



Gardner's Beacon

Cape Ann and Salem PI anter



Thomas Gardner Society

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The sea: barrier, provider, and more. Barrier? Early sea travel was, in reality, an adventure limited to the hearty few. By the time of the Great Migration, sailing over the seas had become more practical, and safer for the movement of families, than had been seen before.

Now, the voyages to the new world for the migrates were uncomfortable (most of the time) and were hazardous (some of the time), yet those traveling could have a fairly high expectation of getting to their destination. Nevertheless, even with the more reliable means for sea travel, there were still many dangers, such as those related to the hostilities between countries, the existence of storms, or even the chance of running into pirates.

Need we mention that the Plymouth colony, in part, resulted from a trip that went off course? And, were there not reports of shipwrecks and disappearances during the migration period?

The ability to move fairly easily on the waters helped to enable the larger migratory pattern, in a sense. But, there are many factors that also contributed to the development of the new world. We could talk about the existence of available land (someplace to go to), more than enough interest (many needed to leave their situations), and necessary support (to guarantee, somewhat, the success of the endeavor). All of these factors deserve to be considered at some point.

Gardners and the sea

Let's, for now, take some time to look at the sea's influence on the lives of a few Gardner descendants. Much can be written about fishing and other production from the sea. We might also briefly look at the use of the sea for travel and shipping. Too, the military, as in naval, experience bears some attention.

Provider? The Cape Ann group, led by Thomas, had two goals: planting and fishing. The latter goal resulted, no doubt, from stories about the abundant amount of fish in the waters off of New England. This

news had drawn attention because of successful seasonal excursions for several years. The early experience at Cape Ann might not have proven fruitful, but production from New England did, before too long, meet the earlier expectations. New England's output from fishing, lobstering, and whaling became legendary.

Besides fishing, regular shipments between the old and the new worlds became normal early on. This shipping industry took a hit several times over the years. We will have, this year, an opportunity to look at the large influence of the conflict of 1812 (next issue).



Thomas and Margaret Gardner brought two sons with them, **Thomas** and **George**. From that, we have the parents and their offspring as the first on the list of sea-going Gardners. All of the other children were born on this soil, with John being the first.

Born at Cape Ann, **John Gardner** (1624-1706), son of Thomas, was a known mariner in Salem. He received an invitation, in 1672, from the inhabitants of Nantucket to set up a fishing enterprise on the island with his brother, **Richard**. The interest was cod fishing which proved to be very successful.

John, as only having one-half share in the ownership of the island, also got involved with governance issues. In 1673, he was appointed Captain of the company formed for the defense of the island. He represented Nantucket at the court of the Governor in New York. And, Capt Gardner served as Chief Magistrate several times. Of note are his efforts to establish peaceful relationships with the natives on the island. Nantucket can be recognized for its good relations even during the period of the bloody King Philip's war in which Joseph, John's brother, was killed.



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Whaling (Nantucket)

The Gardner name became associated with another form of sea production. Sometime in the 1600s, people on Nantucket learned how to hunt whales from boats. Their efforts were so successful that the "global oil business" was headquartered on the island from 1750 to about 1850. In 1819, there were more than seventy whale ships working out of Nantucket. At the time, the island was one of the richest places in America.

Given that whaling was dangerous, not many attempted the feat. In short, hundreds of whalers have been killed in the industry over the years.

Early whale hunts from Nantucket were undertaken when a whale was observed from land. After a time, the voyages had to be longer in order to find whales. Eventually, a whaling voyage could be years. The absence of the seamen for so long had a



serious impact on families. However, despite the difficulties, the interest in this industry continued to grow; many people flocked to Nantucket.

We can't offer a full accounting of Gardner involvement at this point. Of the several families who were involved with whaling and seafaring, Gardner and Coffin stand out. There was much success. But it might be appropriate to mention some of the personal losses, as many Gardner families suffered losses.



Joseph Gardner (1726-1757, husband of Eunice Worth and son of Ebenezer and Judith (Coffin) Gardner) was lost at sea in 1757. Joseph was the great-grandson of **Richard**. Other Gardners, from Nantucket, who were lost, or killed, at sea include the following:

Tristram (1743, husband of Deborah Coffin and son of Ebenezer Gardner), **Joseph** (1757), **Josiah** (1758), **Jethro** (1764), **Solomon** (1764), **Thaddeus** (1767),

Grindall (1772), **Simeon** (1780), **Zacchariah** (1780), **Isaac** (1782), **Abraham** (1783), **Reuben** (1791), **Shubael** (1791), **Alexander** (1800), **Ansel** (1812), **John** (1812, son of John and Betsy (Coffin/Folger) Gardner), **James** (1813), **Franklin** (1820), **Henry** (1825), **Alexander** (1835), **George** (1839), **Asa** (1842), **Charles** (1844), **William** (1850), **Andrew** (), **Barnabas** ().

While they were whaling, Gardner sailors also helped to explore the sea. For instance, **Gideon Gardner** (1759-1832) was an owner of the *Ganges*, a whaler. His ship was captained by **Joshua Gardner** () when Gardner Island was discovered (some claim that this is where Amelia Earhart was lost). Later, Gideon was elected as U.S. Representative from Massachusetts in 1809.

Shipping -- If we turn to shipping, we will find lots of Gardner examples, sailing from several ports. In Salem, **John Gardner** (1771-1847, husband of Sarah West) was quite successful. John and Sarah funded the building of the Gardner-Pingree house of Salem in the early 1800s. The house was later sold to cover losses related to the War of 1812. In Boston, **John Lowell Gardner** (1804-1884, husband of Catherine Endicott Peabody) was the owner of many ships pursuing the East Indies trade.

Military -- Several Gardner descendants have been involved with naval activity. Let's consider, for one, **Captain Jonathan Gardner** (1728-1791) who fought in both the French and Indian War and, then, in the Revolutionary War. In the former, he commanded a privateer, *Two Brothers*. In the latter, he had both a civil and military roles. As an officer in the Salem Regiment, he was involved with land maneuvers, such as the Rhode Island campaign.

Seafarers

Benjamin Balch (ca 1730s)
Nathaniel Bowditch (ca 1770s)
George Washington Gardner (ca 1770s)
George William Coffin (ca 1840s)
Adolphus Greely (ca 1840s)
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We are inviting contributions of articles in regard to the Thomas Gardner families. Contact: algswtlk@thomasgardnersociety.org