

THE WARRENS OF FORT ERIE

JOHN WARREN, SR, HENRY WARREN AND

JOHN WARREN, JR

By Ernest A. Cruikshank

"Settlement of Bertie Township"

Audrey Miller Laurie
March 1975.

J O H N W A R R E N S R

John Warren senior, lot four in the first concession, lot four in the second, lot four in the third, lot five in the fourth, lots nine, ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen in the eleventh, lots ten, eleven twelve, thirteen and fourteen in the twelfth concession from Niagara River.

He had been drum-major for many years in the 8th Regiment and was greatly esteemed by the officers, when in 1780 he was appointed Commissary at Fort Erie, a situation which he held until his death late in May, 1813. He had acted as a inspector of immigration and was one of the six persons, to whom a grant of seven hundred acres of land was made by the Legislative Council of Quebec in recognition of their service in promoting the new settlements in the upper country. This was subsequently increased to fourteen hundred and forty. He was appointed a justice of the peace, a commissioner of roads, and a member of the land board for the district of Nassau. When that was dissolved he was appointed a member of the land board for the country of Lincoln. When privately owned ships began to navigate Lake Erie, he was appointed an inspector of inland navigation. When the port of Fort Erie passage was established, he was appointed collector of customs and inspector of pot and pearl ashes. When the militia was organized he was commissioned as lieutenant-colonel commanding the third regiment in the district of Nassau, afterwards the county of Lincoln and continued to serve in that rank until ill health obliged him to resign late in the autumn of 1812. As a justice of peace he married many of the first settlers and took an active part in the settlement of their disputes. He was town warden in 1808, 1809, 1810 and 1813.

H E N R Y W A R R E N

Henry Warren, eldest son of John Warren Sr.

Lot twenty-four in the third concession from Lake Erie. His petition, 17th May, 1796, stated that he had never received any land and that his family consisted of his wife, two sons, and a daughter. He was the eldest son of John Warren, senior, and was then engaged in the business of forwarding merchandise from Fort Erie. He was recommended for a grant of 400 acres, 12th July, 1796.

He succeeded his father in command of the third regiment of Lincoln militia but resigned on 7th April, 1813.

His house and store were destroyed by the enemy.

JOHN WARREN JR

J.P. + M.P.P

John Warren Jr. south part of lot twenty-nine broken front Lake Erie, lots six, seven, and eight in the eleventh concession, lots one and two in the fourteenth, lot one in the fifteenth, and lot one in the sixteenth concession from Niagara River.

He was the second son of John Warren, senior, and in early life had been a seaman. He was recommended for a grant of 400 acres, 12th July 1796.

The ferry below Fort Erie rapids was one of the main channels of communication with the United States, by which many immigrants arrived from the states of New York and Pennsylvania. The supervision of this ferry had devolved upon his father as collector of customs and its unsatisfactory operation induced him to apply for a license in the following petition:

"Your Excellency's Petitioner humbly sheweth that the Ferry below the Rapids at Fort Erie passage has been kept by several different persons at different periods and is now held by Hugh Gilmer late of Red Stone in the state of Pennsylvania, who has assumed the right of keeping said Ferry without authority whatever, and against whom numberless Complaint has been made for impositions upon strangers passing said Ferry. Your Petitioner therefore humbly requesteth that a Grant or Lease of said Ferry may be made to him and for his attention to the established regulations he will give the required Security and as in duty bound will every pray.

"Jno. Warren, Junr"

His petition, which is preserved, bears the following endorsement in the handwriting of the Chief Justice, who presided at the Council:

"20th October, 1802. Mr. John Warren Jr is recommended for a Lease of the Ferry as within prayed.

"H. Allcock

"But previous to Mr. Warren Obtaining the Lease the Board recommends that he with one surety at the least shd enter into an Obligation to conform to all the Rules & Regulations to be established under the Authority of 14 provincial Act of the 37 yr of the King's Reign.

"H. Allcock

"9th November, 1802. Revised this Petition & recommend that the Lease for seven years be granted at 10 lbs annual Rent & that it be made a part of the Condition of the Bond mentioned before that the Rent be duly paid into the hands of the Receiver General.

"H. Allcock
"Chairman".

This lease was four times renewed at the expiration of a term of seven years and he continued to hold it until his death, thirty years later, when it was continued to his widow.

In May, 1812, he was commissioned as captain of a flank company of the third Regiment of Lincoln militia. He was promoted to the rank of major on 25 January, 1813, and became Lieutenant-colonel, commanding that regiment, on 16th April. He was in command of the garrison of Fort Erie on May 27, when he received orders from General Vincent "to open a fire upon Black Rock and continue the same until the next morning, and then burst his guns, blow up his magazines and dismiss his men." These orders were punctually executed and the small garrison retreated along the lake shore as far as the Grand River, and joined Vincent's division at Burlington Heights.

Warren was appointed one of the commissioners for the management of abandoned farms and afterwards commanded a detachment of militia guarding a depot of supplies at the Sugar Loaf mills.

At the conclusion of the war he was appointed collector of customs at Fort Erie and held that office until his death. He was a justice of the peace and a judge of the Court of Requests. He was a town warden in 1809, 1810, 1813, 1815, 1816, 1825, 1828 and 1830.

In 1830 he became a candidate for election to the Legislative Assembly for the newly created constituency of Haldimand in opposition to John Brant. His opponent received a majority of votes cast

and took his seat, but was declared not elected on February 1st, 1831, and Warren was declared duly elected.

He died 5th September, 1832, "deeply and deservedly regretted."

Written by E. A. Cruikshank.

Audrey Miller Laurie
March 1975.