

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, September 19, 2005

J. Warren Marshall (1881–1953): Joseph Warren Marshall (1881–1953) was one of the people who lived at Auburn Heights. He was the eldest son of Israel and Lizzie and lived here from 1897 (when he was nearly 16) until he married Bertha Lamborn in 1907. Warren proved his business ability at an early age and was an avid reader. Graduating from Wilmington Friends School in 1900, he entered the paper manufacturing business with his father and uncle, and when the National Fibre and Insulation Company (later NVF) was founded in 1904, he was made its first president, a position he held until his death 49 years later.

Warren was not mechanically inclined like his brother, Clarence (my father), which precipitated the remark from his father, “Bertha may learn to drive a car, but Warren never will.” While this prophecy proved false, he never drove much except to and from work (the main office of the fibre company was in Wilmington for many years) and preferred to travel by train and steamship.

Bertha T. Lamborn was from a Quaker family in the Kennett Square area, but her father moved his family to Kansas City some time in the 1890s. Shortly thereafter he died, and Bertha's mother, Sally, became quite ill. Her physician told her that if she wanted to live to raise her daughter, she should get away from the Kansas City climate, and he recommended California. So Sally and Bertha moved to Altadena in the suburbs of Los Angeles and then to Pacific Grove on Monterey Bay. From there, Bertha entered the almost-new Stanford University, from which she was graduated about 1905.

In January 1906, Warren embarked on a lengthy train trip that took him to several western National Parks and the Grand Canyon. Postcards and letters that he sent home to his parents have been found at Auburn Heights. He would say, “I'm having a fine trip” and “the Grand Canyon was beautiful,” etc., but the main purpose of his trip was to propose to Bertha. Letters between their mothers indicated that both were very happy at the prospect of marriage between their children. Since Bertha had no immediate family in the west, she and Warren were married in the front hall at Auburn Heights in June 1907. A number of the invited guests arrived by trolley (mostly from Kennett Square); the nearest stop was just across the mill race from the west lawn. A heavy thunder shower delayed both their arrival and the ceremony, but it took place within an hour of the appointed time. Israel was too ill to attend (however, he lived four more years), but he listened to the proceedings from his bedroom upstairs. Warren and Bertha lived in Kennett for about a year before their new bungalow was ready on the next hill, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile southeast of Auburn Heights.