

Early Industrial (1810-1870)

In spite of the general decline in maritime commerce throughout Rhode Island caused by the Jeffersonian Embargo of 1808 which halted all European trade, the War of 1812, and unstable conditions in the Caribbean and South America, Warren remained the second leading ship-building center in Rhode Island.

During the War of 1812, Caleb Carr built the 300 ton brig *Macdonough* for James DeWolf, Esq. of Bristol. Large and fast, the *Macdonough* later became a slaver and was wrecked off Matanzas. Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry also commissioned Caleb Carr to build the *Chippewa*, which was finished fifty-seven days after her keel was laid!

From 1790-1860, 30,000 tons were added to the Warren fleet. Construction peaked in 1793, declined in 1808, and remained depressed until whaling stimulated a revival in the 1830's. The following table reveals that Warren led Rhode Island in ship construction from 1840-1860, amounting to three times as much shipping as Providence and twice as much as Bristol.

Shipping constructed at Rhode Island Ports 1790-1859

(Tons By Admeasurement)

Ports	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1790
	to	to						
	1799	1809	1819	1829	1839	1849	1859	1859
Bristol	108	186	48	32	1,217	4,527	3,403	9,521
Newport	2,176	2,071	824	2,568	6,487	2,923	2,498	19,547
Providence	8,539	8,767	3,848	2,186	2,893	2,088	3,566	31,887
Warren	6,795	2,089	1,399	691	84	6,437	13,055	30,550

(From Peter J. Coleman's *The Transformation of Rhode Island 1790-1860*, p. 35.)

Whaling, begun in Warren before the Revolution, was revived in 1821. Joseph Smith, a prominent shipowner, fitted out the *Rosalie* for a trip to the Pacific. Although her first voyage of three years duration was judged a failure, on her second cruise 101 whales were taken by Captain Joseph Gardner and Charles F. Brown, first mate. This venture began a whaling boom which lasted for nearly forty years with many merchantmen converting to the whaling trade. By 1845, twenty-two whalers, the last of their class in Rhode Island, were sailing from Warren. Warren was the



Fig. 12: Gardner & Brown Mill (1842), 383 Water Street

leading Narragansett Bay whaling center with over 7,000 tons of shipping employed in the trade. The 806 ton *Sea-Shell* of Warren was the largest whale ship in the world and the *Dolphin*, Capt. Charles R. Cutler, the fastest of the Warren "Clipper" whalers.

Whaling Activity of Rhode Island Ports, 1825-1859
(Clearances, 1825-1839: Whalers Registered, 1840-1859)
 (Annual Average)

Ports	1825	1830	1835	1840	1845	1850	1855
	to						
	1829	1834	1839	1844	1849	1854	1859
Providence	0	1	1	5	7	2	1
Newport	1	2	4	11	7	5	4
Bristol	2	5	5	8	4	0	0
Warren	1	5	8	20	22	16	15
Rhode Island	4	13	18	44	40	23	20

(From Peter J. Coleman's *The Transformation of Rhode Island 1790-1860*, p. 64.)

The Census of 1850, the original manuscript of which is now in the Rhode Island Historical Society's library, shows Warren's population totalled 3,103. The town contained thirty-six farms, 380 dwelling houses, and thirty-two productive establishments. Twenty-three types of businesses enumerated in the Census were located in the Water Street area. Some of these waterfront buildings from this whaling era can be located on the oldest printed map of Warren — "Warren Village" — on the "Map of Bristol County, Rhode Island" done by Henry F. Walling in 1851 (see map Plate D). Still standing today are the stone mill at 405 Water Street known as "F. Marble's Blacksmith Shop" (c. 1840), which once boasted a giant statue of Vulcan on its facade; "Gladding's Sail-loft," a stone Greek Revival style mill built by Gardner & Brown in 1842 at 383 Water Street; and "J. J. Smith's Oil Works" (c. 1840) at 329 Water Street. Joseph Smith, prominent whaler, is listed in the 1850 Census as age 74, a merchant, and the wealthiest man in Warren.

Structures once housing businesses allied to whaling and now no longer standing include the Collins & Driscoll cooperage on Collins Wharf between State and Washington Streets, R. B. Johnson's cooperage located on his wharf on Johnson Street, the Sanders soap and candle factory on the west end of Company Street just south of H. H. Luther's



Fig. 13: J. J. Smith's oil works (c. 1840), 329 Water Street



Fig. 14: Bosworth-Maxwell House (c. 1840), 21 Federal Street

rivet factory, and the Chace and Davis shipyard between Bowen and Sisson Streets which built more than fifty ships and in 1850 employed seventy-five hands with an annual product totalling \$65,000.

Whaling made many Warren fortunes, and public and private buildings all reflected the new wealth and changing architectural tastes. Buildings in the Greek Revival manner followed by Early Victorian structures exhibiting Gothic and Italianate detailing are found throughout Warren. Dating from the opening of the nineteenth century, the classic temple form came to dominate American building until almost 1850. The work of Thomas Jefferson in Richmond and Benjamin Latrobe in Philadelphia and Washington set the stage for the introduction of the Greek Revival style. Publication of such books as Asher Benjamin's works, devoted from 1818 to classic details, and Minard Lefever's *Modern Builder's Guide* in 1833, furnished local carpenter-builders and laymen with patterns. These, coupled with the wide-spread sympathy for the Greek War for Independence of 1821 to 1827 led to the rapid spread of this popular new style.

In Warren, the Greek Revival churches and houses of this period are of outstanding quality. St. Mark's Church (1829) on Lyndon Street, designed by Russell Warren (1784-1860), earliest exponent of the Greek Revival style in Rhode Island, is noted for its Ionic portico and canted double doors. The original panelled parapet, similar to the Weybosset Street facade of the Providence Arcade, designed by Warren in 1828, and the square tower have unfortunately been removed and replaced by a simple pediment. Russell Warren may also have designed the Bosworth Mansion (c. 1840) at 21 Federal Street, and the exceptional John R. Wheaton House (1833) at 90 Union Street built by Charles Wheaton's son. Three patterns of wood balconies trim the rooflines above the delicate Ionic porch. Of note within the mansion are the marbleized wood mantels, stairway, woodwork, and interior shutters. Along Manning, Lyndon, Broad, and Wheaton Streets, just south of St. Mark's, are found many small-scale wooden houses set gable end to the street notable for their Greek Revival detailing which reflects this era. The J. R. Hoar House (1841) at 50 Washington Street is a small-scale temple. Also visible along North Water Street and Church Street are two-story, gable-roofed, Greek Revival houses with details dating from the 1840's.

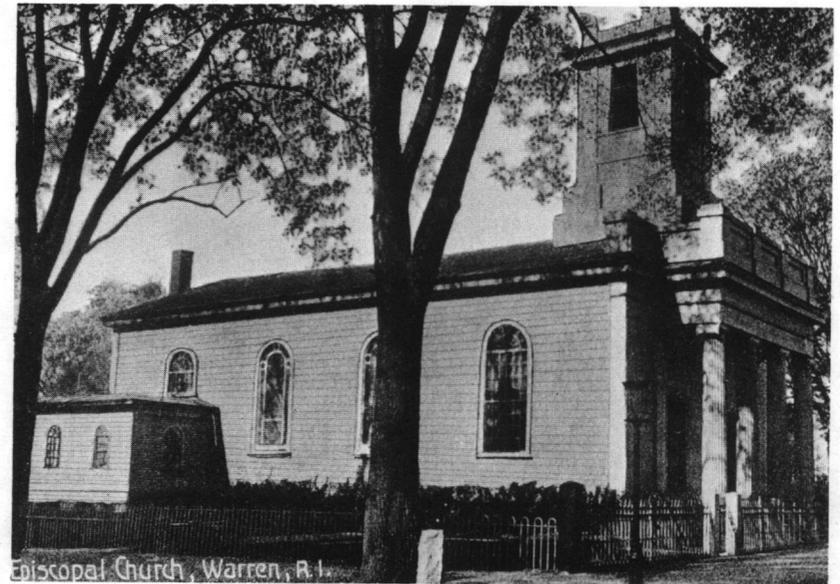


Fig. 15: St. Mark's Church (1828), Lyndon Street, postcard 1903

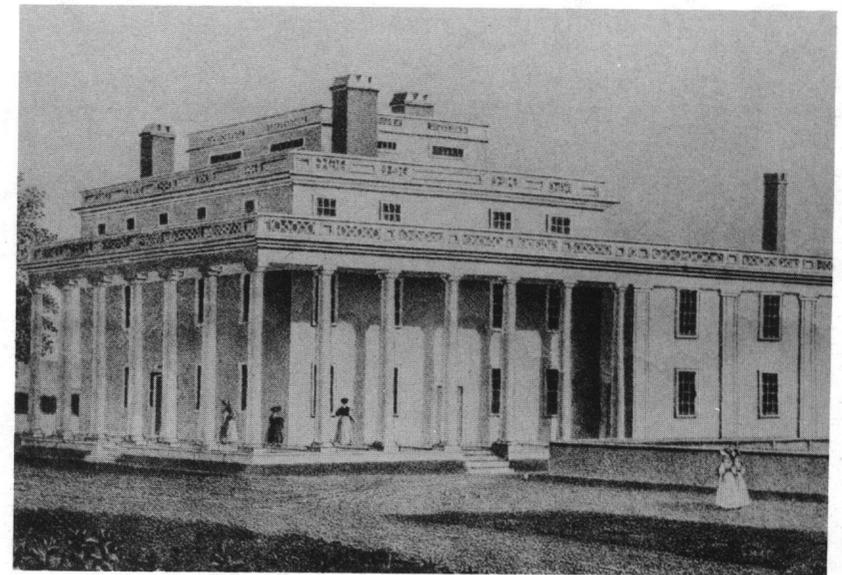


Fig. 16: Warren Ladies Seminary (1834, 1855, burned 1863), Main/Wood Street

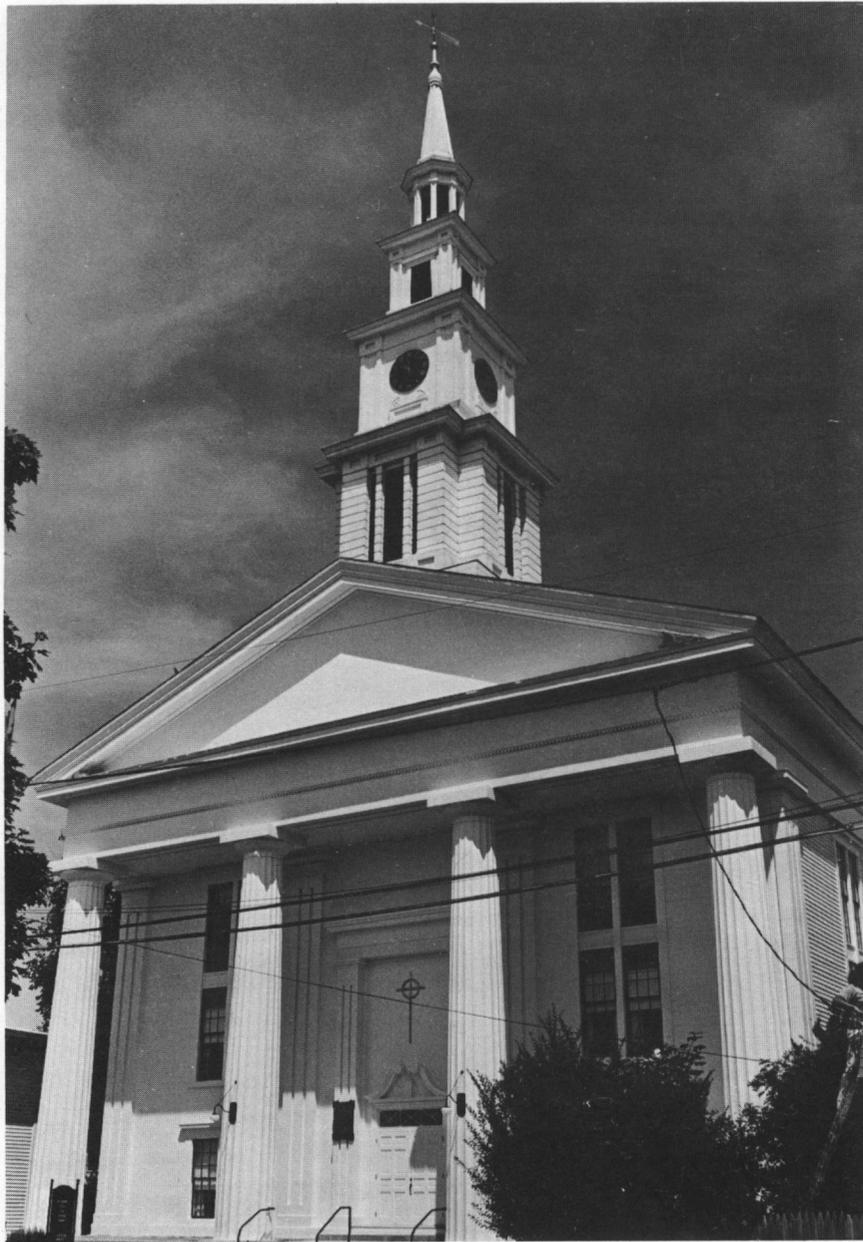


Fig. 17: First Methodist Church (1844), Church Street

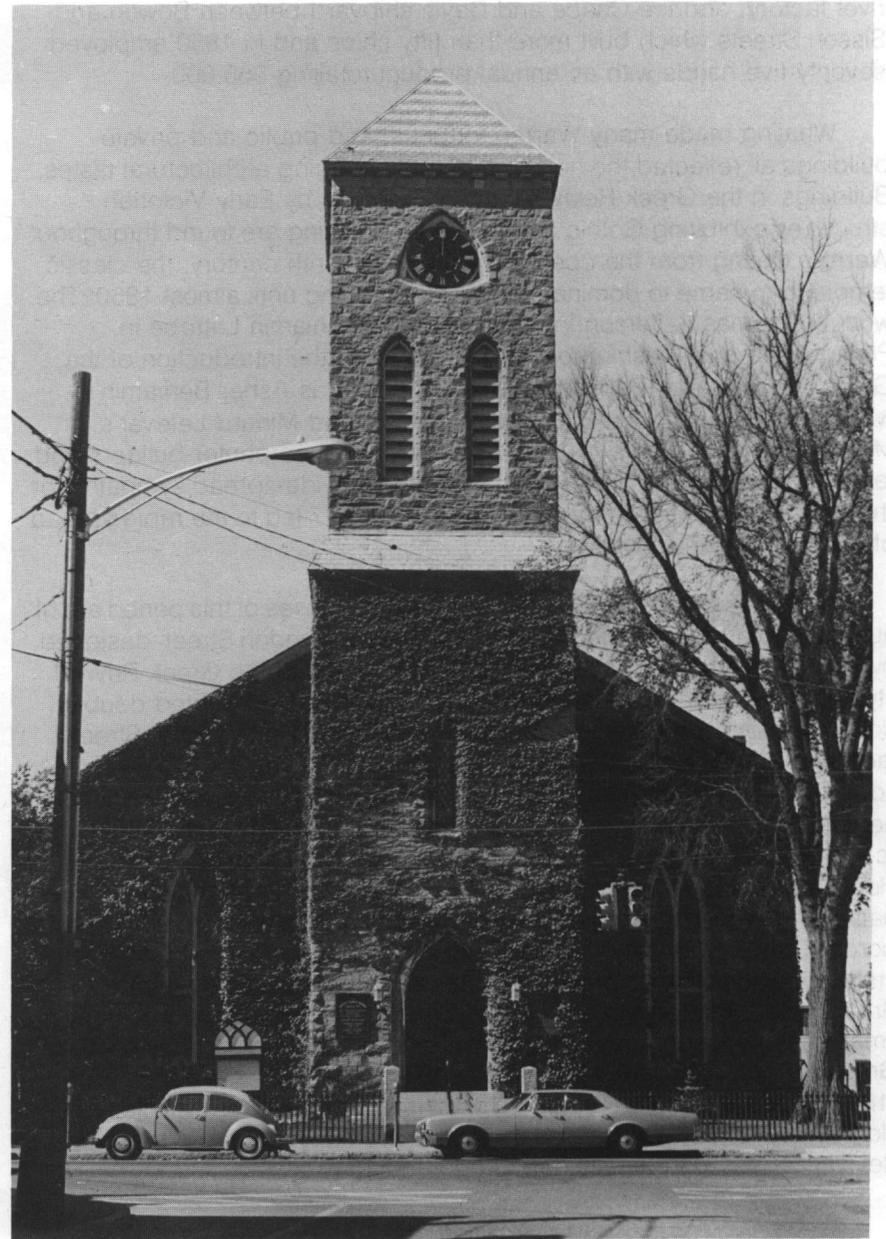


Fig. 18: Warren Baptist Church (1844), Main Street