

THE TOWPATH

NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION
120 North Main Street - P.O. Box 73
New Bremen, Ohio 45869

APRIL, MAY, JUNE 1995

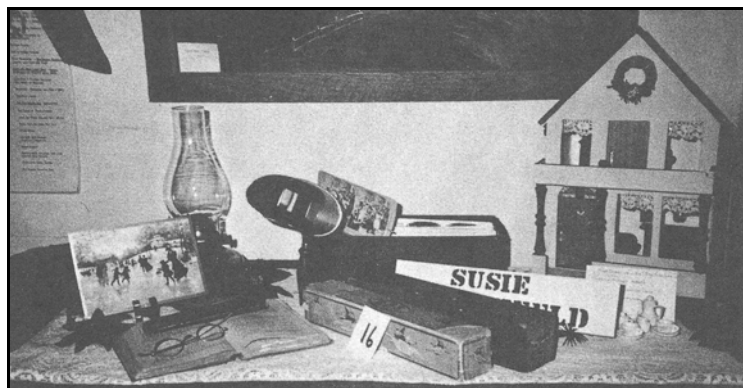
**THIS NEWSLETTER IS
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY**

Membership Dues:
\$3.00 per year
Life Membership \$50.00

Regular visiting hours:
Sunday afternoons - June, July, August
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

SLATE OF OFFICERS & TRUSTEES

(97) Craig Griesdorn..... President
(97) Don Ruese Vice Pres.
(96) Donna Warner.....Secretary
(98) Betty Schroer Treasurer
(98) Mark Gaerke Trustee
(98) Dorothy Hertenstein Trustee
(96) Rev. Lawrence Holmer Trustee
(96) Dan Miller Trustee
(97) Eugene Kuck..... Trustee
Irene Wellemeyer ... Corresponding Secy.
Lois Moeller Historian
Vernita Scheer..... Co-Curator
Bea Young Co-Curator
Susie Hirschfeld Membership
Mary Wint Genealogy
Marjorie Lietz "Towpath" Editor



1994 CHRISTMAS DISPLAY OF "THE GAY NINETIES"
by Susie Hirschfeld

A doll house with lace curtains – tiny tea set – coal oil lamp
skating scene – piano roll – stereoscope with 3-D pictures
book – reading glasses.

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

On March 13, 1995, President Craig Griesdorn welcomed members and guests to the NBHA Annual Dinner Meeting with the good news that over 90 reservations had been received for the dinner. A delicious steak dinner with all the trimmings was cooked and served by the St. Paul Cookers. It was excellent!

He then announced the change in officers for the coming year. Craig Griesdorn will assume the President's job for another year and Don Ruese will be the new Vice-President. Mark Gaerke will remain as a Trustee.

Joyce Alig, who is in her 23rd year as Director of the Mercer County Historical Association was the speaker for the evening. She is also the author of 8 books, her latest book being *"Those Magnificent Big Barns in Mercer County of Western Ohio"*. A slide show featuring barns of southern Mercer County along St. Rt. 274 was enjoyed by all. It was a fine evening of entertainment and the President closed the evening with a "Thank You".

OLD BARNs

Old barns retain a mystic quality. With high raftered beams, the scent still clings of fragrant clover mixed with timothy. Between the wide-spaced boards, a wind harp sings while sunlight forms pipe organ patterns on the spacious floor where dust motes dance at will. Within the choir loft, in union, birds sing their choral music, versatile in repertoire as any symphony. Above a stable barn once long ago, a star of prophecy bent down and so old barns retain a mystic quality.

-by Inga Gibson Caldwell

A DAILY JOB THE YEAR 'ROUND

All of the mail addressed to the New Bremen Historic Association is collected and opened by our treasurer, Betty Schroer. It is then sorted for the officers. Now comes the job we do not want to go unnoticed. Thank you to her husband, Curtis Schroer, for being the deliveryman in all kinds of weather – sometimes daily, sometimes weekly, giving each officer his/her mail.

SPECIAL NOTICE

May 17th and May 20th are set aside as clean-up days at the Museum. Call an officer and say you will help.



Dear Marjorie:

January 2, 1995

I am enclosing a picture which I found recently among some papers accumulated through the years. I am sending it to you in case it might be of interest to be included in a "Towpath" publication.

This picture was given to me by my mother, Malinda (Watermann) Hartman, who was married to Chris Hartman. Her father was John Wilhelm Gerhard Watermann. He is in the middle of the picture (#6 from the left). It was the custom back in those days to have a parade in New Bremen each

year on Decoration Day with the Civil War veterans from that area participating in it, followed by a trip to the cemetery for a visit to various graves.

I am the oldest of seven children in the Hartman family. All of us graduated from New Bremen High School between 1926 and 1938. Our names are Irvin, Bernice, Earl, Ione, Howard, Edward and June. Five are no longer living, which leaves Edward and me.

Edward now lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico and my wife, Velma, and I



spend most of our time between Mt Pleasant, Michigan and Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. We were married by Rev. Melchert in St. Paul German Evangelical Lutheran Church in New Bremen 61 years ago. All of my brothers, sisters and I were confirmed in that church under the pastorates of Rev. Henninger and Rev. Melchert.

If you decide that this material is worthy of being included in one of the "Towpath" publications, feel free to delete or change any of it. You may keep the picture if you have some use for it.

If the above is of interest to you, then another person in this picture (#4 from the left) should also be mentioned. His name is Herman Heinrich Schaefer, Sr. and he was the grandfather of Vernon, Merrill, Ahleen, Herbert, Paul and James Kellermeyer and who lived on a farm several miles northwest of New Bremen.

Vernon and Merrill graduated from NBHS in 1927 and 1929 respectively. The remaining four graduated from St. Marys, Ohio High School. All six of them were confirmed in the St. Paul Church in New Bremen.

Vernon and his wife, Dorothy, spend most of their time between Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and Toledo, Ohio. They recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary at a nice yacht club here, of which we both are members. The Kellermeyers have been most successful and presently they devote much of their time for good in many ways.

And now, to top this story, it should be mentioned that our grandfathers married sisters (Brune family) when they returned to Ohio after the Civil War, in which they participated in the famous Battle of Vicksburg. Then, ultimately, though a chain of marriages and births, the Kellermeyer and Hartman children mentioned above became second cousins.

Sincerely, Irvin W. Hartman

DECORATION DAY - 1912

Many present – the weather a little threatening – the parade formed with Fire Chief Weinberg on horseback leading the ranks. Supt. C.C. Garman was the Master of Ceremonies for the program. Hon. George W. Mannix, Jr. of Greenville was the speaker. Mr. Mannix stated it was just 34 years ago (1878) when his father built the large Central School in New Bremen and became a close friend to Messrs. Julius and Adolph Boesel.

The address was a masterpiece of oratory. The musical part of the program was also well rendered. The High School chorus and the Citizens' Band each rendered a couple of popular selections while Otto Mesloh, in his own way by which he has captured many an audience in New York City, rendered a cornet solo that was pronounced splendid by all who heard it!

[New Bremen Sun – May 31, 1912]

NEW BREMEN AND THE FLEMISH ARTISTS CONNECTION

by Dr. John T. Dickman - Columbus, Ohio

This article explores the probability of an intriguing connection between our little village of New Bremen and a family of significant Flemish artists who flourished in Europe throughout the 15th through 17th centuries. The suggestion was first made and researched by the late Professor Elmer Ende, a New Bremen native son and Professor of Music at the University of Akron.

The story begins in Gouda in Holland, a thriving trade center still famous today for the round red balls of Gouda cheese. In this city in the mid-1500s lived an artist by the name of Pieter Pourbus. He was a competent painter of religious subjects, allegorical scenes, and portraits.

Pieter Pourbus died in Bruges, Belgium, in 1584, leaving a son, Frans, who was born in Bruges in 1545 and whose artistic skills overshadowed those of his father. Frans was a student of his father and painted a wide range of subjects including religious themes, wooded landscapes with animals, and portraits. Frans's life was cut short when he died of typhoid fever in 1581 in Antwerp. But he left a son who was to be the most famous of the Pourbus family of painters, Frans Pourbus the Younger.

Frans the Younger was born in Antwerp in 1569. His father died when Frans was only 12 years old, but his father's influence was sufficient to set him on an artistic course. In 1599 he was invited by Vincenzo Gonzaga, the Duke of Mantua, to become his court painter in Italy. So in 1600 Frans the Younger went to Mantua where he was employed as court painter and contributor to the Duke's gallery of beautiful women. But another event happened at Mantua that was to influence Frans's life. At about this same time the Duke employed another Flemish painter, the soon-to-be world-renowned Peter Paul Rubens. Pourbus and Rubens worked as colleagues from 1600 to 1608.

In 1609 Frans Pourbus was sent to Paris by the Duke of Mantua to paint for Henry IV and Queen Marie de Medicis of France. The Queen specifically asked the Duke for the permanent services of Pourbus and the Duke agreed. One of his portraits of Marie de Medicis hangs in the Chicago Art Institute and hundreds of examples of his works grace private collections and museums around the world. He did not rise to the eminence of his contemporary, Peter Paul Rubens, but his work is looked upon favorably by the art world.

The religious persuasion of the Pourbus family was Protestant. It was during this time in history that great strife arose between the French Roman Catholics and a group of Protestants known as Huguenots. It is believed that Pourbus himself did not outwardly proclaim his religious belief, but moved his family around 1615 away from this strife into the Rheinpfalz in western Germany, where the family name became and remains to this day, the German version Purpus. Frans himself returned to Paris and remained there as court painter until his death in Paris in 1622. And here begins the New Bremen connection.

The Purpus name was once quite prominent in New Bremen history. Eugene R. Purpus, family genealogist of Tiberon, California, wrote in 1977 that the family came to America, specifically to New Bremen, in 1868 from the village of Lauterecken in the Rheinpfalz, the very location to which Frans Pourbus moved his family in 1615. The Purpus family history in Germany begins with a Johann Purpus, born in 1700 in Weinheim, a village in the Lauterecken area. Johann's grandson, Johann Ludwig Karl Purpus (b. 1808), immigrated to New Bremen from Lauterecken with at least three of his sons sometime around 1868. The 1870 US census records him as living next door to one of those sons. They included Eduard, who operated "The Ed Purpus Toy and Fancy Store" at the corner of Main and Monroe Streets and served as the town's mayor in the late 1800s; Theodore, who taught school and was the editor of New Bremen's early newspaper *Der Stern des Westlichen Ohio*; and Ludwig (known in America as Louis), a schoolmaster who suffered a similar fate in America to his ancestor, Frans Pourbus the Elder, both dying of typhoid fever. Louis was the father of my grandfather, Fridolin T. Purpus, who was manager of the erstwhile New Bremen Broom Company and proprietor of the Purpus Insurance Agency, forerunner of the present-day New Bremen Insurance Agency, Inc.

Today no one bearing the Purpus name lives in New Bremen. However, the grandson of Theodore, namesake Ted Purpus, lives in Minster and, like his great uncle Eduard, serves as mayor of his village. Ted's two sons, Don and Jay, also live in Minster to carry on the Purpus name. It seems that one of the problems of the Purpus family was its proclivity to produce female offspring, which is disadvantageous in carrying on the family name.

So from a family of Flemish painters to the New Bremen Purpuses, the connection is complete. Whether the present day Purpuses carry any of the artistic talents of their forebears is unknown. However, it might be a good idea to scour the auctions and garage sales of New Bremen. Perhaps you might come up with a painting like that reported a couple of years ago in Minneapolis. A religious painting had been donated to the Sunday school of the Hennepin United Methodist Church in Minneapolis in 1928. It served to decorate a wall, perhaps hiding a crack, until in 1992 it was learned that the painting was the work of the 16th-century Flemish painter, Pieter Pourbus, and valued somewhere between \$200,000 and \$300,000!

ONE HONORABLE DEUTCHER (RESPECTED BUSINESSMAN AND CITIZEN)



Adam & Johanna Marie (Siemer) Fritz

**THIS ARTICLE APPEARED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE NEWSPAPER
"DER STERN DES WESTLICHEN OHIO" ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1905:**

Adam Fritz celebrated his 70th birthday Saturday. It comes to the minds of people that there are many memories in a whole lifetime of a person that one leaves behind for the future generation to think about. He has 70 years of memories behind him, but cannot yet see what the future brings. And now the *STERN* wishes the honorable fellow citizen a delightful birthday and congratulations for his accomplishments.

A short biography of dedication of Adam Fritz: He was born September 23, 1835 in Lauterecken, Rheinpfalz. Many of our citizens' ancestors came from Rheinpfalz. He learned the trade of shoemaker. In 1853, he immigrated to the United States and came to St. Marys, Ohio. Here he lived for 10 years and for 2 of those years, made shoes and was an apprentice. Then for 8 years he was in partnership with Mr. Severt in the shoe store.

While in St. Marys, he married Johanna Marie Siemer. In 1864, he sold his partnership and moved with his family to New Bremen, where he built his own home on the corner of Monroe and Herman Streets.

Then he started a shoemaking business in partnership with Herman Wieggers in the building where Mrs. Bienz had her cleaning business. After Wieggers went out of the partnership, he built a home on the corner of Main and First Streets which was across from the old Finke house where his son-in-law, F.W. Greber and family, lived for many years already. There he continued having his shoemaking shop for many years, then later built another room onto his own home where he continued with his shoemaking and cobbler business with not much success in later years.

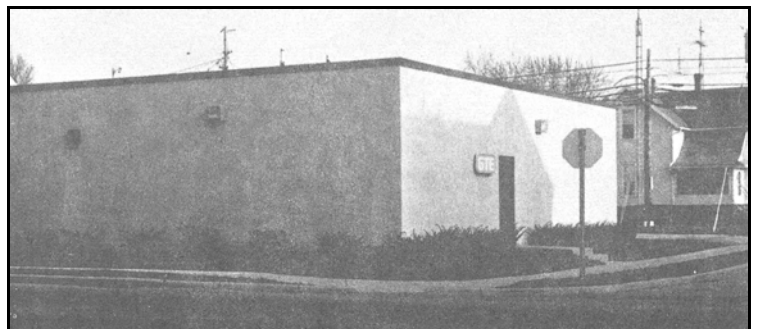
Since he was a trusted honorable citizen, he was elected to two terms for State Councilman. During his term in 1883, he organized Concordia Bank and Spar-Verein (a Bank & Loan Co.). He held the position of President and Director.

He had a happily married life. Together they had 10 children – seven daughters and 3 sons. Two sons died.

[Translated from German by Johann & Mary (Bruggeman) Klein]



The Fritz home on the corner of Monroe and Herman
July 1978



The same site now occupied by General Telephone Exchange
April 1995

WE WELCOME YOUR SNAPSHOTS OF EARLY NEW BREMEN

Please include the names of persons in the pictures, the year the photo was taken and the occasion. This page of pictures are through the courtesy of Marian (Frey) Engle, who grew up in New Bremen and is a graduate of New Bremen High School. Marian is married to Gene Engle, a former music teacher here in New Bremen. The Engles have two daughters. Even though Marian and Gene make their home in Crozet, Virginia now, their home ties with New Bremen are strong! Thank you, Marian, for sharing these photos with us and giving us happy memories...



REXALL DRUG STORE

That is right! The sign on the front door says
"Rexall Drug Store".

David Schwieterman (left)

Jimmie Schnell (right)



WOODMEN OF THE WORLD FLOAT TO CELEBRATE THE END OF W.W.II

There wasn't a W.O.W. queen in 1945, so I was the "holdover" to ride on the float. In the evening, the float was in Minster's parade. The float happens to show our old (Frey) house in the background.

Marian (Frey) Engle



NEIGHBORHOOD BIRTHDAY PARTY January 21, 1940

Celebrating Betty Horn's birthday at her house
in New Bremen.

BACK: Betty (Horn) Schroer, Marian (Frey) Engle,
Dorothy (Frey) Baer, Evelyn (Gieseke) Warner.

FRONT: Nancy Erhardt, Edith (Blanke) Wissman.

