

The Detroit Public Library contains a series of publications, by the Pioneer and Historical Society of Michigan, in Vol. 28 of which may be found a history of the Vermont-ville Colony, by E. W. Barber, the son of a first settler and a boyhood chum of my brother, the late Judge Cochrane. This account, in treating of my father as the prime mover and active participant in the establishment of the colony, makes mention of some of the family as connected with the Colony and as known to him afterward, but declares that "of Sarah, the daughter, nothing is known." Immediately upon my discovery of this *Barberous* lack of information, I mailed to Mr. Barber's address a copy of the Annual Report of the Detroit Public Library, placing a mark against my name in the staff list. This at least *disproved my utter nonentity* and brought out a "correction" in a subsequent volume of the series. It was Mr. Barber who first suggested to me the publication of my mother's letter, and additional biographical notes.

Home Life in a Michigan Clearing.

Vermontville Oct 3^d 1838

Dear Sister*—

I have been thinking of writing to you for a long time but some cares and a want of resolution to set myself about it has hitherto prevented me

When I attempt to write to my friends I hardly know where to begin. A multitude of thoughts crowd around my mind and *beat up* for their right to insertion and I find it difficult to select the best ones and stop the clamorous demands of others which though they may be objects of interest to me may not be so much so to you

I will begin with giving you an account of our health which being one of the greatest blessings of life, you cannot but be interested to learn that we have enjoyed since we came here, as great a share of good health as we ever did at the east Last winter I had a bad spell with my old disorder in my neck and throat, which is not entirely well now, yet it troubles me but very little at present— There has been but very little sickness in the settlement till this summer Within a few weeks there have been a number of

*—Mother's letter to her sister, Mrs. James Davis, written 1838, one year after coming to Vermontville.

cases of fever and fever-and-ague but no deaths I think we have no reason to expect to escape those disorders which are incident to a new country

The season has been pretty favorable to crops The weather in the first part of the summer was intensely hot and somewhat dry for several weeks in succession And it is now very dry, no rains for 6 weeks But on the whole there has been an abundant harvest Wheat out in the more settled parts of the country is selling at 75 cents per bushel There has been a considerable raised here—it grows well Corn is raised here as easily as you can raise hog-weeds— Nothing is necessary but to raise the turf and stick the kernels under and they come up and grow grandly without hoeing or hilling All that is necessary is to go round with a hoe and cut down the weeds, such as are balm nettles and wild grass which grow very luxuriant in so good a soil Much of the corn that has been raised here this year is 2 and 3 feet higher than a man can reach on a *tip-toe*— There is a story to test your credulity! The land has produced best that was improved last year Gardens especially are the most exuberant that I ever saw Vines of all kinds thrive abundantly I was in one garden where I saw a number of squashes nearly a yard in length— *There is another of your Michigan stories* say you! Mush-melons and water-melons, I never saw the like for size and flavour There have been more raised here this year than necessary for "home consumption" How I wish I could send you a water-melon and a mush-melon as big as a pail and as ripe and sweet as you can-desire!

We have raised about 25 bushels of wheat shall have 40 or 50 of corn— Potatoes, beans, pumkins, squashes and all kinds of garden vegetables, enough for our own use We are fattening pork, have plenty of fowls growing—and have lately got a cow The children, poor things, were glad enough to get milk after living without so long There have been months that we have not seen a drop of milk or butter We have lived six weeks at a time without a morsel of anything to eat except potatoes and salt and bread But I think that the worst is over,—we shall not probably be obliged to live so any more There was not half enough raised here last year to supply the inhabiance Those that