



A SPECULATOR'S DIARY

John M. Gordon

John Montgomery Gordon, a Baltimore banker, accompanied by Clement Biddle, a relative of his wife, travelled to Michigan in July 1836, at the height of the land rush, bought thousands of acres, and established a considerable fortune. He kept a diary—which now reposes in the Maryland Historical Society—from July to December 1836, when he travelled from Baltimore to New York City, up the Hudson to Albany, then to Buffalo, across Lake Erie to Detroit, and then by horseback across to Lake Michigan through the southern part of the state.

Gordon kept the diary in the hope that it “will form a connected narrative of the successive steps towards the formation of an opinion, will shew to my posterity the lights I acted under, whether successfull or unsuccessfull in my Land purchases and will be a convenient mode of informing my friends of the state of that North West country should any of them wish to invest in it.” The diary does indeed achieve its purpose; it is an indispensable source for an understanding of Michigan at the height of the land boom. Intelligent

travel accounts, of which Gordon's is a prime example, are among the most useful primary historical sources.

Gordon was born in Virginia in 1810; like many sons of socially prominent southern families, he went north to college, graduating from Yale in 1830. After his marriage in 1833, he moved to Baltimore and began a career in banking and law; his wife was a member of the Biddle family, which was prominent in banking and politics. Major John Biddle, the head of the federal land office in Detroit, naturally received him graciously. Gordon's diary, alas, is incomplete. It begins with a copiously detailed account of his travels to Buffalo and Detroit; the edited portion below includes most of his adventures in traveling through Michigan. The later parts of the diary have been lost.

As he forayed across Michigan on horseback on the Territorial Road, little escaped his notice. We find detailed analyses of land forms, travel accommodations, mishaps, all kinds of people, including the Indians. He was present at Grand Rapids during the distribution of payments to the Indians under the terms of the Treaty of Washington of 1836. Of greatest value to the historian, however, are the discussions of land speculation, speculators, and their role in the soon-to-be state of Michigan. Gordon was only one among many land speculators who descended on Michigan during the land rush of the 1830s. Although a speculator himself, he was ambivalent about his own speculations. In 1836, the year of Gordon's visit, the astonishing total of 4,189,823 acres of public land were sold in Michigan. This figure represented more than one fifth of all public lands sold in the United States since 1789, when public land sales began. So many speculators were buying land in Michigan that President Andrew Jackson issued his famous "Specie Circular" of July 1837, which ordered that only hard money (i.e., specie) be taken in payment for public lands. Since many speculators had been buying up public lands with highly fluctuating paper currency issued by state banks, the Specie Circular had a dampening effect on land speculation in Michigan. While Gordon was aware of President Jackson's decree, its effects were obviously not felt until several months had passed.

The diary does indeed convey a sense of the speculative craze that pervaded Michigan at the height of the land boom. Wherever Gordon went he asked what lands were selling for; 100% was considered the minimum return anyone would consider for an investment. The government price of \$1.25 an acre seemed ridiculously lower than its true value. Gordon prospered as a result of his investments. He died in 1884.

Modern readers will recognize that "Ann Harbour" is in fact Ann Arbor (the origin of the name is in controversy). "Jacksonburg" is of course one of the early names of the city of Jackson; "GoGwack" refers to Gowagiac. Gordon's spelling and usage have been preserved; some paragraphs have been broken up for easier reading. As mentioned, the original diary reposes in the Maryland Historical Society; the excerpts here are taken from the version edited by George S. May and Douglas H. Gordon in *Michigan History* 43 (March, June, September and December, 1959). By permission of *Michigan History* magazine.

Detroit Monday 12 at night Octr. 3rd: Arriving here at 6 P.M. we put our trunks into a cart and rode in it to the Exchange Tavern, which being full to overflowing we drove on to the American where with much difficulty we obtained a room in an adjoining shed. Having purified ourselves I sent my letter to Major [John] Biddle, who lives in the next house, and waited on us immediately and carried us home to meet a small whist party, consisting of some dozen military & legal gentlemen. . . . The Society of Detroit to judge from what I saw this evening, must be very good. I like the tone of its manners if I have apprehended it rightly, and I attribute it to the fact that D[etroit] has always been a military post. At Major B[iddle]'s I saw a Miss Biddle, a daughter of a gentleman of that name, at Mackinaw, by his full-blooded Indian wife, who is a Chippeway [sic] by birth and disdains to profane her lips with the language of white men. She is an interesting girl of about 16 and is receiving a good education. Her father is a fur trader which class of persons often intermarry with the tribes from motives of merchandize & because white women are not at hand nor suited to their style line.

Tuesday Octr. 4th. Breakfast this morning with Major B[iddle], with whom I passed several hours in conversation. He has been a Land register at this place for some 16 years. The several L[and] offices in Michigan all deposit their receipts here which under the system of specie payments have to be brought down in ox carts over roads barely passable. Drafts on Philadelphia banks he thinks can be cashed for me at par. But the difficulty will be in transportation to the land offices, at which I may take up land. Major B. thinks investments at \$1.25 cts. [per acre] are entirely safe, but does not anticipate as large profits as most persons do. He is of the opinion that speculation may retard the growth of Michigan & that the stream of migration may be diverted. But to this it may [be] conclusively objected, that the Lakes & Erie Canal have a natural monopoly of travel for the N. York and N. England redundant [surplus] population. If it is diverted it must pour into Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, which are already thickly settled, or into Wisconsin which is farther in a straight line west & much inferior in commercial and agricultural advantages. With regard to speculation, if it keeps large bodies of land out of cultivation, then those which are in market will have more ready sale.

But mere speculation, generally speaking, cannot hold on for any length of time. If they have bought on borrowed capital, then their investments are not permanent. But in truth every actual settler

is a speculator to the extent of his means and buys for the purpose of sale as many acres as he can lay his hands on. And again if speculation is to retard the growth of the state it is only in those parts where it has been ripe and therefore such as are chiefly occupied by settlers must improve faster. In this view it will be my aim to get into the column of immigration and make my location in its track. The Govt. price of land \$1.15 (which should be considered only as the office fee) is so much below its intrinsic value and settlers will so readily give the first purchaser a few dollars advance (having sold their lands at home for \$20, \$30, \$50, & \$75) that when the public Domain is exhausted in Michigan, that which is in second hands will quickly be consumed by the increasing demand of an increasing population accompanied with a decreasing supply. . . .

The surplus population of the free states will always migrate to the free states, and they are the finest race of men the world affords for the settlement and rapid development of a new region. They go to the west to plant themselves and their posterity ever & for this reason the growth of the country they inhabit is progressive, destined to run no race of renovation and decay. The population being free may be multiplied to any degree of . . . [concentration]. Having vegetated on the bleak rocks of N.E. they find the climate of Michigan genial to their constitutions and its soil a Delta, and being prepared to make the most of it, in their hands it becomes as productive as the cotton and sugar plantations of the south. The staple products of the North western states make a better return to the Earth. The southern states having a mixed population, most obey a limit in its density. They work upon the system of killing the Goose which lays the golden egg. The mass [southern settlers], regardless of posthumous wealth, strive only to create a fortune for their own enjoyment, and having no tap roots in the soil, are eager to abandon it when the object of their cupidity is attained. They are destined to run the course of the old slave states. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin are to supply them with food and become the grain growing states of the country. Their geographical position, their soil & population destine them to this end.

The population of Michigan in 1834 was 87,263 which is nearly triple the number of 1830. It is now estimated at 150,000 and will doubtless in a few years reach one half million. Ohio is now well charged with inhabitants containing, at a low estimate, 1,200,000, Indiana 500,000 and Illinois say 300,000. Emigration will probably flow into Michigan until something like a level is found and, as I think, even after that. Because of its great commercial facilities, it

being a great Atlantic Western state, combining the advantages of both. It has natural channels of commerce radiating as from a common centre and commanding the Atlantic through N. York, the Canada, the southwestern states through the tributaries of the Mississippi, & being surrounded by navigable Lakes has the advantages of the Mediterranean coasts, add to which it is deeply penetrated by navigable streams from every coast which can easily be connected by canals, and the surface of the country in every direction is so level that rail roads may be constructed with but small cost of graduation.

The region North of the Grand River & west of the Saganaw has not been brought into the market, not having yet been surveyed. That which lies below these rivers is represented to be, for the most part, of great fertility, well covered with timber, well watered and healthy. The upper half of the peninsula, as far as it is known, is not favorably described, and, probably, will be settled slowly. Hence a strong cause for the more rapid improvement of the southern half, which likewise being contiguous to Ohio received a large share of her redundant population, for even that infant state has already become, in its turn, a mint shop of nations. Upon the whole I look forward to the progress of Michigan in the race for improvement to be as clear as the sun in its daily course. Other views might be here suggested but I leave them to be noted down as they are proved and corrected by my own observation; those which have been presented shew the tendency of lands in Michigan to attain an equilibrium with those of adjacent states. Improved farms in the western part of N.Y. sell for \$50, 60, 70, to \$100 per acre, wild lands from \$20 to \$50, that is, of a choice quality such as now may be taken up in this state. During the morning I held a conversation with a Mr. Misner, a land agent here and gathered from him information relative to the country on St. Clair River, in which he is prepared to make locations. My impressions upon the whole are not very favorable of that part of the state, & I shall take care to be well informed before taking any definite steps. Major B. calls in a few minutes to carry me to see Haskell, land receiver at Saganaw. This has been a very wet day & the mud in the streets from late rains is knee deep.

6 P.M. I saw Haskell. He has come down from Sagana [sic] to bring specie for Deposit in Detroit. There is much fine land, he tells me, still to be taken up in his district, whence I can go to the Grand River by sleeping out one night. He thinks well of the sections watered by the Shiawassa, the Cass & the Tittewasse; which were likewise recommended to me by Carroll of Washington. I prefer a more

southern part of the state, though Govern. [Lewis] Cass, is of the opinion that Sagana will be the seat of Government as the state is settled. . . . I am still undetermined which land office to visit first. KeKalamazo is said to have been very much culled. Grand River has been the favorite of speculators and Sagana has not so large a stream of settlers setting towards it. Tonight I shall converse with Deacon and determine, upon the information derived from him, upon the route we shall pursue. Grand River I shall certainly visit. . . .

9 P.M. Spent the evening at the exchange with Deacon upon the best route to pursue. He is very intelligent & familiar with the Country, in which he has resided since the Black Hawk war, and does the business of a general land agent for the location of lands. . . . There is still, he informs me, much good land to be had in the Kalamazo [sic] district, which he prefers to any of the others, on a/c of the lower latitude, the denser population[,] the small portion held by speculators, & the excellence of the soil. He will undertake to guide me through the woods in the selection of a quantity not less than 4000 acres, and inasmuch as he will be a most agreeable companion & I shall be able to obtain much information from him, I shall probably come to terms with him, after ascertaining more about him from Major B. and his other acquaintances. He is the son of a Capt. in our Navy, handsome & about 23 years of Age.

Wednesday Octr. 5th. Noon[.] We have determined to go hence to the Kalamazo district with Deacon and shall proceed tomorrow or the next day to Bronson, the place of the Land office (often called Kalamazo) on horseback, from which point we shall direct our course up the St. Joseph. From the K. district we shall direct our course up to Grand river and down it, if possible, across Lake Michigan into Wisconsin thence Home via the Miss. We have been looking into the stables for horses but can find none as yet to suit us. The road west is so bad at this season that it is desperation to attempt it in the stage, or rather wagon. The passengers walk most of the distance and are repeatedly upset, beside which applications must be made for seats a week ahead. Another wet day. I do not feel my zeal for a long ride at all abated.

10 1/2 P.M. Spent the evening at Genrl. Brady's, with the party I met at Major B's. I made the acquaintance of Major Whiting and several other gentlemen. In the afternoon I called [on] Meredith (a college acquaintance) & Bush, whose sister he married. (Her property like that of every one else has risen greatly in value.)

Thursday Octr. 6th. 2 P.M. I bought a very good looking young

Roan this morning for \$92. He is a spirited animal though I fear a little young for hard riding and harder fare. He is a good walker and has a perfectly sound back, an important quality for one's steed in making a journey west. I purchased likewise an India rubber over coat and some other necessities to protect my person from the weather. An umbrella I discarded. We shall set forth tomorrow if the day prove[s] good. Our route will lead us through Ann Harbour [sic], leaving Ypsilanti on the South. Biddle has likewise furnished himself with a horse and trappings. . . . Our saddle bags are packed and ready for an early start.

Friday Octr. 7. 1 1/2 P.M. Gurley's [an inn] 14 miles from D[etroit]. We left D. at 9 1/2 and have stopt here to dine. There was quite a crowd to see us off at the tavern door as is usual at the departure of travelers like our selves. Our equipment, mackinaw great coat, &c were quite a sight. The day rose fair but became cloudy & raw, our horses performed well, however, and the country had too much of the charm of novelty to me to make the ride unpleasant. At leaving Detroit we followed the banks of the [Detroit] river for several miles, along the road which leads to the fronts of many small oblong farms of the old French settlers, which are a few acres wide & run back several miles. On some of them I noticed orchards of fruit trees, particularly some ancient pears, which must be a century old. Turning our faces west after proceeding 5 or 6 miles we struck the River Rouge, a most melancholy looking stream, and traced its course for some miles crossing it occasionally on very precarious bridges. Here I would think the New England migrant might enjoy the ague & fever nine months in the year & the bilious, for the other three. Our general route thus far lay through a level & wet country, in geological character very much like the "Marsh" in Fauquier Co. Va. but much more fertile. It is clothed with a very thick and heavy growth of timber, is well settled & the soil appears to be adapted to grass, in an eminent degree. The road, which was very bad, was thronged with travellers from the neighbourhood, and Emigrants. One Inn Keeper told me that 40 wagons stopt at his house daily with an average of 100 immigrants, chiefly bound for Illinois and Wisconsin. I conversed with most of those whom we overtook and ascertained their departure and destination to be from N York & N England & to Michigan & the two states named above. Wayne C. contains about 25000 inhabitants, being the oldest settlement & the most populous county in the state. I should suppose it to be unhealthy.

Plymouth. 6 1/2 P.M. 26 m. We have just reached this little

village [sic] which is situated at 4 cross roads, contains about 50 or 60 houses, 300 inhabitants and is 7 years old. For the distance of 20 miles our route led us over the worst road imaginable, what to the emigrant must be a "slough of Despond" and through the same level, heavy timbered land described this morning. The soil contains a large proportion of clay and while it holds water on its surface long, has no inclination to give current to its streams. . . . The soil, as may be supposed, is admirably adapted to the growth of grass, which springs up spontaneously in great luxuriance when the trees have been cut away, and, near the road, several of the cultivated species are to be discovered, which have doubtless been transplanted in a measure by the food & manure of horses. . . .

The country has been settled some ten years and land near the road is worth, improved \$20 to 25, and wood \$10 to 15. Six miles from this place, we left the heavy timber and passed into a sandy soil with light oak woods. The soil is like the Rappck. [Rappahannock River in Virginia] bottoms, of fair quality, but with too large a dose of sand, perhaps. . . . The settlements on the road are quite frequent. I was informed to day by an intelligent man, with whom we rode for an hour, that he took up public lands [at \$1.25 an acre] 5 years since, nine miles from Ann Harbour (which we pass through) and now would not be willing to sell them under \$30 per acre. We had delicious potatoes and butter for our supper. Opposite me at the table I recognized some emigrants who were passengers in the Michigan. They are going to Chicago & take out with them improved breeds of cattle, hogs, fowls, to establish a grazing farm. The stock go around by steam boats. . . . Few get through without accidents to their wagons or horses. The women and children walk the greater part of the way. We passed, six miles from Detroit, a young man & wife travell[ing] in a covered two horse wagon, who were laid up by a broken wheel. . . . They were very young, just married, of highly respectable and refined appearance and were giving up a comfortable life & agreeable establishment in N. York (city) for a farm near Chicago. . . . I saw not one stone of any size between this place and D, the want of which will render Turnpikes very expensive, if not impracticable, though on the other hand the perfect level of the Country adapts it to the construction of Rail Roads. It is to become the Goshen of Michigan. A rail Road is under construction from D. to the mouth of St. Joseph's River, of which 30 miles are to be in operation next Spring. This will be a great facility to the traveller. The country immediately around this place is heavily wooded. Lots in the village of 1/4 acre each sell for \$100 to

\$500. Every person with whom I converse tells me that govrt. lands well selected must rise 50 to 100 percent per annum. . . . The timber we saw today consisted of oak, walnut, hickory, wild poplar, sugar tree, &c &c all of very large growth and clothed with the resplendent hints of autumn. Henceforward we traverse the region of Oaks which now becomes the predominating tree until we reach the Lake.

Satr. Octr. 8th. Prays [an inn] 6 miles. We arose at 5 & have stopt here to breakfast. I slept last night in an open garret under a crack and awoke with a stiff neck. Cloudy. We have had bad roads again and passed through a region heavily timbered, with frequent clearings on the road. Oaks of the circumference 9 to 15 feet abound in the forests. Such are their dimensions generally to Detroit. I remarked this morning some of the largest Black Walnut I have ever seen. The soil appears to be very fertile and a little more clayey from its proximity to a water course. Having stopt at a farm house to procure a glass of new milk (the water is all Limestone and creates a thirst) I was informed by the owner that he had bought the 80 acres on which he lives 2 years since at \$15 per acre. It has few improvements but has been cultivated some 15 years and seems to be very rich. Marl abounds through the county and state generally of so pure a quality that it is used for lime. We have seen very little stone yet. The surface of the earth is becoming more rolling. This Inn is full of Emigrants and their children are crowding around me while I write with the rabid curiosity of genuine Yankeys. The men are prying into my saddle bags & the pockets of my Mackinaw. This is a substantial 2 story brick house, a rare thing in the interior, as the soil contains lime which when burnt slacks and destroys the Brick. Hence, being without stone likewise, the architecture of Michigan must in great degree be confined to wooden materials. The Land lord tells me he entertains about 50 emigrants a day and lodges about 30. Taverns occur at short intervals and there is another main route west parallel [sic] & a few miles south of this, on which the travel is reported to be greater. These data will enable us to form some idea of the amount of Emigration pouring into this part of the state. Beside which there are other streams setting up to Grand River and Sagana. When the obstacle of impassable roads (at certain seasons) is overcome by rail roads and canals, what an inundation of population will sweep over the state? A National Territorial Road is under construction from Detroit to the mouth of the Grand River, commenced by the Genrl. [i.e., federal] Govrt. It will be a fine highway when finished, and the canal which is projected from the falls of that River to D. will bring all that fine country under rapid settlement. . . . Land

here is worth cultivated \$20 & woods \$10. Settlements had penetrated but a few miles from D. and the belt of wet land described had given a character to the whole interior, which with the ignorant and unfavorable account of the Indian traders prevented emigration from extending westward. No sooner how[ever] was this barrier passed and the excellent quality of the soil beyond it ascertained than a torrent of population poured in, which is rapidly covering the whole face of the state.

Lima[,], 17 m. from Prays 3 P.M. Stimson's[.] We dine here. This house is kept by an Englishman and was a favourite stopping place to the traveller whose daintily fed horse could not eat prairie or wild hay he being the only cultivator of tame grass, this side of D. 3 or 4 years since. He still keeps up the sign "English Hay." . . . We passed through Ann Harbour, where we stopt 1/2 hour. The country to that place is a little rolling for the first few miles from Prays, and then the Oak openings begin. They are clothed with a thin growth of large Brash White Oak, & some Burr Oak at long intervals (say 30 or 40 feet) with an undergrowth 5 or 6 feet high which has the appearance of being annually burnt down, as I am informed it is. This periodical burning of the woods produced what is called "oak openings" on the beauty of which the Western tourist is so fond of enlarging. The larger & hardier trees being alone spared and all the dead wood & undergrowth consumed, it assumes the appearance of a grove carefully kept near a gentleman's residence and it is difficult to divest yourself of the impression that you are approaching a stately mansion through a stately forest. It thus has the charm of inviting the traveller still on, and if he has a lively sensibility to the softer beauty of natural scenery he may wander from rise of moon to set of Sun in these arcadian regions in groves of Oaks. . . . The Burr Oak is a variety I have never seen before. . . . It is very like the pear tree about the same size, an excellent wood for burning & agricultural purposes and when constituting the sole growth is an infallible indication of the very best quality of soil. They are preferred to any other species of Land and are hard to be obtained now, having been generally taken up. Oak opening grow at wide intervals, like a regularly planted orchard; they generally have no undergrowth, except grass, though doubtless the ground must be full of rootes, whose tops are kept down by the annual fires, and hence, when guarded from conflagration, having such a strong hold in the soil, these invisible and well grown rootes soon spring up into fine timber. This process I am informed is going on, as emigration keeps the fires in check, and regions which now are

scarce of wood will soon have an abundant supply. On each side of Ann Harbour the soil is of an excellent quality light, a little sandy with lime and resting on clay. The settlements on the road we passed to day are very thick, being in farms from 80 to 200 acres. The buildings are good, consisting chiefly of wood framed Houses one & a half stories high, with good out buildings, all presenting an appearance of comfort and neatness which indicate the occupants to be Yankeys. The travelling today, independently of mere emigrants, [is greater] than in any part of the interior of Va. with which I am acquainted. We passed some dozen respectable looking men on foote, who informed us they were going to Kalamazo to take up land and bring out their families. The country back from the road is as thickly settled, I am told, as that immediately on it. The region of oak openings in which we now are, runs North some distance and west to the Lake. It presents certain facilities for agriculture. The trees are belted in the fall with little labour and the ground being slightly plowed and harrowed yields from 20 to 25 bush. wheat, other grain proportion, and 300 or 400 bush. potatoes. In this vicinity, land is worth improved \$25 to 30\$, wood \$10 to \$15 & the settlements are thick in farms of 80 to 200 acres.

Ann Harbour is the county seat of Washtenaw Co. and contains 3000 inhabitants (the county say 20,000). It has sprung into existence in the last 4 years. The Huron which runs by the town affords good water power with which 10 acres sold four years since for \$100—last spring \$10,000 & could not now be had for less than \$20,000. A farm near the vilage sold last spring for 50\$ per acre. . . .

Jacksonville. Rose at 4 1/2 oclock, which was before light, and have come to this place to breakfast. It is Sunday morning and the bar room in which I write is crowded with tavern frequenters. I am writing and conversing with them at the same time, putting down such answers to my questions as shew the state and progress of the country. This vilage is three years old, is the county seat of Jackson County and contains 500 inhabitants. It is situated on one of the head waters of the Grand River, which is navigable by boats to the main stream, and carried on a good deal of commerce in flour &c last spring and summer down the river, to Ionia, Grand Rapids, &c. . . . A large farm near the vilage, lately sold for \$30 per acre, and cannot now be had at double that price. Improvements are going on at a rapid rate. The country we passed through this morning is rather more rolling than that of yesterday and appears to be more fertile. It contains more lime and we saw many Boulders in spots. Settlements are not so thick along the road now and many of them are in the first

state of rude log cabins and we saw, in one or two instances the emigrant & his family, who had just reached their lot. The wagon was drawn up to one side in the woods, the children were gathering the bright flowers of autumn, the mother looking around on the wild woods in which she had been set down and the father and his sturdy sons were making the finest trees for the logs of their cabin. There is something wild and pleasing at thus finding oneself on the frontier of settlement. One of these immigrants informed me that he had purchased his lot (80 acres) last year for \$9, all of it in wood without a clearing, but lying on both sides of the Road. Wood land in this vicinity is worth from \$5 to \$10 according to quality. We had a scant night's rest after the ride of Yesterday. I slept on the floor and contrary to expectation has a very comfortable bed which the Landlady had given me after a little coaxing.

Some of the soil we saw in cultivation this morning was as black, as light and mellow, as an asparagus bed. Such indeed is the general character of that which we saw in this morning's ride. The constituent of lime in the condition of small pebble and sand, by slacking when the sod is turned, gives the soil a very dark colour, which continues to acquire a deeper hue, with several years cultivation. This is the source of great fertility, add to which the quantity of vegetable [sic] and ashes deposited by the annual fires, . . . and you have a deep & rich loam which will grease your fingers, and feels in the hand like a finely granulated brown sugar. I have rarely seen a richer tract of country than that which we are now traversing. . . .

The most communicative & intelligent persons I meet at the Taverns are the Doctors. They lounge in the Bar rooms to converse with travellers, are familiar with all the concerns of the county from their practice, and are thoroughly conversant with its growth and development. Being sociable and in want of the society of persons better educated than their patients usually are, they seize upon an intelligent traveller and ask as many questions as they are called upon to answer. Upon entering an Inn, if I have half an hour to spare, I always look around for the Esculapius of the neighbourhood who is not tardy in presenting himself.

Smith's T. 13 miles f. Jacksonburg. 2 P.M. We left Jacksonburg at 10 1/2 and have come only 13 1/2 miles to dinner. I[t] began to rain 7 miles back and we used our Indian rubber overalls for the first time, which proved to be an effective protection from wetting. They are almost too warm over the Mackinaw. The country continues to wear the same general features, slightly rolling, without anything like a

mountain or even a hill. Settlements are perhaps a little thicker. The houses in the second stage of advancement are generally framed and about 25 feet by 20 in dimensions, neatly finished, and in good order. Almost every one is a tavern from the necessity of the case and the regular Inns are at intervals of a few miles only.

I was told by a young physician, at the Inn where we stopt to put on our overcoats, that Jackson Co. has been settled 5 years, and as thickly everywhere as on the road. All the good Lands are taken up. Improved sell for \$20 to \$25, wood from \$5 to \$10. The Population, which consists chiefly of Yankeys & N Yorkers (there are few Irish, Dutch, or Swiss) is now about 8000. It is increasing very fast and has received an accession during the last year of about 1000. In 1834 its population was 1865. For the last six miles the soil has assumed a very black appearance and appears to be inexhaustibly rich. It is slightly undulating & covered chiefly with a thin growth of Burr oak openings, which as before stated indicate infallibly the most fertile lands. The undergrowth is a low scrub, the young shoots doubtless of old rootes, which render the ploughing at times not a little difficult and sometimes it has been found less labourious to clear and break the heaviest timber land. . . . Heavy timber land has one advantage, that it can be cultivated in corn or potatoes the first year by merely scratching the surface without penetrating the sod. With this trifling preparation of the ground the most abundant crops are produced. The Burr oak soil has been found to improve upon cultivation and is better the 7th than the first year. It grows blacker and more mellow at each turning, by the operation of the lime. No one has yet thought of manuring. The dark complexion [of the soil] pervades the whole tract south of the Grand River and westward to Lake Michg. owing to the presence of a great quantity of vegetable matter and ashes. We have passed in the last 20 miles many natural meadows more or less rich, some with small Lakes in the center, varying in size from one to one thousand acres, and covered with a tall coarse grass. They are very numerous now, and increase as we approach the heads & tributaries of the western streams. They are often connected in a long stream at intervals of 1/2 mile or more, by springs which run out of one into another and finally discharge themselves through a common brook into some river or lake. The Lakes discharge themselves in the same way and frequently alternate in the chain of meadows. Their surface is a water level, the texture of the soil is spongy & springy as black as lamp black and has somewhat the appearance of a fungus. The sod is tough and will bear a horse or wagon for some time, but when broken

through, you sink almost beyond extrication. They are composed probably for the most part of vegetable matter & natural loam with the deposit from the Lakes of which they are bottoms, or which, in many instances, may have been filled by beaver dams. Hence they are easily drained and become exceedingly productive of all kinds of grain and grasses. Timothy soon takes roote and is tenacious enough to drive out the natural vegetation, thus affording great facility to the farmer in the first preparation of his farm, by a supply of Hay & Grass at all seasons for his cattle. The convenience of placing their houses near them, for the use of the springs as well as meadow, which is a universal practice, is doubtless a great cause of the intermittent fevers which prevail to some extent among the first settlers. "Prairie" is a term often applied to these low grounds. Such as are above described are called wet prairies. When they have no outlet, the moisture passes off slowly by evaporation. The soil is friable and inexhaustibly rich. For some time, the wetter class were not much esteemed, but they are now growing more in favour and will doubtless in time become among the most valuable Lands of the state. There are like wise the heathy or bushy prairies which have springs and are covered with small shrubs, bushes, grape vines, &c. and are more common in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri & Wisconsin than Michigan, and the dry rolling prairie, generally destitute of water and almost of all vegetation but grass. These are the most common and extensive; the traveler may wander for days in these vast and nearly level plains, without wood or water and see no object above the horizon. These are the grazing grounds of the Buffalo, of this character is a large part of Illinois. Hence a great obstacle to their rapid settlement. Of the Heathy Prairie we have as yet seen no specimens, but shall as we advance farther West. The dry rolling kind, I understand is not found in Mich. All the accounts which settlers give me of the state must however be taken with many allowances for their imperfect sources of information. They are too much occupied with the urgent wants of the day to speculate or enquire much beyond their own farms, or the adjacent sections of land on which they have placed their eyes as a future addition for a son or daughter. . . .

Marshall, Calhoun Co. 9 P.M. Sunday, 17 miles from Smith's. We have made more than double a sabbath's day journey this day, 49 miles, the quickest riding we have done yet. Part of it was performed in the dark. We are in a comfortable Inn, our horses well stabled (I always look to them first) and while supper is making ready I write up my journal. From Smith's to within a few miles of this place, the

settlements are thin. The soil continues to be very fertile, a black loam about 18 inches deep, reposing on a bed of clay. Three years since there were no settlements 6 miles this side of Smith's. Now there are houses every 1/2 mile and farms on the road are worth from \$15 to \$20 [per acre]. But little land remains unlocated in this county which is 24 by 30 miles and contains 720 square miles or 460,800 square acres. Marshall contains about 1000 inhabitants, is two years old and is rapidly improving. Town lots of 4/5 acre sell for from \$100 to \$500. The Detroit and Maumee railroads are to pass through it and the citizens expect it will be the seat of Government, for that reason, & because it is nearly the center of population. I have not seen the village except on the street by which we entered, it being quite dark at our arrival. It appears, however to be finely situated on a plain, and is on the Banks of the Beautifull KeKalamazo. The County of Calhoun contains upwards of 3000 persons having doubled in population last year. Taken generally, its soil is better than Jackson County. This afternoon I saw a prairie Hen, sitting on a bough of the tree near the road a[nd] was able to examine it for 5 minutes. A flock of a dozen afterwards flew from the woods over our heads to the level ground near the KeKalamazo, while we were standing on a bridge across the stream which we had dismounted and turned the road to cross. The waters of the river at this point were beautifully clear, 40 feet wide or more, 2 or 3 feet deep, and quite rapid, affording probably good water power. Deacon says that purchases of farms second hand are better than Govrt. land to one residing on the spot, because they can be turned over often in a year and are a cash article always. When situated on or near the road, there are numbers of emigrants who from various causes, fatigue [sic], sickness of families, despondency of wives at the toil of a larger journey, &c &c are ready to fix themselves on a farm which is partly under way & they will pay a few dollars per acre more, rather than go farther with the uncertainty of supplying themselves so well or so soon with a home. . . . Few Emigrants were on the road today, being Sunday. They stop to refresh their horses, as well as to observe the sabbath, which is so strict a regulation in N. England. Land hear here is worth with the usual improvements, of log houses, from \$25 to \$30, and produced 20 to 40 bushels of wheat to the acre and the other crops in proportion. A Market for everything exists on the spot and will until this immense stream of emigrants ceases. They pass through like an army of Locust[s] and eat up everything before them. I must retire after supper to prepare for an early rise; tomorrow we shall reach Bronson. . . .

Monday Octr. 18th[.] 8 1/2 A.M. 7 miles from Marshall. The first 3 miles of this morning's ride were thinly settled, the last four, more thickly. . . . The [oak] openings present great facilities for roads especially rail roads, and indeed you may at almost every point drive a coach & four for miles through them in every direction. They embrace a large part of the western half of Michigan, extending to the shores of L. Michigan with occasional intervals of heavy timber & northward to Grand River. How much farther they run in that direction is not ascertained.

There are three main Roads through the state E & W. viz, that which we are travelling, the one which is parallel & pass through Ypsilanti to Chicago and the territorial road, which is to terminate at the mouth of the Grand River, beginning in Detroit. The worst part of all of which Roads is that passing for 20 miles through the Belt of wet timber land which runs North and south of the length of the state and skirts Detroit. . . . 2 P.M. 15 miles f. Breakfast[.] The country for two miles after Breakfast was rolling and of equal fertility with the region behind us. We crossed the KeKalamazo where there is a mill race to conduct the water to Battle Creek. They have a fall of 7 feet which is very valuable. On this side of the river in the bottom I noticed the colour of the soil and the wet places, indications of Iron ore. On ascending the high ground a beautifull view, took us by surprise; Prairie Gogwack lay before us in our path. Deacon had not apprised us that we were near it; It is the first dry prairie we have seen and is of a regular shape, one mile long and 2 wide, a dead level and fringed with beautifull oak openings. The whole is under cultivation, being laid off in half a dozen farms. The soil is black, as rich as fat, and light and friable as an old asparagus bed. . . . Only four years since it was taken up and cannot now be bought under \$25 per acre. Deacon tells me, it is too rich for wheat which it does not produce as well as the Burr Oak openings, but throws up the most luxurious crop of straw. It is however the best of all soils for corn, potatoes, oats, &c. It seized upon my imagination more than any place yet seen and I drew up my horse and lingered half an hour to admire it and cross question a farmer who was ploughing near the road. These prairie farms often produce a second & even third volunteer crop of wheat which yield as much as the fair sowing, & without any cultivation. . . . I have no time to say anything about the origin of these prairies; farther than to say that they are, in my opinion made by fires. They are numerous in the western part of the state, south of Grand River and East [sic] of Jacksonburg. . . . They are the first lands taken up from the facility with which they are

cultivated and their great fertility; though some emigrants prefer heavy timber, the soil of which they think is good, and the timber will [be] very valuable when it comes to be scarce. Near Bronson are Gull and Grand Prairie, and not far from the s.w. corner of Kalamazo county is situated Big Prairie Round, containing some 10,000 acres, surrounded with fine timber, containing in its center a body of 600 acres in wood the center of which again is a small clear lake full of fish. Of this prairie, or little Prairie Round near it, I have recd. the following account. When Emigration began to discharge itself some few years since, into Kalamazo & adjoining counties, two emigrants were informed by the Indians, that there was a large prairie about 30 miles back in the woods. (These prairies were the grounds on which the Indians raised their corn.) They started on horseback in search of it & having proceeded as far as they could go in that way spauseled their animals where there was good grass, put bells on them and continued on foot. In a few days they discovered the prairie and secured a large slice of it (by squatting with their friends, I suppose).

From GoGwack we passed into oak openings again of the most beautifull growth & finest quality of soil which continued to this place. One mile back we passed a school selection of very fine quality, which I am told is the character of all of them. It is somewhat singular and the fact is no mean proof of the excellence of the soil of Michigan in general. It seems that the General Government gave to the state every 36th section for a school. The counties are laid off into townships 6 miles square, and these again into miles square, which are numbered from 1 to 36. No. 16, the center section, belongs to the school fund and what is a most singular and fortunate coincidence there is hardly a number 16 in any of the counties which is not first rate soil, although located at random. Beside this liberal provision for education, the Genrl. Govrt. has given to the state 70 sections (first choice) for the founding & endowment of an university, all of which have been judiciously located by the commissioners, on prairies, town sites, meadows, &c and at present prices are estimated to be worth several millions of dollars. Twenty sections remain to be located. . . .

Bronson. 6 1/2 P.M. 11 miles from Earl's & 132 from Detroit. We made 32 miles today. We put up at Hawlys. For the distance of two miles from Earls our route lay through Oak openings, undulating, but of an excellent quality and thickly, though newly settled. We then crossed the Kalamazo where it was about 15 yds wide & came to a small prairie stretching along the Banks of the river & containing say 500 acres of a dark mellow could many inches deep, level & capable of

the easiest cultivation. After passing the prairie we came through a fine piece of level timbered land and along the side of Comstock's farm which contains 1200 acres, was located by him four years since & would now sell for \$30 per acre. It has water power and lies along the Kalamazo. . . . From his farm we followed the banks of the river to this place. Bronson is now the site of the Land office for Kalamazo district which was transferred from White Pigeon 3 years since and at the same time had another carved out of it which situated in Ionia Co. on the Grand River.

Tuesday Oct. 11th. 8 P.M. Rose early. After breakfast we walked around the town and looked over the maps with Deacon who pointed out the parts of Van Buren & Berrien Counties to which we shall direct our attention particularly. I have provided myself with a set of maps for Kalamazo, Jackson, Van Buren, Berrien & Allegan Counties. These maps are printed on a large scale being copies of the actual surveys of the counties, and shew the sections, small runs, lakes, ponds, marshes, &c; so that by knowing your position in the woods, you readily ascertain by an inspection of them, what obstacles you are to encounter or what Land marks you are to meet in any one direction. These surveys however are made in the winter & thus much bog & swamp being frozen escapes observation. However they are correct for all usefull purposes. In the after noon I went to the registers office and got the Clerk to mark off, as he is in the habit of doing, all sections of land and parts of sections which are located, that I may examine such only as are not taken up. This he does in red ink with the letter S for sold. The sections are divided first into quarters[,] these into halves[,] which make Eights, and the Eights again in halves which make sixteenths which last is the smallest subdivision containing forty acres. But none but an actual settler can enter less than one eighth[,] i.e. an 80 acre lot. By overlooking the Clerk in the operation, I got a good idea of the run of the settlements & state of the counties and thus became more familiar with these Points, than a week's conversation would have made me. Beside which, I thereby, picked up many hints from the cause of why certain districts are more or less cut in upon. I sat with him 3 hours. He is to copy for me the surveyors notes of all the sections and parts of sections unlocated, by aid of which I shall obtain very accurate information so far as their observations can be relied on, as to the quality of soil, growth of timber, level, water &c. I brought letters from Major Biddle to the Cashier of the Bank at this place and to the Register & Receiver, Messrs. Edwards & Sheldon. The C[ashier] thinks I can raise specie [i.e., coin] or its

equivalent by a draft from Detroit on the receiver here. I have \$8000 in treasury receipts. I had a long conversation with Sheldon last night. Like every one else he thinks things are in the full tide to fortune and investments in Public Land certain in a few years for 300 or 400 pr. ct. He himself has made a large fortune. Hammond is the name of the cashier, who I find has just been appointed and came up the lake with me from Buffalo. This place has been settled three years and now contains 1500 to 2000 inhabitants. Land in this vicinity is worth \$15 to \$20 in farms. We are lodged in a small room with two beds, Clem & I together. Our tavern is two stories, and 7-feet long with a proportionate depth. The stabling is good. We shall leave in the morning for the mouth of the St. Joseph looking at lands on the Right & Left as we go and return from which I shall make my selections. My maps enable me to see at a glance what lands are vacant and we have only to ride over and choose those which please us. The Land office at each place consists of two departments, the Register who enters your name & numbers & the receiver who takes the pay & gives you yr. duplicates which you hold as evidence of title until the patent issues. From the accumulation of business they are said to be three years behind at Washington in the business of the Land Department, but a late reorganization of it by Congress will soon bring up the patents to the pace of sales. . . .

Freeman's. 8 P.M. 26 miles from Bronson. Left Bronson at 10 A.M. taking a snack of arrow roote & milk at Fayette 16 miles from B. About 6 miles from B. we passed through a body of Land containing 4 or 5 sections which are still unlocated in Town 2 N of Range 12 West viz sections 31, 32, 33, 34, 27, 28, 39, 21, part of some of which have been entered. The road passes through [section numbers]. . . . Heavy timber may be had within a few miles on the Pawpaw. I am partial to heavily timbered land and have a good deal before me to make selections from. We examine these sections farther on our return. There is good water power at Fayette (a city in the germ) on the Pawpaw, which stream waters some fine timbered Lands. . . . We have put up for the night at Freemans[,] a log hut, of three rooms on the edge of a beautifull sheet of water, with a gravelly shore, and luxuriant border of wood, and abounding, as my host informs me, with a variety of good fish, a sweet position for a house. The canoe has floated off else we would have had a trial at spearing fish, the usual mode of catching them. . . . The vicinity has been settled about one year, and wood lands are now held at \$5 per acre as our Landlord informs me. I tasted the Lake white fish to night salted, of which such quantities are

caught and cured at Detroit, Mackinaw, &c. It is very white, of a most delicate flavor and in every respect superior to our shad of the Potowmack [sic] & Rappahannock. I have a nice mahogany table on which to write my journal while Deacon is talking to one of the neighbours, a late settler who having no family boards with Freeman. He states that the neighbouring forest abound in game, deer, Turkeys &c. Tomorrow we diverge from the road north and south to look at some unlocated sections. Clem has had a raging tooth ache all day and suffered much from the ride. . . .

I have not yet mentioned my equipment for travelling. In my saddle bags, I carry my wardrobe consisting of 3 shirts, 1 do flannel, 1 pr drawers, 3 do socks, 4 hnks, shaving apparatus, medicine, spring lancet, bandages, lint, . . . maps, 1 pack of playing cards, a pound cannister of arrow roote, some cakes of cocoa &c. I wear a coarse hair cap, a Blanket great coat, stout trousers & bootes, gaiters, and indian rubber over all, very light and strapped behind the saddle, likewise a small tin cup to boil my arrow roote in. In my pocket I keep a screw top inkstand, hair brush & comb, and blank book. In a second fob I carry my compass, an indispensable article in the woods. By the By mine is a very bad one, there being none good in Detroit and I neglected to take one with me which I had bespoken in Baltimore. These particulars may be amusing to my posterity at some future day, should my investments turn out well, and I am inclined to think that the foundation of a fortune may be made now, as was in the settlement of Va., on a small capital, with this diff. that it ripens to maturity in a few years in Michg. &c whereas several generations passed away in Va. before those large bodies of land were productive to the holders.

There is a party of half a dozen wagoners eating supper in the room where I write who have just come in and are discussing prices &c. There was no road along here a twelve month since & the first wagon which came in to St. Joseph across the country was looked upon as a great curiosity. The accession to our party for the night has made the sleepers outnumber the Beds and our landlord has inquired of Biddle whether he objects to sleeping upstairs with a strange gentleman who has retired & whom he will find very agreeable. Had Clem been a maid he would not have felt or expressed more astonishment at the proposition. We arrange the matter, however, by having a bed spread on the floor for Deacon & Clem & I [to] sleep together.

I have not mentioned . . . how one finds his position in the woods and identifies the section he wishes to locate. It is thus. The state is surveyed & laid off into square miles, which are designated by

townships running north and south of a base line passing through the center and by ranges running East & West of a certain meridian. The meridian & base line are equivalent to a parallel of latitude & meridian of Longitude and a particular section is read thus, viz. Town 1 North of Range 2 West section 25—and so on of the subdivisions of each section. The sections are numbered from one to 36 which compose a Township of six miles square. The 4 sides of sections are marked by blazed trees and the corners, where of course 4 sections meet, have 4 trees numbered within the Range, Town ship & Number of each section respectively—so that by following a line to a corner, reading the numbers on each tree and comparing them with Yr. farmers map, or map got at the [land] office, you ascertain your latitude & longitude. . . .

4 P.M. St. Joseph. . . . We arrived here at 11 1/2 A.M. Our route lay through heavily timbered land and in part through Oak openings. The road was muddy & deep in some places, being still quite new. Along its edge D. pointed out some bodies of woods which has been taken up and are owned by a person named Johnson from Connecticut, a young man, on which he could now realize an advance upon the cost of several hundred percent. All the land on the road has been taken a year since. As we approached the St. Joseph River, we passed through an extensive meadow over a corduroy road. The meadow is owned chiefly by the university [of Michigan] and will some day be valuable for its Hay which will find a market in the Town of St. Joseph or can be readily shipped to the town on the Lake. It lies between the Pawpaw & St. Joseph [rivers].

On the edge of the woods, sitting on the blasted top of a huge oak we saw a pair of gigantic Eagles which I endeavored to approach, but found the ground too wet to bear my horse. These enormous birds, probably, often cross the lake, 60 or 70 miles wide, at a flight and visit now and then the distant shores of Lake Superior. We cross the St. Joseph in a ferry boat. A bridge is now going up, on which the Detroit Rail Road is to run. The view of the Lake is charming, being still rough from the recent storms, which swept every sail from its surface, it chafes the shore like the ocean at Nahant or Long Branch. We are in a very good hotel on the Hill (the town is situated in part on a high & level Bluff) and see below us on the beach the steam Boat Milwaukie (I think) blown high and dry, and another large vessel aground within a few yards of the shore, but within the mouth of the river. After dinner at the Mansion House where I met some persons (whom I was introduced to in New York) we walked down the bluff

1/2 a mile to Deacon's cottage which he keeps, merely for the use of a private room and a bed, for the months that he remains here. The village, it is to be observed, is laid off into lots for a mile, perhaps, back into the original forest. About 150 acres, perhaps, are cleared, on which many very comfortable two story frame houses painted white & in the New England style are built or finished. D. has a beautiful Turkey carpet on his floor sent to him by his father, Capt. Deacon of U.S. Navy, and a good glass of wine to give us. We sat an hour discussing a glass or two of it and examined our maps and the surveyors notes with a view to laying down some general plan by which to shape our course when we start into the woods again which will be in a day or two. . . .

After making our memoranda, we walked down to the shipping part of the town which lies under the hill and visited a steam saw mill & freight boat, which were both built by Deacon within 2 years. He has sold out his interest in the latter, and 9/10 in the former. The Boat is a huge scow with wheels worked by a boiler, is now owned by a man named Porter, a merchant, who informs me that it yields a profit of 75 per cent on its cost, about \$2000. The mill is supplied with timber from Deacons woods on or near Pawpaw Lake. The last sale of a share was at the rate of \$80,000 for the whole. D. assures me that at present prices of lumber it nets a profit of some 300 per cent per annum on its cost, such is the demand for lumber. So scarce is it in the west, that lumber is carried now from the sources of the Allegheny river in New York to St. Louis.

Such is the growth of the west & so large an extent of the country is to be supplied with timber from those sections which possess it, that Pine Lands, for instance, contiguous to navigable streams, must be worth what would appear to be an exorbitant price to one who has not these data in his calculations. I am assured by many intelligent persons that the profit on a saw mill is 3 or 4 hundred per cent per annum. Pine, Poplar, Hickory, walnut & Bass, are the trees chiefly used for lumber, maple and wild cherry for cabinet work. . . . The village contains some 50 houses more or less and about 1000 inhabitants. Several vessels are now lying in harbour and there is a good line of wharves on the other side of the river. The Harbour, which is deep, but has an obstruction by a sand bar at its mouth, is to be improved by a government appropriation and an Engineer of the U.S. Corps [of Engineers] is about commencing a survey of it. It is proposed to carry the river straight out by piers, but as it makes a curve at present just before emptying into the Lake, such a plan would throw many valu-

able water lots in the background on dry land & bring the opposite dry land down to navigation. This is of course advocated or resisted as the interest of the land holder of his friends may be affected. . . .

Saturday[.] 3 P.M. Octr. 14th[15th]. Clem and I mounted our horses after breakfast and galloped 3 or 4 miles down the Beach, which is a fine hard sand but not so good as Nahant for a ride. The road to Chicago lies along the Lake shore and is in some places under water for several miles so as to render the travel[ing] difficult if not hazardous during the prevalence of certain winds. At this time there is no conveyance to Chicago other than in small vessels which are unsafe at this season, and the road to Galena from Chicago is said to be so bad that I have altogether abandoned the idea of going further west.

The navigation of Lake Michg. is in the present state of things very perilous. The sailors have no skill, the vessels are badly built and when they are overtaken far out by a blow and those ugly short waves, they make one plunge, and go down to the bottom without a moment's warning. There have been many wrecks of this kind within two years. When the vessels happen to be near shore, there is little danger, for the beach being smooth & sandy, in such position when a blow comes the crew run directly for the shore & drive the vessel up high and dry. But, I am told that is a case of constant occurrence for a vessel to put out of harbour just before a storm & never to appear again by the slightest trace. Lake Michg. is very deficient in Harbours, and hence the importance of the few good ones which exist. The mouth of the St. Joseph is of this kind and the town will doubtless become a place of importance. A few years will cover the Lake, like Erie, with Steam boats & vessels of all classes and the borders of Wisconsin & those states which have a footing on the Lakes will begin to [be] filled with a most thriving population. These shores have all the advantages of a Mediterranean coast and it is worthy of remark that nature has made these great Lakes to bend & turn so as to afford the greatest convenience to the greatest extent of country. Add to this the tributaries of the Lakes and their facility to be improved by canals, &c and Michg. in particular from all her advantages of soil and position is to be one of the Granaries of our country. When the rail Road to St. Joseph from Detroit is finished, immigrants will pour in, and the improvement of the former advance with rapid strides thence forward. The first 30 miles of this Road will be completed next spring, if the work goes on as fast as expected. Some ten or 15 years will present the anomaly of a population of labourers with landed estate, all with

property of value and no paupers. This is already happening in the southern states, but their prosperity, from the nature of their staple, the character of the people, their kind of labour, &c &c is always liable to sudden checks & great retrogradations. The free states, on the contrary, may be arrested but are not so easily put back in the race of improvement.

The lands at which I shall look near Pawpaw Lake I consider valuable from their proximity to this place. They are some 15 miles distant, have navigable water to the lake and will have a market in the town as it improves, or else a good harbour for shipment. All the lands nearer are taken.

4 P.M. I have just heard from Dr. Abbott, one of the owners of Abbotts Mills, a report that the president has ordered all the land offices to be closed. He heard it at Niles from a passenger who had just come in from Detroit. I do not credit the rumor, but if it be true I am completely sewed up with my Treasury receipts, they are unavailable in every respect. . . .

Sunday Noon[,] Octr. 15th[16th]. Just arrived on our route back. In crossing the Pawpaw, in the boat, my young horse became frightened by the flapping of the sails and was with difficulty prevented from jumping into the River. At this place we take a snack and then diverge from the road on the left-hand into the woods in T4S Range 17 W section 20 (which we are now in) and examine sections 12 and 13 and thence proceed up to town 3 S to look at some sections on and near Lake Pawpaw, on the edge of which we shall lodge. A Rail Road is talked of from this point to St. Joseph as a branch of that laid out to Detroit, the direction of which, however, is not altogether concluded upon yet. We saw at St. Joseph Mrs. Abbott, wife of the Dr. and relict of Captain Helen who was with a body of regulars massacred under the walls of the fort at Chicago, by the Indians, in the last year. She escaped by the protection of an Indian chief who took her into his arms and ran into the river beyond the tomahawks of his warriors whom after much persuasion he prevailed upon to save her life. She has seen many bloody scenes during the last war and has been so affected by them that she is never seen to smile. She is a middle aged[,] fine-looking woman, with a masculine face deeply furrowed by scenes that she has been through.

Sunday Evg. 9 oclock Keyes[.] We are comfortably housed for the night at the cabin of a settler named Keyes who has been here for one year. He is living some 3 miles from the St. Joseph road and has very easy access to it by a road of his own through the woods. A

storm is coming on of wind and rain, and I felicitate myself in having a shelter over my head to meet it. Leaving Davis about 1 P.M. we entered the woods and proceed[ed] to sections 12 & 13 which we examined by first running the line between them. They are finely timbered and both of excellent quality. The growth is large poplar, oak, Elm, Hickory, &c some pine. Level & dry but well watered. The soil is doubtless deep as indicated by the growth of forest trees, above enumerated. I shall apply for both sections. They are about two miles from the Road[.] We intended proceeding as far tonight as Abbotts Mills, but a cold rain coming we retraced our course for a mile and are in section 11 near 10. The old man has kindly given us a kind reception, a good supper of milk[,] potatoes and fresh eggs & has turned his horses out of the stable to admit ours. He has cut his hand very severely with an axe, a grievous misfortune to a settle[r] who has everything to make for himself. However he has several sturdy sons, who seem to be smart and industrious. A daughter of about 16 is really a beauty. Indeed I have seen a great deal of that exotic in Michg. They go among the settlers by the name of prairie pigeons.

Deacon has given the old man a story about his being lost one night in a prairie among the saux [Sauk] Indians, and he is now telling, in turn, the adventure of a young man who was lately lost in this neighbourhood, I put it down as he states it. A short time since about day break he heard a knock at his door. It being an unusual hour for any one to be stirring so far in the woods from the main road, he asked who it was before opening the door. Receiving an unintelligible answer, he took down the bar, opened the door & saw a young man of haggard appearance with his clothes much torn by the bushes, & muddy, standing before him. "How are you sir," says Keyes. "How are you sir," says he. "I see you don't know me." "No. I have never seen you before, but come in stranger and warm yourself by the fire. The young man walked in and began to talk in a style which shewed his mind was wandering. I waked my wife up and made her cook some breakfast for him, which he eat very greedily. After a while he got sickish & faint and we put him in our bed where he laid several days delirious. We attended to him the best we knew how and after a while he came to his right mind & remembered how he came to my door. He said he had gone out 3 or 4 miles with a party into the woods on Black River hunting land. By some chance he was seperated [sic] from his companions and having no pocket compass or map soon became lost and confused. He walked on all day following the surveyors' lines until night when he slept on the ground. The next day he

lost the lines, and then he walked on in as straight a direction as he could shape his course. He was now very hungry and eat such berries as he could find. It then began to rain and continued to do so for several days. He had no fire and walked as long as he could to keep himself warm. In this way he continued to wander in the mazes of the woods, shouting at times in the hope of being near a house or some party in the forests, often deluded & led astray by the Echo of his own voice. . . . [He] lost his recollection and has no memory of any thing until the morning when about daybreak he heard the crowing of a cock which he remembers following until he reached the door and then he had no consciousness until he found himself lying in bed. Keyes thinks he must have come 60 miles through the woods over bogs, streams, &c &c [.] The last night he slept out he was within 100 yds of the house, which he could not see through the woods. I stop here to talk to the family. The wind is blowing up a storm. How awful to be in the woods on such a night, with the largest trees falling all around you.

Monday[,] 7 A.M. We slept in the loft last night with the Boys. I closed my eyes at a late hour without serious fear at being awakened or killed, possibly, by the falling of a tree on the roof. It blew a tornado around midnight and, this morning I see many trees with their limbs or tops twisted off. It is very common in this part of the state to have what are called wind falls. That is, something like a whirl wind, descends upon a forest and cuts a path for itself like a scythe through a field of wheat. I heard a gentleman say he was out one night in such a blow, and he was dodging large trees all night which were falling around him, somewhere in this part of the state. Our Host, this morning, would receive no pay. We have contributed a sum which Deacon is to lay out in a dress as a present to the pretty daughter. Keyes has just taken me into a field to show the change of colour in the ground caused by ploughing. The line of the plough may be traced as distinctly as a black mark on the edge of the soil which has not been turned as yet. He is anxious to sell in order to buy more land at Govrt. prices & as I think he has his eye on 11 or 12 which join him. I stop to saddle my horse.

Monday[,] 6 P.M. Beningers[.] We are in the shed of another settler in Range 17 W T. S. section 21. Leaving Keyes, after breakfast, we reached Abbotts Mills (where we took snack) in 2 hours over a very bad road. Abbott & Smith have some 50 hands employed in building a mill &c. They own a large body of land about the Lake which they expect to be the site of a town. The labourers will leave

him in a year or two and probably settle themselves in the vicinity. Hence another advantage to adjacent lands in their chance of speedy settlement. The mills are on Pawpaw River and have a considerable water power. Hence too a great advantage to those lands, I am to look at, in the convenience of cutting their timber at the saw mill. After our snack we rode down here and leaving our horses with Beninger walked say 1/2 a mile to the head of Pawpaw Lake, where we found a canoe and paddled 1 1/2 mile over to the point in section 15. The water is very deep and clear and abounds in fish of several varieties[,] viz. bass, mullet, perch, pickerel, &c. The lake is three miles long and 1/3 mile wide in some places 30 fathoms deep, by measurement, and in others said to be unfathomable. After landing we went up into section 10 and followed the creek & line between 10 and 11 up to the corner of 2 & 3, returning diagonally through 10 back to the head of the lake. The land is sugar timber, with large wild poplar, cherry[,] oak &c and thick undergrowth. Even and dry. The soil has every appearance of great fertility. The fractional parts of 10 and 11 lying immediately on the lake have been taken. In them the growth of Sugar Maple is very gigantic and the spot has been the resort of the Indians from Grand River every spring to make sugar. Many of their wigwams are still standing some with all the implements packed away for the next "sap." The trees are deeply wounded & many of them killed by the process of drawing off the juice. A sugar ground is always the sign of good land. The one of which I am speaking has a great advantage from its proximity to the lake which affords a supply of fish & the woods abound with deer. It can be visited in Boats from any port of Lake Michg. up to the Pawpaw; & thence into the Lake through the mouth or strait which connects them. In [section] 21, the head of the Lake approaches within 1/4 a mile of the river with which [it] may easily be united by a canal affording 18 feet fall. Deacon commands this "water privilege" by owning a 40 acre plot through which the nearest & easiest route of communication runs. The shores of this Lake will probably be thickly settled.

Abbotts Mills will create a villiage [sic] around them and to some extent a home market, for produce and lumber. No. 16 a school section has been leased by Deacon for the timber which is floated to the steam mill at St. Joseph. Most of it has been cut down. It was covered with very fine pine, a rare timber in this part of the state. D. pointed out to us 3 or 4 acres immediately on the Lake from which he had been selling pine trees for the manufacture of shingles and had reced. in one year from his share of them \$350. There are several cabins

within a stone's throw of us on the river, of a very inferior style. That in which we are, is the worst I have yet seen; there is but one room; it is very open & the night is cold. However we have a blazing fire in the capacious hearth and a frank and hospitable reception from the owner who, with his wife[,] is from Monroe County, Virginia. Over the door hangs a gigantic pair of deer horns and under them swings a polished rifle. Beninger informs me that he is a saddler by trade. He emigrated from Va. to Indiana and thence hither 3 years since. On his arrival he had but \$2 in the world & the second day ague and fever. He worked on his well days with the lumberers on the Lake at the wages of \$1 per day, until he has laid up enough to buy himself a lot. When he finished a house, he was persuaded by his old employer to board some of the labourers, which he did and never received a dollar's pay, being thus cheated in the beginni[ng] out of \$275. The produce of three hogs brought him in two years \$400. He has lately sold his 80 acre lot at \$10 per acre and is about to move. . . .

My feete [sic] are nearly frozen and I must stop and thaw them before going to bed. We are now on the frontier of settlement, there being no cabins to the west & north in this part of the State. The N W 1/4 of 13 in 17 W. 3 S. Beninger tells me contains iron ore. This I shall make a strong effort to get.

Tuesday Morning. We slept three in one bed last night, most uncomfortably, & I awoke with a sore throat and the rheumatism in my Back. We heard the wolves last night howling around us in the woods. They are a great nuisance to the settler in the destruction of pigs[,] poultry[,] &c. Beninger tells me that there were great numbers of them here a year since until the neighbors set seriously to work to destroy them by shooting and traps. Not long since he secured a very large one alive and fastening a chain about his neck dragged him to his house where the neighbors children mustered all their dogs, & set them on the poor creature to worry it. Having amused themselves with its sufferings until they were tired, they left the wolf lying on the ground as if dead. About midnight, however he revived, broke his chain and was heard running by one of the cabins with it dangling about his heels. One settler happening to be up ran out and gave chase following him into the deep woods where the wolf finding himself losing ground & impeded by the chain turned round & in turn gave chase to his pursuer who had quickly to betake himself to a tree. In the meantime other neighbors, having been roused by his cries, came to his rescue and recaptured the furious beast which was forthwith dispatched with a rifle. . . .

Keelers[,] 7 P.M. We have had an insight into the woods today as well as the mud. After passing Abbotts Mills we ran the line between 24 & 25 in R 17 W. 3 S. until stopt by a small tamarack swamp which we went around & struck the dividing line of 25 & 30, following it nearly to 31. . . . The Growth is white wood, oak, ash, maple, &c. No[.] 30 is magnificent Land and the timber, viz, wild poplar, walnut, hickory, oak & beech gigantic. It has a thick undergrowth of grass on which our horses were glad to make up for the deficiencies of their morning's feed. We walked most of the way with their bridles swung over our arms. In 30 & 31 we followed for some time and [sic] Indian Trail, which, by the by, are observed generally to run through the best lands as if the route were selected on account of the deep shade of enormous trees. On these sections the Timber is as thick as it is heavy. The largest trees often touched. . . . The ground was covered with a thick tuft of grass the rootes of which were so matted together as to afford pretty secure footing to our horses though at every step the foundation trembled for yards around. We soon found it impossible to move forward in a straight line and had to pick our way as it opened before us.

After winding about at all points of the compass for 1/2 an hour, we were pleased to discover the tracks of horses, which supposing to be those of some one who had crossed the bog we determined to follow which under the idea of being thus guided by the best route, but having done so for some time we were mortified to discover that we had made a circle & were retracing our own steps. We were brought up at the point where we entered the swamp, on the banks of a small run, in crossing which Clem dropt his saddle bags and got them filled with water. Stopping for a few moments to ascertain our departure & diff[.] of latitude, we took a course due East. For 200 yards we passed through a trembling marsh covered with grass several times as tall as our heads. About mid way we started a Deer. On reaching its edge, we found a creek to be forded. Deacon dismounted and with some misgivings forced Fox, who was very reluctant, to put his sore feet in. He went down almost to the withers & at the same instant his hinder feet sunk through the Bank and thus the poor steed was, as we feared completely and hopelessly mired. The sagacious animal lay perfectly still; had he struggled, he would have sunk out of sight, for we afterwards stuck down branches in trying the Bottom 6 or 7 feet through the quagmire.

We stood for a moment in breathless anxiety at a loss what to do and our sympathy for poor Fox was heightened by the cries of a pack

of hungry wolves which at the instant commenced howling around us as if already scenting the poor creatures carcass. It was now growing late & cloudy and no time was to be lost whether we saved Fox or made a cabin for the night. Deacon having first unbuckled the girths of the saddle and encouraged his horse by a pat on the neck, seized the reins of the bridle and pulled his head around towards the Bank with all his force, he plunged and struggled and after a series of the most desperate efforts we succeeded in getting him on the bank again. I would hardly have felt more joy at saving a human being than in thus seeing a fine horse rescued from such a miserable death. Retracing our steps again by a deer path, we were fortunate in hitting the stream a little lower down where it had a sandy bottom and the fording was entirely safe. A few minutes brought us upon terra firma in a fine body of Oaks and we quickened our pace to reach the main road ere night fall. We crossed section 9 nearly diagonally. Just before reaching section 16, riding at a rapid pace, Clem & I being ahead; we came to another small run which having a sandy bottom, we crossed at a trot, and spurring up our horses we had not proceeded 10 yds before both plunged in a springy place up to the shoulders & Clem and I were thrown over their necks. Clem alighted on his head which stuck in the mud & was nearly struck by the feet of his horse as the frightened creature floundered through. We got both through however with no other damage than a full suit of mud. . . . In three miles farther riding we gained the road and pulled up before Keelers. A hard rain has now set in and though the House is full of guests and we have every prospect of sleeping 3 in one bed, yet how much more comfortable than sleeping in the woods without tent, food, or fire! Our route through the woods today was not more than 12 or 14 miles. Sections 10, 11, 25, 13 in Town 3 S. 17 W and 12, 13 in 4 S 17 W. . . . I shall put in for.

Bronson[,] P.M. Octr. 19. It rained in torrents last night and snowed at intervals and though we slept double in a thin bed, I thanked my stars, when I saw them about day break through the roof, that we were not lying in the bushes. At ordering our Horses this morning Clem's was discovered to have cut the sinew of his ankle very badly and to be unfit for riding. Upon consultation we decided to leave him [the horse] behind and to hire another in its stead from Keeler, which we did; but it was so poor a creature than Clem fell behind & has not yet come up. He has stopt I suppose at Freemans or Fayette. From the latter place we came hither by the old road which leads through the Grand Prairie. Having understood that the land

office opened tomorrow we hurried on and left a note for Clem at Dodges explaining our leaving him behind. In 18 we entered Grand Prairie which contains some 3000 acres and has a soil in every respect like other prairies we have seen. A large portion is owned by the university. It is all settled by purchasers, or squatters, who gain an easy subsistence by cultivating small farms. . . .

My horse was very jaded this afternoon and could not be whipt out of a slow walk. From the time of leaving Keelers it rained and snowed without intermitting and we had a most uncomfortable ride. My feet were like icicles and could be kept from being frost bitten only by jumping & running by the side of my horse, who in turn was much relieved thereby. The Old Road is more thickly settled than the new. . . . I have not shaved since we left Detroit. . . .

Bronson[,] 20 Octr[.] 5 P.M. Deacon and I were bed fellows last night, the tavern being too full to admit of sleeping by ones self, a luxury rarely met with in this part of the state. This morning we made a copious note of such Land as I shall apply for. I have down about 10,000 acres. . . . Clem has not come up, & I am a little uneasy at his delay. Judge [Epaphroditus] Ransom informed me to day, that marl of a pure kind is to be found in large formations in low Bottoms. In some places it exists in very great bodies, and at one point near Clinton, from which the water has been drained there are 100 acres constituting a bed of pure lime. Prairies he thinks were made and cultivated by the Indians and have, since being abandoned by them, been kept in their present condition by annual fires. We had venison today and magnificent cauliflowers, which grow in the natural virgin soil to the size to fill half a bushel. My horse floundered today!

Saturday[,] 8 P.M. Octr. 22[.] Bronson[,] Clem arrived yesterday as Deacon and I were driving out of town in a wagon to look more particularly at those unlocated sections about 6 or 8 miles south of this place through which the St Jo. road passes. . . . We shall go to Ionia in a day or two and I shall take a portion of my treasury certificates with me, leaving in the hands of Sheldon, funds to an amount sufficient to pay for all the Lands I take up here. . . . This morning Clem and I . . . walked to Grand Prairie to shoot grouse. We borrowed very good double barreled shotguns from some young men in town. For the first hour we hunted without success & had despaired of seeing any game when upon entering the edge of a corn field we put up 50 in a flock which rose up like thunder and lit again within 100 yds. The first three or four shots I only made the feathers fly, but upon increasing the charge I was more fortunate and had the pleasure of bringing

down 3 in succession. We followed them up until they took shelter in the woods. On our return we stopt at a tavern and had a bird broiled for dinner, substituting the tongs for a gridiron. The woman refusing any pay I distributed among the children some 5 cent pieces which I got at the mint and which have served to gladden the hearts of many children at the house we have stopt at. There are some Virginians squatted on Grand Prairie. Having no water, the farmers use wells entirely, which require to be sunk some 80 feet. We shall leave for Ionia on Monday. Our Inn is crowded to suffocation and the sitting room filled with stage drivers and citizen boarders, smoking pipes & playing eucher, the national Game of Michg.

Octr. 23rd[,] 6 1/2 P.M. I rode to Grand Prairie again this morning in pursuit of grouse and saw but two, one of which I killed. My horse has recovered from his stiffness and is again in condition to travel. . . . 1/2 of this villiage was sold yesterday for \$12,000 (i.e. of the remaining vacant lots.) The Site was taken up a few years since at \$1 1/4 per acre and this price would seem like wild speculation. The point however is an important one, on the head of boat navigation of the Kekalamazo. It is the land office, central in its position, where population has some thousand souls added to it annually. If one considers that Michg. has now none or few towns, that its population is pouring in at the rate of 50 thousand a year, that they have been accustomed and must have their villiages, that the soil is of excellent quality generally, it will be perceived that these town speculations have a real basis of intrinsic value & are not like investment in town plats in old states, where the wants of the people have been supplied in this particular gradually with their slow growth. Suppose New York without towns and villiages tomorrow, that they are all sunk by an earth quake. The wants of the people would soon build them up again with great rapidity—such, on a smaller scale, is the process of town manufacture now going on in Michigan. However I shall invest nothing in Lots.

Octr. 24th[,] Monday[,] 5 P.M. Yankey springs[,] 30 miles from Bronson[,] We left Bronson at 7 1/2. Clem on a hired and I on my own horse. The country for 10 miles, until we reached Gull Prairie was oak openings of very good quality. The Prairie contains about 6000 acres of Land[,] 2000 of which are owned by the university. In most respects it is exactly similar to those which we have before seen. . . . A settler near the edge at whose house we dined, stated to me that from his own experience he preferred openings to prairie, that the old farmers on the latter think they begin to perceive a slight deteriora-

tion of soil by cultivation, whereas in Washtenaw Co. for instance, some parts of which have been settled 12 years the openings have continued to improve with every crop to the present time. Such observations have been likewise made in Kalamazoo Co., which as likewise as Berrien & Van Buren Counties have been chiefly taken up by settlers.

Grand River District is understood to have been much infested by speculators. In 3 or 4 years my informant thinks, that all the good land in Berrien & Van Buren cos. will be worth & sell for readily \$10 per acre. After leaving the Prairie we again passed through oak openings to this place, some very beautiful and rich, but for the greater part more or less rolling, and holding in its bosom many clear lakes which were alive with Geese & Ducks. We have had a delicious day. On dismounting here I had the pleasure of meeting Major Whiting, to whom I was introduced in Detroit, and who is on his way to Grand Rapids to make a payment to the indians north of Grand River on account of their lands the title to which has lately been extinguished by the Genrl. Govrt. It is to be a meeting similar to that held last month at Mackinaw and composed of such as could not visit that remote point. He proposed to turn us aside that far out of our way to witness the spectacle, which we readily agreed to, as we hereby see Grand Rapids[,] a place reckoned of great importance & shall not lose much leeway. Whiting . . . is travelling in an open wagon with the specie which he does not hesitate to mention in the bar room of the tavern. Such is the security from Robbery in Michg. . . . This place is called Yankey Springs by a French settler named Moreau, an indian trader who lives near here, and has given the stand that name in spite of the loss of the custom [of trading with the Indians]. He likewise keeps an inn. . . . Barry County in which we are, will probably become a great sheep pasture; it is too rolling for cultivation. Whiting has a person named Trowbridge with him to assist in paying the Indians, & drive his wagon for him. A drunken Irish Taylor is making a most disagreeable growling while I write & talking to Clem & me whom he takes for speculators, a race particularly odious to emigrants, and justly so, for no sooner has a settler established himself than all the lots around him are taken up by these persons who when he desires to enlarge his farm charge him 3 or 4 prices. It is very cold. I met here an old Gentleman . . . from some part of the state of New York whom I saw in Bronson and who tells me he has been waiting here several days for the arrival of Monroe, a Land Hunter who is to guide him in his explorations in Barry Co. He has already, he informs

me, selected about 7000 acres about Bronson and intends applying for about as much more. . . .

Robinson's[,] 2 P.M. Octr. 25[,] 39 miles from Yankey Springs. We are at the junction of Grand River and the Thornapple near an indian villiage, the inhabitants of which, however, are absent at Grand Rapids to receive their pay. There are but few houses in it & those small and dingy, shaped like an inverted funnel. Every tribe varies the style of their wigwam architecture. These resemble tents. They are made by sticking poles in a circle & drawing them together near the top leaving open a small orifice for the smoke to escape. They are covered with bark so closely as to turn the water. There is some fine bottom lands immediately about us. Such sites are usually selected for villiages as their rude architecture is thus more conveniently carried on. The se[c]tions which embrace the mouth of the Thornapple, the villiage and all the fine open land around containing say 1000 acres, have been squatted on by Robinson & his kin, the eldest brother having married a squaw and thus gained the confidence of the poor savages, whose possessions he is already grasping at before they have relinquished them. He lives, usually, at the house we are stopping to dine at, but is absent just now at Grand Rapids to collect his debts from the Indians when they are paid off. His wife and children are with him. Last night we slept in the loft with some 20 persons, land agents, speculators, foot and horse passengers, labourers, carpenters, &c &c[.] Clem and I monopolized one bed. We had clean sheets and I slept very well except being awakened by a cat, about midnight, walking over my face. We started this morning at 6 and reached Leonards at 8 to Breakfast a few minutes after Major Whiting had left. Leonard gave us a good meal which our ride and his very pretty daughter who waited on us made us relish vastly. I have several times had occasion to remark on the beauty of the Michg. Girls. Indeed we have scarcely seen a single young face which can fairly be called homely since leaving Detroit. Our route to day lay through Oak openings of a very good quality with a few rugged points at intervals. Indeed, you hardly see any other kind of tree to any extent, and in a ride of 2 or 3 hundred miles it finally becomes wearisome to the eye. . . . We came upon Major Whiting four miles back. In fording the Thornapple the last time our horses nearly swam. Clem got very wet and I lost my whip. Moreau, the French indian trader (who was of the Whittings party and had rode ahead to prepare the boat for him), stood on the bank of the stream and directed us to the shallowest way else we had got beyond our depth.

We learn here that the Ottawas have been waiting a month, encamped outside Grand Rapids, in daily expectation of the arrival of the Govt. agent. The poor creatures have no other divisions of time beyond seasons, viz. the time of planting, corn eat[ing], Roasti[ng] ears, gathering it ripe, and snow & ice. So they are often a month out of calculation Grand Rapids[,] Octr. 25. 7 P.M. 40 miles from Lewis' at Hinsdale's Boarding House. We got in after dark and upon much solicitation were squeezed in here. A bed has been rigged up for us in the store. From Robinsons hither we passed through oak openings of very good quality, all of which have been taken up, being highly valued on account of their proximity to Grand Rapids, which, every one thinks, will become a very important point. All the Lands near the Grand River are entered from its mouth to its source on the south side. Those which lie north are in possession of the Indians whose title was extinguished at the last session of Congress. The territory thus acquired embraces some 8,000,000 acres extending north to Mackinaw, most of which is thought to be of a very inferior quality, though very little is known of its true character. It has been explored hitherto only by the Indians who range through every corner and section of it in their hunting expeditions.

Major Whiting and Trowbridge called this morning to accompany us over the river to witness the payment of money and distribution of goods to the Indians. We crossed the rapids in a Keel boat at a point where they are 250 yds. wide and 4 or 5 feete deep. The land immediately opposite the villiage on which we are to put ashore is a high bluff extending for miles up and down the stream and back 4 or 5 hundred yds. to the Forest. A little to the south is an indian villiage containing 200 or 300 inhabitants, who consist chiefly of the flock of Mr. Sater, the Baptist missionary. He has been living near them in a cabin some 10 years and during a greater part of this period had communication with no whites but the inhabitants of Detroit and with them by means of pack horses through the woods by Indian Trails once or twice a year to procure necessities of life at periods of scarcity. His wife continued with him all this time. They have several children. He has learnt to speak the Indian dialect and preaches to them every Sunday. Many of the old men, he informs me, have been baptized and have good ideas of Religion. Slater is a very modest man and of a weakly nervous constitution, yet he has evinced the courage of a lion in thus planting himself, in the midst of savages, hundreds of miles from thick white settlement, without understanding their language and undertaking to teach them a new religion and reclaim them from

their Barbarous life. To a great extent the villiage[s] have turned themselves to agriculture, being supplied, latterly, with the implements by the whites.

The high level bluff described above seems once to have been entirely under cultivation. I noticed much marl in the soil, so that, by a kick of the foot it could be turned up at any spot. Along the bank of the river for some distance up were arranged the tents of the indians & temporary wigwams of all who had come from a distance to receive their shares in the general distribution. Some were from the mouth of Grand River, the Thornapple, Flat River, the maple, the looking glass, near St. Joseph[,] &c &c all arriving finally by canoes through the Grand River. We first directed our course to the house of Mr. Slater (which is a good log cabin,) and were conducted by him to the meeting house in which were all the goods arranged in bundles for distribution. None of the Indians having assembled on the spot, Major Whiting dispatched a crier to give notice that he should begin the division in two hours. In the meantime Trowbridge[,] Clem and I strolled up the banks to examine the camping ground more minutely.

There were some 200 temporary huts, tents, wigwams, &c arranged in groups of 4 or 5 near the water, with their beautifully finished canoes drawn upon the sand. Some were crossing at the moment with squaws who used the paddle as dextrously as a ducks foote and passed over the rapid parts of the current as easily as two strong men could pull it through the stiller water below. Others were crossing the shallows on their little ponies riding double and triple. We peeped in the wigwams to see what was going on. The inmates were generally squatted around their half extinguished fires, eating their breakfast of pumpion [pumpkin?] or hominy, boiled. Some were arranging themselves in their gayest attire for the occasion. Several we saw already decked out in all their finery, high crowned hats with cockades & feathers, cloth hunting shirts, rings in their ears & noses, in some instances a chain of them hanging from the forehead down over each eye to the cheekbone, silver bracelets from the wrists to the shoulders & the ankles to the thighs, blue tights, mockasins, much trimmed & ornament[ed] with beads & porcupine needles, a belt around the waist. Their faces painted as if for war. Such as were in mourning for a relative had their features marked with black streaks. The proportion of children seemed great. These latter were playing with bows & arrows and some drew back in sport & pointed them at us when we approached their tents. Near one group of wigwams I observed a long pole planted in the ground with a dead puppy tied to

the top, which is perhaps a religious ceremony. Trowbridge seemed to think it was perhaps intended for food as the Indians are notoriously fond of the flesh of this faithful animal. T. has seen much of this tribe, having assisted in paying them for many years. He informs me that they eat all kinds of unclean animals, which they boil in one common pot; often when making maple sugar they will throw a dog into the caldron [sic] and cook their food day after day, thus mingling two operations. He was once in the woods, he tells me, for a day or two without food and came by chance to an Indian camp. Their dinner was boiling at the time in one pot. It consisted of a puppy, a polecat & muskrat. Being half famished he made a hearty meal of this revolting Salmagundi. Many of the Indians knew him and shook his hand with much cordiality. At passing they would salute us with their "Bon Jour" a term picked up by them from the French Trader.

About one mile up we came upon the frame house of [Rix] Robinson, the Indian Trader, which is his store. He was selling tobacco and other articles to some dozen Indians. I have already made some mention of this personage. He is a man cast in the mould of a Giant: well framed, active & erect as a hunter, about 50 years of age. For some 30 years he has been the agent of the North Western Fur Company for the purchase of peltry. During this time he has been stationed at various points remote from the frontier of white population an[d] in the bosom of the Indians over whom he has obtained and exercises great influence. He has taken a squaw to wife, a thing absolutely necessary in his mode of life if one wishes to be married, for a white woman could not exist under the privations of a rude wigwam in a winter of great rigor. He speaks the dialect of the Ottawas, fluently. Near his store was his tent, in which he sleeps, and about it 4 or 5 of his half breed children. His woman was young and very pretty, dressed in the aboriginal style with a half dozen yards of fine blue cloth thrown gracefully over her shoulders. Indeed the squaws give even to blankets, some times, the ease & grace of drapery on a statue, holding it on their shoulders with a lightness & security which a white woman might in vain seek to imitate. Robinson has squatted on an 80 acre lot opposite the Grand Prairie opposite the Grand Rapids under the expectation of securing it at Govt. price by means of a future preemption Law. The water power which it commands will, with its adaptation to the site of a town, make it very valuable. I am informed that if put up for sale the 80 acres would bring \$1000 or \$1500 per acre. He has planted a brother (of whom he has six) at all the best points from the mouth to the sources of the Grand river,

with the view of gaining the title by occupancy. One is the mouth of Grand River, one of the best Harbours on Lake Michg., another is at the mouth of the Thornapple a good point for transshipment, a third at the junction of the flat & Grand, a fourth, I believe, at Maple River &c. all of which are tributaries of the Grand and will become towns or places of transshipment. Independently of these prospects the Elder Robinson is said to have accumulated a fortune of about \$100,000 by traffic with the Indians.

At our return to the meeting house we found most of the Indians assembled and the distribution of good[s] begun. Mr. Slater acted as crier, holding in his hands a list he called each one by name in his turn and handed him his share tied up in a blanket. It contained broad cloth, calico, cotton, thread, needles, yarn[,] soap, fish hooks, cooking utensils, such as one bell metal boiler, tea pot, tin pans[,] &c and a few tools and agricultural implements, a coarse shot gun to the men & a \$10 rifle to the Chiefs. The savages were arranged around the house in family groups[,] some reclini[ng] on the Ground, others were seated on benches. The children of the Chief were distinguished by more silver rings & bracelets & a better style of dress than the lower class. The majority presented a miserable and squalid appearance, with few clothes except a blanket and in some cases without mockasins. I noticed one old woman who had nothing on but a small thin blanket worn to shreds & patches. Some of the girls, however, were very pretty[.] All had delicate & well formed feet, which their tight trousers shewed off to much advantage. Of the Chiefs there were some noble looking men. He whose appearance struck me most was named Shiawas, from the mouth of the Grand River. For several years he has been victim to rheumatism, which has chained his Herculean frame to the ground. He lay on the grass all the time, and his limb[s] which were cast in the strongest mold rested in the most graceful repose. His features were strongly marked, played as if a little volcano might be slumbering under them. In height, I should suppose him to be six feet one inch. I was informed that he was a great hunter and warrior and was at the massacre of the River Raisin. Around him were arranged his family. His wife was decently clad and possessed a very matronly air. She fed him during the day with boiled hominy and pumpkin from a large Gourd with a wooden spoon. Her daughter of about 14 years of age was quite a beauty as she sat combing her black hair which was parted exactly in front. . . . A very pretty squaw was pointed out to me by Trowbridge, who had been the wife [of] a trader or merchant in Grand Rapids, and lived in a comfortable

house like a white lady. Upon her husband's death 2 years since she broke up house keeping & returned to her friends & tribe in the woods and now dresses like them.

The next finest looking man to Shiawas, was Win-dè-go-wish, about my height and size, a beautiful figure and a hundred times more elastic. He was about 50 years of age. The Orator of the Tribe and noted among them for his singular modesty & diffidence. He had lost a finger. Next was Muc-cut-o-quit, a little inclined to corpulancy and very unaboriginal in his figure, but possessing withal a countenance most strikingly benevolent. I was so much impressed with this characteristic expression of his face as to be induced to enquire particularly into his character. Trowbridge, who has known him for many years, informed me that he was noted for this trait among his tribe, by whom he is revered as the best man among them. He suspects him to be the son of a white man, probably some French Trader. During the morning I had occasion to see his kindness of feeling developed. A poor blind Indian was called upon to receive his share of goods and stumbled forward without support amid the shouts & laughter of the whole assemblage (for the Indians are fond of a coarse joke)[.] Some were preparing to play tricks upon him, when Muc-cut-o-quit stepped forward silenci[ng] all around him by a look, assisted him with his bundle and led him out of the crowd in the most considerate and benevolent manner. I must not omit the name of His Turkship Cob-e-moo-sah, a sharp featured keen eyed chief of moderate stature and exact proportions[.] He has three young wives, sisters whom he espoused on the same day, and who have presented the uxorious hunter with three young warriors apiece. . . . He has had other wives now dead, whom he probably removed by the sinister influence of arsenic or some other favourite drug to make room in his wigwam for the "sisters three." . . .

I derived much amusement from examining the costume and features of the various chiefs and their families. There was a great and very obvious variety of feature, generally stampd with the strong trace of Character. The wonderfull elasticity of their frames struck me forcibly. The oldest men squatting themselves on the ground would spring to their feet with the bound of a boy. The women were made to perform the offices of pack horses in carrying off on their shoulders their husbands' bundles. . . .

Thursday[,] Oct. 27[.] The site of Grand Rapids was located as long back as seven years by several settlers in small lots and has lately passed through several hands. [Lucius] Lyon obtained a part of the

water power from an old French Trader. He has sold 1/2 or a smaller share of his interest to Sargeant, a shoe maker in Detroit, for \$6000. Sargeant sold out last spring to Judge Carroll of New York for \$80,000. Thus do town sites change hands. . . . Villiage lots are now selling at from \$500 to \$5000, but its rapid settlement has been somewhat retarded by the circumstance that nearly the whole of Kent County has been taken by speculators who hold up their lands at from \$5 to \$20 per acre and thus throw back or divert the stream of migration, and on the north side of Grand River about 300 settlers have squatted in consequence thereof. Some of them have gone so far in improvements as to put up mills. They are said to keep a land office of their own in which each squatter's name & section or lot are entered as evidence of title when Congress passes another pre-emption Law, and all persons coming among them are required to join the association. They have caused surveyors of their own to extended the lines across the river of the old survey, so that each man makes a description of his location as exact as those kept at Govrt. Land offices. They doubtless, by this early and close combination, have ulterior views of enforcing Lynch law in case it becomes necessary thus to assert their claims. The Lands on & near Grand River, which they have a thus monopolized, are said to be of very superior quality and, if put on public sale, would bring from \$5 to \$50 and at some points \$1000 per acre. This Point is the County seat and if we consider the navigation and the water power, she is destined probably to become a second Rochester, or a Greater than she. The fall is some 20 feet produced by a stratum of limestone crossing the river at this point. The Rapids are shallow & steam boats will be compelled to pass around them by locks & a canal. . . .

Trowbridge wishes to make an investment in town lots here and will inform me if any favourable chances offer. We again spent the day on the other side of the river with the Indians. They number about 1000. Clem and I assisted Major Whiting in Counting the money which was paid them, in all about \$8000, which with the amount paid out at Mackinaw and the value of the presents, makes perhaps the sum of \$75,000; this is all they receive for the remainder of their Michg. Lands, in extent say 8,000,000 [acres]! The lots on Grand River alone would bring thrice, nay ten times that price. The Chiefs received \$500 and \$250 according to rank, as of the first or second degree. The men and women from \$2.50 to \$50, according to the number of persons in their families. By the terms of the Treaty they are to occupy a slip of land on Lake Michg. some 60 miles long north

of the mouth of the Grand River for 5 years and then to incorporate with the inhabitants of the state or be removed beyond the Miss. Slater has prevailed on his immediate flock to remove to the Kalamazo River on which he proposes to purchase a few acres of public Land at Govrt. price and fix them at agriculture. In a few days, he tells me that most of those who are now paid a few silver dollars will have spent or been cheated out of all. . . .

Trowbridge, who is my Cicerone on this occasion, pointed out several chiefs this morning and gave me partial sketches of their lives and characters. Most of them had been present at the massacre of the River Raisin. Among these old Cu-gi-as-cum interested me most. We gave him the cognomen Spread Eagle on account of his roman nose and Eagle eye. His age was about 80 though apparently not more than 60, about middle stature, a face of the sternest aspect marked with a more than usual degree of savage Gloom, with a very compact though active figure. His features were much scarred with wounds. He was decidedly the noblest Roman of them all in his bearing, form & countenance. For many years he was the leading Chief of his whole tribe whose favour he sacrificed by a treaty with the Genrl. Govrt. for the sale of their Lands in the southern part of Michg. The Indians, always averse to a sale, had unanimously resolved in full council, to shoote the first man who signed the Treaty. Cu-gi-as-cum was intimate with Govr. Cass who persuaded him (with the promise it is said of an annuity of \$500) to step forward in the face of this threat at the hazard of his life and affix his signature. The other Chiefs were soon induced to follow his example and the lands were sold. Old Spread Eagle soon became obnoxious to many attempts upon his life by poison, a favourite mode of removing an enemy among the Indians, and all his family were destroyed in this quiet way. The Old Chief however escaped all the messes prepared for him and still lives in the daily apprehension of his being daily removed. He has lost cast[e], and seems to hold intercourse with none. His wigwam is near the mouth of Flat River (30 miles above) in which he was nearly drowned lately by some of his persecutors, who left him for dead upon the Beach. The Govrt., it is said, gave him his annuity for a year or so, but now it has been stopped. He did not come in for a full chief's share at the distribution of the money. The census or roll, was made out by Robinson, and many have been omitted by him by mistake, design or misspelling their names. I saw an old woman, whom I mentioned yesterday, with nothing to cover her aged limbs but a worn out blanket. Her name was not down and no bundle had been sent for her. She was a widow

without children and thus left to meet the rigours of a Michg. winter without clothes[,] food or any thing. We made a contribution for her on the spot, and Major Whiting threw in an extra blanket and small articles of various kinds. . . .

We shall leave in the morning for Ionia. Trowbridge goes with us. From the window of the house where I am writing, I see by moon light, far across the Grand River, the ancient forests, hitherto the domain of the roving Indian & untrod but by him and the game he pursues. They are soon to yield to the axe of the whites and bear on their cultivated bosoms half a million of civilized men. The wild Indian in his native greatness, roaming the woods, is a sublime sight, but how infinitely more sublime the spectacle of civilization on its march, softening every thing with its plastic touch and raising new life into nations of intelligent and happy beings. Yet it still excites a feeling of melancholy to think that those thousand fastnesses untrod but by the hunter, those profound seclusions, the ancient empire of solitude herself, must be broken by the strokes of the axe, and the monarchs of the forest, "those murdered Banquos," be brought to the ground to build the hut of some squalid settler. The surveyors are already rattling their chains and two years more will bring the whole region within the grasp of the speculator. Trowbridge and I have been offered some town lots at about \$500, which he & his friends here, think cheap. I am disposed to make a little investment, but time presses, & perhaps upon the whole good farming Lands @ \$1.25 are a better purchase.

Memo. (Major Whiting informs me). The National road from the mouth of Grand River to Detroit is to run through Oakland, Livingston, Ingham, Clinton[,] Ionia & Kent Counties, passing near here and so on west. I[t] was begun three years since by the Genrl. Gvt. and is in part completed. Congress made no appropriation last year. Whiting has had the management of it lately. When finished it will be a thoroughfare to the state and much enhance the price of lands near which it passes. The other National roads are to Fort Gratiot, Saganaw, and Chicago from Detroit. These are not to be turnpikes but are to be made in the best style the materials of the country affords. Twenty one years ago all that was known of Michg. was the strip settled about Detroit on the water. None had then penetrated the woods farther than a mile or two, except Traders and an expedition 30 miles up into Oakland was considered a great achievement. . . .

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