



We wish our readers a wonderful 2024. So, we have to ask this question: what happened in 2023?

If we look at the year's activities, two major events stand out. One of these was the February discovery of digitized baptismal records for the children of Thomas Gardner and Margaret Frier. All the children, but Seeth, were born in Sherborne, Dorset, UK. Seeth was born in Salem, MA. This find raises several questions. [Was Thomas here at Cape Ann?](#) Rev. Hubbard said that he was for, at least, the first year. Margaret's arrival would have been before Seeth's birth. So, Thomas and his family were involved in the early days of the founding of Salem, MA. The other event is being looked at next.

Research, business, as usual

So, backing up a little, in November of 2022, OpenAI made their announcement about ChatGPT. They offered free access and had 100 million users within a short time. We will look at that further as we go over the year's events, but we were not aware of the release until February of 2023. What were we doing in November of 2022?

At the time, our regular research had us looking at two things which were reported in a blog post.

[Family Search](#) (29 Nov 2022) - we were continuing our interior look at the U.S. In this case, it was the Northwest Territory. And, we were bringing in data from other colonies, namely New Sweden and New Netherlands.

[Perspective, a necessity](#) (1 Dec 2022) – in the Northwest Territory, we find Ohio. Veterans from Ipswich, MA (after the Revolution) went out to Ohio and created a settlement. At the time, that was Michigan Territory. The trip was repeated later in the 1900s using documents kept by original team members.

Now, those two areas? They are east of the Mississippi. History and lineage research requirements covers a lot of territory and time. We figure that the [frontier experience](#) post the Revolution was a century according to our work that supports D.A.R. and S.A.R. And, those two

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commemorate the Revolution with their work. The 250th of this even is coming up in 2026.

Technology and change

The world at large has changed lots of ways of late; but, then, it has not in many other ways. Our focus? We consider technology itself as neutral, but it introduces change. Though, there is no "intelligence" involved at this time with the computer; what is being exhibited is mathematics finally being demonstrated in an unrestrained manner. That itself is not good without proper considerations and care. But we humans have to learn these restraints, somehow.

Using our blog as the timeline, we can look at this year's research activity. The image shows a list of the "All time, popular" posts by count as of mid-December of 2023. Generally, the older posts have the most reads, but there are some recent posts on the list. We have another report for the reads of the "Last week" in which the newer posts predominate.

The top of the list in the image relates to the marriage of [Thomas and Margaret](#) and comes from the 2014 timeframe. If we skip the next image, all of the posts are of older vintage up to the ones titled "Caleb Haskell's diary" and "[St Louis MO to San Francisco CA](#)" which are from 2021. The topic of California has spawned several posts and discussions, such as the "[San Francisco](#)" post which is from 2023. We will continue this area of research as there are many questions that are open. Too, like Texas, California was a colony of New Spain. One result of our 2014 research that was supported by technology was that our FAQ had to be updated in 2023 and will be updated further in 2024 due to even newer information about the family. See the "[In summary](#)" post for a few details that we will be discussing further.

Now, the 2nd-most-read post deals with technology. Titled "[A\(rtificial\) I\(ntelligence\) researched properly](#)" (from 2021), it goes through our own work over the past decade and then makes some predictions about the future. We will continue to describe things from the historical viewpoint,





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both technologically and phenomenally which is how we view the U.S.

Walk through 2023

This issue looks at AI as it has manifested itself (usual sense) over the past year and collects material pertinent to ongoing discussion and work. Per usual, this review will be related to work and interests of the Thomas Gardner Society.

Most of the posts are from the TGS blog and point to related material. A few others are from external sources.

[Introducing ChatGPT](#) (30 Nov 2022) – this announcement included a thorough overview of the motivation and what was being offered. We did see references to this activity on sites like Quora (who offered POE, later; the head of this organization is on the Board of OpenAI - [Little Exeter NH](#)).

[ChatGPT](#) (2 Feb 2022) – finally, we heard of the system from a colleague (a linguist) in late Jan and got around to doing a query on the 2nd (Groundhog Day). It did not take long to find major issues. These are the result of the techniques used and can be controlled, somewhat. One issue is the "omni" and "know-it-all" nuance that is obvious. [How ChatGPT Kicked Off an A.I. Arms Race](#) (3 Feb 2023).

[Square one?](#) (19 Mar 2023) – This year, Gloucester MA kicked off their 400th. We were supporting them from a distance without bringing in the crew as that would be a 2024 issue. Our thought was to emphasize Margaret (Fryer) Gardner's contribution. We had not been paying attention to the feeds from WikiTree, however a researcher in Feb of 2023 went through the load of images from the digitized files of Sherborne, Dorset and discovered birth records for about all of the Gardner children. Except, Seeth was born in Salem. Did Thomas come over to support the Cape Ann effort? Rev. Hubbard suggested such. Remember, he talked to the principals.

[Research notes](#) (2 Apr 2023) - using our new WP site, we summarized the situation and provided a copy of the list of names and births. There are gaps between some births that might show Thomas being away from home while supporting the effort of the Dorchester Company.

[Technology, computing](#) (May 2023) - after some reading and discussion, I contacted the head of the

former Sperry Univac Knowledge Systems Center. He wrote a brief article on how Univac got involved with the AI effort in the mid-1980s. More coming.

[Intro to Bard](#) (7 Jul 2023) - after some time with ChatGPT and looking at issues all around, we finally tried Bard. The post, [To Bard or not](#), summarized some of the issues. For instance, a known downfall is that the xNN, as being used, squashed nuance. One cannot expect to retrace either input or its influence; definitely, there is a need to honor the requirements for footnotes and other referencing modes. In Dec of 2023, Bard was updated significantly. We tried it, but the issue of more fiction than fact remained. One noted improvement was that Bard now stresses teaming, human and machine (rather the "omni" status mentioned above). That was significant as it changes the tone of the interchange.

[ChatGPT a year on: 3 ways the AI chatbot has completely changed the world in 12 months](#) (30 Nov 2023) - we don't agree with the list, as a huge result is the diminishing of trust. What can we believe? Say, of stuff on the cloud? These purveyors, for the most part, suggest that we check the results given by their system. Oh, we all have time and energy for that? If that is how the output will be, why use these systems?

[AI not solely ML](#) (4 Dec 2023) - this is our retort and focus for the future. We need to bring to awareness the knowledge work done in the industrial world. There are many varieties, however the focus was (and needs to be) on humans and their abilities. If down right, humans would obtain an extremely useful tool.

So, themes abound. Like, what is America about? The dream? Technology can be both a boon and a bane. Why has the latter been more prevalent? On the other hand, since phenomenal mathematical processing is being assisted by the computer, how do we manage that? In essence, we have a super abacus and slide rule at our disposal now. That is, if only we can understand the need for maturity of the capabilities that it brings.

See also:

- Nathaniel Fick (ca 1977) - [Dartmouth '99](#);
- [New Frontier, 21st Century Type](#);
- [THE FUTURE OF AI IN SCIENCE AND MEDICINE](#) (Gardner Foundation, Oct 25, 2023)