

[Rawson, Samuel]

SAMUEL RAWSON

By Stella Humphrey

The Hon. Samuel Rawson was born in West Stockbridge, Mass., in the year 1781, Oct. 14th.

Of his life little is known as to the nature and extent of it, but that it was a thorough one, and well supplemented by his own reading, was evident to those who knew him. The piercing mind, well-stored with knowledge gained during an eventful life, and the dry wit which characterized his conversation, daily refreshed and enlivened all who came in contact with him.

His wife Lydia Burgett by name was also of New England birth, and their marriage occurred in Mass. but the date of it cannot now be ascertained. Five children were born to them [Norman, Erastus, Esther, Augustus and Rachel], some of whom now survive.

In the early years of the present century, the family journeyed from their New England home to western New York. In 1812, Mr. Rawson, afterwards known as Judge Rawson, purchased a farm in the west part of district No. 1, which contains the village of Victor. "The next year, he moved his family on his purchase, and began to clear his land." Here they remained; and upon this homestead, still the property of the Rawsons—occurred the death of the "Judge," March 4th, 1874, [he] having spent the last sixty years of his life in Victor. In considering the subject of our sketch as a citizen, we find in him that spirit of enterprise, independence, and courage which is so strongly characteristic of the early settlers of our town. Something of the mental strength and energy of this man is clearly indicated by the sentiment of the following toast, given by him at a 4th of July celebration held in 1832, he being vice-president of the day:

"Bigotry, superstition and ignorance—may they from this day henceforth, hide their diminutive heads, and never again attempt to rivet the shackles on the freemen of Victor." Here is the same true ring of patriotism, and the same spirit behind the words as was shown by the men of 76, who drew up and signed the Declaration of Independence.

Judge Rawson held various town offices. That he was most efficient as an officer is (?) proven by the fact of his serving continuously as magistrate for twenty five years[,] being chosen first by appointment and later by election. He was also supervisor four terms, an associate judge and at one time member of assembly.

During his residence in Victor, the Judge was a staunch adherent of the Universalist church, though reared with his brother and sisters in the Presbyterian faith. Always a regular attendant at Divine service, he continued going long after he had lost his hearing. When questioned by his

[Rawson, Samuel]

family as to why he still went, he replied with a merry twinkle of the eye that he "did it to set a pattern for young people."

Many living now remember his erect military bearing as he walked, always walked, from preference, to and from church. It is also mentioned in regard to his appearance that he retained to the last a certain courtliness and dignity of manner which was his pre-eminently.

In conclusion may we say truly, that like the disciples of old, he followed gladly in the footsteps of the Master and though his life was long, and lived in treacherous times, yet, at the close of it, all could be summed up in these words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

*Victor Herald*, Victor NY, Sat. 5 Jul 1895

Transcribed on 12 Nov 2018 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY