Southern Pilgrimage

James D. Warren's 1840 -41 letters from Kentucky and Mississippi

Charles D. Warren December, 2017



Figure 1. James D. Warren from *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Biography of New York* V. 5

We have Emily Wettlaufer to thank for seeing to the safekeeping of James D. Warren's letters and other family documents. Among them, are two letters from James's 1840-41 trip to Nachez, Mississippi, which provide a glimpse of his personality and some clues to Warren genealogy.

James D. Warren (1823-1886) was chairman of the New York State Republican Party and the owner of the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, the city's oldest newspaper; he was the party boss of Erie County (figure 1). Most biographical sketches mention the year he spent traveling in the South, but the two letters give us a more intimate view of him as a 17 year old. They provide details of his trip south and reveal that his father, Orsamus Warren, had asked him to scout for farmland in Kentucky. With some additional research, we can identify the relatives who accompanied him and hosted him when he reached Natchez, Mississippi. I have included copies of the letters with the very helpful typed transcriptions made c. 1930 by our cousin Elizabeth Warren Olmsted (1907-1982).

James D. Warren posted the first letter in Louisville, Kentucky (figures 3,4). In it he mentions the route from his home in Clarence, NY through Cleveland and Cincinnati. He marvels at the fine farmland and horses, and remarks a bit disconcertingly on the quality of the hogs and the quantity of Negroes. The traveling party included his Uncle Seth W. Warren and Seth's wife Sinah Warren, née Glasscock; Laura Glasscock, Sinah's unmarried relative (sister, niece?); and a young man named Ben. Ben's family name may be Glasscock also, or he might be another Erie County native.

Repetition of the names William, James, and Seth through multiple generations of Warrens makes it difficult to track separate personalities, so I include initials or use italicized burial place names as antecedents for given names. I hope this makes it easier to distinguish one from another. For example, Seth W. Warren (1797-1858) is buried in Natchez, Mississippi, so I refer to him as Natchez Seth. We learn from the letters that Natchez Seth was James D. Warren's uncle and most likely the eldest brother of Orsamus Warren (James D. Warren's father). Orsamus had an older brother named Horatio and four other siblings, all of them children of Darien James (1774-1823), so called because that James Warren is buried in Darien, NY, near Buffalo (figure 2). Before reading James D. Warren's letters, I had only the vaguest notion Horatio and Orsamus had an older brother - Natchez Seth.



Figure 2. Headstone of James Warren 1774-1823 (*Darien* James). Allegany Road, Darien, NY. Photo circa 1960.

Orsamus Harrie Eson

Figure 3a. Letter from James D. Warren to Orsamus and Nancy Warren, Louisville, Kentucky, Sept. 5, 1841

anison aring ill my u agam uis orle muting w nome huro her a w a do as V pliasan exe wi l CI ictly ur ave tim lels abant arry and wan C e nth v 20 3 on ost

Figure 3b. Letter from James D. Warren to Orsamus and Nancy Warren, Louisville, Kentucky, Sept. 5, 1840, Page. 1

As I have been to annu now I ought to write something rather mor interesting, Unch Seth hab made some ingunity about a farm for entr. ones 1 or unds 1 up lat rather la high rate Sixty Pollars for acr terti No onisoile. I supposed mara of thirty or thirty, ive milas the first quality might be bought about as many dollars for acre are all well or to we can Eat our allowaner if is large Aunt Sinch Safera Unen Seth 12 2m all send there love grandmother is there tel not for gotten I. have you have confidence to believe that I am not homesick nor have not fire I assure you I feel will an well & am treated just wee I can be Unch Jeth says firms you got any money when you get on just call on my you can alway) have what you want with mine is gone

Figure 3c. Letter from James D. Warren to Orsamus and Nancy Warren, Louisville, Kentucky, Sept. 5, 1840. Page 2

then well both go to sawing wood We wan all fover bleaveable bincinnath twin one about Somevier. Please remin ber me to dunt Saura Sion & finaly to all inquiring friends of not written when you rection , write that I may know whither are all will and how you alo ruly & Verry ear Top hought of saying af words to you that you may then had forgotin the man Himus Vive had together I hope you will remember your promise swriter complements to Mr MW. Hadey Matteson & Family Gro. Hen Cha Hen mity & all and believe to be your frind + Cousin 1

Figure 3d. Letter from James D. Warren to Orsamus and Nancy Warren, Louisville, Kentucky, Sept. 5, 1840. Page 3

To: Orsamus Warren Esqr Clarence Erie Co. N. York Louisville, Ky. Sept. 5th 1840

Dear Parents

I again fulfill my promise by writing while in Louisville we arrived here Thursday morning safe & sound as a dollar. I find Louisville much more pleasant than any City I ever was in I will not except Clarence As yet I have been perfectly contented and had a very pleasant time -

But if you want fine Horses just come to Kentucky where they ' have them. The best of land a very fine country and such Hogs as you never see in the state of N. York yes and any quantity of Negroes. The steamboat Gen. Pike sunk on the Ohio night before last no lives lost but all her freight ***

As I have been to dinner now I cught to write something rather more interesting. Uncle Seth has made some inquiries about a farm for You there is a plenty of good ones for sale he finds but at rather a high rate from fourty to sixty Dollars pr. acre that is near Louisville. I suppose at a distance of thirty or thirty five miles a farm of the first quality might be bought for about as many dollars pr. acre.

We are all well or or so we can eat our allowance if it is large. Aunt Sinah Laura Uncle Seth Ben all send their love to you if grandmother is there tell her I have not forgotten her ------

I hope You have confidence to believe that I am not homesick nor have not been I assure you I feel well & am well & am treated just as well as I can be Uncle Seth says Jeimes (? - suspect he's trying to indicate pronunciation - E. W. O.) have you got any money when you get out just call on me you can always have what you want until mine is gone then we'll both go to sawing wood. We rode all over Cleavland Cincinnatti twice one(?) about Louisville. Please remember me to Aunt Laura Levi & finaly to all inquiring friends. If you have not written when you receive this please write that I may know whether you are all well and how you get along

Yours Truly & Very Respectfuly

J. D. Warren

Dear Pop

I thought of saying a few words to you that you may know I have not forgotten you nor the many good times we have had together. I hope you will remember your promise & write. Give my compliments to Mr. & Mrs Hadly(?)

Sept. 5, 1840

Major Mattison & Family Ged. Hen(?) Charly Hen Metz & all and believe me to be your friend & cousin J.D.W.

Note: Believe Pop to be Alan Poladore Millar who was almost the same age and whom he knew well all his life. "Pop" Millar's mother was Cythera Warren daughter of James Warren and sister of Orsamus Warren. E.W.O.

Figure 4b. Transcrition of James D. Warren's letter from Louisville, Kentucky made by Elizabeth Warren Olmsted

Darien James Warren settled in the wilderness of what is now Genesee County (just east of Erie County) in the town of Darien during the first decade of the 19th century. The lives of he and his descendants, along with other pioneer families are chronicled in three volumes of William R. Cutler's Genealogical and Family History of Western New York (1912) that sit crumbling on my shelf (figure 5). Cutler tells us that Darien James begat Orsamus Warren, who begat James D. Warren, who begat Willliam Candee Warren 1st, who begat three children: William Candee Warren Jr., Charlotte Streeter, née Warren, and John Davock Warren. I hope that allows living family members to locate themselves in this story of Buffalo's genesis.

As long as we follow Cutler's genealogy after Darien James, all goes smoothly. He tells us that Darien James and his unnamed first wife had one son (I believe this is Natchez Seth). After that, Darien James married Phebe Luce (Cutler misspells her name as Love) and they were the parents of Horatio, Orsamus, and four other



Figute 5. William R. Cutler's *Genealogical and Family History of Western New York; New York*, 1912, Lewis Historical Publishing.

Warren children. James D. Warren's letters and other documents corroborate all this. But when Cutler gives an account of Warrens **before** *Darien* James, he tells us the father of *Darien* James was Moses Warren and then he traces the family back to a James Warren, who was in Kittery, Maine by the mid-17th century. I think he is wrong.

James D. Warren posted a second letter to his parents, Orsamus and Nancy Warren, from Natchez, Mississippi in 1841 figures 7,8). Reading both letters we can piece together a sequence of events. It seems *Natchez* Seth and some of his family had made the journey north to visit his brothers and that on the return trip, his nephew James D. Warren accompanied them home to Natchez. *Natchez* Seth was born in Hudson, NY, two years before *Darien* James's son Horatio Warren (1799-1862) and four years before Orsamus Warren (1800-1876). These dates and the relationships described in the letters fit with the description of *Darien* James's children in Cutler's book.

Natchez Seth settled in Natchez, Mississippi and before 1823 he married Sinah Glasscock there. James D. Warren's second letter, sent from Vale Place, Natchez, is dated a year after the 1840 census, which tells us Seth was a planter and the owner of forty slaves. Vale Place may be Seth's plantation, or it may be a town house. Nachez was a safe haven for outnumbered white planers worried about slave rebellions on their remote plantations, Seth and Sinah appear to fit this profile. Sinah's family (Glasscocks) had plantations across the Mississippi in Concordia Parish, Louisiana and there is reason to think Seth's plantation was near that of the Glascocks. We learn from Seth's 1858 will that he left most of his property, excepting a few household slaves to an adopted son named Pierre Augustus Barker Warren.

Pierre A.B. Warren's biological parents are the subject of some gossip in James D. Warren's letters, but it took some research to figure out who they were. The wedding mentioned in the letter - Laura to Mr. Barker of Buffalo - refers to Laura Glasscock's marriage to Robert R. Barker. Laura was Sinah Warren's relative, who had visited Buffalo and made the trip back to Natchez with James D. Warren. Robert R. Barker had left Buffalo at about the same time. He was the son of Pierre Augustus Barker, Buffalo's mayor, and president of more than one of its banks. Mayor Barker, like the Warrens, came from Dutchess County, NY. Laura Barker, née Glasscock signs the addedum to the Natchez letter "friend et cousin" and mentions "Uncle Hortio's girls" referring to James D. Warren's cousins and asserting intimate if complex family ties.



Figure 6. Oakland College, Lorman, Mississippi before the Civil War

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Figure 7a. Letter from James D. Warren to Orsamus and Nancy Warren, Natchez, Mississippi. Jan. 5, 1841.

After the wedding, Robert and Laura Barker lived in Concordia Parish, Louisiana at a place called Fairview, but Robert died shortly after the birth of their fourth child, Pierre Augustus Barker. Laura was left with three small children and she allowed her childless relatives Sinah and Seth Warren to adopt her infant son. They changed his name to Pierre Augustus Barker Warren and reared him as their own. During the Rebellion Pierre fought for the Confederacy and survived to raise his own family, some of whom are buried next to him in the Warren Cemetery near the site of Fairview Church in Concordia Parish. It seems likely the church was near (or part of) the plantation where his biological parents lived and possibly on the land left to him by his adoptive father, Natchez Seth.

James D. Warren's letter mentions his return to college and it seems likely he was referring to Oakland College in Lorman, Mississippi, just north of Natchez; there are few alternatives. Various Glasscocks matriculated at Oakland in the 1850's, but James could not have studied there for more than a school year.

Oakland's founder, Jeremiah Chamberlain was a native of Pennsylvania and a member of the first graduating class at Princeton Theological Seminary. In 1851 he was murdered for his abolitionist views. The college did not survived the Civil War controversies either, yet some of its buildings did. They are now part of an historically black college in the state university system (figure 6).

Plaw Match Stany 3 With pleasure I. Seat inform you your Rind 15th al Dec - the was noc yesterday + rea with much gratificate Mica Men wrote Mother to write during Ohristmad Holidays for A servis al thave delayed until of new years you may the astonisheds as Deside my letter dated Val Matche that we have had a vacation of two weeks which time Ben & I have sent at home very agreeably I alsurage we have to leave for College to me morning without Lail Gow say you an at a great stand to Know which do & which thuch to write & advise you which he had dowe but presus will not get the letter he wishes in to say third is any quanty and to be had in Kontucki nath & about ten miles distant aftern to housty five dollars for a but thinks you had better no the anticripation of coming south until come stoot These and improved, which it have been speaking & near cucinfatter which is a first rate market Uncl. Day he has written + Dant Som hapers and wishes you to write whither you recathin (You will please exense a bad firm)

Figure 7b. Letter from James D. Warren to Orsamus and Nancy Warren, Natchez, Mississippi. Jan. 5, 1841. Page 1.

as. will a news at well ou all has the tel slar mu tru & aura wa marise N Tarton UN have mur ha 4 a mon Ar oner in low She need 2 no as as hedre a height & in the inn can 10 ann aura unt word Inche et × 12 NE Thur, not very w ٤ Summed a. the er's 10 es all. 1 or her ula hur 1 118 2Emg about 1 believe will in gerlis Mother Hoursel ran Idma our You & Mother will Ala Edt w Matches Mils letter to 6th am everty elly you must jourd on as Athis + Day what eleva re you a dougt how blig & your affectionale ourself 4 I will w agam in ag itr X TEN DE TH. I at /1200

Figure 7c. Letter from James D. Warren to Orsamus and Nancy Warren, Natchez, Mississippi. Jan. 5, 1841. Page 2.

Sear. Mother 1 aug much not Isal this untit is Jan while me to com home write y & Chawte Harled though as yet I have frem well & contented She Day Anow the has not 02 900 Mother Irmany 5 Fall Delace Dear consin Betay the James has not taken whale tie in writing to parte arranged, 3 vote Ito you, In the first- pla a partangth t- to tell you the 1- I was marine prose 9 last-month, I rerote weeks ago giving equestice the girl to was viry and a tion to you, Det astonished at your not coming_ uncle Tranen & Mr. Barker have gone to Natchez to day. A- is duch a beautifu day. So warm lance pleasant - Jex freetnort - Summer will be very warne. Betty I ought to give you a good a Scolding for not writing to me often just to think of my having only had the from you eper since I came The It think I have we them the letters beside this to you, Jele uncle Horation girls to write. to me soon, I expect to go to New Orleand sometime at 15 of this month Betty answer soon The children accept the same bor yourself - about Sinerty your devoter friend Love to you

Figure 7d. Letter from James D. Warren to Orsamus and Nancy Warren, Natchez, Mississippi. Jan. 5, 1841. Page 3.

To : - Orsamus Warren Esqr Clarence Erie Co. N.Y. Vale Place Natches Jany 5th 1841

Dear Father

With pleasure I seat myself to inform you your kind letter of the 5th of Dec. was rec'd yesterday and red with much gratification When Ben wrote to Mother I promised to write during Christmas Holidays but it seems I have delayed until after new years you may be astonished at seeing my letter dated Vale Place Natches but we have had a vacation of two weeks which time Ben & I have spent at home very agreeably I assure you but we have to leave for College to morrow morning without fail.

You say you are at a great stand to know what to do & wish Uncle to write & advise you which he has done but presuming you will not get the letter he wishes me to say there is any quantity of good land to be had in Kentucky opposite of Cincinnatti & about ten miles distant, for from fifteen to twenty-five dollars per acre - but thinks you had better not sell with the anticipation of coming south until you come & look (These are improved farms of which I have been speaking & near cincinnatti which is a first rate market) --

Uncle says he has written & sent some papers and wishes you to write whether you rec'd them or not _____"____"

(You will please excuse a bad pen)

As I write that you may know the news I will tell you though I believe Ben has the start of me by telling when he wrote Laura was married on the 15th of Dec to R. R. Barker of Buffalo, N. Y. this is all I have that is new & this has been now nearly a month ______"_____"_____"_____"

You say in your letter I must write once in ten days to console mother tell her she need not get the figets for I am as fat as a nearly six feet in height & in the spring if I find the weather/warm I can come home at the word go. Uncle Seth Aunt Sinah & Laura send their love to all Aunt Sinah is not very well she thinks of spending next summer at the Blue Lick Springs in Kentucky if her health does not improve (?? hole in paper??) says kiss bub for her & tell Julia her sweet heart groes like a pig.

Being about out of scap I believe I will stop best love to all the girls Mother yourself Pop Aunt Laura Grandmother & compliments to all who inquire You and Mother will please write direct your letter to Natches Miss. & oblige your Dutiful son

J.D. Warren

Jan. 5, 1829

p.2

Dear Betty you must write as soon as you receive this & say what you are doing how you enjoy yourself etc. & oblige your affectionate

Brother J.D.W.

I will write again in a few days.

Dear Mother

Aunt Sinah says I must not seal this until I say when you want me to come home write & I shall be started though as yet I have been well & contented she says, say this that you may know she has not forgotten her promise to my Mother . Your devoted & affectionate son --- J.D. Warren

January 5th 1840 Vale Place

Dear cousin Betsy

As I James has not taken up all the paper in writing to Uncle Orsamus I devote part of it - to you. In the first place I suppose I ought to tell you that I was married the 15 of last month. I wrote to Uncle Horatio's girls about three weeks ago giving them an invitation ????????? I requested the girls to extend the invitation to you. Betty I was very much astonished at your not coming --

Uncle Warren & Mr. Barker have gone to Natchez to day it is a rich a beautiful day, so warm and pleasant. I expect next summer will be very warm.

Betty I ought to give you a good scolding for not writing to me oftener just to think of my having only <u>half</u> a letter from you ever since I came home & then to think I have written three letters besides this to you. Tell Uncle Horatio's girls to write to me soon, I expect to go to New Orleans sometime about the 15 of this month Betty answer soon give my best love to your Father Mother & all the children accept the same for yourself - Aunt Sinahs love to you. Your devoted friend "et" cousin

Laura Barker

Note on outside of letter- Mother you must write to Aunt Sinah & Betty must too. J.

Figure 8b. Transcrition of James D. Warren's letter from Natchez, Mississippi. made by Elizabeth Warren Olmsted

In the 1920s when my grandfather, William C. Warren Jr. and the rest of America were in the high cotton of the 1920's economic boom, he made an effort to uncover the mysteries of Warren genealogy. WCW Jr. kept a well-organized correspondence file, held together with long, bendable, double bladed, brass fasteners. The system is marvelously antiquated, but it organizes years of letters in chronological order as neatly as a computer hard-drive.

The file includes some correspondence with Henry Hyde Warren, a cousin in Philadelphia who lamented that he had paid a professional genealogist over \$200 to research the Warren genealogy. In one letter, cousin Henry Warren observed that WCW Jr., too, had "caught the genealogy bug." Writing back, WCW Jr. admitted contagion and confessed to having written his own checks to a professional genealogist. He claimed not to have spent \$200 (yet), but candidly wondered if he would. Correspondence between WCW Jr. and his genealogist, Arthur W. Ackerman, trails off after the 1929 crash, which may have provided a harsh cure for a harmless bug.

that WCW Jr. started out believing Cutler's theory of the Warren origins in Kittery, Maine just as Henry Hyde Warren had. But when he discovered the heirloom, 1695 edition of Cotton Mather's Johannes in Eremo in the possession of his aunt Mary Vought née Warren, he changed his mind. That fragile and incomplete book has been in the family for more than 300 years and it carries signatures of Warren ancestors - James, Seth, Cornelius, and others - going back to the early 18th century - some accompanied by dates and places such as Tiverton and Newport (not far from Plymouth, Massachusetts). In 1841 James D. Warren was the last to add his own neat signature (Figure 9). That date suggests Natchez Seth may have given him the book.

This artifact contradicts Cutler's Kittery theory, and eventually both WCW Jr. and genealogist Ackerman concluded that Cutler was wrong. They formulated an alternative theory that the Warren family made its way west from Plymouth, Massachusetts to Buffalo with a generation long stop in Stanford, NY (Dutchess County) and a shorter one in Exeter, NY (Otsego County), where James D. Warren's father, Orsamus Warren, was born in 1800. With the Mather book in hand, I reached the same conclusion.

Abider FATTH, HOPE, & CHARITIE, CHARITIE'S the Greateft of the Three which this might be added, from another Hand, obfingeo referens !) Prin lidit Arcano, Secula Apoltolica, Donifque itidem Santtiffmas Her-Den Wr Heros tacitis Protuint Ex Tenel

Figure 9a. Pages from Cotton Mather's 1695 edition of *Johannes in Eremo* with Warren signatures and dates.

Early correspondence in this same file shows

The Life of St Epitaphium JOHANNES DAVENPORTUS. in Portum Delatus. dan march in the Vivus Nov Anglia, ac Ecclefia Ornamentum. Et Mortuus, Utrinfque Triffe/Defiderium. ornelius May his hun 7.27 ret Chryfostomus Nov-Anglorum. THELIFE OF Mr.JOHN DAVENPORT. agead S.I. Noted Author of more than Twice Seven Treatifes, and Chaptain to two Succeffive Others Davenport whole Affumed Name was, Francicus a Santta clara. And in Mr. Rafnworths Collection of peeches, made in the Chebrated Parlaiment, 1640. I find Sin Benjamp Hudysrd, ung thele fords Santta Clara, hah Pablith-ed, That it a Synod were held. Nor intermented ed, That it a Synod were held, Non anter Paritanie, Setting Paritani afide, Our Articl Their Religion would foon be Agreed have fo brought it to pais, that unit

Figure 9b. Pages from Cotton Mather's 1695 edition of *Johannes in Eremo* with Warren signatures and dates. There are well documented Pilgrim genealogies through five or six generations, so it is easy to trace the Warren family five generations forward from Mayflower passenger Richard Warren to three brothers: James (call him *Stanford* James, 1745-1811), Samuel, and Cornelius Warren. These men left Massachusetts with their wives, children, and their widowed mother after the Revolution and settled in the town of Stanford, Dutchess County, New York (a part of Nine Partners Patent). Most records of this branch of Mayflower descendants stop there.

Tracing the Erie County Warrens back in time from our generation is a bit more complicated, but Cutler's book and other printed documents reliably lead us as far as *Darien* James (1774-1823). It is the connection between him and the three Mayflower descendant Warren brothers -*Stanford* James, Samuel, and Cornelius - that has puzzled genealogists. WCW Jr. and Ackerman, who both believed these genealogies were connected, never settled on the identity of *Darien* James's father; they wondered whether it was Stanford James or his brother Cornelius.

However, WCW Jr and Ackerman did not know that Stanford James left a will (proved in 1811), which names his wife and children (it even names some grandchildren). This document clarifies some relationships and raises questions about others. In it he names three sons: Seth (call him Otsego Seth because he is buried in Otsego County, New York), John, and Andrew. To them he bequeaths his farm in equal parts. However, later in the will he mentions a fourth son, James, to whom he bequeaths \$10.00 (I believe this is Darien James). It is interesting to note that the will lists legacies to his grandchildren by name (in trust until they reach adulthood). That list includes Seth Warren (Nachez Seth?), but does not mention Horatio or Orsamus Warren. Maybe these grandchildren,

born far from Stanford, were unknown to their grandfather, or perhaps *Darien* James's second marriage had caused a rift. It appears *Stanford* James is, indeed, the father of *Darien* James and his will provides the link between Western New York Warrens and Richard Warren of Plymouth, MA.

Early Ninetenth century property records from Exeter, NY corroborate *Stanford* James's paternity of *Darien* James. They show the same brothers named in the will of *Stanford* James - a James Warren (*Darien* James) and a Seth Warren (*Otsego* Seth) - owning adjacent farms. *Otsego* Seth spent his life in Otsego County and is buried there; he was less restless than *Darien* James, who, by 1802, had sold his Otsego farm and was on the move further west to Darien, NY.

The 1823 will of *Darien* James Warren, dictated from his deathbed, names his sons Horatio and Orsamus, who were present with his wife when he died at age 49. He mentions the smaller children also, but not by name, and there is not a word about *Natchez* Seth. We do not know when *Natchez* Seth departed his father's household, but by the time *Darien* James died, his eldest son (by a first wife) was married and living in Natchez. Still, the bonds of kinship were strong enough to draw *Natchez* Seth to Clarence and Buffalo for a visit with Horatio and Orsamus in 1840 and to draw his nephew James D. Warren with him on a journey to the South.

There are still some loose ends to tie up, but the facts about Seth W. Warren contained in and derived from James D. Warren's letters link the Western NY Warrens to those in Dutchess County. Our family's history is enriched by this information, which buttresses the theory of Mayflower origins, and allows us to finally dispense with Cutler's Kittery, Maine altenative.