

"THE TOWPATH" – JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER - 1991

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 \$3.00 per year. Life Membership is \$50.00
Donations, either material or monetary, are always welcome!
"The Towpath" brings you some history of New Bremen - your article is welcome.
Visiting hours are Sunday afternoons during the summer from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Other days and hours by appointment.

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TAKEN ON SOUTH SIDE OF ZION'S CHURCH – NORTH MAIN & FIRST STS.
[Men are unidentified]

"MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE, SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY"

JULY: A patriotic month. We put our flag up early in the morning, watch the stars and stripes waving in the hot breeze and remember, with a tug at our hearts, our independence.

AUGUST: Warm days and the abundance of summer flowers. The fragrance of ripening corn fills the air.

SEPTEMBER: The first day of school, The saucy cry of the blue jay, bees, butterflies, the goldenrod and the dark purple ironweed growing along the country roads.

THAT'S OUR TOWN – NEW BREMEN!

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COME AND VISIT THE N.B.H.A. MUSEUM: The museum features a parlor and dining room from yesteryear. There are two rooms of memorabilia, pictures, photo albums, notebooks with newspaper clippings, books, canal day news, and music items. **UPSTAIRS:** A children's toy room, a room with vintage clothing, a complete bedroom, sewing room, military items and books.

OUR GOAL: to feature articles made or used in New Bremen and the surrounding area. Right now we have yardsticks, flour sacks, pencils, thermometers, notebooks, calendars, plates and school items. These all carry an address of a New Bremen business of the past. If you have any items to add to the collection, please call or write to P.O. Box 73. Thank you.

As soon as the weather warmed up, it was housecleaning time at the museum. The old saying "Many hands make light work" applied. We swept and dusted and washed curtains and now we are ready for company. Dan Miller came over to help the trustees move some heavy furniture. **THANK YOU** to the furniture movers!

The Historic Association purchased a de-humidifier and it is working great! St. Peter's Church donated a rug for the dining room and it blends well with the furniture.

We appreciate your quick response in paying membership dues and also your generous donations. The money is used to pay utility bills, repairs, insurance and to publish the newsletter, *"The Towpath"*.

OUR MAILING CODE [ABOVE YOUR NAME LABEL]: **91**-Paid, **CM**-Charter Member, **LM**-Life Member, **11**-Not Current.



Geciena Halsema's
First Communion



Geciena & Elizabeth Halsema with nieces & nephews:
Louise, Charlotte, Peggy, Wayne & Jane Halsema
[taken in Washington, D.C. – ca. 1960]

MY NEW BREMEN AUNTS

by James J. Halsema, nephew

EVERY TIME OUR TELEPHONE COMPANY TRIES TO SELL US A NEW ELECTRONIC MARVEL, I THINK OF MY TWO AUNTS - GECIENA VERONICA AND ELIZABETH HALSEMA, WHOSE VOICES AND HANDS FOR OVER FOUR DECADES PROVIDED THESE SERVICES TO THE NEW BREMEN AREA.

IN HIS NATIVE VILLAGE OF KLOOSTERBUREN IN GRONINGEN PROVINCE OF THE NORTHERN NETHERLANDS, JOHANNES HALSEMA LEARNED HOW TO REPAIR AND EVEN MAKE WATCHES AND CLOCKS DESPITE HAVING LOST AN EYE WHEN AS A CHILD HE FELL CARRYING AN OPEN PAIR OF SCISSORS. THREE MONTHS AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS WIDOWED MOTHER, HE MARRIED 24-YEAR-OLD FRONIKA DUTMERS. A FEW WEEKS LATER, IN THE SUMMER OF 1874, THEY JOINED HIS BROTHER, LAMBERTUS, AND HIS FAMILY IN AUGLAIZE COUNTY.

ANGLICIZING THEIR NAMES TO JOHN AND VERONICA, THE HALSEMAS BUILT A TWO STORY BRICK HOUSE AT 209 W. MONROE STREET (LATER TORN DOWN TO BECOME THE SITE OF A FURNITURE STORE ADDITION.) THEY HAD NINE CHILDREN, OF WHOM SIX LIVED TO ADULthood. LUCIUS DIED AT AGE 20. THE REMAINING CHILDREN LEFT HOME: JOHN, THE ELDEST, WENT TO MINSTER TO RUN THE TOWN'S SCHOOLS; BERNARD WENT TO OKLAHOMA, EUSEBIUS "JAY" WENT HALF WAY AROUND THE WORLD TO THE PHILIPPINES. GECIENA (BORN DEC. 5, 1886) AND ELIZABETH (BORN JAN. 11, 1893) STAYED TO CARE FOR THEIR PARENTS. VERONICA DIED IN 1922 BUT JOHN SR. LIVED UNTIL 1930. IN OLD AGE THEIR FATHER BECAME COMPLETELY BLIND AND TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON HIS DAUGHTERS FOR CARE.

GECIENA WENT TO WORK FOR THE TELEPHONE COMPANY WHEN SHE WAS STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL. THEY LIVED JUST AROUND THE CORNER FROM THE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE LOCATED ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE CITY BUILDING AND U.S. POST OFFICE (ON THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF MAIN & MONROE STREETS), SO THEY WERE AVAILABLE AT ALL HOURS IN ALL WEATHER. SEATED BEFORE A BANK OF SOCKETS, EACH WIRED TO A TELEPHONE, THEY CONNECTED SUBSCRIBERS BY INSERTING PLUGS FOR OTHER TELEPHONES, INITIALLY ONLY LOCALLY, BUT GRADUALLY AT INCREASINGLY LONG DISTANCES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTY, THE STATE, AND THE NATION. EVENTUALLY THEY HANDLED THE CALLS TO AND FROM NEW BREMEN BUSINESS FIRMS THAT WENT ACROSS THE SEAS BY RADIO AT HIGH COST AND WITH VARYING SUCCESS.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS WERE NOT REALLY NECESSARY. THE SISTERS KNEW EVERYONE IN TOWN AND THE SURROUNDING FARMERS BY NAME. THEY KEPT FINGERS ON THE PULSES OF HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE. THEY COULD FIND THE DOCTOR WHEREVER HE MIGHT BE, SUMMON THE FIREMEN, LOCATE A VISITOR AND ADVISE A CALLER THAT HIS/HER INTENDED CONTACT WAS OUT OF TOWN. THEY KNEW THE TOWN'S SECRETS, BUT WERE ALWAYS THE SOUL OF DISCRETION. THEY RETIRED WITH 40 AND 43 YEARS OF SERVICE.

THEIR INFORMATION WAS VERY USEFUL FOR THEIR NEPHEW, JIM. A STUDENT AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, JIM WAS FAR FROM HIS HOME IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THE PHILIPPINES. HIS AUNTS, GECIENA AND ELIZABETH, WERE HIS HOME AWAY FROM HOME. ONE OF THE MANY REASONS HE ENJOYED VISITING THEM WAS THEY ALWAYS HAD UP-TO-DATE, ACCURATE INFORMATION ON WHICH NEW BREMEN GIRLS OF HIS AGE WERE AVAILABLE FOR DATES.

ELIZABETH DIED NOVEMBER 16, 1965 AT NEW BREMEN, BUT GECIENA, WHO NEVER EXPECTED TO SURVIVE HER YOUNGER SISTER, DIED AT COLDWATER ON HER 90TH BIRTHDAY - DECEMBER 5, 1975.

EDITOR'S NOTE: IN 1991, THE GAZEBO OCCUPIES THE SITE OF THE FORMER TELEPHONE EXCHANGE. THE FURNITURE STORE MENTIONED IS OUR PRESENT DAY HOME FURNISHINGS INC. ON WEST MONROE ST. IN THE EARLY 1900s, THE HALSEMA SISTERS WERE ALSO EXPERTS AT HEM-STITCHING LINENS FOR CROCHET AND EMBROIDERY WORK. THANK YOU TO JAMES HALSEMA OF PENNSYLVANIA FOR THIS ARTICLE.



DO YOU SEW?

by Dorothy (Gieseke) Kah

I have always loved to sew and browse through fabric stores. Sometimes my mind wanders back to the materials (as we called them), that were used in my younger days. Many of these "materials" were purchased at THE ARCADE DEPARTMENT STORE, ERHARDT'S DRY GOODS, NIETER'S STORE, all of New Bremen and the SEARS and ROEBUCK catalog - such fun when that package arrived and we could see what we had "picked out". How many of these "materials" do you remember and can you add more to my list?

1. SHANTUNG: cotton and silk.
2. SOISETTE: a cotton with a lovely silky finish.
3. NAINSOOK: for blouses and baby dresses.
4. DIMITY: a cotton fabric woven with checks or stripes of heavier thread.
5. DOTTED SWISS: for afternoon frocks and "Sunday" dresses.
6. BLACK SATEEN: for those "hated" bloomers!
7. MERCERIZED COLORED SATEEN: remember the fancy below-the-knee bloomers in purple and emerald green, popular in 1927 and 1928?
8. PONGEE: silk or cotton
9. OIL BOILED CALICO: red, black or indigo blue, guaranteed not to fade!
10. SERGE: cotton and wool.
11. CAMBRIC: for dresses, baby dresses, and slips.
12. MARQUISETTE: for curtains.
13. LAWN: for aprons, kimonos, gowns and dresses.
14. CANTON FLANNEL: for undershirts, especially for babies.
15. SUITING: a cotton material in checks or plaids for dresses, skirts and jackets.
16. GAUZE: thin transparent woven material of silk or cotton.
17. PLISSE CREPE: cotton, a cool material for summer.
18. WOOL CHALLIS: for dresses and capes.

NEWS FROM YESTERYEAR - 1909

Nieter and Co. and Theo. Rabe are tearing down old warehouses in rear of business rooms and will replace with brand new 25x60 ft. structure, 2 stories high, which will be used by ARCADE DEPT. STORE.

Ed Bambauer, who for several years was employed by Tony Schwieterman, blacksmith, has gone into business for himself at Lock Two, reopening old Komminsk shop.

Old landmark being removed - Gilberg blacksmith shop on West Monroe Street.

St. Paul Church decides to build new parsonage.

Frank Wierth's pork packing plant on Second Street is a busy establishment.

To supply the great demand of brick, Frank Wierth began operating his plant again. He intends to manufacture a kiln full and dry them by heating process.

White Mountain Creamery held a social and business meeting, it having been 24 years since first butter was made in the little creamery.

New meat market, SIMES & McCLURE have purchased tools, machinery and stand of W.J. Bredwieser between "Sun" office and Schneider's barber shop.

Christ Gieseke moved into own property on Monroe Street from the farm.



THIS "ALL GERMANS" POSTCARD WAS SENT BY BEN LAUT TO HIS FUTURE WIFE, HILDA GEIB, FOUR YEARS BEFORE THEY MARRIED. THEIR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, MRS. RICHARD LAUT, SENT THE CARD TO MRS. LOWELL (LUCILLE TOPP) FRANCIS WHO DONATED IT TO THE N.B.H.A. MUSEUM.

IN THE BACK ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, BALLPLAYER 2 IS ED WELLMAN, BALLPLAYER 5 IS AL (MAC) HUENKE, AND AT THE END OF THE ROW IS LAWRENCE (MAGGIE) ROETTGER .

IN THE FRONT ROW, BALLPLAYER 2 IS IRVIN WISSMAN (FATHER OF JOHN WISSMAN) AND #4 IS CARL (COTTON) WEHMEYER.

THE POSTCARD IS DATED SEPTEMBER 14, 1909 - NEW BREMEN, OHIO. THE GREEN PENNY STAMP HAS BEEN REMOVED. THE CARD WAS PRINTED BY THE HOVERMAN STUDIO, NEW BREMEN, OHIO.



THE SCHWABEROW TAILOR SHOP 21 N. Main St. in "OLD NEW BREMEN"

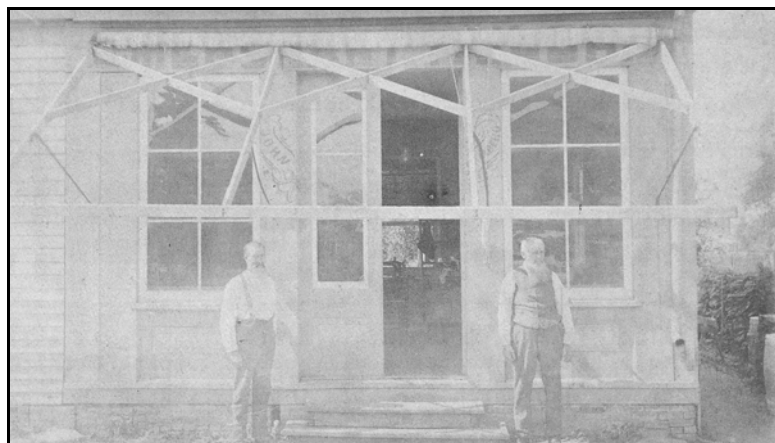
This building was the home of the John Schwaberow family and his Tailor Shop is on the right hand side. Through the doorway one can see the old pedal type sewing machine.



UPCOMING EVENTS

YES - we are going to have a Christmas Tree Festival again this year! The theme will be "TOYLAND", so put on your thinking caps for your Christmas display at the museum. There will be more details in the next issue.

SOMETHING NEW! The Historic Association is planning to sell Christmas cards this year. The cards will be in keeping with the history of New Bremen. Watch for more information in the next issue.



ELEVATOR RAZED BY FIRE! – JULY 24, 1926

LOSS ESTIMATED AT BETWEEN \$5,000 AND \$6,000 WAS CAUSED BY A FIRE OF UNDETERMINED ORIGIN WHICH COMPLETELY DESTROYED THE DIERKER ELEVATOR, FOR MANY YEARS A PROMINENT LANDMARK, NEAR THE NICKLE PLATE RAILROAD TRACKS IN THE WEST END OF TOWN SATURDAY AFTERNOON. THE LOSS IS SAID TO BE PARTLY COVERED BY INSURANCE.

STARTING IN A SMALL BUILDING NORTH OF THE ELEVATOR, THE FIRE SPREAD RAPIDLY AND BY THE TIME AN ALARM WAS SENT IN, THE MAIN BUILDING WAS A MASS OF FLAMES! FIREMEN WERE UNABLE TO SAVE THE METAL-COVERED BUILDING ALTHOUGH WATER WAS THROWN ON IT FOR SEVERAL HOURS. SEVERAL FREIGHT CARS STANDING NEAR THE TRACKS ALSO STARTED TO BURN BUT THE FLAMES WERE QUICKLY EXTINGUISHED AND THE CARS MOVED OUT OF DANGER. SMOKE FROM THE BURNING BUILDING WAS VISIBLE FOR MILES AROUND.

THE ELEVATOR WAS OWNED BY MRS. LOUISE DIERKER AND IN RECENT YEARS HAD BEEN OPERATED BY HER SON-IN-LAW, H.W. RAIRDON. IT WAS CLOSED ALMOST A YEAR AGO AND IS UNDERSTOOD NOT TO HAVE BEEN REOPENED SINCE THAT TIME, ALTHOUGH A CARLOAD OF OATS WAS SHIPPED LAST WEEK. ABOUT 100 BUSHEL OF GRAIN WERE DESTROYED WITH THE BUILDING. *(NEW BREMEN SUN - JULY 29, 1926)*

THE FIRE AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF A 5 YEAR OLD

by Paul A. Lietz

WE DO NOT HAVE A PICTURE OF THIS OLD LANDMARK, ONLY THE PICTURE I CARRY IN MY THOUGHTS OF YESTERYEAR. I KNOW IT HAPPENED ON A SATURDAY BECAUSE MY DAD WAS HOME FOR THE WEEKEND. WHEN THE FIRE WHISTLE BLEW AND THE FIRE ENGINE CAME TOWARDS OUR END OF TOWN, MY DAD TOOK MY HAND AND WE WENT IN THAT DIRECTION! THE FIRE WAS VERY CLOSE TO MY GRANDMOTHER LIETZ'S HOUSE - IN FACT, JUST WEST OF HER BACKYARD. SHE LIVED AT 23 NORTH HERMAN STREET (NOW THE HOME OF THE STEVE SCHROER FAMILY).

I WAS GIVEN VERY STRICT ORDERS TO STAY IN THE BACKYARD! TO ME, AT THAT TIME THE BUILDING WAS A HUGE STRUCTURE. I REMEMBER THE FIREMEN AND THE BIG HOSES. THE FIREMEN WOULD TAKE LONG POLES AND TRY TO PULL DOWN THE METAL ROOFS AS THE TIMBER BURNED AWAY BENEATH THEM. SMOKE KEPT POURING OUT OF A SMALL WINDOW AT THE TOP. NO DOUBT THERE WAS A CROWD OF PEOPLE GATHERED THERE, HOWEVER I CAN'T TELL YOU IF THERE WERE 50 OR 500 BECAUSE I WAS TOO BUSY WATCHING THE FIREMEN! IF ANY OF YOU READERS HAVE A PICTURE OF THIS ELEVATOR BEFORE IT BURNED, WE WILL BE GLAD TO PUBLISH IT IN THE NEXT ISSUE. *PAUL A. LIETZ*

NOTE: ARTICLES ABOUT NEW BREMEN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AND IF YOU HAVE A PHOTO TO GO WITH IT, WE CAN PRINT THAT TOO! JUST CALL OR WRITE: 629-2924 – LIETZ - 34 S. HERMAN, NBO 45869

