

The Iowa Star

Granger had several long-range and immediate goals for his one-man weekly newspaper. He and his financial backer, Curtis Bates, wanted to elect Democrats to office. They wanted more settlers to come to central Iowa and they wanted to keep those already there from hurrying off to California to dig gold. They worked to bring railroads to the state and they promoted expanded steamboat service from Keokuk to Des Moines up the Des Moines River. The *Star* supported transfer of the state capital from Iowa City to Des Moines.

Getting out the paper every week was one of Granger's most difficult tasks. The first issue was dated July 26, 1849. The second did not appear until August 23. Granger wrote apologetically: "The disappointment happened in consequence of the wagoner who was to bring the paper up from Keokuk being taken sick on the way. In the future, we shall have a supply of material on hand and our subscribers may expect a paper regularly each week."

Vain hope! On December 14 of the same year the *Star* warned: "We are sorry to inform our readers that we will not be able to issue next week's paper, owing to the extreme cold weather

with which we are at present blessed. As soon as we can move our press into more comfortable quarters, which we hope to do in a short time, we will issue our next number." Tradition has it that Granger heated his ink that winter to keep it from freezing while the paper was being printed. On December 7, he offered to trade subscriptions for fifty cords of wood.

Lack of warmth and of paper were only two of his many difficulties. Another was that he did not get much advertising. When he left the *Star*, a little later, he wrote an editorial telling the troubles of publishing "a seven-column paper in a five-column town." It was not easy in those days to "collect for the paper" from the subscribers. The subscription rate for the *Star* was \$2 a year if paid in advance, or \$3 if payment was not made until the end of the year. Theoretically, a subscriber could not quit taking the paper without paying up. A notice said: "No paper will be discontinued until all arrearages have been paid." Six months was all that Granger could stand as publisher of the *Star*. He turned the paper over to Judge Bates, his backer, on January 15, 1850.

The Granger issues of the *Star* were not overloaded with news. Small wonder. The editor was printer, press-foreman, advertising salesman, subscription solicitor — the whole staff, in fact. The *Star* reprinted a lot of poems, and long reports

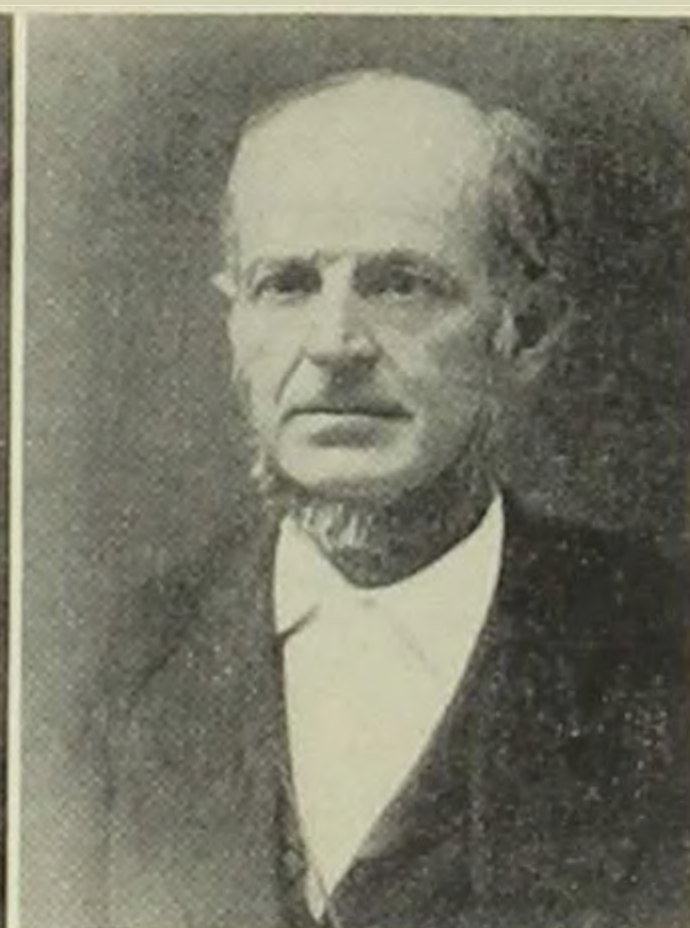
TWO DEMOCRATS AND A WHIG



Barlow Granger



Curtis Bates



Lampson P. Sherman

THE FIGHTING CLARKSONS



Coker F. "Father"
Clarkson



Richard P.
Clarkson



James S. "Ret"
Clarkson

The Iowa Star.

VOL. I.

FORT DESMOINES, IOWA, THURSDAY, JULY 26, 1849.

NO. 1.

THE IOWA STATE JOURNAL.

The Weekly Citizen.

Iowa State Register.

The Register and Leader.

Des Moines Tribune

The Paper With the Pictures—and the Up-to-the-Hour War Maps

The Weather
Unsettled and much
cloudy Saturday; Sun-
day partly cloudy.
—ST. LOUIS P. M. 17.

The Des Moines Register

The Newspaper Iowa Depends Upon

VOL. 20, NO. 289.

DES MOINES, IOWA, SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 6, 1925.—EIGHTEEN PAGES

PRICE 10 CENTS

EXTRA

SOME ANCESTORS OF THE DES MOINES REGISTER

were carried on Democratic conventions and on speeches given by prominent Democrats. Railroads and Iowa's need for them were topics uppermost in Granger's mind. In one editorial he said: "The absolute wants of our own state and the interests of others will imperatively demand a railroad from the Mississippi to the Missouri long before one can be made." As was true of most papers well up into the 1880's and 1890's, local news always was on the inside pages.

Editors pulled no punches when dealing with their opponents in Granger's time. Yet, when Lampson Sherman started the *Fort Des Moines Gazette*, a Whig paper, on January 14, 1850, the *Star* wrote: "We wish the adventurous proprietor success in everything but the extension of his political beliefs."

Bates edited the *Star* himself after Granger retired. In announcing his editorship, Bates described the widespread influence of newspapers. In a beautifully-written statement on the responsibility of the press, he said: "How important that . . . [the press] urge sound and expedient measures of political economy, that its voice be ever heard for the right! If there is a principle to be struggled for, to the press should our eyes be turned. If a prejudice is to be stormed, we should look to see its pennant wave first above the breach."

He was a man of strong opinions on at least two subjects. He did not like the Whigs (forerunners of the Republicans) and he was bitter over talk of dissolution of the United States. He wrote: "What? The Union dissolved? As well you might expect to see the stupendous Appenines crumble away, that have towered for ages in the blue, immaculate ether. . . ."

But Bates' high-flown language did not bring much cash to the *Star's* till. He too missed an issue now and then. He asked in an 1852 editorial whether subscribers "realize the *Star* must have paper and the editors and printers food and raiment?" Bates kept the publication going for four years by continuing his law practice and using his law fees to pay part of the *Star's* expenses. Even so, "it was all I could do to keep the paper alive."

In January, 1854, Bates gave up. He had become the Democratic nominee for governor of Iowa. A firm known as S. W. Hill and Company took over the *Star*, with D. O. Finch as editor. But the paper continued to be unprofitable. The August 17, 1854, issue appeared with wide black lines of mourning between the columns. One of the publishers had died. The same issue was the obituary for the *Star* also. Although the paper was revived later, the name "Iowa Star" passed into history.