Best Friend Departed

“His name will be Joseph Warren Revere.”

Paul Revere would have stated these words in April of 1777, less than two years after the death of his close friend Dr. Joseph Warren. Dr. Warren died at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Two years later, Paul Revere christened his son, Joseph Warren Revere. [[1]](#endnote-1)

Paul Revere and Joseph Warren recognized the covenant of this land. In 1775, on the eve of our struggle for Independence, Dr. Warren had stated,

“Our country is in danger, but not to be despaired of. Our enemies are numerous and powerful; but we have many friends, determining to be free, and heaven and earth will aid the resolution. On you depend the fortunes of America. You are to decide the important question, on which rest the happiness and liberty of millions yet unborn. Act worthy of yourselves.”[[2]](#endnote-2)

Paul Revere and Joseph Warren’s friendship began in the midst of a revolution. They both joined St. Andrews Masonic Lodge and met regularly in the legendary Green Dragon Tavern. They both participated in the Boston Tea Party. They both engaged in acts of treason, that could have led them to the gallows.

In the evening before the battles of April 19, 1775, Paul Revere came to Joseph Warren’s home. In Dr. Warren’s house, Paul received instructions. He learned of his role in notifying the countryside. He learned that the King’s soldiers were marching to take the American’s stored arms in Concord. That evening, Dr. Warren lit the fuse that started the Americans’ War for Independence. Neither of these friends could imagine that one was riding into the history books of a new nation.

Two months later, on June 17, 1775, on a hill outside of Boston, their earthly friendship ended. As a widower, with four young children, Dr. Warren died on Bunker Hill at age 34. Although appointed in Philadelphia to be a General of the newly formed Continental Army, Dr. Warren fought alongside the volunteer farmers and fathers. With the powder and ammunition spent, Dr. Warren helped conduct an organized retreat. Before escaping himself, a British officer spotted him, and fired a shot to the young General’s head. After the battle, the British soldiers unceremoniously stripped Dr. Warren of his clothes and buried him in a farmer’s frock. He lay in a common grave, filled with other patriots.

Nine months later, General Washington forced the British out of Boston. Bunker Hill became accessible. With the help of Joseph Warren’s brothers, Paul Revere dug through the dead. With each uncovered body, he hoped to find the hero of Bunker Hill.

How could Paul Revere identify his friend? So many were buried together and nine months had passed. Fortuitously, Joseph had employed Paul as a silversmith to make two false teeth of ivory and bind them together with a silver strand. Paul Revere found the ivory teeth and silver strand.[[3]](#endnote-3) He’d located his friend.

Dr. Warren’s funeral exceeded any of its time. He died a martyr to a greater cause. He knew the importance of America and the freedoms she inspired. He honored the American covenant.

In an oration delivered March 5, 1772, to commemorate the Boston Massacre, Dr. Joseph Warren stated, “May we ever be a people favored of GOD. May our land be a land of liberty, the seat of virtue, the asylum of the oppressed, a name and praise in the whole earth, until the last shock of time shall bury the empires of the world in one common undistinguished ruin!” [[4]](#endnote-4)

His good friend remembered him. He said, “My son’s name shall be Joseph Warren Revere.”

Essayist – Jeffery J. McKenna

Author of *Saving Dr. Warren…”A True Patriot”*

End Notes

1. Hurwitz, Mark, (2020) “This Old Pew: #54 – Joseph Warren Revere,” The Old North Church and Historical Site. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Warren, Joseph. An Oration; Delivered March 6, 1775: At the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770. Boston:  Edes and Gill, Joseph Greenleaf, 1775. The original handwritten manuscript is in the  John Collins Warren Papers. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts, Ms. N-1731, Box 1a. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. https://strangeremains.com/2017/07/04/paul-revere-the-first-american-forensic-dentist/ [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Warren, Joseph. An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1772. At the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770. 2nd ed. Boston: Edes and Gill by order of the town of Boston, 1772. Reprinted many times both during the Revolutionary era and in collections of the Massacre Orations through the mid-nineteenth century. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)