Connecticut Yankee to Southern Gentleman

The Warner Families in New England and Virginia

A treasure trove of correspondence, records, and documents stored in an Essex County attic have furnished a memory of activities, achievements, and attitudes of eight generations of three New England families which were among the earliest Americans.

The chronicles had been preserved by Mary Gaylord Warner, wife of Dr. Richard Warner and mother of the late Charles Crocker Warner.

1. The first Selden to emigrate to New England from his home in Sussex County, England, was Thomas, sometime before 1636 and before he was 20 years old. By 1639 he was an original proprietor in Hartford, Connecticut, a founder of Hartford and a maker of the Constitution of Connecticut.

2. William Gaylord was one of the 140 persons who embarked at Plymouth, England on the ship "Mary & John" March 30, 1630, and landed, May 30, at Mattapan or Dorchester, Massachusetts. In 1635, William and some others of the party, moved to Windsor, in the Connecticut Valley.

3. Andrew Warner, Emigrant, is mentioned in the town records of Cambridge, Massachusetts, then known as Newtowne, on January 7, 1632, as one of 42 settlers to build a fence to enclose the Commons, indicating that he had been a resident for some time already.

The families eventually settled as neighbors along the Connecticut River and intermarried. They built handsome homes which are still standing in their picturesque locations. The men of the families were educated at Yale College.

Some, responding to the lure of the expanding horizons of the new land, ventured further west. Jonathan Trumbull Warner was an early explorer of the big unknown beyond the coastal mountain ranges of the East. A series of significant exploits eventually brought him to the San Diego area and in the 1840's he was proprietor of a more than 26,000 acre ranch as well as a Senator of the State of California.

Samuel Gaylord plied the global trade routes as Captain of a fleet of sailing vessels. Others harvested the North Atlantic fishing and whaling waters.

A group invested in property in Ohio and established a community at Cuyahoga Falls.

Many remained to become leaders and developers of the Connecticut community, influential in the affairs of the State of Connecticut, supporters of the Congregational Church and soldiers in wars.

Dr. Richard Warner, seventh generation of Warners in America, graduated from Yale Medical School in 1821. He resisted the urging of his relatives who had gone to seek richer opportunities and elected to stay in his native environment. He settled in Cromwell, Connecticut and practiced medicine there for 27 years, "living . . . to impress his life and his ideals on his community and his state". Not only was he an outstanding practitioner of his profession but his scientific interest and pursuits extended into the fields of botany, geology, mineralogy, conchology, sharing his collections and research with other scholars. He improved agricultural methods and promoted innovations which eventually became established successes. He served as President of the Connecticut Medical Society. The Society's tribute at the time of his death in 1853 was highly laudatory and read in part . . . "As a citizen he was first in every good work, a leading member of Church and Society with strong convictions of right and wrong, standing firm for the right, often to the sacrifice of his own interest."

He married, 1st, Millicent Gilbert. Their son was Richard Selden Warner, Jr. Dr. Warner once wrote to his son who was working in Selma, Alabama: "Study to be dignified and manly in your deportment, seek good company, and while you are not obstructive, don't shrink from the company of gentlemen."
After Millicent died, Dr. Warner married Mary Gaylord, daughter of Captain Samuel Gaylord. Their two sons were Samuel Gaylord Warner and Charles Crocker Warner. They were 5 and 3 years old when their father died. Mary Gaylord Warner held the family together but was not able to have the boys educated at Yale as their forebears had been. She kept them in the academy until they were past 16 years of age. Then they had to find paying work.

Charles' half brother Richard helped him find his first job as a clerk in a general store in Meriden, Connecticut. He had begun the habit of making regular entries in a journal or diary when he was 13 1/2 years old. This practice continued, and on June 6, 1867 he writes: "Today I am to leave home to begin my career and seek my fortune."

On June 8th, he is in Meriden, Connecticut with Richard. A Mr. Wheeler agrees to take him on as a clerk in a large general store for $175.00 a year and a room.

The diary is enclosed from time to time in letters to his mother at Cromwell.

Some notations indicated that he was dissatisfied with the situation in Meriden because of the careless way the stock was handled and the lack of order in the business management. Though discouraged, he determines to try it longer because Richard had taken so much pains to get the job for him. Visits with Richard and his wife boosted Charles' spirits, he made some good friends, and began to attend church services.

In January 1874 he is 23 1/2 years old, living in Orange, New Jersey. He continues to record his experiences and impressions. As the year begins he is working alone as a plasterer in icy cold weather, lathing houses under construction. He has become expert at estimating building costs and at some planning and designing. His employer makes use of these skills but does not compensate him for the extra work. His wages seem to be $2.00 a day when he works, most of which goes for board and much of which his employer failed to pay!

Charles is committed to the practice of Temperance, goes to church twice on Sundays, and to weekly Masonic and Knights of Pythias meetings. He keeps fit by activities such as rowing. He enjoys association with friends in evening after work. He is often plagued by severe headaches and in July has not been feeling well so decides to go home to Cromwell, Connecticut. Doctors there diagnosed "walking typhoid" but had little to offer as relief, except to order him to stay in bed. He began to work again in September on the Yale University Library. At that time he bought a telescope and a spyglass and later a revolver. He kept carefully itemized accounts of all expenses.

January 1876, in New Haven, Connecticut, he notes that as this year begins he is 25 years, 4 months, 25 days old. He also writes that he has been taking dancing lessons. He has a busy social life, is invited to meals and entertainment, meets and admires attractive people, flirts with pretty girls, reads and studies. He also details his financial position and business activities. He went to visit brother Samuel in New York City. He enjoyed sight seeing, many concerts, lectures, and other entertainments.

In April, he records a visit with a Mr. Lindsley in New Haven, a business acquaintance and family friend, who is just back, having spent 5 weeks in Virginia working on an oyster harvesting vessel. Mr. Lindsley advises him to try the oyster business in Virginia. However, his brother has arranged for him to work at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia for 6 months. On May 8, 1876 he went to Samuel's home in New York and on the 10th the two of them arrived in Philadelphia via the Pennsylvania Railroad in time to witness the Centennial Celebration's opening ceremonies. Samuel returned to New York on the 5:00 p.m. train. Charlie endured the enormous crowd, rain, and ankle deep mud. Finding all hotels full he finally obtained one of 20 beds in one long room. He put his money in his stockings, and wore them to bed, and his clothes he folded under his pillow. By June he had found a room he describes as "splendid" "so cool".

His work was with some of the exhibits in the Exposition. He doesn't tell details of that - is more interested in the friends he meets and visits with until very late in the evening. Apparently he is manning and demonstrating in a commercial exhibit booth.

On the 4th of July, after having been up til 1:30 a.m., he started out at 7:00 a.m. to get a spot on the steps of the Continental Hotel to view the parade as it proceeded on Chestnut Street. He then went back to work at the Exposition until time for the firework's display in the evening. "Some magnificent pieces, but it rained, got wet, immense crowd, walked home three miles, near run over by a runaway horse, ate some fried oysters."

July 6th, Mr. Lindsley and Alling left at noon for Virginia. Mr. Lindsley was back in Philly in August. In September he stayed with Charlie on his way to Virginia to go into the oyster business himself.

In November, Mr. Clarkson and friends came to Charlie's booth at the Exposition with a letter of introduction from Sherwood Lindsley. Mr. Clarkson gave an urgent invitation for Charlie to visit him in Virginia. (This must have been the Clarkson who was prominent in the oyster business in the Bowler's area of Essex).

Among the other Virginians, whom he met at the Exposition, were Captain and Mrs. J. T. Hoskins and their daughter, Katherine Waring Hoskins, from "Midway", Essex County, Virginia.

On November 10th, the Centennial closed, so Charlie's work was finished.

On December 16th, he wrote Mr. Lindsley that he thought he would come to Virginia.

On December 31st 1876, Charlie writes that the Centennial Year has been one of more pleasure he had experienced, and if not beneficial in other ways, a year of great adventures and improvement to himself.

His next adventure was sailing to Virginia, with one other
man, on the vessel "Lottie", using the inland waterways to avoid most of the ocean route. Approximately 110 years later Mr. Charles Crocker Warner's great-grandson, Pearce F. Gardner and his wife, Lori, repeated the trip in their sailboat, "Athena", a 34 foot Morgan Sloop built in 1969, accompanied by his brother Billy Rush Gardner for the ocean going part of the trip. Billy Rush owns "Whisper", a 32 foot Morgan. Billy's wife, Lynn, drove by land, taking pictures of the lighthouses which Great Grandfather Warner would have used as aids to navigation on his earlier voyage.

Upon arriving at Bowler's, Mr. Warner decided to look up the girl he had met in 1876 in Philadelphia. From Bowlers, he walked to Angel Visit Church where a service was in progress. At first opportunity he inquired whether anyone knew Kate Hoskins. They kindly sent him to her grandmother, Catherine Waring Ware, at Bellevue, Ware's Wharf. His quest was successful and a romance between Charlie and Kate blossomed.

Soon brother Samuel, his wife and two children came to live in Dunsville. Charlie must have shared their home there as their mother writes in 1881 from Brooklyn, New York to both sons in Dunsville.

On March 1, 1882, Charles wrote to his mother..."I am about to be married. I hope my choice will meet with your approval...I believe that my friends and relatives north generally will not approve of my marrying anyone here. I hope and believe that if they ever meet and know her, she will win them over from their natural prejudices. I believe that she is superior socially and intellectually to any of the ladies of my acquaintance that I might have married north. As to financial advantages, neither of us expect any, therefore we will not be disappointed."

Katherine Waring Hoskins and Charles Crocker Warner were married April 13, 1882 at "Midway", Essex County, Virginia. For about a year Mr. and Mrs. Warner, as Kate and Charles always publicly addressed each other, lived at "Bellevue" farm, her grandmother's home about a half mile below Ware's Wharf. On May 7, 1883 their daughter, Susie Ware Warner, was born there.

Years later this daughter wrote, in characterizing her father and her Warner grandmother: "Though I was too young to remember her, because I admired my father so much, especially for those traits which must have been inculcated in his very early youth: his habit of gentle courtesy which came from the heart, his punctilious observance of the fine ceremonial of manners and dress, his painstaking faithfulness in every endeavor, his generous and honorable conduct in all business relationships, his noble ideals, I always thought his mother must have been a wonderful woman." Indeed she was!

Mary Gaylord Warner came to live with her sons and their families in Virginia and soon all the Warners moved to South Hill Farm in lower Essex. Kate and Charlie Warner's first son, Selden Richard was born there January 27, 1885.

For their growing family, the young couple needed a home of their own so they purchased from Kate's mother, Hannah Ware Hoskins, a 36 acre tract, situated toward the Rappahannock River from Dunsville. They named it "Sunnyside". There was a small house, built in the early 1700's, on the property. They fixed up the house, making a dining room and living room on the lower floor and a bedroom upstairs. The kitchen was outside in the yard. They settled in with their children and immediately began to build an addition 20' x 24', two stories and an attic.

Brother Samuel and his family moved away from Virginia. His mother stayed to live with Kate and Charles at "Sunnyside". She had brought from Connecticut the large quantity of correspondence between generations of family members, records, and the journals which Charlie had kept. It is this collection of treasured material which has furnished insight regarding the lives of eight generations of fascinating Americans. Mary Gaylord Warner died at "Sunnyside" June 21, 1887. She did not live to see two more grandsons born to Kate and Charlie: Charles Andrew Warner, April 20, 1888 and Thomas Hoskins Warner, June 20, 1890.

In 1906 Mr. Warner added a 12' x 16' chamber to the northeast portion of the home with a bedroom and an attic above. Next, with son Thomas' help, a front hall about 8' x 16' with a room above, known as "The Boy's Room" was built.

Then came two corner porches in the style of Mr. Warner's native New England. The floors throughout the house were wide heart pine. Each board ran the length of the room.

The first roof of the 1887 addition was covered with a portion of sail from the vessel "Lottie" used in oystering during the years spent at South Hill Farm. It is still visible from inside the house. The drag anchor from the "Lottie" is presently at the base of the front steps at "Sunnyside". On the "Lottie", Mr. Warner brought from Connecticut family furniture, some of which dated back to the 1600's.

Around 1936, his daughter, Susie Warner Maddox remodeled the house. On the side toward the river, an addition made a large parlor, paneled in cypress, two bedrooms and baths. On the mantle in the new parlor is an hand carved inscription "Happy the man whose work and care a few paternal acres bound, Content to breathe his native air on his own ground".

When she had transformed this cherished old house into an elegant and gracious home, she furnished and decorated it with objects and materials gathered during her world travels. A national magazine published an article featuring the house, praising her accomplishment and her excellent taste.

After her death in 1954, her niece, Dorothy Selden Warner Gardner and William Rush Gardner, Jr., her husband, purchased "Sunnyside" and 102 acres from the Charles County Warner Estate. In 1994 they had the original part of the house remodeled into a modern kitchen with a cathedral ceiling.

Although there had been no electricity in the house until
he sat in the second pew under the balcony on the men's side. There is a partition of pew height running down the middle of the church and the men, because they chewed tobacco, sat separately from the women. This practice of men and women sitting on different sides of the church continued until after World War II. Each family had a "family tree" in the yard to which they tied their buggy or wagon. The Warner family tree has long since disappeared. When Rappahannock, in modern times, constructed an addition to the rear of the church, air hammers and every method known were used to try to break up and remove the concrete steps Mr. Warner had built to go from the exterior into the basement. Neither a dent or a chip could be made in the concrete and therefore to this day they remain in the downstairs hall.

Mr. Warner was deacon, treasurer, and clerk of the church, and also furnished the wine for communion. He made the wine from the concord grapes which still grow at "Sunnyside". Kate was likewise devoted to the church and worked diligently for the Women's organization. They raised their children in the ways of the Lord and in their honor their children gave the church a sterling silver communion set.

As well as being active in their church, the Warners were active in the county. Mrs. Warner was appointed to a committee to decorate the courthouse and she was an early member of the Woman's Club of Essex County. In the Court room there is a marble plaque which she wrote concerning some of the Hoskins men. According to a marble plaque in the present jury room, Mr. Warner was on a committee to oversee the fireproofing of the Clerk's office. He also served as Chairman of the Essex School Board. Mrs. Warner was educated in private schools and at the University of Virginia. She was a teacher and at one time was governess for the children of a family living on the Eastern Shore. She taught the neighborhood children and her own in a house near the woods on "Sunnyside".

Mr. Warner insisted that each of their children be educated for professional careers and that their sons also learn manual skills in order to be proficient in a trade.

Susie Ware Warner (1883-1954) graduated from State Normal School, later called Farmville State Teachers College, Farmville, Virginia, now Longwood College. She taught in public schools.

She married Dr. William Arthur Maddox from Washington, D.C. who held degrees BA and LLD from William & Mary College, PhD from Columbia University, New York City. He became President of Rockford College, Rockford Illinois. He worked ceaselessly to make friends for the college and to have the college serve the community. His goal was to provide an education that would make students independent in their thinking, self directed, self disciplined, socially responsible, morally versed in experience of the past, acquainted with the arts and equipped with the spirit and character and cultivated mind to be able to live happily. He turned down an invitation to become president of the University of Chicago because he felt that he had not
accomplished all he intended for Rockford. In the summer of 1933, a railroad accident ended his life.

His widow then returned to "Sunnyside" and, although bedridden, it was then that she accomplished the splendid work on the house itself. She extended a tremendous influence in the Essex community through her intense interest in its people and progress. She built a handsome structure on the main street of Tappahannock, The Maddox Building, in honor of her husband.

A letter from Mr. J. B. Hunley in March, 1941, congratulates her for the fine achievement and describes it in glowing terms. "The noble structure gives a dignity and meaning to the town . . . the artistic is matched by the wisdom of the location". The U.S. Post Office and a drug store occupied the lower floor and Dr. Joseph Chinn had his medical office above.

Dr. Richard Selden Warner (1885-1976) was graduated from William & Mary in 1908, received a Master's degree from Cornell University, and PhD from Columbia. He was professor of Biology, head of the Biology Department, and eventually President at Sam Houston State Teachers College, Huntsville, Texas. In accordance with his father's plan for him he learned to be an excellent plasterer too.

He married Grace Christian Miller from Washington, D.C., graduate of the University of Tennessee.

After his retirement they spent most of their time traveling the world, preferring to go by passenger freighter because of the relaxing pace and the good food. They had many adventures including being shipwrecked off the coast of Alaska when they were quite elderly.

Their first daughter, Mary Gaylord Warner, has also been an avid and intrepid traveler for years. She married, in 1939, William Gates Phillips, a native of Texas, graduate in electrical engineering from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He had a distinguished career with the Westinghouse Corporation. He played a major role in the construction of the Tunnel under Hampton Roads and in the outfitting of the first atomic-powered submarine of the U.S. Navy. He died in 1992 in Newport News, Virginia. Their children are Caroline Battle, Sally, and William Warner Phillips. Selden's second daughter, Anne Meriwether Warner, married Arthur Penniman. They live in the Lake Tahoe area of California and have three daughters: Elizabeth, Margaret Webb, and Katherine Warner Penniman.

Kate and Charlie's second son, John Thomas Warner, lived only four months.

Dr. Charles Andrew Warner learned bricklaying and worked at that during summer breaks from his college studies but his life-long career was dentistry. He received his D.D.S. degree from the Medical College of Virginia in 1912 and practiced in Tappahannock. He was noted as a dentist so expert that his patients' fillings would last as long as they lived! He served as mayor of Tappahannock and as a Deacon in Rappahannock Church. He had extensive land holdings on both sides of the river and took special pleasure from hunting birds there in season. He married Gladys Roy Hoskins. She was educated at Lynchburg College and Columbia University. Their daughter, Elizabeth Selden Warner, attended St. Margaret's School, Tappahannock High School, and graduated from Farmville State Teachers College (Longwood). She married William Austin Trible of "Johnville" near Dunsville and a graduate of Rappahannock College. Their daughter, Betty Hoskins Trible, born September 1, 1951 died February 26, 1955. Their sons, William Austin Trible, Jr. and Charlie Warner Trible have carried on their father's business, Tappahannock Building Supply Co., since his death. Their mother has been active in the business as well. They provide a major service to the community and contribute to its economic growth and stability. They are active participants in all phases of the mission of St. John's Episcopal Church. Austin, Jr. married Elaine Louise LaPonte who came from Bristol, Connecticut to teach in Essex County Schools. They have three sons: William Austin Trible, III (Will), Louis Hoskins Trible (Hoskins), and Andrew Ashman Trible (Andrew). They live at "Mt. Pisgah", Essex County, Charlie Warner Trible married Lee Ann Ferebee from Midlothian, Virginia. Their son and daughter are Charlie Warner Trible, Jr. (J.C.) and Meredith Lee Trible (Meredith). They live at "Woodville", Essex County. Dr. Warner's son, Charles Willard Warner, received both BA and MA degrees from William and Mary College. He is an historian and author. He married Ann Hagerty Harp. They reside at "Accaceek" on the Northern Neck.

Thomas Hoskins Warner's (1890-1968) avocation was carpentry. He was graduated from Bethany College, West Virginia and was, for a brief time, minister of a Christian Church. He was an elder at Rappahannock Christian Church most of his life. During World War I, he was in Officers' Training School at the time of the armistice. During World War II, he and his wife were inspectors of electrical systems in airplanes. He was Essex County surveyor for forty years, Director of Tappahannock Division of William and Mary College, and president of Rappahannock College in Tappahannock during the 1930's. His historical and genealogical writings received wide acclaim nationally. In addition to owning land, at one time he had about 200 acres of oyster ground and, like his father, an oyster boat. He married Pauline Pearce from Richmond who received her BA from Richmond College and her MA from William and Mary College. They had two daughters: Pauline Baldwin Warner, who died 1983, and Dorothy Selden Warner was graduated from Westhampton College, and was married to William Rush Gardner, Jr. from Hillsville, Virginia on August 22, 1950. He is an alumnus of the University of Richmond.

They own and operate Gardner Realty, Tappahannock. The offices are in the building which was Rappahannock College. They purchased "Sunnyside" from Kate and Charles Warner's estate in 1956. There are three Gardner children: William Rush Gardner, III, his wife, the former Lynn Martin Green, from Manteo, North Carolina, and their
daughter, Katherine (Katie) Leigh, live in Summerfield, North Carolina. Billy Rush earned degrees in Physical Chemistry and Textile Chemistry from North Carolina State University and Lynn, was graduated from Meredith College with a major in Biology.

Dorothy Selden Gardner Aikin, her husband, Donald Sentman Aikin from Perryville, Maryland, and their children, Samuel Sentman Aikin and Dorothy Selden Aikin have recently moved from Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina to State College, Pennsylvania. Dottie was graduated from Mary Washington College with a Mathematics major. Donald was graduated from North Carolina State with a Mechanical Engineering degree. Pearce Foster Gardner and his wife, the former Lorraine Estelle Klein of Long Island, New York live near Bowler's Wharf. Pearce appraises for Gardner Realty. He is a Virginia Commonwealth University alumnus where he studied Real Estate and appraising. Lori is an audiologist and received a BA from University of Virginia and MA in audiology from the University of Tennessee.

"Sunnyside" Farm, the Essex County Warners' ancestral home, has been in the family ever since it was patented. To this time it has always passed through the female line by purchase or inheritance.

The Warner chronicle is one of courage, character, and constant devotion to God, family and country.

Compiled and edited by:
Dorothy Selden Warner Gardner
Mary Burgess Ball Long Montsinger
(Great Granddaughter of Catherine Elizabeth Waring Ware and 2nd cousin to Susie, Selden, Charles, and Thomas Warner)

Information From:
Essex County Court House Records

Family Letters Volumes I and II
Edited by Susie Warner Maddox - copies now in possession of
Elizabeth Selden Warner Tribe, Duke Street, Tappahannock
and Dorothy Warner Gardner "Sunnyside", Dunsville, Virginia

Hoskins and Related Families by:
Charles Willard Hoskins Warner

Journals 1-2-3, by Thomas Hoskins Warner

Descendants of Andrew Warner by:
Lucien Warner

Jonathan Warner - 1728-1810 by:
Gwendolyn and Harry Orton - Jones

ESSEX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
October 16, 1994

THE ESSEX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY met at "Little Egypt", an early 18th century Tappahannock home which has been carefully restored and furnished by the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Snyder. Mr. Wilson Ware spoke about the history of the house and of the families who had lived there formerly. The Snyders very graciously showed the many unique and interesting features of the structure.

Anne T. Wright, Secretary

ESSEX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
January 16, 1994

THE ESSEX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY met at the Essex County Court House. The guest speaker was Mr. Wayne Smith, Regional Manager for Virginia Power. He described the development and installation of the earlier electrical services to this area.

Anne T. Wright, Secretary

ESSEX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Spring 1995

THE ESSEX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY will not be meeting in April as usual. Instead it is hoped that all members and friends of the Society will participate in the Essex House Tour on Saturday, May 6th. Picnic fare will be sold on the grounds at St. John's Church, Duke Street, Tappahannock, Virginia before the tour.

Anne T. Wright, Secretary

Officers of the Society
President ....................................... Mr. Harold VanArsdale
Secretary ........................................... Anne T. Wright
Treasurer ........................................... Mr. Ludwell F. Smither

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Mrs. Mary Ball Montsinger, Chairman
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Meetings are held quarterly in the Essex Court House, or in an historic home or church of the County. Dues are $10.00 yearly per individual and $15.00 per family. For copies of publications send $2.00 to Mr.
Charles H. Warner, Tappahannock, Virginia 22560