AGAIN IN MICHIGAN.

Stevenson's Notes on the Scenes of His Early Life.

Correspondence Deseret News.

PORTAGE, Mich., Nov. 17, 1893.—This is one of the early fields of the spread of the Gospel. It is where Martin Harris came to visit his sister, Mrs. Sophia Harris Kellogg, and where Martin bore his powerful testimony as a witness of the angel who presented to the young man Joseph Smith the records of the Mound Builders—a nation lost in their history to the people who followed Columbus to America.

This testimony is not without its good results to the present day. This is the town where Mother Smith visited the Stark family in the earlier days of the rise of the Church. Joseph and Hyrum Smith, also, in 1834, visited Poulton, and Father Smith, the first Patriarch in the Church, came and exercised the powers of his high calling in the early days of his long sickness. This was in the year 1834. I was asked the favored one to receive a Patriarchal blessing under his hands in the Poulton branch of the Church only a short time before I moved from this place to the same year, with others who moved, Elijah Oakland county to Liberty, Clay county, Mo., and after the Saints were driven from Independence, Jackson county, Mo., it was also from here that Father Samuel Bent, known here as Deacon Bent, of the Prophet's company, with Sidney Lyman Curtis and six wives and others obeyed the Gospel message. Lyman is yet living at Paso Robles, Oak county. A goodly number emigrated from here to Zion in the days of Hiram.

After the closing of the World's Fair and visiting friends at Sandusky, Ohio, I have availed myself of the favorable opportunity of visiting the land of my political days and the grave of my father. It was here that he purchased over 200 acres of land with a view of settling down for life. That was in the year 1828. In 1831, Elders Joseph Wood, and Silas Lester, introduced the Gospel in Portage.

I left Sandusky on the morning of Thursday, the 9th inst., taking passage on a Sim steamer, the Frank E. King, over Lake Erie, 85 miles to Detroit, Michigan; from there 11 to 20 miles to Portage. Crossing Lake Erie was a delightful trip except at Put-in-Bay, where we stopped to take on a new load of fog. There we encountered a heavy fog while loading up. I think it was providential that we were detained at the fish port for the fog came on so severe that a captain of the steamer City of Sandusky, who has plied so long to and from Put-in-Bay, in the same fog ran upon a sand bar quite out of the channel. He was running direct for Gibraltar, a small island of about five acres, upon which Perry had a strong hold in 1812, and from which it took its name. A tug boat failing to release the Sandusky, our large steamer was called for to pull it out of its perilous condition. The fog had then begun to rise. Our steamer tugged away for more than an hour, having to get out the second hawser before she could release the other. Without this timely aid there is no telling when she would have left the bar.

After returning to the wharf and examining the loading of fresh fish, which is quite a trade in these several islands, we proceeded with greater safety on our journey to Detroit. By our delay of nearly three hours the dense fog had passed away. In the many islands there is great danger in heavy fogs, as in the case just mentioned. We had a pleasant journey over the lake and up the river to Detroit.

After breakfast at the Hodges house, I enjoyed a walk looking over the old land marks where sixty-one years ago I rode seven a week, carrying the mail from Pontiac to Plymouth, Wayne County, forty miles south west. I was at that time only twelve years old and I now am 74. I could more readily see the contrast not only in the age and lapse of time, but also in the various changes which had taken place in these few years. Our old homestead was in Waterford, in that township alone there are over thirty lakes, generally small ones. Elizabeth lake is about 400 acres in it; Stevenson's lake now named Scott's Lake, is about three-fourths of a mile long and half a mile in width; Silver lake is also the same size, perhaps a little larger. There are many swamps and marshes. Cranberries and huckleberries need to abound in early days, and a variety of fish such as bickerel, pike, English perch, bullheads and a species of catfish. Tamarac swamps were unknown, but now as the country is being settled up and land becomes scarce and cost, those swamps are being cleared up.

While on my enjoyable walk, I called to see a man who had reclaimed one of these Tamarac swamps. When such as its homes in Syrian life, I picked huckleberries and cranberries, and from the three bushes in the swamp picked Tuna the pole. O, what a change had taken place! Mr. Fredrick Rollins said: "Yes, that swamp would give a horse. When I sow corn, I have spent $20, draining with tiles, finding an outlet one mile away. I dug one year's wind from the tiles taken out. Did that year I took and sold $80.43 worth of those tiles three-quarters of an acre, nearly entire." He took me through his poultry houses where he has hundreds of chickens worth packed away in a growing condition. He takes it north for market at pleasure, any time in winter. He has gathered his stock that which he has not sold, packing it in his strawberries so as to keep it growing and green. This place nearly two years ago, was the most desirable land in all this place and the result of work. Later. The swamps, not all but many of them are then being reclaimed, and as far as personal contacts are concerned here in a prosperous community, the same as in my observations of this province.

I held conversation with a Mr. George Forty, aged about 75, and he stood at a peculiar crossroads so to speak. I asked him what was the matter with him. With his white hairs I have talked half an hour with you and you have conversed. I believe I never listened where there was so much hard speaking as in Michigan. While conversing a young man came, perhaps that I spoke to him. He mentioned, then said, "O, we call it a new acquaintance." I know it is not right, but it is the custom of the country. The early history of the country was intimate to, when to my knowledge money was loaned without interest or note and mortgage, as a matter of friendship. "That time is past in Michigan," said one of the party; "now no a man who is not after the money, and who is strictly honest in all things, and you will find hair growing in the palm of his hand." "A very singular expression," said I. "Yes, sir, but it is too true."

Two and a half miles out from Portage, on the Stickney turnpike, I came to a schoolhouse where I went to school, and where the Prophet Joseph Smith attended to exercises and the first Mormon sermon was preached. In these days of new settlements the schools were well attended. As I was preparing to take a photo of the spot where stood my dear old school, I observed the tears, and where the gifts of the Spirit were manifested, the school mistress requested to be taken in the picture with her scholars. Some who gathered all of her school amount her being numbered only eight. I succeeded at last as good a photo, for the country has become so thickly settled, but as I visited the premises I could behold the scene of the great change, one and sometimes as many as twenty children and when no children at all composed the household family.

After taking a few minutes of the old home, the log house I was baptized, sleeping one night on the spot where the Prophet Joseph partook of our hospitality, and where my father died before the Gospel came here and where was a family of seven of us dwelt in comfortable circumstances with good horses and cows, I retired to a secret spot, poured out my soul in thanksgiving, dropped a tear, and of regret for the steps taken, but joy for the knowledge received by the Gospel, feeling that my hope in the West never more than equal the for the sacrifice I had made. I was satisfied soon to be called to the land from whence I had gathered.

The people have not improved in morality more that time. I am convinced with my Western home, or more so that the Western home, so many would be an inconvenience in exchange. Thinking people are looking for changes to come, and truly they are close at hand; we will quietly wait and see. WM. ADAMS STEVENSON.

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