

31 South Illinois Ave.
Villa Park, Ill. 60181
July 17, 1970.

Librarian, Newberry Library
60 West Walton St.
Chicago, Ill. 60610.

Dear Sir,

In 1966 I searched the Genealogy Section of the Newberry Library for records of Rev. David Brewer, pioneer citizen of Illinois who came to our state in 1830 and lived here most of his life. I am glad to say I had some success, but it was much less than I had hoped for.

Now, I am sending you herewith a booklet entitled "Rev. David Brewer, Frontier Clergyman" which is the record of Rev. Brewer as I have reconstructed it from the sources now available. I sincerely hope it will find a place in the Genealogy Section of the library and that it will benefit some future researcher.

Respectfully yours,

Leon D Brewer.

Leon D Brewer.

REV. DAVID BREWER,
FRONTIER CLERGYMAN
1826-1896

Rev. David Brewer,
Frontier Clergyman.
1826-1896.

*Let your light so shine before men that they may
see your good works, and glorify your Father
which is in Heaven. St. Matthew 5:16.*

In the fall of 1887 a former Methodist preacher was appointed by the Upper Wabash Conference of the United Brethren to serve as their minister in Pilot Township of Vermilion County, Illinois.

For Rev. Brewer, then sixty-one years of age, this was at long last the fulfillment of his wish to devote full time to the ministry and a triumph over persistent adversity and the handicaps of a limited formal education and recurrent troubles with his voice. Earlier, in the frontier days of Illinois, he had held several such positions in the Methodist Church but was then unable to carry on. But from 1887 until his death in 1896 he served successfully as a regularly appointed minister and a highly regarded one at that.

Seldom has a man not better known in his own time left behind a more legible trace, a trace that could be followed through most of the sixty-nine years of his life by one not privileged to know him when living, and seldom has such a man been more liberally rewarded with the respect and devotion of his associates than was Rev. David Brewer.

I wish I could more fully record the life of Rev. Brewer, but time has obscured the details, it being now more than seventy years since his death. Because my intent is to compile a factual record for his descendants, I have refrained from filling in the missing details from imagination. Hence, what follows becomes more a series of facts from whatever sources were available to me than a complete and connected narrative. I hope that those who do me the honor of reading it will understand that it cannot be both factual and complete.

Leon David Brewer
2-13-1968.

Rev. David Brewer,
Frontier Clergyman
1825 - 1896

Birth and Parentage.

David Brewer was born in Pike County, Ohio, on October 19, 1826, the seventh of nine children born to Richard Brewer and Christina (Roderick) Brewer.

Richard was a soldier in the Ohio Militia during the War of 1812, serving in the detachment of General Cass with which he was surrendered to the British at Detroit after the capitulation of General Hull. Upon his release, he returned to Ohio and married Christina at Piketon on October 28, 1813. Richard was a shoemaker and a farmer. Richard's father was John Brewer who served in the American Revolution. The Brewer family is reported to have come from Holland.

Christina was a native of Pennsylvania and was taken to Ohio as a child. The Roderick family is reported to have come from Germany.

The children of Richard and Christina were:

1. Milly, born September 27, 1814. She became the wife of Simeon Lamb on August 11, 1831 at Danville, Illinois and appears to have lived most of her life near Danville. She died April 9, 1875 and was buried in the Lamb Cemetery east of Danville.
2. Meshech, born November 11, 1816, married Margaret Elder at Danville on February 14, 1838, appears to have lived much of his life in Douglas County, Illinois, and died February 17, 1881. He was buried at Camargo, Illinois.
3. Charles, born October 11, 1818. He is understood to have lived near Camargo.
4. Benjamin, born June 14, 1820 in Pike County, Ohio, married Rebecca Van Kirk at Danville on April 26, 1847, and became a prosperous land owner near Danville.
5. John, born April 4, 1822, died January 25, 1897. John and his wife Elizabeth were buried at Onarga, Illinois.
6. Sarah, born May 12, 1824 in Pike County, Ohio. She became the wife of Thomas Elder at Danville, Illinois on December 11, 1840 and lived near the village of State Line east of Danville. Sarah died, probably June 4, 1880, and was buried in the Lamb Cemetery.
7. David, born October 19, 1826.
8. Mary, born in a log cabin in Danville Township on July 29, 1830. She married Henry Martin at Danville on February 23, 1851 and lived in Saline County, Kansas.
9. Daniel, born December 5, 1832 on a farm four miles north-east of Danville, married Mariah Cunningham at Danville on May 4, 1851. Daniel became a prosperous Vermilion County farmer.

Migration to Vermilion County.

The Richard Brewer family migrated to Vermilion County, Illinois in 1830 and settled in Newell Township four miles north-east of Danville where Richard and Christina lived out the remainder of their lives. Some accounts say they lived two years near Lafayette, Indiana just prior to the move to Illinois.

Richard's homestead was located in the south-east corner of Section 35, three and a half miles east of Vermilion Street, Danville and just north of the extension of Voorhees Street.

Richard's brother, Charles, also migrated from Pike County, Ohio to Vermilion County, Illinois in 1830. Another brother, William, arrived in the early 1830's. Brother John and sister Sarah also lived in Vermilion County prior to 1836.

Richard Brewer and his family were among the earliest settlers of Newell Township, then a very primitive and undeveloped area. Covington, Indiana and Chicago, Illinois, then Fort Dearborn, were their trading centers. Richard hauled leather from Chicago in a wagon for making boots and shoes.

Appendix 1 to this biography gives a description, compiled from various sources, of what the early settlers encountered in this area.

Richard died February 21, 1849 and was buried in the Lamb Cemetery in Section 26 of Newell Township. Christina was a widow for more than twenty-three years. She died November 21, 1872 and was buried beside her husband.

The Education of David.

Unfortunately, I have found no record of the education of David. That he had some formal education is apparent from the example of his handwriting on the marriage certificate of Isaac Brewer and Anna F. Derrough which is reproduced in Appendix 2. Note that the letters are of uniform size, clearly made, well aligned and carefully shaded. This is the hand of one accustomed to writing.

I am of the opinion that the formal education of David was limited to that available locally at the time of David's boyhood. There seems to be little reason to think that David's father could or would have sent his children outside the locality for better education. Fortunately, we know something of the local schools at the time David would have attended.

Pearson describes the education of Daniel Brewer, David's brother, six years younger, as follows: "He spent his boyhood days on the farm and attending school near Danville in what was known as the Lamb District School, a hewed log school-house, with slab seats and table, and an old fashioned fireplace. He had but limited opportunities of acquiring an education, yet he managed to become well informed and taught school at an early age". Beckwith informs us that the first school-house in Newell Township was built in 1827 on Section 23, and from his description of the location it must have been in the north-west corner of this section. The second was built in 1830, the third in 1833 on the bank of the North Fork near the village of Denmark, and the Lamb school-house about 1835 in the south-east corner of Section 26.

The first school-house (1827) was four miles from the Braver homestead, the third (1833) five and a half miles and the Lamb School-house was one mile. There may have been schools also in nearby Danville Township that were within reach. Thus it is clear that David did have the opportunity to acquire a limited education.

It is worth noting that Illinois had no system of free schools in this period, and the schools that existed were organized and financed by the neighborhood people. To help pay expenses there was a tuition fee of \$1.00 or \$1.50 for each three month term. Often, those who could do so would pay for those who could not. Reading, writing, spelling and ciphering were the courses taught.

The Marriage of David and Maria.

Maria Caroline Lynch was born on October 9 or October 10, 1826 in Harrison County Virginia (now West Virginia), the daughter of John and Maria (Magee) Lynch. This family migrated from Lancaster, Ohio in 1835 and settled near Danville. In a rural community people become acquainted for miles around, and so it was with David and Maria. They were married in Vermilion County on August 23, 1844, before either was 18 years old.

Maria Caroline was a grand-daughter of Peter Lynch, an American soldier in the Revolution. Peter was born in Ireland.

The Children of David and Maria.

Ten children were born to David and Maria. They were:

1. Richard Milton, born in 1846, served in the Civil War, married Rebecca Groves, died February 22, 1886 and was buried at Philo, Illinois.
2. Sarah, born January 1848, married Edward White, died January 14, 1878 and was buried at Philo.
3. Infant, unknown.
4. Infant, unknown.
5. Meshech, born May 22, 1852, married Harriet Locke on December 31, 1874, became a prosperous Champaign County farmer. served as post master at Philo for many years and spent his later life in Three Rivers, Michigan. Meshech died June 27, 1929 and was buried at Philo.
6. Infant, unknown.
7. Isaac, born October 5, 1857, married Anna Florence Derrough on December 1, 1880, became a prosperous Champaign County farmer and business man. Isaac died January 24, 1938 and was buried at Philo.
8. Robert, born March 5, 1860, married Sade Gordy on February 25, 1886. Robert and his family moved to Kansas City about 1915.
9. Infant, unknown.

1866 LDB

10. Frank, born December 3, ~~1886~~, married Catherine Wise on November 17, 1891. Frank was a business man at Homer, Catlin and Ridgefarm, Illinois for many years. He died March 13, 1960 at the age of 93 and was buried at Ridgefarm.

Early Married Life.

David and Maria began their married life in a log cabin on a rented farm in the locality of the home of David's parents. Five of the six children that were to reach maturity were born in this general area.

First Preparation for the Ministry.

Beckwith gives 1826 as the date that the first Methodist class was organized in Newell Township, and lists the people known to have been members between 1826 and 1835. In the list are John Brewer and his wife Lavina, Christina Brewer and Sarah (Brewer) Roderick. This John Brewer was David's uncle, Christina was of course his mother, and Sarah was his aunt. Pearson, in the section on Daniel Brewer, states that David's father, Richard, was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church and held several offices therein. Thus it was natural that David should join the Methodists, which he is reported to have done at the age of sixteen.

Isaac Brewer remembered that David became an exhorter in the Methodist Church when 24 to 26 years of age. An exhorter is a local person authorized to speak in church and is not a common title today. This was David's first step toward becoming a minister.

First Land Ownership.

David and Maria purchased 80 acres of farm land a few miles east of Danville about 1860. Isaac Brewer estimated that the price did not exceed six dollars an acre. Thomas and Sarah Elder, David's brother-in-law and sister, lived across the road.

The Move to Douglas County.

David was never good in money matters, and the result was that debts piled up and it soon became necessary to sell the land to pay them off. The farm was sold, probably in 1862, and in 1863 David took his family to Douglas County, Illinois where they resided in a log cabin on the farm of David's brother, Charles, for a few years.

The records of the Camargo, Illinois Masonic Lodge show that David joined that lodge in 1866. He was given his degrees on March 21, 1866, April 18, 1866 and May 16, 1866.

Second Step Toward the Ministry.

Isaac Brewer recalled that shortly after the move to Douglas County David was licensed to preach in the Methodist Church.

The minutes of the annual conference of the M. E. Church, held in September of 1864, lists David among the deacons.

Nettie Randolph's History of the Camargo Methodist Church reports that David participated in baptism ceremonies on March 18, 1866, and again on August 5, 1866. There is no mention of his having performed

marriage ceremonies between 1863 and 1870.

It seems quite probable that David was occupying the pulpit on occasion in this period although he was yet to be assigned a charge.

The Camargo Farm.

David and Maria again bought land in 1864, this time 160 acres four miles east of Camargo. Isaac Brewer described life on this farm for me and I will set down what I remember of it in Appendix 3.

Rev. Brewer's first Charge.

Rev. Brewer was given his first charge in 1867. It was the Philo Circuit, consisting of congregations at Philo, Illinois and approximately six outlying locations. A history of the Philo M. E. Church, written in 1906 by Meshech Brewer, has survived and is available to us. Meshech was David's son, had lived in or near Philo since 1867, and had witnessed most of the situations and events he recorded. His history contains a graphic description of the times. It appears in part in Appendix 4.

The record of the September 1867 meeting of the Illinois Conference of the Methodist Church shows that Rev. Brewer was admitted on trial and appointed to Philo.

Forced Retirements.

Unfortunately, Rev. Brewer abused his voice in the pulpit, on whatever served him for a pulpit in those days. Difficulty in speaking made it necessary to retire to rest his voice upon completion of one term at Philo. He returned to the farm at Camargo.

The record of the annual conference held in September of 1868 shows him discontinued at his own request. It also shows that he had claims for \$650 and receipts of \$550.

In the fall of 1869, Rev. Brewer reentered the ministry. The record of the September 1869 annual conference shows him readmitted on trial and appointed to Pilot. Isaac Brewer remembered this as being three churches near Newtown, an unincorporated community near Collison in Pilot Township of Vermilion County. The record of the 1870 annual conference shows him remaining on trial and appointed to Oakwood, a few miles west of Danville. Beckwith, on page 911, noted that Rev. Brewer was pastor when Pilot Chapel in Pilot Township was constructed in 1871.

Upon completion of his term at Oakwood, David was again forced to retire to rest his voice. Again he returned to the farm at Camargo. In the record of the September 1871 meeting of the annual conference, David's name appears only in the list of deacons. In the 1872 record his name appears in the list of local preachers and his address is given as Camargo.

David's third attempt at the annual conference ministry occurred in the fall of 1872 when he was again admitted on trial and given an appointment to Dewitt. Here he was able to serve only from September to February, when his voice failed him completely, forcing him to give up his charge in mid-term. He returned to Philo with his family in 1874.

The record of the September 1874 annual conference shows David to be discontinued. This is the last appearance of his name in the minutes. However, he continued to hold his license to preach.

In 1874 David and Maria sold their farm at Camargo and bought 120 acres south of Philo, their third and last venture in land. This farm was situated in the south-west corner of Section 25 of Philo Township. They moved to this farm in March of 1875 and lived in the original house while a new one was being built. In July of 1875 they occupied the new house.

Nettie Randolph's history of the Camargo Church records that the annual conference of October 4, 1876 left the Camargo Church to be supplied and that the presiding elder, Rev. W. N. McElroy, appointed Brother David Brewer, who took charge of the work. However, in consequence of the failure of his health he was forced to ask the presiding elder for a release early in December of 1876. He was released and Rev. W. H. Davis was employed and entered on the work of the charge on December 16, 1876.

Stewart's history of Champaign County dated 1878 records that David and Maria were living near Philo and gives David's occupation as minister and farmer. Therefore it is possible that David was serving as local preacher on occasion.

Stewart's history also records that David was a charter member of the Masonic Lodge of Philo, and the lodge records show that he signed the charter on October 3, 1876.

Death of Maria.

As has been recorded in the foregoing, David had already seen a fair share of troubles, but the period of his life that was to really try his faith began with the death of Maria. Maria Caroline died at 6:30 PM on November 21, 1877. She was then 51 years of age and had been David's wife for more than 33 years. David buried her in Locust Grove Cemetery in Philo. In addition to David, she was survived by her sons Richard Milton, Meshech, Isaac, Robert and Frank, and by her daughter Sarah. Sarah lived less than three months after Maria's death, further adding to David's sorrow.

Maria died of a lingering illness to which the hardships, the rigors and the privations of being a frontier wife and mother no doubt contributed.

David's Second Marriage.

We cannot really know at this late date just what influences were acting on David at this time and can only guess at the reasons for his decision. What we do know is that he was married to Mrs. Mary O. Pearson on November 17, 1878. It was an unfortunate marriage and lasted only about a year. Mrs. Pearson was closely related to the wife of David's son Richard Milton and to Superintendent Groves under whom David served in the Methodist Church.

Issaa Brewer recalled that David served as minister at Mahomet for a year and then for a few months at Chrisman begining about the time of this marriage, but the annual conference records do not show him to have been appointed to either location. Neither can I find his name in the records of of the Mahomet or the Chrisman Church, and this item remains unresolved. However, Isaac's memory was good on other details that have been since verified and I am of the opinion that Rev. Brewer did serve somewhere, possibly as a local preacher in country churches in the vicinities of Mahomet and Chrisman.

Isaac Brewer also recalled that David separated from his second wife during his service at Chrisman and further that the separation terminated his employment as a preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church. His last act as a Methodist minister of which I have found a record was the marriage of Isaac Brewer and Anna Derrough on December 1, 1880. Pressures from church authorities forced David to turn in his church letter as a consequence of the marriage failure. Bitterness in the family persisted for more than half a century.

The Obscure Years.

During the 1870's and 1880's the farmer's plight became increasingly severe, caught as he was between generally low commodity prices and exorbitant rates charged to handle and ship his grain by the operators of grain elevators and by the railroads.

There was a mortgage on David's farm at Philo, and his financial situation became increasingly difficult until he was unable to meet his obligations and a foreclosure took the farm, leaving him without a home and probably near destitute. Isaac Brewer recalled that at this time David returned to the area of his boyhood home near Danville.

I have found no record of the remaining years until the fall of 1887 when he became an annual conference minister in the U. B. Church (Unite Brethren in Christ), Upper Wabash Conference, with a charge at Pilot Grove in Pilot Township of Vermilion County, Illinois, and with a mailing address of Oakwood. The yearbooks and some other records of the U. B. Church are available for this period. Prior to the 1888 conference year his name is not in the list of ministers. Thereafter, his name appears for each year including the year of his death as a minister in charge appointed by the annual conference. I have examined the Champaign County marriage records from January 1, 1878 to March 1, 1896 for marriages performed by Rev. Brewer in that county. There were seven such marriages in the years 1878 through 1880, the last being December 1, 1880 as noted above, an average of more than two a year. In the seven years from 1881 through 1887 none were performed. Then one was performed in July of 1888 and another in October of 1890. The Discipline of the U. B. Church in this period specifically limited authority to perform marriage ceremonies to ordained ministers and those licensed by the annual conference. Accordingly, David must have been so licensed or ordained in the U. B. Church before July 1, 1888 when he married Cora Johnson to Sidney Woodcock.

David's Third Marriage.

David was married again in Vermillion County, Indiana on September 18, 1889, about two years after entering the U. B. ministry. His bride was Elizabeth Witherspoon who was then the widow of J. D. Witherspoon. Her maiden name had been Orr. The marriage ceremony was performed by David's associate, Rev. A. M. Snyder of the U. B. Church. The original of the marriage license is in the possession of Mrs. Gerald W. Brewer of Ridgefarm, Illinois.

I remember Elizabeth from my childhood days. At that time she was again a widow and living in Homer, Illinois. Occasionally she would visit the home of my father and mother (Isaac and Anna) at Philo. I remember her as a very pleasant person, highly regarded by my parents and always welcome in their home.

Service in the U. B. Church.

The following list of appointments comes from Wilmore's history of the White River Conference, a conference adjoining the Upper Wabash Conference in which David served, and the addresses come from the yearbooks of the church.

Annual Conference Date	Confer- ence Year	Rev. Brewer's Appointment	Mailing Address
Fall 1887	1888	Pilot Grove	Oakwood, Illinois
Fall 1888	1889	Pilot Grove	Oakwood, Illinois
Fall 1889	1890	Gessie	Gessie, Indiana
Fall 1890	1891	Ambia	Ambia, Indiana
Fall 1891	1892	Ambia	Ambia, Indiana
Fall 1892	1893	Battle Ground	Battle Ground, Indiana
Fall 1893	1894	Green Hill	Otterbein, Indiana
Fall 1894	1895	Williamsport	Otterbein, Indiana
Fall 1895	1896	Woodland	Woodland, Illinois.

I have been able to find the minutes of only one annual meeting of the Upper Wabash Conference for the year that Rev. Brewer served in it. That one is for the session held in 1891 and in it Rev. Brewer is listed as having attended from Ambia, Indiana and his classification is given as ordained itinerant. Pastors were classified as ordained or licentiate, and also as itinerant, local, or supernumerary. His salary for the year was \$498. Low as this was, it was still above the average. The average was \$381.

There was no organized method of preserving U. B. Church history during the years Rev. Brewer served, and we have no further details.

Service in Woodland.

Fortunately, the Watseka Republican had an active correspondent from Woodland and several items of interest concerning Rev. Brewer appeared in issues of this newspaper from the fall of 1895 to February 1896. The following are excerpts from that publication:

October 2, 1895 - C B Brewer of Onarga was here (Woodland) in company with his brother, Rev. D Brewer, last Sabbath. With deep regret we announce that Rev. Hunt will not return here the coming conference year, but instead goes to Sheldon. Rev. Brewer, late of Williamsport will succeed him here. Rev. Brewer delivered his first sermon last Sabbath morning.

October 16, 1895 - Rev. D Brewer moved his family from Williamsport, Indiana. They will occupy the U. B. parsonage.

October 23, 1895 - Rev. D Brewer received word last Thursday of the death of his brother-in-law, the Rev. E R Lynch of Danville. Rev. Lynch was one of the oldest M E preachers of south-east Illinois and was very popular in the ministry. His funeral was held Saturday at a church five miles from Danville which he helped to build as a boy.

October 16, 1895 - Rev. Brewer lost one of his fine driving horses.

January 8, 1896 - Rev. Brewer, who was visiting his sons at Philo, returned last Friday.

January 22, 1896 - Owing to the continued ill health of Rev. D Brewer, Rev. R H Fairborn occupied the pulpit last Sabbath. The congregation unites in one prayer that Rev. Brewer will be restored to health.

February 5, 1896 - With pain we state that Rev. Brewer is still very ill. The Republican will take the privilege of speaking for the community at large in wishing for his speedy recovery. One could not gain a warmer place in the hearts of the Woodland people than he has.

February 12, 1896 - John Brewer of Onarga visited with his brother, the Rev. David Brewer, at this place last Friday and Saturday. Frank Brewer of Philo visited his father, Rev. David Brewer, last week. We are sorry to say that Rev. Brewer is no better.

February 19, 1896 - Isaac Brewer and his wife of Philo are visiting his father, Rev. David Brewer, at this place. Daniel Brewer of Champaign is visiting his brother, Rev. Brewer. Mrs. Mich Brewer of Philo is a guest of her father-in-law Rev. Brewer. Rev. Brewer is still quite ill and it pains us to say that no hopes are entertained for his recovery.

The illness of Rev. Brewer was noted also in the Iroquois County News. The following is from the issue of February 21, 1896:

Rev. David Brewer, our U. B. Minister, is dangerously sick at his home. The following are in attendance at his bedside: Mr. Fred Basset, Champaign, Illinois; Dan Brewer, brother, of Fairmont, Indiana; Frank Brewer, Mrs. Hattie Brewer of Philo, Illinois; Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Brewer, son, of Urbana. We hope for the recovery of Brother Brewer.

Death of David.

Death came to Rev. Brewer at his home in Woodland at 6:15 PM on February 20, 1896 at the age of sixty-nine years and four months.

Funeral services were held at his home in Woodland on Saturday morning February 22, and at the home of his son Meshech in Philo in the afternoon of the same day. Rev. A M Snyder of the U. B. Church conducted the Woodland service. It was Rev. Snyder who had married David and Elizabeth six years earlier.

David was buried beside his first wife, Maria Caroline, in Locust Grove Cemetery at Philo.

A marble stone marks the grave, inscribed :

On the north:

Maria C
Wife of D Brewer
Died Nov. 21, 1887
Age 51 years
1 month
12 days

On the south:

David Brewer
Oct 19, 1826-Feb. 20, 1896

The death of David was recorded in the Champaign County News, the Religious Telescope, the year book of the U. B. Church, the Inoquois County News and the Watseka Republican. Of these, the report in the Watseka Republican is the most complete and informative and I have reproduced the entire item in Appendix 5.

David was nearly six feet tall, weighed about 135 pounds when young and about 200 to 210 pounds in later life. In height and weight he resembled his father, Richard. David was cordial, friendly, talkative and had a hearty laugh. He had a liking for beards and wore a variety of them in his lifetime.

Appendixes.

1. Illinois, Vermilion County and Newell Township in the Years of Early Settlement.
2. David's Handwriting.
3. The Camargo Farm.
4. The Origin of the Philo M. E. Church.
5. The Obituary of Rev. David Brewer.
6. Descendants of Rev. David Brewer.
7. Postscript.

Sources.

Books:

- Pearson, Past and Present of Vermilion County, 1903.
 Beckwith, History of Vermilion County, 1879.
 Jones, History of Vermilion County, Illinois, 1911.
 Stewart, History of Champaign County, 1878.
 Randolph, History of the Camargo M. E. Church.
 Chapman, Portrait and Biographical Album - Vermilion and Edgar Counties, 1889.
 Brink Mc Donough & Co., History of Champaign County, 1878.
 Gresham, History of Douglas County, 1905.
 Wilmore, History of the White River Conference.
 Federal Writers, Illinois, Description and Historical Guide.

Newspapers:

- Champaign County News.
Watseka Republican.
Inoquois County News.

M E Church Publications:

- Minutes of the Annual Sessions of the Illinois Conference.

U. B Church Publications:

- Yearbooks of the U B Church.
"Minutes of the 1891 Session of the Upper Wabash Conference".
Religious Telescope

County Records:

- Vermilion County Marriage Records.
Champaign County Marriage Records

Maps:

- Historical Atlas Map of Vermilion County, 1875.

Military Records:

- Archives of the General Services Administration.

Manuscript:

- M L Brewer, "History of the Philo M E Church".

Other:

- Records of Centennial Lodge 747, A F & A M, Philo, Illinois.

Appendix I.

*Illinois, Vermilion County and Newell Township
in the Years of Early Settlement*

Illinois and Vermilion County in 1830.

The eastern forests halted at the western edge of Indiana and gave way to the prairie, which flowed on to the Mississippi like an ocean of grass with island groves scattered on a sea of prairie. Summer after summer the grasses grew to a man's height and blossomed with wild roses blue bells, corn flowers, shooting stars and sun flowers. In the giant blue stem grass cattle were hidden and a man on foot disappeared without a trace. On the ridges grew the spikey Indian grass, and the profusion of swales were rank with slough grass, sedges, joint grass and the wiry, stubborn switch grass. Now and again an early frost killed the grass and only a flash of lightning was needed to ignite it and spread destruction in a wide circle. Prairie fires roared on with tornado force, and lighted up the sky at night. For days after, charred bits of grass hung in the air like a curtain. The annual grass growth and the periodic fires created a thick black soil containing just the nutrients needed for growing grain.

The line of forest and prairie was as strict a border as a shore line. For ages, the Indians burned off the autumn grass land to keep it open for hunting. Without this burning, the forest would have extended to the Mississippi.

Not all the state was grassland, however. Trees lined the river banks, and forests covered the southern portion of the state upward about one hundred miles from the Ohio River.

In 1830 there were 157,445 hardy pioneers living in the entire state, two thirds of whom had come here in the preceeding ten years. The rising tide of emigration that would bring more than three hundred thousand new settlers to Illinois in the 1830's had just begun. The western movement began each autumn after the last harvest had been gathered from fields about to be left forever. The trails would then be full of wagons, cattle, horses, hogs, sheep and families, all joyously wending their way to their new habitations. The lure was inexpensive land that could be bought from the government for as little as \$1.25 an acre.

The population was almost exclusively rural in 1830, and remained so for another twenty years. The people lived along the rivers, the Wabash below Danville, the Mississippi below Quincy, the Illinois below Peoria, the Kaskaskia below Vandalia, and the Ohio where it bordered the State. The pioneers admired the grass lands, but clung to the wooded waterways. In the 1830's, farmers on the forest edge thought they had reached the western limits of habitation. The prairie was long regarded as useless for farm land because the complex networks of grass roots were too strong for existing plows. It was not until 1837 that John Deere, a blacksmith at Grand Detour, Illinois, solved this problem with his mill saw blade which was self scouring and kept turning over the rich black soil. Wooded waterways furnished timber for fuel and building, a convenient water supply, and protection for the settlers' jerry built cabins from prairie fires and windstorms.

There were yet a few Indians left in Illinois in 1830, making their way in small groups to the promised land beyond the Mississippi which they sensed would be the graveyard of their race. By now they had been thoroughly beaten and seldom caused trouble, but one settler recalled that "their appearance, enveloped in their gaudy blankets, porcupine quill embroidered leggins with moccasins to match, long unkempt hair and tomahawk in belt, caused alarm, especially to lone women and children when the men folks were away". The Indians gave Illinois a final fright and then passed on.

In 1830 the frontier line lay north and south across Vermilion County in the vicinity of Danville.

Danville in 1830 was a small village of rude log cabins barely three years old. It had been established in 1827 on one hundred acres of land donated for the seat of newly formed Vermilion County by G W Smith and Dan Beckwith for whom Danville was named. Beckwith had a trading post near the North Fork of the Vermilion River in what is now Ellsworth Park. A post office and a grist mill had been established in 1828, and a white goods store came in 1831. In 1833, Danville had eighty one houses and cabins.

The area to the west and north of Danville was mostly open prairie, nearly unoccupied by white men. Indeed, a traveler from Canton through Peoria and Ottawa to Fort Dearborn in 1827 did not see a single white person except in those small towns. From Blooming Grove, now Bloomington, to Lake Michigan there were no houses at all.

The Hard Winter of 1830-1831.

The winter of 1830-1831 concealed all Illinois from the sight of man. On Christmas Day the snow began to fall over the entire state, and kept falling steadily for most of the winter. Men not far from home when the storm began were blinded and lost. For weeks, no one ventured from cabin refuge except for firewood close at hand. Even in the woods the snow lay a foot deep, then two feet, then three feet, then four feet. On the prairie the drifts mounted to fifteen feet and where the snow was level the tops of corn shocks could just be seen. The cold was intense, often ten to twenty degrees below zero. Cattle died, deer and turkeys, which had been numerous, were nearly exterminated. Of wild animals, only the wolves survived, and even they suffered for food. A slight rain fell and a thick crust formed six feet above the roads. All winter the settlers, confined in snow bound cabins, had nothing to eat but boiled corn and pounded meal.

With the coming of spring the whole land was covered with water. Creeks and rivers overflowed and, for a time, rude boats were the only means of getting around.

Settlement of Newell Township.

The first actual settlement of Newell Township was by Ben Butterfield in February of 1825 on Section 14. In the course of the summer and fall came several other families. John Lamb and son Simeon, natives of North

Carolina, came from Indiana this year. In 1828, Solomon Rodrick came from Ohio and settled on Section 34.

The pioneers were attracted to Newell Township by the rich soil, pure water and abundant timber. The earlier settlers came mostly from Ohio and Kentucky. With little more than industrious habits and strong wills they came to build homes and gather around them the ordinary conveniences of civilized life. To leave comfortable firesides and old associations to emigrate to this wild region was a major episode in their lives. Trials and difficulties abounded with disheartening constancy. Few in the later generations comprehend or appreciate the personal sacrifices of these resolute men and women.

In the early years, the hard situation of all things was so grievously born by many that they would have returned to their former homes had this been possible. However, about all they possessed was required to reach the place, and then only through much fortitude could they remain, even after it was impossible to depart. Sickness added more to the discouragement of those who were heartsick in their new homes than any other thing. The prevalent diseases were ague, typhoid fever, milk sickness, and congestive chills. Usually in summer and fall sickness prevailed throughout the country, with whole families often down together.

Only the stronger and more fortunate infants survived. Indeed, it was reported that only half the children born here in the early years lived to the age of five. Many a mother's tear was shed for a child in an unmarked and now forgotten grave.

Appendix 2,
The Handwriting of Rev. David Brewer.

TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, I GREET YOU IN THE LORD AND WISH YOU ALL THE BLESSINGS OF HEAVEN.

Marriage Certificate

Between the Deas Brewer of Chico
in the County of Champaign and State of Illinois
of the age of 23 years, and
Miss Anna J. Dabney of Chico
in the County of Champaign and State of Illinois
of the age of 19 years

(Witness) J. B. McCullough County Clerk
and the said of and County at his Office in Montana issued
County the 30 day of Nov A.D. 1882

J. B. McCullough County Clerk

STATE OF ILLINOIS } S.S.
COUNTY }
I, David Brewer hereby
do certify that the Deas Brewer and
Miss Anna J. Dabney were united in Marriage by me at
Chico in the County of Champaign
and State of Illinois on the 1 day of Dec A.D. 1882

David Brewer
a minister

Illinois Printing Co. Evansville, Ind.

Appendix 3.
The Camargo Farm

Isaac Brewer described the Camargo farm for me in the 1930's. Although not very detailed, his description does give some insight into the way the family then lived. Isaac lived here as a boy with his parents and their other children during about five years of the eight year period beginning in 1864.

David and Maria purchased this 160 acre farm, situated four miles east of Camargo, Illinois, in 1864 and owned it until 1874. The records indicate that they lived here from 1864 through 1867, in 1869, and again in 1872.

In 1864 this part of Illinois was a frontier area and it appears that the farm had not yet been improved to any substantial extent. Although a three room frame house was already there, it lacked a shelter for farm animals. David built a barn of logs from a grove one and a half miles to the west during the first year. Part or all the land was virgin prairie since Isaac mentioned breaking prairie sod with an ox team.

Newly turned prairie sod was planted to corn by dropping seed between sods every third furrow. Where sod had been broken in earlier years, the corn was planted with a hoe. Other crops were oats, buckwheat and sorghum.

Surplus grain was hauled to the railroad at Tolono or Tuscola or sold to stock feeders.

Wood was the material used for fencing and the fuel for cooking and heating. Wood ashes were saved and used for making soap.

There were a number of Brewers living near Camargo in the 1860's. On page two it was noted that David's brothers Meshech and Charles lived here at one time and it seems likely that they were here in this period. Also, Randolph's History of the Camargo M. E. Church lists the following who were members in 1863 through 1870: William, Nancy, Joseph, Magdaline, Edward, Louise, John, Emily, Owen, Elenor, Milton, Sarah, S. W., M. E., Lavina, and Wesley. It seems likely that all were related.

*Origin of the Philo M. E. Church
From a Manuscript by M L Brewer dated
November 1906.*

In the summer of 1865 there was a small class formed informally at Philo by Brother Reed. He was then a superannuated member of the Illinois Conference and passed to his reward only a few years ago. He, with a local preacher of Urbana, a brother Farson, served the class during the summer. In the fall of 1865, Rev. Anderson Orr, then of the Tolono Church, formally organized the class, eighteen in number. They were Josia and Catherine Davidson, H E and R A Francisco, Hanna Lock, Matilda E Everitt, W A and M E Ennis, Mrs. Carl Markle, George and Mary Davis, Simeon and Olinda Harvey, Jonathan, Lucy, Esther, and Dennis Aiden.

The Illinois Conference organized what was known as the Philo Mission, Danville District at the annual session held at Bloomington on September 19, 1866. Rev Hyde was appointed pastor of the following appointments: Philo, Yankee Ridge, Reddick, and Crafts. During the year Bouses Grove, Union and Silver were added. All of these were school-house appointments.

The original membership of the above named circuit was forty-nine. Those added by new points were thirty-three.

The first Quarterly Conference of the Philo Mission was held forty years ago this month, November 19, 1906. Rev. B F Hyde was pastor, and Rev. Sarson Shinn was presiding elder, both of whom I (M L Brewer) well remember.

The first board of stewarts were H E Francisco, Josia Davidson, William Buxton, J L Mc Daniels, H A Craft, S P Hovey, William Reddick, and William Brewer. There were no trustees as there was no church property. At the second quarterly meeting held in Yankee Ridge School-house on January 19, 1867, the first board of trustees was elected to take charge of any church property belonging to the circuit. They were H E Francisco, S P Hovey and D H Fackler.

At this meeting a proposition from Mr. Hale was presented, that he would donate Lot 3, Block 11, provided the trustees would buy Lot 4 of the same block for church purposes. The proposition was accepted.

The first record we have of the trustees is the third quarterly conference, held March 3, 1866 at the Union School-house. They report the parsonage about completed except for plastering, and ask for money to complete it.

The fourth quarterly conference was held at Bouses Grove May 25, 1867, when the trustees report the parsonage completed at a cost of \$773.21, lot \$30.00, stable \$10.00, total \$813.21 with an indebtedness of \$355.26.

The above named appointments should be historic spots to Methodists. Here our fathers and mothers worshiped God in spirit and in truth. Not with organs and choir to lead the singing, not with pulpits for the preachers, not with bright gasoline lamps for light. They met at early candlelight, a few brethren carrying tallow candles with them for light. No bell called them to worship. The preacher, if he had any pulpit at all, had only the small desk used by the teacher of the day school.

In the fall of 1867, Rev. David Brewer was appointed preacher in charge and, during the summer of 1868, started a plan for the first church building in Philo, and the first on the circuit. His work was first to procure subscriptions. He had the brick foundation laid before the conference year closed, when failing health compelled him to return to the farm.

The Philo Mission was hereafter known as the Philo Circuit. It once had eight preaching places and took three weeks to get around, with some points having services on week nights. The missionary appropriation was \$60 a year, a reminder to us today that we too once needed help. The land was then not carefully pruned and cultivated, but rather was a broad expanse of tree-less virgin prairie, with sloughs broad and often deep and impassable. Here and there were little groups of settlers, trying to build homes for themselves and their families.

Many times the preaching (by local brethren) was as crude as was the surroundings. Yet such preaching filled a spiritual need and helped lay the foundation for the church life of our day.

Appendix 5.
 Obituary of Rev. David Brewer
 From The Waukegan Republican of Wednesday,
February 26, 1896.

Woodland, Illinois - A Vacancy That Cannot be Filled

In September 1875, there moved to our quiet little village a gentleman who, as soon as known, became a favorite and was loved by every person in Woodland and vicinity. About the last week in December his health began to fail him. He gradually grew worse until he was unable to fill his appointments or even to make his appearance in public. For eight or nine weeks hope and fear struggled in the United Brethren Congregation's heart. Would their pastor recover? Almost the first question that was asked as morning after morning came was, "How is Mr. Brewer?" Last Thursday evening every head was bowed and every heart stricken with grief when informed he had passed beyond the vale into the great beyond. But why weep? Surely we should not, for the great soul of Rev. Brewer only went back to God who gave it.

David Brewer was born in Piketon, Pike County, Ohio, October 18, 1826 and died at his home in Woodland February 20, 1896, age sixty-nine years, four months and two days.

When two years of age his parents moved to Lafayette, Indiana, where they resided for two years, thence removing to a farm near Danville, Illinois.

On August 23, 1844 he was united in marriage to Miss Caroline Lynch of Danville, Illinois. To this union ten children, consisting of eight sons and two daughters, was born, four sons of whom survive him, respectively, Mich, Isaac and Frank of Philo, Illinois and Robert of Muscotah, Kansas. The mother of these children died November 21, 1877. He was married to Elizabeth Witherspoon of Newport, Indiana September 18, 1889.

He was converted at the age of sixteen and united with the M. E. Church. He was licensed to preach at the age of twenty-six. He entered the traveling ministry seventeen years later. In 1888 he withdrew from

the M. E. Church and united with the United Brethren and continued with active work until his death, preaching his last sermon before the U. B. Congregation at this place on Sabbath evening, January 12.

As a husband he was true and affectionate, as a father, loving; as a neighbor, kind and generous; as a servant of God he was a zealous worker in his Master's vineyard; living, he was loved as a man is rarely loved; dying, he bequeathed to his relatives and friends a legacy of Christian devotion which shall last as long as time shall endure.

Just a few minutes before his death he said to Charles Aurich who was beside his bedside, "Brother Aurich, I am going home", and died praising God. Such a death brings involuntarily to our lips the words of Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, 15:55, "Oh death, where is thy sting, oh grave, where is thy victory?"

The funeral services took place from the west side church last Sunday at nine o'clock A. M., conducted by Elder A M Snyder of Brook, Indiana, who took for his text the following from St. John 14:2 and 3, "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, you may be there also". The remains were sent to Danville on the 11:19 A M train, thence to Philo on the Wabash Railroad. The pall bearers were S P White, J R Keeth, J W Anderson, S John and S Jones.

Those present from abroad were John Brewer of Onarga, Daniel Brewer of Fairmount, brothers of the deceased; Isaac and Frank Brewer of Philo, sons; Mrs. Mich Brewer of Philo, daughter-in-law; Cyrus Brewer of Onarga, nephew; Thomas Orr of Homer, brother of Mrs. Brewer; Revs. Hunt of Sheldon and Thorn and son of Milford.

Appendix 6.

Descendants of Rev. David Brewer.

David Brewer 1826-1896 : Milton, Sarah, Meshech, Isaac, Robert, Frank.

David, Milton : Woody, Clinton.

" Meshech : Elta, Guy.

" Isaac : Orma Perl, Leon David.

" Robert : Lelah, Vera.

" Frank : Donald.

David, Milton, Clinton : Kenneth, Richard.

" Meshech, Elta : Harold, Linn, Wayne, Harriet (Hazen).

" Isaac, Orma Perl : Franklin, Kenneth, Walter, Joseph, Catherine.

" " Leon David : Shirley, Glen.

" Frank, Donald : Gerald, Jean E, Veralou.

David, Meshech, Elta, Harold : Stanley, Martha, Nathan, Anne (Hazen).

" " " Linn : Paul, Susan, Dianne, Steven, Jeffery (Hazen).

" " " Wayne : Priscilla, Gretchen, Virginia, Eric (Hazen).

" " " Harriet : Peter, John, Frederick, Thomas,
Christopher, Daniel (Gibbon).

" Isaac, Orma Perl, Walter : Rita, Marilyn, Jimmy.

" " " Joseph : Janice, Gary, Joanna & Deanna.

" " Leon David, Shirley : Kent, Steven, David, Daniel (Taylor).

" Frank, Donald, Gerald : Margaret, David, Kathryn, William.

" " " Jean E : Linda, Paul, Dale, Lisa, Loretta, LeDonna
(Neu).

" " " Veralou : Steven, Janet, Dianne (Scott).

David, Meshech, Elta, Harold, Stanley : Edward, Ellen (Hazen).

" " " " Martha : John, Hilary (Liller).

" " " " Nathan : Jeffery, Catherine, Rachel (Hazen).

" " " " Anne : Rhys, David, (Bowen).

" " " Linn, Susan : Piper (Sangston).

" " " Wayne, Priscilla : Debona, Annette (Lillie).

" " " " Virginia : Heidi (Weinert).

David, Isaac, Orma Perl, Joseph, Janice : Marcel (Hoke).

" Frank, Donald, Jean E, Linda : Keith (Carson).

" " " Gerald, Margaret : Christine (Wilson).

*Appendix 7 - Postscript,
Largest U S Church Merger - April, 1968.*

The nation's largest church merger, talked about since 1803, now is an accomplished fact.

Formal ceremonies in Dallas on April 23, 1968 brought into being the United Methodist Church, composed of 10.3 million members of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the 747,000 members of the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

Together they add up to the second largest Protestant denomination in the United States, just behind the Southern Baptist Convention's 11.1 million members. There are, however, a million members outside the United States, which are believed to give the new church the largest world wide following of any U. S. denomination.

Ties between the Methodists and the Brethren go far back. John Wesley, founder of the Methodists, was a close friend of Philip W. Otterbein, founder of the Brethren. Both units are represented in the Consultation on Church Union, which has been working to unite the ten major Protestant denominations with a total of 25.5 million members.

Not all differences have been ironed out. In Oregon and Washington, 47 of the 79 Brethren congregations said that they will not enter the new church. At the merger scene, a group walked out, accusing the new church of racial discrimination, since it is planned to continue until 1972 some aspects of a separate jurisdiction for many of the 350,000 negro Methodists.

