

# **OUR CIVIL WAR:**

Commemorating Local  
Contributions to the Union

The Civil War  
Sesquicentennial  
2011-2015

Albert Wisner Public Library Local History Department  
Warwick, NY



## The Orange Blossoms

Many of our area's young men served in the Civil War.

Most of them enlisted in the 124th N.Y. State Volunteers, called "The Orange Blossoms."

Company D was known as "The Warwick Boys."

Their unit was in many battles, including Fredricksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg.



Silk guide flag from the collection of the New York State Military Museum



The monument for the Orange Blossoms at Gettysburg.  
The text says:

THE ORANGE BLOSSOMS  
WENT INTO ACTION ON  
THIS SPOT WITH  
18 OFFICERS AND 220 MEN.  
LOST IN KILLED AND WOUNDED  
7 OFFICERS AND 85 MEN.  
MUSTERED IN SEPT. 5, 1862.  
MUSTERED OUT JUNE 2, 1865.  
TOTAL ENLISTMENTS 1320.  
TOTAL LOSSES 516.



# Capt. James W. Benedict

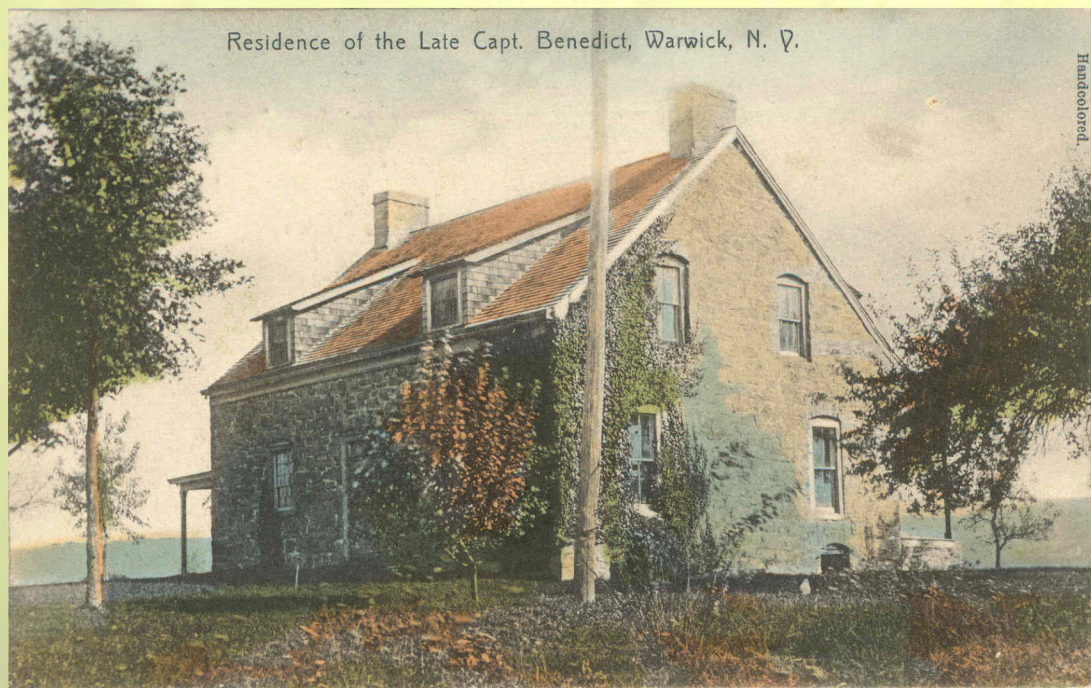
The leader of the 124th's Company D was James W. Benedict.

He led "The Warwick Boys" in every march and battle of the Army of the Potomac.

On May 12, 1864 he was seriously wounded at Spotsylvania Court House but was later able to return to his company.



From the Benedict Family Collection,  
Courtesy of Joan & Tom Frangos



He was promoted to Major in 1865 and mustered out on June 3 of that year.

He participated in 28 battles and was hit by bullets 13 times.

The stone Benedict Homestead still stands on Kings Highway at the Village line. This photo circa 1919, Stemmler Collection, Historical Society of Warwick.

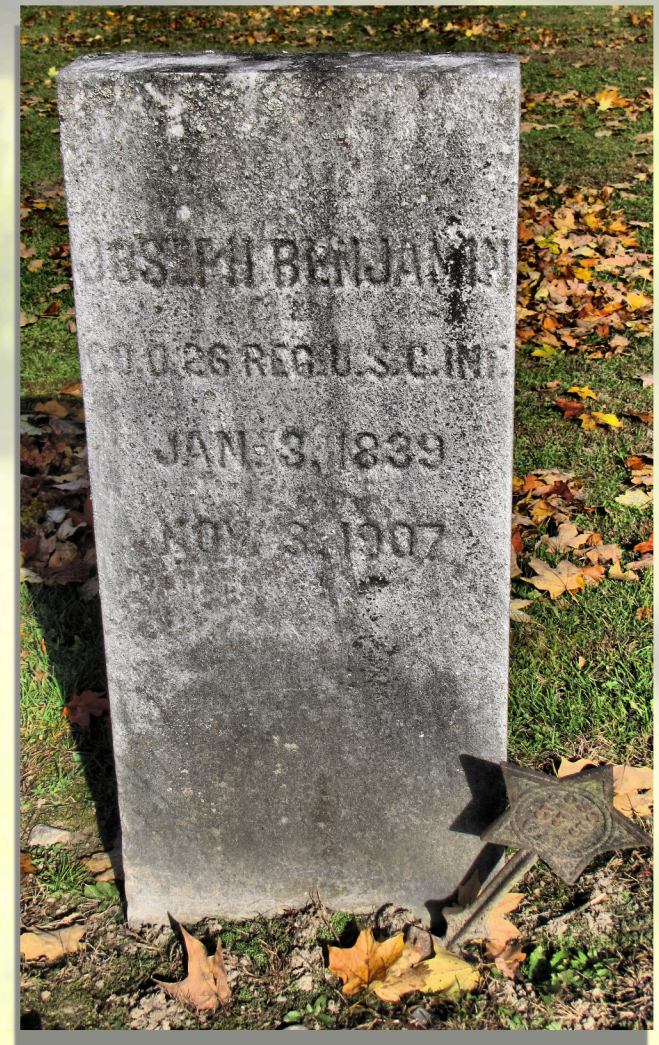


## Brethren in Arms

Local African Americans also joined in the fight to extinguish slavery in our country. Black enlistees joined "colored" units.

Some of Warwick's were:

*Joseph Benjamin  
Thomas Gaul  
Benjamin Maticer  
Isaac Mason  
Robert Peterson  
George Washington*



Joseph Benjamin's stone in Warwick Cemetery shows that he served in Co. D, Regular U.S. Colored Infantry



## A Harrowing Rescue

During the draft riots in Manhattan, in which angry mobs hunted down blacks, blaming them for the draft, the household of Warwick's Eliza Benedict Hornby rescued and hid a terrified girl and her baby for three weeks.



## Remembrance



The site in our community where the sacrifices of the Civil War veterans are most visible is in the Warwick Cemetery.

Many of the soldier's graves have the standard military stone, and have the star-shaped markers of membership in the Grand Army of the Republic, or GAR, Post 575.

The GAR was formed as an association for Union veterans in 1866.

A Memorial Urn was placed in 1887 and dedicated "*To The Unreturned*".

It was unveiled on Decoration Day, a special holiday for remembering the veterans of this war. The day has since become Memorial Day, commemorating all those fallen in service of this country.







Portrait by Matthew Brady,  
c. 1860-65

## William Henry Seward

New York's most illustrious Civil War figure was from the Village of Florida. He rose through political offices to become Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of State.

He had a lifelong aversion to slavery, believing it to be morally wrong.

He defended runaway slaves in court.

An associate of John Wilkes Booth attempted to assassinate Seward on the night Lincoln was shot, stabbing him several times.

The Seward birthplace in Florida was recently purchased through the Town's preservation fund, and plans for its restoration are moving forward.

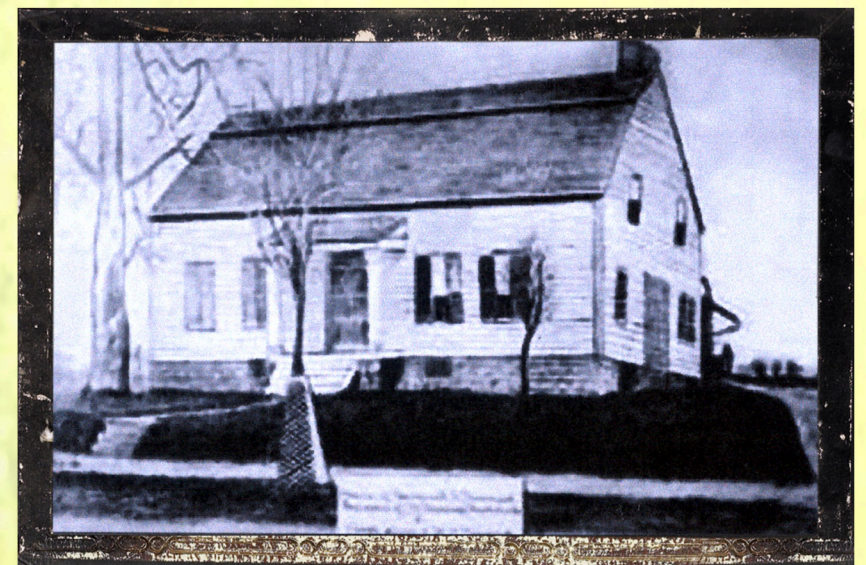


Photo taken ca. 1886, from Florida  
Historical Society book



# Sugar Loaf's Col. Henry Weir

Born at West Point, Henry Cary Weir enlisted when the war broke out. He served in several units, and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

His bravery at St. Mary's Church, Va. earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor.

He was later wounded and retired from the field.



Congressional Medal of Honor



After the war he purchased a farm in Warwick near at Sugar Loaf, where he and his family lived.

He studiously avoided talking about his wartime experiences for the rest of his life.

Grave marker at Brooklyn's famous Green-Wood Cemetery