

THE TOWPATH

NEW BREMEN

HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 73
NEW BREMEN, OHIO 45869-0073

DUES: \$5.00 ANNUALLY (Due in January)
LIFE MEMBERSHIP: \$50.00

MUSEUM: 120-122 N. MAIN ST.

WINTER VISITING HOURS BY APPOINTMENT

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A HOME TOWN PAPER FOR HOME TOWN FOLKS

The Towpath is truly becoming a "hometown" paper, written by and about "hometown folks." In this issue are articles inspired by or contributed by the following New Bremen-related "folks" - Robert Heinfeld (pg. 2), James Melchert and James Bordewisch (pg. 5), Kenneth Fark, Roger Mueller, Ed Henning, Harry Ludeka and Fred Wellemeyer (pgs. 6, 7), Mildred Zahn Yocum (pgs 8, 9), Robert and Harold Brucken (pg. 10), and Edna (Saer) Cadle (pg. 11).

Articles in this issue are about: the "Thompson house" & barn, the Thompson family; Dr. Robert H. Dicke; the Melchert family; New Bremen's future bicycle museum; Lone Pine Filling Station; John Zahn & family; Gast Blacksmith & Implement Co.; New Bremen's house-numbering system; and the Grewe family (Curator's Corner).

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue of *The Towpath*. Hearing from all of you and receiving information and pictures makes my job so interesting and so much fun! There should be something of interest for everyone. *Lucille Francis, Editor*

"The more the local residents are aware of the area's cultural & historical backgrounds, the better able they are in becoming sup-porters, promoters, and ambassadors for their community." (*Eve. Leader-5/3/97*)

By being contributors to *The Towpath*, you are helping make others aware of New Bremen's historical background. We hope to continue hearing from many more of our readers in the future.



OUR CREW AT THE ANNUAL DINNER & PROGRAM - 3/17/97

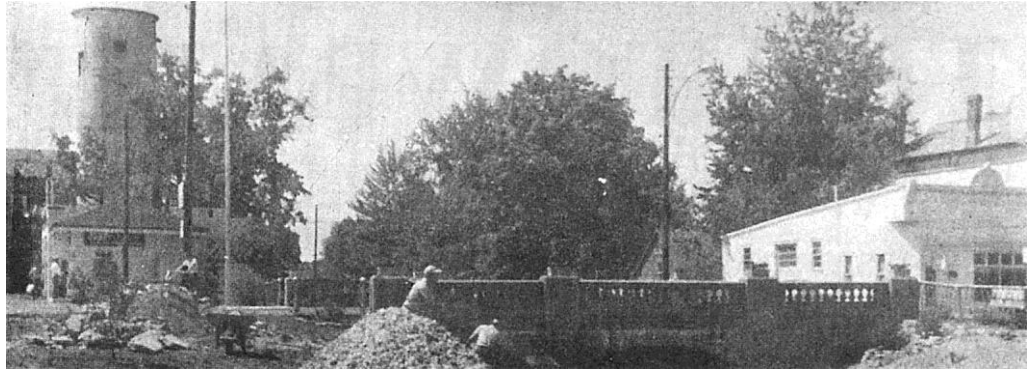
BACK: Craig Griesdorn, Mark Gaerke, Gene Kuck, Doug Harrod, Don Ruese.

CENTER: Bea Young, Susie Hirschfeld, Lois Moeller, Vernita Scheer, Donna Warner.

SEATED: Rev. Lawrence Holmer, Martha Plattner, Lucille Francis.

A READER COMMENTS

The photo in the April issue of *The Towpath* was most interesting. I remember the Sohio station quite well - on the north side was a sidewalk sign advertising Gargoyle motor oil. Sohio was a popular brand of gasoline and this station was among the busiest in New Bremen.



The flower boxes on the canal bridge and around the flag pole were filled with a variety of flowers during the summer months and Charley Weinberg took meticulous care of them by his constant watering.

Street Commissioner Clarence Wehrman and his assistant, Charles Weinberg, placed the flower boxes on the Monroe Street canal bridge the early part of the week, and Fred Wellemeyer, successful florist south of town, is busy planting the flowers, which will add to the general appearance for Memorial Day on Sunday. Decorating the bridge has been an annual popular gesture on the part of the village authorities for a number of years. (New Bremen Sun 5/27/1943)

The white 1-story building next to Schulenberg's, also built by the Schulenberg family (in 1896), was used for storage of freight brought in and picked up by a freight interurban of the Lima route of the Western Ohio Traction Line via a spur. It has a large door on the east side which was used for loading and unloading. I remember Bill Hollingsworth telling me of one motorman on the freight runs who would ring his bell and if anything was on the streetcar tracks, he would "knock" it off. In the front, Fridolin Purpus had an insurance agency. This building was recently vacated by Gilberg Furniture Store.

The large building in back of this building, showing only the gable, is the Thompson Brothers storage building. They kept their model-T truck for dray work in here, picking up freight at the Nickel Plate Railroad yards and delivering it to the businesses around town. This was before the days of motor freight. They also kept automobiles of the guests of the Hotel Hollingsworth in here overnight. The Thompson house is not visible in this photo because of the trees. It would certainly have been nice to have this building today as the toll-keeper's house for the locks of the Miami-Erie Canal, in conjunction with the Lock One Park. **Robert G. Heinfeld - Ada, Ohio (4/9/97)**

NEW BREMEN'S HISTORIC LOCK TENDER'S HOUSE BURNED TO GROUND IN FIREMEN'S SCHOOL

(The Evening Leader - 2/28, 4/20, 4/29/1968)

A resolution was passed at the January, 1968, meeting of the New Bremen Village Council and Mayor Frank Dicke, giving permission to the Lions Club to "institute a park and recreational development project" on the Komminsk tract shortly after the land was donated to the village by Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Komminsk. The two buildings on this land were the lock tender's house (nearest the canal lock), which also served as a hotel for the boatmen, and the livery stable (located northwest of the house) which was originally used for the mules that pulled the canal boats.

The livery stable ("Thompson" horse barn), was torn down by members of the Lions Club and other volunteer help including Lendor Schneider, Jim Schnell, John Gilberg, and Lee Kuck in February, 1968. The "lean-to" on the south side and much of the siding and roofing of the large barn were removed on Sunday afternoon, February 25. The razing was completed within the next few weeks, and the contents of the building and the good salvaged materials were sold at an auction.

On Saturday and Sunday, April 27 & 28, 1968, crowds of people lined the banks of the Miami-Erie Canal near the area where Lock One was built more than 120 years before to watch the historic lock tender's house burn to the ground, as 203 firemen from 33 departments participated in a training session sponsored by the Central Western Firemen's Association. Permission had been obtained to do this, even though some thought the house should be restored and preserved. A 60-foot hard maple tree in front of the house was saved except for a few end branches.

The "Thompson" house, so called because of the last family who lived there and tended the canal lock, was 2½ stories high and had 14 rooms. The bottom was built of stone and had a kitchen and wine cellar. The rest of the house was bedrooms and sitting rooms. It had oak floors and 4 x 4 oak rafters. There was only one chimney. From the small windows near the top, the lock-tender could see the canal boats coming around the bend and immediately ring a bell to put in operation the opening and closing of the locks. Taxes were paid on only half of the house, because it was built on state property, shortly after the locks were constructed in 1839. The last family to live in the house was the Matthews family. Another family that lived there for some time was the Herb Gross family.



THOMAS B. THOMPSON

(from the N.B. Sun - 3/29/1907)

Thomas B. Thompson was one of the most familiar and best known personages of the community of New Bremen.

Born in Juniatta County, Pennsylvania on January 9, 1832, he came to Ohio at the age of 19. He came on the packet Ohio to Piqua where he obtained employment with Farrington & Slawson on a boat plying between Cincinnati and Toledo. Later he boated for a short while for Lawton & Barnet. On leaving the canal, he secured employment on the Dayton & Michigan Railroad, which was at that time building, but in one day discovered that he did not care for railroad work.

He roamed over the country for a couple of years, working when and wherever he could secure labor, and at the time when Early made his famous raid through the Cumberland Valley, he was employed at Hagerstown, Maryland.

He then came back to Piqua where he was engaged in the saloon business for two years, but gave that up to embark in the bakery and confectionery business. During those years, he made regular trips with horse and wagon over the country to the outlying towns where he sold his wares to the merchants. He made

frequent trips to New Bremen and often stopped at the then famous hostleries - the American House conducted by Wilhelmi, the Lehmkuhl House, and also the Goll House, where he has now lived for many years.

After giving up the bakery, he embarked in the lumber business, buying and selling all kinds of timber - railroad ties, hoop-poles, cord wood, and staves - long before there were any stove factories in this part of the country. Soon, however, he was again attracted to the canal and gave up the lumber business for boating - buying, selling and operating boats - until he owned as many as seventeen boats, all on the Miami-Erie Canal. He also boated one summer on the Wabash Canal.

On leaving the canal again, he went to Dayton where he conducted a grocery and saloon for 6 months for one I. Greer. He then married Mr. Greer's sister, Mary E. List, on June 2, 1868. After residing in Dayton for 10 months, they boarded a packet and came to New Bremen on April 27, 1869 and he became active in much of the progress made by the village. He at once rented the house where he now lives from William Meyer, who was then employed and interested in the flour and woolen mills. Here he conducted a grocery and saloon for two or three years, and then sold the business to Lafe Tecklenburg.

For almost five years, he conducted a saloon on Washington Street, and then purchased the house at the lock, and for many years conducted a boarding and lodging house. He also conducted a livery barn a few years and always had one or more teams busy either at some kind of public work, at his own contracts, or at farming. Besides his boarding house, he did all kinds of hauling and teaming, always being his own manager in whatever he undertook, at times having more irons in the fire than the average man is able to manage.

THE THOMPSON GENEALOGY

Mr. & Mrs. Thompson had 9 children

H-Thomas B. -1/9/1832-12/21/1907

W-Mary E. - 12/8/1849-3/11/1905

1-George L. - 10/26/1870-4/26/1956 *Apparently George & Ray were the only two who married.*

George married Anna Brueggeman in 1896 and they had 2 sons: Clinton & Elton.

2-Catherine C. - 1872-5/2/1875

3-Edward C. - 1875-11/20/1907

4-Ray Thompson - born in 1878 *(Last to survive-lived in Dayton/1956)*

5-Walter Grey-1/27/1881-6/9/1951

6-Frank Wood- 3/17/1884-5/16/1940 *(his nickname was "Hook")* →

7-Thomas B. J. -12/30/1886-12/5/1903 *(he died of diabetes)*

8-Harry E. - 1890- 8/6/1891

9-Grover C. - 7/23/1893-10/25/1900 *(he drowned - see obituary)* →



EXCERPTS FROM THE N.B. SUN

3/1898 - T.B. Thompson moved the barn from Henry Schwaberow which stood in the rear of the old William Fahrenhorst lot fronting on Monroe to his grounds in rear of livery barn and will use it for stable.

✓**10/26/1900** - Grover Cleveland Thompson fell into the canal last night and drowned. He is the youngest son of Mr. & Mrs. T.B. Thompson, who live near the canal lock. Grover failed to respond when his father rang the house bell summoning his children home. A Democratic rally was in full sway and Grover had been tooting his horn along with the Kettlersville Band, who had come in to play at the rally.

After all attempts to locate the missing boy proved futile, permission was given by the town authorities to ring the alarm bells. The lifeless body of the boy was recovered from the lock at about 1:00 by August Wehrman. He was buried at Willow Grove Cemetery.

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER Written by HOWARD HOFFMAN to RALPH MAY (2/21/1969)

So sorry to hear they tore down the Thompson house. I was thinking one time of buying it. What a delightful story could be written about the house and the Miami-Erie Canal. Remember the time little Do-Do Thompson drowned in the lock? It was during a political torch-light parade. I was in second grade then and occupied the seat behind him.

2/1/1901 - Ed Thompson sold his livery barn to his father last week. Ed has been willing for some time to dispose of his business, at which he was quite successful. His father is a veteran at the livery business and will conduct it at the old stand.

3/15/1901 - Lester Rairdon, of Bloom Centre, Ohio has purchased T.B. Thompson's livery stock, and has taken possession of same. Mr. Rairdon is a brother of H.W. Rairdon who is also engaged in the livery business here. Mr. Thompson still owns the livery building, and Mr. Rairdon will conduct the business at the old stand.

4/15/1904 - Woehler property on South Washington Street purchased by T.B. Thompson for \$500.

4/22/1904 - Marie Woehler et al to Thomas B. Thompson, lot 389, New Bremen - \$500. (NOTE: Lot 389 is situated at 322 S. Walnut St.)

✓**3/17/1905** - Mary E. Thompson, nee List, wife of Thomas B. Thompson, died Saturday, 3/11/1905, after long suffering with facial cancer. She was born near Dayton on 12/8/1849 and married Mr. Thompson on 6/2/1868. They came to New Bremen on 4/27/1869 and became the parents of 9 children - 8 sons and 1 daughter, of which 3 sons and the daughter preceded her in death.

She is survived by her husband, 3 brothers, 2 sisters, and 5 sons - George, Walter, and Frank of New Bremen; Ed of Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Ray of Dayton, Ohio; also 2 daughters-in-law. She was buried at Willow Grove Cemetery with Rev. P.G. Kluge of Zions Church officiating.

3/24/1905 - FOR SALE: I will sell at private sale a five-room brick house on South Washington Street, all in good shape. Also, two teams, wagons, harness and beds of all kinds, farming utensils of all kinds, top wagon, top buggy, and bobsled. Will sell for cash, or take good notes on six months or one year. For further information call on or write Thomas Thompson, Box 140, New Bremen.

✓**11/22/1907** - Edward C. Thompson, of Colorado Springs, Colorado died on Wednesday, November 20th, at the age of 32. He was forced to seek the Colorado climate several years ago due to ill health. He was buried in Willow Grove Cemetery with Rev. W.F. Henninger officiating.

✓**12/27/1907** - T.B. Thompson, born 1/9/1832, died last Friday, 12/21/1907, of old age and constitutional weakness, just 19 days short of his 76th birthday. Burial took place in Willow Grove Cemetery with Rev. W.F. Henninger officiating.

1/3/1908 - COURT NEWS: Thomas B. Thompson to Walter G. Thompson et al, TR 8 & 9, outlots 5 & 6, New Bremen, by will.

7/2/1909 - Allen Ray Thompson & wife to Walter G. Thompson, undivided 1/3, outlots 5 & 6, New Bremen - \$400.

NOTE: Outlots 5 & 6 consist of the property along the west side of the canal, extending from behind Schulenberg's all the way to Plum St. Schulenberg's is on Outlot 4.

4/3/1914 - The Thompson brothers' two dray horses were electrocuted when a live guy-wire of the W.O. Railway fell upon them from overhead. Three weeks later, Western Ohio made good with a check in the amount of \$500.

✓**5/16/1940** - Frank Wood Thompson, age 56, died at 2:00 this morning at his home near the canal lock. Affectionately known as "Hook", he was a son of Thomas B. and Mary Elizabeth Thompson, and spent all his years in New Bremen. He never married.

For a number of years, he and his brother, Walter, operated the only dray line in New Bremen, for some years with a team of horses, and in later years with an automobile truck. This he continued until bodily affliction, added to a physical deformity with which he was handicapped all his life, disabled him to carry on in the hauling business. After that he occasionally was occupied with odd jobs, but for many months he had been confined to his bed, being cared for by his brother Walter, and near friends. Two other brothers also survive - George of St. Marys, and Ray of New Lebanon.

Funeral services will be conducted at the Albert Funeral Home on West Monroe Street, with the Rev. N.E. Vitz officiating. Burial will be in Willow Grove Cemetery.

THOMAS B. THOMPSON

Dealer in

Sand, Building, Curb & Gutter Stone

Cord Wood, etc.

Two teams are ready at all times, and goods will be delivered anywhere.

☞ Also, proprietor of Boarding House.

Lock 1 (5/18/1895) New Bremen, Ohio

A LETTER FROM A READER

From **JAMES MELCHERT**

6077 Ocean View Dr. - Oakland, California 94618

March 12, 1997

The news that Dr. Robert H. Dicke passed away recently (3/4/1997) has no doubt appeared in your local paper (*Evening Leader* - 3/22/97). I happened to come across it in the New York Times. As you can see from the enclosed clipping, the Times devoted a good deal of space to his achievements as a physicist.

If I'm not mistaken, Robert Dicke had already begun teaching at Princeton University when his parents, Oscar and Flora (Peterson) Dicke, moved back to New Bremen in the 1940's. They lived on South Washington Street next door to Dr. and Mrs. Michael Rabe. One summer during my high school years, I was in the Rabes' backyard with their son Val when Robert Dicke appeared on the lawn. He was visiting his parents and had brought along a telescope that he set up in the yard. He showed us how it worked and explained what he was looking for. It was an extraordinary encounter for a couple of boys like Val and me.

Robert's mother enjoyed oil painting as a hobby. She was very good at it even though she had pretty much taught herself. Somehow she learned that I was taking Saturday classes at the Dayton Art Institute. She once asked me in to look at her paintings and show her how to improve them. I wasn't much help to her because she was better at it than I was in those days. Nevertheless, she remembered me. When I entered Princeton as a freshman in 1948, I received an invitation from her son to join him and his wife for dinner. By then I knew him to be a prominent professor in the Physics Department. Obviously his parents in New Bremen had suggested it, thinking that I might appreciate the welcome. I did indeed.

I thought the N.B.H.A. might appreciate having the New York Times obituary in its archives. It is a delight to receive a copy of *The Towpath* every few months. Thank you for all the hard work and research that goes into it.

♦♦♦

JAMES MELCHERT is the son of Rev. John C. and Hulda Melchert. He is one of three sons - John, Jr., Paul, and James. Rev. Melchert was the minister at St. Paul Church in New Bremen from June, 1922 to June, 1947,

having replaced Rev. W.F. Henninger.

When the Melcherts left St. Paul, he was replaced by Rev. Emil H. Bassler, who served from November, 1947 to January, 1968. Rev. and Mrs. (Marian) Bassler had two children - Evelyn and Thomas. Evelyn is married to Rev. Robert Baur, the son of Rev. & Mrs. Herbert P. Baur, who served at St. Peter's Church from September, 1951 to November, 1957.

DR. ROBERT HENRY DICKE

Robert H. Dicke was born May 6, 1916 to Oscar H. and Flora (Peterson) Dicke. His mother died in 1954 and his father in 1971. Oscar had remarried, to Lula Thompson, and she died in 1991.

Robert Dicke was a student at University of Rochester and graduated from Princeton in 1939. He then earned a doctorate in nuclear physics at Rochester. In 1970, he was appointed to the National Science Board by President Richard M. Nixon, who awarded him the National Medal of Science the next year. He was the first to hold a professorship in Albert Einstein's name.

Mr. Dicke held at least 50 patents, 35 of them in radar. During W.W.II, he contributed to the development of radar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, developing a meter able to detect very weak radio waves. This became a major element in radio astronomy and radar.

Robert Dicke died March 4, 1997. He is survived by his wife, Annie Currie, whom he married in 1942, a daughter, two sons, and several cousins, three of whom live at New Bremen - James F. Dicke, Sr., Thomas Kuenning, and Mrs. Virgil (Loree Doenges) Nedderman. A memorial service was held at Princeton University Chapel on April 5.

(from the New York Times and St. Marys Evening Leader)

NEW BREMEN'S BICYCLE MUSEUM

On April 6, 1997, James F. Dicke, II attended an auction in Chicago, Illinois of the Schwinn family's bicycle collection. He purchased 163 of the 168 bicycles being sold, also about 80 percent of the Schwinn family's collection of documents and memorabilia. (The Schwinn family has been selling its 500-piece collection to cover company debts.)

According to a news article in the *Bicycle Retailer and Industry News* dated 5/1/97, and confirmed by Jim Dicke, plans are to open a bicycle museum in New Bremen, initially to be in the recently vacated Gilberg Furniture Store east of "The Grille", including the building pictured and spoken of in the "Reader Comments" article on page 2 - in the former Schulenberg Drug Store building, etc. These buildings and future museum are located at the north end of the newly developed "Lock One Park."

Also planned is a 5-mile bicycle path along the Miami-Erie Canal, to be built using federal money.

These new developments, along with the many other buildings which have been restored by the Dicke family, are sure to make New Bremen a tourist attraction.

*(Newspaper article contributed by
James Bordewisch - Dayton, OH)*

MY DAYS AT "THE LONE PINE"

by Kenneth Fark

(Taped by Ed Henning - 1995)

[Additional information obtained from Fred Wellemeyer,
Harry Ludeka, and Roger Mueller]

I'm Ken Fark. I was born October 27, 1915 and I've lived in New Bremen all my life, except when I was in the service. The first job I ever had was working for Bill Combs, the last canal boat captain and ice harvester. Bill's son, Fuzzy (Forest), and I hauled ice door to door. Then Howard Huenke offered me a job and I worked at the Lone Pine Filling Station in '41 and '42 until I went into the service in February of '42. Howard owned the station at that time. I worked with Edgar Moeller. Merlin Ahlers came in later, till he left for the Army. When I went into the service, they hired Ray Hirschfeld. He and Edgar worked together quite a few years, then Ray went from Lone Pine to Advance Auto. Roger Mueller worked there after school and in the summer time. Then he worked with Edgar and Ray for about 7 years until he left for the service in 1951. Others who worked there were Dave Pape, Fred Wellemeyer, Jim Berning and Jim Cooper. Wayne Maurer also worked there in the 1960's until he went to college.

FRED WELLEMAYER: I worked for Howard Huenke starting in May of 1953. In the summer of '53, Howard sold the station to the Vosslers from Sidney. I worked for them until November 14, 1955. On October 1, 1956, I leased the station from Mrs. Vossler. There were several other owners during this time, until March 15,

1966, when Standard Oil bought it and I leased it from them. They wanted me to buy the station, house, and everything, but I declined. In late spring of 1966, the station was sold to John Hoffman, who still owns it.

HARRY LUDEKA: Howard Huenke built the filling station (on the corner of North Main & Pearl). That whole property belonged to Howard - house and everything. Later it became the Lone Pine Nursing Home. That tree was still there on the corner by the street. That's the reason it's called Lone Pine.

The Creamery was Howard's main business, but he built the station, and he owned the Lone Pine house too. William Haveman worked in the office out at the Creamery and he rented the upstairs. His daughter married Rev. Harold Jung. Howard Huenke's wife's folks, Ed and Anna Langhorst, lived in the bottom.

Howard didn't really work at the station, he just came in and checked with us occasionally. We did everything from pump the gas to bookkeeping. We opened at 7:00 AM and closed at 10:00 PM. The last thing we'd do at night was close the door and write everything down and figure it all out. Howard furnished our clothes. This is a picture of me in my uniform.

At that time, Route 66 (now 66A) was the main route. We had the biggest business in town, by far. Another station in town was the Ford Garage on the corner of Main and Monroe Streets where Edgar Rump was later on. I think Elmer Kellermeyer worked there before Rump. I don't know who owned it.

We changed oil in the cars, too. We'd drive over the pit (we didn't have a hoist) and we had a pan you could set in there. It hooked on the edges of the pit and you'd walk down the steps and take the plug out and let the oil run and work on the car. We also sold FRAM oil cleaners, 'cause no cars came out with oil filters in 'em.

Once there was this guy who stayed at the Hotel overnight. He started out in the morning and filled up with gas, and I know he didn't take much gas. I asked him if I should check his oil, and he said, "Certainly." We had this card that said we were supposed to ask the customer, "How's your oil," and if he'd say, "You better check it," then you'd ask, "How's your Fram?" - oil filter, you know. But this guy's looked like he'd just put it on, nice and shiny. I thought it was stupid to ask a man, "How's your Fram?" when he's got a brand new one on, so I missed the \$5.00 that they were puttin' out for the operator that asked him, "How's your Fram?" They sent me a letter that said, "We're sorry you missed the \$5.00." They even had the date and everything.

One time Edgar drained the oil on a car and forgot to put the plug back in, and when he poured the oil in, he took the stick and checked it, and he said, "What the heck, no oil in it." Down in the pit I went, and heck, there was no plug in it! The plug was still layin' out.

The gasoline came on a big railroad car. Mr. Dammeyer used to live east across the street and he would take the horses and bring gasoline over to the filling station on a tank wagon with a big round tank on it and we'd put it in the ground. We had regular and high test gas - premium, they called it - and everything was Standard Oil (Sohio) as far as gasoline was concerned. I think we'd get a car load of one, and then in about a week, we'd get a car load of the other one. The car never had both kinds at the same time. There were three or four pumps there. That way if you had more than one car that came in, then you could always have one on one side and one on the other. We also had Sohio oil, and then came Firestone. Sohio tires were available, but we never pushed 'em.

I remember when they had a gas war in town and Howard drove to the Pure Oil, and to the Ford Garage, and I forget who was on the other end of town, but he rode around, and he said, "By noon, I want to see that everybody's got the same price. Whatever we agree on, that's what the price will be. We're not gonna have any of this cut-throatin' goin' on - none of us will make any money if we do that." Howard would get gas in a tank car so much cheaper than what they'd get it, havin' a truck come in and bring a tank of gas at a time. So, he had 'em all in a corner - what could they do? He wasn't tryin' to beat anybody out of anything. There just wasn't any beatin' his price on anything.

The Lone Pine was about the only outlet for tires at that time, FIRESTONE tires. We used to sell lots and lots of Firestone tires to the bigger dealers, like Wolf in Celina. He sold 'em for years. We would sell 'em to all other dealers in these parts - they'd come and get 'em. We always kept plenty on hand in the summer kitchen over at the Lone Pine house. That was full to the brim with tires. We had tires for tractors and automobiles or any other size that somebody really needed. There were a lot of older cars on the road then.

We also changed tractors over from steel studs to rubber tires. I think the cleats were put on a rim and we took the cleats off and put the rubber on. When that started, it caught on quick with the farmers in our area. Edgar and I used to work many a night till 10:30 or 11:00. We'd call up in the morning and say, "Can you spare your tractor this evening?" We put many a tractor on rubber right out in the yard where we had stones. There sure wasn't much room inside.

You couldn't run in there with the tractor. You'd go right down in the pit with the front wheels.

When the railroad cars would come in with a car load of tires, and you unloaded one of them, boy, you knew you'd done something. That was a lot of weight. We did that at night. I think Mr. Dammeyer had a wagon that we hauled 'em on.

I had a Dodge car I bought at Celina. I don't know what year it was, but I know I put on my own brakes. I serviced it there, too. We were allowed that. Howard said, "When you guys need an oil change, just go ahead and change it." I think cars then held four quarts of oil. Leo Kuhlhorst had an imported car, a great big automobile. I know he used #10 oil, but I don't remember what kind of car he had. I know Art Heil had an eight cylinder Pontiac. I don't know what make Howard Huenke had any more, but I think it was a six cylinder.

ROGER MUELLER: Howard Huenke had a 1939-40 Buick. Edgar Moeller bought it later on. Before that, he didn't have a car. He rode his bicycle to work every day. So did Ray Hirschfeld and I.

Once a year we would go to Howard's house. Then he'd tell how much we made. He told us everything, how much the books were, how good a job we did, and I think he gave us all a couple bucks more. Of course, we had to do everything - pump gas, check the tires, check the radiator, change oil, batteries. We sold lots of batteries. There wasn't much room at that station. When you'd tell somebody that we did more business than all the rest of 'em put together, why, they wouldn't believe you. Howard had good sense - good sense and good prices. I had an enjoyable time workin' there.

After I came back from the service in February of 1946, I drove a truck for the Wooden Shoe Brewery. Then Bob Schroeder offered me a job driving truck for New Bremen Supply. I worked there for 20 years or so until December, 1966 when the company moved to Dayton. In January, 1967 I went to work at Stamco as an assembler, retiring in April 1982.

EDITOR'S NOTE: According to the Ohio Historic Inventory prepared in 1981 under the supervision of Mary Ann Brown, the Lone Pine house was built on the lot at 403 North Main St. between 1880 and 1890, after the original house that stood there was moved to the west of this lot. At one time B.A. Fledderjohann, State Representative from 1902-1906, lived in this house. A brick summer kitchen is located to the rear of the house. The Lone Pine Gas Station was built in the 1920's.



A Kleinhenz stock truck overturned in front of The Lone Pine Gas Station while rounding the corner of North Main and Pearl Streets (then Route 66). This is thought to have happened in the summer of 1944. This was the driver's last run before going into the service.

JOHN ZAHN

(by Mildred Zahn Yocum - 3/19/97)

My father, John Zahn, came to the United States from Grömbach, Germany in September, 1901. He was 17 years old, and when he arrived at Ellis Island, he had to go through customs. The customs officer looked through his small satchel, which held all his belongings, and, after examining its contents, gave it a kick and said, "Oh, humbug!" These were the first English words my dad heard.

He had always heard of the New World and since he had a sister and brother in Ohio, decided to come to America. His first job, after arriving in New York, was working in a meat market from 6 AM to 11 PM, six days a week for \$2.00 a week. He mixed 600 pounds of meat to make frankfurters. After earning enough money for traveling, he came to New Bremen, where his sister & brother-in-law, Christina and Christ Hehr lived. The Hehrs were Dorothy Hertenstein's grandparents. Dad's brother, Christ Zahn, lived in Piqua.

Since he had learned the blacksmith trade in Germany, he went to work with George and Jim Gast. He made his home with the Gast family. Along with horse shoeing, carriage trimming, painting, and general repairs, they also sold Maxwell cars.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Ellis Island Immigrant Station formally opened in New York on January 1, 1892. The last immigrant was processed through on November 12, 1954.

In 1906, shortly after the big earthquake, Dad went to San Francisco to visit an uncle and his family. He said he never saw such devastation. While out west, he traveled to Oakland, California, where he saw Buffalo Bill.

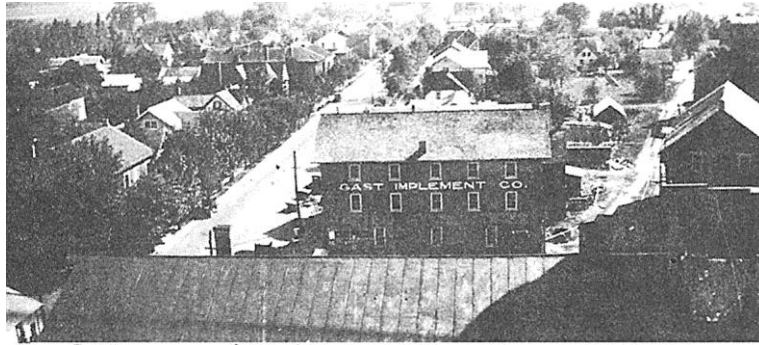
In 1914, he went by ship, the Rotterdam, back to Germany to see his mother, brothers and sisters. He had planned to stay three months but because of World War I, his stay was shortened. He married my mother, Irma Wuebbeling, on June 9, 1920 and never got to go back home again. I remember when Dad got the letter, edged in black, telling of his mother's death on June 2, 1931, and Dad sitting at the kitchen table crying.

I'm not sure when this picture was taken, but it looks like maybe a 4th of July parade in New Bremen. George Gast is in the front and Dad is the second from the left.



FROM THE NEW BREMEN SUN

- ♦The Knost & Heinfeldt's New Bremen Carriage Works business was acquired by Gregore Gast. (3/29/1889)
- ♦Gregore Gast moved his blacksmith shop from the J.L. Hoffman building on East Monroe St. to South Washington St. (Lot 290) near August Heinfeld's carriage factory. (12/ /1897)
- ♦A story has been put on Gregore Gast's blacksmith shop and an addition built to the rear. Heinfeld's carriage factory and repair shop will be in connection with it. (5/5/1899)
- ♦Gregore Gast is now prepared to rubber tire buggy wheels. Work is neatly & promptly executed. Give him a call. (3/29/1901)



S.W. corner of Washington & Front Sts. - 9/25/1924

On January 15, 1940, my Dad was gored by a bull. It was a cold, windy day and the bull had to walk from his stable in the barn to the outside pen. However, before Dad could close the gate, the wind blew the gate open and the bull threw him up into the air. Our dog, Kernel, heard and saw what happened and started barking. My Uncle Willie Wuebbeling, who lived with us, went to see what was wrong and saw my Dad lying on the ground. He took a pitchfork and started shoving it towards the bull but the pitchfork dropped from his hands and Dad thought, "Now he will get both of us." However, Uncle Willie was able to retrieve the pitchfork and got the bull to go to the other side of the pen. He was able to get Dad out and get the gate closed again. Dad walked to the house and the doctor said later he didn't know how he was able to do that. The ambulance was called and Dad was taken to Lima Memorial Hospital. When he arrived at the hospital, Dad said he heard one of the doctors say, "He won't live till morning, just let him be." But a young Dr. Tillotson said, "Where there is life, there is hope - we will do all we can for this man." Dad had seven broken ribs, a broken collar bone, a dislocated shoulder, and was severely bruised all over his body. He was in Memorial Hospital for four weeks and in traction most of that time. The total hospital cost was \$1000.00. He recovered and lived to be 85.

When I think of the wonderful friends, relatives, and neighbors who took my mother to the hospital every day, I am still so grateful for all the kindness shown to our family. I was a Junior in High School and my brother, John, was a Sophomore at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. John dropped out of school for a short time to help with the chores at home, however he was still able to graduate with his class in 1942. Thomas Kuenning was John's roommate at Miami.

I am so thankful to have had parents who took us to Sunday School and Church and to have been raised in a town like New Bremen. I was truly blessed!

JOHN ZAHN, JR., was one of nine New Bremen area servicemen who lost their lives in World War II. After graduating from Miami University on June 1, 1942, he entered the armed service and became a flyer. He received his wings and graduated as Second Lieutenant on 12/23/1943 at Herrington, Kansas. He went overseas on April 12, 1944, and was killed in action over Germany on May 19, 1944. He was the only son of John, Sr. & Irma (Wuebbeling) Zahn, and the brother of Mildred (Zahn) Yocum. He also left a fiancée, Pauline Meyer, of Dayton.

GAST BLACKSMITH & IMPLEMENT COMPANY

Gregore Gast, Sr. was Alsatian by birth and came alone from France at the age of 16. He located first at Fort Loramie (*or Minster?*) where he became a proficient blacksmith. He then went to Chickasaw and opened a shop of his own. While in Chickasaw, he married Bertha Klopf, who was born at Piqua. After 6 or 7 years (around 1887), he opened a blacksmith shop at New Bremen, where he spent the last 26 years of his life. The Gasts had 6 children: George F., Lulu, Charles, Romand, Clifford James ("Jim"), and Irene. Charles Gast graduated from N.B.H.S. in 1908, Romand in 1910, Jim in 1913 just weeks before his father's death, and Irene in 1915.

Gregore Gast's business in New Bremen spanned a period of 23 years. In January, 1898, he purchased Lot #290 on the southwest corner of South Washington and Front Streets from J.H. Boesche for \$525. Around 1903, he added the sale of agricultural implements. In May, 1909, the blacksmith business was transferred to his son George and John Zahn and was known as Gast and Zahn. After disposal of the blacksmith business, Gregore branched out into the sales of farming implements and buggies. In October, 1910, he started to sell manure spreaders made by the New Idea Spreader Co. His son Jim took care of the implement line and George was in charge of the blacksmith and repair business.

After their father's death on June 26, 1913, George and Jim Gast carried on the business, doing general repair work and dealing in agricultural implements and automobiles. George was also the chief of the New Bremen Fire

Dept., following in the footsteps of his father, who had been identified with the Hook and Ladder Company.

George F. Gast, born 9/24/1884, the oldest of the two brothers, married Louetta Weinberg on February 4, 1915 and they had one son, Gregore, named after his grandfather. Greg married Mabel Ritter and they had two children, Judy and Greg. In 1933, George Gast was named road superintendent and county surveyor, serving in that capacity for 12 years, after which he resigned to establish himself as a road resurfacing contractor. He was later joined in this business by his son, Gregore. George died 6/18/1951 and Louetta died 12/7/1952.

Clifford J. Gast, born 10/24/1893, married Irene Dinkel and they had two daughters, Beverly and Virginia.

On January 1, 1916, the brothers formed a partnership and changed the name of the business to Gast Implement Co.

In October, 1917, H.A. Schrage, former New Bremen school teacher, became their bookkeeper.

The Gast Implement Co. building shown on the opposite page was purchased by David Pape, CPA, in 1965, and was razed and replaced with a one-story 2-unit brick office building. Dave's accounting office occupies the north half (101 S. Washington) and Dr. Ronald Riebel began his dentistry business in the south half (105 S. Washington) in 1968 after a three year occupancy by Dr. Thomas Beech, M.D.

HOW YOUR HOUSE GOT ITS NUMBER

by Robert M. Brucken

18210 Fernway Road - Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122

4/14/97

There is probably only one person living today who knows how each house in New Bremen got its number - my father, Harold Brucken. Here is his story.....

The time is 1925, when Dad came home to New Bremen from his freshman year at Marietta College (he had graduated from N.B.H.S. in 1924) and needed a summer job. His father, Joseph Brucken, was the Village Clerk, the Mayor was family friend Clifford V. Huenke (President of White Mountain Creamery Co.), another Councilman was family friend William "Doc" Stappe (the village veterinarian), and a third Councilman was Adolph Boesel (President of the Boesel Bank) who was the father of the woman with whom Dad had then been keeping company for several years, Eunice Boesel. They married in 1929 and are still together. These village officials apparently conspired to provide my father with a village job.

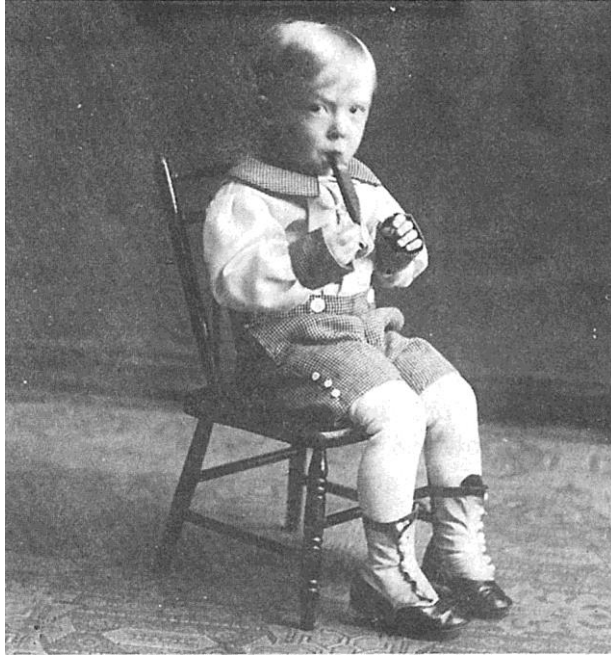
Village residents had always gone to the village Post Office to retrieve their mail. Most had post boxes there, and if you did not rent a box, you received mail from a common box that was called "general delivery." The Post Office Dept. had just decreed that New Bremen had become large enough and had advanced such that it could commence home mail delivery. But first, each house needed a number to identify it to the Post Office.

Dad was hired by the Village to number the houses. With help from his father, he took a copy of the village plat and, starting from Main and Monroe Streets, measured linear distances north, south, east, and west along each street and assigned numbers accordingly to each lot, including both improved and vacant lots. The annotated plat was presented to Council, which officially adopted it, and then delivered to the Post Office.

The next step was Dad's. He went from house to house, giving each householder written notice of the number assigned to the house. The householder then went to the Charles Boesel, III Hardware Store, which shared the first floor of the Boesel building with the Boesel Bank (Charles was a cousin of banker, Adolph) and bought numbers to mount on his house. Note in passing that all of the local citizens named above, who were requiring, and then selling, house numbers and providing the patronage position for Dad, were Democrats. It might have provided raw meat for a modern investigative newspaper reporter, but they did not see it that way 75 years ago.

Since 1925, more homes have been built in the Village. Each time one is to be built, reference must be made to Dad's plat (at the Post Office still, I assume) to find the number he assigned to the then vacant lot in 1925. Numerical immortality!!!

Little boy of long ago,
You are much too young to know
What the world expects of men!
Oh, be carefree while you may—
Childhood never comes again.



(Can anyone identify this little boy?... See below)
(Clue: He was N.B.'s postmaster from 1963-1975)



A GROUP OF FRIENDS (l. to r.)
(late 1930 or early 1940)

Mrs. John Kettler (Louise Meyerholtz), mother of Laverta Hittepole & grandmother of Ron Hittepole.
Mrs. Henry Ruedebusch (Emma Kuest), mother of the little boy pictured above - Orville Ruedebusch.
Ida Kuest, sister to Emma Ruedebusch & Anna Kuest.
Mrs. Christ Otte (Dora Schelper), mother of Marie Topp & grandmother of the editor, Lucille (Topp) Francis.
Anna Kuest, sister to Emma Ruedebusch & Ida Kuest.
(Can anybody identify this house?)

Curator's Corner

We have received from Mrs. Edna (Saer) Cadle of Medford, Oregon, a very thick, heavy, self-fringed lap robe that was used by E.G. (Emil) Conradi in the days before automobiles had heaters in them. She also sent a 1905 New Bremen High School diploma for Lucia Grewe and a picture of the 1905 graduating class. Lucy was the second wife of Emil Conradi and the aunt of Mrs. Cadle.

THE GREWE FAMILY

◆The William and Anna (Kruel) Grewe family lived in a house they built in 1899 for \$1520 (at 211 South Walnut Street, across from the 1929 High School.) *(NOTE: On 4/16/1937, Wilson and Delilah Braun purchased this house for \$2400. Today it is lived in by Jim and Carol Opperman.)* William and Anna immigrated from Osnabruck, Germany in 1883, along with Anna's brother, Henry Kruel, who was 17 years old and who went to work in the Klanke Furniture Factory. William (1/2/1861-2/9/1929) and Anna (3/25/1862-3/7/1909) married in St. Paul's Church on 11/1/1883 and had five children, the oldest being ◆Lydia (Mrs. Sheldon Saer - 1/4/1884-11/15/1964), the mother of Mrs. Cadle. The Saers lived in Toledo. *(William Grewe is pictured on page 30 of the Ralph May book, standing in the loading zone of the old Kuenzel Flour Mills, where he was in charge as head miller and, at his death in 1929, was Vice-President. He was also on the board of directors of the Citizens Building & Loan Association and a volunteer fire-fighter in the days of hand-drawn equipment.)*

◆Oscar Grewe (5/23/1885-2/5/1918) was also a member of the 1905 graduating class and went to work as a clerk for the C. B. & Q. Railroad in Chicago. He then graduated from Hamilton Law College at Chicago, after which he became ill with tuberculosis & died at 32 years.

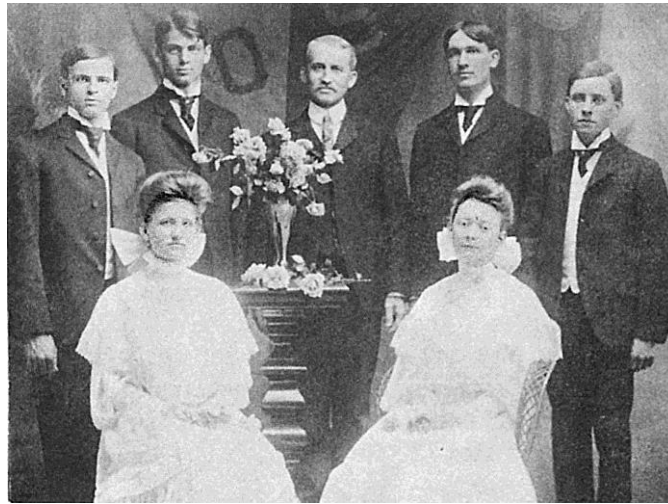
◆Lucy Grewe (1/13/1888-5/6/1971) worked as a clerk in the New Bremen Gas office (1909) and later (during W.W.II) was a bookkeeper in Seattle for the armed services. Lucy followed her sisters, Lydia Saer and Evelyn Grewe, to Seattle, Washington in the 1930s to join their brother, Leonard Grewe. She married Emil G. Conradi in Fort Wayne, Indiana after his first wife, Ida Wilhelmina Boesel, died on 2/21/1951.

Emil G. Conradi (10/12/1872-Oct./1964) graduated from N.B.H.S. in 1889, after which he taught in the village schools for 11 years. In May, 1900, he and his brother-in-law, Fridolin Purpus, became owners and publishers of *The Stern des Westlichen Ohio*. In April, 1903, they became the proprietors of *The New Bremen Sun*. Emil also served as mayor for nearly 5 years (1903-1907), was secretary of the New Bremen Telephone Co., and served 1 term on the Board of Education. He lived with his first wife in the former Jacob Boesel home at 116 West Monroe St., the same home where Ida had been born. After Emil and Lucy married, they sold the house to the Woodmen of the World in August, 1952 and moved to Seattle. They both died in Seattle and are buried there.

◆Leonard Grewe (5/15/1891-2/5/1968) never married. He graduated from N.B.H.S. in 1910 (with Ralph May and Elmer Ende) and was a lawyer. He was Vice-President of the Continental Casualty Co. in Chicago and was in charge of the Pacific Northwest states, with his office being in Seattle. He was the primary breadwinner for the family, supporting himself, 3 sisters and 2 nieces (Mrs. Cadle and her younger sister, Ruthanna). Leonard also served in W.W.I.

◆Evelyn Grewe (7/14/1907-7/29/1979), who was less than two years old when her mother died, graduated from N.B.H.S. in 1925 and never married. She was attending the Florida State College for Women in Tallahassee, Florida in 1929 when her father died, then taught a class in home economics at Toledo University and later worked for a Power & Light Co.

(Mrs. Cadle remembers that there was a metal fence around the Conradi property and a metal deer in the yard. She also remembers that Emil Conradi worked in the Post Office across the street. According to newspaper items, in September of 1909, after the death of Charles Boesel, Jr. and the sale of his property at the corner of Main & Monroe Streets to J.H. Grothaus, some of the Boesel statues were moved from this yard to other residences, possibly across the street to the Conradi property. On pages 55 and 93 of "Ralph May Remembers" are pictures of both the Jacob Boesel/E.G. Conradi residence and the Charles Boesel, Jr. residence across the street, which later became the Post Office, etc. In the yard of the Charles Boesel residence can be seen the statue of an Indian. On page 113 of the 1880 Auglaize County Atlas is a lithographic view of the Charles Boesel residence showing the deer and several other statues in the yard. J.H. Grothaus remodeled this residence, turning it into business rooms and offices, including the Post Office and the Telephone Company.)



THE 1905 GRADUATING CLASS OF N.B.H.S.

BACK: Robert Boesel (son of Julius), Irwin Boesel (son of Gustav), Hugo Kettler, Oscar Grewe, and Harry Komminsk.

FRONT: Lucy Grewe and Geciena Halsema (*she became a telephone operator for the N.B. Telephone Co. - see the July, 1996 issue of "The Towpath"*).

MEMORIAL FUND

Since mentioning and explaining the Memorial Plaque and Fund in the January, 1997 issue of *The Towpath*, we have been receiving quite a few memorial donations from our readers in memory of loved ones. Several of you have asked what this money is used for.

A review of past records indicates that the first "memorial donation" was made in June of 1974 by Lavina Schroeder, in memory of her husband, Walter, in the amount of \$2000.00. This money was used in the renovation of the museum's kitchen and a "room plaque" was placed in that room in memory of Walter.

From the October, 1978 issue of our newsletter: "It was decided to establish a 'Memorial Plaque' to record memorial contributions of \$100.00 or more on a gold (brass) nameplate." The first two plates to be placed on the plaque were for William Langhorst and William Schulenberg. The most recent plates to be added to the plaque are Alvera K. Schelper, Wilbur J. Garmhausen, and Robert J. Schroeder.

We have received additional donations this past quarter in memory of: **Paul Lietz**, by Norman Holcomb; **Franklin Coss & Mary Jane (Coss) Baird**, by their sister, Raeanna (Coss) Summerill; **Robert J. Schroeder**, by his sister, Catherine (Schroeder) Graf; and **Dr. Reuben J. Boesel**, by his daughter, Jeanne (Boesel) Sills. We thank all of you for your contributions.

The current balance in the Memorial Fund stands at \$2955.00. Under consideration for uses of this money and future memorial and/or other donations are the following: a new "N.B.H.A./ Museum" sign for the front lawn, directional "Museum" street signs, landscaping, a shallow cabinet to display small items, restroom facilities (we don't have any!), and a "climate control"/air-conditioning system to reduce the mildew & mustiness problem in the museum. Other suggestions from our readers are welcomed. If you have a specific use or project in mind when you make donations of any kind, please make your desires known to us in writing.

NOTE: Memorials do not need to be in the name of a person. They could be for a class, an organization, etc.

GENEALOGY RESEARCH FEES

Due to the increasing number of genealogy requests being received and the amount of time involved for research, plus copying, printing, and postage costs, all future requests must be accompanied by a minimum of a \$10.00 initial research fee. Additional time spent will be billed at \$5.00 per hour, plus any additional copying costs, etc.

We still have copies of our book, *New Bremen Marriages 1835 to 1922*, available at a cost of \$10.00, postpaid. Send orders to our P.O. Box 73 - New Bremen, OH 45869-0073.

PICTURE REQUEST

Martha Plattner is still trying to find a grade-school picture with her mother-in-law, Anna (Donnerberg) Plattner in it. Anna was born in February of 1901 and is thought to have attended Lock Two School between 1907 and 1915. If you have or know of such a picture, contact Martha at 5885 St. Rt. 274 - New Bremen, OH 45869 or call 419-629-2814. She would like to have a copy made.

NEW MEMBERS THIS QUARTER (TO 6/20/97)

04/10/97 Brown, Daniel - Bellbrook, Ohio
04/10/97 Brown, Joseph - Perrysburg, Ohio
04/10/97 Brown, Steven - Mason, Ohio
05/15/97 Cox, Phyllis E. (LM) - New Bremen
05/15/97 Cox, Thomas J. - Round Rock, Texas
05/05/97 Diegel, Ganell - Mendon, Ohio
05/28/97 Graber, Emma (Wehmeyer) - Ft. Wayne
04/20/97 Katterheinrich, Joanne (Koenig) - N. Knox.
04/10/97 Kavanaugh, Julie (Brown) - Modesto, CA
05/24/97 Koenig, Steve & Sue - New Bremen
04/14/97 Kuenning, Scott (LM) - New Bremen
04/14/97 Kuenning, Tim (LM) - New Bremen
04/07/97 Laut, Arnold - Leesburg, Florida
04/11/97 Luedeke, Donald - New Bremen
04/20/97 Manley, Molly Lou (Kellermeyer)(LM)-Mich.
04/28/97 Moeller, Kimberly (LM) - Palo Alto, CA
04/28/97 Moeller, Todd W. (LM) - Dublin, Calif.
05/28/97 O'Bannon, Clinton - New Bremen
05/03/97 Pearson, Joan (Burklo/Buckloh) - Indiana
05/28/97 Reisner, Emily (Grothaus) - Durham, NC
06/11/97 Sills, Jeanne (Boesel) - Wyoming & Calif.
06/01/97 Tangeman, Helen (DuBois) - New Bremen
04/01/97 Topp, Kathleen L. (LM) - New Bremen
04/22/97 Turner, Carol (Vandemark) - New Bremen
04/20/97 Voress, George, Sr. - New Bremen
05/05/97 Young, Bill - New Bremen

ADDITIONAL LIFE MEMBERS

05/15/97 Cox, Mrs. James (Phyllis)(new)
04/14/97 Kuenning, Scott (new)
04/14/97 Kuenning, Tim (new)
04/20/97 Manley, Molly Lou (Kellermeyer)(new)
04/28/97 Moeller, Kimberly (new)
04/28/97 Moeller, Todd (new)
04/01/97 Topp, Kathleen L. (new)
05/05/97 Vessely, Patricia (Heusch)
05/24/97 Wissman, Helen (Brockman)

MEMBER DEATHS THIS QUARTER

06/09/97 Ashbaugh, James A.
04/01/97 Dietrich, Lola (Huenke)(Charter Member)
04/17/97 Kunning, Marguerite (Koop)(Life Member)
05/21/97 Schroeder, Robert J. (*see July '96 Towpath*)

MAILING ASSISTANTS

Due to the increasing volume of *The Towpath* mailing, and the amount of time it takes to prepare it, I have asked for volunteers to help with the labeling, sorting, counting, stuffing, and sealing of the envelopes in accordance with bulk-mailing specifications. Susie Hirschfeld has volunteered to take over the management of this process. Those who helped with the April issue were: Susie Hirschfeld, Donna Warner, Martha Plattner, Rev. Larry Holmer, Dorothy Hertenstein, and Bea Young. I very much appreciate the help of all these volunteers. It made the job much easier. *Lucille*

Francis, Editor

THE MUSEUM IS NOW OPEN for visitation on Sunday afternoons from 2:00-4:00. Come and see our new acquisitions and new displays. Phyllis Cox is a new Life Member and has volunteered to work with Vernita Scheer and Bea Young in the Museum. We welcome Phyllis to our organization and to our Curators' staff.