

They had no price to set on their manhood; but they won names which are synonyms for stern integrity.

While many other good and true men were for years earnest and faithful co-workers in this historic struggle, it was C. F. Clarkson whose brain devised the plan which discomfited a powerful combination which was, by most men, regarded as too strong to be successfully resisted. The magnitude of the victory can be measured by millions of dollars saved to western farmers in the forced reduction of more than 100 per cent. from the syndicate price fixed upon fence wire. During his long and useful life Father Clarkson did his adopted State much valuable service in various capacities, but he regarded that above briefly noted, as his greatest achievement, as will history, when it is faithfully written. B. F. GUE.

ZIMRI STREETER — "OLD BLACK HAWK."

BY PETER MELENDY.

One of the unique characters among the pioneer lawmakers of Iowa, thirty years ago, was Zimri Streeter, "Old Black Hawk," as he was familiarly called by his colleagues in the General Assemblies of 1858-60. He was born February 7th, 1801, at Granville, Washington County, N. Y., where his boyhood years were spent on a farm. In 1824 he married Lucinda Dean, and in 1852 removed to Iowa, settling on a quarter section of prairie on the banks of the Cedar River, midway between Waterloo and Cedar Falls, which he had entered as government land. He built a good log cabin, into which they settled down and made their home for many years. He was a man of excellent judgment and sturdy integrity, always held in highest esteem by his neighbors. They believed in him, trusted him, and elected him to represent them in many responsible positions. He was honorable and straightforward in all the relations of life, a man of courage and convictions, with ability to maintain his views upon all occasions. He was.

never a demagogue or policy man, and despised everything that savored of insincerity or deception. He was a typical Iowa farmer, simple in his habits, plain of speech, positive in opinions, but tolerant with those who differed with him. He was staunch in his friendships, genial in manners and a hater of all shams.

In 1857 he was nominated by the Republicans of Black Hawk County for Representative in the Legislature, and elected by a large majority.

He went to Des Moines without any "axes to grind," and had no special measures to urge upon the Legislature. He was always in his seat, attentive to business, and invariably acted upon his own judgment. He had no vain ambition to see his name in print as the author of bills presented, but he took especial delight in showing up and defeating extravagant and selfish schemes. He held it to be the highest duty of a member, to closely examine every proposition presented to the Legislature, and unless it was clearly right and necessary, it had better be defeated. It is probable that no member of the House of 1858 and 1860 defeated so many visionary, vicious or useless bills as "Old Black Hawk." With great genialty, he *possessed* sound judgment, an unusual allowance of common sense, and saw at a glance through the various "schemes" that come before legislative bodies. A two minute speech, pointed with a touch of his irresistible humor and sarcasm, generally "did the business" for a measure that he thought ought to be defeated. Few people, aside from his colleagues, have ever known how valuable were the services he rendered the State during his four year's term in the Iowa Legislature.

A newspaper correspondent of that day thus describes him: "That old-looking man down there next to the wall, on the speaker's right, is Hon. Zimri Streeter, or "Old Black Hawk," the wag of the House. He is fifty-nine years of age, but hardly seems so old. He is a man who probably never enjoyed many advantages of education in his early days and doubtless has seen much of pioneer life. He understands human nature pretty thoroughly and is a man of mature

experience, varied and extensive general information. He always comes squarely up to the work, and the call of the yeas and nays has no terror for him.

"He is a substantial, honest, patriotic old man—one whom it is safe to tie to every time. It is quite amusing to hear him speak. When he arises and says 'Mr. Speaker,' every member turns to hear 'the gentleman from Black Hawk.' He seldom speaks more than three or four minutes, and generally closes his remarks by the time the members get fairly fixed for hearing him. He makes a brief statement of his position, and concludes with some original witticism or humorous illustration, then *drops into his chair*, leaving the House convulsed with laughter. The members always expect to laugh when he rises to speak, and they never fail to have the opportunity; they see fun sticking out of his eyes.

"'Old Black Hawk' is a kind and generous man whenever he discovers merit or honesty of purpose in any member's course, but he is a regular terror to all excessively 'smart young men,' who come down to the Capitol with the idea that they 'know it all.' During the session of 1858 there were several members who justly deserved the severe sarcasm which he always had in store for the egotistic and pompous."

A bill was once under discussion relating to exemptions from sales under execution, which he deemed sheer demagoguery. "Mr. Speaker," said Uncle Zimri, "I hope our benevolent friends will not tinker up the law so as to prevent a feller from paying his debts if he wants to."

"He was one whose wit
Without wounding could hit,
And green be the turf that's above him."

At a meeting held by the citizens of Cedar Falls to celebrate the advent of the Dubuque & Sioux City railroad into that place in 1861, "Old Black Hawk" was called upon to respond to the following toast:

"Cedar Falls—from the stage coach to the locomotive."

Mr. Streeter said: "I have been accused of making short speeches. I do not claim any credit for it—for there is always

a good reason for it. I remember well when in 1852 I moved my family from Illinois to this place with an ox-team. There was then *a track* most of the way—when it was dry ; but when it was a little moist—down it went out of sight ! When I got here I inquired how often the mail came. I was told there was a man at Quasqueton who brought it through once a week ; in bad weather, not so often ; in very bad weather, not at all. He rode a blind horse, in order, I suppose, that when he came to a bad slough, the animal might 'go it blind.' A few years later the mail was carried in a buggy—afterwards in a two-horse rig. Finally it came in style on a four-horse stage coach. Now, I understand, though I do not pretend to know much about railroads, that the rails are laid upon the track ; then you carried the rails on your back to help the coach out of the mud."

In 1864 Mr. Streeter was appointed by the Governor as one of the Commissioners to take the vote of Iowa soldiers in the field.

During his long and useful life he was often chosen to positions of honor and trust by the people of Black Hawk county, and always served them with ability and fidelity. He died on the 7th of January, 1880, at the age of 79, respected and esteemed by all who knew him.

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