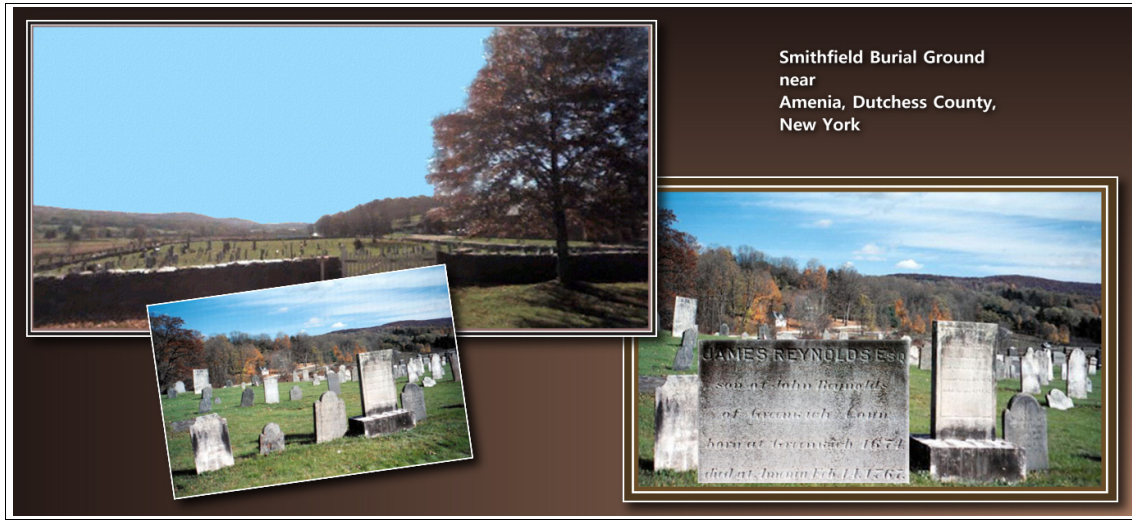


## Warren's Paternal Forebears -- Religion In The Bone



James Reynolds Esquire, son of John Reynolds of Greenwich, and second great-grandfather of Warren Ford Reynolds, rests in Smithfield Burial Ground near Amenia, Dutchess County, New York. Collage from author's private photo illustration and a photo courtesy of Glenn G. Reynolds, M.D.

Warren F. Reynolds' great-grandfather, the senior Jeremiah (1711-1768), died from his French-Indian war wounds while the communities around him on the shores of Long Island Sound strove to firm up their fast evolving theological institutions. Jeremiah Sr's father, James carried the title Esquire. From historical and civic documents of his day, more is known of James' life than any of his line descendants that followed in the next four or five generations. He was a generous man of peace and conviction -- a third generation American, the grandson of emigrants John and Sarah, who came to Watertown, Massachusetts aboard the Winchester tall ship, Elizabeth in 1634 seeking a new life and religious freedom.

James was born at a time when English Rule strongly influenced the lives of the New England colonists. Like his father and grandfather, his life was that of a faithful Puritan. During the course of his 93 years he saw unprecedented changes in land distribution and use; in the loyalty and autonomy of clergyman--when they could and could not be hired at any cost; and in opportunities for civic duty and even more importantly there was in Greenwich the "Train Band" or local militia, and he became it's Captain—a title that meant more even than that of Esquire, which deservedly came with his Justice of the Peace duties. Overriding everything else, perhaps, were the political realities that marked early colonial Connecticut history including the French and Indian

War. He witnessed family members going off to do battle—sons and nephews and probably others—and a few who never returned or when they did had injuries that shortened their lives.<sup>1</sup>

Warren's grandfather, the younger Jeremiah Jr. (1748-1827), was living in Amenia Precinct in Dutchess County, New York in 1767 when his own grandfather James died and was buried there. At age 19 we can safely assume that the young man was rightfully influenced by the known and well acknowledged stature of his Captain and Esquire grandfather who had accomplished and given so much of himself during his 93 years. In 1767 the Revolutionary War had not begun, but the old man was perceptively in tune with events of the day leading up to it; and he would have pondered the changes challenging his life-long religious convictions. In his youth all of his family were Congregationalists and the chapel of the “Church of the Second Society” was as close as next door; now he observed family and children developing new church ties or none at all in the area they called the East or Great Nine Partners Patent.

We need not wonder about the sureness of the Puritan convictions of this 93 year old James for what he passed to his grandson, Jeremiah would surface a few years later when the grandson with his wife Elizabeth became founding members of Baptist Church of Christ in Pittstown in March 1787.<sup>2</sup> Later still, after the family had removed to the Genesee Valley of western New York State, members of the family made impressionable records in the Avon Baptist Church. More about that later...

By great-grandson Robert N. Reynolds

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1 Abstract of probate records of the District of Stamford, County of Fairfield, and State of Connecticut, 1729-1802, verify death of Jeremiah Reynolds, late of Greenwich, October 4, 1768. On October 2, 1770, by bond of Peter Brown of Greenwich, sons David and Shubael selected said Peter Brown as guardian.

2 History of Rensselaer County, New York, page 478. Also see Reynolds Family History, Summary of Information and Documents, compiled by Robert N. Reynolds, page 28.