

# THE TOWPATH

Published quarterly (January-April-July-October)

New Bremen Historic Association  
P.O. 73-New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073  
(Founded in 1973)

Museum located at 120 N. Main St....Visiting Hours 2:00-4:00 Sundays –June, July, August  
**April 1998**

## CHANGE OF OFFICERS

With this newsletter, we are introducing two new Trustees on our board. They are Thomas Braun and Jerry Brown, who are replacing outgoing Trustees, Betty Schroer and Mark Gaerke. Thomas Braun was born in New Bremen and graduated from N.B.H.S. He and his wife, Ginny (McCollum), have recently moved back to New Bremen after retirement. Tom is especially interested in genealogy and will be helping to answer your genealogy questions. Jerry Brown's family moved to New Bremen when he was four years old. He also graduated from N.B.H.S. and subsequently taught school in New Bremen. He is also retired and was one of the founders of our Historic Association. We are happy to have him back on board. Dorothy Hertenstein renewed for another 3-year term as Trustee, agreeing to serve as Vice-President for the next year. Phyllis Cox has been helping the curators and also with the mailings of *The Towpath*. She has accepted the position of Corresponding Secretary, filling the vacancy left by the resignation of Irene Wellemeyer. We thank all of the outgoing officers for their years of service.

## THE OLD HOME TOWN

You can't go back, some people say  
Into the world of yesterday.  
"But why?" I ask, "I disagree,  
For we can go back in memory."

The old hometown from whence we came  
Is still there though it's not the same.  
The houses are different in which we stayed,  
The neighborhood too, and the places we played.

Even the land has made a change.  
The canal and the woods and streets look strange.  
But don't give up as you look around.

Get lost in your memories and you're homeward bound.

For the memories of youth that a hometown holds  
Are far more precious than silver and gold.

We can go back, if only for a day,

For yesterday's memories are here to stay.

---

*(The above poem was read by **Dona Mae Kuening** at our annual dinner and program held on March 16, 1998. It was a fine wrap-up for the preceding slide program, "Downtown Remembered", in which many memories were re-kindled of the buildings and conditions of downtown New Bremen of 30 years ago and before. See page 2 to jog your own memories.)*

## HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 1998 DUES?

Before you lay this issue aside, be sure to **check the label on your envelope**. If the top line is highlighted in pink, this means we have not received your dues for 1998. A gold MEMBERSHIP DUES notice and a return envelope were included in the January, 1998 issue. Please send your payment now in order to ensure uninterrupted delivery of *The Towpath*.

To those conscientious folks who made up the difference between our new dues (\$8.00/\$75.00) and what they had paid in advance (\$5.00/\$50.00), WE THANK YOU! Your thoughtfulness is truly appreciated.

## DOWNTOWN REMEMBERED

On Monday, March 16, 1998, our annual dinner and program were held in St. Paul's Sunday School auditorium. We had a record-breaking attendance of 250+ people. President Doug Harrod welcomed everyone, introduced the officers, and then presented special guest, Harry Ludeka, with a birthday cake and asked everyone to sing "Happy Birthday" in honor of Harry's 100th birthday which he celebrated on Jan. 28th.

Rev. Jeff Gerber of St. Paul's Church gave the invocation, after which everyone enjoyed a roast beef dinner prepared by Mary (Voskuhl) Evers of Fort Recovery and her crew.

After the dinner, John Dickman introduced and showed the guests his recently completed booklet, "A Taste of Tradition - New Bremen Memories from the Kitchen." He explained that he has given publishing rights to the N.B.H.A. and that we will be offering the booklets for sale soon (see back page).

### **Program Background**

On January 7, 1967, plans were drawn up by retired engineer, Reuben Wissman, for a city building, a library, and a parking area to be put in the canal lands area in downtown New Bremen between Washington Street and the Miami-Erie Canal. These plans were then taken to the state for approval.

On June 13, 1967, House Bill 525 was passed deeding the canal lands to the village. The state agreed to buy the 7-foot tubing to flume the canal from 10 feet north of the dam, which had replaced the old wooden locks, to the Monroe Street bridge - a distance of approximately 212 feet - in order to provide a parking area.

On October 20, 1967, a contract was awarded to Dr. C.H. Libbee for the demolition of Kuenzel Mills. Work was to be completed by June 1, 1968.

### **Program**

Our program consisted of a group of slides recently discovered in our archives at the Museum depicting the demolition of buildings and the clean-up of downtown New Bremen between Washington Street and the canal as outlined above. Additional slides were obtained from Lendor & Elodie Sollman (from Len's brother Arlon's collection), Jim Cooper, Dale Schaefer, and Merlin Hirschfeld. Approximately 120 slides were arranged and shown by Lucille Francis and the program was narrated by Stan Kuenning, with comments being welcomed from the special guests, Lendor & Elodie Sollman, Harry Ludeka, Alton ("Butch") Schelper, and also the audience.

---

**Kuenzel Mills** - Demolition of the 1954 "quonset" cement block addition had been completed by mid-January, 1968. Demolition of the brick woolen mill began around mid-March (see next page for organization and construction history). Next to go was the frame flour mill in the middle. Demolition was completed May 9, 1968. Last to be demolished was the concrete silo which had been built in 1920. The library was built on the SE corner of this land in 1973.

Also demolished in April & May, 1968 (these by Crown Controls) were the brick buildings between Front & Plum Streets south of the village-owned canal lands. These buildings were along the canal near the poultry house & Reuben Thiesing's wood-working shop. This area is now a Crown employees' parking lot.

**Lock-keeper's (Thompson) buildings** - The Thompson barn was demolished in February, 1968. In April, the house was burned down by 33 area fire departments who used this as a training exercise (see July, 1997 "Towpath").

**Fluming of the canal** - created a parking lot. The entire area between Washington St. & the canal is now "Lock One Park." (see October, 1997 "Towpath").

**First National Bank / Koeper's Shoe Store** - These buildings were demolished around 1969-1970 to widen the intersection of St. Rt. 66 (right turn lane added) and St. Rt. 274 (left turn lane added.)

**Theater building** - In 1968, this building was purchased by the newly organized Senior Citizens organization and remodeled.

**McKay Woolen Mills** - These buildings along First Street (east of the canal) were also demolished in 1968 by Dr. Libbee and the area was used to expand the Auglaize School for the Retarded (now ABC Center).

### **Program Wrap-up**

John Poppe, one of the founders of the N.B.H.A., was asked to repeat the address he gave at the dedication of the Museum on July 4, 1976. In it he explained how, when the idea of a Historic Association first began in late 1973, downtown New Bremen had just undergone a major clean-up project - not only the areas just mentioned, but also the Bessel/Harris junk yard (now the Lions' Club Park) and the N.B. Men's Garden Club project of cleaning up the canal north of Monroe St., planting flowers, etc. after they organized in 1963 (see April, 1997 "Towpath"). Theirs was the first concerted effort to start cleaning up the downtown.

In 1976, and again in 1998, John asked everyone to join in the efforts of the Historic Association in preserving the history of New Bremen and in making its history live on in the minds of lots of people.

We hope that by presenting this slide program, we have been able to re-ignite lots of memories for those who were around here 30 years ago or more, and we hope it has shown some of our newer & younger residents how New Bremen came to be what it is today. Certainly it should make us appreciate "Our Home Town" (a poem written by Lina Brucken) a little more.

After John's address, Dona Mae Kuenning read a poem entitled "The Old Home Town" (see front page) which reflected the feelings of a lot of the guests.

Also, each guest received as a table favor, a copy of the poem written by Mrs. Joe (Lina Taylor) Brucken and which was published in the *New Bremen Sun* on May 24, 1935. (See page 7, if you would like to have a copy.)

### **OLD KUENZEL MILLS RECORDS**

In April, 1968, when Crown Controls began demolishing the old Kuenzel Mills warehouse and office building at

the end of Front Street, a batch of old records of the Woolen Mill and Flour Mill were uncovered in a loft. New Bremen historian, Ralph May, was invited to examine these old records and found the following items of interest - the original co-partnership agreement of July 17, 1866, and an itemized list of the "Cost of Building" the woolen mill. The woolen mill (later known as Kuenzel Mills) was built in 1866-1867.

### WOOLEN MILL CO-PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

(from *The Evening Leader* - 4/3/1968)

New Bremen

July 17th, 1866

We the undersigned, Wm. Finke & Son, Fred. Backhaus, and Wm. Meyer of German Township, County of Auglaize, and State of Ohio, hereby agree to form ourselves into a co-partnership in three equal parts for the purpose of erecting a Woolen Cloth Manufactory in the Town of Ober Bremen, of said Township, on Outlot No. (14) Fourteen and it is agreed upon that the said Wm. Meyer is to be allowed the sum of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2000.00) for the premises, described as follows:

All of the South part of Outlot No. (14) Fourteen South of the Grist Mill, except 40 feet of the South end, in the town of Ober Bremen, County and State aforesaid.

And it is further agreed between the co-partnership that (no Run?) water goes in the premises above mentioned, and to be paid by the co-partnership yearly, sum One Hundred Dollars.

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands this 17th day of July, Anno Domini 1866.

(Signed) *A.F. Wm. Meyer*

( " ) *F. Backhaus*

( " ) *Wm. Finke & So*

### THE PARTNERS

**A. F. Wilhelm Meyer** (8/20/1824-6/19/1877) was married twice, first on 1/10/1850 to Anna S.C. Wuebbenhorst, who died 9/21/1863. He then married Margaret Sophie Wilhelmine Backhaus. When she died 3/3/1909, her obituary stated that their marriage "did not last very many years and was broken by the violent death of her husband while employed in a flouring mill." On 12/22/1898, she remarried, to Herman Wiegers. Witnessing their marriage was Friedrich Backhaus.

**Cort Carl Friedrich Backhaus** (9/16/1831-9/4/1901) came to America 6/19/1846, and came directly to New Bremen. He was apprenticed to the tin trade in Piqua and returned to New Bremen to engage in that business. In 1866 he sold his tin store and started the woolen mill in partnership with several men. On 4/10/1856, he married Louise Kamman (1839-9/23/1906). They had 9 children.

**William Jobst Finke** (10/3/1813-8/2/1882) was trained as a flour miller in his native Germany and brought his training with him to New Bremen, his pioneer flour mill proving a great convenience to the settlers. He later merged this flour mill with the operations of the woolen mill, and the business was operated as Finke, Backhaus & Kuenzel. William was married four times, his third wife being Elisabeth Barbara Kuenzel, and his fourth wife being Katharina Auguste Kuenzel (both daughters of Michael Conrad Kuenzel and Catharina Barbara Bellmann.)

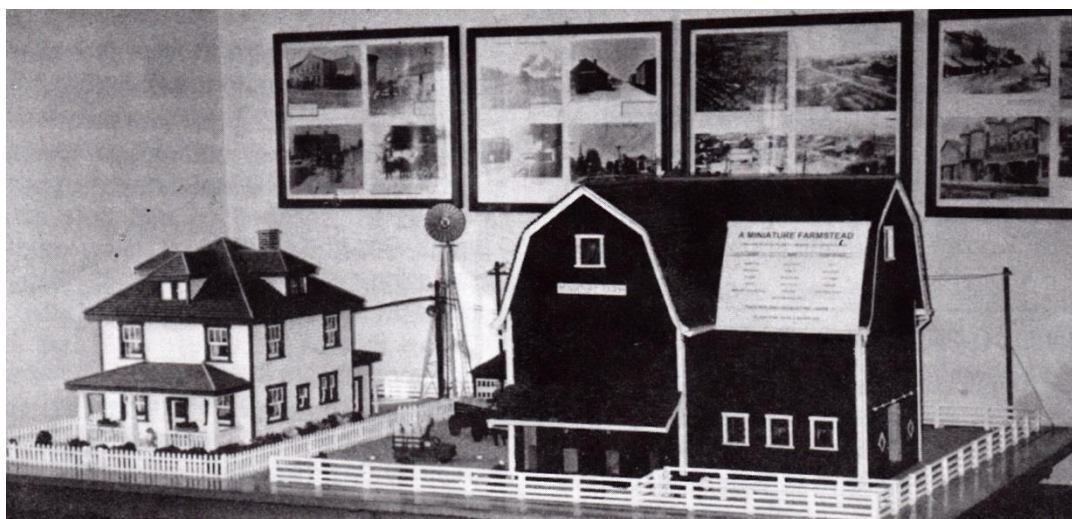
**Henry Conrad Finke** (1/14/1843-1/15/1911) was the oldest child of William J. Finke & Elisabeth Barbara Kuenzel. He assisted personally in the erection of the woolen mill in 1866-1867, and took charge of the business as soon as the building was completed. Henry was married to Louise Wehrman (2/16/1849-6/22/1947). They had 7 children.

### WOOLEN MILL COST OF BUILDING - 1866-67

(from *The Evening Leader* - 4/3/1968)

529 T(ons?) Stone from Piqua @ 2.45	1295.48
228,150 Bricks from Piqua @ 5.85/M	1334.53
Lime & _____?	498.16
Sand _____?	126.75
Oak Wood @ 1.60 x _____?	1750.37
Pine _____?	675.12
Slates, Caps? & Cornice	900.89
Plastering	103.60
Job of Brick & Stone laying	1113.80
Glass & Putty	212.86
Freestone (Doors & Windowsills & Caps)	287.95
Sheep _____? & Painting	19.40
Chimney Covers? _____?	79.25
Flooring	9.00
Spouting	413.84
Crocks? Hinges & Wash? Lead	41.60
_____? & Screws in Garret	14.15
Hardware of different _____?	122.64
Lightning rod	261.90
Brinkmeyer & Klopfel _____? _____?	48.00
Blacksmithing by G. Aue	57.61
Water? wheel	320.29
C. Moeller & drying floor	111.00
Real Estate	297.03
Labor	2000.00
Millwright labor	2781.10
Crank & Fly Wheel on _____?	1021.82
Sundries? Expenses	62.20
_____? Stock, (next 4 words illegible)	89.46
accounted for in above	500.00

**Total cost of Building \$16,000.00**



One of the Museum's displays that drew a lot of attention (especially from visiting children) during the 1997 Christmas Tree Festival was the miniature farm scene in the northwest room. This is one of two such scenes built by Orlando C. Maurer of Kettlersville, Ohio approximately 61 years ago. The house is a replica of the one on the Maurer farm (the 1st farm east of Kettlersville on the north side of the road.) The second set was reportedly sold to the Dayton Power & Light Co.

A MINIATURE FARMSTEAD		
100% HAND MADE by ORLANDO C. MAURER - KETTLERSVILLE, OHIO		
HOUSE	BARN	OTHER DETAILS
FURNITURE	HAY LOFTS	SILO
DRAPERIES	STALLS	HEN HOUSE
SHADES	STANCHIONS	HOG BARN
LIGHTS	HAY CHUTE	GARAGE
WINDOWS (Open & Close)	FEED BIN	ELECTRIC LIGHTS
	HAY FORK & PULLEYS	
EACH BUILDING HAS ELECTRIC LIGHTS		
ON LOAN FROM: WAYNE O. MAURER, SON		

## NEW BREMEN'S FILLING STATIONS

With the coming of automobiles, filling stations began to spring up all over town in the 1920s and 1930s.

On January 20, 1998, Bob Heinfeld of Ada, Ohio paid a visit to the *Towpath* editor and passed on his memories of the many "filling" stations that existed in the '30s and '40s in New Bremen. Here are his memories, along with those of Dolores (Schroer) Stienecker, Paul E. Dicke, Karl Warner, Alice (Schmidt) Wissman, and others.

The young people of today probably don't know what a "filling" station was - it was the forerunner of the "service" station. There were a number of filling stations in New Bremen, selling a lot of different brands of petroleum. There were two Sohio stations and two Johnson Oil Co. stations (later Sinclair). Filling stations then had the tall pumps where the attendant pumped up the amount of gas the motorist wanted (usually five gallons) into the tall glass cylinder.

### Hi-way Hand-Operated Five-Gallon Capacity Visible Gasoline Dispenser, ca. 1923

The symmetrical and attractive design makes this an ideal pump for use in Filling Stations or at the Curb. In its construction many unique and distinctive features have been incorporated, thus insuring the widest possible range of service.

#### PREDOMINANT FEATURES:

Flood-type electric illumination of the entire pump.

Three gallonage indicators, prominently located on the outside of the glass measuring cylinder.

Two hose discharge connections - one at the front, the other at the side of pump.

Overhead fill located within the glass cylinder.

Speedy horizontal double-acting plunger pump.

Numerous interlocking features - affording equal protection to both dealer and customer.

## THAT GOOD GULF GASOLINE

*Gulf Oil Company's first drive-in gasoline service station opened in Pittsburgh in 1913. By the following spring, it was selling an average of 1800 gallons per day. Gulf used the slogan "that good Gulf gasoline". This catch-phrase was prompted by a customer's letter written to the company inquiring where one could find "that good Gulf gasoline."*

◆Starting at the south end of town, on the SE corner of S. Washington & Cherry Streets (304 S. Washington), there was the "South Side Service Station." Charlie Block built it in 1928. Charlie was the father of Henry Block, the plumber. As I remember, the original South Side Service Station sold Sunoco gasoline, but in 1934, when the new station was built at the corner of Monroe & Main, it became the Hi-Speed station. *Wilbur Dennison (he was Julius Hoeper's son-in-law) ran it for two years until March of 1936, when Jack Abbott took over.* Later it became a Sinclair station.

*In the fall of 1936, Harry B. & Clara (Topp) Schroer moved into this two-room station (1 bedroom and a kitchen) with their newborn daughter, Dolores, whose crib was a banana box. Their bathroom was the same one used by the public, and Harry installed a shower in the car wash area of the garage. During the eight years or so that they lived at the station, they sold gas, minnows, crawfish, cigarettes, and groceries. They lived there until 1944, when they moved across the street, to the NW corner of South Washington & Cherry Streets (231 S. Washington) and opened their grocery store there.*



*Paul E. Dicke bought the station and went into business on February 1, 1947. (In 1960, the station was taken over by Paul's son, Don Dicke, and around 1995-1996, it was purchased by Crown Equipment Corp. Don Dicke still works there as a mechanic, etc. for Crown.)*

### NEW FILLING STATION TO OPEN

Opening of the South Side Service Station, located at South Washington and Cherry Streets, has been announced for Saturday, November 10, 1928, by the managers, Irvin Koeper and Albert Schmedt. A dust cloth will be given free to every motorist purchasing five gallons of gasoline on that day.

Work on the station, which is owned by Charles Block, was started late in September and is being completed this week. It will be the fourth filling station to be operated here - the others being the Refiners, corner of Washington and Monroe Streets; the Lone Pine Station, North Main and Pearl; and the Johnson Station, North Herman Street.

In addition to handling Sunoco gasoline, motor oils and greases, an agency for Dayton tires also will be maintained in the South Side Station. A complete battery sales and service system has been installed, also a machine for washing automobiles.

The station is ideally located because of an expected heavy increase in traffic entering New Bremen from the south with the completion of the last link of paving in the road leading from here to Piqua and then over the Dixie highway into Dayton.

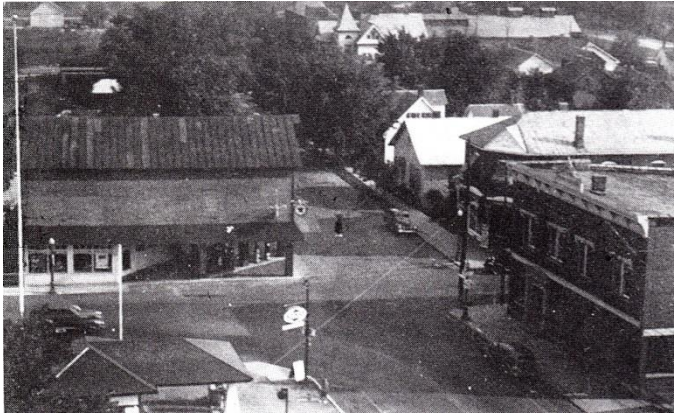
*(New Bremen Sun - 11/8/1928)*

◆At the southwest corner of Washington and Monroe (3 S. Washington), we had the Standard Oil Station (Sohio), originally the Refiners Oil Co. (Sohio became a brand name in 1928.) Back in the 30s, it was operated by Harold Mohrman. *[Others who ran this station were Alvin ("Pete") Wagner, George Knost, Les Neuman, Paul E. Dicke, Bob Klose, Luther ("Jack") Hirschfeld, Ray Luedeke, and Ted Rollins. In 1967, the original station (see Rairdon picture, below) was torn down and replaced with a new cement block building. The last person to run this station before it (the "new" station) was torn down (in 1968-70?) was Bud Pratt.]* Sohio was a good brand and that was a very popular station. It was probably one of the busiest stations in town.

◆Just south of this station was Teddy Doenges' Tire Shop (7 S. Washington) St.) I don't remember if he had gas pumps there or not, but then he moved to North Main Street and had a curb-side service there. He had two gas pumps just north of Zion's Church where the street is widened. That was the Cities Service Station. Teddy had his tire shop in there too and sold Dayton Thorobred and Seiberling tires.



◆Across the street from the Sohio station, on the northwest corner of Washington & Monroe (2 E. Monroe), H.W. (Wilbur) Rairdon had a garage and a Texaco station. (see below ↓) *(This building was torn down and a new Post Office was built there in 1955. By 1960, when the highway was scheduled for widening, the Post Office itself was replaced with another new one that was built on North Main Street.)* (N.B.H.A. photo ↓)



◆On East Monroe Street, on the northeast corner of Monroe & Walnut Streets, Virgil Horn (Betty Schroer's dad) had a Pure Oil station, and later sold Marathon gas & oil and Equity ice cream. Betty took care of the station the summer of 1941 after she graduated from High School and her dad went to work at WACO Aircraft in Troy. (see the October, 1991 issue of "The Towpath".) This station was first owned by Clarence Busse and then sold to "Doc" Schmidt who had a Gulf station there. It was run by Harold ("Shorty") Ahlers. They also sold "No-Nox" gasoline. Later on, Goldie Schmidt (sister of Dr. Leonard Schmidt) built a little house on this corner (around 1960?) For some time before that, a man named John Kuhlhorst lived in the station. →



*(Virgil Horn's station -photo courtesy of Betty Schroer)*

◆On the SE corner of Monroe & Walnut, there was a Pure Oil station for a while that was owned by Alvin ("Sockey") Dicke. Two people who worked there were Alvin ("Pete") Wagner and Carl ("Jack") Abbott. That station was moved in 1935 out to Herman Schmidt's station on North Herman St. and added to the north side of the original square station. They had a grease rack, etc. in there (the part shown with open door and Model A ford. ↓) It was taken down Monroe St. to Herman St. on rollers and then on north out to Schmidt's station. *(Notice the dark gasoline pump on the right - it appears to say "Sinclair HI-C Gasoline")* The tiny building at the left was used by Henry Heitkamp to make cement dogs.



*[Photo courtesy of Alvira (Roettger) Schmidt]*

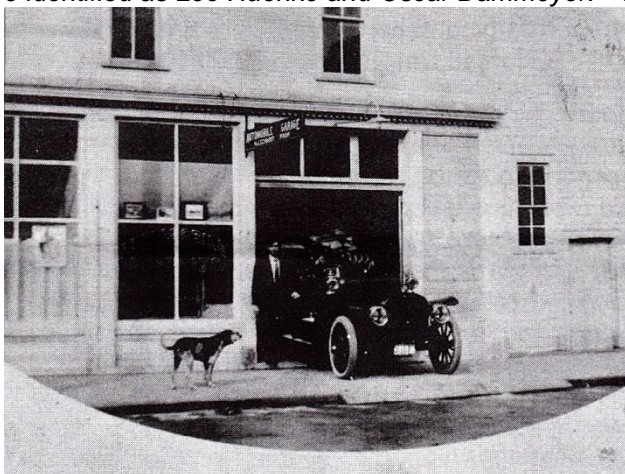
◆On the north end of town, on North Herman Street (now State Route 66A), was Herman Schmidt's station, out by the railroad. This station had been built by Henry Heitkamp. Herman sold Johnson's gasoline, also, and later changed to Sinclair. He had one of the first places to have a ramp (outside) that you would drive up on to get your car serviced (oil changed and greased). You had to crouch underneath the ramp, though, to do it. (The Lone Pine had a grease pit.)

Herman Schmidt's station was the last stop for those on their way to the New Bremen Speedway. Herman sold large home-cooked ham sandwiches for 25¢, and beer for 25¢, also. Herman's brother-in-law, Henry Landwehr, worked in the station.

*(EDITOR'S NOTE: My dad, Lafe Topp, along with Frank Niemeyer, Sr., Max Schurer, Herb Kellermeyer, Jr., Forrest Bowers, Don Coble, and others used to play dart ball and sheephead (a card game) here one night a week. Our printer, Larry Lee Kuhn, of Lee's Printing, now has a used car lot in this location - Lee's Used Cars.)*

◆Now we'll go back southeast to the Lone Pine, at the corner of North Main and Pearl Streets, which probably was the busiest station in town. They sold Sohio (Standard Oil) products there, too. *(see Ken Fark's article in the July, 1997 issue of "The Towpath")*

◆Further south was Leo Huenke's Garage at 202 N. Main St. - the NE corner of North Main & West Second St. He had a garage first, then sold gas from a double pump out front. It was all joined together - it went straight up and then had two dials. He may have had a rolling tank before that, which he would roll up to cars to fill them. Then Clarence Roettger (Norbert Roettger's dad) had it for a while. He sold Phillips 66 gasoline. I think the "66" stood for the octane rating. As for Sohio, there were three grades of gasoline - Renown, X-70 (that also meant octane rating), and their best gasoline, Supreme. *(Oscar Dammeyer also ran Huenke's Garage at one time. In the picture below, the sign says "Automobile Garage" - H.J. Schmidt, Prop." The sign on the window says "Automobile Supplies." The men were identified as Leo Huenke and Oscar Dammeyer. - What model is this car?)*



## HUENKE GARAGE

AGENCY FOR

FORD CARS

AUTOMOBILE ACCESSORIES

LEO HUENKE, PROPRIETOR

CORNER MAIN AND SECOND

NEW BREMEN, OHIO

*(1920 Mirage yearbook)*

◆Continuing south to 24 N. Main Street, at the SE corner of N. Main and W. First Streets, was the Central Auto (Ford) Garage, the former location of the French House Hotel. Ralph Fogt, Francis Hickman, and Ernie Counts built that (around 1932?). They sold Johnson Oil Co. products - "Time Tells." There was an hour-glass, and it said "Time Tells." Reinhard Kuck had a bulk plant (Kuck Oil Co.) over by the railroad station and he serviced the Central Auto Garage. Eventually he changed to Sinclair Oil Co. and Central Auto also became a Sinclair station. Later, Ernie Counts went back to Sidney, and Fogt and Hickman sold out to Leroy Schroer and Clifford Quellhorst (around 1945?).



Central Auto Service (photo from Lilas Quellhorst)



◆Coming back to Monroe Street, on the SW corner of Monroe and Main (201 W. Monroe), there was a Sunoco station run by Arnold Hegemier, next to the Home Furniture Store. Prior to the gas station, there had been a house on this corner that was owned by Dr. Ferdinand F. Fledderjohann. The house was purchased by the Anna Oil Co. in 1934 and demolished, after which the filling station was built in the winter of 1935, and Sunoco moved here from the South Side Station. Arnold Hegemier, who had been at the South Side Station, took over the management at the new location. Elmer Kellermeyer worked as Arnold's employee. Across the street was the Kroger Store, formerly the New Bremen Sun Printing Co. and later (still is, in 1998) Howell's IGA. The Sunoco station was owned by George Gross of the Anna Oil Co. The Anna Oil Co. owned a lot of stations in the area - in St. Marys, Celina, etc. When George Gross died, his wife sold the station to the Pure Oil Co. (around 1945). I worked for Arnold Hegemier for a while, then Irvin ("Butch") Koeper ran it from 1941 until 1943. He sold out to Ralph Fogt, who ran it until 1946, when Edgar Rump took it over. I went to the service and after I got out I worked there again for a little while. *[On September 26, 1946, Edgar Rump took over the management of the Pure Oil Station. In July, 1965, Edgar's son, Edward, Sr. took over the management, and in 1966, the Pure Oil Co. was sold to Union 76. In 1990, Ed, Sr. and Ed, Jr. built a new station on the SE corner of St. Rt. 66 and Amsterdam Road south of town. They have since added a beer and soft drink drive-through and became known as Rump's Express Mart. In the fall of 1997, Rump's Union 76 became a Citgo (Cities Service) station.]* (RGH photo)



◆In 1948, Ralph Fogt built a station at 329 S. Washington St., the NW corner of South Washington and South Streets. It was a Mobilgas station for a while, then Marathon, and finally Fleetwing. *(Later this station was run by Bill Meyer. It was torn down in 1995-96 by Crown Equipment Corp., along with the stucco house next door. It is now an open space, with grass and trees.)*



*[Photo courtesy of Shirley (Fogt) Black]*

When I started working in the Sunoco Station in 1939, they only had one grade of gasoline (the color was blue) and it sold for 17¢ a gallon. In 1940, it went to 19¢ a gallon. Cars were greased for 75¢. There were a lot of fittings to do on a car then - not like today. A car wash cost 75¢ also. The best tire that Goodrich made (6:00 x 16 size) was \$9.95. There were 13, 15, 17, and 19-plate batteries. The 19-plate battery was a very expensive one. It would be used in Buicks, Oldsmobiles, and Cadillacs. I don't remember having any Cadillacs in town back then. Guarantees were unheard of then.

**Sunoco Service Station**  
**High Powered Sunoco Gasoline**  
**and Oil**  
**Goodrich Safety Silvertown Tires**  
**Exide and Goodrich Batteries**  
**Guessing Contest**  
**1st Prize - Goodrich Inner Tube**  
**(Value \$2.00)**  
**2nd Prize - Gal. Sunoco Oil, value \$1.**  
**3rd Prize - Polishing Cloth, value 50¢**  
**Arnold Hegemier, Mgr.**

*(1940 Festival adv. - N.B. Sun)*



Around 1940 New Bremen had its own little gas price war. One station operator visited another station that had two operators. He bragged to them that he was selling a lot of gasoline. The two operators thought he was stretching the truth a little and one of them later said "We'll cut our price from 17¢ to 15¢." They did this and that started the price war. Immediately a third station owner remarked "We'll fix this thing once and for all. We're gonna sell it at 13¢ a gallon." So, the cheapest price we ever had for gas in New Bremen was 13¢ a gallon. That was the same price as kerosene. The price war was short-lived - with 11 gas stations in a town of 1200 people (1940 census), none of them could have been making any money.

I believe that the "filling" station era was over by 1930 and then they became "service" stations. The stations used to give away free maps and handed out sheets of cardboard to put in front of the radiators with, of course, the oil company's name on them. Gulf had a weekly "funny paper" to hand out to the kids. Wilbur Rairdon gave out Texaco Fire Chief hats, which, when they got wet, would make your hair red.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** The first official road map was issued by the American Automobile Association around 1905. Around 1914, William Akin, an advertising agency executive, got the idea of oil companies issuing maps for free, using them as advertising as well as for information. Within a year, the Gulf Refining Co. was producing 300,000 maps a year. Soon other oil companies followed suit and free maps became standard, until recent years when the high production costs forced many companies to discontinue this service. (*Dayton Daily News-1/25/98*)

And so you see what was once only a gasoline "filling" station became a full-service station selling gas, changing and adding oil, greasing chassis, selling batteries, charging batteries, repairing tires, and washing cars. They served New Bremen well.

*Today there are only two public service stations still in existence in New Bremen - Rump's Express Mart (Citgo self-serve) south of town at the intersection of State Route 66 & Amsterdam Road, and the Speedway Station at the SE corner of Washington & Monroe. This is the former location of the First National Bank (Henry Dierker building) which was demolished in 1970, along with the Koeper Shoe Store building. Part of this space was used in the widening of the intersection, adding a left turn lane to St. Rt. 274 and a right turn lane to St. Rt. 66. A Marathon Service Station was built in the remaining space. In 1996-1997, it became a Speedway station (self-serve) and is again strictly a "filling" station.*

©1998 Lucille M. Francis, N.B.H.A.  
(reprint by written permission only)

### **SOHIO SOLD - KLOSE TO OPEN HOBBY SHOP**

*(New Bremen Sun - 1/12/1950)*

A deal was completed last week, whereby the Cal Sohio Service Station at Washington & Monroe, owned and operated by Bob Klose, was sold to Luther (Jack) Hirschfeld. Hirschfeld is the manager of Johnston's 5 & 10¢ Store, and plans to take over management of the station February 1, 1950.

Klose plans to open a Sporting Goods & Hobby Shop in the business rooms now occupied by Gast's Style Shop, which is quitting business. Klose plans to carry a complete line of sporting goods, fishing tackle, hunting equipment, and toys. He will also offer expert rod & reel repair and minor gun repair services. James Pape, jeweler, located in Gast's Style Shop, will remain in with the Sporting Goods store.

### **LOCAL NIMRODS NARROWLY ESCAPE INJURY**

*(New Bremen Sun - 1/18/1945)*

Lloyd J. Laut and Les Blanke, while taking advantage of the last days of the rabbit season which closed Saturday, had a rare experience which they do not especially crave to have repeated. While pursuing their course across an open field on the Ruese farm east of town, with eyes straight ahead, their attention was suddenly drawn to the buzzing overhead of an airplane, followed by another which seemed in close proximity. The hunters looked up just in time to see the one (a fighter plane) zooming upward, apparently to avoid a head-on collision with the other plane. At the same time, they observed an object come plummeting down from the fighter. The missile proved to be an empty auxiliary gasoline tank which landed in the field in the space they had left open between them as hunters always do. Mr. Laut and Mr. Blanke are of the opinion that fliers should exercise more caution about handling and moving and having secure all gas tanks, so that when the occasion arises to hurriedly seek a higher altitude, the lives of innocent hunters will not be placed in jeopardy.

### **A FISH TALE**

*(New Bremen Sun - November, 1951)*

Laverne Wint was one of the first to buy a duck stamp last month and one of the first to start banging away at the quack-quacks at Lake St. Marys when the season opened. He ended the day empty-handed

but as he was rowing along gently, a big bold bass began to eye him enviously. The poor fish ended by making a suicidal slide from the water into the boat - for a one-way ride. Several days later, Wint again was out and again landed a fish. This time it was a good-sized crappie. It's hard to predict what he'll do today. Maybe it's his day to bring home A DUCK!

### MEMORIES OF PLUM STREET

One of our new members is Beverly/"Betty" (Gast) Roberts of Palm Desert, California. Betty first wrote to us in January ordering a 2-year subscription to *The Towpath* after having received several previous copies thanks to a "distant" cousin, Sally (Abbott) Fark of New Bremen. Several weeks later, she sent us a number of pictures, obituaries and high school memorabilia which we appreciate receiving - some of the pictures will appear in *The Towpath* whenever space permits (see next page.) She also sent a christening dress, a cradle skirt, her grandmother's petticoat and a child's fur scarf & muffs (2 sets) dating from around 1918-1920.

Betty Gast is a daughter of Clifford J. ("Jim") Gast and Irene Dinkel. She graduated from N.B.H.S. in 1933, the first class to attend all four years of high school in the 1929 school. Betty lived for some years of her childhood in the house at 104 E. Plum St. - the same house that Ralph May grew up in with his Grandmother Schroeder and which he mentioned often in his writings (where the log cabin is now.) Betty also had a few stories to tell about her days in this house east of the poultry house:

"When we lived in the East Plum St. house (in the 1920s), a man called 'Diamond Dick' (Schroeder) lived in the two front rooms, an apartment of sorts. He and I used to 'kill' a full quart of ice cream together most every weekend. (*'Diamond Dick' was August Schroeder, an uncle of Ralph May.*) That property covered a whole block and we had oodles of space to roam and lots of freedom. One side of the lot had a row of apple trees and the other side a long row of black walnut trees with a huge garden in the middle. One time I thought I could fly, so I jumped out the second floor bedroom window with an umbrella. If it hadn't been for the old apple tree, I would have gone splat!! Between the rear of the house and the poultry house was a huge mulberry tree and a large barn, where we raised pigeons and rabbits. Reuben Thiesing and I had such fun climbing that tree when the mulberries were ripe."

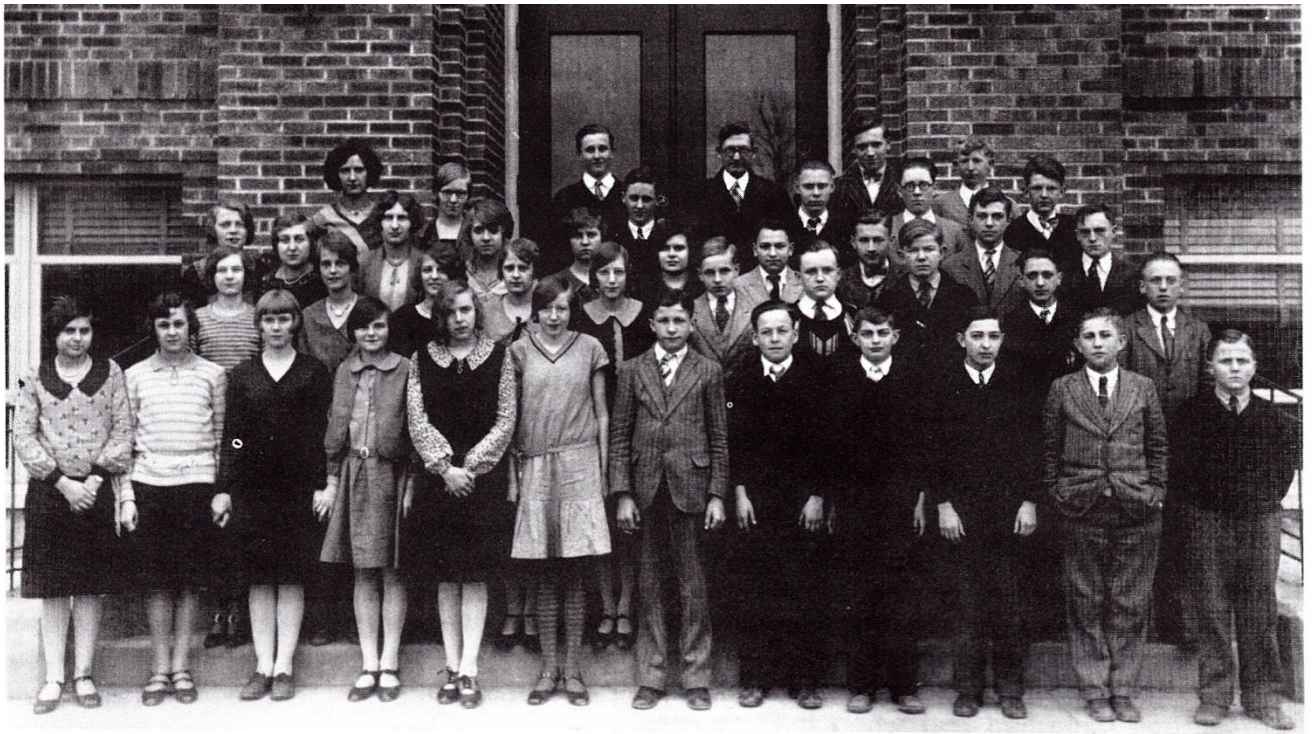
"The house was very convenient to the Miami-Erie Canal. I could get up in the morning before anyone else was awake and take my pole and some fishworms from the garden and catch a mess of catfish before breakfast. Also, we skated down the canal when it was frozen over. One time I went through the ice and they had to pull me home since I was literally frozen stiff. We used to swim in the old ice pond on the other side of the canal."



House at 104 E. Plum St.

This house was later lived in (from around 1950) by the Harold & Susie Looker family.





### 1929-1930 FRESHMAN CLASS

(First Freshman class to attend the new High School built in 1929 and who graduated in 1933.)

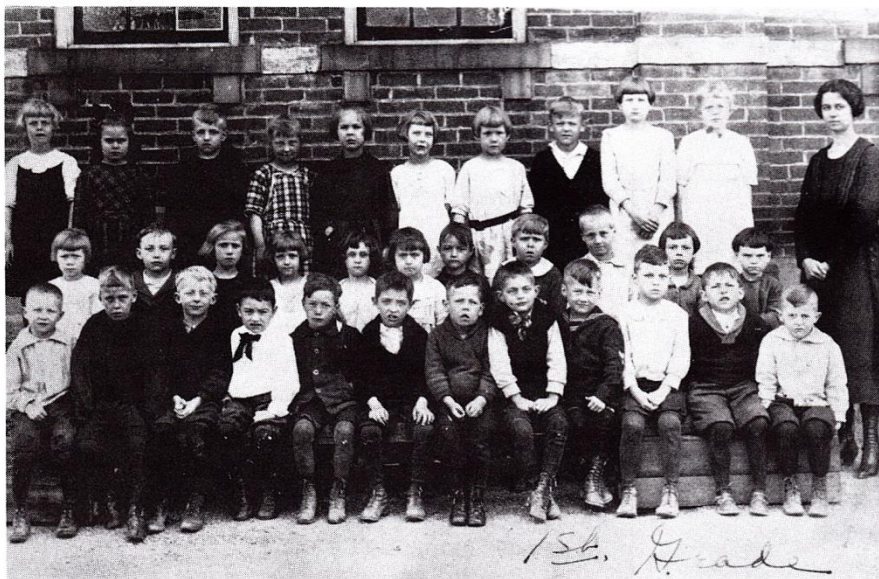
**FRONT:** Norma Heinfeld, Betty Gast, Dorothy Gieseke, Charlotte Knost, Leona Niekamp, Lorma Fark, Vernon Roediger, Virgil Hirschfeld, Karl Block, Frederick Gilberg, Earl Meckstroth, Orville Fishbaugh.

**ROW 2:** Elizabeth ("Billie") Streine, Phyllis Nussmeyer, Hilda Garmhausen, Marcella Nieter, Helen Warner, Lewis Komminsk, Otis Longworth, Sylvester Scheer, Frederick Koeper, Ralph Dicke.

**ROW 3:** Lucile Fark, Gladys Poppe, Elodie Lanfersieck, Opal Fishbach, Alma Kuest, Helen Topp, Ernst Strohmeier, Lionel Schierholt, Victor Koenig, Albert Knost.

**ROW 4:** Pauline Haus (teacher), Beulah Scheer, Everett Koenig, Adrian Greber, Howard Ruese, Robert Kiefer.

**BACK:** James King, Mr. Archer (Superintendent), Willis Schierholt, Elmer Wietholter.



### 1921-1922 FIRST GRADE CLASS

**FRONT:** Reuben Varno, Reuben Thiesing, Elmer Wietholter, Ernest Strohmeier, Clifford Scheer, Frederick Gilberg, Virgil Hirschfeld, Karl Block, Richard Weinberg, Victor Koenig, Vernon Roediger, Everett Koenig.

**MIDDLE:** Druscilla Fark, Otis Longworth, Rosemary Wissman, Lois Maurer, Betty Gast, Norma Heinfeld, Kenneth Fark, Edgar Egbert, Frank Topp, Mabel Moeller, Charlotte Knost.

**STANDING:** Phyllis Nussmeyer, Helen Topp, Lewis Komminsk, Alma Kuest, Helen Doenges, Margaret Roettger, Dorothy Gieseke, Eugene Jordan, Elodie Lanfersieck, Lucile Fark.

**TEACHER:** Esther Vornholt.

(Photos from Betty Gast Roberts)

(I.D.'s by Lucile Fark Moeller)



## READERS' RESPONSE

♥A great January, 1998 issue of *The Towpath*, particularly "Miss Alberta's" wedding (*Alberta Collins & Calvin Steinebrey*.) I was in her class at that time - what a sad time for us. Everyone loved her, and she was leaving - no married teachers were allowed at that time!

I also had Enola (Huenke) Montague, perhaps as a substitute teacher. She was in the picture of the 1926-1927 N.B.H.S. girls' basketball team.

Best wishes, Lois & Frank McCune - Gaylord, Mich.

To the Editor:

February 4, 1998

♥Thank you for the complimentary copy of the January, 1998 issue of *The Towpath*. In the article "Do you Remember?", my father, Robert Isenberger, was mentioned as having the nickname "Spatz." It brought back so many wonderful memories. In regard to the article about Lola Patterson - she bought my Grandmother Lorina Isenberger's house on Main Street, remodeled it and moved into it.

I am enclosing my membership dues and look forward to the next issue.

Joyce (Isenberger) Thornsberry, class of '65

## NEW BREMEN HAT MAKERS

In a recent visit with Elodie (Lanfersieck) Sollman, she told about her mother's days as a hat maker. Elodie's mother was Mrs. Joseph Lanfersieck, the former Josephine Bruns. Josephine Bruns had a hat store in the building now occupied by Miller Insurance Agency at 109 South Washington St. for 12 years, from around 1898-99 to 1910-11. The store was to the front of the building and Josephine lived in the back part. Anna Fuelling lived at 310 South Washington and was a seamstress. When she would finish sewing a dress for someone, the ladies would then come to Josephine Bruns to have a hat made to match.

The hats were made from scratch, with charges of 5¢ and 10¢ for the different components of the hat. Every spring and fall, she and other ladies from the area would go to Cincinnati to buy all the materials they would need for that season. They bought the crowns, braids, ribbons, flowers, veils, etc.

Mesdames E.R. Haines and Wilson Ahlers left the fore part of this week to attend the millinery openings at Dayton, Cincinnati and Columbus and to purchase a stock of goods for the former's store.

(*New Bremen Sun* -8/19/1910)

## In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we report the death on March 17, 1998 of **Melba Roediger**, one of our "founding ladies" and a charter member of the N.B.H.A. Melba was one of the four women who originated the idea of having a museum and a historical organization in New Bremen.

Melba was the head librarian of the New Bremen Public Library since August, 1964 - from the time the library was housed in the old First National Bank building at the SE corner of Washington & Monroe Streets to the present time in the building which was built in 1973 on the NW corner of S. Washington & Front Streets. She was married to Carl Roediger.

On January 9, 1998, **Harold Matthew Brucken** died at Cleveland. He was the son of Joseph & Lina (Taylor) Brucken and graduated from N.B.H.S. in 1924. In the summer of 1925, after completing his freshman year at Marietta College, he was hired by the village of New Bremen to assign numbers to all the existing houses and empty lots, which greatly improved the two-year old mail delivery service. In 1929, he married Eunice Boesel. (*see the July, 1997 issue of "The Towpath"*)

### The Brucken Family

Harold Brucken was born in Fort Loramie and the family moved to New Bremen when he became school age. His great-grandfather, Conrad Brucken, came from Spenrath, Germany in 1854 and settled in Fort Loramie where he operated a sawmill. Conrad's son, Mathias (Matthew) Brucken, established Brucken's Cafe in Fort Loramie in the 1890's. Matthew's son, Joseph (Harold's father), operated a cigar store and factory in New Bremen and managed the town baseball team. He later was Sales Manager of the White Mountain Creamery. Joe was married to Lina Taylor, who served as superintendent of the St. Paul's Church Sunday School for over 25 years.

Lina Brucken was also a writer of poetry. At our annual dinner and program held on March 16, 1998,

everyone was given a copy of one of her most famous poems, "Our Home Town", which was printed in the *New Bremen Sun* on May 24, 1935. It is two pages long and names all the businesses, stores, town officers, etc. of that time period.

If anyone would like to have a copy of this poem, please send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope and we will be glad to send you a copy.

We extend our condolences to these two families.

## GENEALOGY CORNER?

### HIS OWN GRANDFATHER

Frank Giwley of Woodstock, Ontario, committed suicide a few days ago, having gone insane over the idea that he was his own grandfather. After reading the letter left by the unfortunate man, he can scarcely be blamed for killing himself under the circumstances. Here is his letter:

"I married a widow with a grown-up daughter. My father visited our home very often, and he fell in love with my step-daughter and married her. So my father became my son-in-law, and my step-daughter became my mother, because she was my father's wife.

Some time afterward, my wife had a son - he was my uncle for he was the brother of my step-mother. My father's wife, i.e. my step-daughter, also had a son - he was, of course, my brother, and in the meantime, my grandson, for he was the son of my daughter.

My wife was my grandmother because she was my mother's mother. I was my wife's husband and grandson at the same time - and, as the husband of a son's grandmother is his grandfather, I was my own grandfather!"  
(*New Bremen Sun* - 4/16/1897)

EDITOR'S NOTE: An old song I remember went: "It sounds funny I know, but it really is so, oh, I'm my own Grandpa."

## NEW PUBLICATION OFFERED

### A Recipe for Remembering

John T. Dickman, a former New Bremen resident, remembers his youth in New Bremen in the 30s and 40s by way of the foods of the day in an 86-page compilation of memories and recipes entitled:

### *A Taste of Tradition*

### *New Bremen Memories from the Kitchen.*

The New Bremen Historic Association is offering this booklet for \$5.00 with all proceeds to go to the Association. Please add \$1.25 per book for mailing.

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

We wish to acknowledge and thank the following members for the Memorial contributions they made to the New Bremen Historic Association this past quarter:

Mary D. ("Pat" Buckloh) Sink, in memory of  
her parents, Frank & Marie (Dicke) Buckloh her sister, Lucille (Buckloh) Deerhake.

Betty (Horn) Schroer, in memory of  
her parents, Virgil & Malinda (Gieseke) Horn

Jeanne (Boesel) Sills, in memory of  
her father, Dr. Reuben J. Boesel  
her uncle, Harold M. Brucken