

## **Ancestors at Warner Hall**

By Associate Cranston Williams

*This talk was given at Warner Hall on October 17, 2009.*

"Thank you Governor Lyman for that kind introduction.

It is an honor and a privilege to have been asked to talk to you today at this historic location. Warner Hall was a part of the beginning of the United States of America.

You could say that I like history and genealogy. My Father's Salzburger ancestors settled in Ebenezer, GA, near Savannah in 1734. My Mother's ancestors date back through the Warners, buried here to Charlemagne. I spent my first 18 years each summer at Jefferson's Poplar Forest in Forest, VA, My maternal grandparents' summer home outside Lynchburg. My Grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Christian S. Hutter, and Grandparent's family owned Jefferson's Poplar Forest for 118 years. A Hutter son married a daughter of the neighboring Cobbs Family. The Cobbs are my Order of Founders and Patriots ancestors. I am married to Marilyn, who is also here today, who is also here today, along with our daughter, Sally Warner. We have a son, Cranston Reade.

The name Warner Hall instantly brings to mind an association as the home of the Lewis family. Warner Hall is to the Lewis family as Westover is to the Byrd Family. Warner Hall stands in relation to the Lewis family more in the position which Shirley has to the Carter family. In both of these cases the original ownership and the building of estates were inherited from other ancestral families. Thus, Warner Hall was originally owned and built by the Warner Family and it came into the Lewis Family through inheritance by an heiress of the Warner family, named Martiau and Reade. Warner Hall was also the headquarters for a time during Bacon's aid into New Kent and Gloucester counties.

The first Warner came to Virginia with the heraldic title of "Gentleman." He was Augustine Warner, Sr., called Councillor until his death in 1674. He married Mary Townley/Towneley. She and her family lived at Stonehenge in England for many generations. It was nephew Lawrence Townley that married their daughter Sarah. One of her descendants is Queen Elizabeth II. The Warners made their home in York County which became Gloucester. He was Justice of York County, was Burgess of York County in 1652 and for Gloucester in 1655 and was "Councillor" from 1659 to 1667. It was about 1653 when he patented Warner Hall. His original house was destroyed by fire in 1845. He served as a Captain in the VA Militia until 1658 and thereafter held the rank of Colonel.

Councillor Warner, Sr. died 1674 and his wife Mary died in 1662 and they are buried here. They left only one son and one daughter, Sarah Warner, wife of Lawrence Townley and the ancestor of Robert E. Lee. The son, Col. Augustine Warner, Jr. was born 1642 and was later known as "Speaker."

Like many heirs of then-prominent VA families, Warner, Jr. was sent in childhood to be educated in England. In 1658 he entered the Merchant Tailor's School in London. We don't know how long he remained in England but he probably completed his education at one of the universities since records are silent on this point. He became very prominent in the social and political life of the colony at an early age upon his return.

Before 1671 Augustine Jr. married Mildred Reade, daughter of Col. George and Elizabeth [Martiau] Reade of Yorktown. They had three sons [Augustine who died soon after turning 20, George and Robert] who stayed with their Mother and without issue and three daughters: Elizabeth, Mary and Mildred. I will mention them later.

Upon Augustine Warner, Sr.'s death in 1674, the son inherited the Warner Hall estate. He and his family undoubtedly lived here during the remainder of Mildred's and his life except during the time when he was attending to his duties at the Capital. In 1676 he was elevated to be the "Speaker" of the House of Burgess. Singularly enough, since no other case is known, within a few months thereafter he was also functioning as the dual office of "Councillor."

"Speaker" Warner, Jr.'s public services did not consist entirely of holding offices. He was Colonel Commandant of the Gloucester County militia. Like his great-grandson, George Washington, he spent a considerable amount of his personal funds in public business as well as in his church. He died in 1681 at the age of 39 - having risen in his short life time to be one of the most prominent men in VA. He is buried at Warner Hall beside his parents' graves. His will bequeathed Warner Hall to his family in which they continued to live in addition to all the lands owned by his father.

Speaker Jr.'s wife Mildred's will in 1694 stated that if neither son, George nor Robert left heirs, then the estate would revert to Mildred's brothers, Robert, Francis, Benjamin and Thomas Reade.

The daughters of Speaker Jr. and Mildred were Elizabeth, Mary and Mildred Warner.

Elizabeth Warner, born 1672, married "Councillor" John Lewis bringing the Lewis family of the ancestral lines of Martiau, Reade and Warner into the continuance of Warner Hall.

Mary Warner married Maj. John Smith of "Purton", Gloucester and had many descendants.

Mildred Warner married Lawrence Washington in 1686 and in time became the grandmother of George Washington. She was a woman of some substance when Lawrence Washington married her in 1686 in Virginia. He had made a will in March of 1698/99 and died shortly afterwards leaving Mildred with three children, a girl and two boys. The elder boy was John, named after his paternal grandfather and the younger Augustine, named after his Mother's Father. It was the younger son, Augustine, who fathered George Washington by his second marriage in 1730 to a 23-year old orphan named Mary Ball. George was their first-born in 1732 and the first President of the United States. Thus, George Washington was the great grandson of "Councillor" Augustine Warner, Jr.

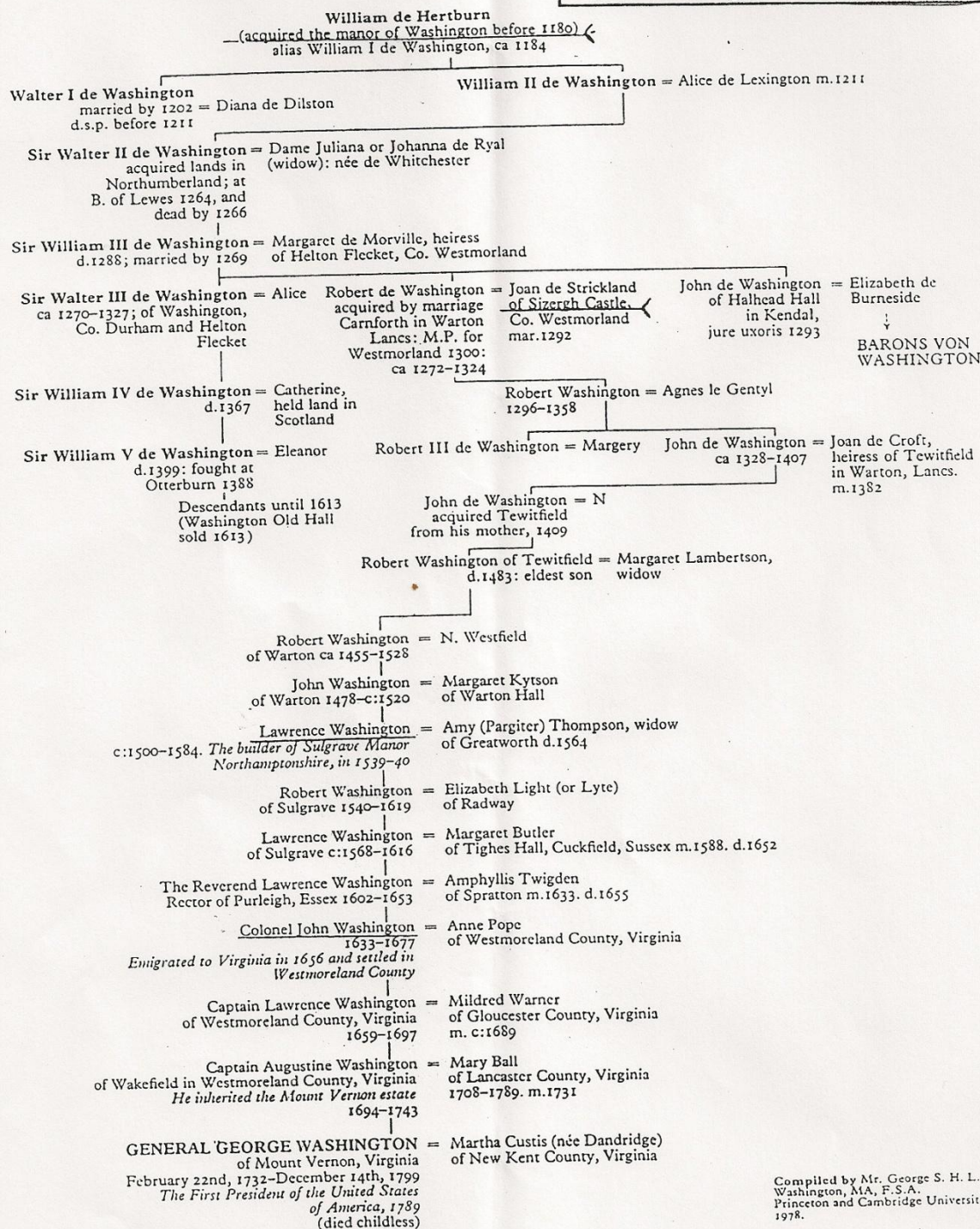
In the autumn of 1700, Mildred Reade married a second time to George Gale, the son of John Gale II of Whitehaven, England. Gale brought Mildred, now pregnant, her three children and a female Negro servant to England. By the time she got to Whitehaven she was ill and her maid also could have been ailing. The St. Nicholas Church's register entries thereafter the next few months tell a poignant story. On January 7th, 1701, Mildred's Negro maid was baptized and given the name of Jane. On January 25th, the newly born little Mildred Gale was baptized. On January 30th, Mildred herself was buried; on February 20th, Jane was buried, and on May 26th, the baby Mildred Gale was buried. Mildred, Jane and the baby were buried in Old St. Nicholas churchyard. Marilyn and I were there in Whitehaven, England, in May of 2001 on the National SAR recognition trip to visit a few of the ancestral homes of George Washington. It was there that we saw the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities inscribed plaque in memory of Mildred Warner.

It is interesting to note that, at George Washington's special request, stone quarried on the Whitehaven side of St. Bees Head was sent to America in 1785, to pave the portico of his home at Mount Vernon. When this pavement required renewal, similar stone was sent from the same quarry in 1915.

In conclusion, Warner Hall is an unusual and historic place that has many connections to our country's founding and connection to the American Revolution. I could go on for a long time with more Warner, Lewis, Reade and Martiau history and information about their relationship to our nation's evolution as we have known.

Thank you for having me and my family here today at Warner Hall."

# The Washington Family Pedigree



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