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.

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Come and Visit our Museum!

“DER HEILIGE NIKOLAS TAG” (SAINT NICHOLAS DAY – DECEMBER 6TH)

is the theme this year for the 18th Annual Christmas Tree Festival

SATURDAY: December 5th - 6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.
SUNDAY: December 6th - 11:30 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

We hope you will come and enjoy the Christmas displays! Home baked Christmas cookies, hot cider and coffee will be served. AND... most of all, SAINT NICHOLAS will be here on Sunday, December 6th, from 2 to 4 P.M. to hear what you want for Christmas. COME AND VISIT THE MUSEUM!

Would you like to bring a Christmas display or Christmas tree to the New Bremen Historical Museum for the 18th Annual Christmas Tree Festival? Special set-up times can be arranged by calling Rev. Lawrence Holmer (629-3738), chairman of the 1992 Christmas Tree Festival.

HERE IS A SONG SUNG BY THE CHILDREN
Welcome, friend Saint Nicholas, welcome.
Bring no rod for us tonight.
While our voices bid thee welcome,
Every heart with joy is light.
Tell us every fault and failing;
We will bear thy keenest railing.
So we sing - so we sing;
Thou shalt tell us everything.
Welcome, friend Saint Nicholas, welcome.
Welcome to this merry band.
Happy children greet thee welcome.
Thou art glad'ning all the land.
Fill each empty hand and basket,
’Tis thy little ones who ask it;
So we sing - so we sing
Thou wilt bring us everything.

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SINTERKLAAS TO THE DUTCH, FATHER CHRISTMAS TO THE ENGLISH, PÈRE NOEL TO THE FRENCH. THE GERMANS CALL HIM WEIHNACHTSMANN, AS WELL AS CHRISTKINDL, OR CHRIST CHILD, WHILE IN RUSSIA THEY ONCE SPOKE OF THE MIRACLE MAKER, BUT NOW SIMPLY REFER TO HIM AS GRANDFATHER FROST. THE CHINESE HAVE THEIR LAM KHONG-KHONG, MEANING NICE OLD FATHER, AND THE JAPANESE HAVE HOTEISHO, WHO HAS EYES IN BOTH THE BACK AND FRONT OF HIS HEAD AND CARRIES A BIG BAG OF TOYS. ON JANUARY FIFTH, EPIPHANY EVE IN ITALY, SANTA CLAUS IS A WOMAN CALLED BEFANA, WHO COMES DOWN THE CHIMNEY BEARING GIFTS FOR GOOD LITTLE GIRLS AND BOYS.


ACCORDING TO ONE ACCOUNT, NICHOLAS WAS BORN TO A CHILDLESS COUPLE AFTER THIRTY YEARS OF MARRIAGE AND WAS ORPHANED AT THE AGE OF NINE. REARED BY GUARDIANS THEREAFTER, HE DEVELOPED A STRONG SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY AND DEVOTED A GREAT DEAL OF HIS TIME TO PROVIDING FOOD, CLOTHING AND OFTEN MONEY TO THE UNDERPRIVILEGED. MUCH OF HIS GIFT GIVING WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN SECRET AND, INVARIABLY, AT NIGHT.

A STORY OFTEN TOLD OF THE YOUNG SAINT NICHOLAS INVOLVES THE THREE DAUGHTERS OF AN IMPOVERISHED NOBLEMAN WHO WAS NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE THEM WITH DOWRIES. WITHOUT Dowries they had no hope of suitors. Out of desperation one of the girls volunteered to sell herself into slavery in order to provide marriage portions for her two sisters. Informed of their difficulties Nicholas came by one night and tossed a small bag of gold down the chimney or through the open window of the eldest girl's bedroom where, according to the legends, it fell into a stocking hanging up to dry. Shortly thereafter the eldest daughter was married. This same act of generosity was repeated for the other two daughters with equally happy results. Conceivably this is the origin of the custom of hanging stockings at Christmas Eve.

WHILE PERHAPS STILL IN HIS TEENS, NICHOLAS BECAME THE BISHOP OF MYRA IN LYCIA (ASIA MINOR), SUBSEQUENTLY TO BE IDENTIFIED IN EARLY MANUSCRIPTS AS A SAINT AND MIRACLE WORKER. DESTINED TO BECOME PATRON SAINT OF CHILDREN, RUSSIA, BANKERS, SAILORS, PAWNBROKERS, VAGABONDS AND THIEVES, WHEN NICHOLAS DIED, PROBABLY ON THE SIXTH DAY OF DECEMBER AROUND THE YEAR A.D. 340, HE WAS WELL ON HIS WAY TO BECOMING UNIVERSALLY REVERED AS ST. NICHOLAS OF MYRA. DEVOTION TO ST. NICHOLAS EXTENDED TO ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD. IN 1807 ITALIAN SAILORS BROUGHT HIS BODY FROM MYRA TO BARI IN APULIA; THIS TRANSLATION, COMMEMORATED ON MAY 9TH, GREATLY INCREASED THE SAINT'S POPULARITY, AND BARI BECAME ONE OF THE MOST CROWDED PILGRIMAGE CENTERS. HIS MIRACLES WERE A FAVORITE SUBJECT FOR MEDIEVAL ARTISTS AND LITURGICAL PLAYS, AND HIS FEAST DAY - DECEMBER 6TH - WAS THE OCCASION FOR THE CEREMONIES OF THE BOY BISHOP.

THE PRACTICE OF BRINGING GIFTS IN THE NAME OF ST. NICHOLAS PROBABLY BEGAN IN FRANCE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY. THE FIFTH OF DECEMBER, PROCLAIMED THE EVE OF ST. NICHOLAS, WAS THE TIME WHEN PEOPLE WOULD LEAVE GIFTS OF GOOD THINGS TO EAT - FRUITS, NUTS, AND SWEETS - AT THE DOORSTEP FOR THE SMALL CHILDREN OF POOR FAMILIES. THE CUSTOM SPREAD RAPIDLY INTO OTHER PARTS OF EUROPE AND WAS SOON BEING CELEBRATED BY BOTH RICH AND POOR ALIKE. IN ENGLAND CHILDREN HANG STOCKINGS BY THE FIREPLACE. IN FRANCE AND HOLLAND SLIPPERS AND SHOES ARE LEFT BY THE HEARTH TO BE FILLED WITH PRESENTS. ON EPHPHANY EVE IN ITALY THE GOOD LITTLE BEFANA COMES DOWN THE CHIMNEY ON A BROOM AND FILLS THE SHOES OF GOOD ITALIAN BOYS AND GIRLS WITH TOYS. THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BAD WILL MORE LIKELY FIND THEIR SHOES FILLED WITH CHARCOAL, ROCKS AND ASH. WHEREVER CHRISTMAS IS CELEBRATED, SOME FORM OF THE CUSTOM IS STILL IN PRACTICE.

IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1626 THAT SAINT NICHOLAS MADE HIS WAY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC TO NORTH AMERICA. HE CAME IN THE FORM OF A FIGUREHEAD ON THE PROW OF A DUTCH SHIP, THE GOOD HOUSEWIFE, FILLED WITH SETTLERS FROM HOLLAND. THEIR DESTINATION WAS NEW AMSTERDAM [NEW YORK] AT THE SOUTHERN TIP OF MANHATTAN ISLAND. IT WAS HERE THAT ST. NICHOLAS' THOOFOLD IN THE NEW WORLD WAS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED. EVEN AFTER NEW AMSTERDAM FELL TO THE BRITISH IN 1664, THE DUTCH PERSEIVED IN THE CUSTOM OF CELEBRATING ST. NICHOLAS EVE. POPULAR PRONUNCIATION OVER THE YEARS MANAGED TO CONTRACT SAINT NICHOLAS INTO SINTERKLAAS, WHICH WAS EVENTUALLY CORRUPTED TO SANTCE CLAUS.

WITH SANCTE CLAUS NOW ON THE SCENE, COULD SANTA CLAUS BE FAR BEHIND? THREE PEOPLE ARE GENERALLY CREDITED WITH THE FURTHER TRANSFORMATION OF SAINT NICHOLAS FROM THE GIFT-BEARING GOOD BISHOP OF MYRA TO OUR OWN BELOVED GIFT-BEARING SANTA CLAUS. THEY ARE THE AUTHOR AND HUMORIST WASHINGTON IRVING; CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE, A PROFESSOR AT A THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY; AND THE RENOWED POLITICAL CARTOONIST, THOMAS NAST.

IT HAS TAKEN MORE THAN SIXTEEN CENTURIES FOR THE GOOD BISHOP OF MYRA TO Evolve into jolly old Saint Nick. In an age of computers, genetic engineering and interplanetary space travel, it is tempting to speculate on what additional changes the next sixteen centuries might impose on this beloved figure.

BUT EVEN IF SANTA DOES TRADE IN HIS RED FLANNELS FOR A THERMOSTATICALLY CONTROLLED SPACE SUIT, AND THE REINDEER FOR A GLITTERING TITANIUM SPACE CAPSULE, THE SPIRIT OF THE GOOD GIFT-BEARING BISHOP OF MYRA WITH HIS UNFAILING CONCERN FOR THE NEEDY AND LESS FORTUNATE WILL NEVER CHANGE. SIXTEEN CENTURIES FROM NOW ONE THING WILL STILL BE TAKING PLACE ON CHRISTMAS EVE - CHILDREN WILL STILL BE ASKING TOUGH QUESTIONS, HANGING STOCKINGS AND EAGERLY AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF SANTA CLAUS / JOLLY OLD ST. NICK ON DECEMBER 24TH, OR IN MANY PLACES AS THEY DO TODAY, ON THE 5TH OF DECEMBER - THE EVE OF SAINT NICHOLAS' DAY.

-REV. LAWRENCE HOLMER
DO YOU REMEMBER when the village of Lock Two had a Volunteer Fire Department? In the early 1900s, the community was very proud of their equipment. They had one hand pumper operated by 18 men, one hose cart, and one ladder. The hand pumper is now in the Allen County Museum at Lima, Ohio. The volunteer fire-fighters were members of the Lock Two community and the members paid monthly dues for department expenses.

The original building for the fire department was a frame building (now torn down) on the north section of Canal Road. Later the department had a cement structure built which stands today east of the old Garmhausen Store on Lock Two Road.

A fire alarm was sounded by a bell located on the derrick behind the building. The Lock Two Fire Dept. remained in operation until the New Bremen Fire Dept. received their motorized equipment (1927). At that time, the Lock Two Dept. was disbanded. The final distribution of money was used to purchase household fire extinguishers for the community.

In addition to fire protection, the Lock Two Fire Dept. sponsored various activities for the community throughout the year. In the fall of the year, they would have a rabbit fry. This activity would take place in the old dance hall (now torn down) and the rabbits were supplied by community hunters. My mother, Emma (Kuest) Ruedebusch, was the cook. On the menu was fried rabbit, (Hasenpfiffer) and bread.

In the spring of the year, the department would have an outing at Lehmkuhl’s Landing at Lake Loramie. This was a big time for the children, with free ice cream and soda pop. The Lock Two Mill would furnish the truck for transportation of supplies for the event.

During the summer, the Fire Dept. would sponsor a Fireman’s Picnic, with entertainment in the park at Lock Two.

LISTED BELOW are the names of some of the men in the Lock Two Community and probably members of the Lock Two Fire Department. Perhaps you know of other names that could be added to this partial list.

August Ahlers
Louis Ahlers
Edward Bambauer
August Dicke
Henry Dicke
Theodore Doenges
Ben Garmhausen
Christ Garmhausen
Herbert Garmhausen
Louis Heinfeld
Henry Heinfeld
William Heitkamp
Mr. Kelling
August Kettler
John Kettler
Elmer Oberwitte
Herbert Piehl
John Piehl
Edwin Poppe
Emil Poppe
Elmer Roettger
Henry Roettger
Lafe Scheer
John Schierholt
Ferd Roettger
Frank Wierth
Mr. Kelling
August Kettler
John Kettler
Elmer Oberwitte
Herbert Piehl
Lafe Scheer
Theodore Waterman
William Tostrick
Gust Wissman

Mrs. Henry (Emma Kuest) Ruedebusch (left), was the cook for the rabbit fries at Lock Two.

Here is the recipe for the “Hasenpfeffer” that everyone enjoyed and are still talking about over fifty years later: (This recipe was contributed by Margaret (Ruedebusch) Slattery. Also contributing to the rabbit fry information were Bernice Dilger and Bud & Vernita Scheer.)

HASENPFEFFER
Dip rabbit in flour and brown. Add mixture below.
Sauce:
Put 1 teaspoon of mixed spices in a bag.
Use equal parts of vinegar and brown sugar.
Salt & pepper – gravy if needed.
EDWARD CONRADI was born on a little farm just one mile east of New Bremen, Ohio in German Township, Auglaize County. The farm buildings were located on the land in the southeast corner of where Route 274 intersects with the Kettler Road. It was a long way for a little boy to walk to school, especially in a down-pouring rain or when the snow was deep.

According to the dates found in the New Bremen Centennial Book (published in 1933), Edward started his schooling in the Ober Bremen School. This school was located on Cherry Street, east of Walnut Street on four lots with a total of 1.82 acres of land. (It was very close to where the school bus garage is now located in 1992.) From hearsay, this was a swamp area and not too desirable. There are no records of what year this school was built. The building was vacated in 1877 and used only for summer classes. Finally after some years it was torn down, however, during the 1930s an old well was found on the property and was filled in for safety measures. The first teachers for the Ober Bremen School were Theodore Purpus and H. W. Bockemohle.

You can feel the warmth of summer and the sun against your cheek
Smell the fragrance of roses, hear the babbling of the creek.
Kids are barefoot in the country hiking over hill and glen;
Life is carefree, days are happy, telling school is out again. (Ideals)

EDWARD'S CHILDHOOD
There was time for play but also time for work. Edward was the middle child of seven and even though the farm was of small acreage, there were jobs to be done. With no modern equipment to work the fields, it took many hands at planting and harvest time. Ed and his older brothers helped the neighbor who lived south of them with her daily tasks. She was handicapped and could not walk very well. So the boys fed and watered the livestock for her and also gathered the eggs, sometimes having to climb in the haymow to look for hidden nests.

When Christmas came, the Conradi children knew there would be gifts of warm mittens and stockings knit of woolen yarn because they had helped knit them in the long winter evenings. While they were busy knitting by candle or coal oil lamp, their father, a shoe cobbler by trade, was bent over the cobbler's bench, making boots and shoes for other folks. With the gifts of woolen clothes would be fresh fruit. Their mother, at harvest time, carefully picked out the finest pears and apples, wrapped them carefully in paper and put them aside for Christmas Day. Each child would also receive one piece of candy shaped like an apple and made entirely of sugar. Life was different in the 1870s. It was a time of heating stoves, dug wells, felt boots, feather beds, horses to harness and no electronics.

EDWARD'S GOAL WAS TEACHING
The desire for more education in order to teach made Edward continue his studies. With family help he graduated from New Bremen High School in 1888. There were three persons in his class.

A year later, Augusta D.E. Grothaus (the first woman teacher in New Bremen) became his bride on August 24, 1898. The minister performing the ceremony was Pastor F.W. Bertram. Within the next few years they became the parents of two daughters, Elizabeth and Louise.
“A COLLEGE SHOULD BE FIRST A BUILDER OF LIFE.”

The above quote was one of Edward’s and he firmly believed in it. From his memoirs: “It has always been the policy of the College to be first of all a builder of life. The students are to learn what the great leaders of the history of civilization have contributed to the building of a better and nobler life, and to the comforts of the modern day.”

FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

Dr. Edward Conradi will long be remembered for his strength of character and warmth of personality when he served as President of the College from 1909 to 1941. He raised the academic standards at the college and constantly challenged students and faculty to develop high ideals of the spirit and of life.

Honoring its heritage as a woman’s liberal arts college and the president who led it for 32 years, Florida State has established the Dr. Edward Conradi Eminent Scholar Chair in Psychology at Florida State University. The chair is Florida State University’s 14th fully funded $1 million chair and is the first eminent scholar chair completed in the College of Arts and Sciences.

HIS HOME TOWN

On July 2, 1933, Dr. Edward Conradi came to his hometown to take part in the 100th birthday of New Bremen. He gave an address to the public, called, “A Century of Progress”. Even though his teaching positions took him many miles from his place of birth, he never lost his love for his home town.

“We are all links in the chain of life. No one is complete in himself. We are each one daily bearing something onward – something that contributes to the world and to experience. And we never know to what end our influence has been carried.” (Ideals)

THROUGH THE YEARS

(from “THE NEW BREMEN SUN”)

September 1927: When the housewife discovers a flour that meets all the requirements of a "good flour" she insists upon having that particular brand! That is why so many women of this section of Ohio demand that their grocer keep GOLD LACE FLOUR manufactured by THE KUENZEL MILLS CO. here at New Bremen.

1930-1931: THE NEW BREMEN SUN gave a full page each week to the New Bremen High School to fill. This page was called "The Crimson and Gold". In the school year of 1930-31, the Editorial Staff was listed as follows:

Editor-in Chief, Mary Archer; Associate Editor, Marie Kuest; Senior Class Reporter, Marie Behm; Junior Class Reporter, Gabriel Schaefer; Sophomore Class Reporter, Elizabeth Streine; Freshman Class Reporter, Paul Eschmeyer; Humor Editor, John (Jack) Garmhausen; Assistant Humor Editor, Louise Haines; Sport Editors, Frederick Luedke, (boys), Helen Knipple (girls); and the Faculty Advisor, R.S. Miller.

April 16, 1932: Miss Goldie Schmidt has sold the filling station building at Walnut and Monroe Streets in New Bremen to Prosper Combs who will move the building to the Harry Gephart farm. After the building has been moved, Miss Schmidt plans to build a home on the lot in the near future.

GROCERIES AT THE KROGER STORE IN NEW BREMEN - JULY 1933

Coffee: 19¢ / lb.
Jewel-smooth, fragrant

Sugar: 25 lb. bag / $1.32
Pure Cane Granulated

Bread: 24-oz. loaf / 8¢
Country Club 16-oz. loaf / 6¢

Relish: 17-oz. jar / 10¢
Pickles: quart jar / 25¢
Sweet Gherkins

Layer Cake: 2½ lb. / 39¢
with Orange-Pineapple Icing

Pineapple Juice: 2 for 25¢
No. 2 cans, for Fruit Cocktails

Tomato Juice: 3 for 25¢
16-oz. bottles, fine appetizer

Shu White: 13¢
For Canvas, Duck and Suede Shoes

APRIL 1, 1966: The Men’s Garden Club of New Bremen have accepted New Bremen’s old antique fire bell and will use for display. The bell was cast in Europe and tolled at the death of Abraham Lincoln.

Feverish excitement runs high when “townfolks” get together to plan a celebration! Some of our “TOWPATH” readers had the pleasure of helping plan for New Bremen’s Centennial (1933) and also for New Bremen’s Sesquicentennial (1983).

IN 1933, MRS. J.M. (LINA) BRUCKEN, PROMINENT LADY OF NEW BREMEN, WROTE A POEM (“OUR HOMETOWN”) MENTIONING ALL THE PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS FOLKS IN NEW BREMEN. YOU WILL NOTICE SOME ARE FULL NAMES, SOME ARE ONLY FIRST NAMES, SO “TRAVEL UP AND DOWN THE STREETS IN NEW BREMEN WHILE YOU ARE IN YOUR EASY CHAIR.”
Our plumbers, both Heinfeld and Block,  
That furnishes employment for quite a few;  
So when it is matured it won't be wrong.  

It builds muscle and makes the body strong,  
Its ice cream and milk are sure a treat;  
Our Meadow Gold butter can't be beat,  

New Bremen brooms sweep mighty clean,  
To keep us warm when the winds are high;  
Brockman and Kamman our coal supply,  
It makes good bread and pancakes light,  
Our Gold Lace flour is renowned,  

That stand the wear and the test of time;  
Our Woolen Mills make blankets fine,  
A popular product on the market today;  
A yarn mill run by Mr. McKay,  
He is also the agent for the Wooden Shoe beer.  

He will shoe your horses, including the pony;  
So when you want to dress up old Dobbin, be sure to stop.  

The Briggs Furniture Company is just new,  
Will sell you a Chevy if you give him a chance;  
Taylor's Studio is just the place,  
To get a likeness of your face.  

One veterinary, who by night or day,  
They will very comfortably fit your feet;  
The Home Furniture Company will help you find,  
Home furnishings of the latest kind;  
The Briggs Furniture Company is just new,  
It will soon have its product on the market too;  
Furniture is built and repaired by Bertram and Heil,  
Their prices are right and their work worth while.  

Our Meadow Gold butter can't be beat,  
Its ice cream and milk are sure a treat;  
It builds muscle and makes the body strong,  
So when it is matured it won't be wrong.  

Knipple's bread and pastries are fine,  
Be sure to serve them when you dine;  
Schwieterman's Drug Store is up to date,  
His one cent sales are sure cut-rate.
Dreamin' of New Bremen
Dedicated to Howard R. Hoffman by Arthur M. Crow

I ain't a kid no longer,
My hair is thin and gray,
But my love keeps growin' stronger
For an old town far away.
When day is done and sun is set
I find myself a dreamin'
Of a dear old spot I can't forget,
My old home town, New Bremen.

I dream of the old electric line,
They say it's gone to rust.
And the old Lake Erie steam engine
That often I have cussed.
It sure pulled in most powerful late
A wheezin' and a steamin',
And then the crew would dump the freight
For us folks there at Bremen.

I dream of settin' in that old grandstand
At the great Tri-County Fair
And listenin' to that Little Six Band
Playin' a good old German air.
I dream of factory and mill
As the stars come out a gleamin'
And then my eyes begin to fill,
A dreamin' of New Bremen.

Old town that binds with golden strands
Where everyone was pal
And home folks joined in clasping hands
Across the old canal.
Today as we shall gather in
Where the welcome signs are streamin',
God bless each one and all their kin
And our old home town, New Bremen.

WHO ARE THEY?

This picture of three little children was brought to St. Paul Church in hopes that someone might know who they are. The photo was taken by F.W. Greber of New Bremen, who took many of the early New Bremen pictures in the late 1800s and at the turn of the century.

Mr. Greber sold his photography business to J.H. Hoverman of nearby Spencerville in 1905. He then gave his full attention to his new job at the Buckeye Handle and Lumber Co.

If you can identify these children, please let us know.

ON DISPLAY AT THE MUSEUM

“This little rocking chair is made of solid walnut and was hand-made by a local carpenter years ago” says Mrs. Margaret (Hoffman) Buckingham of St. Marys, Ohio. The chair was a gift to her mother, Catherine (Dinkel) Hoffman, before Margaret was born.

Since New Bremen was Margaret’s home in her early years, the chair has been donated to the NBHA museum.

The doll in the rocker is known as a “Floradora 22”, made in Germany in 1901. The doll belonged to Helene Garmhausen and has also now been donated to the museum.

MAY THE MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS GLOW WARMLY IN YOUR HEART
WHERE THE CHERISHED OLD TRADITIONS EVER PLAY A VITAL PART.

LET THE NORTH WIND BLOW - Thank you to Paul Lietz, Clarence Lesher, Karl Mesloh, Norman Holcomb and daughter Carrie who made, fitted, painted and installed the storm windows at the museum! They are great!