



Gardner's Beacon

CAPE ANN AND SALEM PLANTER



Thomas Gardner Society

Founded 2010



[Volume II -- Issue 1](#)

-- February, 2012

In modern times, February has become associated, in part, with [St. Valentine's Day](#).

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

There was a St. Valentine who was an early Christian martyr. [Valentine](#), a priest, was jailed for performing marriages, secretly, for young soldiers who were forbidden to marry. Legend has it that we use "from your Valentine" because this is how he signed a note to a young girl to whom he wrote when he was in prison prior to his execution.

By the 17th century, Valentine's Day was generally popular in England. People exchanged "small tokens of affection or hand-written notes." The valentines, themselves, were a work of art shared by only a few people.

New England Valentines

Thomas and Margaret would have been familiar with the St. Valentine's Day traditions of their mother country. We don't know how the early settlers continued the traditions. Given the harsh environment of New England, there was little leisure in early times. Even if the Puritans would have allowed such an expression of affection, one has to wonder when the settlers would ever have time and resources. Daily labor would have been a dawn-to-dusk effort.



Early Valentines

Many have honored the Valentine tradition [throughout the centuries](#). The British museum has a Valentine's Day card that dates from the 1400s. It was hand-written and is considered the oldest.





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Through the 1700s, the exchange of valentines became commonly accepted. Valentines were hand-made with real lace, ribbon, cherubs, and other items. In the mid-1800s, [Esther Howland](#), of Worcester, MA, received a valentine from England which inspired her to start an industry to produce them in New England.



In this Issue, we are sharing some of our family treasures. These Valentine cards, from Massachusetts, date from the 1880s and are certainly a lot more elaborately constructed than what one sees today.



We will continue the Valentine's Day theme by focusing on a son of Thomas and Margaret, namely Joseph, and his wife, Ann Downing. Since they had no progeny to honor them, this couple desires some special attention.

[Joseph was the youngest son](#); it is believed that he was born about 1630, in Salem. We know the year as he was reported to be about 16 in a 1646 assessment of young men in the area. He was educated to the extent that, in 1649, he was given surveying duties with four of his older brothers.

Joseph continued to support the community in various roles that are related to the legal profession. He is noted for being an attorney; the records show Joseph's involvement in settling many disputes.

Joseph kept a tavern which allowed him to "[sell wine at retail](#)." However, he is also recorded as being a vintner.

Joseph was quite active, with his brother Samuel, [in real estate](#). When he died in the King Philip's war, he owned 100s of acres. In 1656, [Joseph married Ann](#). The couple received land, and a house, from her parents, Emanuel and Lucie Downing.

In Felt's, we find [an engraving of the house](#) that Ann and Joseph owned on the lot where the Peabody house

(Essex Museum) now stands. It was built by Emanuel and given to Ann and Joseph as a wedding gift. Felt remarked how the house would have renewed the "emigrant's associations of domestic art in the land of the fathers."



After Joseph died, the house was named after Governor Bradstreet who had married Widow Ann. The house was pulled down in 1753.

Joseph was an officer in one of the Salem companies. In 1675, he was with the joint forces from Plymouth, Connecticut and Massachusetts who attacked the Indian fort at Narragansett. Joseph was killed on December 19 in the [Great Swamp fight](#).

Some descendants:

- [Nathaniel Bowditch](#) (c 1770s)
- [Ezra Cornell](#) (c 1800s)
- [Charles Sanders Peirce](#) (c 1830s)
- [Lila Cabot Perry](#) (c 1840s)
- [Francis Cabot Lowell](#) (c 1850s)
- [William Sydney Porter](#) (c 1860s)
- [Charles Austin Beard](#) (c 1870s)

Ann Downing (d 1713, age 79) was a widow twice: [Joseph Gardner and Governor Simon Bradstreet, Jr.](#) Her father, Emanuel, was a lawyer from London and saw to it that Ann had "[an excellent education](#)." She was quite astute as evidenced by the agreement that she drew up, in 1676, when she, as a widow, [married Bradstreet](#). This agreement is noted as being remarkable in that it was a pre-nup and that a "new woman" of today would "have a difficult task in equaling in those regards her counterpart" of 325 years ago.

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