



Reading the Past: Reading Historical Handwriting

Kat Anderberg, Metadata Cataloger

Online with the CMC – August 9, 2023



History of Methodism in New Lenox, 1899

History of Methodism in New Lenox.

On this auspicious occasion, being the 12th day of July, A.D. 1899, while we lay the corner stone of this church, and our hearts are filled with hope for the future of Methodism in this community, it is especially fitting that some attention be paid to the history of early Methodism in New Lenox and the surrounding country, so the following brief record has been prepared to be placed in this corner stone.

Prior to 1845 in New Lenox, Illinois, services of the Methodist Episcopal church were held at irregular intervals in the homes of Abraham Francis, Thomas Francis, John Cooper, William Gougar, and other early settlers. In their pioneer days the Rev. S. A. Briggs, who lived during the later years of his life at Clairfield, Illinois, but who is now deceased, was a circuit rider and preached throughout much of Northwestern Illinois to small congregations at widely separated intervals of time and distance. In his journeyings through the country he stopped

preaching, the official board of the church held a business meeting in a shed that stood some distance from the barn. Upon the completion of their deliberations, the official board became anxious to hear the young minister's discourse. But not wishing to disconcert him by entering the congregation while he was in the midst of his sermon, they decided to go into the basement of the barn, which was large, and listen to the young man's remarks from there.

The audience was assembled on the bare floor, and the young minister occupied a position where he could not see the official board enter the basement. Now it happened that the heat of the day had driven the greater part of Mrs. Francis' large stock of poultry to the basement for shelter from the sun. As soon as the official board entered the basement of course the geese, chickens and ducks began to scamp for any hole they could find through which to escape. The result was such

Elders W. H. Holmes and the Rev. P. V. Clark, pastors of the Church.

Set at New Lenox, Illinois this 12th day of July, A.D. 1899.

Chas. S. Havens,
Historian.

History of Methodism
New Lenox, Illinois.
Written by
Chas. S. Havens.

Placed in this
Corner Stone on
July 12, A.D. 1899.

Manual Transcription

of the scene.

There being no regular place of worship for the people of New Lenox, services were held at the houses and barns of the pioneer settlers until about 1845, when a school house was built on the farm of Abraham Francis at a spot on the south side of the road and a few rods east of the fork of Hickory Creek that runs through the Francis farm, the road in question being the one that leads past the Francis homestead. In that building religious meetings were usually held on every alternate Sunday until the Bethel Church was erected. Even after that church afforded a specially prepared place for worship, services were nevertheless held for a number of years longer in the Francis school house. Some of the ministers who preached in the Francis school house were the Rev. Stephen R. Briggs, hereafter mentioned, Dr. Goodfellow, the Rev. Springer and the Rev. J. H. Vincent, and a bishop of the Church.

The Bethel Church, also called Chulera Church, referred to above, was

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Skimming Through

History of Methodism in New Lenox.

On this auspicious occasion, being the 12th day of July, A.D. 1899, while we lay the corner stone of this church, and our hearts are filled with hope for the future of Methodism in this community, it is especially befitting that some attention be paid to the history of early Methodism in New Lenox and the surrounding country, so the following brief record has been prepared to be placed in this corner stone.

Prior to 1845 in New Lenox, Illinois, services of the Methodist Episcopal church were held at irregular intervals in the homes of Abraham Francis, Thomas Francis, John Cooper, William Longas, and other early settlers. In their pioneer days the Rev. S. A. Briggs, who lived during the later years of his life at Plainfield, Illinois, but who is now deceased, was a circuit rider and preached throughout much of Northwestern Illinois to small congregations at widely separated intervals of time and distance. In his journeyings through the country he stopped

The First Pass

New Lenox and Frankfort Station, a village a few rods west of the line between New Lenox and Frankfort townships. That church was supported jointly by the people of New Lenox and Frankfort.

In 1863 the Bethel Church was torn down. The material in the structure was used in the building of a new church at the village of New Lenox, which is platted as the Village of Tracy. The building was erected on Lot 6 Block 6. The parsonage of Bethel Church was sold to Smith Reynolds, who moved it on to the farm now owned by Henry J. Schumbl. The building is now a part of Mr. Schumbl's dwelling house.

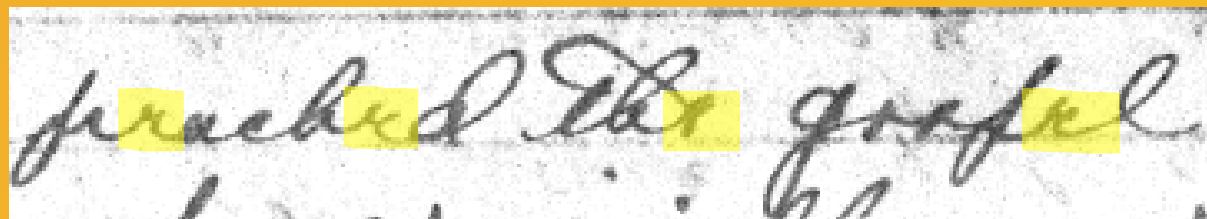
At the same time that a church building was erected at New Lenox, a church and also a parsonage were built at Frankfort Station, and the two places were served by one minister, the Bethel Church thus being enlarged into the Frankfort and New Lenox charge.

was built about 1853. It stood together with a parsonage, on the north side of the State road, leading from New Lenox to Frankfort Station, at (?) a ~~place~~ site a few rods west of the LINE between New Lenox and Frankfort townships. That church was ~~a~~ supported jointly by the people of New Lenox and Frankfort.

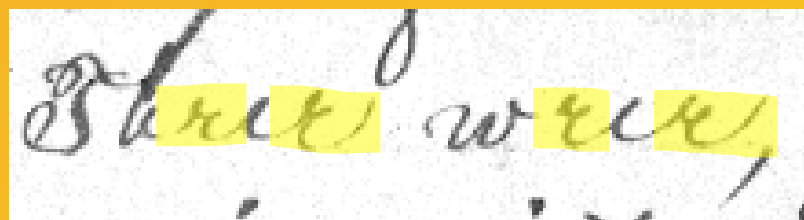
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At the same time that a church building was erected at New Lenox, a church and also a parsonage were built at Frankfort Station, and the two places were served by one minister, the Bethel Church thus

Identifying mystery letters: lowercase “e”



perched the grateful



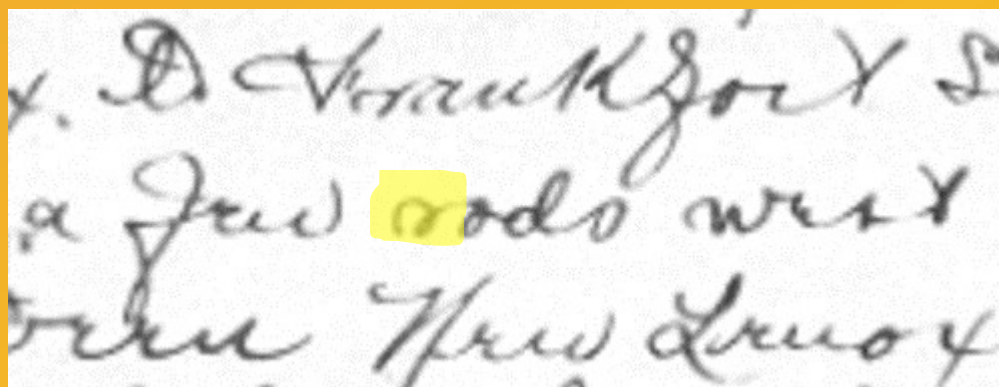
There were



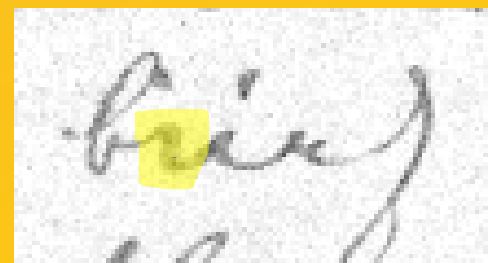
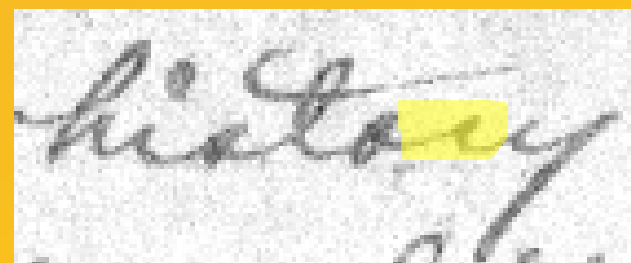
The Rev. Reed,

Identifying mystery letters: lowercase “r”

Leading “r”



Non-leading “r”



Identifying mystery words

Leuoy. D. Frankfurt Station, at a
site a few rods west of the **line**
between New Leuoy and Frankfurt

Identifying mystery words

course, many other circuit riders,
but the Rev. Briggs led the **war** and
is more clearly motivated than any

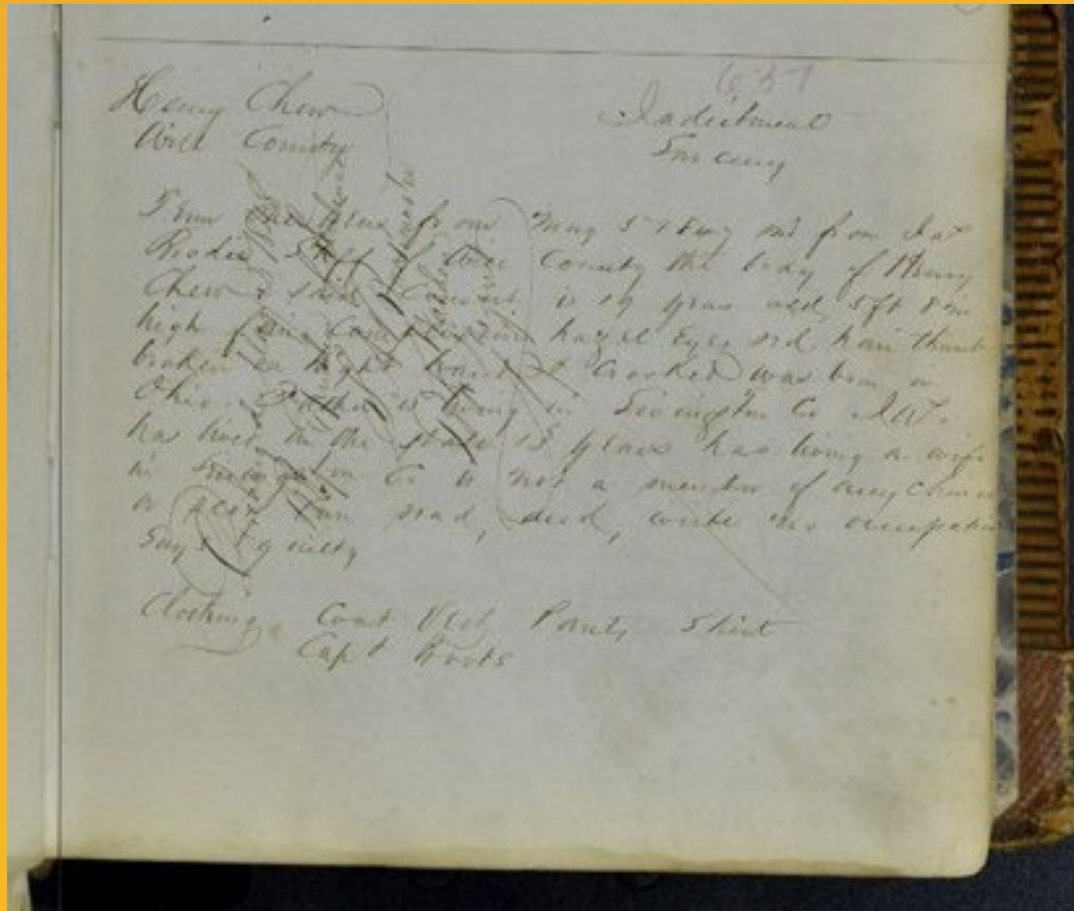
Identifying non-letter symbols

J. A. Laro was
minister & prob
defendant

Tracing words

intervals in the houses
Francis, Thomas Francis
William Gougar, and a
et al. In those places
Mr. S. R. **Brygg**, who li
lates years of his life
Illinois, but who is
was a circuit rider a

Cross Writing



- Writing in multiple directions on one sheet of paper
- Tracing over the writing with a colored pen can make it easier to identify letters and words, especially when first starting out with this type of document

Resources

- History of Methodism in New Lenox: [History of Methodism in New Lenox - New Lenox Public Library Digital Archive - Illinois Digital Archives \(idaillinois.org\)](https://id.illinois.org/History-of-Methodism-in-New-Lenox-New-Lenox-Public-Library-Digital-Archive)
- Illinois State Prison (Alton), Volume 3, page 2: [Illinois State Prison \(Alton\), Volume 3 - Register of Illinois Prison Records - Illinois Digital Archives \(idaillinois.org\)](https://id.illinois.org/Illinois-State-Prison-Alton-Volume-3-Register-of-Illinois-Prison-Records)
- How to decipher unfamiliar handwriting: A short introduction to palaeography, Natural History Museum: [NHM Palaeography Guide 2014 | NC Archives \(ncdcr.gov\)](https://ncdcr.gov/NHM-Palaeography-Guide-2014)
- Tips for Reading Old Handwriting, Ancestry Support: [Tips for Reading Old Handwriting \(ancestry.com\)](https://ancestry.com/support/tips-for-reading-old-handwriting)
- How to read old handwriting, Judith Batchelor, Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine: [How to read old handwriting | Who Do You Think You Are Magazine](https://www.bbc.com/history/whodoyouthinkyouare/magazine/whodoyouthinkyouare-how-to-read-old-handwriting)



ON THE CALL TODAY

Questions? Contact the CMC:

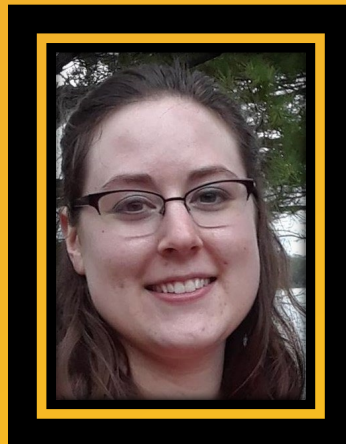
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