

The Petoskey Record Wed 2-11-1885

Communicated.

Things which have Happened and been Seen in Emmet County Mich.

I have seen eight years of actual Homestead life in the woods of Emmet county confronting all the inconveniences this kind of life could be subject to, having homesteaded 160 acres of land seven years ago, on which we moved several hundred dollars in debt, which now is all paid and we have lived- not as comfortable as one might admire, but we have neither starved nor frozen as many persons would like to have it appear to the outside world.

This portion of the great state of Michigan hardly gets credit for what it can raise and produce. I have seen spring wheat grown here on the farm of John Wagley, of Cross Village, which threshed out (machine measure) 33 bushels to the acre, and I believe the wheat was sown by a man by the name of M.M. Hughes, who now resides in Center Township. I have seen a great many men come here looking for land and pass this same farm and say; I would not take this land as a present and pay taxes on it. Why did they talk so? Because they did not know what they were talking about. When you come to Emmet county, land looking, don't be too ready to pass an opinion or somebody who hears you will know that you don't know anything. There are a good many kinds of land buyers who come here. Some come and think they can sponge their way on the settlers along the line of their travel. Others come fully prepared to buy. The first man they meet is a homesteader who will not work. No fence on his farm. No buildings of any importance. First question- how long have you lived here? Seven years probably. Five acres bogged over- man strong and able bodied. How do you like the country? "Well, I like the country well enough but can't raise nothing here." The reason is because he don't try. He will run into some village, and spend half his time condemning the country. Next man he meets has thirty or forty acres cleared, fenced, and in a good state of cultivation. How long have you lived here? Four years; homesteaded this land, or bought it of the man who did homestead it. Where is he now? Left the country, couldn't live here. Now there is no doubt that the first farm he passes is just as good or a little better than the last but being a stranger don't like to purchase because he is afraid of getting what he thinks is a poor piece of land. Keep off the clay land in Emmet county, unless there is a couple feet of sand or gravel on top of it. One foot is not enough. After the land is cleared it will work down and the clay will appear on top. When it does this it is no longer of any use as a good farm in Emmet county. It is too clammy and cold a character of land for the

short seasons. Does not get warm quick enough, so it is far better to get sandy or gravely land. It cannot be possible for any man who has ever turned his attention to farming in Emmet county to utter any definite opinion as to general farming here. There is not a farm hardly to be found in the whole county which is not yet covered with stumps, and roots, and all kinds of dying and sour matter. Warm up your land by sowing clover. Get the sour substance reduced to its proper place in the earth. Apply more labor on less land, and then compare five years of farming here with five years any where else in the state and you will find you have a good balance in favor of this part of the state. It has been my lot quite recently to hear farmers say, I wish my land would show as fine crops as it did the first year after I cleared it off. To those I would say, sow clover, plow it down, and your expectations will be met fully. Don't sell hay and straw off the farm. Drive it off on hoof and you will reap the reward of your own labor and your land will blush to think you have been so generous as not to haul from the farm until there is nothing left but a shadow of what once was 160 acres of as good land as the sun ever shone upon.

Farmers here as well as else where will find that there is one hard problem to solve, and that is this; the farm never sleeps and the farmer should only sleep eight hours out of twenty-four. The other sixteen he should be up for fear the farm should fall asleep. Again, don't find yourself fishing on Monday, gone to town on Tuesday, running the cattle out of your corn on Wednesday; Thursday over to neighbor Jones' to see what he is doing, Friday commence hoeing potatoes which should have been hoed two weeks previous, Saturday gone to the post office after your mail, Sunday chop wood all day, as you are pretty sure every body has gone to church or Sabbath School- therefore you will have to keep nobodys company on this day. Moral. Too much familiarity breeds contempt. Stick to the farm six days of the week and the farm will stay by you seven. One for interest on your investment.

O.I.C.