Aroostook: Extracts from Addresses of Edward Wiggin, Esq., Delivered Before the Farmers' Club

Edward Wiggin

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EXTRACTS

FROM ADDRESS OF

EDWARD WIGGIN, ESQ.,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

FARMERS' CLUB,

At Boothbay, Dec. 14, 1885.

ALSO, OPINION OF OTHERS

WITH REFERENCE TO THAT COUNTY.

PORTLAND:

TUCKER PRINTING HOUSE,

1887.
The laconic advice given by Horace Greeley to the young man who came to him for counsel and for aid in finding employment in the great metropolis, was probably the best advice which he could have given him, all things being considered. "Go west, young man," said the old philosopher, and he spoke with a full appreciation of the hardships and discouragements in store for the average young man in his struggle for success amidst the keen competition and merciless jostling of a great city. In that new and almost boundless western country, with its fresh young life and active vigor, there are possibilities and opportunities for the young men of the older and more populous eastern section which the crowded cities and villages do not afford. While there is undoubtably room at the west for all who wish to go there and make the battle with a determined zeal and manly courage, still we think that the young men would do well to consider before making the move whether there are not as good if not better opportunities offered them nearer home. The old Pine Tree State, ice-bound and rock-ribbed though she be, is a pretty good State after all. Though the climate may be somewhat vigorous and the soil not so easy of cultivation as in some other sections of our land, though the sunny south, and the boundless west, and the fertile Pacific slope may each and all offer superior advantages in some respects, still we cannot help thinking that all things being considered, Maine is the best place. How many a Maine farmer who has gone west has found that in leaving Maine he has left home and that his fond anticipations and flattering hopes of improving his fortunes in a short time and with little labor, have been far from realized in the event!

The object of this paper is to give in a plain and candid manner, some facts in regard to a portion of our own State which has received considerable attention of late, and to enumerate some of the inducements which Aroostook offers. There are many young
men who have grown up on farms, and who upon arriving at the age of manhood find the old hive too small, and wishing to make for themselves homes of their own, to marry and plant their own roof-tree, see no satisfactory opening for them in their own vicinity. To this class especially, Aroostook offers inducements which they would do well carefully to consider and examine.

I am speaking now more particularly of young men of limited means, whose principal capital consists in sound health, abundant muscle, a willingness to work and a cheerful courage to tackle the knotty old problem of life, and to make the most and the best they can of it. "How much capital have you got sir?" asked a fond parent somewhat sternly of the young man who had presumed to ask for his daughter's hand. "Well, sir," was the plucky reply, "I haven't got much money, but I'm chuck full of day's work." This kind of capital can find a ready investment in Aroostook, and seldom fails to yield ample and generous returns. Many of the finest farms in that fertile country, farms whose broad fields are unbroken by stump or stone, and whose ample barns are now pressed full with one of the most bountiful crops ever harvested in that section, are owned by men who went there with nothing but a stout heart, a strong arm, and a good narrow axe, and courageously went to work to hew for themselves a home out of what was then almost a wilderness. Go through the towns of northern Aroostook (which is the newest portion of the county), look over the fine farms there with their comfortable and commodious and in many cases costly buildings, with their fine flocks and herds and implements of all descriptions, and you will find them occupied for the most part by men still in the prime of manhood, who had very little capital in the way of money to start with, but who have by industry and economy become comparatively independent, and are now the solid men of the county. This has been done in the past, and can be done again, and the facilities are far greater now than when these men started in to make their farms.

First a word as to the extent and area of the county, so that you may know there is room for all who wish to go without any present danger of being over-crowded. The eastern boundary of the county extends in a straight line due north and south one hundred miles from the northern border of Washington county,
until the line strikes the St. John river in Hamlin plantation. You then follow up the St. John as the northern and north-eastern boundary of the county for some seventy miles to the mouth of the St. Francis river, which then becomes the boundary. Following up this river, you soon leave New Brunswick to the south, and find that Canada is your neighbor over the border. The boundary between New Brunswick and Canada strikes Aroostook away up in township 19, range 11. A young friend of mine assured me that while up there on a pleasure tour, he stood with one foot in Canada and the other in New Brunswick and caught a trout and threw it over into Aroostook for Breakfast. You ascend the St. Francis thirty miles before you come to the northern-most point of Aroostook. In its extent from east to west, Aroostook spans the entire State. Start from the town of Easton, which joins New Brunswick on the east, and you can travel a due west course for more than a hundred miles to where the county joins the Province of Quebec on the west. It has four counties on its southern borders, and embraces an area of 6800 square miles.

Fifty years ago there were in all this vast region but a little more than 3000 souls. To-day there are 45,000 and more on the road. In 1860, only 23 years ago, the value of the estates in the whole county was but little more than a million dollars. To-day it is fully eight million and steadily increasing. This vast percentage of increase in population and valuation has been wholly due to the agricultural resources of the county. Covered all over as it originally was and as a great part of it is still with a magnificent growth of heavy timber, it possesses a soil which in strength, richness and fertility will compare favorably with any section of our land. Not only is the soil new and possessed of all its original fertility, but it is rich in the elements of plant food to such a degree as to render it (with proper cultivation) practically inexhaustible. In the valley of the Aroostook and its tributaries the soil is a deep rich mellow loam, the underlying ledge being of porous limestone. There are comparatively few surface stones and these are generally small and easily removed. Since the introduction of starch factories into that section and the consequent raising of large breadths of potatoes, much rough stumpy land has been made smooth and fitted for the working of machinery. The transforma-
tion of one of these old fields or pastures (as they have generally been turned out to pasture ever since they were first cleared) is really a matter of surprise to one unacquainted with the character of Aroostook soil.

Since the era of the factories, the practice has been to take up each year as much of this kind of land as the owner could comfortably handle, say five to ten acres. The first thing of course is to remove the stumps and logs, and haul them together into huge piles and burn them. This has been usually done in the fall when possible. Now it is ready to plow. Two good horses will break it up. The next spring after a good harrowing the field is planted to potatoes and is worked with the horse hoe and cultivator. The next year it is sown to wheat and seeded down, and the third year, on that stumpy, bushy, log-covered lot of only three years ago, the farmer starts out on a fine July morning with his horses and mowing machine, and rides smoothly along with no impediment save the ample swath which is often so stout the first year as to require a man to follow the machine with a fork and pitch the swath away from the standing grass. This is no exageration. I had one field in particular of some eight acres which was so tangled with bushes and logs and stumps that it was almost impossible for a man to get through it on foot, and the second year I plowed it with a sulkey plow, and on the first seeding to grass I cut it with a machine and it has cut two tons of hay to the acre ever since. I mention these facts to give you an idea of the general character of the soil, which is usually so mellow and free from boulders and outcropping ledges that the smoothing harrow easily levels down the cradle knolls and uneven places, and very readily fits it for the working of machinery.

The original growth upon the higher ridges is principally birch and maple, with an occasional beech and often a huge cedar growing side by side with a towering rock maple. In the lower lands, or mixed growth, are hemlock, spruce, fir and cedar, with elm, hornbeam and black or brown ash; the birch and maple being also mixed through this growth. This kind of land, though harder to clear than the hard wood ridges, is really the stronger and will stand more cropping and is the very best of grass land. The soil in this low mixed growth is deep and black, not generally muck,
but a deep rich turf or vegetable mold, which is easy of cultivation and produces abundantly. The staple crops of Aroostook are potatoes, wheat, oats, peas, beans, buckwheat, rye, barley and hay, which, though mentioned last, is really the most important of all. Corn can be raised and is to some extent by many farmers, but it hardly comes into the list of profitable crops. Vegetables of all kinds adapted to the latitude can be grown in abundance, and those which will bear transportation, especially onions, can be raised at a good profit. Strawberry culture can be made a finely paying business by any man who is acquainted with it or is willing to learn it. Strawberries can be shipped from Presque Isle, Caribou or Fort Fairfield to Bangor in about twelve hours, and to Boston in twenty-four, and coming as they would just as the supply from other sources was failing, would command a ready sale at good prices. Aroostook honey is noted for its excellence, and those who have gone into bee culture to any extent have made it a very remunerative business. The vast tracts of fireweed upon the new lands make excellent pasturage for the bees, and the rich clover blossoms are full of the liquid sweetness. The raising of hops has received some attention within a few years. Had the price held up to last year's figures, many farmers might have been tempted to embark in this hardly legitimate branch of agriculture. Dairying is receiving more and more attention each year from our best farmers, and cheese factories are already established in various places throughout the county. This together with stock husbandry is, and is to be the true vocation of the Aroostook farmer. As the country becomes older, and better methods of farming are beginning to prevail, more and more attention is yearly being given to stock raising and dairying. It is estimated upon good authority that fully $200,000 were paid in 1885 for beef in Aroostook. The raising of crops to be sold from the farm is already beginning to be regarded by our best farmers as suicidal, and feeding instead of selling the raw product will one day be the rule instead of the exception. The advantages of Aroostook for stock raising are evident to any one at all conversant with the business. The grasses are there the richest and most luxuriant in the State. Pasturage is most excellent, and the scorching drouths of other sections are unknown there. As soon as the hay is cut
upon the meadows the new crop begins to spring up, and in September, when the fields in other sections of the State are often parched and bare, Aroostook fields are covered with a rich verdure which affords abundant feed for cattle until late in the fall. The stock comes to the barn in excellent condition, and the ample hay-
mows assure a plentiful ration during the winter campaign. Nowhere in Maine, and I think I may safely add in New England, can hay be raised and harvested so cheaply as in Aroostook, and I think I hazard nothing in saying that nowhere can it be more profitably fed to stock.

A large slaughtering establishment is now in operation in Houlton, where 600 sheep and lambs were killed daily in 1885 and forwarded in refrigerator cars to the outside market. The business is to be extended to include the slaughtering and forwarding of beef, so that a ready home market will be at hand for all stock products. Sheep husbandry has been amply proved to be a success in Aroostook, and is a safe, profitable and pleasant business to one who has a taste for it.

Said Mr. Cobb, of the Board of Agriculture, at the Farmers' Institute at Caribou, "Your sheep brought from Aroostook to Androscoggin county soon run down and die off." He had been at a loss to account for this, but when he went up there and saw the feed that those sheep had been brought up on, he ceased to wonder at the effect of the change. The large-bodied coarse-wooled sheep have been chiefly raised, but the Merinoes have been introduced in some sections and take kindly to the green pastures, and are not unfavorably affected by Aroostook winters.

The climate of Aroostook is considered, by many who have never lived there, to be a serious objection. The winters are supposed to be fearfully cold, and the snow-drifts so formidable as to impede travel for half the year. Now I would not undertake to deny that we have some passably cold days during the winter months, and snow is usually a pretty safe crop to reckon on, yet despite all this, I do not hesitate to say that nowhere in Maine, all things considered, is the winter so pleasant and comfortable as in Aroostook. Our snows may come a little earlier, and remain
somewhat later, but by this means we escape the long periods of mud, or of frozen ruts and ridges which often make winter travel so unpleasant in places nearer the seashore.

Another advantage is that the snow usually covers the ground before it has frozen to any considerable depth, and when it goes off in the spring the frost is generally all out of the ground and the grass begins at once to spring up fresh and green, and we are ready to start the plow and the harrow. Indeed, the change from the white mantle of winter to the rich verdure of spring seems almost like the work of magic. There is hardly any interim. On the edge of the forest the poplars are budding and taking on their covering of leaves, while but a rod or two farther in, the ground is covered deep with the snow of winter. The spring sown grain has sent up its strong green spike and has already begun to show a breadth of leaf and to wave a little in the passing breeze, while yet in the fence corners linger the remains of the winter's drift.

Frosts are, as a general thing, not a great source of annoyance or damage to the Aroostook farmer more than to his brother of the other counties, and this year I had sweet corn in my garden fresh and green, long after the papers had told us that autumn frost had harvested everything of a tender nature in the other counties. The season may be a little shorter in Aroostook than in some of the other counties. But I have left home after the crops were well in the ground and found the farmers of Cumberland and of Androscogggin plowing for spring seeding.

Some statistics selected from the columns of the census of 1880 may not be out of place in this connection. The population of Aroostook, as given in the census table of 1880, was 41,700. It is to-day, December 14, 1885, easily 45,000 in round numbers. The number of farms in Aroostook county in 1880 was 5,802. The number of acres of improved land was 270,442, which gave an average of but a fraction less than 50 acres of improved land to each farm. The value of these farms, including land, fences and buildings, is estimated at $5,151,151, or a shade less than $890 each on an average. Not a very high average value, you may think, but you must remember that Aroostook is still a new country, and on many a farm worth $1000 or over, the stumps of the trees that furnished lumber for the buildings, still stand thick upon the
ground, some of them, it may be, in the very dooryard. Remember, too, that the $5,000,000 divided into farms of an average value of less than $900, represents a larger individual independence, a larger number of comfortable homes, than does $11,000,000 which in each of the counties of Cumberland, Kennebec and York is divided into farms of an average value of over $2000.

The value of the live stock in 1880 was $1,164,090, which was more than one-sixteenth of the value of all the live stock in the State. The amount of money expended in fertilizers in Aroostook for the year 1879 was $6,672, while the estimated value of all farm productions sold, consumed, or on hand, was $1,826,348. A closer scrutiny of these figures reveals the interesting fact that while Aroostook produced one-twelfth of the total value of farm products of the State, she expended but one-thirty-second of the whole amount expended in the State for fertilizers during the same year. No other comment is needed on the fertility of Aroostook soil.

Of the several principal crops Aroostook raised 15,777 bushels of barley, which was more than one-sixteenth of all the barley raised in the State; 296,793 bushels of buckwheat, more than three-fourths of all the buckwheat raised in Maine. No danger of starving, you see, where the staff of life grows in such rich abundance. In the matter of corn we made a poor showing, being credited with only 382 bushels, but it wasn't much of a corn year. I remember that same year I fitted an acre of ground for corn, being encouraged thereto by the fact that the year before I raised a barrel of meal from a little patch planted for green corn. The season being rather backward I got discouraged about my corn and sowed my acre to oats and seeded it down to Alsike clover and herdsgrass. I harvested 95 bushels of clean oats, machine measure, from my measured acre, and have cut an average of two tons of hay each year on it since. Not a very bad crop of corn that, either.

Of oats we raised 628,435 bushels, or nearly one-third of the total product of the State. Of rye we raised 10,894 bushels, considerably more than one-third of the total product. The value of orchard products are rapidly on the increase. There are many kinds of hardy apples which can be easily raised, and increased
fact of the comparatively small part of Aroostook land as yet under cultivation, will give some idea of the possibilities in the future for this young and growing country.

A word here in regard to the religious, social and educational advantages of Aroostook would not seem out of place. A Maine man in removing to a distant State is often obliged to leave behind him all his dear old home customs and associations, and finds himself generally in a new atmosphere whose elements are for the most part foreign to that to which he has been accustomed. This is a great sacrifice, and to many it is one for which no advantage will compensate. Though we are not all saints in Maine, yet our good old forefathers and foremothers have handed down to us certain customs and practices which it were well for us sacredly to cherish. And although it has become somewhat common in some latitudes to sneer at New England Puritanism, yet we think the outcome of that same Puritanic education toned down by the gentle hand of Time, and by the influences of liberal ideas, has been to raise a pretty staunch, solid and respectable class of men and women. These distinctive customs and practices are not lost or left behind when the Maine man leaves his old home in one of the older counties for a new one in Aroostook. Whatever may be his religious belief he may be sure of finding brothers and sisters of the same faith in his new home. Even in the most remote and sparsely settled sections of the county, religious meetings of some kind are held at stated intervals, while in all the villages and larger settlements the neat, white church with its graceful spire pointing trustingly heavenward attests the fact that the teaching of the fathers has not been forgotten in this new country. In the matter of education the young county is not to be left behind her sister counties, and nowhere in the State is more interest taken in education by the rural population than in Aroostook. Everywhere throughout the length and breadth of the county, upon every back road and in every remote settlement where a half dozen or more sturdy pioneers have commenced to hew them a home out of the greenwood, the school-house, the pride and hope of our land, may be seen nestled in among the trees; modest and unpretentious though it may often be, and rude in its architecture and findings, yet it shows the value placed by the people upon the education of
the youth of the land. Not bad influences these for a boy or girl to grow up among. Said, or sang rather, David Barker, Maine's truest poet:

"Had I this tough old world to rule,
My cannon, sword and mallet
Should be the dear old district school,
God's Bible and the ballot."

The importance of these agencies are duly appreciated by the people of Aroostook, and besides the common district school there is at Houlton, and will in a few months be at Presque Isle, a higher grade of school or seminary at which any youth who is desirous of fitting for a college course can find ample facilities at a moderate expense. The social characteristics of Aroostook people are marked and noticed by all who visit the county. No warmer hearted people or better mixers can be found throughout the State. I think there is something in the atmosphere of a new country to bring people together and make them more cordial and warm blooded than in sections where the line fences have been established for a century. Among the pioneers of a section, this community of interest and working together for the common good is a matter of necessity, and the influence of it remains long after each one has become comparatively independent of his neighbor's help. The harvest feasts which are held at short intervals are occasions of rare social enjoyment, and cannot help making the participants better neighbors and therefore better citizens in every respect.

A matter of great and vital importance to a farmer settling in a new country is to be assured of a market for what he raises. The soil may be as fertile as can be desired and the crops raised yearly may be abundant and generous, but if there be no market for the crop after it has been raised and harvested the prospect for the farmer is certainly not very flattering. But in this respect the Aroostook farmer is fortunately well provided. From the wild berry which grows in the fields and woodlands to the fat steer which he has fed with so much care and pride, there is nothing on the whole list of farm productions but finds a ready market and for cash. This has not always been the case with us. Time was when very few of the products of the farm could be sold for cash, and no permanent cash market could be counted on for any of
them. The trading was formerly largely done by barter, and the credit system prevailed to a great extent. The farmer got his goods on credit at the store during the whole summer, and in the fall as soon as his grain was harvested he was obliged to carry it in and deliver it at the trading price. For potatoes there was no market at all beyond the comparatively few that were wanted for consumption in the villages. It was the same with many other articles of farm production. They could be raised in abundance and at a comparatively small expense, but there was no call for them after they were raised, and so the Aroostook farmer was cut off from many sources of revenue and was practically limited to the market created by the lumbering operations which was at best a capricious and untrustworthy dependence. It was far better than no market to be sure, and was a great help to the county in its pioneer days, and is yet to many of the remote lying districts, but the advent of the RAILROADS has changed the face of matters very materially as regards market facilities, and now buyers of all sorts of farm produce are not only located at the railroad stations, but their agents visit the farmer at his home and buy his surplus products, and competition is generally so lively that the price paid is usually pretty well up to what can be realized in the larger markets after the intervening expenses are paid. With the railroad came the starch factories, which have made a home market for all the potatoes that can be raised at prices which have proved to be remunerative, and many a farmer who either bought his farm partly on time, giving a mortgage for the remainder, or who by bad luck or bad management had become involved, has by the aid of the starch factories paid off all his indebtedness, and now free from debt he walks forth the most independent man on God's green earth, the undisputed possessor of the land he tills. Not only at the factories can the potatoes be disposed of, but buyers are always on hand to pay cash in hand for merchantable potatoes at prices governed of course by the outside market. And so with every other article the farmer may have to dispose of. His eggs are taken at the door, his poultry is bought alive and taken at the barn and the money put into his hands.

Cheese factories during their season consume the milk of those dairies situated within a convenient distance, and the cheese is sold
at the factory in the fall for cash. For most of the grain raised there is a market for home consumption in the villages and in the lumber woods. Hay is shipped now from Northern Aroostook to Boston. Even rye straw is an article of merchandise and has a ready sale for cash, for shipment to Boston, and last of all, and most unexpected of all, has come the man with a pocket full of money to buy cedar bark to ship away to be manufactured into paper. What will be the next Aroostook product to be sought for by outside capital it is hard to predict.

In the matter of roads for transportation and inter-communication Aroostook is well supplied. The character of the soil is such as to render road building comparatively easy, and for so new a country the roads are certainly remarkably good. As in the old Roman empire all roads led to Rome, so in the valley of the Aroostook all roads lead to some one of the three villages of Presque Isle, Caribou, or Fort Fairfield, each one of which is a railroad station and the centre of a fertile and thriving agricultural district. A drive in the vicinity of either one of these villages will take you among beautiful farms with large, comfortable and costly buildings, with smooth, rich and well tilled fields stretching away to the woods, and in many places so level that a field of hundreds of acres could be enclosed, in which an animal feeding upon any part of it could be seen from either fence. And still there are men now living who can remember the time when the land where these fine and fertile farms now are, was an unbroken forest, and when even the sites of these flourishing villages with their noisy wheels and hum of busy life was an almost trackless wilderness. I talked but a short time ago with a hale, hearty old gentleman who came up the Aroostook river and drove his stake down in what is now the thriving village of Caribou, when hardly a tree had been cut on the whole township. A few settled in together and made their clearing. The river was their only highway, and it was many a mile to Tobique on the St. John River where the nearest store and mill was situated. What a change had this man lived to see! The wilderness whose trackless depths resounded with the blows of the pioneer's axe has truly been made to blossom as the rose, and on the spot where this man saw the first tree cut to build the settler's cabin, is now a thriving, bustling village, with its railroad and
telegraph, its mills run both by water and steam, the **largest starch factory in the world**, large blocks of stores and fine residences, its churches, school-houses and public halls. The same may in substance be said of all the other villages in the valley. And still this growth has been the effect of no sudden excitement, as of the discovery of a gold or silver mine; it has not been the mushroom growth of the western railroad town, which springs up as it were in a day, and as quickly disappears when the road moves farther on. Mines of wealth are hidden indeed in these fertile acres, but it is the wealth which comes from the husbandman's toil, and the "watered stock" of these claims brings no unhealthy fever of speculation.

But perhaps enough has been said in description of the country and its resources. And now some may be asking the questions: "How, when and where shall we go, and how shall we obtain possession of some of this fertile land and make for ourselves homes in this garden county, as others have done in the past?" These questions I will try to answer fairly and candidly, making no statements which will not wash, and holding out no inducements which are not warranted by facts. Of course these questions would be answered differently to different individuals, that is, to persons of different pecuniary circumstances. But in the first place, we will suppose the person to be a young man with no dependencies, with good health and no other capital than his muscle and his wits. My advice to such a young man would be to scrape together what money he can this winter by working where he can earn the best wages. Next spring, say along the last of April, start for Aroostook. Go to Presque Isle, Caribou, or Fort Fairfield by rail. Then strike out among the farmers. Some one will want you to work on a farm next summer, and you will receive for six month's work, say $120. It may be a little more and perhaps a little less, according to your experience and ability. By working during the season for some good farmer you will get somewhat acquainted with the country and the people, with the soil and the crops, as well as the methods and practices among the farmers of that section. You will also have time and opportunity to enquire particularly where the best land can be found and at what price, and can form some more definite idea as to where you would prefer.
to locate. By the time your six months have expired, say by the first of November, you will begin to feel quite at home. The hills round about will begin to look familiar to you, and you will not feel so much like a stranger in a strange land. Now take a week or two and prospect. You will have heard by this time of different localities where wild land can be bought at reasonable rates. Go and look at these places. If you have now made up your mind to buy a new lot, and make a farm for yourself from the forest, take a little time in making a selection and look the property over pretty thoroughly before purchasing. The lot you want is one which has a road running to it or near it, or one where a road is to be made in the near future. Select a well watered lot. Don't pick for a lot that is all clear hard wood. A mixed growth on a part of the lot is no matter of objection, as there you will find your strongest land after it is cleared. I think you can find a lot to suit you, say 160 acres (that's enough) for about $2.00 per acre. It will not be within a stone's throw of a village, but remember that those who settled where the villages are now, were much farther from a village, or a settlement even, than you can get now if you try. You can buy your land by paying a part down and letting the rest remain until you can earn it or make it from the land. Now you have got your land and it is perhaps nearly the middle of November. What next? Well, you must now be governed in a great measure by circumstances.

It won't do to lay down too many rules at this distance, or to lay out the work too far ahead, but like Josh Billings' rules for counting, just get the thing well under way and then "let it kinder run itself." If you have paid one hundred dollars down on your land you may be (after buying a few clothes needed for winter) getting pretty near the bottom of your pile, and will have to fall back on your reserved capital, to wit: your day's work for more money. You may prefer to work on a farm for the winter if you can hit a favorable opening, if not the lumbermen want you and in ordinary seasons will pay you fair wages for a winter's work.

Now I have got you well started and located on a good lot of Aroostook land, now let's see how much sand you've have got in you. If you mean business and have got the right sort of stuff in you, you are bound to succeed. If these requisites are wholly
lacking, no amount of advice or counsel from me will help you much, either in Aroostook or anywhere else. In regard to localities where wild land suitable for farming can be bought, I would say that in nearly all of the towns already settled there are some lots which can still be obtained. Mapleton, Castle Hill and Chapman are towns abounding in good settling land still covered with its original forest growth. In each of these towns there are many fine farms which have been made from the forest within a few years, and made too by just the class of men of whom I have been speaking.

Adjoining the town of Washburn there are tracts of fine settling land in what is called Dumstown or Wade plantation. These tracts lie along the Aroostook river, and are beautiful areas of forest land. Along the line of the new county road which is now being opened from Caribou to Fort Kent, there is in township 16, range 4, some excellent settling land in desirable locations.

Now let me speak a word or two to another class of persons who may be desirous of going to Aroostook and making themselves a home. You are a man with a wife and growing family and may be able to pull together a few hundred dollars to start with. "Where, you ask, are you going to place me?" Well, my friend, we have just the place for you exactly. If you have but a very small capital, say two or three hundred dollars when you land in Aroostook, you can find in the town of Perham (a good town named for a good Oxford man) farms with small clearings already made, with a small house and barn perhaps ready built and which will do until you can build better, which you can buy for a comparatively small advance from the price of wild land. These openings can be found in other towns, but I instance this town because I happened to be talking with a resident not long since who spoke of quite a number of farms of this description which could be bought at a very reasonable rate. Perham was a State town and the land was sold to actual settlers at fifty cents per acre to be paid in road labor in making roads to their own lots. The State required a house to be erected and a certain amount of land to be cleared and seeded before a deed could be given. These farms which I speak of as now being for sale are farms which were taken up by settlers and the requisite settling duties
performed, and then for some reason the owner chose to remove to some other locality. Perhaps in some instances he had not the requisite grit to stay and fight the battle through. It may be that sickness or death in the family decided his removal, but be that as it may, those farms are there and can be bought for small money, and some resolute men with small means are going in there and take up some of them and make fine comfortable homes for themselves and their children. You will observe I am placing you upon farms which your present means will pretty nearly pay for, or where the remaining debt will be comparatively small. I have done this because I have a horror of debt. I can point you to farms here and there throughout Aroostook, farms worth $800, $1000 or $1500, which you can buy by paying $200 or $300 down and giving notes and mortgage for the balance. There are those whose means will enable them to buy these farms and nearly pay for them, and a few hundred dollars’ debt on a farm worth $1000 or $1500 is no great terror to a resolute man.

I have addressed myself mainly in these crude remarks to men of small means, for the reason that men who have capital to invest are able to go and look the situation over for themselves. And I repeat what I said at the beginning, that to young men especially, who have their own energy, courage and muscle to rely on, Aroostook offers superior inducements. And I think that ten years of honest labor and frugal economy on an Aroostook lot which can be purchased to-day for from two hundred dollars to three hundred dollars will provide a man with a better home, and surround him with more of the comforts of life than will, (on the average,) ten years at any other business he can embark in.

Let me give you a few figures from the actual experience of one of my neighbors. He gave me the items but last week. Something over twenty years ago he set foot in Presque Isle with just five dollars and sixty cents in his pocket, which was all he had in the world to start on. He went to work in April for sixteen dollars a month and worked till he earned a little over sixty dollars. He then bought a settler’s improvement on a State lot on which the settler had fallen 14 acres of trees. He gave him sixty dollars for his claim, having the State still to pay. That fall he cleared up 8 acres of the 14, and then went into the woods and worked all
winter for $80. In the spring he bought a yoke of steers, paying part down and giving note and bill of sale for rest. He went on to his lot and cleared up the other six acres and put the whole 14 into wheat and oats. As soon as he got his crop in he went to work out on a farm and earned enough to pay for some help in harvesting, and did the rest of it himself alone after his money gave out. He raised 183 bushels of wheat, for which he got $240, and 380 bushels of oats which brought him $190, making in all for his crop $430, and all his own except what he owed on his steers. After harvest he took a job on the road from the land agent and paid for his farm. He then went to work and got out lumber and built him a barn and then sold out for $600 in cash. He then commenced on another improved farm and to-day he has one of the best farms in Maysville, some 300 acres of land, a fine two-story house, barn 50x100 and is one of the independent farmers of the county. Another of my neighbors bought the farm on which he now lives about twenty years ago. It was a 160 acre lot and there were 10 acres cleared off ready for the harrow. It had a little log house, the remains of which were to be seen but a year or two ago, and no barn. He paid $350 which was all the money he had. He went to work clearing land and raising crops. After a few years he bought another lot of 120 acres adjoining his. He sold this lot the other day for $1600 in cash, and on his home lot he has about 100 acres cleared, has one of the best barns in the county, a house good enough for any one, a fine stock of cattle and to-day is one of the foremost citizens of the county.

Another one of my neighbors who came to Maysville just after the war, having been a soldier in the Union army, told me that after paying for his farm, on which there was a small clearing, he had just a five dollar bill left. He has now one of the best farms on the road, good buildings and stock and is independent. Instances like these might be multiplied, but I fear I am already wearying your patience. Let me, however, as an illustration of the profit in clearing new land, give you just one example, the figures of which were given me the other day, by Columbus Hayford, Esq., one of the leading farmers of Aroostook. He cleared last year 10 acres of new land, as he did not get a first-
rate burn he plowed, or as we say, rooted over a part of it in the spring. These are his figures:

Dr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearing land, 10 acres</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plowing</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrowing</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 bush. seed potatoes, .25</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting 5 acres</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed oats, 12 bush. .60</td>
<td>7.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sowing 1 acre turnips</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting oats</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digging potatoes</td>
<td>41.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hauling potatoes to factory</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting turnips</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$249.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1050 bush. potatoes, .25</td>
<td>$262.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240 &quot; oats, .40</td>
<td>96.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 &quot; turnips, .15</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$388.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>249.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$139.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A profit of $13.93 per acre (after paying for clearing the land) on the first crop. Of course it would not be fair to charge the whole expense of clearing to this crop, but I have done so to show the profit on clearing good land.

I told you I would give you facts; I have done so. I have not done as the newspaper correspondents often do, who hearing of an exceptionally large crop which some Aroostook farmer has raised immediately give that as the average. I have carefully refrained from anything of the kind, but have given you a fair, candid, uncolored statement of inducements which Aroostook offers to settlers. Let any good honest man who is able and willing to work and make a home for himself, thereby increasing his own comfort and adding to the material wealth of the county and State, go to Aroostook, and he will be sure of a cordial welcome, all the more cordial if take a good honest woman along with him. The future in store for Aroostook promises to be bright.
EXTRACTS.

[Bangor Whig and Courier.]

Aroostook County not only offers a golden opportunity to the man who is contented with sufficient means for himself and those dependent upon him, comfortable. One who when he has accomplished this much, he has obtained all there is of real happiness in the accumulation of wealth, and therefore has no reason to complain of his lot; but there is ample opportunity for the man who is ambitious, to become wealthy, as there is a chance on every hand for him to suit his taste in regard to any business calling his talents and education best fit him to adopt.

[Hon. Wm. R. Porter, of Boston, says:]

Good goods are not damaged by their showing. We are surprised and delighted with Aroostook County. Its beautiful fields and fertile lands.

[Eastern Argus, Portland.]

Aroostook County is a land of great fertility, unsurpassed indeed in this respect by any in the country and only equalled by the richest tracks, like the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky, which it resembles in quality of soil.

[Lowell Courier, Lowell, Mass.]

Aroostook County is four times as large as Rhode Island and contains 6,800 square miles; it is watered by the St. John. It is bountifully watered, the surface is undulating or rolling, few mountains or high hills and scarcely any level plains, except intervals belts on the rivers; the soil consists of rich loam from two to ten feet deep; vegetable mould is frequently found at the later depth, the fertility of the soil appears to be almost unlimited, yielding bountiful crops for many years in succession without fertilization. In different parts of the county are found ores of iron, also sandstone and roofing slate. It is the best potato country in New England, averaging 300 to 400 bushels to the acre; wheat or oats average greater, per acre, than the Western or Southern States.

[George H. Miller, Worcester, Mass.]

For men of small means who desire to enter upon an agricultural life, it presents unusual attractions; large farms can be secured for a moderate outlay; uncleared lands can be had for $1.50 to $2.50 per acre and it can be cleared for $10, ready for cultivation.
[H. K. Morrill, Esq., Gardiner, says:]

The country around Caribou is as fine an agricultural region as the world can produce and the wide spread fields of waving grain or dark green potatoes, convey an air of comfort and plenty I have seldom seen.

[Lewiston Journal.]

The farmers of Aroostook County have made money, as well as a living, out of their farms. Many a farmer has $2,000 in the Houlton Savings Bank; this gold has been dug out of the soil in legitimate farming and not outside ventures—in the mean time the farmer has lived well. The products of Aroostook are abundant.

[Boston Journal says:]

A person looking at fields of grain, hay, potatoes, the dark soil devoid of stones, the luxuriant character of everything, need not be told that a prosperous people find there a home, and enjoy as many comforts as any people in the farming regions of New England.

[Hon. J. S. Grinnell, Greenfield, Mass.]

I was immensely interested in the products of that county, Aroostook, at Manchester, N. H.

[Fairfield Journal.]

The future of Aroostook County is sure to be remarkable. It does not stand to reason that such a stretch of the most productive land the sun ever shown upon, is to remain much longer unimproved.

[Hon. C. B. Pratt, of Worcester.]

One thing that astonished me more than all else, was the richness and fertility of the soil we found everywhere in Aroostook. It was by all odds the finest land in New England, and there are no better anywhere; recollect the soil is rich and productive.

[Hon. Daniel Needham, of Boston, says:]

The Aroostook soils, with their natural rainfall, would far exceed the acreable productions of the far West; he had traveled extensively and nowhere had he seen more beautiful scenery, delightful landscape views, greener and more fertile fields; nowhere had he met a more hospitable, intelligent and enterprising people. Everything surprised his most sanguine expectations. He had seen the products of "Aroostook" soil on exhibition at the various fairs, and they were such as would be creditable to any State in America; but he had no idea of the capacity, various resources and extent of territory. He had been to the Pacific Slope, California, Kansas, New Mexico and Nebraska; had seen the true type of American character, and nowhere had he found better specimens of men and women, or a place where the English language was more correctly
spoken than in the State of Maine. He could produce more on one acre of Aroostook soil, with its natural rainfall, than on one hundred of the dry and sandy soils of Arizona and New Mexico.

[HON. Z. A. GILBERT, Secretary Board of Agriculture, says:]

No one who loves land and knows its value, could fail to be favorably impressed with the smooth acres, stretching away farm after farm over the broad swells which make up the characteristic Aroostook lands.

[MASSACHUSETTS PLOWMAN.]

Here in New England, right at the door, stretch a Virgin country, with forests and water courses, and richest of soils in a state of nature, within easy reach by rail to the coast and its carrying facilities, where cereals and roots, cattle, horses and sheep could be raised in abundance and to an assured profit, and inviting the young agriculturalist to turn their feet to the East instead of the West, no longer making an emigrant an exile.

[MR. DANIEL STICKNEY says:]

"To be happy is the birthright of an Aroostook farmer." His crops always good, this year are unusually good. The crop of wheat is unusual, twenty-five and thirty bushels per acre.

[HON. GEORGE B. LORING, President of the New England Agricultural Society, in his address before that Society, at their meeting at Bangor, Sept., 1886, says:]

Aroostook County, the Garden of the East, covering an area four times as large as Rhode Island, a third larger than Connecticut, three-fourths as large as Vermont and four-fifths as large as New Hampshire; it is rich in soil and forests, in ores and quarries, in streams and lakes. A county in which three or four hundred bushels of potatoes are raised to the acre is entitled to the respect and admiration of every tiller of the soil. We are told that seven farmers in one section of this county raised from 505 acres in grass and 260 acres in cultivation, 550 tons of hay, 14,848 bushels of potatoes, 652 bushels of wheat, and 4,646 bushels of oats, 1,275 bushels of buckwheat, and 200 bushels of rye. And this section is but a sample of many others in the county. The cattle of the Aroostook are well known for their thrift and quality. It returns 9,054 horses, 2,252 working oxen, 12,461 cows and 14,031 other cattle, more "other cattle" than any other county in the State except Oxford and Penobscot. The care and management of the farms in this county are worthy of great admiration; the condition of the lands and buildings indicating well-applied industry and wide-spread prosperity. I have made this statement of the agricultural condition of Aroostook because it presents, as I think, an excellent illustration of the progress of agriculture
in many other parts of New England as well as possessing unusual merits of its own. This county was only incorporated in 1839 with a population of only 9,000. It now has fifty towns and nearly 42,000 inhabitants.

[The Evening Journal, Lewiston. Room Enough In Maine. Don't "Go West, Young Man."]

No, young man: you are not compelled to leave your native State to obtain a living, or even to gain riches. Though the peculiar energy of our Maine boys has pushed them out into all parts of the world and reflected honor back upon their birthplace, there exists no necessity for any more such removals. Maine is big enough and has resources enough to provide handsomely for all her children.

[Bangor Commercial, Dec. 28th, 1886.]

The price now paid to farmers for potatoes, delivered at the depot, is $1.00 per barrel. The freight from Caribou to Boston is 16½ cents per bushel. At this season of the year, the "Eastman Heater Car" is used, for which an extra charge of $20 is made for heating, and if the car be unloaded within five days after arrival at destination, a draw-back of $10 is allowed the shipper.

Houlton, Fort Fairfield, Caribou and Presque Isle, are the principal potato markets for Aroostook County, and their importance ranks in the order named, Houlton being the largest. Here there are eleven regular potato buyers; at Fort Fairfield, 8; at Caribou, 4; at Presque Isle, 3.

There is no place in the world where better potatoes are raised, or more to the acre, than in Aroostook County, it being a very common thing for a farmer to take 400 bushels from one acre of land, and last season there were several who raised from 5000 to 7000 bushels, and in one or two cases, 8000 bushels.

It is a noticeable fact that the Aroostook farmers are now getting their freight through to Boston by rail at a less rate than that from Bangor to Boston at the time General Manager Tucker assumed the management of the road.

There is no section of this country which can present better inducements for energetic farming than Aroostook County, and we doubt if more thrifty and successful tillers of the soil are to be found in any other than in this acknowledged "Garden of New England." The rich, deep soil is free from rocks and easily worked, strongly resembling in these particulars the famous prairie land of the West.

The figures already given in this article show that the rates for freight are low, considering the distance from the market. We know whereof we affirm when we say that many a Vermont farmer, whose lands lie contiguous to railroads, has to pay a higher freight rate in getting his products to Boston than do the farmers in Aroostook County, although the distance from the the latter place to Boston is twice as far.
There is plenty of land in Aroostook that can be had at a reasonable price, the County having an area about equal to that of the State of Massachusetts. Good farmers of New England, who wish to better their condition, would do well to cast their lot with Aroostook.

[Hon. Warren Brown, Hampton Falls, N. H., Dec. 27th, 1886.]

I have always heard of the wonderful fertility of the Aroostook lands, and after a personal examination they prove to be all that was ever claimed for them. It is a natural grass country, and is favorable to the growth of grain and potatoes. The history of the world shows that those countries where grass grows abundantly, enjoy a material prosperity and become wealthy. To those who wish to engage in farming, Aroostook County seems to me to possess great and unusual attractions. It is a good place to engage in stock raising, being near enough to market not to suffer from railroad combinations and monopoly, such as are complained of in the far West. Its freedom from drouth and grasshoppers is another valuable feature. The people seem noted for industry, intelligence and sobriety, and good society is the rule. I have no hesitation in recommending Aroostook as combining more favorable conditions than any section of our country I have ever seen. And having been a practical farmer all my life, I feel that I am not mistaken in my views, that a few years of well directed industry cannot fail to secure a competence.

Yours truly,

Hon. Warren Brown,
Hampton Falls, N. H.