

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE FAMILY

OF

STERLING BREWER

(1770-1832)

PREPARED FOR THE 1992 BREWER REUNION

by

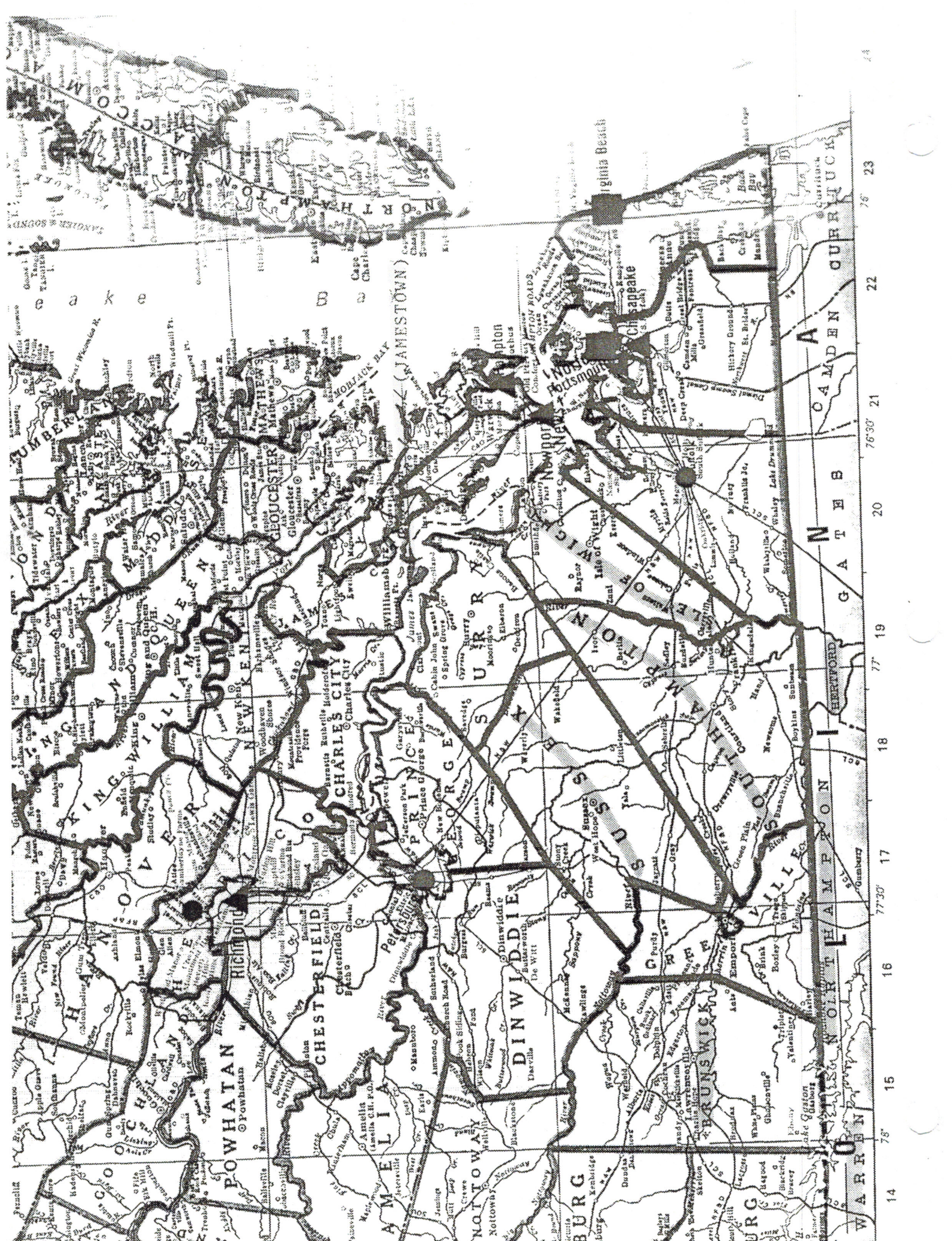
MARGARET BREWER BOONE

INTRODUCTION

This is a personal essay on the history of the family of Sterling Brewer (1771 - 1832). I look on this as a work in progress and for that reason, I have chosen to put the history, charts and pictures in loose leaf binders to facilitate adding and changing information. Research on the Brewers in Virginia and North Carolina is a tedious and frustrating process. All the information contained here is accurate as far as I know to date. Please realize that some of it contains my "best guess" based on what information I have found available and is subject to revision and change as more information becomes available. Without the foundation work done by Vernon Brewer in the 1930's and by Mollie Holm, Bill Brewer, and Mabel Brewer in the 1960's even this would not be possible.

I started this research several years ago and, as with many things in life, the process may have been more important than the end result--although, I certainly hope that to be worthwhile also. One of the real joys of the process has been getting to know my family better. I will always cherish my friendship with Lucy Brewer Crockarell whom I miss terribly as do all who knew her. This reunion was our dream together spurred on by the cooperation of Henry James and Bill Lawrence. It is really a great disappointment to me that Katherine Brewer Doggett can not be with us. She has been immeasurably helpful in providing family letters and reminiscences. Our correspondence has made trips to the mail box an anticipatory event as I eagerly look forward to her letters. Henry James has kept my spirits up when I thought that the reunion was an impossible dream. I hope I have recruited him to the ranks of family researcher.

The family histories contained here stop with the grandchildren of the Rev. Sterling Brewer, Jr. It is my hope that you will all catch "family fever" and will want to write short biographies of the next generations which can be added to our notebooks. I am also hopeful that new family pictures and letters will surface to be included. I am volunteering myself and Henry James as a depository for such items. We will reproduce them and send them out to the rest of the family.



THE VIRGINIA BREWERS

Although there were Brewers who settled in Massachusetts and Maryland early in the Colonial period, the first Brewer who came to our part of the New World was John Brewer who sailed to Jamestown, Virginia, with his wife, Mary, and his children about 1625. John had been a merchant and grocer of Bartholomew Lane, London, before setting out in middle age to seek adventure in the New World. He brought with him three children and his wife, Mary Grove "daughter of Ralph Grove of the Temple and of Canterbury." Two more children were born in Virginia. His children's names were John, Francis, Mary, Margaret and Roger. (House of Brewer) It is interesting to speculate that Francis was named for Sir Francis Drake, a *possible* distant relative of John's mother who was a Drake. It is fun to imagine that hearing of Sir Francis' adventures in the new world so fired his imagination that he decided to leave his comfortable life in London and seek fortune with the Virginia Company which had established a settlement at Jamestown in 1607.

For whatever adventurous reasons, John left an evidently solid business and set sail for Virginia with his wife and three oldest children sometime before 1629. His immigration to the New World seemed to set a pattern for the next 300 years as successive generations of Brewers moved into North Carolina, Tennessee, and on westward to California. In addition to his family, he paid the passage of 18 other adults. As a result he was granted 1,000 acres, fifty each for his and his wife's "personal adventure" and fifty each for the eighteen others. The plantation was known as both Stanley's Hundred and Brewer's Borough (Bruers Borugh). Its location is still called Brewer's Neck and it lies between Brewer's and Chuchatuck Creeks to the north of the James River in the county of Warrosquidiacke, New Warwick. (Virginia Land Records)

John I (we'll refer to him as such to distinguish him from his son John II) was a Burgess from the Warwick River District in 1629-30. The Burgesses met in the old wooden church in Jamestown before the Brick Church was built. From 1632 to 1634 John I was a member of the Governor's Council. He died in Virginia in 1635 and his widow (relict) soon after married the Rev. Thomas Butler. (17th Century Isle of Wight).

John I's will dated September 4, 1631, identified himself as a "citizen and grocer of London." He left Stanley Hundred to John II. Roger and Margaret were evidently still minors as he left them each "40 pounds apiece payable at marriage or when 21." (The other two children had died previously.) He further instructed "my body be buried without mourning apparel or gowns given to any but those of mine own household." (Va. Land Records) The will was proved in London May 13, 1636.

John I's "relict" Mary married the Rev. Thomas Butler, "Clarke and Pastor of Denbie (later Warwick)" within months of his death. John II apparently settled on Butler's grant of 1,000 acres in Isle of Wight County to the south of the James River. When the Rev. Butler died in 1637, John II then held title to both estates. In 1657-58 John II was elected Burgess from Isle of Wight County along with Thomas Taberer and Joseph Bridger.

John II was born in London about 1600 and was a young man at the time the family began its Virginia adventure. His wife was Ann Reade and their

children's names were John III, Thomas, Mary and Ann. When he died in Isle of Wight County in 1669, his estate was valued at 87,621 pounds tobacco, 155 pounds gold and silver, and 78 ounces valuable plate. His nuncupative will left John III "Stanley Hundred " and his son Thomas "the land whereon he lives."

At this point the trail grows dim. Without further research and information, I do not know from which of John II's sons our John Brewer who was the father of Reace Brewer who was the father of Sterling I descends. Also, I do not know what happened to the estate of Stanley Hundred for the family seems to have spread south and west as time went on. John III, who inherited Stanley Hundred, moved on to Brunswick County about 50 miles southwest perhaps to escape problems caused by his participation in Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. (House of Brewer, E.D. Brewer) The loss of records through fire and other means over the centuries and the habit of using the name John in every generation in every Brewer family makes the paper trail all the more confusing.

The John Brewer with whom we are concerned apparently was in Southhampton County, formerly part of Isle of Wight County, from at least 1750 until about 1772. There is record that John Brewer purchased land in Southhampton County in 1750 and 1753. In the Southhampton County Order Book for the years 1759-1763, John Brewer is involved in a suit against Meredith Johnson, defendant, on behalf of his daughter Elizabeth Brewer, an infant. He and his wife Anne are recorded in the Order Book of 1768 - 1772 as having voluntarily relinquished Anne's right of dower in an indentured estate. At this point John and Anne apparently moved just south of Southhampton County into Hertford County, North Carolina as they are not found in the Order Book of 1772-1774. He died in 1780 in Hertford County, but his will was probated in Southhampton County, Virginia. (Journal of No. Carolina Genealogy, Summer 1964)

WILL OF JOHN BREWER OF HERTFORD COUNTY, N.C.

In the Name of God Amen. I John Brewer of Hertford County and Province of North Carolina Planter being now of Perfect mind and memory but knowing the uncertainty of life think it necessary to make some Disposition of what it pleased the Almighty to bless me with. In the first place I recommend my soul to God and my Body to the Earth to be Decently Interred at the Discretion of my Executors hereafter mentioned and as touching what worldly Estate I have I Dispose of it in manner and form following to Wit Imprimis, I give unto my loving wife my best new Featherbed & Furniture belonging to it, as also one half of my household Furniture of every kind whatsoever During her life or widowhood.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my Son John Brewer Five Shillings Sterling Money of Great Britain.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my Son **Reace Brewer** Five Shillings Sterling Money of Great Britain.

Item, I give and bequeath to my Son Jacob Brewer Five Shillings Sterling.

Item, I give unto my Son Jesse Brewer the sum of Five Shillings Sterling Money of Great Britain.

Item, I give unto my Daughter Pacience Five Shillings Sterling Money.

Item, I give unto my Daughter Elizabeth the sum of Five Shillings Sterling.

Item, I give unto my Daughter Frances one Featherbed the Smalest (sic) I have by me at this time with two Sheets one Blanket and one Rugg.

Item, I give unto my Son Hardy Brewer One Featherbed and Furniture to wit, one rug two Sheets & one Blanket also I give him one half of my household Furniture not as yet Disposed of Also my Desire (sic) is that if my Son Hardy Shou'd die without marrying, then I desire that what I have herein Given him Shou'd descend to my Son Henry.

Item, I give to my Son Henry every part of my Estate which I have Given to my wife after her death or Widowhood and in Case my Son Henry shou'd die without marrying or Heir then & in such wise I desire that it may Devote to my Son Hardy and lastly I do hereby appoint my loving wife & son Hardy Brewer Exr. to this my last will & Testament Hereby Ratifying this & no other to be such. I Witness whereof I have hereunto Set my hand & seal this _____.

/S/ John Brewer, his mark

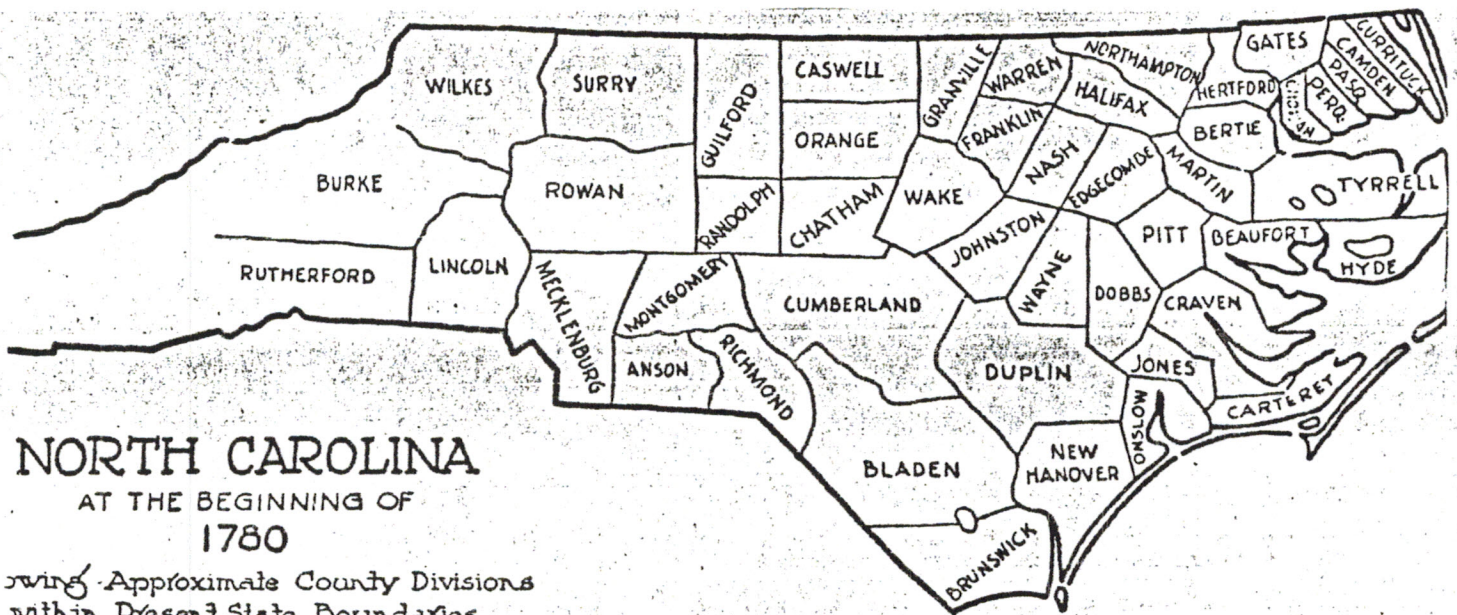
Signed Sealed published & Declared in presence of us: Geo. Little, Abram Poter, Rebecca Morgan her mark.

At a Court held for the County of Southampton the 10th day of Jany. 1780 This Will was presented in Court by Ann Brewer & Hardy Brewer the Executors therein named & proved by the Oaths of Geo. Little, Abram Poter & Rebecca Morgan the Witnesses thereto & ordered to be Recorded and on the motion of sd Executors who made oath according to law Certificate is granted them for obtaining a Probat (sic) in due form giving Security where upon & c.\

/S/ Sam Kello

Will Book 3, 295.

N. Carolina Journal of Genealogy



NORTH CAROLINA

AT THE BEGINNING OF
1780

Showing Approximate County Divisions
within Present State Boundaries.

Map by
L. Polk Denmark

THE EARLIEST BREWERS

The surname Brewer does not necessarily denote an occupation although in some cases it may. The name was originally Breviere and is Flemish in origin (British Family Names, Barber) The first Breviere came to England with William the Conqueror in 1066. He was Drogo de Bruviere, "a Fleming who held the Seigneury of La Bruviere near Bethune in ancient Flanders," a region of France near Belgium. He was married to a kinswoman of William. As a result of his participation in the invasion of 1066 and probably also because of his kinship to the King, he was given large holding of conquered lands and was a figure of importance in the Court. Unfortunately, this happy state of affairs did not last. After twenty years in England, he murdered his wife and escaped back to Flanders in 1086 to avoid the wrath of the King. His lands were confiscated and given to other Court favorites.

His children apparently stayed in England. There was a William Brewer in the Court of Richard the Lionhearted and also of King John I. (Some Observations upon the Law of Ancient Desmesne. Pym Yeatman. London 1884) It is assumed that it was their descendants who were prominent in the 13th century court of Henry III. Baron William Brewer is credited with advising the King to sign the confirmation of the Magna Charta. This family did own property in Somersetshire. (The House of Brewer, E.D. Brewer).

The ancestors of our John Brewer of Virginia can be traced back to the 16th century in the Manor and Borough of Chard, Somerset, England. Chard exists today and is located about 20 miles above Lyme Regis, a well known town on the southern coast. St. Mary's Church, Chard, contains the monument of William Brewer and his wife Deanes, "daughter of Mr. Baker of Crockehern in Somerset." It must be the largest and finest in the Church because it is the center piece in the guide and history printed on the 750th anniversary in 1985. The inscription on the monument is as follows:

Here lieth interred (expecting their Saviour)
the bodies of William Brewer of Chard, Phistian
and Deanes his wife, who, living forty years in
Happy Wedlock, in full of age departed this
life, shee dying 8 Nov. 1614 and he 24 July 1618,
having issue only six sons and five daughters all
men and women growne, and all comforts to them.

The monument also bears a shield, a very simple device in red (GULES) with two wavy stripes in gold running across (two bends, wavy, OR). This can not technically be called a coat of arms but it is tantalizing to note that the coat of arms of Drogo de Breviere contained a shield of that description and was topped by a mermaid.

I have corresponded with Mr. Len Hoskins of Chard and his research shows that the direct descendants of William Brewer had left Chard by 1664 when the land, a "messaue and half virgate in Forton," which he had held passed into the possession of Abigail Loringe. That land and a portion of the dwelling can still be identified today and have been visited by Dr. Ben Brewer of Louisville, probably a very distant relative.

William Brewer of Chard was the Grandfather of the John Brewer who emigrated to Virginia in the 1620's. John's father was Thomas Brewer who married a Drake of Cheddar, Somerset, and London and moved to London and entered business there. Roger Drake, Thomas' father-in-law, was a wealthy mercer in Cheapside, London. Thomas Brewer was still living in London at the time of his son's death in Virginia because he is mentioned in John's will dated September 4, 1631. "To my dearly beloved father Thomas Brewer, eight pounds yearly and every year so long as he shall happen to live after my decease."

(17th Century Isle of Wight)



Church's most impressive memorial commemorates the lives of William Brewer, 'pious' (died 1618), Deanes, his wife and their eleven children. The sixth son, shown only as a head behind the eldest, was according to legend the family 'black sheep', but as the memorial says the children 'were all comforts to them' it is probable that the last son was much younger than the rest of the family.

THESE TABLE LINES BE SET WTH GOLD
TO KEEPE A LIND THE MEMORIE