

RANDOLPH
Holland Mich, Oct 30, 1880.

Dear Uncle

Your letter of Sept 29. came duly to hand some two weeks after its date, and the package of wheat about two weeks later. You doubtless had notice of its delivery by my receipt for it at the Post office. I have not found time until today to open and examine the package. Its contents were in good order and very satisfactory. I shall put them in a glass case and hang them in the office for public inspection. Should you have opportunity to get further specimens, especially of the Egyptian or mummy wheat & send them, I shall feel greatly obliged. In return, if our Agriculture and Pomology interest you, I will send our State reports of 1879. They are large octavo bound volumes, and contain much interesting matter. Our wheat crop this year is estimated at about 33 million of bushels, averaging about 19 bushels per acre. So, you see Michigan raises a little wheat yet. What a wonderful country we live in! And, there seems as yet no limit to its development. A day or two since I met a friend who lives in Grand Rapids and has been investing in one of the huge Red River wheat farms in NW Minnesota

he says it costs only 30¢ per bushel to raise wheat there. He also told me he travelled 1400 miles north west from Pembina, and found the whole distance a good agricultural country without any colder winter than Minnesota. But our Michigan farmers who have land, don't need to emigrate. Taking our mild climate on the lee side of Lake Michigan, and our splendid climate for fruit growing, and our pleasant salubrious summer, and our moderate winter, I think Western Michigan a good place to live. Lake Michigan is practically as boundless to the eye as the Pacific, and almost as boisterous as the ocean when storm lashed into fury. Friday night Oct 15th the steamer Alpena, sailed from Grand Haven 20 miles north from Holland on her usual trip to Chicago. She was a strong side wheel boat of about 700 tons burthen, and had a crew of 25 men and as nearly as can be ascertained, 57 passengers. The other boat of the same line passed her about 40 miles N. E. from Chicago. On the morning of Oct 16. about 2 a.m. a terrible gale of wind struck Lake Michigan. Sunday, some fire buckets marked Alpena, came ashore at our harbor, Monday, and Tuesday the wreck of her upper works and cargo came ashore, about 8 or 10 miles along the beach north and south of our harbor, and the bodies of 8 persons have come ashore and been picked up. And this is all we know of the fate of the boat and the 82 persons on board of her! During the past week since the wreck, even the approaching Presidential election has not excited as much interest here, as the loss of the ill fated

Alpena. Our hotels have been filled by friends of the lost passengers, and the shore of the Lake has been constantly patrolled by searchers for their bodies. Next week decide, who shall be our next President.

We all work and pray that it may be Garfield, believing as we do, that there is more involved than the mere question of party supremacy, in the impending election. There is no question as to the vote of Michigan. Will Oregon help elect Garfield?

Our family is in usual health. John and Kate, his wife still live with us. They have a fine boy about six weeks old. Mary is taking care of her music class as usual. I was at Grand Rapids yesterday. Brother Hoyt & family are well. They have just returned from a visit to Victor, and left father and mother well as usual. We do not hear from Kalamazoo very often, and take it as granted, that no news is good news, showing that Uncle Henry and family are in their usual health or we should hear from them.

We shall be glad to see your son Horace if he will come to visit us, at any time, and will endeavor to make it pleasant to him to do so. We would be glad to hear from your daughter and son William. Perhaps some of them can give us some information about Oregon natural history, especially the Botany and Geology. We take great interest in such matters, and in the way of collection, would very much like to

Make some exchanges.

Hoping to hear from you all, soon I remain,

Your affectionate nephew,

Henry D. Poch

The Post and many desires to be remembered to you