

[Cornelius Conway Felton, Jr.](#), a renowned classicist and educator, was born in West Newbury, but he was not here long. His parents married in Newbury in 1806. Essex deeds indicate that they may have bought the Main Street, West Newbury, property cattycorner from what is now Felton Lane in July 1807, just before his birth on November 6. His mother, Anna Morse, had deep Newbury roots as the daughter of [David Morse and Abigail Bailey](#). His father did not, being from Marblehead with family located on Cape Ann and points south.

In West Newbury, Cornelius Felton, Sr., was [reportedly a chaise-maker](#), building or assembling carts and carriages. Sometime before 1815, he moved the family south, becoming a toll-keeper in Chelsea.

Thus Cornelius Conway Felton, Jr., would have spent no more than eight of his first years in West Newbury. This impediment did not prevent him (or his two West Newbury-born siblings) from doing great things. Nor did it prevent him from becoming the beneficiary of a historical marker noting his birth in Town.

Professor Felton put himself through Harvard while working as a teacher. He graduated in 1827 then taught high school for a couple of years. In 1829 he returned to Harvard as a Tutor and completed a graduate degree the following year. [His career was meteoric](#): Professor of Greek 1832-1834; Eliot Professor of Greek Literature 1834-1860; Harvard Regent 1849-1857. He was President of Harvard

University from 1860 until he died of a heart condition in 1862.

Professor Felton was among the nation's most influential leaders in classical education. He authored scholarly works ranging from [A Greek Reader for the Use of Schools](#) (1840) to [Birds of Aristophanes](#) (1849), for which he enlisted his friend Louis Agassiz as ornithological adviser.

In addition to all of the above, Professor Felton was a beloved teacher. According to Andrew Preston Peabody's [Harvard Reminiscences](#), "In the classroom he was the opposite of rigid and exacting, and an indifferent scholar was put by him under no compulsory pressure; but . . . such students as were disposed to love classical literature were drawn to him by elective affinity; and, as he reached and passed middle life, . . . were always among the *habitués* of his house, and his intimate associates, those many years his juniors, with whom he grew young again in their common enthusiasm for Greece and its monuments. At the same time his genial disposition and his fellow-feeling with young life, which never waned, made him a favorite teacher, even with those who profited the least by his instruction."

Also deserving of note if not a marker are West Newbury-born siblings [Samuel Morse Felton](#), a civil engineer who as President of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad [helped save President Lincoln and his train from being blown up in an assassination attempt](#) during an inaugural event, and [Lydia Brewster Felton](#), who taught at a Boston women's school.

*Cornelius Conway Felton, Jr., Scholar and Harvard President*



*Felton & home- photo West Newbury Historical Society*



Marker Location: 868-98 Main St., West Newbury, MA Latitude: 42.812190 Longitude: -70.944766