

Spirit Land

ANNUAL CAMP MEETING OF SPIRITUALISTS AT HASLETT PARK

A Tame opening Thursday-Delay in Preparing the Grounds – Noted Mediums and Troops of Spirits Will be There Tomorrow, and More to Follow.

Dropping off a train at the little hamlet on the south shore of Pine Lake¹, perhaps a dozen miles east of Lansing on the C. &G.T. railway, about the first prominent feature the will attract the eye of the tourist, as he endeavors to notice his surroundings, is the large board sign a few rods west of the depot, and on the north side of the track. It is an ample sign; and apparently once wore a vernal hue; but time has given it a pale and somewhat dingy look. The elements have not, however, succeeding in effecting the large rustic letters which surmount the pale green field and form the single legend

“HASLETT PARK”

If one has spent too much time in this curious study of his surroundings before arousing to action, he will probably pass under this sign and enter upon a pedestrian tour upon a plank walk which penetrates the swamp for a distance of perhaps three hundred yards. The walk is flanked with an impenetrable fringe of rank grass and bushes, beneath which the black and oozy soil presents an appearance so manifestly treacherous that he would be rash, indeed, who trusted his weight upon its surface.

Pursuing his walk with no special sign of terminus visible in the vista, our explorer finally reaches the end of his walk, only to find a small and somewhat primitive dock at his right upon the line where the black ooze ends, with a sedgy border, and the waters of Pine Lake open to view. On the other hand stretches the dank and impenetrable swamp. Had he been a few moments earlier he would have found a small but remarkably neat steam yacht waiting to bear him over the dancing waters of the lake to the haven of his desire. As it is he is in a veritable “slough of despond.”² Nothing remains but to retrace his steps to the starting point, and follow the dusty wagon road around the top of the ridge for a distance of three-quarters of a mile. This route is scarcely more charming than the first, for the track that winds through the tilled fields is filled with rag-weed, beans and potato tops.

Rising to the top of the ridge at a certain point, the pedestrian beholds, at one sweeping glance, Haslett park, the great campground of the spiritualists of Michigan, now again wakening to life under the influence of the pilgrims who are arriving from all parts of the state to participate in the annual camp meeting.

¹ Lake Lansing

² Is a deep bog in John Bunyan's allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Descending the slight declivity one enters a street, flanked on either side with cottages of various styles of architecture—not elaborate, but bearing a cozy look, and affording a full view of the open waters of the lake and exposed to the breezes, tempered by the waters. This street, which is about 80 rods in length, is intersected at right angles by another of about equal length, also occupied by booths and cottages, and marking the line of Haslett Park proper, comprising some 20 acres of natural woodland, gently undulating and sloping towards the lake and enclosed with a wire fence. There are no cottages within this enclosure, the only permanent building being the auditorium, a building about 80x90 feet in area, elevated on stone piers and roofed, but without sides. Here all public gatherings are held, but as yet all is quiet and serene. No antediluvian shade is visible. No noble red man's spirit peers at one from behind the stems of the giants of the primeval forest, and no war whoops echoes through their umbrageous corridors. The dainty and fleet footed spirits of red maidens, long since departed to the spirit land are not as yet apparent to ordinary mortals, unless they may peer from the "laughing eyes of brown" gray or blue appertaining to their sisters of the blood of the paleface, of which not a few were seen in the grove, or gathering the white lilies that lifted their waxen faces to the sun from the bosom of the lake. The great "spirit conductors" were conspicuous by their absence. No noted mediums had arrived with their "invisible company of souls;" but a number of them were expected today, when all this scene of bucolic quietude may be changed.



Spiritualist Camp Haslett Park

There is a certain charm, however, in the quietude, which tends to relax formality and promote hospitality and social interchange of thought, and even the whistle of the little steamer, with its freight of humanity to swell the throng, conveys a disagreeable shock at times because of its suggestiveness of an outside world full of action, bustle and strife. Yet this *dolce far niente*³ is doomed to the rude interruptions when the real business of the meeting comes forward as it probably will tomorrow.

Among the recent improvements at the park is a two story frame building located at the head of the principal street outside the enclosure, known as the "Mediums' house." It was erected during the present season by the "mediums' protective union," of which Dr. A. W. Edson of this city is president; is 50x32 feet in size, and contains 16 rooms two of which are designed for office and reception rooms, and the others for the use of members of the union. This will doubtlessly be a headquarters for the principle mediums in attendance. Several cottages have also been added. The entire location is a desirable one but must be greatly improved before it meets the demands of such a resort.

The little yacht "Belle Haslett" plies between the depot and the Pine Lake house on the north shore, meeting all the trains and stopping at Haslett Park each trip. It is evident that the Pine Lake house and grounds are recovering all their old time popularity under the able management of H.J. Olney, the new proprietor. Everything is neat and wears a hospital air, and the hotel cuisine is unexcelled by anything in central Michigan. Visitors are emphatic in their commendations.

Sunday will mark the real commencement of the meeting at Haslett Park, although it was to have opened on Wednesday. It has not been advertised as extensively as in previous years but is expected to present unusually interesting features and the local attendance will doubtlessly be large.

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³ Pleasant idleness