B. Schlesinger Weil, credited by many as the founder of Slinger, was a big man in more ways than one. Within this huge Frenchman's frame burned an ambition so strong, that it carried him from the Lower Rhine in France, across an ocean and thousands of miles of unexplored wilderness in search of an empire.

The ashes of a thousand camp fires dotted his back trail and recorded his passing, and he pushed his wagon train westward across the land of the Iroquois and into the land of the Winnebago in 1845. It was late Indian summer of that year, that this zealous Frenchman and his small caravan came plodding down the old Winnebago trail, to halt with a jangle of trace chains, at the junction of what is now Highways 175 and 144.

No street lights or neon signs illuminated the darkness then. Only a few dim trails that the great forest soon swallowed and the flickering, feeble glow of a few Indian camp fires met his gaze. It is doubtful if those dancing flames of the red man out there in the forest brought any feeling of assurance to this tired little group of travelers. Over the miles they had heard many stories of the redskins' savagery and cunning, so no doubt they said their prayers with their shotguns cocked that first night.

Friendly Indians

The Winnebagos, however, were a friendly tribe and the black night passed uneventful into a grey October dawn. Just as the misty morning light spread over the frosty forest, B. Schlesinger Weil climbed the highest hill in the area (the Owls Nest) and standing among the oaks, whose leaves were turning from yellow to deep red, decided that this beautiful Kettle Moraine Valley was to be the journey's end.

With winter fast approaching, there was little time to be lost, so the party started construction of a log house on the site of the present Slinger State Bank. This was the first house ever built in Slinger. That first winter remains for the most part unrecorded, but the hardships were many as stocks of food and supplies dwindled away.

Out in the forest where the red man lived, they found a good supply of wild game. Quail, turkey and white tailed deer roamed through the area in large numbers in that far off day, and no doubt the hills rocked under the shotgun's ugly crash as the settlers searched for food. Upon a night the lonesome wail of the timber wolf would drift down from some barren ridge. From some distant points in the forest would come the answering cries, and through the night the hills echoed back the song of the "chase."

Second House Built

In the summer of 1846 the second house was built in Slinger on the present site of Theisen's I.G.A. Store. It was Slinger's first store and all the lumber was brought from Milwaukee via ox-team.

Pioneer Weil had planned well and located accurately on sections 17 and 18, surveyed some years before by two Statesmen by the names of Brink and Burk. Under his name they became the sections on which the village of Schlesingerville came into being. It was in 1846 that B. Schlesinger Weil purchased this strip of land, three miles long and one mile wide, from the United States Government. This is now the original tract of the village of Slinger.

From 1845 to 1859 Mr. Weil contributed much to the growth of his empire. During this period a tannery, a hotel, a shoemaker, blacksmith, wagon maker, two taverns, two schools, a flouring mill, three churches, distillery, store, grain elevator, stone stable and a railroad came to Schlesingerville. It was in 1855 through the exertions and influence of Mr. Weil that the route of the old La Crosse Railroad, now a section of the Milwaukee and St. Paul, was located so as to pass through his town. The occasion of its completion was celebrated in a big affair furnished by Weil.

Big Celebration

A large party came out from Milwaukee to celebrate the occasion. Included in this group were Stoddard Judd, president of the railroad; Judge Larabee, James B. Cross, Mayor of Milwaukee; Maurice Schoeffler and Harrison Ludington. The party was met and saluted by salvos of artillery. Mr. Weil feasted and wined the whole party at his own expense for two days in one of the greatest blowouts ever seen in Schlesingerville.

Mr. Schlesinger Weil lived in the town, which he helped to build, until the winter of 1859. Then with his destiny fulfilled he left the scene of his greatest triumph. His tired old eyes had seen a dream come true and a city take form, but the years had taken their toll. Broken in health, he headed for Milwaukee, in hopes that some doctor could still the pains that racked his aging frame.

One evening in autumn, about the time that the soft calls of the bob white came floating in over the hills in the gathering dusk, a blinding flash of light illuminated the little room, as the Black Angel came for B. Schlesinginer Weil. They found the old pioneer dead in his chair. The fire dead out and the stew pot burned black.

They buried the old man in a little cemetery, now grown large ... So this is his story, a thumbnail sketch of the way it happened, taken from the records and diaries of folks who once lived along the Winnebago trail.
CONGRATULATIONS

SLINGER

FROM THE FAMILY OF

BARUCH SCHLEISINGER WEIL