

## Burning Interest

# Marion Makes It Believe It or Not

Living through two centuries of change in Marion County is always a notable occasion, but when that person is Herbert W. Brewer on his 90th birthday the event is near historic. Born February 22nd, 1885 to Edward and Ida Carhart Brewer in Grand Prairie Township, Mr. Brewer is still very much an active and alert man. He was the eldest of his family and today remains the only living member of his immediate kin. He readily recalls scenes of a Marion County long since gone by.

Mr. Brewer was born in the Land Mark Home, a large 13 room Gothic-styled house that once stood on the west side of old Route 23 North of Forest Glen Cemetery (now Chapel Heights). When this grand

house with its spiral stairway burnt to the ground some years later, every stick of wood in the structure was consumed except the wood stacked in the fireplace! So strange was this occurrence that Ripley cited the event in his **Believe It or Not** series, perhaps being the only mention of Marion County in his books.

Herbert recalls that his father was a well-known breeder of race horses and had his own graded dirt track on an adjacent farm. He spent so much time there that his wife offered him an ultimatum of either the horses or the family. In a Solomon move, Herbert's father built his new house on the west turn of the race track so that all could be happy.



**LAND MARK HOUSE**

Residence of Edward E. Brewer. Cited in Ripley's **Believe it or Not**. Mr. Herbert Brewer on the Left.

Mr. Brewer also remembers hauling many logs through the streets of Marion to be used by the Fairbanks Crane Company as booms for the 'new' steam shovels. The logs were cut from his farm and dragged by four teams of horses to the plant that would be the fore-runner of the Marion Power Shovel. On one occasion a huge 40 foot log became mired in the mud near the rail crossing on North Main Street which necessitated extra teams and men to free it from the quagmire.

Gypsies frequently camped near the covered bridge on the Rocky Fork Creek near the North Drive-in. Many people feared robbery in the darkness of the old covered bridge and would give the area wide berth when the wandering tribes would camp in Marion.

Today's teenagers might have been at a loss if they were to go 'a courtin' in a sleigh as Mr. Brewer did at the turn of the century. Snow drifts frequently dumped he and his fancy onto the frozen ground. Mr. Brewer remembers that he could not call his fiancée as there were two telephone companies; his the Bell Co., hers the Citizen Corporate, with no connecting lines!

Communications nonetheless, he married his

sweetheart, Mrs. Iona Hinamon on April 17th, 1907 who has since passed away leaving Mr. Brewer and four children: Edna, Mrs. Nolon Almendinger of St. Petersburg, Fla.; Barbara, Mrs. Billy Purvis of Mansfield, Ohio; Mary, Mrs. John Sappington of Rolla, N. Dakota; and Delmar Brewer of Marion.

Mr. Brewer currently resides with his daughter Barbara at 59 Western Avenue, Mansfield, Ohio, and wishes people to correspond with him. An Open House was observed in his honor February 23rd, 1975.