

9-11-08

# Judge Edwin R. Reynolds (1816-1908)

**H**on. Edwin R. Reynolds was for many years a prominent and honored citizen of Orleans County.

He was born in Salem, Washington County, N.Y. Feb. 16, 1816. His father, Linus Reynolds, was a Baptist minister as well as a printer.

In 1828 the family moved to East Poultney, Vt. where Linus Reynolds edited a newspaper. It was here that Edwin Reynolds learned the printer's trade working at the time with Horace Greeley who was a youthful apprentice. They became fast friends for the remainder of their lives.

Our portrait shown here of Reynolds dating around 1870 was recently given to the Cobblestone Museum at Childs and hangs now in the Ward House. Since Greeley once owned the Ward House in 1863 there is indeed a local connection.

It seems Greeley's aunt and uncle once lived in the museum house when he acted as their co-signer. When they defaulted, Greeley was obliged to pay up. He not only came to the Albion area for family reasons, but also to visit his friend Reynolds.

In 1835 Reynolds entered Brown University at Providence, R.I. where he remained for two years. He then spent one year teaching at Cold Spring on the Hudson.

In 1838, at the age of 21, he moved to Albion where he

became the first principal of the old Albion Academy. This position continued from January 1838 to December 1846.

By an act of the State Legislature in 1841 a county superintendent of schools became required. Reynolds was appointed the first superintendent serving from 1841-1843. This position was abolished in 1846.

In 1840, while teaching, he began a course of law studies under the direction of A. Hyde Cole and Dan H. Cole of Albion. He was admitted to the bar in 1843 and set up his own practice in 1846. His law partners included George H. Stone and Albert W. Crandell.

From 1848 to 1854 he served as justice of the peace for the Town of Barre including what is now the Town of Albion.

Reynolds had an active interest in local journalism as a result of his early printer's experience. He once served as editor of the Orleans American and frequently wrote political articles. In 1860 Reynolds was elected to the United States Congress. While in Congress he became a friend and supporter of President Lincoln. He had he distinct honor of standing near Lincoln when the latter delivered his first inaugural address.

While in Congress he voted for the admission of Kansas as a free state and the Morrill Tariff Bill. He



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introduced and advocated a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia which was a most unpopular measure to take at the time.

However, Reynolds was a strong abolitionist and was a

member of the War Committee for Orleans County during the Civil War.

In 1863 Reynolds was elected Orleans County Judge and Surrogate serving one term of four years.

For 13 years he was chairman of the Republican County Committee also serving on the state committee. In 1868 he was an elector on the Grant ticket.

Reynolds always maintained an interest in education and was on the committee in 1876 to examine the general laws on organizing the first Orleans County Bar Association.

For many years he maintained a law practice in Albion and also dabbled in real estate. He was interested in politics and matters of the First Presbyterian Church of

which he was a member. He was married to Elizabeth Ann Gale in 1846 and they had two children.

In 1881 Reynolds had built a very fine large brick residence on the corner of West State and Clinton Streets in Albion. Mrs. Reynolds died in 1904 and their daughter Grace, wife of John Phillips of Hulberton, then took care of her aged father until he died in 1908.

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