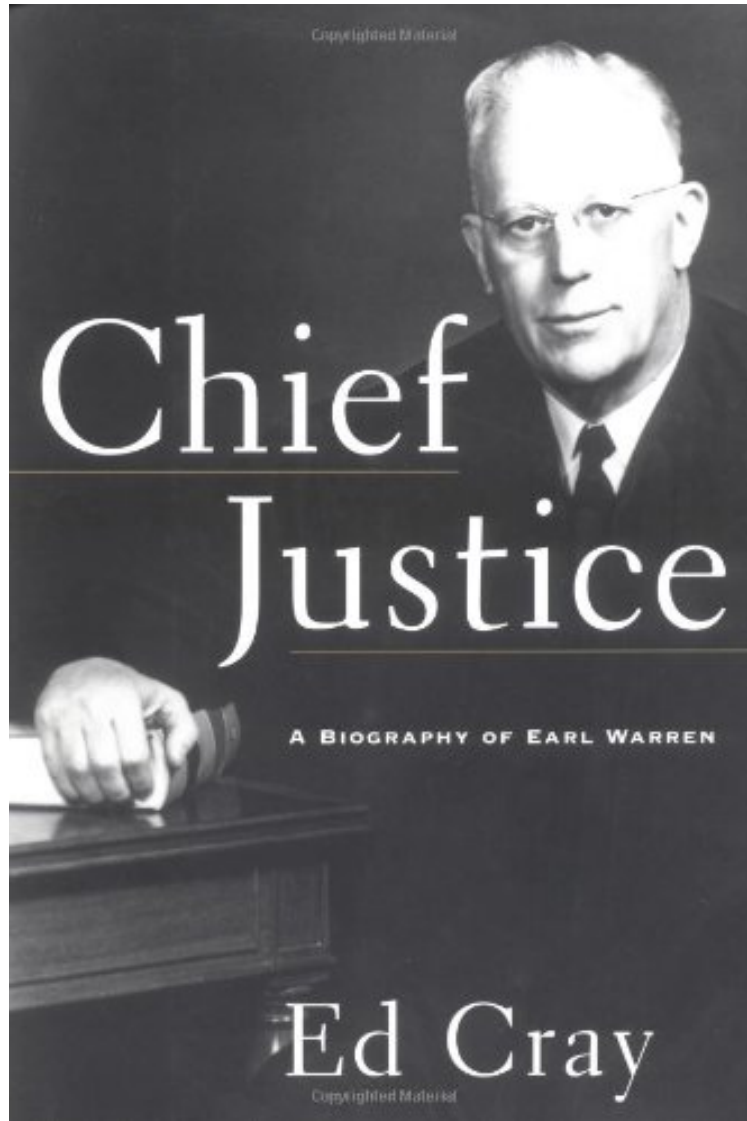


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## CHIEF JUSTICE: A Biography of Earl Warren

*Ed Cray*

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**Ed Cray : CHIEF JUSTICE: A Biography of Earl Warren** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised CHIEF JUSTICE: A Biography of Earl Warren:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Best Warren BiographyBy Brad C.To me this is the definitive biography. It is thorough, critical, and unbiased. His private life was the "American Dream". He had a terrific public life that was justifiably marred by the incarceration of the Japanese. If you are a conservative you should read this book so you can understand how a person can be a political conservative and yet be progressive on social issues.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great Man, Great BookBy Adam DukovichEarl Warren grew up in

Bakersfield, California. To those of you who've been there, it seems an unlikely place to beget one of the great justices of the 20th century who was known for his ability to continue to mold and change his ideas. However, this comprehensive and excellent biography of Earl Warren, Governor of California and 14th Chief Justice of the United States, shows that he turned out far from where he might have been expected to wind up. The book starts with Warren's childhood, where he was an above-average student who went into the county courtroom every day because it was too hot outside and became entranced with the law. He would go to UC Berkeley for his undergraduate and law degrees, and after a few odd jobs would wind up as the Alameda County DA, where he made a name for himself by cleaning out organized crime, gambling, and prostitution from the county. His work gave him high visibility, from which to launch his campaign for Attorney General of California, where he would be responsible in the infamous forced internment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans after Pearl Harbor (as the author notes, only near the end of his life did he come to terms with this act). Then, as now, State AG was merely a stepping stone to the Governor's Mansion, to which he won three terms. Although a Republican, he pushed for progressive reforms in many areas: he tried to get all Californians covered for healthcare (and failed), he tried to make college in California excellent and inexpensive (and succeeded), and he tried to pass worker safety and environmental protection legislation (and did both). He was extremely popular in the state, in fact, in 1946 he won the primaries for the Democratic, Republican, and Progressive parties (Under California law at the time, you could file for the nominations of all parties). His reputation as a moderate consensus-builder in a Democratic state who had still accomplished most of what he wanted made him a lock for the Vice-Presidential slot alongside Tom Dewey, which seemed as sure a thing as possible. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) for Warren, the 1948 election was won by Harry Truman in the biggest surprise in American politics. He would run again four years later, in 1952, hoping to be able to become a consensus candidate for President. Instead, he ended up having to surrender his chances due to an insufficient budget and lobbying by Dwight Eisenhower. Ike, however, knew what Warren had given up and promised him the thing that he really wanted: an appointment to the Supreme court, which happened less than a year later, with the passing of Chief Justice Fred Vinson. This is where the book heats up. The book makes clear that Warren was neither an intellectual, nor a brilliant writer nor the possessor of a natural legal intuition. What he did have, though, was the willingness to work very hard, as well as the ability to persuade colleagues to vote with him. His leadership became apparent when the Brown decision was handed down, unanimously. Brown was nearly evenly divided before, however, Warren went to work on his colleagues one at a time and managed to wrangle agreement on what is, aside from *Roe v. Wade*, the most famous and without a doubt the most celebrated court case of all. Never one to settle with small or half measures, Warren proceeded to establish a broad interpretation of the constitution, guided by a simple moral compass. He knew that any decision could be backed up by reasoning and precedent, so he picked the side he felt was morally right and let his clerks sort it out. The major cases, including *Gideon v. Wainwright* (establishing a right to an attorney), *Miranda v. Arizona* (ever seen a cop show?), and *Mapp v. Ohio* (ensuring state legislatures were determined by population and not by land) were controversial, but now they seem almost natural. Occasionally the court went too far for the public: banishing school prayer sparked a debate that continues to this day, but again, Warren was looking out for fairness--in this case, he wanted no ill-will toward non-believing schoolchildren. As the book notes, very few of the Chief's vast pronouncements have been rolled back by the Burger and Rehnquist courts, and it seems certain by this point that they will have long life in the republic. The book also goes over his involvement in the Warren Commission to investigate the JFK assassination, in some detail. However, some of the most interesting material involves his ability to lead the other disparate justices on the court: moderating the continuing feuds between the liberal activist faction, including Hugo Black and William Douglas; and the judicial restraint supporters like Felix Frankfurter and Robert Jackson. John Roberts should read closely how Warren managed to provide a model for being a Chief Justice: kind but firm, willing to compromise but continually steering the court in his own direction. Love him or hate him, Warren is rightfully considered among the best Chief Justices, and this book tells why. After reading, it is little wonder that after Warren's departure, and the arrival of the super-political hack Warren Burger, justices like William Brennan, Black and Douglas regarded him as the real chief. Warren was a man who transcended his times: his total lack of prejudice and dedication to preserving the American dream gave him a greater impact on America than Eisenhower or Nixon, his arch-enemy. We could use more men from all persuasions like him.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A complicated man By TLRA good account of Warren's personal and professional life, and his evolution into a liberal who reinterpreted the Constitution to fit the changing realities of American life. A strong friend and supporter of JFK (he voted for him in 1960), Earl Warren was deeply shaken by his death. "It was like losing one of my own sons." Ed Cray writes: "Warren personally blamed the radical right and Texas' extremely conservative oil millionaires." Later, he told his son, "I don't know who or what caused this or did the deed, but I sure know where the blame is." He very reluctantly accepted the job of heading President Johnson's Commission to investigate Kennedy's death. In fact, he at first flatly rejected the job, but as Johnson applied his persuasive charms, Warren gave in. In fact, now we know that LBJ told Warren that millions of Americans might be killed in a nuclear war. Like many liberals who accepted the story that a "Red" had killed the President, and then was killed by a Jewish strip club owner, Warren understood what he was expected to do for the good of the country. I.F. Stone would adopt the same stance. The fear of a new

McCarthyism at home and a war with Cuba and the USSR kept many on the Left from investigating the more likely domestic suspects on the Right. According to Anthony Summers, Warren had been friendly with J. Edgar Hoover; Hoover had run FBI checks on his daughter's boyfriends. But by the time of the Warren Commission investigation, he saw Warren as a nuisance. Hoover wrote in one memo, "If Warren had kept his big mouth shut, these conjectures would not have happened." Warren insisted that a muted criticism of the FBI's failure to inform the Secret Service about Oswald be included in the Warren Report; Hoover retaliated by having Warren's name taken off his Special Correspondents list. Warren did not believe "in a conspiracy of any kind," he told Arthur Goldberg. "The only thing that gave me any pause about a conspiracy theory was that Oswald had been a defector to Russia at one time." In his memoirs, he recalled that after viewing the autopsy photos, they were "so horrible that I could not sleep well for nights." Warren's family says that he developed covert sources of information (a small group of FBI agents, Edward Bennett Williams, Warren Olney) because he wasn't getting enough cooperation from Hoover. He was also closely involved in the writing of the Report. The whole experience on the WC took a great physical and emotional toll on Warren.

Based on interviews and unprecedented access to Warren's papers, a biography of the former Chief Justice reveals his rivalry with California conservatives, how some of his decisions were shaped by political happenings, and the workings of the Warren court. 20,000 first printing.

.com A former prosecutor and moderate Republican governor of California when appointed to the Supreme Court in 1953, Earl Warren (1891-1974) surprised everyone by leading it in an increasingly liberal direction. *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, and other key decisions bolstered the rights of individuals and committed the federal government to acting in support of them. Journalist/historian Ed Cray's detailed account depicts an admirable, self-assured man who arrived slowly at positions, driven not by ideology but by an old-fashioned sense of morality that asked, "Is it fair?" From Library Journal With this excellent biography, Cray (journalism, Univ. of Southern California) offers new insight into the chief justice, a key American political figure of the 20th century. Warren served as a district attorney, attorney general of California, twice governor of that state, 1948 Republican vice presidential nominee, chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, and chair of the Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination of President Kennedy. Cray carefully analyzes Warren's central role in the development of World War II-era California and the fight for progressive legislation within the Republican Party. He shows how Warren's leadership on the Supreme Court expanded the scope of constitutional civil liberties and how this emerging judicial activism penetrated major Court decisions, such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964). Highly recommended for all libraries. [BOMC main selection.]?Steven Puro, St. Louis Univ.-?Steven Puro, St. Louis Univ. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist An exhaustively researched biography, Cray's life of Warren reads like a diary of the subject's activities; every material fact falls into its strict chronological place. Perhaps this technique was the only option in writing about Warren, who erected a wall between his public and private lives as tall as the wall he reinforced between church and state. Since no hint of scandal, public or private, was ever attached to Warren, Cray was limited in the number of personality-revealing crises he could write about; a nigh unique public glimpse was Warren weeping in front of reporters over the brutal murder of his father. Otherwise, the Warren persona was upright and stoical, that of a good government square who started in politics by prosecuting vice and corruption. What a contrast Warren's law-enforcement methods made--countenanced wire taps, coerced confessions, deprivation of counsel--with those the Warren Court mandated in the 1960s! Unusual for a politician, Warren evolved in a liberal rather than a conservative direction, which process Cray indicates in Warren's policies as attorney general and progressive Republican governor of California, policies marred by the big blot in the record, Warren's interning of Japanese Americans in 1942. As for Warren's historic and still-controversial leadership of the Supreme Court, Cray's intensive digging and interviewing have uncovered many telling incidents of the internal balance of attitudes on the court. A quality less apparent in Cray's account--thankfully so, for general readers--is legalistic analysis of the court's landmark decisions from *Brown* to *Miranda* to *Griswold*. Let law libraries handle the technical books about those cases, and let public libraries make accessible a diligently investigated biography of the man to whom, as much as any other, citizens owe the ideals of nondiscrimination in education, nonbrutality in law enforcement, and noninvasion of privacy. Gilbert Taylor