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Subsistence of Devils Lake.

It was in the latter part of March, 1883, that President J. J. Hill of the Great Northern road walked out upon the ice in Creel's Bay in Devils Lake, North Dakota, and after sounding through the ice and finding a depth of eight feet, decided that at that point was the best location for the town which subsequently became the city of Devils Lake, one of the most prosperous and growing points in North Dakota.

Since 1882 great changes have taken place in the amount of water of in the lakes and streams of North Dakota. The water in Creel's Bay has entirely disappeared and Devils Lake City is now three miles from its lake, and where the waves of the bay used to roll the plowshare is now turning the rich ground for the crops of grain which are beginning to be planted upon the old lake bed.

It has been asserted that the water supply of the lakes and rivers in the interior of continents remote from the seas has been progressively diminishing, and Devils Lake is only an instance of the drying up which has been steadily taking place in our Northwestern lakes and rivers since the early eighties. Lakes which, ten years ago, covered thousands of acres and had a depth of from three to twenty feet, have either entirely disappeared or are reduced to nothing more than a mere quagmire—with a little temporary water in the spring which quickly disappears with the advent of warm dry weather. Whether this state of affairs will be permanent or not remains to be seen.

In the summer of 1882 a large stream—Big Coulee—flowed into the northern side of Devils Lake. At Churches Ferry, ten miles from its entrance to the lake, that stream, during the summer of 1882, was 200 feet wide, and old man Church cleaned up over \$3,000 during the summer from the profits of ferrying over the new settlers who were then pouring into the country. Within two years the Big Coulee had dried up and since then we believe no volume of water has reached Devils Lake through its bed.

In 1882 and 1883 myriads of lakes and sloughs occupied the elevated, rolling country throughout the northern part of North Dakota. Few farms were more than a mile from water. The writer remembers that when Mr. Lamb started Michigan City, one of his favorite arguments was that the city was built upon the banks of a beautiful lake, which would be a paradise for fishing and boating for the inhabitants of the future great city. In fact, during that summer a causeway and bridge were built across the lake at its narrowest point, but since then the lake has been absorbed by the hungry south winds of summer. The causeway and bridge are still there, but the water is absent. Some persons have attributed this progressive

diminution of the water supply to cultivation, but the same set of conditions have taken place in parts of the Northwest as yet entirely unoccupied and uncultivated.

Notwithstanding all this, the writer is hardly prepared to say that the rain fall is diminishing throughout the Northwest, though undoubtedly it has been less than the average for the last ten years. He prefers to attribute this desiccation of our surface waters in the Northwest to the unusually hot summer months of June, July and August, with their attendant dry south and southwest winds, which have been so prominent a feature of the three summer months, with but one or two exceptions, since 1885.

If we have a cycle of unusually cool summer months during the next ten years, coupled with a rainfall above the average, the lakes and streams will doubtless again become replenished, to a large extent, though not to the degree of ten or fifteen years ago, for cultivation of the land causes it to absorb water directly into the ground, which, before cultivation, was quickly shed off in the early spring to the streams, sloughs and lakes.

The numberless lakes which have dotted our Northwest country have been one of its chief sources of beauty and attraction, and let us hope that we have reached the turning point where a series of cool summers and increased rain and snow falls will restore them to their old time levels.—Northwest Magazine, St. Paul

Graphite.

Graphite seems to be a common name for the mineral known as black lead or plumbago, but authorities contend that it contains no lead, nor is it in any way related to lead. Graphite is found in parts of Mexico, Lower California, and to come nearer home, at Ticonderoga, N. Y. A very superior graphite is mined in Ceylon. The graphite found in the first two named places is of an amorphous form and is said to be of an inferior sort. The pigment is never found in a state of absolute purity. The process of preparing it for market, which consists of heating, grinding, washing, etc., is a complicated one. Pure graphite paint, free from iron and other like impurities, should be of a flake formation, no matter how finely ground. When laid on a surface each flake laps over its neighbor like the scales on a fish. This scale formation, however, is so minute that the use of the pigment on the finest surface cannot reasonably be objected to. It can be ground impalpably fine—as fine perhaps as any pigment used in painting. Graphite has long been used for painting purposes, especially for painting metallic surfaces, such as bridge parts, pipes, roofs, etc., during which time its great durability has been conspicuously established. Instances of roofs painted with graph-

ite having worn for periods varying from 10 to 15 years before requiring repainting, are numerous in evidence. The writer has in had the testimony of a bridge painter who refers to bridge work painted with graphite paint that has worn 20 years.

A pound of graphite is three times greater in bulk than white lead. It has great covering, coloring and spreading properties. It is of a dark grey color, and with white pigments it forms delightful cool grey tints. Jet blacks, dark greens and reds may be obtained without causing the graphite to deteriorate in value, but when light colors are attempted the result will be graphite only in name. Its composition will be mainly something else.

Of late years the adulteration of graphite has been largely practiced, the adulterants being charcoal, lampblack and cheap black lead not to mention stove polish and foundry facings mixed in oil and slyly foisted on the confiding painter. In buying graphite deal only with reputable, standard firms and buy only the best grade.

For metal surfaces, roofs and exposed structures of any kind, high grade graphite ground in pure linseed oil affords a pigment of great tenacity and durability.—Painter's Magazine.

Condition of Cattle in Argentine.

The Chicago Drovers' Journal says: Cattle in Argentine are said to be in excellent condition this year and for that reason offer a stronger competition with our cattle in British markets. They are being marketed in larger numbers, also, which indicate that the trade is growing rapidly. The experimental shipments made a few years ago were not very successful, because the cattle were wild and the worry and excitement of a long voyage made them undesirable on the London market. The grazers from Argentina have overcome this to a large extent by domesticating their cattle so that they feed well on the ocean trip and are salable when they arrive at the port of debarkation. Being entirely grass-fed and of an uncertain breed they hardly class with good corn-fed steers from the United States, but they nevertheless fill up a big hole in the consumptive demand and so lessen the demand for our cattle very much.

The Commercial has received a copy of the Warwickshire Advertiser, Warwick, England, containing a lecture by A. J. McMillan, on "Manitoba and its Development." The lecturer described Canada in general and Manitoba in particular in very moderate terms, avoiding extravagant or misleading expressions, such as too often accompany immigration efforts.