

southern counties, in an elaborate article to the *Wisconsin Farmer*, gravely asserted that Northern and Central Wisconsin was an alternation of sand-ridges and marshes. In fact, the idea is too prevalent to-day, that at least the unexplored portions of Wisconsin, embracing the northern portions of Oconto, Marathon, Chippewa, La Pointe and Douglas counties, are swampy, sandy, sterile regions, worthless and uninhabitable!—whereas, the truth is beginning to come out, that they are quite the reverse of all this, and likely to prove the best agricultural districts in the State.

In the year 1852, it was proposed to apply to Congress for the establishment of a Land Office at Stevens' Point; the idea was regarded as Utopian—supposed that not lands enough would be sold to pay current expenses of the office. It has now been open nearly four years; the result is, that almost *one-half* of the district is sold—the title passed from the United States to actual settlers, and the remaining lands in the northern and western portions, are being sought and bought up with unparalleled avidity. Such are some of the consequences of *actual exploration*, in opposition to imagination, as touching new countries. This part of Wisconsin originally constituted a part of Brown county. Portage county was set off from Brown county by act of the Territorial Legislature, in 1844,* embracing all the country north of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers—excepting a part of Brown county north of Fox river, and Crawford county above the Wisconsin, bordering on the Mississippi. Columbia county was set off from Portage in the year 1846; Marathon county in the year 1850, and Wood in the year 1856, leaving the present area of Portage within the constitutional limit. The first aggression upon the "Upper Wisconsin" as In-

*Portage county was set off from Brown county, December 7th, 1836, when it embraced about the present limits of Columbia county; and in March, 1841, the territory forming the present counties of Adams, Juneau, Portage and Marathon, was annexed to Portage county, and in January, 1844, the present county of Portage was fully organized.