

## NORTHERN INDIANA IN 1829.

*From the Indiana Republican (Madison), January 7, 1829.*

MR. EDITOR: The writer of this has spent some days of the last month examining the country on the St. Joseph of Lake Michigan, the Wabash and Kankikee. This country, except the Kankikee, is embraced in the purchase made this fall from the Pottawatamies.

We set out from Fort Wayne, a northwesterly direction for the St. Joseph of the Lake. The first twenty miles after leaving the Fort, the country is mostly covered with a heavy forest of timber; but a small portion of the soil is of good quality for farming. After passing Blue-grass creek, we passed a few miles of country, the land of an inferior quality, thinly timbered with oak and hickory, interspersed with a number of small lakes, from which flows to the southwest the head branch of the Tippecanoe river; we then entered the Elk-heart bottom; this bottom is about eight miles wide, soil and timber of the best quality. Elk-heart creek is a fine, boatable stream, running northwest, and the depth of the water (above the knees of our horses) affording a sufficiency at the dryest season for all kinds of machinery. After crossing this creek we entered the Elk-heart prairie, about six miles long and from two to four wide, soil of the best quality. Along the southwest margin of this beautiful prairie flows the Elk-heart creek, on the north bank of which, and in the prairie, is the site of Five Medals village, well known to our soldiers of the late war as the residence of the Pottawatamie war chief, Five Medals. This creek unites with the St. Joseph a few miles south of the line dividing Indiana and Michigan Territory, and near this point is also the entrance from the north of a large creek, which flows from Pleasant lake in Michigan Territory; at the junction of these waters is a fine town site, possessing the advantages of being surrounded by a fine country of good land, and on the bank of the St. Joseph river, which is a deep, boatable stream, affording plenty of water for keel-boat navigation from this point to the lake at all seasons of the year—distance 75 to 100 miles by the river.

Twenty miles below the mouth of Elk-heart is the southern bend of the St. Joseph. At this place the American Fur Company have an establishment to carry on trade with the Indians; it is situated on a high, dry plain, affording a very handsome and extensive site for a village; through this place, the road, as lately laid off from Lake Michigan to Indianapolis, passes, affording it the advantage of a road south to the Wabash, as well as the river northwest to the lake, at all times navigable, with a good harbor for the largest lake vessels, and a safe bay at its entrance into the lake, and also a high and beautiful site for a town on the margin of the lake at the mouth of the river.

From the southern bend of the St. Joseph we traveled west to Lake Michigan; the country is dry and beautiful until we arrive within three or four miles of the lake, part rich barrens, and part first-rate timber land, with a large portion of prairie. We traveled part of the distance on the United States road, from Detroit to Chicago, this road which crosses the northern boundary of Indiana, about thirty miles east of Lake Michigan, and continues parallel with and near the north line of Indiana to the southern point of Lake Michigan. The tract of land through which this road passes was purchased from the Indians at the treaty of the Wabash, called the ten mile purchase, and as embraced between the north line of Indiana and the Kankikee river and ponds. This tract of land is perhaps surpassed by no other for beauty and fertility of soil. There may be a scarcity of timber after it is settled. It is watered with some spring rivulets, and has many beautiful lakes from one-fourth to one and one-half miles in circumference, with dry banks, sand bottoms, clear, sweet water, that abound with fish of various kinds.

We traveled from Lake Michigan a southeasterly course, and descended a hill of more than one hundred feet, and soon found ourselves in the neighborhood of these celebrated Kankikee ponds. The river of that name rises near the center of Indiana, from east to west, and flows west through a low valley, which is from four to eleven miles wide, and in the spring is covered with water. After the summer season sets in the quantity of water decreases, but there remains a marsh or swamp which is said to be sixty miles in length from east to west, and impossible

at most places for man or horse to pass; the river crosses the line dividing Indiana and Illinois about thirty-five miles south of Lake Michigan, and uniting with the river *Aux-plaines*, from the Illinois river. The ponds above mentioned extend along the north side of the river beyond the State line. Most of the land on this river within Indiana is exceedingly poor. We crossed the Kankikee, which from its appearance we believed sufficiently large for boats to pass down it, from a point thirty or forty miles within the State of Indiana, part of the year. The trace on which we traveled led us southeast to Yellow river, a large branch of the Kankikee, within the country now owned by the Pottawatamies, and the whole distance between these rivers we saw no land suitable for farming, it being mostly wet prairie, or if timbered, with low black oak, and the soil of the most inferior quality. After crossing Yellow river and traveling about four miles, we passed a beautiful lake, from seven to ten miles in circumference, called by the Pottawatamie Indians *Mix-in-kuk-kee*. It is surrounded with rolling land of good quality and is formed from springs, and seems to occupy the highest summit between the Tippecanoe and Kankikee rivers. From it flows to the south a large creek, forming one of the principal branches of the former river, and distant from it about five miles. The lake will probably some day supply a feeder for a canal to connect the Wabash and Illinois rivers. From this lake we proceeded a short distance east and found the line of the Michigan Road, on which we traveled to the Wabash at the mouth of Eel river. Most of that country is good and susceptible of making a fine road. Should the legislature authorize, *as they most likely will*, the location of the donation of the Michigan Road in the prairie between the St. Joseph and Lake Michigan, and on the line of the United States road from Detroit to Chicago, it will sell for an immense sum of money, and within two or three years will form one of the best settlements in Indiana. The country lately purchased is susceptible of forming from three to five counties, and in five years after it is sold by the United States will have sufficient population to send an additional member to Congress.

A TRAVELER.