

An Arbor, March 11th 1843

Dear Brother, I must make you out a letter this week and send it on nothing special to tell. This is Monday evening (March 6th) This morning was cold, very cold, for the time of year, and considering that February has been so steadily cold. Almost every one are wishing that the cold weather would disappear but as yet their wishes are not gratified. This was a pleasant day after the nine of the clock. January was a pleasant month. February was a cold month. Good sleighing the whole of the month and the nine tenths of the month first rate. The sleighing so far in March is very good and the weather cold. A first rate winter to haul logs. And the Saurmills have an extra supply. Logs still continue to come in six were hauled in to day. Four Oaks, and Two Poplar. We have probably 1200 logs in the millyard. Eldred's Plastermill is grinding Plaster now. It is run night and day. They are now grinding Grand-river Plaster it is white. Sell it for nine dollars per ton ground. Seneca-falls Plaster of which they have a supply on hand. They sell at eight dollars per ton. I would prefer the white if there was two dollars difference in the price. This Grand River Plaster is from Kent County Michigan. Eldred's say it can be furnished, for less than Seneca-falls Plaster which is a black Plaster and is not much esteemed. Some say who have tried it, that it is good for nothing. Others say that it is good and they have used some of it. It was not for the hard times much Plaster would be sold this season. For hay is at the present time more scarce than money. Scarce as that is. A great many persons have fed nearly all the provender they have for their cattle. And are about enquiring for straw, as Hay is not expected. And what is very discouraging the cold weather still hangs on and seems determined not to let up. The cause of this distress is. The crop of hay last year was light, and the winter has been steadily cold with much snow. The 21st of February the snow was the deepest. Two feet was the depth. And another cause many thresh their wheat early in the fall with a threshing machine and much of the straw get wasted. Robert is going thresh with a machine this week one day and pay the hands that assist him in straw. A Mr Snow sold straw in Ypsilanti last week at two cents a bundle: two sheaves in a bundle. I am not sure it was Rye straw but I think it was. I have hay enough. I fenced a marsh, between Malletts creek and Whitmore brook last year, and hired a man to make the hay on it and stack it. The hay cost me five dollars. (The marsh had not been mowed for a number of years and was hard to mow.) It cost me one dollar and an half, to haul it home this winter I got half a ton of Bran which cost me four dollars. That makes \$10.50 that my two cows cost me this winter. Last winter I bought my hay, and the same cows cost \$29 to winter them, when tame hay was \$7 per ton. Hay is quick ^{sale} at ten dollars per ton now. My cows run on the common in the summer, and cost me nothing. I keep my cows well.

March 8th. Yesterday evening I read the New York Weekly Tribune. Rather a dearth of news at present. The year's days shows our Michigan member among the nay: in favor of high wages and high salaries. That vote will be in the way of his nomination

I don't want you to pay for the Weekly North American any more for I intend not to take it any longer than the time that has been paid for. It is a good Newspaper. but I prefer the Tribune at the same price. The Tribune costs \$1.50 per year. In the summer the Tribune arrives here first: in the Winter the North American comes first. This morning was warmer than any this week and we have had a fine day. The cost of building a house here is owing to ^{the} kind of house. When we first came here. houses were built and roofed for \$40. 100 dollars built what was called a decent house. These were log houses. The first kind round logs. The second kind were round logs hewed inside. and story and quarter high. My house is two stories, 24 by 32 feet. Cellar under half of it. It is a frame house. I keep a particular account of the cost. And it amounted to \$754.77. Probably a house of the same size might be built ^{now} near mine for \$500. Your land is further from a Sawmill. and stones are not had very near. These things would probably add 20 per cent more to ^{the} cost of a house on your land. There is an old log house adjoining your land. (Built by a Mr Stillwell, who died some years ago.) might be had. At least Mr Dalton Brown who has the agency of it said he would give you the first chance to rent. But I doubt whether he can get the man out of it that is now in it. I think it is three acres of land that is attached to the house. This house and lot belongs to Stillwell's children. and cannot be sold until the youngest comes of age. or else you ought to buy it. so as to control it. Mr King lives in it now and he is called the worst man in the neighborhood. ~~is called~~. Philadelphia par Bank notes I presume would answer us. The Country Bank bills are uncertain and ^{we} want none of them. Your County, Townshipp, & State tax in Pittsfield for 1842 was \$9.20. That is high. Robert has 232 acres in Superior which was taxed \$5.85. Robert's land is as good as yours and some of it improved. Such is the difference of tax in different Townships. Your land was probably assessed at 5 dollars pr acre and Robert at \$4 pr acre. Robert's farm in Ann Arbor was averaged at \$6 pr acre. Some remedy ought to be applied to these different assessments. I put that part of Ann Arbor I assessed at half its value in 1842. Pittsfield was a little higher. Superior was full as much lower. If I am elected assessor next April. I will think it my duty to put Ann Arbor still lower. But where is ^{this} thing to end!

March 9th. Still cool. The news of this day is that the United States ^{Court} has decided that Mortgages given before the Law appraising land and setting it off at two thirds ^{to} value was passed. can be foreclosed and the land sold just as if the appraisal law had never been passed. I am glad of that decision. I am tired of appraisal laws. Like Bank suspensions I can tolerate them a short time but persevering in such things makes them a standing nuisance and a curse to the country. If persons cannot pay their debts after giving them a reasonable time they ought wind up and begin again. I think but little of the present Bankrupt law. It seems to me that it does not work well. At any rate there is quite a prejudice, or rather a hard feeling against those that serve a notice on those ^{they owe} instead paying them, what is probably honestly their due. It is certainly a mean way of paying debts. I have had one notice served on me for about \$85

I would have been more satisfied and better pleased if he had come and told me he could not pay and offered me something say \$5 and if he had nothing I would have taken nothing and forgave him the debt. But to be served with a notice as pay in full: shews a cold hearted impudence. that poor human nature must delect: and as you see no humble ness how can you forgive. Forgiveness does not seem to be thought of. Still I would be in favor of Bankrupt law. If it could be divested of this saucy independence. I will copy a letter from Mr Ewers which he sent me a year ago "Jane thinks you want some information in relation to the money she is to receive from Wm he writes that he can send Treasury drafts, or notes, which will be acceptable, as they are about the same as specie, sometimes a little better. But the best manner to remit unless he has business which will require him to come to Michigan on his own account: will be to purchase a ~~Dr. on New York~~ ^{to} which he is sure will be paid on presentation. drawn to the order of you or myself which could be sold for one or two per cent over specie this will be a safe way as the draft will not be good without being indorsed by the person to whose order it is drawn in favor. And we can by power of Attorney sign off our claim and remit the same. N. B. I presume a draft on New York can be bought in Harrisburgh at one per cent. but this is merely a suggestion which if not satisfactory on enquiry need not be adopted". March 10th We had a drizzling ^{rain} last night and until one of the clock to day. The wind changed then and blew from the West. The wind is high now and it is blowing up cold again. Wheat is .53 Corn 37½ Cato .25. Butter 12½ Eggs 12½. Dried Apples 1.25 pr Bu (that is 22 lbs) Corn, & Cato, are scarce. The want of hay may raise the price of wheat before harvest. It is said that North & West of this; hay and straw are more scarce than here. In new settlements there is no want grass for hay in Michigan. For marshes are without number. Consequently it is nothing but carelessness runs them out of fodder. The Yankees are so given to talking big and displaying the worthlessness of Marsh hay in comparison to tame hay. That sometimes they almost if not altogether persuade themselves that Marsh ^{hay} is not worth cutting and lay in a scanty allowance. I am sorry that so many have been improvident not only on account of the suffering it occasions. but because it impoverishes the country by diverting its income to home consumption. I received a Lebanon Courier it arrived a day before your letter. I see your state tax is ~~not quite~~ ^{not quite} two mills on the dollar. But other things are taxed Witches & amounting to ½ of a mill more. The state tax is more than the County tax. Here the State, County & Township tax is laid on and collected at the same time. The State tax 2 mills. In Ann Arbor the whole tax was 7½ mills (but the Property is assessed at half its worth) this is beside the Road tax which is done in work. At 62½ pr day it amounts to about half the other taxes.

I intend to go to Ann Arbor tomorrow afternoon and then mail this. We are all well Robert the day thrashed 300 Bu of Wheat March 8th Eight horses and fifteen men were employed. He has 300 more to thrash which he intends to thrash next Monday. Robert set his crop of Wheat last year at 900 Bu. I presume it will come up to that. I think that Robert must clear something this past year

William Geddes Esqr Forwell John Geddes

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