

# "THE TOWPATH" – JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH - 1993

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

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*"The Towpath"* brings you some history of New Bremen - your article is welcome.

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NEW BREMEN LUMBER CO. – NEW BREMEN, OHIO

*Happy New Year!*

## 18th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

The 18th Annual Christmas Tree Festival was held on December 5th and 6th, with Rev. Lawrence Holmer as Chairperson. He had many willing helpers and to all of you we say "Thank You!"

This event opens the Christmas season in New Bremen, inviting everyone to come to the Museum and see all the beautiful Christmas displays and hear the old familiar carols. A special treat was to enjoy the good home-baked Christmas cookies and the hot spiced cider. Seventy two children received a candy cane from Santa Claus and left their Christmas lists with him. Door Prizes won were: Wreath, Dorothy Hertenstein; Apron, Lewis Bertke; Mini Mail Box, Jerry Newman; Fruit Basket, Brenda Philipot; Door Knob Hangers, Bernard Schroer; Tissue Box Cover, Alan Fenters.

## COMING SOON – N.B.H.A. ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

Monday, March 15th, 1993 is the date set for the Annual Dinner Meeting, to be held at St. Paul Church at 6:30 P.M. There will be entertainment by the "MIAMI ERIE BOYS" and a program, "Remember Old New Bremen". Tickets will go on sale March 1st at Schwieterman's Drug Store and also at the Cornerstone Shop.



Frosty is the morning, but the sun is bright, flooding all the landscape with its golden light.  
Hark the sounds of laughter and of voices shrill. See the happy children coasting down the hill.  
*[McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader – donated by Marie Taylor.]*

## NEW BREMEN'S BLIZZARDS

**FEBRUARY 3, 1888:** SLEIGHING GONE - SLIPPERY WEATHER - LOOK OUT!

**30 YEARS LATER - SNOW BOUND NEW BREMEN INCLUDED IN PATH OF BLIZZARD.**

**JANUARY 18, 1918:** A fierce blizzard of thirty six hours duration, and perhaps the worst one in the history of this section of the country, struck New Bremen Friday night, January 18th, shortly after 10:00 P.M. and had it not been for an ample supply of fuel that had been secured by the citizens during the previous two weeks, there would surely have been much suffering!

The thermometer registered as low as 23° below zero with a gale sweeping over the country at the rate of 30 to 40 miles per hour. With drifts so high, roads were impassable and the snow was packed almost as solid as ice!

IN THE HOMES, water pipes in great numbers were caught by the cold and burst. IN THE COUNTRY, farmers were busy looking after their livestock, the latter suffering very much because of the intense cold! Then, 8 to 10 inches more snow before the weather became more moderating. Sleighing became fine - the younger people are taking advantage of the opportunity.  
*(from the New Bremen Sun)*



### ALL ABOUT SNOW

A soft thick cover has been laid  
On meadow and the pond;  
And there are downy featherbeds  
Upon the slopes beyond.

The hungry sparrows plead for food  
On every windowsill;  
And misty halos hide the crest  
Of every snowcapped hill.

What love dear Mother Nature has  
For with one winter storm  
She creates beauty for us all  
And keeps the good earth warm!

*(Ideals magazine)*

**60 YEARS LATER - THE WORST BLIZZARD IN MANY YEARS! OHIO BATTLES BACK FROM THE KILLER BLIZZARD.**

A 1978 BLIZZARD PHOTO (ABOVE) TAKEN THE DAY AFTER THE STORM. A VIEW OF SOUTH HERMAN STREET. WORKERS WERE FORCED TO STAY HOME, SOME HIGHWAYS WERE "OFF-LIMITS", GROCERY STORES WERE OUT OF BREAD, HIGH DRIFTS, TERRIFIC WIND.

**JANUARY 26, 1978:** It started to snow on Wednesday, January 25th, then no let-up on Thursday. It was a watch and wait situation. Wind gusts up to 70 MPH lashed the area sending the chill factor at times to -70° (below zero!). Rescue efforts were hampered by the howling wind and near zero visibility but as time went on, law enforcement units, rescue units, power companies, etc. began to swing into action. Much credit can be given to the CB RADIO, the SNOWMOBILE, and the 4-WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLE. Dramatic rescue stories followed: a doctor arrived on a snowmobile to deliver a baby, entire families were being brought from their snowbound homes by snowmobilers, deliveries of food to isolated households - all deserve recognition! And then the snow, caught by the strong winds, began to form deep, deep drifts. The Ohio National Guardsmen became the delivery boys for Mercer and Auglaize Counties.  
*[The Evening Leader]*

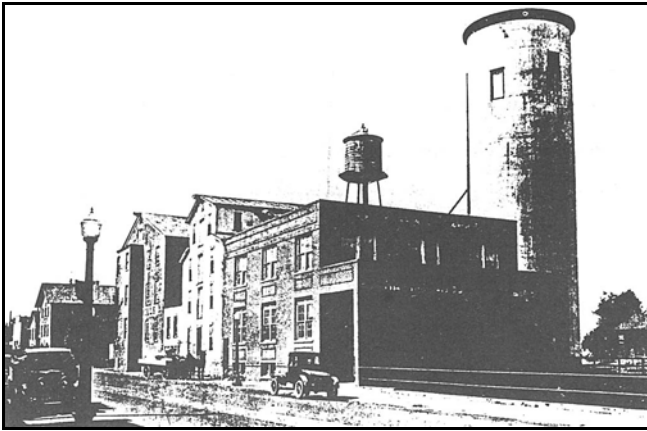


### A PRECIOUS PICTURE FROM YESTERYEAR!

THE YEAR IS 1923. THE GROUND IS COVERED WITH SNOW AND THESE YOUNG LADIES ARE GATHERED AT THE DEPOT IN NEW BREMEN READY TO TAKE A "FUN TRIP" TO VISIT A FRIEND. "WHAT CAN WE TAKE ALONG FOR FUN?" THEIR ATTICS AT HOME FURNISHED THE MATERIAL FOR THEM - OLD WICKER HAMPERS, WORN OUT UMBRELLAS, AND EVEN AN EMPTY BIRD CAGE!

NOTE: THE LADIES ARE WEARING FOUR -BUCKLE BOOTS - THEY WERE CALLED GALOSHES!

L-R: ELSA MUELLER, MAUD EKERMAYER, EMMA KOENIG (SCHROER), HILDA HUCKRIEDE (LUDWIG), VIOLA MUELLER, AND IRENE EKERMAYER.



THE KUENZEL MILLS ON SOUTH WASHINGTON ST.



THE NEW BREMEN LIBRARY NOW OCCUPIES THIS SITE.  
(1992 PHOTO)

### WHO REMEMBERS THE OLD TOWN PUMP?

ON PAGE 6 OF THE 1983 SESQUICENTENNIAL BOOK, "RALPH MAY REMEMBERS NEW BREMEN", THERE IS THIS PARAGRAPH ABOUT TOWN PUMPS:

"THERE WAS AN OLD WOODEN PUMP REMINDING ME OF HAWTHORNE'S STORY 'THE TOWN PUMP' PRINTED IN MCGUFFEY'S READER AND WITH WHICH MOST OF US WERE FAMILIAR. THERE USED TO BE SUCH A PUMP ACROSS FROM THE ARCADE CORNER NEAR THE OLD MILL HOUSE."

"THE TEAM OF HORSES WAIT TO UNLOAD AND THEN PERHAPS WILL GET A DRINK OF WATER FROM THE TOWN PUMP."

MAYBE THERE IS SOMEONE WHO WILL REMEMBER IT. IT PROBABLY WAS A DUG WELL USED PRIMARILY TO WATER THE TEAMS OF HORSES THAT PULLED THE WAGONS OF GRAIN TO THE MILL. MAYBE IT HAD A WOODEN WATERING TROUGH SIMILAR TO THE ONE THAT THE MCGUFFEY READER FEATURES. AND I THINK IT HAD AN OLD-TIME TIN CUP HANGING FROM A HOOK ON THE PUMP SO WEARY TRAVELERS COULD HAVE A DRINK OF WATER.

### CAN YOU HELP? - THE MYSTERY OF GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S NAME CHANGE

**BACKGROUND:** My great-grandmother, Elizabeth Heil, was born in New Bremen, Ohio on September 3, 1852. Her parents' names may have been Charles and Elizabeth Heil. Her brothers and sisters may have been Henry/Heinrich Heil, Charles/Carl Heil, Edward/Eduard Heil, Flora/Florence Heil, Wilmina and Mary Heil.

Great-grandmother Elizabeth Heil married my great-grandfather Wilhelm/William Engelage on January 4, 1872. Their first four children were born between 1873 and 1878, carried the family name Engelage and were baptized at the Saint Paul Lutheran Church in New Bremen.

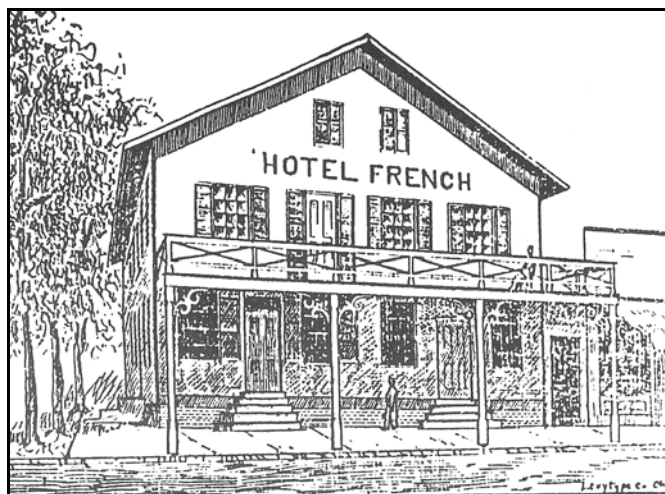
**THE MYSTERY BEGINS:** My grandfather, Oscar, was born in 1881 with the family name Blumhorst. Since there is no question that Wilhelm Engelage and Wilhelm Blumhorst are one and the same person, this means that sometime between 1878 and 1881, my great-grandfather, Wilhelm, changed his name. However, there is no legal change of name on record.

**MY HOPE:** That there may be some descendants of Elizabeth Heil who may have any information, fact or even rumor, as to why Wilhelm changed his last name. If you can be of any help, please contact me:

Thelma Ratchford - 4237 Glenayre Drive - Englewood, Ohio 45322 or call: 513-836-4165.

[2009 address: 1863 Sulky Trail - Miamisburg, OH 45342.]





## THE FRENCH HOTEL

This is a line drawing from the 1880 *Atlas of Auglaize County* of the "French Hotel" – at one time a popular hotel for canal trade in New Bremen. As of this writing (12/31/1992), Homan & Stucke Construction, Inc. occupies this site at 26 North Main Street.

Many of you will remember this building from before it was taken down in 1932. The last business in this building was the ~~Sunshine~~ (Superior) Broom Co.

The accompanying article was researched and written by Mervin Niekamp of Burbank, California. Mervin lived in New Bremen as a youth and attended the New Bremen Schools. He is a Life Member of the N.B.H.A. and is interested in New Bremen history.

The hotel known as the DICKE HOUSE, and later as HOTEL FRENCH, was located on lot number 61 at the southeast corner of First and Main Streets in New Bremen, Ohio. I don't know when, or by whom, it was built. C.W. Dicke, my great-grandfather, owned and operated it from sometime in the early 1860s to the late 1870s. It was a three-story frame building. The third story was storage space. It was approximately 40 ft. wide and 120 ft. long. The second story had a porch or deck built over the public sidewalk on Main Street, facing west. When I was a boy I walked by this building many times and as I recall there were at least three doors which allowed outside access to some of the rooms on the north side. The hotel catered mainly to travelers and workers on the canal.

After C.W. Dicke quit the hotel, I don't know who took it over. J.H. Mesloh is listed as the owner of the property on page 66 of the 1880 *Atlas of Auglaize County, Ohio*.

In the 1880s the hotel was owned or operated by Alex Bourquin - probably it was he who changed the name to HOTEL FRENCH. In the sesquicentennial book, *NEW BREMEN, OHIO 1833-1983*, page 57, "Excerpts from the New Bremen Sun", is this item dated February 8, 1889 – "THE LANDLORD OF THE FRENCH HOUSE INTENDS TO SELL OUT". On the following pages, 58-59, an item dated July 29, 1904 relates to happenings of 15 years before. One sentence in this item reads, "The Hotel French, which was at that time (1889) conducted by Alex Bourquin, has been closed."

The building was last used for a broom shop. I remember seeing bundles of brooms being loaded from the second floor porch deck onto a wagon or truck parked on Main Street.

The building was taken down in the late 1920s or early 1930s (1932? – see above article). The lumber was salvaged and a home built from it in New Bremen. It sits on the corner of State Route 274 and Eastmoor Drive.

[The information as to the size of the building, when it was taken down, and the use of the lumber, I received from Leroy Schroer. In 1980, he and Clifford Quellhorst operated a garage that was built on the lot where the hotel stood.]

### NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT - 1992

|                  |  |           |   |
|------------------|--|-----------|---|
| \$2317.83        | Balance January 1, 1992  |           |   |
|                  | <b>RECEIPTS:</b>   |           | <b>DISBURSEMENTS:</b>   |
| 2162.50          | Dues and Donations   | \$163.74  | Property, Maintenance (Includes Painting)                           |
| 1513.61          | Special Events (Annual Dinner Meeting,<br>Christmas Open House, Notecards) | 401.00    | Utilities   |
| 885.00           | Grants   | 445.00    | Insurance   |
| 197.40           | Interest   | 1100.58   | Special Events Expenses   |
| <u>\$4758.51</u> | TOTAL RECEIPTS   | 1118.14   | Newsletter Expenses (Printing & Postage)                            |
| <u>\$7076.34</u> | <b>TOTAL</b>   | 143.88    | Miscellaneous (Office Supplies, Stamps,<br>Curators Supplies, etc.) |
| <u>-3372.34</u>  | <b>-DISBURSEMENTS</b>  | \$3372.34 | <b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>  |
| \$3704.00        | Balance December 31, 1992 (Checking Acct.)                                 |           |   |
| \$1500.00        | Reserve (American Budget)  |           |   |

[Betty Schroer, Treasurer]

*Editor's Note: Karl Mesloh of New Bremen, Ohio is retired and a Life Member of the N.B.H.A. One of Karl's hobbies is the study of German surnames (starts on next page). He promises us more information on our names. Thank you, Karl.*

## GERMAN SURNAMES -THEIR MEANING & ORIGIN

(by Karl Mesloh - Part 1)

Those of you who have German ancestors, did you ever wonder what your surname (last name) means - or how it originated? Well, Dr. George F. Jones wrote a most interesting and informative book on the subject titled, "German American Names" in which he interpreted 12,700 names. In this and several ensuing articles, a look will be taken at the origins and an attempt will be made to interpret as many of the German names on the "Towpath" mailing list as possible. (Incidentally, Wayne Wenning of "The Evening Leader" placed a copy of Dr. Jones's book in each of the four local libraries: New Bremen, New Knoxville, Minster and St. Marys.)

The earliest German names were just a single name - it was not a first name or a last name, it was just a "name". This "name" was composed of two syllables with each syllable representing a "root" and each "root" having a specific meaning. This name was very important to the Germans for it represented that whatever they were today, whatever they would be tomorrow, and whatever virtues they would pass along to their namesakes, all lay in that "name" and so the Germans chose their name very carefully.

Whenever the Germans wanted to emphasize some particular aspect of their "being", they used a "tautological" name; by tautological it is meant that the "name" consisted of two different roots but with each root having the same meaning. For example, an expert or adept swordsman might choose or be given the name "Schwerdecke" by his fellow warriors; "schwert" meaning sword and "ecke" meaning sword so the name meant, sword-sword. Another example would be the name "Richwald" as "rich" meant ruler and "wald" meant ruler and so the name meant, ruler-ruler (please note, the ancient root "wald" meant ruler but today "wald means forest). There are at least three such tautological names in the local area: Mesloh meaning "swampy low forest" or simply "swampy forest" (the tautology being that a "low forest" grows in a swamp; Huckriede meaning "marsh-reed marsh"; Klipfels meaning "cliff-cliff" and so one would conclude that the Meslohs lived in or near a very swampy place; the Huckriedes, in or near a very marshy place and the Klipfels on a very high or steep or prominent (in some aspect) cliff.

There are various suffixes (or root endings) which now are of interest but early-on they were of considerable importance:

1) "er" originally meant that the person whose name ended in "er" was an owner of a farm at the terrain feature indicated by the two "roots", for example, the name, "Rothenberger" would mean that a person by the name of Rothenberg owned a farm at "red mountain"; in time it also meant a dweller at or near or on red mountain. "er" can also mean that the person is "a doer of something", for example, the name "Becker" can mean a "baker" (as well as a dweller or farm owner on a stream). From these several examples it is seen that the specific geographical location is both necessary and important for an accurate interpretation of one's name. Incidentally, some names end in "ert" but the addition of the "t" neither adds nor subtracts anything from the meaning of the name; the "t" was added to help in pronunciation indicating that the "r" was not to be trilled.

2) "en" essentially meant "at" the terrain feature the "en" followed. An interesting name in which this suffix is highlighted is the name, "Ziegenbusch". The ancient root, "Ziege" means "goat" and although a literal translation of "Ziegenbusch" can be "goat bush" there is yet another, and even more interesting! In ancient days, whenever the wine of the new harvest was ready for drinking, the inn or tavern keepers would hang a piece of greenery such as a limb of a bush on their doorframe to so indicate that the new wine was ready! Thus early-on, all inn or tavern keepers were called Busch, or Buschers, or Buschman from this hanging out of a green bush. If an Englishman were asked as to where he was going, he would probably reply, "to the Red Lion" or "to the Silver Chalice" or to whatever the name of his favorite pub might be. A German so asked might reply, "Zum die Ziegen" or "at the Goat" and thus the name Ziegenbusch translates, "tavern or inn keeper at (or of) Goat Tavern". Incidentally, this practice of hanging out some "greenery" whenever the wine of the new harvest is ready to drink is still followed today in some parts of Germany and Austria; at least it was as late as July 1991 as this author can happily attest!

3) "ing" means "belonging to", for example, the name "Kuenning" means "belonging to the Brave (family or clan or group of warriors etc.)

4) "ingen" means the place where the "root's" people lived, for example, the village of Sulingen in north Germany means "the place where Sull's people lived".

5) "sen" means "son of".

6) "ssen" originally meant "the first generation son of to bear that particular name". So much for "root" endings and now let us look at the "roots" themselves. Essentially there are four major classifications of German name "roots", they being:

- 1) Military
- 2) Terrain and Its Features
- 3) Professions
- 4) Miscellaneous such as Nicknames, Personal Characteristics, Abnormalities etc.

Each of the above classifications of roots will be explored in more detail in subsequent issues of "The Towpath". In the April-May-June 1993 "Towpath", a look will be taken at Military Roots as well as those "Towpath" names having military origins.

(to be continued)