

Our folks —

Here I is — not exactly in the Bay State, but clear to the tother end of Michigan, a smart chance towards the west. Well, I started from Detroit in a teamster's wagon, the stage being crowded, for Marshall, the county seat for Calhoun Co. A distance of about 130 from Detroit. First day we made Ann Arbour, the shine town of Washtenaw. Second Jacksonburgh the capital of Jackson and the third Marshall. It rained and hailed during our passage here so that the roads for a considerable portion of the way were bad — very rough — hard riding. The counties of Wayne, Washtenaw and a part of Jackson are nothing to "brag on" if they are in Michigan. But as you go west the country becomes better — the land more fertile — more beautiful in appearance and the inhabitants look more like folks — their dwellings more comfortable, and all around looks prosperous. The western part of Jackson and whole of Calhoun abound in wheat lands of the first quality, thousands of acres are to be seen as you pass along which look fine — such as I have never seen in Yorkstate. The oak openings — the plains and the timberland are, from the appearance of the crops, of the richest soil — Ann Arbour is quite a village, on the Huron River — some 600 or 800 inhabitants. There are quite a number of small villages in this section consisting of a few houses, stores and so forth collected around Mills. Jacksonburgh on the head waters of the Grand River is nothing much, about as large as Abbott's Corners. Marshall is a lively place of about 1000 or 1200 inhabitants I should think, with a bank, two papers, mills, etc.

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Started from Marshall on my own responsibility. That is, on foot. Took a southwest direction through a part of Branch into St. Joseph to Constantine — a distance of 90 miles. Came 35 miles the first day, and arrived on the third, about 8 o'clock P.M. My walkers were pretty considerably well tuckered out, and my feet blistered. This is the finest county that I have yet seen, and it would make you sigh for the land of the west if you were to see it once. Hamburg would lose its attractions, and you would wish never to behold it again. The soil, so rich and fertile — so easy of cultivation — so productive with all, that the labour which is necessary to insure a good crop is nothing what it is compared with York State. The openings consist of land covered with oak timber very scattering and not very large. The oaks are of several kinds — the white oak, the burr oak, and the red oak. It takes from three to four yoke of oxen to make a beginning or to break the ground for the first time, on account of the heavy roots which are under the turf. I passed one large prairie — the Notawassippi about 6 miles long and 3 broad — it looked elegant. On one side the St. Joseph wound along — on the other was the forest. These plains make ground farms, not a stump or a stone — nothing but a fine soil to work in. O 'tis fine business to farm it in Michigan. Wheat in this region is \$10 per bushel. Oats about the same, all other kinds of produce in proportion. They raise from 30 to 40 bushels per acre, but the great demand at the west always produces a market at high prices.

Constantine is situated on the St. Joseph about 150 miles from Lake Michigan by way of the river. It has one store and doing a fine business. A steam boat is being built to ply between this place and the mouth of the river. This is most beautiful place. The St. Joseph is a fine stream about twice as large as Buffalo Creek up home, running at a rate of four miles an hour — of pure water, and plenty of fish.

Yesterday, Monger, two more fellows and myself took a ride over into Indiana, to Fisher's Lake, upon which we had a fine sail and passed through, White Pigeons Village situated on a prairie of the same name. You cannot conceive how beautiful this section is. All that has been told of Michigan does not come up to the reality in my estimation. The lands, however, have all been entered, and are now to be purchased only second handed. But there is a fine chance here at that. I know of one — a farm of 180 acres — 130 under improvement which if I owned I would not exchange it for all Hamburg. It is for sale at \$5500. \$2500 down the rest in two years. It is near Constantine about three fourths of a mile distant and two miles from White Pigeon, with a good frame house and barn. The land alone last year rented for \$800 by which you may see it is worth something. If you could only sell out in Hamburg and come here you would never regret it for the farm would pay for itself in a short time. The county is healthy, as I should judge from the appearance of the inhabitants and from those with whom I have conversed.

I do not know how long I shall stay here for Monger cannot tell yet whether he shall have employment for me. I shall stay at any rate until I hear from H. I intend to remain here if possible for I like this place better than any I have seen. Business, or rather money is scarce here as well as at all other places. Went to church this forenoon, in a school house, pretty good preaching — great many folks — black as half indians, good many of them, for they go out in the sun without covering, women and ,all. I am now in a store, on the banks of the river, a pleasant place — as you ever did see. What are all the peoples about? I spose they have plenty of gossip to amuse themselves with their hard time. If I leave here I may go to Chicago and from there to the Mississippi in Illinois. Write as soon as you receive this, and send by steamboat as it will come much sooner than by mail.

F. Bragman