Some of his progeny were there. One of the things that Thomas would have known about closely was the execution of the Boston martyrs (Mary Dyer, et al – Endicott's little senseless achievement). So, Thomas, no doubt, knew irrationality and its effects.

The ones closest to the events of 1692 would have been Samuel (2nd) through his son, Abel (3rd), John (2nd), and Ruth (3rd, daughter of George (2nd)). Let's take Ruth first, poor dear. She was the wife of John Hathorne. Who was he? John was the principal judge who opted to apply the noose, many times. As well, he ordered the torture of Giles Corey. Much has been written about Ruth. This example is from a 2004 book by Frances Hill:

John Hathorne married, at the age of 33, a girl of 14. Ironically, she was the daughter of Quakers who had been so mercilessly persecuted in Massachusetts they had moved to Connecticut. ... Probably Hathorne's domineering personality made only a very young girl, whose confidence had been undermined by her parents' persecution and her own subsequent abandonment, the kind of consort he could tolerate.

One might ask, how was this daughter of George left in Salem so as to get in John's clutches?

Samuel (2nd) had died in 1689 which was just



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shortly before the breakout of insanity. He would have had several connections.

The in-laws of Abel (his son) were Porters. Elizabeth (Hathome) Porter was aghast at John's (her brother's) doings. She and her husband, Israel Porter, tried to calm matters, such as their attempt to save Rebecca Nurse. This effort is noted at the Nurse memorial in Danvers.

Another connection would be through Samuel's charges, the Corwins. Jonathan was 1/2 brother of Samuel's wife, Mary (Abel's mother). George, son of Jonathan's brother, John, was 1/2 nephew of Mary. Samuel had watched over the Corwin children after their parents had died. One has to wonder if Samuel could have been a moderating force had he been alive.

Too, Jonathan and George were of 'royal descent' (ah, that descent word has many connotations, does it not?). This trait has been of much interest to people doing their genealogy as it allows identification of a 'gateway' to the royals of Europe.

Jonathan Corwin was a buddy of John Hathome. Too, he was of the judgeship. George Corwin, the nephew, was a hammer, acting as sheriff and enforcer of the law (some claim that he was also the taker of property). Of course, he pressed poor Giles to death.

John (2nd) was of Nantucket. He had been Magistrate several times and had other public roles. John had been instructed (or requested?) by the court to convince his friend, Giles, that he ought to respond to the charges of witchcraft that had been leveled against Giles. The poor guy's wife had already been hung by the Hathome/Corwin mafia. Well, John was not able to persuade Giles to play along. Why should Giles? His sons would have lost their property. So, George Corwin got a chance to put Giles to the test.

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.

We know that there were more Gardners influenced by the madness. Some blame the Puritan (Winthrop, et al) worldview. Even the Mathers, of Harvard, were more for the trials than against, until later. Rev. John Wise was far enough away to see the idiocy.

The whole thing started, some say, with the Putnam's trying to expand their property. Evidently, they did not like that the Porter/Gardner clans seemed to be more successful, comparatively. The main testimonial foundation was based upon claims by young girls. This would have been the 4th generation. Over the history of the U.S., we have seen how families change, through generations, on arrival at the shores of the 'free' country.

Another factor, pointed out in an academic paper, is that there had been a rainy/wet period that was quite extensive. Rye, a main source of their food, can get ergot, easily. Consumption of this would have had psychoactive results.



Unfortunates in one family

Executed:

- Mary (Ayer) Parker
- Susan (North) Martin
- Mary (Clements) Osgood
- Samuel Wardwell

....

Accused:

- Sarah (Lord) Wilson

....

Rebecca Nurse (ca 1621 - 1692, Danvers) Born in England, Rebecca Towne came with her family in 1640 to Salem Village. She married Francis Nurse around 1645 and had four daughters and four sons. A dispute with the Putnams resulted in her being accused and executed despite outcries in her defense.

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