

George Knott

Ahhh! 1639! I remember it well! Let me tell you a bit about our town and family history; enough I hope to get you interested to look more deeply into the fair town of Sandwich.

First, the “Ten Men of Saugus” and Mrs. Debra Wing arrived in the New World seeking freedom to worship God in our own way. It was the motivation for many groups including the Puritans who preceded us to Saugus, Massachusetts Bay Colony. It’s a bit ironic then that the leaders of the Saugus Puritans were not all that tolerant of our group’s more liberal ways of practicing our religious beliefs. Hence, we were encouraged to leave Saugus!

Governor William Bradford and the leaders of Plymouth Colony were happy to have us join them in their colony and establish a new settlement on Cape Cod. They granted us the large area we now call Sandwich. We named it Sandwich because the meadows, marshes and ocean reminded us of Sandwich, Kent, England, the home town of some of us.

After moving south from Saugus to Sandwich in 1637, my household of son, Samuel, and daughter, Martha, and I established ourselves with our new property.

Our town quickly began to work the land and one of the important activities was the opening of Thomas Dexter’s Grist Mill, I notice it is still standing today, pretty as ever beside the Shawme Pond and Mill Creek. And it actually grinds corn every season for the community.

Soon after our establishing Sandwich formally as a town in 1639, a handsome young man arrived from England, built a house next door to me and won the heart of my lovely daughter, Martha Knott. They married in 1650 and produced numerous boys and girls. My only son, Samuel, never married and left no children so Thomas and Martha Knott Tobey created my descendant line of Tobeys.

I do see “The Tobey House-1690” up on Water Street close to the Wing School. Just recently the probable foundation including a double-sided hearth right next door to the Hoxie House (circa 1645) was discovered. Archeologists believe quite firmly that it is the house that Thomas Tobey built after his arrival in town. The house itself is thought to have been moved and incorporated into another old house built in the early 1800’s. It is surprising that they were able to move houses intact in that day and age.

Boy oh boy, Mrs Debra Wing who accompanied the “Ten Men of Saugus,” despite the untimely death of her husband, certainly made a name for the family. Her father and children accompanied her to the New World. The town named the Wing School in honor of the family. To their credit, they have proliferated all over this land and I see a great number of them are attending here today.

However we Tobey’s were no slouches either. A branch moved over to Dennis in 1678 and were very active in creating a vibrant community there. Later, the town of Dennis erected a tower on Scargo Hill, the highest point of land on Cape Cod, in honor of two Tobey brothers because of their support and activities on behalf of the town.

Many of the Tobey descendants served in the Revolutionary War to help establish the United States. Like the Wings, Tupperes, Hoxies and other family descendants, the Tobeys and kin are located from one end of the country to the other. There are even some of our cousins in Sandwich, including Mrs Barbara Gill, the noted library archivist.

It is amazing what achievements our little band of Ten Men of Saugus and Mrs. Wing have wrought. I’m proud of them all!