

Transcription of Warren Historical Society Oral Histories

Warren History – Industries pt2, Taverns, cemeteries, and stores. Recorded in 1967

Transcribed by Heather Blue Forstmann February 1st, 2021

This tape was prepared in 1967 by a group of residents in Warren, Connecticut to record their recollections of Warren history. The discussions of industries, which was started on another reel, is continued. This is followed by taverns, cemeteries and stores. The voices of the following persons are recorded on this tape: Edna K. Cashion, discussion leader, Marge Tanner Regner, former town clerk, Elinor Andregg Hereth, town clerk and husband, Edward Hereth. Old residents: Walt Sheldon, and Herbert Curtiss and Annette Perkins, wife of Beecher Perkins.

EKC: [audio cuts in mid-sentence] ... have something to add I think to add to Industries, something about the cheese factory, Marge Regner did you have something to add to that?

MTR: Well, we had found that about 1867, Ned Lyman built a cheese factory on the property he owned, down Richard's road. And he ran this factory as long as he lived. Upon his death it was taken over by his son, George who also ran it, until his death. And it was inherited then by his daughter, Mrs. Eunice Kingman. The Lyman family lived on the Fowler Place. That is the old Lyman Farm.

EKC: The Fowler place, perhaps we should identify it a little bit more fully, is the first house on Melius Rd when you come up from Rte. 45 it would be house on the left. Well then to go on, I think there were more industries. Ed Hereth has something, I think, to add to that-

EH: Well, I think we ought to go into the blacksmiths' shops, because that seemed to be quite an industry in those days, and the one I know of is on the Andregg property. [____] was blacksmith and the foundation of the blacksmith shop still stands there. There was another one on the, what is now on what is now the Miller property. Elinor, could you tell any more about that?

EKC: Elinor Hereth?

EAH: Yes that, you're wrong, that was the *Muller* property. And it's, (the foundation,) is directly across from the pond, on the Hereth property. That was run by Pete Smith.

EKC: Is there something else Ed Hereth?

EH: Yes, there was another one down where Steegers lived, perhaps Marge Regner could tell us more about that?

MTR: I don't know too much about that, except that for many years was evidence of a blacksmith shop there, as well as a mill. And the water rights there were owned by the Max Schnell family and Mrs. Schnell ran a boarding house there for years as well as the mill and the blacksmith shop.

EKC: Ed Hereth, did you have something to say?

EH: Um, yes, they mentioned the Wren House before, and I believe there was a story about a blacksmith shop on the Wren House property. And I think Elenore knows something about that.

EKC: Elinor Hereth?

EAH: Yes, the old deeds tell that there was a blacksmith shop there. But it was on the Town property on the edge of the road, and they had to have permission from the Selectmen to build a blacksmith shop. And there was also one at the LaMaster property, the building may still be standing. It's between there and the Fowler property. And, at that time, the road ran between the LaMaster house and the blacksmith shop. The road has now been changed.

EKC: Marge Regner?

MTR: I believe when that was last run, in town, it was run by Mr. Henry Katan.

EKC: Walt Sheldon, did you have anything to add to that?

WS: The only thing I have to add to that is that Marge Regner is right. I remember very, very well when Henry Katan had a blacksmith shop where Elinor Hereth says it was.

EKC: Was that that little place that's back of Ann's up off Melius road? It looks as though it goes right into the side of that hill there. That can't be that building. Which building is it there?

WS: Well, it was right there somewhere, I remember it.

EKC: Where did the road start from then? From 45?

WS: It came down right by the Seeger place, by their picket fence, right up through there.

EKC: Marge Regner?

MTR: I think that was the Heywood place in later years, and the road came down very close to the picket fence there, through what is now almost a little park. The road has been changed there it was brought straight out from Rte. 45. But originally it went in there close to that fence and went directly up across. And I believe that that little red building on the right-hand side that's close to the highway now was what was the blacksmith shop rather than the one farther up on the hill. I think it's the one that's close to the present highway that was the blacksmith shop.

EKC: Oh, that's very interesting I didn't know that this Melius Rd had been changed. Ed Hereth?

EH: There was another blacksmith, [Burns blacksmith?] and it was on the property where Andrew Strong's house is today. I don't have any more information.

EKC: Andy Strong lives on what was on the Kent Rd. Marge Regner?

MTR: Well, they're actually the last house, going out to Kent Rd. before you come to the swamp. And it was owned by Andy's uncle Perry Strong for years and before that by the Burns.

EKC: Of course, we'll get into more of this when we get into family histories. Ed Hereth, shall we get on to something else?

EH: Yes. Well, I think the next thing we ought to go into is brick making. Charles Finney's father made brick out of the clay from the [?] on Angevine Rd. I think Marge Regner knows a lot about this.

MTR: The story is that the father of Charles G. Finney, who was later the president of Oberlin College in Ohio, made bricks, and the clay came from the flat meadows over there on Angevine Rd. And the bricks that the brick school is made out of, were made by Mr. Finney. That is all that I know about the brick making there.

EKC: Ed Hereth?

EH: I think the next thing we should talk about is the Post Office. The only thing that I have on it is the in Swift Tallmadge store the original Warren post office was located. And I believe Mr. Swift was telling us something about he has the original desk and cubby holes where they put the mail. And there is part of it too, over in the Litchfield Museum.

EKC: Marge Regner?

MTR: I believe that the old post office boxes were lent by some member of the Swift family to the Litchfield Museum in Litchfield, and that Mr. O. B. Swift who recently built here in town has the original post office desk which used to be in the store, and he's been restoring it to its original state.

EKC: The Swift house that they are referring to is almost across from the Warren Store on Rte. 45. I also had heard at one time, that there was a post office in the house where Ann LaMaster lives. Is this so? Before Mr. Molinder, or Colonel Molinder I think they called him. It's funny because Ann said she had some records there. Well, we'll look into that. Ed Hereth?

EH: I think the next thing we should talk about is taverns. The taverns in the town of Warren. And the first one I have is referenced to as what is now the Seeley Place, the history of the place we have of it is it was once the Methodist/Episcopal parsonage. And I don't know anything more than that.

EAH: This church owned it for five years. Then I don't know who it was sold to, I've forgotten, but in the 1870s it was Phelps Tavern

EH: Did you know anything about this Marjorie?

MTR: No, I had just heard that there was a tavern there and I don't know how many others there were, in town, there was one where the Town Hall now stands, which belonged to Deacon Joseph Tanner, and this was in the center of the town, and was the place that the people used to go to after the morning church service, in the old days when the church was unheated, they always kept a roaring fire, or a good bed of coals on Sunday morning, so that the people that had the little foot warmers that they could put coals in to keep their feet from freezing in the unheated church. They went over to the tavern and gathered there for their lunch and then refilled their little foot stools with coals and carry them back over to church for the afternoon service. Deacon Joseph Tanner ran this for years it was also a place of course where people stayed overnight in the old days, and he sold liquor there as they did everywhere, at a later date, he found that his convictions wouldn't let him sell liquor, and he refused to sell liquor and the men in town that wanted it, were very upset, and they hamstrung a young colt, and girdled every tree in his orchard which used to stand between the old Methodist Church and the tavern, in the spring of the year, when if you girdled a tree, you'd lose it. And the old story goes that not one of those trees died, so Somebody must have been looking out for him.

[All chuckle]

EKC: He had a friend from up above. Ed Hereth?

EH: The next tavern that we have is the Platt Starr's Tavern, which is now the Tranquil House. Elinor, do you know anything more about that?

EKC: Elinor Hereth?

EAH: No, only that Platt Starr owned it from 1798 until 1826.

EKC: You know we skipped right over something you mentioned in passing Marge. They went to church all day then, in those days.

MTR: That's right, they went in for a morning service, and then had their lunch, and went back for an afternoon service of equal length, the pews were, in the old church, were built in squares with doors on them so the children wouldn't get mixed up in somebody else's pew I expect. But I don't believe they were allowed to move any way, during the service, in those days.

EKC: That was Marge Regner. Ed Hereth did you have, did you want to go on to another tavern?

EH: The next, I have no more taverns, I think that finishes the taverns pretty well. I think the next thing should be the cemetery. And Elinor can give us a lot on the old cemetery?

EKC: Elinor Hereth?

EAH: Well, we have in our records that Mr. Osbourne was our first minister and he had intended a piece of land, north of his home. Which later became the Swift home, that we mentioned before. This plot of land was to go for cemetery. But when he died, his wife married Jeremiah Day, minister in New Preston. And we got Peter Starr for our minister here. And for some reason, Day held the plot of land in reserve, but it never was deeded to the town. After Mr. Starr had been here for some time, it was deeded to the town and Mr. Starr leased it for 30 years to keep it in order with the promise that he would never let any pigs or cattle run it, and he would keep the brush cut.

EKC: Is this about the where the cemetery is now? The old cemetery?

EAH: This is where, it *is* the old cemetery.

EKC: Marge Regner?

MTR: At a later date there was a piece added to that old cemetery when the Swifts deeded the property that was the garden to the Swift House, added it to the cemetery. I think this was brought about by the fact that Rob Swift wanted to be buried in his garden and in order to bring that piece of property into the cemetery, some of the later members of the family deeded the garden to the cemetery and added it to it and it is now the section where most of the family is buried.

EKC: You must be speaking of a Robert Smith that we don't know a Robert Swift.

MTR: The original Robert Swift, uncle to the Robert Swift that you knew. He was superintendent of the of the Sunday School here in Warren for years, and I think died perhaps about 1918 or around that time.

EKC: Was he living in the Swift house then?

MTR: He was. He had two children, Herbert and Betty at that time.

EKC: Was there anything else Ed Hereth?

EH: Well, there is no more about the old cemetery. But I think now is a good time to talk about the new cemetery. When it was it organized and how. Does anybody have any ideas about that?

EKC: Elinor Hereth?

EAH: I do know that my mother lost two babies in 1910 and they were the first ones buried in it.

EKC: Marge Regner?

MTR: I would like to add to this that there was a fund, known as the Salmon Brunson fund, which was left for the use of the Methodist Church. And when the Methodist Church went to pieces in this town and there was no more Methodist Church here, this fund became inactive and I can remember my father, Arden Tanner, as town clerk, was very worried that this money was going to going to be turned back to the state of Connecticut, rather than used in the town. And he, in conjunction with some others in the town, went through a lot of negotiations with the court and finally persuaded the court that some members of the Methodist Church were most of them buried in the local cemeteries. And best use for this fund was to turn it over for the care of those cemeteries and I believe that this money was finally, by order of the court turned over to the Warren Cemetery Association. And the income there from is used to help support the work that is needed on each year.

EKC: Is there something more on cemeteries Ed Hereth?

EH: Yes, there is, there is a record of an older cemetery, I think it was the original cemetery in the town, it was down around the lake somewhere, does anyone know anything about that?

EKC: I think probably Herb Curtiss would know.

HC: Well, that would be an Indian Cemetery, which is situated on the Will Hopkins Estate. Between Curtiss Rd and the Lake Rd., which is in the past, now has been turned into farmland, walls were taken down and stones were taken away. and It's just another piece of land now for crops. It used to be right on path or short cut to the lake school when I went to school.

EKC: And Nothing remains of it at all Herb Curtiss?

HC: No remains of it at. No signs of anybody that didn't know it was there would be able to tell to even close to where it was.

EKC: Marge Regner?

MTR: One thing about that whole cemetery down there at the Lake Rd was that the first white child that was born in the town of Warren was buried in that cemetery. She was an ancestor of the Strong family, Rhoda Strong. She was Rhoda Paine. And she was noted for her great strength. And it was said at one time that there some men struggling to load a cask of cider on to a wagon and she told them to move over and picked it up herself and put it on.

EKC: First white child ever born in this vicinity was buried there, so I always assumed until recently that she died when she was a child, but she didn't. She was married and had children of her own and she was not too young a woman when she died, is that so Marge Regner?

MTR: As far as I know I think that is correct.

EKC: Elinor Hereth, did you think there was another cemetery down there?

EAH: I thought it was all the same cemetery

EKC: I think it is. I agree with you.

EAH: I believe that the people who lived down there were buried down there. I understood they were.

EKC: I thought that if it was the first cemetery around here, you would assume everybody would be buried there. From this vicinity from here, on down to the lake. Herb Curtiss?

HC: Well, it was very, very small, I wouldn't say it was over a quarter of an acre in size.

EKC: Well, there must have been some place between that time that that was used then, and the time your old cemetery here in town was used. There seems to be a discrepancy in time here.

AP: What was the time?

EKC: Annette Perkins

AP: Because you have revolutionary war dead that were brought back here and were buried here in 1776 in the old cemetery.

EKC: Elinor Hereth

EAH: They had been using it as a cemetery before it was deeded to the town. It had been used since the time of Rev. Osborne who came here in 1752, I believe. And it had been used during that time, but it had never been deeded to the town

EKC: Well that pretty well clears it up then. It must have been first the cemetery down by the lake, and then what we call the old cemetery and, our new cemetery. Ed Hereth?

EH: There was a rumor of another cemetery that they called the Indian Cemetery, which was located in back of Dave Strong's, up on Above All, what is now known as Above All. It was enclosed by a palisade. But nobody seems to know anything about this. Do you know anything more about this Marge Regner?

EKC: Marge Regner?

MTR: No, I don't, except that I asked Dave Strong's son Andy, and he said he had never heard of a cemetery up there on Above All so I gave up this hunt, figuring if had been one there Andy would have known about it. And he said he never heard of one.

EKC: Ed Hereth, what did you mean by a palisade?

EH: The trunks of tree, you know, like they have in these western pictures, where they have the fort, and they ride in, that's a palisade. Where they put the trunks of trees right next to one another and bury them. It's a stockade like they call it too. They had them around to protect....

EKC: And this was around the cemetery?

EH: Yeah, there was a cemetery enclosed in it.

EKC: Elinor Hereth?

EAH: This was a story that Dave Strong used to come down, he used to spend several afternoons a month at our house telling yarns. And this was one of his yarns he used to tell. But knowing Dave as I do probably it was just a yarn.

EKC: Ed Hereth did you have something you wanted to start now?

EH: Yes, I think now we ought to start on the stores and small businesses in Warren, and I think the first thing we ought to have is carpenter shops. In the Rob Perkins place, Gibson had a carpenter shop. Do you know any more about that Elinor?

EKC: Elinor Hereth, but lets first specify where Rob Perkins place was.

EAH: It is on Rte. 341, in the center, about 4 houses over from the center. Oramel Gibson built the house in 1860 with a carpenter shop.

EKC: How long was Mr. Gibson in the carpenter business here then?

EAH: Well, he had been in the carpenter business for quite a number of years, I understand that there were a number of homes around that he had built. Including the house where the Cheney's now live. Beecher Perkins said that he built the Perkins homestead in 1848.

EKC: Ed Hereth?

EH: It was just a question I wanted to ask. Was his carpenter shop where present Victor Antique Shop is? That addition on to the building?

EAH: Yes.

EH: That was the carpenter shop?

EAH: Well that I don't know.

EH: Or was that built later?

EAH: It could have been one of the buildings down at the barn, I don't know. There's a number of barns back there.

EKC: Ed Hereth?

EH: Well, I think the next one will be the, there was a store at Lamaster's in 1817 at that time it was Sherman Hartwell. Do you know anything about that Marge Regner?

MTR: No, I don't. I just heard there was one there, but I don't know anything about it.

EKC: Anne Lamaster's home was on the corner of Melius Rd and Rte. 45. I've heard there was a store there too.

EH: You don't know what kind of store it was.

EKC: No, but to go back to the carpenter, was there only one carpenter in town?

EH: At that time, evidently.

EKC: Elinor Hereth?

EAH: I wouldn't know, there is nothing in the records that would tell how many, there could have been a number. But the deeds mention his carpentry shop.

EKC: Ed Hereth?

EH: The next one is Swift's store, which is located on, where the entrance to the tranquil house is now, and the gas station is. Do you know anything more about that Marge Regner?

MTR: I know that there was a Swift store there, and it was a large one for those days, I think, and very active, also contained the Post Office.

EKC: There also was a Hall over that store, wasn't there? Isn't that that Swift Hall where the Grange met for a while.

MTR: That's right, there was a hall over the store, and it was a place where the Grange met during one period.

EKC: There was just the one store in town then?

MTR: I believe there was more than one at that time. There was also the Gilbert store up top of the hill, which was down in back of where the Town Hall is now, directly across from the church. And one story that I have always heard about the Gilbert store was that the old man used to ask people if they wanted 50 cent or dollar tea. It all came out of the same box, but they had whichever they wanted, 50 cents or a dollar for it.

That is the end of this recording.

This tape was recorded and edited by R J Casion
Warren, Connecticut.

Corrections and amendments:

The Fowler Place is the 2nd house on Melius on the left (15 Melius Rd)

Dr. Norman Lyman ran the cheese factory on his property on Hardscrabble Rd.

Oramel Gibson's house is 7 Kent Rd.

Robert Perkins' house is 17 Kent Rd.

The desk and cubby holes are currently residing in the collection of the Warren Historical Society at 7 Sacket Hill Rd.

The Cemetery in question is on private property and is known as the Averill Cemetery. As of the recording of names made in 1934, only 2 monuments were legible: Sarah Averill and William Dain.