

Arrigo Farm



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According to his descendants, John Warren purchased from the town of Watertown a 16-acre site on the north side of what is now Warren Street in 1635. Warren was prominent in the Watertown community initially, but developed Quaker sympathies later in life. His house was searched for Quakers.

The 16-acre site on (now) Warren Street went to his son, Daniel Warren, who built a house there in 1650. So the farm dates to at least 1650, and possibly as early as 1635. 1635 was before Middlesex County was established, and the transaction was not recorded in the Watertown land grants. In 1635, Watertown parceled out land lots between Lexington Street, Warren Street and Main Street. So the land may have been acquired at that time. If the farm dates to 1635, this would make it the oldest farm in Massachusetts, and the third oldest farm in the country. Whatever the date – 1635 to 1650 – the farm dates to the earliest history of Watertown. (Waltham was separated from Watertown in 1738, and the farm was located in what would become Waltham in 1738). John's son, Daniel Warren, fought in the King Philip's War in 1675-76. The farm then went to Daniel's son, Joshua Warren, who was one of the founders of Waltham in 1738. Joshua Warren married Rebecca Church, great granddaughter of Richard Warren, who came to Plymouth Colony on the Mayflower in 1620. Next came Joshua's son, Phineas Warren. Three sons of Phineas Warren fought in the American Revolution, and two of them were wounded at the battle of Bunker Hill.



Waltham in 1738 (Warren farm on Watertown border)



Adeline (Lawrence) Barnes

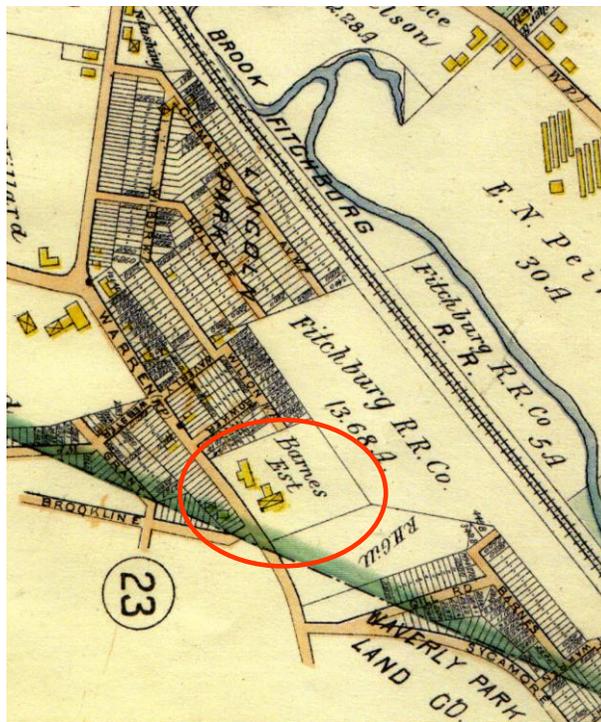
wood shed, and a cellar. In his will, the west half of the house would go to his wife, Adeline. The 1870 census shows Adeline Barnes and her daughter, Mary, living in a separate household, but within the same dwelling, and Phineas and his family living as another household in the dwelling. This living arrangement reflects the use of the west wing as a separate household. Otis Barnes, the brother of Phineas, lived next door.

One of Phineas Warren's daughters, Grace, married Samuel Barnes, who was involved in maritime trade. Samuel Barnes bought out the interests of his brothers-in-law in 1781, and Samuel and Grace lived in the old Warren house. Thomas Barnes, the son of Samuel and Grace (Warren) Barnes, was born there, and he married Adeline Lawrence, daughter of Phineas Lawrence of Trapelo Road, in 1822. Thomas Barnes, a Waltham assessor and school board member, tore down the old 1650 house and built a new house in 1837. That 1837 house still stands as the central portion of the current house. Members of the Arrigo family remember finding Revolutionary War era coins in the walls of their house. Otis Barnes, a son of Thomas and Grace (Warren) Barnes, fought in the Civil War.

The 1850 federal census shows Thomas and Adeline Barnes living with six children at one residence. In that year, Thomas Barnes owned 27 acres of improved land and 30 acres of unimproved land, as well as 3 horses, 6 dairy cows, 3 swine, and one cattle. After the marriage of their son, Phineas Lawrence Barnes, in 1855, the west wing was added to the central 1837 farmhouse. The 1855 state census, taken before Phineas married, shows the family still all living in one dwelling. In an 1860 codicil to his will, Thomas Barnes described the west wing of the house: two rooms, two chambers, a

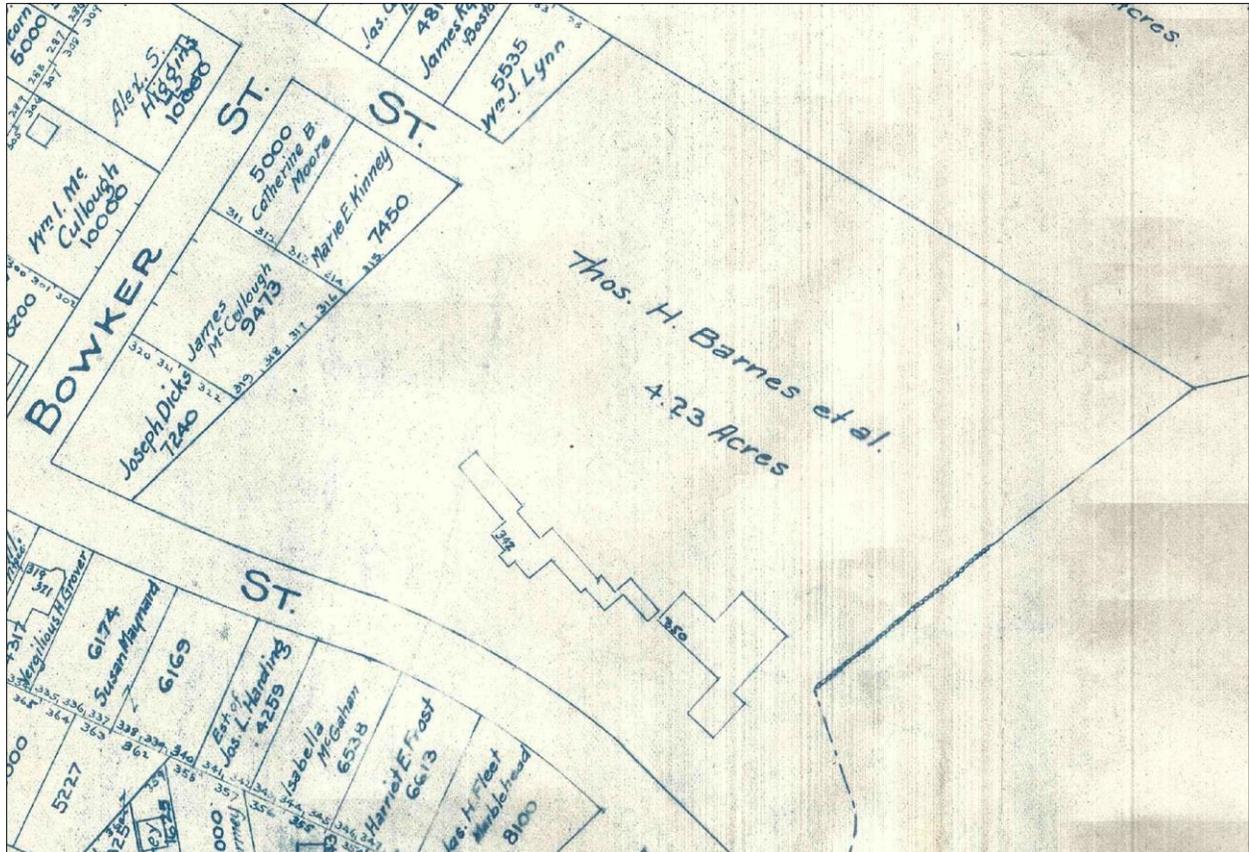
Rev. Lucius R. Paige officiated at the funeral of Miss Mary Frances Barnes at the First Universalist church in Waltham on Friday afternoon. Miss Barnes was 87 years of age and in her younger days was a teacher in the public schools of Boston. She had lived at the old Barnes homestead in Waverley, since the death of her brother, Thomas H. Barnes, of South Boston.

Cambridge Chronicle, May 6, 1922



The Barnes estate in 1900

An Italian immigrant, Placido Arrigo, was working on the Barnes estate as a farm laborer in 1918, and may have started working there soon after he arrived in America in 1913. Placido Arrigo purchased the 4.217-acre farm from the Barnes heirs in 1923 [MLR 4689/148].



1918 map showing ownership by the heirs of Phineas Barnes, & a large outbuilding to the east of the house. This structure may have been converted into a residence. It is gone by 1956.

Placido Arrigo was born in 1896 in Villafranca, a village adjacent to the town of Saponara, Messina province, in Sicily. He arrived at Ellis Island on the *RMS Saxonica* in 1913. He married Mary Voner of Palfrey St. in Watertown in 1918. Placido and Mary (Voner) Arrigo had six children – five girls and one son, John. Placido Arrigo farmed this land for the rest of his life until his death in 1991. Mary (Voner) Arrigo died in 1994. His son, John Arrigo, continued living at the house and farming the land. John Arrigo died in November 2011. The remaining sibling, Elizabeth Holston, died in 2016. There are nine heirs and Placido's grandson, Michael Loynd, who grew up in the house, is the executor of the estate.

Placido Arrigo had a brother, Nicolo Arrigo, who had a farm on Mt. Whalley Rd in Lakeview. The heirs of Nicolo Arrigo planned to develop the Mt. Whalley farm and filed a subdivision plan with the city several years ago. The city rejected the plan, so this parcel remains undeveloped. So, although we say that the Placido Arrigo farm is the last family farm in the city, the Nicolo Arrigo farm remains in development limbo. But all the other Italian family farms, the DeVincents, the Riccis, the Pizzis, etc. have all been sold and developed.



