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Willard E. Wight



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HORACE GREELEY, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE:
A FLORIDIAN'S VIEW

edited by WILLARD E. WIGHT

IN THE PRESIDENTIAL election of 1872, Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, was the candidate of the Liberal Republican Party and of the Democratic Party. Nominated first by the Liberal Republicans at their convention in Cincinnati, Greeley had been named by the Democrats at Baltimore in July, 1872. The Democrats not only adopted the candidate of the Liberal Republicans but also adopted their platform verbatim.

Following the action of the Baltimore Convention, the most prompt and almost unanimous endorsement of Greeley came from the South. There the abuses of the radical rule were felt most grievously and the whites of the former Confederacy had little confidence in the ability of the Democratic Party alone to deliver them from their condition.

Greeley was probably the only Republican who could have secured support in as full a measure from the southern states. His stand on secession was the most satisfactory; he had tried hard to secure an early peace; and he had done much to counteract his past course by many conciliatory and helpful words and acts during reconstruction. The fact that he was one of the signers of Jefferson Davis' bond probably in the eyes of many ex-Confederates wiped out all his previous record. Prominent Democratic leaders early declared for the coalition, and Greeley was supported by the greater number of influential Southern newspapers.¹

In Florida where reconstruction was still pursued with full force, Greeley's candidacy with its backing by the discontented element of Grant's party as well as the entire Democratic augured well for success. Among those who looked with hope on Greeley's chances was Mariano D. Papy, a leading figure of the bar in Leon County, who had long been active in the political life of the state.

1. The attitude of the South is shown in Earle D. Ross *The Liberal Republican Movement* (New York, 1919), *passim*, and especially in his "Horace Greeley and the South, 1865-1872," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XVI (October, 1917), 324-38.

Mariano D. Papy (1824-1875) was a native of Saint Augustine, but became a resident of Tallahassee in his boyhood.² He was admitted to the bar in 1844 by a special act of the Territorial Legislature before he had attained his majority. When the Supreme Court of Florida was first constituted, he was named its first clerk and served from 1845 to 1849 in this capacity. In 1852, Papy represented Leon County in the lower house of the state legislature. That same year the attorney general of the state resigned and Papy was appointed to the post. He was elected for a full four year term in 1853 and again in 1856. One of the most conspicuous services which he rendered during his tenure of this office was representing the state before the United States Supreme Court in the litigation over the Georgia-Florida boundary.

When the Florida Secession Convention reassembled on January 14, 1862, it created an Executive Council to strengthen the Executive Department of the state during the war. Papy was the second member elected by the convention to the Council and faithfully attended the five meetings which were held. On May 15, 1862, he resigned without, however, stating the grounds for his action. In December of that year he was appointed one of the two commissioners to settle the boundary line between Florida and Georgia.

Following the surrender of General Sam Jones at the end of the war, Papy was one of the five commissioners appointed by Governor A. K. Allison to interview President Johnson on the political relations of Florida to the Union. While not a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1865, Papy was a member of the commission appointed by Governor William Martin at the suggestion of that body to frame suitable laws for the government of the freedmen.

In 1866 he was a member of the delegation appointed by

2. This sketch of Papy is based on the following: Rowland W. Rerick, *Memoirs of Florida*, Francis P. Fleming, editor, 2 vols. (Atlanta, 1902), I, 225, 325; II, 91, 94, 101; William C. Havard, "The Florida Executive Council," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII (October, 1954), 77-96; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the General Assembly, of the State of Florida, at the Twelfth Session, Begun and held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on Monday, November 17, 1862* (Tallahassee, 1862), 155 ff; *Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Supreme Court of the State of Florida, at Terms Held in 1874, '5-'6* (Tallahassee, 1876), xi-xxvii; William W. Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (New York, 1913), 332, 412, 434, 459, 556.

HORACE GREELEY, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE 273

Governor D. S. Walker to represent Florida at the national convention of the Conservatives at Philadelphia. After the beginning of the congressional plan of reconstruction, when the conservative men of Florida sought political control of the Negro, Papy was among those who addressed assemblages of the freedmen.

Perhaps his most outstanding service to his state occurred during the administration of Governor Harrison Reed. Papy was one of the group of lawyers who successfully petitioned the Supreme Court of Florida for the ouster of W. H. Gleason, then occupying the post of lieutenant-governor, on the grounds that he had not been a citizen of the state for two years as required by the state constitution.

The letter here presented is from the Charles F. Jenkins Collection in the Georgia Department of Archives and History through whose cooperation publication is made possible.

(Private)

Savannah, Georgia

July 11, 1872

Hon. John T. Hoffman ³
Albany, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

Inspired by the action of the Baltimore Convention with the hope that the result of the coming election will relieve the Country and especially my own section from the incubus which

3. John T. Hoffman (1828-1888), a native of New York, graduated from Union College in 1846 and after the study of law was admitted to de bar in 1849. Following his removal to New York City, he joined the Tammany Society and rose rapidly in its counsels. He was elected recorder of the city in 1860 and was reelected. He was an asset to the Tweed Ring because of his reputation and platform and was twice elected mayor of New York. There seems to be no evidence that he himself profited from the Tweed Ring graft but he must have known of the gross irregularities. Some authorities believe that his political ambition blinded him to the frauds of his colleagues. His election to the governorship of the state in 1868 was accompanied by many frauds. He was, however, reelected in 1870 at the same time that Tweed was elected to the state senate. By this time public opinion began to run high against Tammany and Hoffman began to show signs of breaking with the organization. His last message to the legislature repudiated the Tweed Ring but by this time he was a politically ruined man because of his association with it. He took an active part in the Democratic Convention of 1872 and was instrumental in the endorsement of Greeley as the party's candidate. Lucius H. Holt, "John Thompson Hoffman," *Dictionary of American Biography*, Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, editors, 21 vols. (New York, 1928-1936), IX, 113-14.

has so sorely pressed us, I but gratify the desire I have long felt to say to you how much I was impressed with the views expressed by you in the Conversation it was my pleasure to have with you last summer whilst we were sojourning at Newport.

I could certainly have wished that a different leader could have been put forward with some hope of success and especially would it have been gratifying if you had been that chosen leader.

From the time however that the Cincinnati movement found expression in the nomination of Mr. Greely, it occurred to me that the course of the Democracy was likely to be that which is now fully developed. Your own views and feelings as expressed to me last summer, not only led me to the conclusion named but also to the belief that yourself and the Democracy of New York would accept the situation as perhaps the best means of dethroning the party in power and restoring the people to their constitutional rights. And on this belief I urged as better expressed by yourself "the sacrifice of personal preferences and prejudices, on the alter [*sic*] of the Country" and I referred to the probable course of the New York Democracy as sufficient to show that *we* would only be coming up to the measure and necessity of the times. The objections urged at first gradually gave way until at last the sentiment became very general to accept the Cincinnati Candidates and at all events to abide the action of the Baltimore Convention even though Mr. Greely should be the nominee.

We hope that we will be able to carry Florida and place our State under the auspices of an honest government.

I am gratified that the convention decided to make a "nomination" instead of merely "endorsing" the Cincinnati nominees as this course preserves the party organization and keeps alive the spirit that has always animated it. It must have the further effect of silencing any suggestion of a disbandment and leaving its members free to choose between Candidates.

One objection we have had to contend with is the distrust expressed or entertained that Mr. Greely may not be relied on in regard to the principles embodied in the platform and as to his recognition of Democrats in the event of his election.⁴

4. Greeley said in his speech at Portland, Maine, the next August that in case of his election he would not confine his appointments to the Republicans. Ross, *Liberal Republican Movement*, 145.

HORACE GREELEY, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE 275

I have no difficulty on this score myself, for I make no doubt, yourself and the others whose views and opinions went so far to control the course of the party are well assured on these points whether that assurance comes from any understanding or springs from your knowledge of the man and of those with whom he is prominently associated. It would be a great misfortune to us down here if we should be disappointed. Although I have no misgivings, nevertheless I would like to be assured in this matter by you if you will do me the kindness.

Before I left home the desire was expressed to me to have my name placed on the electoral ticket as one of the electors. I did not give a final answer, as I could not then say how or when I might be able to return to the state to take part in the Canvass. Should I consent to my name being put on the ticket I should like to be able to give every assurance if necessary of the reliability of the nominees on the points suggested. I know no one who could better inform me than yourself - indeed none from whom I could expect it.

I am well assured that this state (Georgia) will cast her vote for the "Baltimore nominees."

I expect in a few days to go to Atlanta at which place I need not add, I will be glad to hear from you. My address will be to the care of Messers M. Naught Ormond & Co., Atlanta Geo. -

Very Respy Yours &c
M. D. Papy

P.S. I will be glad to know your estimate of the chances of success of the ticket.