

# The Saga of Cesar Hunt *alias* Peter Warren

Compiled by Robert Tucker Gregg

## BACKGROUND

**P**eter Warren was a 5' 6" mulatto who first served in Medfield's militia and was later detached for service in 1780 at or near West Point, New York. Upon discharge that year, it took him 10 days to travel the 200 miles back to Medfield. Nothing is known about Peter's life in this town, either before or after his military service. [*Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the War of the Revolution*, Volume 16, Page 630]

Warren was one of four African American men in Medfield who served in the Continental Army; the others were James Arculas, Warrick Green, and Newport Green. [*Dedham Historical Register*, Volume 8, July 1897, pages 74-75]

There is speculation about Peter's ancestry, since by definition a mulatto is the first generation of a white and a black parent. William Smith Tilden states that he "is said to have been a natural son of Admiral Warren of the British navy" [*Dedham Historical Register*, Volume 8, July 1897, page 75]. This Irish Admiral Peter Warren was in the American colonies by the 1730's with command of a ship calling at eastern ports, including Boston. [Julian Gwyn, *The Enterprising Admiral: The Personal Fortune of Admiral Sir Peter Warren*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1974, p. 30] While speculative, the facts are inconclusive about the affirmation of one parent being this admiral.

For roughly the first thirty years of his life, he was known as Cesar Hunt, a mulatto slave to Joseph Lovell Jr. and earlier to Joseph's father, both of Medway. In 1769 Cesar bought his freedom from his master.

## A SLAVE BUYS HIS LIBERTY

Caesar Hunt, *alias* Peter Warren, paid to Joseph Lovell Jr. the sum of £13, 6s., 8d. for his freedom, on condition that if, in the judgment of the selectmen of Medway, he be idle or prodigal of his time and interest so that there be danger of his becoming a burden on the estate he be remanded to the condition of servitude.

The following is a copy of the legal instrument of emancipation:

"Know all men by these Presents that I, Joseph Lovell of Medway in the County of Suffolk and Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England yeoman for divers and good and valuable considerations me thereunto moving, as well as in consideration of the sum of thirteen pounds six shillings and eightpence paid me by Caesar Hunt *alias* Peter Warren a molatto slave, late the Property of my Father Joseph Lovell late of Medway afore<sup>sd</sup> deceased, and from him descended to me, have released and acquitted and discharged and by these Presents do freely fully and forever release

the s<sup>d</sup> Caesar Hunt, *Alias* Peter Warren from my service and the service of my Heirs forever: so that neither I myself, my heirs, exec<sup>r</sup> or any other Person or Persons for me or Them shall ever hereafter claim any Right, Title, Interest in the Person or the Service of the said Molatto, Provided, nevertheless, that if the s<sup>d</sup> Caesar Hunt, *alias* Peter Warren shall in the judgment of the Select Men of the town of Medway for the time being, at any Time hereafter become idle and prodigal of his Time and Interest so that there shall appear danger of his becoming a burden upon my estate or that of my heirs, I hereby reserve to myself and Heirs the Power at the advise and by the Direction of the Select Men of Medway for the time then being to remand s<sup>d</sup> Caesar Hunt, *alias* Peter Warren to our service and to command Him in such a manner as to prevent his becoming an Incumbrance upon our estate, but during his good Behaviour in the opinion of the Select Men afore<sup>s</sup>d He is to all Intents and Purposes emancipated or set free from all obligations to me and mine forever by these Presents.

"In witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this . . . Day of ... in the ninth year of the Reign of King George the Third Anno Domini 1769. Signed Sealed and Delivered."

The above was duly executed and the said Caesar Hunt, *alias* Peter Warren, became a freedman and was never remanded to slavery. He removed to Medfield, where he died. Upon his tombstone is this honorable inscription: "*A respectable man of color.*" [*History of Medway Massachusetts*, Page 321-322]

#### **A NOTE ABOUT JOSEPH LOVELL SR. AND JOSEPH LOVELL JR.**

Joseph Lovell Sr. was born about 1698 in Medway, Norfolk, MA, son of Alexander and Elizabeth (Dyer) Lovell. He died 14 May 1759 in Medway, ten years before Cesar Hunt was granted his freedom, which is what the above Medway document states.

Joseph Lovell Jr. was born 28 August 1741 in Medway, son of Joseph Sr. and Prudence (Clark) Lovell. On 27 September 1764 in Medfield, Norfolk, MA he married Jemima Adams, daughter of Henry and Jemima (Morse) Adams. She was born 11 April 1740 in Medfield. Joseph Jr. died 2 October 1827 and Jemima died 27 October 1814, both in Medway.

Jemima Lovell, daughter of Joseph Jr. and Jemima (Adams) Lovell was born 5 June 1767 in Medway. On 5 July 1786 in Medway she married Ezra Richardson, son of Asa Sr. and Abigail (Barber) Richardson. Ezra, born 17 March 1760 in Medway, was a brother to Asa Richardson Jr. born about 1746 in Medway. On 19 June 1791 in Medway Asa Jr. married Catherine Adams, daughter of Jonathan and Catherine (Boyden) Adams.

Warren Richardson, son of Asa Jr. and Catherine (Adams) Richardson, was born 8 March 1794 in Medway and died 4 November 1829 in Andover, Essex, MA.

In the will of Peter Warren (below), both the Lovell and Richardson families connect. The sole heir of Peter Warren's property is Warren Richardson, just 17 years old at Peter's death in 1814. This Warren Richardson is a 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin twice removed of Joseph

Lovell Jr., Warren's second master. Thus, Peter Warren maintained a connection with the Lovell family from whom he purchased his freedom.

#### PETER'S DEATH AND BURIAL

A Peter Warren Bachellor died on 8 January 1814 aged 74 years and 3 months as listed in the *Vital Records of Medway, Massachusetts to the Year 1850*, page 289. No reference can be found to his birth date and parents in the Medway records. Presumably this is the same Peter Warren who was buried in Medfield since he resided in Medway earlier in his life. His birth date would have been in October 1739.

On his gravestone is the remark that he was aged "about 70 years." This reference would allow for his birth about 1744. Warren died 9 January 1814 in Medfield [*Vital Records of Medfield, Massachusetts to the Year 1850*, page 240], and to the other five persons interred in the same lot in Vine Lake Cemetery [Section A-3, Lot 197], his relationship is unclear.

The persons interred in Lot 197 are:

Grave 1 – unknown

Grave 2 – Almeda Hamilton, daughter of David and Betsy, born 21 February 1847 in Dedham, Norfolk, MA, died 2 April 1865, Newton Upper Fall, Middlesex, MA; cause of death was typhoid fever [*MA Vital Records* Volume 184, Page 133] [Inscription – Almeda/Many are the Friends that mourn for thee/Almeda/Daughter of David & Betsy Hamilton/died April 2 1865/Æt. 18 years, 1 mo, 12 days]

Grave 3 – Sally Ephraim, daughter of unknown parents, born 1777 [gravestone], died 14 November 1808 in Medfield, Norfolk, MA [*Vital Records of Medfield, Massachusetts to the Year 1850*, page 210] [Inscription – In Memory of Miss Sally Ephraim who died Nov 14<sup>th</sup> 1808, Æt. 31/Farewell my dear brother, the Lord bids me come/I leave you with Jesus until you're called home;/And then do I hope to meet you again/With Jesus in glory forever to reign.]

Grave 4 – Peter Warren [Inscription – In Memory of/Mr. Peter Warren/who died Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> 1814/Aged about 70 years/A respectable man of colour]

Grave 5 – Betsey Fowle Hamilton, wife of David, daughter of unknown father and Caroline, born 30 June 1810 in Fisherfield, Merrimack, NH, died 1 January 1896 in Medfield, Norfolk, MA; cause of death was tumor of the spleen [*MA Vital Records* Volume 464, Page 527] [Inscription- Betsey His Wife/1810-1896]

Grave 6 – David Hamilton, son of John W. Hamilton and unknown wife, born 6 March 1795 in Augusta, Kennebec, ME, died 28 March 1878 in Medfield, Norfolk,

MA; cause of death was paralysis [MA Vital Records Volume 302, Page 229]  
[Inscription – David Hamilton/Born March 6, 1795/Died March 28, 1878/The  
Husband, Father, Friend]

Of these persons, David would have been 19 years of age when Peter Warren died in 1814.

#### **PETER'S WILL**

Peter Warren did compose a will on 8 March 1811 [Norfolk County Probate Court, Canton, MA Docket #19435]

“In the Name of God. Amen.

I Peter Warren of Medfield in the County of Norfolk and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Yeoman – being considerably advanced in Age – but of a disposing mind and retentive Memory – Thanks be to God therefore calling to mind the Mortality of my Body and knowing that it is appointed to Men once to die – do this eighth day of March in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred eleven Make and ordain this my last Will & Testament – that is to say – In the first Place – I give and recommend my precious Soul into the Hands of God who gave (unreadable) (unreadable) Body to the Earth to be buried in a decent Christian Manner at the Discretion of the Executor – not doubting but at the Resurrection I shall secure the fame again by the mighty Power of God. And as touching (unreadable) worldly Estate wherewith it hath pleased God to bestow on me in this Life which remains in my Hands I do Will – Give- and dispose of in the following Manner – Namely – In the first Place, I will & bequeath to Warren Richardson – Son of Asa Richardson Jun<sup>r</sup> of Medway the whole of My Personal Estate situated and being in Town of Medfield – He the said Richardson to Pay all my said (unreadable) (unreadable) together with my funeral Charges – I do constitute – name – ordain and appoint Moses B. Harding to be the Executor of this My last Will and Testament . And I do whereby (unreadable) disallow & revoke all and every Other former Testament – Wills & Bequests in any way before named willed or bequeathed – Ratifying and conforming This and no other to be my last Will and Testament

In (unreadable) whereof Thereunto sett my Hand and Seal the Day and Year above written.

Signed and sealed                      Peter X Warren his mark

In Presence of  
Lothario Danielson  
Moses B Harding  
Augustus Plympton  
Mercy Harding”

#### **A NOTE ABOUT THESE WITNESSES**

Lothario Danielson was a medical doctor in Medfield. Moses Bullen Harding and his wife Mercy were both 40-year old residents of Medfield while Augustus Plympton was a 54 year-old bachelor in the same town.

**THE ADMINISTRATION AND INVENTORY OF PETER WARREN'S ESTATE**

"To the Hon. Edward H. Robbins Esquire Judge of the Probate of Wills etc. for the County of Norfolk. – The account of Moses Adams Administrator of the Will annexed of the estate of Peter Warren late of Medfield in said County, - Yeoman, deceased. – The Administrator charges himself with the Personal Estate of said deceased, as the same was appraised in the inventory therof amounting to \$77.70 also \$77.70  
 The rental of the real Estate amounting to \$60.00  
 \$137.70

The said Administrator prays allowances for the following charges and payments viz.

|     |    |      |   |        |
|-----|----|------|---|--------|
| No. | 1  | Paid | Moses B. Harding for going as a witness to prove the Will | 7.50   |
| "   | 2  | "    | Augustus Plimpton for do.                                 | 1.50   |
| "   | 3  | "    | Samuel Haven Probate fees                                 | 4.61   |
| "   | 4  | "    | Joseph Lovell Esq. for appraising                         | 1.00   |
| "   | 5  | "    | Sylvanus Adams for do. Etc.                               | 1.50   |
| "   | 6  | "    | Doc. Lothario Danielson for Medicines, etc.               | 10.00  |
| "   | 7  | "    | Doc. Nathaniel Miller for consultations etc.              | 6.00   |
| "   | 8  | "    | Doc. Timothy Fisk for Boarding etc.                       | 8.50   |
| "   | 9  | "    | W <sup>d</sup> Sarah Wheelock for boarding etc.           | 28.00  |
| "   | 10 | "    | Noah Daniels for lumber etc.                              | 9.01   |
| "   | 11 | "    | Oliver Wheelock for tolling Bell etc.                     | 1.50   |
| "   | 12 | "    | Thaddeus Morse for labour etc.                            | 13.24  |
| "   | 13 | "    | Nathan Allen for taxes etc.                               | 5.43   |
| "   | 14 | "    | Beriah Brastow on balance in Accts.                       | 2.44   |
| "   | 15 | "    | Nathan Jones Jr. for sling                                | 3.08   |
| "   | 16 | "    | Dyer Lovell a balance in Accts.                           | 2.91   |
| "   | 17 | "    | John Bullard for Boots                                    | 2.75   |
| "   | 18 | "    | Willard Onion for Sundries                                | 1,50   |
| "   | 19 | "    | Phillips Clark for attendance at auction                  | 0.50   |
| "   | 20 | "    | John Fairbanks for Coffin                                 | 3.00   |
| "   | 21 | "    | Henry Richardson for Basket & Hoops                       | 0.62   |
| "   | 22 | "    | David Fairbanks for Rum & Sugar                           | 0.86   |
| "   | 23 | "    | D. Adams, Esq a balance due on a Judgment of              | 17.18  |
|     |    |      |   | 132.63 |
|     |    |      | Brought forward   | 132.63 |
| "   | 24 | "    | Arnold Russell for Fuel & lumber                          | 2.43   |
| "   | 25 | "    | W <sup>d</sup> Olive Morse a Note etc                     | 3.69   |
| "   | 26 | "    | Edward Breck for shoes etc per order of D. Pratt          | 3.00   |
| "   | 27 | "    | John W. Adams on balance of accts                         | 40.34  |
| "   | 28 | "    | John Baxter Esq. for Hay                                  | 1.00   |
| "   | 29 | "    | Asahel Adams the amount of a note of hand                 | 20.08  |

|   |    |   |   |          |
|---|----|---|---|----------|
| " | 30 | " | Sylvanus Adams do.  | 16.00    |
| " | 31 | " | Lucy Brann do   | 29.34    |
| " | 33 | " | Asa Clark do.   | 18.14    |
| " | 34 | " | Daniel Green  | 24.15    |
| " | 35 | " | Amos Turner do.   | 3.31     |
| " | 32 | " | John Bullard do.  | 6.95     |
| " | 36 | " | Thaddeus Morse do.  | 7.33     |
| " | 37 | " | Micah Adams do.   | 8.00     |
| " | 38 | " | Silas Bullard do.   | 0.67     |
| " | 39 | " | Samuel Haven Probate fees   | 3.50     |
| " | 40 | " | for printing notice in newspapers                                       | 1.00     |
|   |    |   | Also prays the allowance for loss in the sales of the personal property | 14.01    |
|   |    |   |   | \$336.37 |
|   |    |   | Also prays allowance for his service in the settlement of the estate    | 25.00    |
|   |    |   | Probate fees  | 1.90     |

Dated on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1815 a correct account of my administration aforesaid

Moses Adams

Personal Estate

|    |  |                   |
|----|--|-------------------|
| 1  | To Wearing Apparel                                 | \$38.63           |
| 2  | To Book 1  | 1.5               |
| 3  | To One feather Beed and Beeding bedsted & Cov      | 14.25             |
| 4  | To Tow Cloath yarn and thread, with case of Razors | 2.65              |
| 5  | To puter and Tin ware                              | 2.80              |
| 6  | To one case with 11 Glafs bottles                  | 2.00              |
| 7  | To Stone and Earthing ware                         | 1.30              |
| 8  | To 2 Iron Cittles one Scillett                     | 2.58              |
| 9  | To 5 Trunks 3 Chests one Table                     | 11.35             |
| 10 | To husbandry tools and tacklings                   | 6.3               |
| 11 | To Shoop Tools                                     | 3.88              |
| 12 | To Nails Syth tacklin and Buttons                  | .80               |
| 13 | To Wooden Ware                                     | 4.39              |
|    | Medway March 16 <sup>th</sup> 1814                 | Sum Total \$91.71 |

Joseph Lovell)  
Abicah Adams) Appraisers  
Sylvanus Adams)

## WHAT WE ARE LEFT WITH

There are more questions than answers.

Was Admiral Peter Warren indeed the father of Cesar Hunt? From reading the 1811 will, we are left with an appreciation of Peter Warren's devotion to God. If he was a pious man, did he, at his emancipation, choose to honor his father the Admiral by taking his name?

Who was Cesar's mother? A black woman to be sure if the Admiral was the father. Or, Cesar could have had a black father and a white mother? Probably unlikely at that time period.

How was Cesar Hunt, a slave, able to amass enough money to buy his freedom? In today's conversion rate (2010), Peter had raised over \$2,150.

What was Peter's occupation and residence in Medfield? He is not listed in the 1800 Federal Population Census. His administration states the he owed money to the widow Sarah Wheelock for boarding, an indication of a residence. Born 1750 and died 1844, she was the wife of Eleazar Wheelock (1724-1812). Their original home at the corner of Main and North streets was torn down in 1780.

Who initiated the idea of having a will? Was it Peter or a friend? It appears that Peter had a very small estate, with no land or buildings.

What was Peter's connection to Moses Bullen Harding, the executor of his will?

What were the reasons that Peter was buried where he was? He was the second one to be buried in what later became the lot owned by David Hamilton. Neither the Hamilton nor the Fowle family appears to have any near or remote connection to the Lovells or Richardsons of Medway.

Who was Sally Ephraim, the person interred next to Peter? Does her name suggest an African American connection? Why was Peter buried directly beside her? What is the meaning or relevance of the word "brother" in her inscription? Does "brother" refer directly to Peter or does it have global significance?

Who funded Peter's and Sally's gravestones?