

## *Orin Warren, M.D., Town Doctor, Civil War Surgeon, and Civic Activist*

Orin Warren, the individual who perhaps more than any left his stamp on West Newbury's landscape and look, was born to teachers Isaiah and Ann Walker Warren on January 20, 1833 in Fryeburg, ME. According to a contemporaneous [biographical sketch](#), Warren was "the fourth in a merry and musical group of seven" children. After graduating from Fryeburg Academy, Warren studied medicine with his brother-in-law Charles Dana in PA, then took classes at Bowdoin, and ultimately graduated from Philadelphia's Jefferson Medical College in 1858. Upon completing his medical training, Warren spent a season at [Deer Island](#) in Boston Harbor, where the hospital took in Irish famine refugees sick from the crossing and from disease.

On July 14, 1859, Warren moved to West Newbury to begin work as a physician in Town, living on Harrison Avenue with the family of comb manufacturer H.G.O. Chase. In the following year, he married Lancaster, MA, native Eliza Ann Sawyer, who joined him at the Chase home for their earliest years together.

Five months after the firing on [Fort Sumter](#) sparked the Civil War in 1861, Warren was serving as an assistant surgeon in the [21<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Infantry Regiment](#), garrisoned at the Naval Academy while awaiting orders. The 21<sup>st</sup> was assigned to General Burnside's Coastal Division, whose [North Carolina Expedition](#) closed almost all that coastline to the Confederacy in early 1862. While tending the sick and wounded after the [battle of Camden](#), Warren was taken prisoner. He was released with his charges not long after.

Like many [Civil War surgeons](#), Warren worked day and night with little sleep and little to eat. Commended for his dedication, he rose rapidly: in June 1862, Warren was promoted to surgeon of the [Mass 33<sup>rd</sup>](#), stationed near Washington, DC; toward the end of November he became a surgeon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, [Eleventh Army Corps](#); in December he was appointed surgeon-in-chief of that division.

[Disease](#)—which killed more Civil War soldiers than combat—did not spare the doctors. While serving, Warren contracted dysentery and a lung ailment whose effects persisted throughout his life. Citing ill health, he [resigned from the Army](#) in April 1863.

Warren returned from war to resume his medical practice in West Newbury, taking over from Dr. Dean Robinson, who was retiring as the Town doctor. He also served as an officer of [Walnut Hill Cemetery](#), was active in the [Botanical Club](#), and led the [Essex North District Medical Society](#). In 1878 he was elected as the area's representative to the [General Court](#) in Boston.

Warren left his mark on West Newbury in ways still seen today. As president of the Town Improvement Society he selected the first [Town historic markers](#). He also supervised the planting of [maple trees along Main Street](#). The Edwards Memorial/Carr Post/Soldiers & Sailors Memorial building was his most significant—and contentious—landmark.

As executor with ["sole judgment and discretion"](#) over a \$3,000 trust (left by Warren's patient and friend Moses Edwards—said by some to be [under Warren's influence](#)) for a memorial building to Union soldiers, Warren ignited a [mini civil war](#) within West Newbury. A few months before Edwards [died in 1895](#), Eliza Warren [purchased](#) the [Griffin pasture](#) adjoining to the east of the Warren family home at 347 Main Street. This, Warren later insisted, was to be the site of the Edwards Memorial building, which (he presumed) would also house the Town library. Meanwhile, West Newbury's G.A.R. Post had amassed \$2,000 and was planning a [memorial on the Training Field](#).

Warren and his supporters suggested the G.A.R. donate its \$2,000 so that the Edwards project would not be ["an inferior building."](#) The [G.A.R., Ladies Library Society, Edwards' relatives, and Town voters](#) wanted the building conveniently located at Post Office Square. In [1898](#) Town Meeting declined to accept a memorial building located on Warren's land. In [February 1900](#) the building was staked out on the Warren property, in [March](#) Town Meeting again voted against Warren's proposal, [by June](#) construction was underway [notwithstanding](#), and shortly thereafter the Town [decided against litigation](#). In [1901](#) and [1902](#) Warren's proposal was again rejected at Town Meeting and tabled until 1952. In 1923, the Legion Post [finally accepted](#) the building and its ¼ acre lot.

Orin Warren, the ["Grand Old Man of West Newbury,"](#) died here on April 4, 1916 at age 83. He is buried with his wife Eliza at Walnut Hill Cemetery.

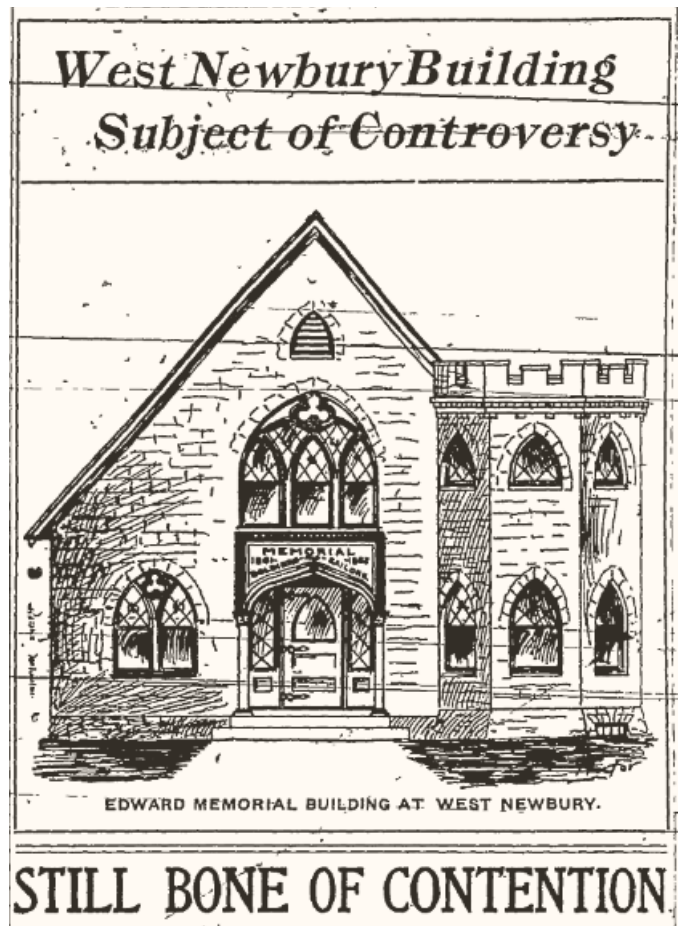
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Union Army  
Surgeon Orin  
Warren

Source: [Historical  
Data Systems](#)

Source:  
1/30/1907  
[Newburyport Daily News](#)

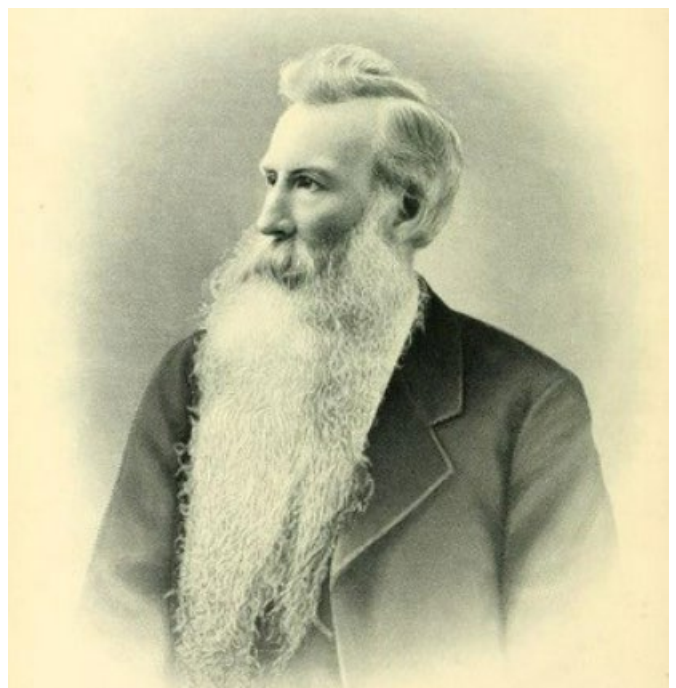


DR. O. WARREN'S BRASS CANDLE HOLDERS

Tallow Candles

Candles were all the light he had in caring for the wounded.

Source: *G.A.R. Library Collection*



Orin Warren  
Source: [Ancestry.com](#)