

**"THE TOWPATH" – APRIL, MAY, JUNE – 1988**

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY  
THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION  
P.O. Box 73 – New Bremen, Ohio 45869  
Marjorie Lietz, Editor

**SUPPORT YOUR MUSEUM:** Membership dues are \$2.00 per year. Life Membership is \$50.00  
**MEMBERSHIP** in the New Bremen Historic Association is open to all persons interested in the history  
of New Bremen and the surrounding area. Donations, either material or monetary, are also always welcome!  
We bring you current news of happenings at the Museum and also nostalgic things of "Yesteryear".

**1988 SLATE OF OFFICERS & TRUSTEES**

Jane Jackson, President ----- 629-2782  
Carol Stauffer, Vice Pres. ----- 629-3334  
Craig Hoffman, Secretary ----- 629-3642  
Jacqui Kuck, Treasurer ----- 629-2566  
Willis Dicke, Trustee ----- 629-3535  
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Steve Patterson, Trustee ----- 629-3620  
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Sue Maxson, Historian ----- 629-2849  
\_\_\_\_\_, Curator -----  
Susie Hirschfeld, Membership Chair. -- 629-2133  
Mary Wint, Genealogy Research ----- 629-2795  
Marjorie Lietz, "Towpath" Editor ----- 629-2924



LOCK NUMBER ONE LOOKING NORTH  
SCHWIETERMAN'S DRUG STORE AND AMERICAN BUDGET

**THREE NEW TRUSTEES NAMED**

Carol Stauffer, Donna Watkins and Stanley Hertenstein are the three new trustees to serve on the New Bremen Historic Association Board. At the April meeting, the Board reorganized, with Jane Jackson as President, Carol Stauffer, Vice President, Craig Hoffman, Secretary and Jacqui Kuck, Treasurer. Other Trustees are Willis Dicke, Fred Harmon and Steve Patterson. Other Officers are Irene Wellemeyer, Corresponding Secretary; Sue Maxson, Historian; Susie Hirschfeld, Membership Chairman; Mary Wint, Genealogical Research and Marjorie Lietz, Newsletter Editor.

The Board meets the first Tuesday of each month from September through May at 7:30 P.M. in the Museum. Any of the above named persons may be reached through the following mailing address: P.O. Box 73, New Bremen, Ohio 45869. THANK YOU to Anna Mae Hudson, Karl Mesloh and Arnold Heitkamp, who have so willingly served on the Board for the past few years! They will continue working at the museum in

**TOWPATH AND DUES REMINDER**

How do you like our new look? The TOWPATH is now being printed commercially and is currently being sent to approximately 400-450 members. With estimated annual printing and mailing costs of \$300-\$900, your dues of \$2.00 per year are important as they will just cover these costs. If you haven't already done so, please send your 1988 dues to: Mrs. Susie Hirschfeld - 9 Vine St - New Bremen, OH 45869, and if you can enclose an extra donation, please do, as it will most certainly be welcome and appreciated, and help cover those unexpected little costs which always seem to arise.

*(Karl Mesloh)*

**THANK YOU:** This edition of "THE TOWPATH" was made possible through the appreciated gift of Dr. Edward C. Conradi and his wife, Dr. Sandra Conradi, of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. Ed is a 1957 graduate of New Bremen High School and Sandra's hometown is Hudson, New York.

**WANTED: OLD HATS**

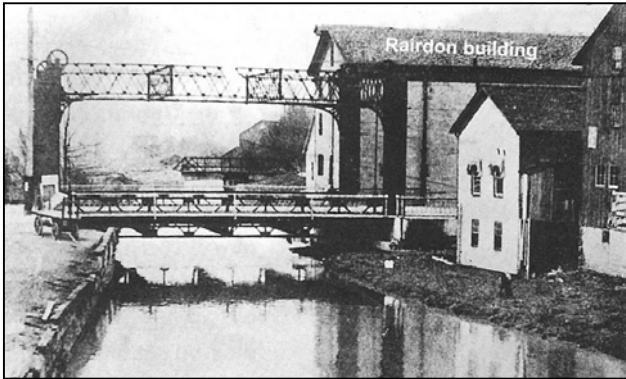
Anna Mae Hudson says "I need some antique hats for the summer display at the museum." So, if you have a lady's or a man's hat that was in style before 1930 and would like to have it on display at the museum, call Anna Mae. Her telephone number is 629-2365.

Yes, maybe those were the good old days. What a joy to sit and daydream, as the years roll by so fast,  
About those days of happy childhood, In the dim and distant past.  
Recalling so many things - the blacksmith shop, a small town grocery store, a spinning wheel, sassafras tea,  
Family reunions, country auctions, carpet beaters, grindstones, kerosene lamps and quilting bees. *(Ideals)*

## MONROE STREET BRIDGE

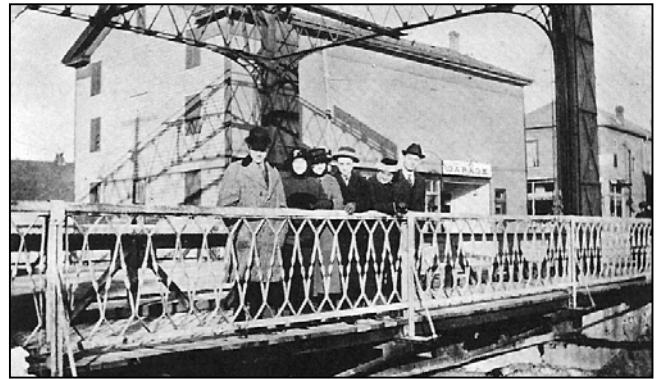
[from "The New Bremen Sun"]

[photos by Paul A. Lietz]



There seems to be a difference of opinion concerning the bridge that spanned the canal on Monroe Street. Was it a lift bridge or was it a swing bridge? This big lift bridge was built for canal boats to pass through our little village and I have heard it said that children in those years had their ears tuned to the sound of the canal boat horn in hopes of getting a ride on the bridge!

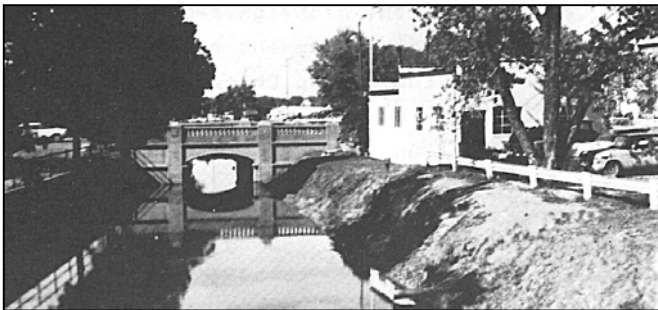
The year of the picture below is 1914, with a group of young folks standing on the old lift bridge in the heart of New Bremen! The writing has faded on the back of the photo, however one can still read "Burk, Klanke, Erhardt".



**April 1, 1921:** Public improvement of a nature that perhaps very few had been thinking about has now become a likelihood in connection with the removal of the old lift bridge across the canal at Monroe Street. As the order had been given, there was merely to be a dismantling of certain parts of the bridge which have been unsightly - that is, all of the superstructure, then a widening of the way to almost take in all of the present sidewalk for foot traffic and an addition on both sides for new sidewalk. However, Tuesday, the Board of Commissioners was in town and held an open air meeting with the Mayor and the Village solons, the place of meeting being the Monroe Street bridge, and there the new proposition was ventilated to such an extent that hopes are given out for a new concrete structure in place of the present antiquated bridge! The state is going to bear a considerable portion of the expense while through town, eight feet of the street will have to be built by the Western Ohio (interurban).

### July 22, 1921 - WORK CONTINUES

Traffic on the Western Ohio, as far as the regular interurban cars were concerned, was terminated at the station on Monroe Street all day Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday until noon. The body of the old bridge was raised a matter of four feet in order to permit the concrete workers to continue unhindered on the new structure. Approaches have been built to the foot bridge on the south side so that people may cross over while work is going on at the new bridge. This condition will continue likely until late fall when the new (concrete) bridge will be put into service.



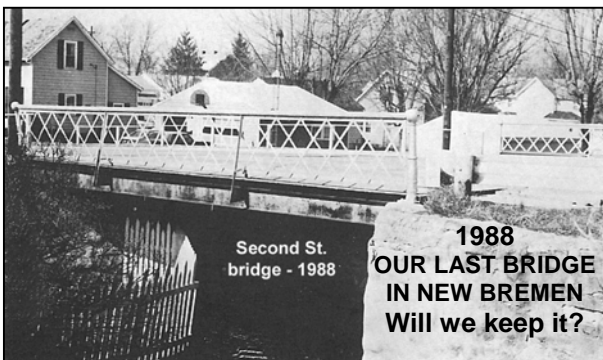
During the years of the '20s, '30s, '40s, '50s and '60s, this concrete bridge spanned the canal. There were flower boxes placed on the bridge banisters during the summer months, the flowers being furnished and cared for by the Women's Club.

### FROM ONE OF OUR READERS

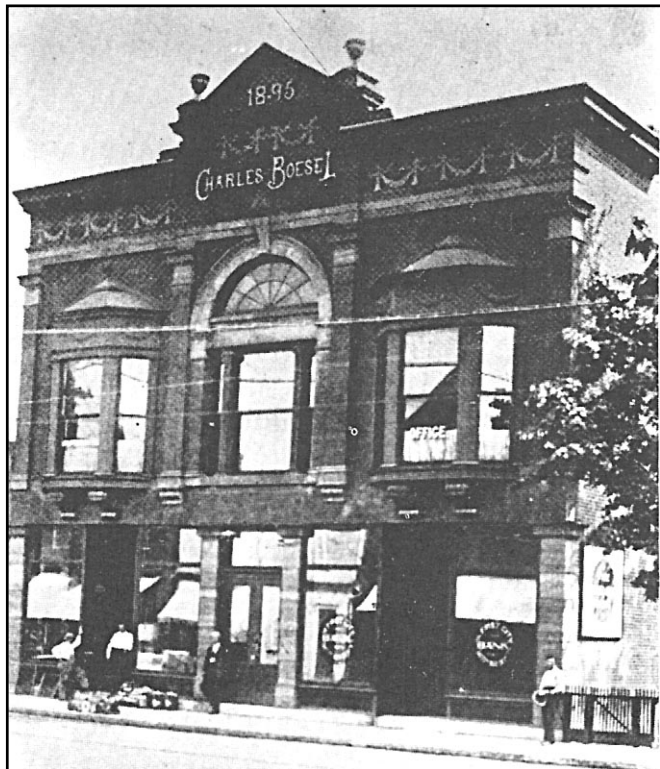
#### Some humor of early New Bremen

The old fire bell had been replaced with a fire whistle which was to be blown every Saturday noon for a check-up. Members of the Volunteer Fire Department took turns doing this. One Saturday at noon, the whistle played the tune "Yankee Doodle Dandy". Amusement spread and someone was heard to say, "Nobody in town could do that but Gust Kunning!" And that was who was doing it - G.A. Kunning, with his inborn love of music and humor, had entertained New Bremen!

[from Marguerite (Koop) Kunning]



## BOESEL OPERA HOUSE



ISN'T IT GREAT THAT THE BOESEL OPERA HOUSE, NOW OWNED BY THE NEW BREMEN AMERICAN LEGION, HAS BEEN PRESERVED AS PART OF OUR HOMETOWN HERITAGE?

IT WAS NEARING THE TURN OF THE CENTURY AND LITTLE TOWNS WITH A POPULATION OF A THOUSAND PERSONS, MORE OR LESS, WERE LONGING FOR THE FINE ARTS, A WEE BIT OF CULTURE WITH THEIR EVERYDAY WORK! THE TREND TOWARD BUILDING OPERA HOUSES BECAME VERY POPULAR. IN NEW BREMEN, THE YEAR WAS 1895 AND BUSINESSMAN CHARLES BOESEL WAS PLANNING TO BUILD AN OPERA HOUSE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF WEST MONROE STREET.

IT WOULD BE A MAGNIFICENT BRICK BUILDING AND THE FIRST FLOOR WOULD HOUSE PLACES OF BUSINESS. THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE FINE STRUCTURE WOULD HAVE A STAGE AND AMPLE ROOM FOR SEATING. ROWS OF CHAIRS WITH ARM RESTS WOULD BE BOLTED TO THE FLOOR AND THE SEATS WOULD FOLD UP TO THE BACK WHEN NOT IN USE. THE FLOOR WOULD BE SLANTED SO THE STAGE WOULD BE IN FULL VIEW FOR EVERYONE. THERE WOULD BE DRESSING ROOMS FOR THE SHOW PEOPLE, VELVET STAGE CURTAINS, AND GOOD STAGE PROPS SUCH AS TRAPEZE HOOKS AND ALSO A TRAP DOOR ON THE STAGE FOR THE MAGICIANS. THE CEILING WOULD BE A WORK OF ART AND THE HUGE CHANDELIER WOULD HANG FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE CEILING, ANOTHER SHOWPIECE.

WORK PROGRESSED AND THEN ONE DAY THE BUILDING WAS FINISHED! THE OPENING NIGHT WAS JANUARY 3, 1896 WITH CHARLES BOESEL, JR. AS MANAGER. HE BOOKED THE FIRST PLAY WITH THE WILLIAM ANDREWS BOOKING CO. OF CHICAGO. IT WAS CALLED "MY WIFE'S FRIEND" AND TICKETS WERE SOLD IN ADVANCE AT HIS HARDWARE STORE.

IT WAS A GALA NIGHT FOR NEW BREMEN WITH MANY MORE SUCH EVENTS TO FOLLOW IN THE YEARS TO COME. ALONG WITH THE TRAVELING SHOWS, THERE WERE POLITICAL RALLIES, PATENT MEDICINE SHOWS AND THE FARMERS' INSTITUTE HELD IN THIS GRAND OLD HOUSE.

THE NEW BREMEN SCHOOL BOARD LEASED THE BUILDING FROM SEPTEMBER 1920 UNTIL THE EARLY THIRTIES SO THE STUDENTS COULD HAVE THEIR CLASS PLAYS HERE ALONG WITH COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES, ORATORICAL CONTESTS, LITERARY AND LECTURE COURSES.

WHEN MOVING PICTURES BECAME THE FASHION, A PROJECTION ROOM WAS BUILT INTO THE NORTH WALL AND PERHAPS SOME OF YOU WILL REMEMBER WHEN MARY PICKFORD STARRED IN "REBECCA OF SUNNYBROOK FARM". ONE OF THE MEN WHO "RAN" THE PROJECTOR WAS EDDIE WEHRMAN, BROTHER OF MRS. HELEN FRONING OF NEW BREMEN. (ml)

### THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS!

Turn back the clock and the calendar too. It was a night of great entertainment when Wayne Ziegenbusch, director, and his cast of characters presented the melodrama "The Shaky Tale of Dr. Jakey."

The "HOUSE" was filled with happy people eating popcorn, socializing, and waiting for the play to begin, and when the lights went out and the actors came on the stage, there were costumes of all kinds - red vests, straw hats, bib overalls, black capes, evening gowns and even can-can dancing outfits. We knew it was going to be an evening of fun! The Sheriff handled the villains real well and then music and romance filled the air.

In order to turn no one away, the play was given on Saturday, March 5th and Sunday, March 6th, 1988. The acoustics are very good in the "Old Opera House" and it is still a grand place for plays because the atmosphere lends to the performance. After the expenses are paid, the proceeds will be given to the New Bremen Historic Association to help keep alive the history of our small town.

We were also in for another treat when Mr. Tim Wright, with his own personal brand of magic, performed. It was truly old-fashioned fun with a magician and his helpers from the audience.

MEMORY IS LIKE A MIRROR, LIKE A MAGIC GLASS,  
BRINGING BACK REFLECTIONS AS OUR RECOLLECTIONS PASS  
O'ER THE SURFACE OF OUR THOUGHTS, LIKE SHADOWS ON A STREAM;  
IMAGES INTANGIBLE, THE OUTLINES OF A DREAM.

(Patience Strong)

