

PETER D. LERICH

On Sunday, May 20, 1900, scores of friends and neighbors shook hands congratulating Peter D. Lerich of Utica on his living to be 90 years old. A few old-time friends dined with him, then from dinnertime till bed people came and went continually. The old gentleman, who is hale and hearty (fat and funny, he says) and weighs 219 lbs., was not one whit embarrassed but was ready for a joke or an argument with the best of them and seemed pleased at the honor done him, and especially with the vocal music of Byron Norton.

In 1832 Mr. Lerich came 'land looking' in company with three other young men, Lemuel Shoup, Ralph Runyan and Alex Hazlett, of Warren Co., NJ to the wilds of the then far west Michigan. Two and a half years later he again came to Michigan, bringing a bride of seventeen summers, and brought of Mr. Narmor a part, and later of Mr. Holmes a part of what is now known as 'Spring Hill Farm' which he owned and tilled for 54 years being considered a very successful farmer, as in the seventies he was rated at forty-two thousand dollars.

Mr. Lerich never used strong drink or tobacco in any form, never paid any insurance, never joined a secret society and never owned a dog or gun.

He was always a strong anti-slavery man, voting for Birney for governor and president, he and 3 others being the only ones for years to vote the 'Free Soil' ticket in the town of Shelby. He is very anxious to know of any Birney men who may be living as he can only call to mind one – John Buttolph of Pontiac.

Peter D. Lerich was born in Warren County, NJ, May 20, 1810, his parents being Pennsylvania Dutch; was married April (12), 1823 to Sarah Fishbough, of Henderson County, and May 4th they started for Michigan, arriving in Detroit May 18; left Royal Oak on the 20th over the rough corduroy road for Utica. Mrs. Lerich was thrown from the wagon under the wheel and broke her arm, and not being able to ride had to remain there over night; from there they walked to Utica Plains, a distance of 15 miles; staid in an old log house for two weeks till they could find a place of their own.

Ten children were born to them, four of whom are still alive. In 1889 they sold Spring Hill Farm and removed to the present home near Utica. Mrs. Lerich died two years ago when Mr. Lerich rented the place to his daughter, Mrs. Green, with whom he has since made his home.

The Era extends its heartiest congratulations to its old friend and subscriber.

The Rochester Era, Rochester, Michigan May, 1900