

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian



Howard Abeel
1819-1890

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"Friendship, Love and Truth"

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Howard Abeel was born at Catskill, Greene County, N.Y. August 10, 1819. Before coming to Albion on a canal boat in 1836 he was a clerk at a store in his native village. In Albion he became a clerk in the store of Cantine and Flint who were grocers and bakers located on the canal dock. Mr. Cantine was a distant relative of Mr. Abeel which suggests why he decided as a young man to locate in Albion. Mr. Abeel later worked for Andrew Wall, also a baker and candle maker, and still later he worked for Elizur Platt.

In 1841 he and Waldo Joslyn bought out Mr. Platt and continued the grocery business on the canal dock under the firm

ship with David Bettis, also opened a dry goods store known as D. Bettis & Co. This lasted until Joslyn and Abeel went out of the grocery business when they then dealt solely in dry goods, incorporating the D. Bettis & Co. into the original name of Joslyn and Abeel. Upon the death of Mr. Joslyn in 1878, Mr. Abeel continued in the dry goods business, first with his son James, and later with Virgil P. Phelps.

Mr. Abeel was in the dry goods business until 1887 when he was elected Orleans County Treasurer. At that time he had completed thirty-seven years as a merchant in Albion. He was also at one time a village trustee and was an active member of the Fire Department, serving as foreman of old No. 2 and assistant engineer. He was involved in Democratic Party politics and served as Collector of Canal tolls in 1865-66. Mr. Abeel was a communicant of Christ Episcopal Church where he served as a vestryman from 1857-65; 1872-73; 1880-87.

Howard Abeel joined the Order of Odd Fellows at the next meeting after the institution of the Albion Lodge in March 1846, and continued as an active member to his death. He also joined the Orleans Encampment soon after its institution and continued a member of that throughout his lifetime. He passed through the chairs in both institutions and represented the Lodge in the Grand Lodge of the State.

"He loved the Order and his affection for it increased with increasing years. He was a worthy member, kind and affectionate towards his brethren, and was ever ready to assist a brother in need. Mr. Abeel had many warm personal friends and no one could say aught against him as a man or as a citizen. As a neighbor he was ever obliging, and in his family he was a model of kindness. He loved his friends and had a warm heart for the miseries of the people"

Orleans Republican
August 20, 1890

Howard Abeel died on August 15, 1890 of a liver ailment. He left a wife Mary, son James and a daughter Minnie Burnett. He was also predeceased by two other children.

Although this all may seem rather remote to us almost 90 years later, the Abeel name remains memorialized upon an institution of our community, that being Abeel Rebekah Lodge No. 131. This being the female portion of the Albion I.O.O.F. Lodge No. 58, it was instituted on May 8, 1891, and named in honor of the most esteemed Howard Abeel.

"The Lord loveth the cheerful giver."