

William Brebner, Fulton Co., IL

brebner.com

Portrait Biographical Album of Fulton County, Illinois

Chicago, Biographical Publishing Co., 1890

Kindly supplied by **Marsha** in California (please contact me for e-mail details) whose interests include the **SILVERNAIL** family mentioned below.

“**William BREBNER** has lived in the vicinity of Farmington for the past thirty-five years, and is one of the most active and stirring men to be met with in this vicinity. He began life as a stonemason and has progressed from the position of a wage-worker to that of a contractor and builder, the owner of a good property, and has finally turned his attention to farming. **Mr. BREBNER** is one of nine children born to **John and Ann (SMITH) BREBNER**, whose home was in Scotland. He is the only one of the family that has come to America. His living brothers and sisters bear the names of **Ann, Alexander, Margaret, John, Adam, Elizabeth** and **Mary**, one having died in early life. The mother died at the age of forty-six and the father lived to be seventy-seven years old. They were in comfortable circumstances, and occupants of a good farm.”

“Our subject was born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, March 29, 1828, and although brought up on a farm, received excellent educational advantages. When sixteen years old he was apprenticed to a stonecutter and after serving three years began working as a journeyman in the country about thirty miles from Aberdeen. Having heard much regarding the gold fields of California, he made up his mind to go thither and seek his fortune. In the month of April, 1853, he sailed from Glasgow on the “*Marchioness of Clyde*”, arriving in New York after a voyage of thirty five days. He continued his journey as far as Canada, where he had friends, and finding wages good there abandoned his intention of visiting California.”

“**Mr. BREBNER** worked at his trade in the Dominion until the 1st of April, 1854, when he came into the States and made his way to Peoria where not a railroad had yet been built. Not being able to find work to suit him he went to the northern part of the State and worked at Dixon, Roxford and Galena for various periods. In the spring of 1855, he returned to the central part of the State and locating at Farmington became contractor of masonry. He was thus engaged until early in the ‘70s when he turned his attention to agriculture. He owns ninety acres of land in Trivoli Township, Peoria County, which he has successfully operated.”

“**Mr. BREBNER** was married in 1857, to **Miss Caroline NELSON** who bore him three children- **William, John** and **Frank**. The first-born died in infancy. **John** married **Tenny COLE** and has two children- **Caroline** and **James F.**; their home is at Liberty Center, Iowa, and the husband is engaged in farming. **Frank** resides in east Portland, Oregon. Our subject was married a second time, March 1, 1865, his bride being **Miss Susan POTTER**. This union has been blest by the birth of three children- **Fanny E., May** and **Walter S.** **Fanny E.** is now in a Chicago hospital, pursuing the work which will fit her for the duties of a professional nurse. She has already demonstrated her sympathetic nature and aptitude for the care of the sick and suffering, by work done at the time of the Chatsworth disaster. She was on board the ill-fated excursion train, and having escaped serious injury, spent some time in care of those who were less fortunate than herself. Her heroism and devotion to the injured ones was noted in the columns of the newspapers in flattering terms. The second child of the present **Mrs. BREBNER** died young. **Walter S.** is now learning the carpenter’s trade at Galesburg.”

“**Mrs. Susan BREBNER** is the youngest child born to **William** and **Rachel (WELLS) POTTER**. Her paternal grandfather was an Englishman and both her parents were born in New Jersey. They came to the Prairie State in 1837, and settled in this county six miles east of Canton where they purchased about ninety acres of land. **Mrs. POTTER** died when her daughter **Susan** was only an infant. **Mr. POTTER** subsequently married a lady from New York City, and in 1847, purchased a farm in Trivoli Township,

Peoria County, three miles east of Farmington. He died there in May, 1877, at the age of eighty-one years. He had served in the War of 1812. The brothers and sisters of **Mrs. BREBNER** are; **Hamilton**, whose home is in Canton; **Harriet**, wife of **Calvin BREED** who died in Canton; **Alice**, wife of **Jacob SILVERNAIL** of the same town; **Isaac**, who died unmarried; **Hannah**, widow of **Jacob WILKISON**, who lived in Toulon; **Phebe A.**, who was drowned in the Ohio River by falling overboard from a boat; Jenny, wife of **Edward EMMONS** whose home is in Rockford.”

“**Mr. BREBNER** is a native of this State. She attended the public schools, completing her education at Farmington. She keeps herself well informed regarding topics of general interest, faithfully discharging the duties which lie before her, and wins many friends by her good qualities.”

“**Mr. BREBNER** cast his first Presidential vote for **Abraham LINCOLN**, having taken out his naturalization papers soon after he came to the State. He is a staunch member of the Republican party, understands well the political issues of the day and firmly believes that he is right in his judgement regarding them. For six years he did efficient service as a school officer, and on one occasion was a candidate for Supervisor of Trivoli Township, but was beaten in the race by three votes”

(This family originated in Tarland, ABD. [View the large genealogy.](#))

