

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

Vol. X 7-21-88 No. 29

Horace Greeley and The Local Connection "Go West Young Man! Go West!"

No American up to this time probably exercised a more profound influence upon public thought and action in this country than Horace Greeley. For over 40 years his logic, intellect and convictions were felt through his literary style.

Greeley was born of Scottish-Irish stock on Feb. 3, 1811 in a small New Hampshire community. When Greeley was 10 his family moved to West Hanover, Vt. for a short time and then to Erie County, Pa. He had a strong desire to learn the printer's trade and in 1826 started work as a "devil boy" for the Northern Specter in East Poultney, Vt. It was here where he learned to become an excellent compositor. After working there for four years the paper went out of business. Finally, after working for various papers, he arrived in New York City on Aug. 17, 1831 with only \$10 in his pocket. There he worked for two years as a journeyman compositor but in 1833 began business for himself with a paper called the Morning Post. In 1834 he began the publication of The New Yorker with Jonas Winchester. This paper lasted seven years and reached a circulation of 9,000 copies.

During the political campaign of William Henry Harrison in 1840, Greeley published The Log Cabin which reached an unprecedented circulation of 80,000 copies. With this success, he was determined to establish a cheap daily Whip paper in New York. On April 10, 1841, he issued the first number of The Daily New York Tribune. He gathered able writers and made this organ one of the most outstanding of its day, expressing the most advanced ideas of the time—Protection of American Industry, Anti-slavery, Temperance, Industrial Co-operation and Intensive Farming. The Weekly Tribune, under his editorship, rose to be a strong political power.

In 1848, Greeley was elected to Congress to fill a vacancy for four months. His bitter opposition to slavery brought upon him the opposition of the pro-slavery advocates. Greeley was prominent in the National Republican Convention of 1860, and in 1869 he was the Republican candidate for State Comptroller, but was defeated. In 1870, he was the candidate for congress from New York City,



but was defeated.

In May 1872, he was nominated for the presidency by the National Liberal Republican Convention at Cincinnati. The National Democrat Convention accepted these candidates and adopted their platform. General Grant defeated Greeley. However, Greeley carried the states of Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee and Texas. The campaign was an exceedingly hard one for him. Just prior to election his wife died and on Nov. 29, 1872 he also passed away. During his life he was widely identified as an outspoken and leading universalist.

The local connection is as follows:

In the summer of 1831, Greeley walked from Lockport to Gaines along the Ridge Road to visit a friend on his way to New York City. In 1851, Benjamin Dwinell, a blacksmith from New Hampshire and his wife, Mary Ann Woodburn, moved to Childs. Mary Ann was a sister to Greeley's mother. In 1861, the Dwinells purchased the little cobblestone house in Childs next to the Universalist (cobblestone) church. Records show that Greeley co-signed for the Dwinell's mortgage. It is also known that in 1863 Greeley came to Childs for a mortgage sale of the property because the Dwinells had defaulted payment. This house, known as the Ward House, is now part of the Cobblestone Museum Complex.