



THE TOWPATH

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER - 1993

THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION
120 North Main Street - 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!
THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY
"The Towpath" brings you some history of New Bremen - your article is welcome.

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THERE'S A SONG IN THE AIR

There's a song in the air, there's a star in the sky.
There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry.
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.

There's a tumult of joy o'er the wonderful birth
For the Virgin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
Ay, the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.

In the light of that star lie the ages impearled
And that song from afar has swept over the world.
Every hearth is aflame and the beautiful sing
In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King.

We rejoice in the light and we echo the song
That comes down through the night from the heavenly throng.
Ay, we shout to the lovely Evangel they bring
And we greet in His cradle our Saviour and King!

19TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Saturday, December 4 - 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M

Sunday, December 5 - 11:30 A.M. to 8:00 P.M

The theme this year for the 19th Annual Christmas Tree Festival is "There's a Song in the Air". Some folks like to plan their display around a theme so President Lawrence Holmer suggested "There's a Song in the Air". This Christmas song was written in the late 1800s and first published in 1879. You can find the song with the music in the Elmhurst Hymnal, No. 67 - also in the 1905 edition of Methodist Hymnal and the 1948 edition of the Pilgrim Hymnal. The melody composed by Karl P. Harrington has proved to be the favorite. The words are by Josiah G. Holland (1819-1881).

Would you like to bring a Christmas display or Christmas tree to the New Bremen Historical Museum for the 19th Annual Christmas Tree Festival? If so, contact one of the Trustees or Craig Griesdorn (629-3321) or Lawrence Holmer (629-3738). Set-up times are as follows: Friday, November 26; Saturday, November 27; Thursday, December 2; Friday, December 3. Special set-up times can be arranged by calling Craig Griesdorn or Lawrence Holmer.

We hope you will come and enjoy the Christmas displays. Home baked Christmas cookies, hot cider and coffee will be served. Most of all, Santa Claus will be here on Sunday, December 5 from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. to hear what you want for Christmas. Please come and visit.

This "Fall" *Towpath* comes to your house a little early this year, but we want you to have ample time to prepare your display for the Christmas Tree Festival at the Museum!

Shopping lists, kitchen smells, children singing;
Jingle bells, colored lights, falling snow, fireplace with amber glow;
Trees adorned, a holly bough, parties, friends, blessings now.
Memories shared, a quiet tear, some are gone, still wanted here;
A time of peace and hope renewed, our fellow man, with love imbued;
A host of things, so many more, to answer then, what's Christmas for?
(by Judy Schwaab)

DAYBOOKS - CANAL BOATS - CAPTAINS

A member of the N.B.H.A. recently purchased some old account books at a local household goods sale here in New Bremen. The books date back to the early 1850s and are called "daybooks". Here the businessman listed the purchases from his place of business, often listing the canal boat and the captain who brought the goods to New Bremen.

When we read the items purchased, we found many of them obsolete now in 1993. Popular items in the 1800s were dripping pans, candle molds, tin cups, spouting, stovepipes, elbows, solder, granite coffee pots, shaving dishes, and molasses cans in different sizes. Heating stoves listed at \$11.50 each, brass wire at 5¢, a wash boiler at \$1.25, a milk bucket at 60¢, a boat lamp at \$2.60.

On April 12, 1855, the REAPER came to New Bremen and the captain was Mr. Lamping. Some of the other canal boats were Kendrise, DonJuan, Utah, California, Wiemeyer, Dan Kelly, Wheat City and Garbey. New Bremen thrived with the canal.



Pictured above are just a few of the items that have been donated to the museum during the summer months. The little dining room cupboard, often referred to as a "glass cupboard", was given by Don and Freda Fark, members of the Historic Association, in memory of Freda's sister, Opal Speckman. The cupboard was built by the late John Speckman.

The two children's pictures of yesteryear at one time belonged to the Wolf-Cron-Post family. They were brought in by Mr. Post. The photographer was Fred W. Greber of New Bremen.

WHEN THE COLD NORTH WIND BLOWS THIS WINTER, the Museum will be well protected. There are now storm windows on every window in the building and our Thank You goes to "Friends and Members" of the Historic Association – Paul Lietz, Clarence Leshner and Karl Mesloh.

A big Thank You also to all of the persons who hosted the Museum during the summer months on Sunday afternoons. Then, Thank You to all the persons who helped with cleaning the inside of the Museum and did all the yard work. The weather was hot, but the job "well-done".

WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOU AS A MEMBER OF OUR HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

We have 350+ members - quite a few of them are Life Members. The membership dues are \$3.00 / year per person, and Life Membership is \$50.00 per person. *"The Towpath"* is the historical newsletter and is published quarterly and mailed to members. If you like to work with "history", please contact an officer. Join – be a member of our "big family". You are welcome. We also welcome articles about New Bremen for the newsletter. -ml

OLD-TIME NEW BREMEN – WAREHOUSES, PORK PACKING, ETC.

by Ralph May – January 2, 1940

The old warehouses in New Bremen, most of which were built along the canal, and a few of which still survive, have always been of much interest to me, for, as a little boy I arrived in time to see the last of the old-time pork packing, the same as I arrived in time to see the last of the canal-boating. Both, however, passed out in the very early years of the turn of the century.

There were seven in all, I believe, and most of them had already been built by 1860. Beginning with the Poultry House on the south end, they extended all along the canal up to the Second Street bridge, with the exception of Speckman's, which was located directly back of the Arcade, the largest of them all, I believe, and entirely built of wood. Some of the others were of brick and of those still standing, the iron S's and the Stars are holding fast and keeping the old structures together. Historically, they could tell of many canal boats that they have had tied up to them, and of loadings and unloadings aplenty. The old frame Poultry House had a platform of rotten timbers that extended out over the canal, and from which I used to fish as a boy. It was a perilous adventure walking out on this platform and difficult art baiting one's hook, not mentioning the effort required to land a ten-pound carp. The canal extended in part under this building, and the water was alive with fish from the cracked corn and feed that found its way into the canal from the cracks in the floor boards.

Speckman's warehouse that stood back of the "Arcade" and next to the Speckman residence, was a huge pile and looking back, I can see the first floor covered with rows and rows of slaughtered hogs all lying on their backs with their feet pointing upward. I associate this picture with bitter cold mornings such as we have been having of late, when the temperature, I am sure, was always some degrees below zero. With my basket under my arm, I would go for a quarter's worth of spare ribs or back bones. And such a basketful. Once I remember getting a whole hog's head for gruetz, and all for a dollar. After the gruetz was prepared, it was so easy to warm up a skillet full for the evening meal and how good it tasted with bread and molasses, the molasses being used to cut the grease.

The many hogs were cut up on huge meat blocks by old experienced hands, men who worked without gloves in the arctic temperature of these old buildings. I liked to watch them trim the hams, cutting here and there, a process that never seemed to have an end. Often, when making my purchases, I would ask for a pigtail to be thrown in gratis, the whole thing coming back to me in the large bowl of bean soup prepared the next day. Of all winter soups, bean soup with ketchup and a pigtail was the most satisfying. Two soup dishes full, with five or six slices of bread and butter, kept me on my feet until four o'clock, when I came home from school, and when I could go to the kitchen cupboard for a snack before supper. Long after the days of pork packing, and when I would ask for it, Mr. Schelper would sometimes throw in a pigtail for good measure (if he had one), with my small purchase of pork-to-cook, hardly ever exceeding ten or fifteen cents.

Once I remember walking on the towpath to Dierker's warehouse back of the Plow Shop, where I believe the business of pork packing came to an end. This was an interesting old building, with large kettles and fireplaces for rendering lard and where there were always plenty of cracklings. Just recently, on my last trip up home, I again walked this old stretch of the towpath, from the Second Street bridge to the old icehouses on Vogelsang (*Plum*) Street, and I could still see the depression in the ground where the old warehouse stood. Sometimes, on my errands, I would skate along the canal, like Hans Brinker of old, but the many bridges and the lock made it very inconvenient. As I stood opposite Rairdon's Livery Stable and looked down the old canal bed, I could not help but think what a sorry mess it all was, and how, at one time, it was as pleasant a stream as those now flowing in Holland. I wish sometimes that some restoration might be made to the canal so that it would look like that stretch just north of the bridge on Route 66 between Minster and Ft. Loramie. Here the canal still retains its old-time appearance, the water reaching the bank on either side, and on the surface at least, reasonably clean.

One of the most interesting of the old wooden warehouses was taken down in 1906 to make way for the present (1940) Lanfersieck block on Washington Street. This was a two-and-a-half story building used for the storing of grain. In my time the upstairs was empty, I believe, but the first floor was divided into storerooms, a saloon on the north side and Joe Lanfersieck's barber shop on the south side. On Saturday afternoons, in the cold winters of those days, I spent many hours in Joe's barber shop trying my best to sell copies of *The Pennsylvania Grit* with Story and Picture Supplement. In an old copy of *The Sun*, it is related that the canal boats would come up along the south side of this building to load grain, Washington Street at that place having been a sort of draw bridge (Tower of London). A passerby nowadays would hardly believe that in those times the vicinity of this old building was covered with several feet of water all the year 'round, but I suppose there are still some old residents who remember this. I have an old picture of this part of Washington Street, taken from where the mill office stands, the street unpaved and deep with ruts, with hitching posts along the way, and a pump with a wooden platform out in front of Tomhafe's barber shop.

Washington street - what pictures you bring to mind! To the mill for a quarter's worth of screenings and to be weighed, carrying home the screenings in an old flour sack slung over my shoulder; Rabe's Store for many trips during the day to read the *Cincinnati Post* and *The Times Star* and *The Sun* on Friday evenings. (It will be a long time before I am in that Half-Century Club). To Speckman & Nieter's for country butter, or for a pound of Lion or Arbuckle's coffee (undated), or possibly to the Dry Goods department for a spool of thread with an extra trip home to make sure

that I have the right number. And then, sometimes, a trip to Koeper's shoe store for that new pair of half-soles needed so badly to keep my feet warm and dry. But I could write an article on these two blocks alone, without ever once crossing the Monroe Street bridge, or even going as far as Schulenberg's Store. During the spring, summer, fall or winter it was the most interesting street in all the world, and on election nights, when we had our torch-light processions, it was here that we would gather for the parade through the town, or for wieners and coffee at Speckman & Nieter's hall.

These thoughts, however, are but a beginning, for old-time New Bremen was a warehouse of many treasures, with three flights of stairs to the floors above, and where, from the attic window, we caught a bird's-eye view of the old town that made our hearts glad, and from where we could see the canal winding round the bend to the south, or flowing to the north in the direction of Allen's Handle Factory.

It is Saturday afternoon and the downtown streets are crowded with wagons and buggies of all descriptions. The mill stable is filled with horses and there are people crossing the streets here and there and all the stores are crowded with shoppers. Overhead the sun is shining and I am just leaving the house with my bundle of papers, expecting to sell each copy before I come home for supper. The whole afternoon is mine; I am feeling as only a boy can feel after having a good dinner; and I am looking forward toward spending the evening over a new copy of *The American Boy* which arrived in this morning's mail. So why shouldn't I be happy?

-RALPH MAY (1-2-40)



In our backyard – my Grandfather, August Heil, on the far left with two helpers on butchering day.
Photo taken in the early 1900s – Fred Gilberg, photographer.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH BUTCHERING DAY

by Paul A. Lietz

IN THE MID TWENTIES, before I was in school, we went out to my cousin's home on Route 219 to help with the hog butchering. Bundled up against the cold weather, I watched the men cut up the hogs and put all the squares of fat into a large kettle. The hog fat sizzled and cooked over a wood fire and then I watched them press out the lard and I even got to eat one of the cracklings! It was also fun to watch the men mix up all the meat that had been ground up like hamburger. While they were mixing in the salt and pepper, they kept tasting the meat. Finally, my cousin put some of the ground meat in his hand and made a big round patty. If he could count 14 grains of pepper in the patty, then the meat was seasoned just right! The sad part of this exciting day was that I was a "town boy". Sleeping that night in a cold bedroom was a new experience to me. That was not as shocking as having to go to the "outhouse" with the snow and wind blowing and then to find the Sears and Roebuck catalog hanging on the rough board wall instead of the rolls of tissue I was used to.

MY SECOND EXPERIENCE WITH BUTCHERING CAME IN THE LATE THIRTIES

I guess my Dad liked HOMEMADE SUMMER SAUSAGE! He would buy some pork shoulders and a hind quarter of beef and have it ground up. Then in the basement, we would mix up the meat, season it, then stuff the sausages. I hated that job! If I turned the crank too fast, the casing would tear and this upset my Dad. Then, if I slowed up too much, Dad would say he didn't want to be there all night!

TO SMOKE OUR SAUSAGES, Dad built a little smokehouse that he could put up in our backyard. One day while we were smoking sausages, a man knocked on our front door and when Mom answered the door, he said, "Lady, I hate to tell you this, but your little outhouse is on fire in the backyard." And that is butchering to me! -Paul A. Lietz



THE NEW BREMEN ATHLETIC CLUB

WHEN? The late 1800s and the early 1900s. Their name was "The Athletic Club". It was also a musical group as you can see from the various instruments. Here are their names:

TOP: William Patterson, Arthur Finke, Lawrence Hoffman, Charles Lanfersieck, Jake Schlesselman and Dar Thompson.

MIDDLE: John Poppenhagen (fiddle), Warner Schultz, Adolph Pape, Harry Koeper, Tony Schwieterman.

BOTTOM: "Dip" Schneider, "Itzie" Sunderman (with dog), Joe Brucken, William Martz & Joe Lanfersieck.

FROM THE NEW BREMEN SUN - March 15, 1901

The members of the New Bremen Athletic Club entertained at a party of married folks last night at their well-appointed club rooms. The evening was pleasantly spent in cards, billiards, dancing, music and exhibitions of athletic skill on the part of the members. An elegant lunch was served. The banquet hall was then cleared and musicians Lawrence Hoffman and Dar Thompson prepared the way for a little hop.



GERMAN SURNAMES - THEIR MEANING & ORIGIN

PART FOUR - PROFESSION ROOTS

In the July-August-September issue of *"The Towpath"*, it was seen that an expanding population increased the need not only for military equipment but for dependable food supplies as well, thus giving rise to those persons exclusively engaged in farming and "smithing". In this issue of *"The Towpath"*, a look will be taken at names deriving from Profession roots.

The two oldest professions of men are hunting and fishing which produced the names of Jaeger (Yeager) and Fischer. Next came the names of Schmidt (Smith) and Miller (miller) with Meyer (farmer) close behind.

The local "smith" was very highly respected as the German warriors believed that "Der Schmidt" had mythical powers to impart magical qualities into the weapons and armor they forged, thus giving that warrior an edge in battle, a "little something extra", highly desired of course. German folk literature, e.g., "The Nibelungenlied", is full of magical swords, impenetrable armor, cloaks of invisibility, mythical dwarfs and elves, etc. There are, incidentally, 13 different ways of spelling "Schmidt" in German which might indicate the "awe" the name Schmidt once held.

Regarding the name Miller, a frequently asked question has been, "Why do Millers spell their names, Müller / Mueller, Möller / Moeller?" The answer is essentially twofold: 1) The Germans had various types and sizes of grain mills; some were hand-held while others were quite large. Möller derives from the Latin "molinarius" meaning "miller"; Müller comes from the root "muhl" or "muehl" meaning "mill". 2) The German spelling of Müller and Möller was with an umlaut "u" and umlaut "o", and since the umlaut which superimposes an "e" upon the vowel for pronunciation is not generally used in America, Möller became Moeller and Müller became Mueller (of course, by simply dropping the umlaut, Möller stayed Moller and Müller stayed Muller in America). If "Der Muller" ground white flour, he became a "Weissmiller" and if he ground brown flour, he became a "Braunmiller" (this system of naming also held true in the case of leather tanning - a tanner of leather was a "Gerber"; if he tanned white leather, he was a "Weissgerber" and a tanner of red leather was a "Rotgerber"). The root "miller" frequently appears as the second root with the first root indicating where the miller lived or the location of the mill, e.g., Bahnmueller meaning "the miller on the path"; Bachmueller or "brook miller"; Mosmueller or "marsh miller"; Rismueller or "swamp miller", etc.

There are numerous roots designating farmer, some of which being Meyer, Myer, Myers, Meier, Mayer, Mann, Hofer, Hoffner, Bauer, Baur, Baumann to name a few. A German once told me that the Meyers and Millers of Germany are like the Smiths and Joneses of America. The root, "meyer" often appears as the second root with the first root designating the location of the farm, e.g., Klingenmeyer or "farmer in the gorge", Reitmeyer or "farmer in the clearing". The root "meyer" can also mean "manager" and this can be seen in the name of Kellermeyer which means "manager or keeper of the cellar"; Hoffman or "manager of a cloister farm"; while a Hoffmeyer is an "estate manager".

There are several interesting peculiarities regarding farmer and other professional names. Whenever a man changed houses or professions, he took the name of the new farm, new house, or new profession to which he was moving while leaving behind his old name, e.g., suppose Karl Meslohoff, proprietor of "Swampy Forest Farm" visits Goat Tavern (zum die Ziegen) and in the ensuing conversation with the tavern keepers, the Ziegenbusch brothers, Lowell and Wayne, the three decide to trade businesses, so what would the three now be called? Well, Karl would then become Karl Ziegenbusch while Lowell and Wayne become Lowell and Wayne Meslohoff. (An expanded interpretation of the name Ziegenbusch appeared in the Jan-Feb-Mar issue of *"The Towpath"*).

A similar situation existed when the olden Germans changed houses - the German moving took the name of the new house and left his old name behind, e.g., Lloyd Laut recently moved to Otterbein, Russell Podoll moved into Laut's house and Martin Topp moved into Podoll's house so what would these men now be called by old German procedures? Well, Lloyd Laut would become Lloyd Otterbein, Russell Podoll becomes Russell Laut and Martin Topp becomes Martin Podoll. A famous example of this same procedure occurred in Maintz in 1444 AD - a young man by the name of "Gensfleisch" (goose flesh) set up a printing press in the house of "Guttenberg" (good mountain) and we know him today as "Guttenberg, The Father of Modern PrintIng". There is yet another interesting item regarding the perpetuation of the "house" or "farm" name. Farms were passed along to sons which naturally bore the house's surname but if a farmer had no sons and only daughters, whenever the daughter(s) married, her new husband then took the surname of the house (farm), thus perpetuating the farm's name - this procedure is called "Stabrut" (Low German) or "Erbtochter" (High German) and on occasion is still practiced yet today, most generally in North Germany.

TOWPATH PROFESSION NAMES

LOCAL PROFESSION NAMES (Of Interest)

Beck	: Baker; Stream	Beckett	: Baker On The Ett River
Boecker	: Baker; Dweller By Stream	Benner	: Barrel or Hoop Maker
Bowman	: Bottom Of Valley Farmer	Bigler	: Stirrup Maker
Brinkmeyer	: Small Farmer	Drescher	: Thresher
Cook	: From Koch meaning Cook	Eisert	: Iron Worker
Cooper	: Copper Dealer	Eiting	: Burner; Stoker; Smelter
Dammeyer	: Farmer At or On The Dike	Gerstner	: Barley Dealer
Eschmeyer	: Farmer Among Ash Trees	Holtzhauer	: Wood Cutter
Fischer	: Fisherman; Fish Seller	Honigford	: Beekeeper At The Ford
Fledderjohann	: Cakebaker John	Koesters	: Sexton
Gerber	: Tanner Of Leather	Kramer	: Shopkeeper
Gruebmeier	: Farmer In The Hollow	Kunstler	: Artist; Artisan
Hegemier	: Enclosed Farm Proprietor	Metz(ger)	: Butcher; Inhabitant of Metz
Henschen	: Glove Maker	Millisor	: Mill(er) On The Iser River
Hoffman	: Cloister Farm Mgr; Courtier	Niemeyer	: New Farmer
Hoffner	: Farmer	Overman	: Chief Bailiff; Boss; Superior
Hott	: Hat Maker	Piper	: Fifer
Hudson	: Son Of Hut Also Hat	Pleiman	: Lead Worker
Jagoditz	: Hunter At The Swamp	Rempe	: Strap Cutter
Kellermeyer	: Keeper Of The Cellar	Sammetinger	: Belonging To Velvet Dealers
Kettler	: Chain Maker	Schaller	: Public Announcer
Knapke	: Miner, Boy, Page	Schenck	: Cup Bearer, Innkeeper
Koeper	: Cap Maker	Schumann	: Shoe Maker
Kuck	: From Koch meaning Cook	Strickland	: Knitter Land
Kuest	: Sexton	Turner	: Tower Keeper
Maurer	: Mason	Weger	: Weigher
Meckstroth	: Road Builder; Power&Straw	Wehner	: Wainwright
Meyer	: Farmer; Dairy Farmer	Weinert	: Wainwright
Miller	: Miller	Winner	: Befriender
Moehlenkamp	: Miller & Field	Wintzer	: Vine Dresser, Wine Maker
Moeller	: Miller	Zangelein	: Little Tooth Puller
Mowery	: Mason	Zehringer	: Belonging To Food Sellers
Mueller	: Miller		
Newman	: Proprietor Of The Neuhoff (New Farm)		
Opperman	: Sexton		
Plattner	: Armor Maker		
Riebel	: Turnip Farmer		
Ruedebusch	: Innkeeper Of Large Hound Tavern		
Scheer	: Barber; Shearer		
Schmitmeyer	: Smith Farmer		
Schneider	: Tailor		
Schroeder	: Tailor		
Schroer	: Tailor		
Schrolucke	: Tailor At Swamp		
Shinerdecker	: Shingle Roofer		
Shroyer	: Tailor		
Sollman	: Tollman; Dweller Near Muddy Land		
Stauffer	: Cup or Mug Maker; Crag Dweller		
Steinecker	: Farmer On A Stony River		
Steinman	: Stone Cutter		
Steiner	: Stone Worker		
Taylor	: Tailor		
Tostrick	: Spice Seller At Or Near Water		
Wagner	: Wainwright (Maker and Repairer Of Wagons		
Waterman	: Wasserman (Waterman)		
Wellemeier	: Marsh Farmer		
Ziegenbusch	: Innkeeper Of Goat Tavern		



This series on German Names will be concluded in the Jan-Feb-Mar 1994 issue of "The Towpath". A look will be taken at Miscellaneous and also Religious roots in the final article. A listing of those names for which no interpretation was found will be listed as well as interpretations for any recent subscribers.

Mr. Karl Mesloh welcomes your letters on these interesting articles on names.

His address is: 6956 New Bremen-New Knoxville Rd. – New Bremen, Ohio 45869