

Short Biography of Warren Eames

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Warren Eames: Our well-read, civically engaged, above-average farmer.

Summary:

Warren Eames (KLC2-WZF, 1833-1922) was a man of many talents. A previous post highlighted his family as the most prolific Library patrons between 1899-1902. He started out as a 16-year old cordwainer on the 1850 census, which was typical for early-career Wilmington men. Leather was readily available, and the shoe industry was conducive to piece work done from home at the time. By 1860 when he married Elizabeth Carter, he had taken up the butcher trade. Through the next 60 years, he also took his civic responsibility seriously, and worked for the town in a variety of capacities, including Treasurer, Collector, Auditor, Selectman, Overseer of the Poor, School Committee, Janitor, and Bell Ringer, Field Driver, Pound Keeper, Highway Surveyor, and Ballot Clerk. At the time of his death at age 88, his occupation was listed as a retired farmer. What an understatement!



Warren Eames Cottage, 205 Middlesex Avenue, photo from MACRIS

Details:

At the time of his marriage in 1860, he was living with his brother on Middlesex Ave adjacent to Sabra Carter. Elizabeth was the daughter of Elbridge and Roxanne Carter, who lived up at the Walker Homestead at the bend in Shawsheen Avenue. Warren and Elizabeth had 10 children between 1861-1886. Of those children, three died in infancy, but seven grew to adulthood. They lived in the house between the former Free Baptist Society (then Town Hall) and the site of the Old Bond Cracker Factory, formerly occupied by W. H. Poole. After a few years, he expanded his holdings through a land purchase from Thomas D Bond, including the lot which previously held the famously burned bakery which leveled the second meetinghouse. As of the 1880 land valuation, he had an above-average valued house, a barn, slaughter-house, 1 acre of tillage, and 2 acres of "English" (hay field). While being civically engaged, Warren kept up his farm, and won a few awards here and there at the annual fair. For example, 1882, he won "Best Hops", for which he was awarded \$1.

What may be most notable is that notwithstanding his general vocation of farmer, he was very active in the community, education, and was head of the most literate household in town. Here is some evidence to that claim.

When he was 27, Warren served on the Superintending School Committee, together with Lemuel Cobb Eames (also a well-respected educator and legislator), and filling a vacancy from Dr. Silas Brown. He maintained that role between 1860-1863. During that period, he contributed to the School Committee Reports. Within one report, he sought to correct the thoroughness of instruction. He wanted even those who only attended the district schools to come out with enough math skills "to correctly assess tax on a certain amount of real estate, or to compute the interest on a six months' note." He saw it in the interest of the community, as well as the individual, and saw education as a privilege that we can afford to all of our citizens, and parents negligent in sending their kids to school are a great hindrance to progress. He saw a great need for manners and morals to be taught in school, such that teachers should be selected as "persons of good moral and religious training, who understand their duty to their pupils and their God, who will strive to create in them a taste for whatever is pure and lovely and will inculcate such principles as will fit them honorably and well to discharge all the duties of life."

These words are backed up through his own practice, as he later served as town Treasurer (1864-1870), Collector (1864-1874, 1899-1901), and Auditor (1881-1902).

Through many years, he also took manual labor jobs with the town, and worked to correct highway deficiencies (men called "Surveyors of Highways who helped the dirt/gravel roads be passable via grading, filling potholes, etc), with a dozen other hard-working men contracted for the job. In 1872-1890, 1902-1903, he served as one of Wilmington's Field Drivers (one who collected loose animals and delivered them to the town pound to be collected by their owners after paying a small fee.) In 1873 did some work to improve the cemetery, and later worked on the Old Soldier's Lot.

In 1868-71 he was a Selectman and an Overseer of the Poor. In 1874, he was added to the list of Town Jurors, who were men of sound judgment, and served there until 1886.

During the years between 1870-1887, when Wilmington Schools were modernized with a public High School and municipal education system, Warren re-joined the school Committee, and led the establishment of the new High School, frequently alongside the influential Lemuel C Eames. Again in that role, he was a proponent of educating the head and the heart together, "for it is virtue combined with intelligence that most exalts a people...we want instructors who will educate a child in what is beautiful as well as useful; in what will make a child happy as well as learned, and in what will elevate as well as instruct the mind. This is true education."

In the 1870s, he also became a butcher, and provided meat to the Almshouse residents. In 1882, he became a trustee of the Public Library, where he would serve six years until 1888.

In 1889, he relinquished his position on the school committee and at the Library, and in addition to his role as Auditor, took a new position and was paid \$5 for his services as the town bell ringer, and as janitor for Town Hall for \$2.50. He also began helping with elections as a Deputy Inspector of Ballots. He would continue in these roles for about 30 years. He also frequently was elected to serve as town Moderator. Since he lived next door, he also mowed the Town Hall yard and was a supplier for firewood for Town Hall as well.

He returned to the School Committee between 1898 and 1902 (alongside Arthur T Bond). In addition he did some odd jobs; he performed the school and town census, did "teaming and expressing", and paid \$3.71 to perform repairs on the town clock. In addition, he was paid \$25 for winding the clock during 1899-1903.

By the time Warren reached his 70s, he reduced his involvement to serving as a public weigher, the pound keeper, and a ballot clerk (which role he continued until his death at age 88). He also maintained his position caring for the town clock, and ringing the bell for civic events.

In 1910, Warren Eames and Otis Gowing are noted to have voted against bringing an Electric service contract to town, and is quoted to have said that his grandfather didn't need electric lights, and he didn't either! Otis's quote of the day was that only immoral people go out after dark, and that God-fearing people were home in bed.

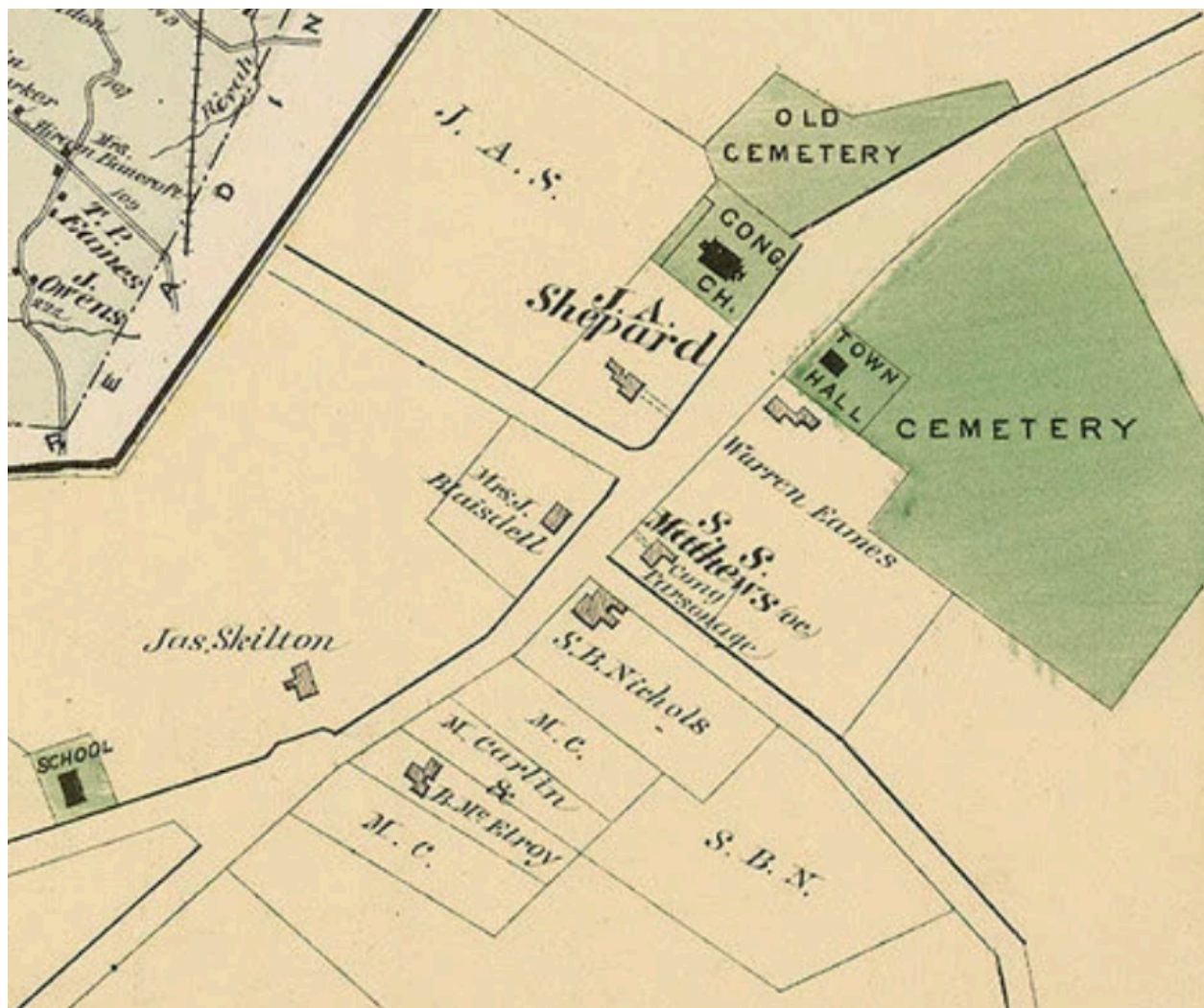
Dr. Buzzell certified Warren's death in 1922, at age 88 after "senile decay."



Warren Eames house still stands between the Town Hall (left) and the Thomas D Bond Bakery lot (right), which he cultivated.



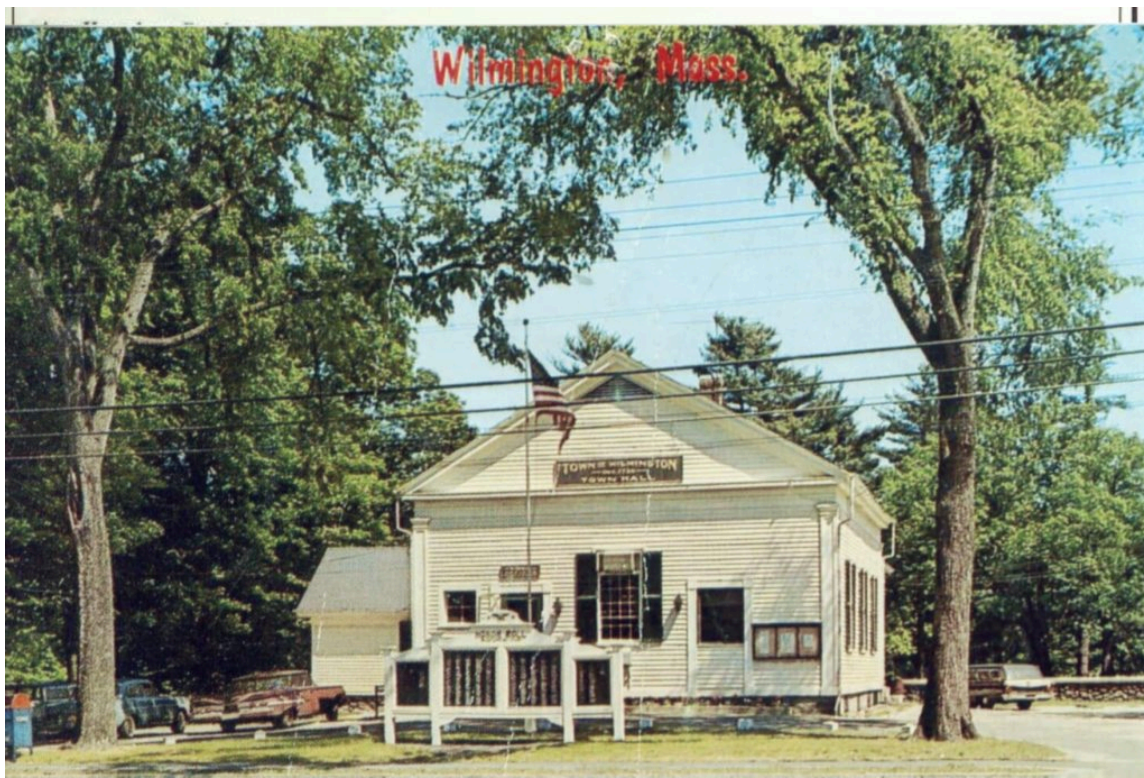
Warren Eames bought from W H Poole, who lived between the Bakery and the Baptist Church at the time of this 1856 Map. Note how busy the intersection of Glen Road and Middlesex Avenue was with the two Bond Bakeries either side of Wildwood Street.



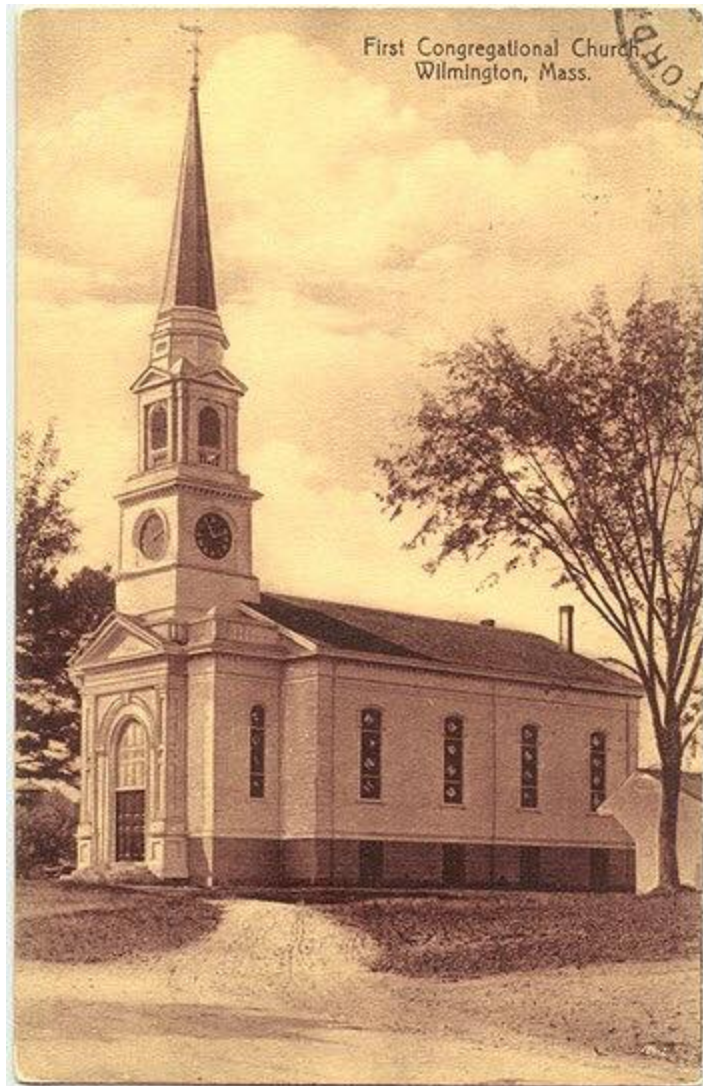
By 1875, Warren Eames had established his little farm between the Town Hall and Wildwood Street. He had an acre of tillage, and two acres of English Hay, in addition to his slaughterhouse and barn.



In his retirement, he was a "Public Weigher", authorized to take certified measurements of folks' wagon-loads of crops upon the platform scales shown just behind the buggy shown on the right. This view is looking across Middlesex Avenue down Glen Road at the Blanchard house on the corner.



The Town Hall housed the Library, the High School, and held town meetings.



Warren was a town Bell Ringer (for municipal purposes), and was paid to keep the town clock wound and in good repair. The town bell and clock were probably those housed in the steeple of the Congregational Church, as that was not only the religious center, but civic and community gathering place, too.

The town pound was along Glen Road in those days, behind the Blanchard house. The "Field Drivers" would collect loose livestock and impound them until farmers paid a small fee to retrieve them.



The Town Pound, as it was at 9 Glen Road.

"Originally built in 1814, the Wilmington town pound was a stone enclosure used as a holding pen for stray animals awaiting retrieval by their owners.

For almost 200 years, the town pound stood near the corner of Glen Road and Middlesex Avenue. It was disassembled and removed in the spring of 2009 after homeowners tried to remove it."



Current view of the Town Pound, after being relocated next to the Olde Burying Ground in 2009.

On the Mass Land Records, it appears that he purchased plots from Timothy D Bond near the Cemetery (bk 40,56), from Thomas D Bond on highway near the Congregational Society (bk 53, 214), likely the lot where the Bakery was that had burned in 1864, as it was adjacent to Warren Eames house, and the sale went through in 1866. He had mortgages granted from Thomas P Eames, Benjamin Buck, and Joseph A Ames. He later also bought the Elbridge Brewster Carter Estate (Walker House) on Shawsheen Ave., and from E. Milton Carter, a 14/54 share in other land holdings in the Elbridge B Cater estate.

