

# THE TOWPATH

Published quarterly (January - April - July - October) by

## NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 73 - New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073

(Founded in 1973)

MUSEUM located at 120 N. Main St.  
(The Luelleman House)

VISITING HOURS: 2:00-4:00 p.m. Sundays - June, July, August  
(Or anytime, by Appointment)

DUES: \$8.00 Per year / Per person

(Life Membership: \$75.00 Per person)

October- 1998

### "NEW BREMEN"

That is the title of a NEW BOOK that will be available soon, written by Mark Bernstein about the history of New Bremen. Mark has interviewed many New Bremen people and done much research about our town since early this year. The Historic Association has been one of his sources of material and pictures. The book will be selling for \$19.95 and will be available by Thanksgiving at the Crown Store at 120 W. Monroe St.

(For more information, call 1-800-298-4708)

### COMPLIMENTARY COPIES

With each quarterly mailing of *The Towpath*, a number of Complimentary Copies are sent to folks we think might be interested in reading one or more of the articles in that issue. If you are one of these people and would like to continue receiving future issues, please send the appropriate amount of dues (subscription) to the above address. (P.O. Box 73)

Since New Bremen is now in the process of building another new High School east of town on State Route 274, this seems like an appropriate time to commemorate the existing High School as it looked after it was built in 1929-1930 on South Walnut St.

A bond issue was passed November 6, 1928 for \$80,000 and construction of the new High School began on March 21, 1929. This was necessary because the 1918 Central High School on Herman St. had been condemned as being unsafe. During this period of building, grades 1-8 met in the mornings and grades 9-12 met in the afternoons in the Central Grade School building. Some of the fixtures and equipment of the old High School were used in the new one.

Grades 7-12 moved into the new High School in January, 1930. Construction costs were \$60,525.

In 1956, a \$490,000 addition was built to the 1929 High School to accommodate the expanding elementary classes. Grades 1-6 were moved into the new building by October 1, 1956. The Central Grade School was razed in 1957.

A FAVORITE COMMENT: "This looks just like it did when I went to school there."



Actual size

### COMMEMORATIVE PORCELAIN MEDALLIONS

PRICE: \$12.50 ea. (Includes Sales Tax & Shipping)

Send orders to P.O. Box 73 - New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073



Photo by Dale Schaefer

### CENTURY-OLD LANDMARK DESTROYED BY FIRE

On July 22, 1998, the cupola-topped, 6-gabled building housing the home and business of Richard and Catherine Klosterman (The Taste Scoop ice cream shop and balloon & gift shop) was destroyed by an early morning fire, thus removing a 102-103 year old historical landmark (the former Julius Boesel horse barn and carriage house) from New Bremen's landscape.

In October, 1895, Julius Boesel (3/13/1857-1/14/1924) and his family moved into their newly-built 2½-3 story, 10-15 room Victorian Queen Anne mansion north of town, built on 20 acres along the angling road to New Knoxville (New Bremen/New Knoxville Road.) Also built about the same time was a horse barn/carriage house on the west side of the property. To the south of the house was built a clay tennis court (now grassed over.) The Boesel family lived here until November, 1921 when Mr. Boesel resigned as President of the First National Bank and moved to Mt. Gilead, Ohio.

In 1976, the house was purchased by Don and Jacqui Kuck, who embarked on a 10 year plan to restore it to its once-stately look. In December, 1983, Don & Jacqui submitted an article detailing their project to the publication, *The Old-House Journal*. They also communicated with several relatives of Julius and Amalia (Haveman) Boesel and also former residents of the house. Here are some memories of a former resident:

*"My father, Jim Coss, purchased the house you now own from the Boesel estate and we lived there for 20 years. We loved that house and our 20 acres of land on which were also the horse barn, a good sized orchard, and chicken and brooder houses. We were chicken farmers mostly. When we moved there from Lima an elderly couple named Kettler were living there as caretakers. [EDITOR'S NOTE: The William & Bertha (Pohlman) Kettler family lived in the house for two years.]*

*I remember my brother Frank (Coss) and I painting and puttying the windows on the third floor. I didn't like heights and it was rather scary! There was a gas fireplace with beautiful green and white mottled glazed tiles, and a lovely mantel with a huge plate glass mirror above it. My parents moved away from New Bremen around 1943-1944."*

**Raeanna (Coss) Summerill - 1984 & 1998**

The property was later purchased by Arlie and Opal Wiessinger. Mr. Wiessinger was the manager of The Arcade Department Store. Miss Caroline Ahlers lived upstairs and cooked for the Wiessingers.

In 1953, the property was sold to Mr. & Mrs. Luther (Jack) Hirschfeld. They lived in the big house for a while and around March, 1965 (after State Route 66 was extended north from Washington St., thereby running along the west side of the barn), they made the horse barn/carriage house into a beer carryout (Barn 66 Carryout) and made the upstairs into a 3-bedroom apartment where they lived. The former back of this building now faced the new Route 66. The big house was sold to Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Barlage. In 1976, the former Boesel mansion was sold to Don & Jacqui Kuck who spent a great deal of time and effort in restoring the house to its former grandeur. The house is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In January, 1977, the carryout business was sold to William & Edna (Meiring) Moore. They added a drive-thru on the south side in May, 1978.

In 1985, the carryout was purchased by Bill & Julie Philipot and changed to an ice cream and balloon & gift shop (The Taste Scoop), and a mini-golf course and gazebo were added north of the building. They sold the business in 1995 to Tom and Kathy Klosterman of St. Marys, who operated it until it was destroyed by the fire on July 22, 1998.



## MEMORIES OF BOESEL RELATIVES



"My dad, Julius Boesel, built that house and over the big picture window in the living room, he put a stained glass window that said 'Julius Boesel 1895.' The staircase was really beautiful. As I recall, there was only one real fireplace, but several imitations - one in the library and one up in one bedroom.

I'm the last of nine children. We used to play hide-and-seek on the roofs - we'd go from one porch to the other. If you climb up in the barn tower, you'll see a lot of our names written up there, including mine. All the gravel in the driveways and walks came from the south field in the 20 acres. That was an Indian cemetery and several skeletons and many tools or relics were found. I believe Professor Edward Conradi took them. He was a Professor at the Florida State College for Women at that time."  
**Dorothy (Boesel) Gossard** - Feb., 1976 & July, 1977

"Kilateka, as it was known to my aunts and uncles, was the place where my mother, Marie (Boesel) Halsema, spent her childhood, and which she visited on her infrequent trips home from the Philippines after she married my father, Eusebius Julius ('Jay')

Halsema, in 1912. I had not been inside the house since my mother brought me there as a newborn infant in January, 1919. Thanks for taking time from your very busy sesquicentennial schedule to show it to me and my wife, Alice. We are amazed at the transformation you have accomplished." **James J. Halsema** - May & June, 1983; Feb., 1984

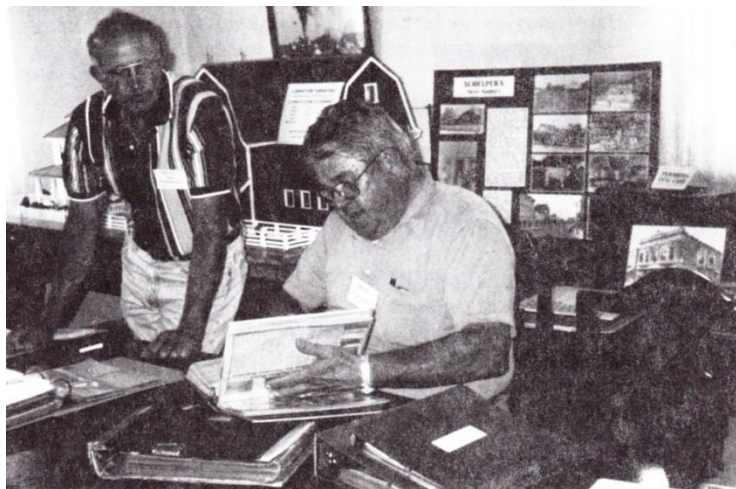
"How my father, Robert Boesel, and his sisters and brothers would have been gladdened to know that their 'villa' is still home to at least one child! (There were 9 children in the Boesel family.) Mildred (Boesel) Wolfe told us the story of how she had lived with her great-uncle Julius's family in the villa during the school term so that she could share in the pleasures of walking to school rather than just going across the street to enter it from her own home on Franklin St. We treasured the chance to tour the Julius Boesel mansion, which you have so lovingly restored. Thanks for making our brief stopover in New Bremen so memorable." **John J. & Mary Boesel** - August, 1990

(All letters printed by permission of Don Kuck)

## SPECIAL DAYS AT MUSEUM

Two special days at visitation were observed at the museum this summer. Both were well attended. On July 19, we had "Postcard Day" (see picture below.) On Saturday, August 15, John Dickman was here to autograph copies of his recently published book, "A Taste of Tradition." A special treat was served to all who visited on this day - Irvin Fark's famous peanut butter rolls baked by Dru (Luedeke) Meyer.

We appreciate the interest and support of all our visitors and the many favorable comments about the museum's "new look."



**POSTCARD DAY AT THE MUSEUM - JULY 19, 1998**

Tom Fledderjohann (left) and Vernon Doenges (right) talking about their collections. Anna Mae Hudson was also on hand to display her collection.

## AN OLD-FASHIONED MOTHER

I was thinking today of my old-fashioned home  
And all the old things that were in it;  
The things that an old-fashioned mother would use,  
Quite good, but not "up to the minute."

For instance, I wouldn't want that old fashioned broom  
That Mother would use for her sweeping;  
A sweeper, electric and streamlined, of course,  
Is needed in modern housekeeping.

I wouldn't want to do all my sewing by hand;  
Oh, dear, no, I must have a Singer!  
And how in the world would my washing get done  
Without a machine and a wringer?

I still am amazed when I think of the work  
To keep her big family from freezing;  
How she piled on the wood in the old-fashioned stoves  
To keep us from coughing and sneezing.

And often I wonder just how in the world  
She nourished her big hungry brood,  
For what did she know about Vitamin C  
Or the calorie content of food?

How well I remember our Saturday nights  
When she fixed all our Sunday School clothes;  
Then she brought in the tub and gave us a scrub  
From the top of our heads to our toes.

She didn't spend her time at the clubs and the shows,  
But she loved to attend Ladies' Aid;  
And many a quilt did she help to stitch,  
And many an apron she made.

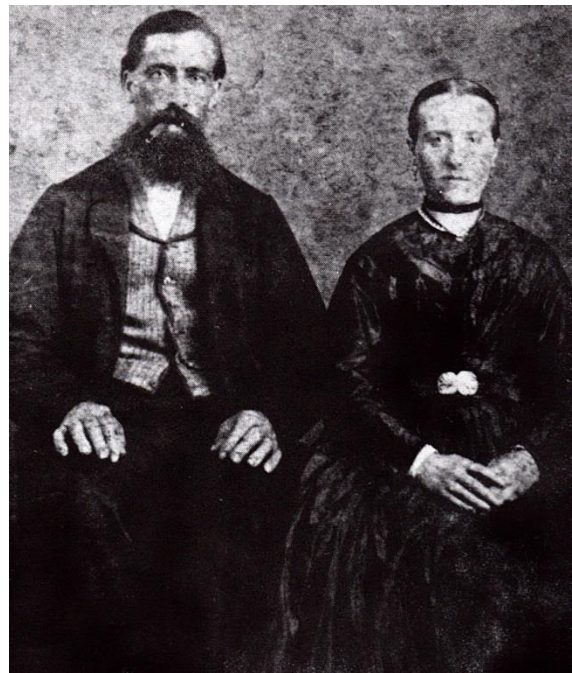
She didn't have an auto to take her to church,  
Or a radio swinging "the blues,"  
Or a telephone handy by which she could get  
All the neighborhood gossip and news.

Still I wouldn't want to barter a single new thing  
For an old-fashioned thing of my mother,  
But I'd gladly exchange every new-fangled thing  
For the old-fashioned faith of that mother.

No matter how heavy the burden she bore,  
No matter how rocky the road,  
She put all her faith in the Saviour above,  
And together they carried the load.

Clara M. Bode  
New Knoxville, Ohio  
May 12, 1945

Clara M. Bode was the wife of Dr. D.A. Bode, Pastor of the First Evangelical and Reformed Church (now First United Church of Christ) of New Knoxville. Mrs. Bode taught World History in New Knoxville for three years and was known for her poetry which was often published in *The Evening Leader*. As of 1950, at least three books of her poetry had been published. The Bode's served in New Knoxville from around 1941-1956. (Poem courtesy of Julia Fark)



William Heinrich and Anna Catharine (Beckmann) Luelleman, early residents of our museum at 120 N. Main St. from 1868 to 1890 (William), 1942 (Anna.) (see the Luelleman article in the January, 1998 issue of "The Towpath".)



The William & Ida (Heinfeld) Luelleman family  
Helen (Quellhorst), Ida, William, Richard,  
Carl  
SEATED: Margaret (McDermitt), Catherine  
(Grilliot)

This picture was recently donated to the museum by Carl Luelleman and was taken in February, 1942, shortly before Carl left for the service in W.W.II.



# NEW BREMEN'S FALL FESTIVAL

**Friday Eve., October 20th, and Saturday, October 21, 1939**

**SEE THE CROWNING OF THE FESTIVAL QUEEN FRIDAY ——— BAND CONCERTS**

**Grand Masquerade Pageant ——— Many Beautiful Floats in Both Street Parades**

**Bicycle Racing ——— Tug-of-War ——— Horse and Colt Parade ——— Prizes**

**DO NOT MISS THIS SOCIAL EVENT ——— Sponsored by W.O.W. Lodge 149**

New Bremen has a long history of successful fetes, beginning with early church picnics in the days of our first settlers in 1833, when they built a log house 12' x 14' in size. That was the beginning of a settlement which has grown and prospered through the years.

Since that distant date, all manner of carnivals, picnics, festivals and other forms of amusement have been noted in the history of the town. Most outstanding was the great New Bremen Centennial held July 1-4, 1933. This 4-day event attracted attention from the entire nation.

Other great occasions were the Fire Department picnics which were revived in 1948 after a lapse of about 20 years. (*See July, 1998 Towpath articles.*)

The Rod & Gun Club, the American Legion Post #241, and the New Bremen Civic Association have also sponsored many interesting, lively and outstanding programs in times past.

The top fete of each year, however, was the big annual W.O.W. (Woodmen of the World) Festival & Homecoming celebration. Every resident of New Bremen looked forward to these gala events and cooperated in making the affairs successful.

*(from the N.B. Sun - 7/19/1948)*

On Friday evening and Saturday, October 20-21, 1939, the first W.O.W. - sponsored annual Fall Festival & Homecoming was held. This took the place of the former annual Horse & Colt Show which had been sponsored by the Rod & Gun Club beginning in 1936.

The 1939 festival marked the beginning of the traditional crowning of a Festival Queen which took place on Friday evening on a special stand erected at the Monroe St. canal bridge. W.O.W. Council Commander Albert Bessel was in charge of the ceremonies. Prior to the crowning of the queen, the New Bremen Band played a brief concert.

The Festival Queen was selected by officials of the Woodmen lodge and members of the general arrangement committee who acted as judges in counting the votes that had been gathered from the various business places where customers had chosen from a group of 8 high school girls - 2 from each grade (9-12).

The first W.O.W. Festival queen was Miss Edna Marshall, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nick Marshall, who lived at that time on a farm east of town (the present Robert Bambauer place, formerly the Becker farm.) The Marshall family had moved to New Bremen from Newport in the summer. Edna's grandparents were said to have lived at New Bremen before they moved to Newport 50 years earlier (before 1889). Older brothers of Nick Marshall were Frank and William, who had attended New Bremen schools. Edna Marshall was a member of the Junior class and graduated in 1941 from N.B.H.S. (*see page 8 for a complete list of queens and their attendants.*)

After the crowning of the queen on Friday evening, there was a drawing to award the prizes which had been donated by merchants, industrialists, farmers, and professional men. Stubs of purchased tickets had been deposited in a cage at the Gilberg and Hegemier Electric Store. After this, people entertained themselves at Beano stands, ball-throwing stands, fortune wheels, lunch stands, and with all the other usual carnival activities.

On Saturday afternoon, bicycle and tricycle races were held. "Doc" Hickman was the winner and Warren Moeller won in the junior division. Following the bike races was a parade consisting of the N.B.H.S. Band, the queen's float (a large rotating white globe with "Woodmen of the World" written on it), horses and colts, etc. Before and after the parade, the horses and colts were on exhibit at Dr. Leonard H. Schmidt's barns on North Walnut St., where a judging took place. More than 50 animals had been entered in the show and 48 prizes were awarded in 13 classes. Chairman of this event was August Schnelle and the secretary was Herbert Dicke.

After the Horse & Colt parade, a farmers' Tug-of-War took place in the former Booster Park next to the Post Office, with August Schnelle leading the east side and Herbert Dicke leading the victorious west side. This was followed by a pie-eating contest with Gust Grothaus winning this event.

The final event of the festival was a masquerade parade held under lights at 9:00 p.m. with various prizes being awarded for best dressed, most comical, etc. Prizes were also awarded for the produce exhibits, guessing contests, etc. Four bands participated in the

parade - New Bremen, Minster, Coldwater, and the Shelby County All-Girls Band. After the parade, all four bands joined together for a mass band concert under the direction of New Bremen High School's band director, Joseph DuPere. Masqueraders from ages 6 to 60 participated, as did over 65 members of the Home Benefit Association, members of the Woodmen of the World, and other residents. The crowd dispersed around midnight.  
(*New Bremen Sun -10/19-20-26/1939*)

**The pictures at the right were taken at the 1942 Woodmen Festival. The top photo, taken from the ferris wheel, looks north up Washington St. The buildings at the left are Rairdon's Garage and Tony Schwieterman's blacksmith shop. At the right is the First National Bank. The bottom photo looks south down the east side of Washington St., from the Lanfersieck building (American Budget) south to the Arcade building (Crown Equipment). (Photos courtesy of Jim Cooper)**

In September, 1940, in addition to another tug-of-war, there was also a water carnival (remember that the swimming pool had just been completed in May, 1940. (see July, 1998 Towpath.)

By 1943, the gas rationing of W.W.II curtailed activities, however there were still band concerts, magician acts, and a poultry and produce show.

No festivals were held for two years after the war in 1945 and 1946; however the Woodmen displayed a Victory float with a replica of the Statue of Liberty in the New Bremen and Minster parades.

The festivals resumed in 1947, and in 1948, the 4-day summer affair (August 4-7) was jointly sponsored by the Woodmen and the American Legion, with Luther (Jack) Hirschfeld serving as chairman for the W.O.W. and Robert Weinberg as chairman for the Legion. Again, a queen was chosen from the Junior class. A Saturday afternoon ball game was scheduled between New Bremen and Minster. Also appearing were the Sidney American Legion's Singing Soldiers, under the direction of Homer Crusey. A special feature this year was the "Lone Star Ranger" and his famous Arabian stallion, "Silver." Free autographed pictures were distributed to the audience. Because Washington St. was practically blocked by concessions in front of the fire station, the fire department stationed a fire truck in the driveway at Rairdon's Gas Station on the corner of Washington and Monroe Streets and another in the John Stueve Tin Shop south of Plum Street.

The festival of August 3-6, 1949 featured Nancy Lee and the Hilltoppers of the WOWO Fort Wayne radio station, also the Zuercher's 23-piece Accordion Band of Berne, Indiana.

In 1950, the festival was moved to the JayCee Park south of Plum Street, where it continued to be held thereafter. This year, a balloon ascension was held. In subsequent years, the entertainment consisted mainly of band concerts by the N.B.H.S. band, amateur talent shows, radio and television personalities, and western

square dancing.







### **PAST QUEENS OF THE WOODMEN OF THE WORLD FESTIVALS – 1939-1964**

**SEATED:** Barbara (Luedeke) Fogel, 1957; Donna (Greber) Conradi, 1947; Edna (Marshall) Cress, 1939;

Lois (Berning) Dicke, 1954; Dolores (Wissman) Teeple, 1949.

**MIDDLE:** Pat (Grilliot) Wourms, 1959; Diane (Kettler) Grilliot, 1963; Janice (Richey) Howell, 1956; Shirley (Fogt) Black, 1942; Lois (Dicke) Herman, 1960; JoAlice (Kuenning) Nieter, 1950; Marian (Frey) Engle, 1944; Diann (Heitkamp) Bornhorst, 1962; Jeanne (Braun) Inglis, 1958; Mary (Holdren) Finke, 1952.

**BACK:** Joyce (Quellhorst) Gilberg, 1953; Jean (Dicke) Dickman, 1948; Judy (Dietrich) Horn, 1955; Beverly (Widau) Fledderjohann, 1964; Betty Ann (Behm) Kishler, 1940; Doris (Waterman) Howe, 1943; Dorothy (Fark) Haupt, 1941; Betty (Holdren) Quellhorst, 1951.

**NOT PICTURED:** Dianne Komminsk, 1961.

*(Photo courtesy of Doris Wissman)*

The 1964 Woodmen Festival & Homecoming was held July 22-25. This marked the 25th anniversary of the first festival to be sponsored by the W.O.W. The queens (past & present) were feted on Saturday with a banquet at the school which was prepared by the Band Mothers, and were each given a complimentary corsage from Cox Greenhouse. Also attending the banquet were Master of Ceremonies David Schwieterman & his wife Ruth, Grand Marshal & Mrs. Albert Bessel, Mayor & Mrs. Frank Dicke, Woodmen Commander & Mrs. Paul Gilberg, banquet chairman & Mrs. Walter Behm, publicity chairman & Mrs. Merlin Ahlers, and Mrs. Alvin Dammeyer of the Woodmen Circle. Later the group was shown films of past parades.

On Saturday evening, the parade was gotten off to a loud start with the firing of a cannon by Gene Bielefeld. After the parade, the past and present queens were introduced to the public by MC Dave Schwieterman.

The Woodmen continued to sponsor the festivals for another 9 years, until after the 1973 festival, when due to a shortage of manpower, they decided to discontinue their tradition. However, when the Bremenfest Committee was organized and began to hold their festivals in August of 1975, the Woodmen continued to man the Bingo stand for many years.

Bremenfest is now held around the third weekend of August every year. It is again being held in the downtown area - the area now known as "Lock One Park." In 1999, Bremenfest will celebrate its 25th anniversary.

The Woodmen of the World, a fraternal insurance society, was chartered in New Bremen on March 8, 1906 by the national organization of Omaha, Nebraska. The local chapter was named Good Hope Camp 149.

The Woodmen Circle was chartered on September 7, 1948. They just celebrated their 50th anniversary.

Early meetings were held in the IOOF (Odd Fellows) hall on the top floor of the Schulenberg & Laut building on W. Monroe St. In 1952, they purchased the E.G. Conradi house at 116 W. Monroe St. and held meetings there.

# WOODMEN FESTIVAL QUEENS (1939 - 1973)

YEAR	QUEEN	ATTENDANTS
1939	Edna (Marshall) Cress	Catherine (Schroeder) Graf - Beverly (Huenke) Paul - Erline (Beickman) Maich - Lois (Scheer) McCune - Pauline (Meyer) Flory - Dorothy (Fark) Haupt - Evelyn (Eckhart) Ru
1940	Betty Ann (Behm) Kishler	Rosemary (Landwehr) Gerling - Erline (Beickman) Maich - Delores (Ahlers) Rasor Earline (Brady) Stolte - Dorothy (Fark) Haupt - Vivian (Grothaus) Schnelle
1941	Dorothy (Fark) Haupt	Jane (Dietrich) Douglas - Alice (Schmidt) Wissman - Barbara (Pape) Schmidt Louise (Schroeder) McAllister - Lois (Scheer) McCune - Erline (Beickman) Maich
1942	Shirley (Fogt) Black	Doris (Waterman) Howe - Edith (Blanke) Wissman - Shirley Schelper - Betty (Schnelle) Slattery - Ruth Ann (Heinfeld) Reese - Barbara (Pape) Schmidt - Jane (Dietrich) Dougla
1943	Doris (Waterman) Howe	Ruth Ann (Heinfeld) Reese - Marian (Frey) Engle - Jane (Dietrich) Douglas Betty (Schnelle) Slattery - Edith (Blanke) Wissman - Dona Mae (Speckman) Kuenning
1944	Marian (Frey) Engle	Ruth Ann (Heinfeld) Reese - Dona Mae (Speckman) Kuenning - Edith (Blanke) Wissma Nancy Lou (Erhardt) Kuehnle - Marilyn (Grothaus) Seals- Jane (Dietrich) Douglas
1945	No festival	
1946	No festival	
1947	Donna (Greber) Conradi	Marjorie (Braun) Belton - Ruth (Block) Johns - Donna (Holdren) Wirtz Betty (Schroer) Bulp - Susan (Schulenberg) Rabe - Esther (Fogt) Slattery
1948	Jean (Dicke) Dickman	Barbara (Earl) Zimpher - Anna Mae (Cooper) Hudson - Lois (Combs) Wissman Joan (Hoffman) Sunderman - Janice (Dammeyer) Ursin-Smith - Martha (Moeller) May
1949	Dolores (Wissman) Teeple	Jean (Greiwe) Ahlers - Dorothy (Tangeman) Dicke - Audrey (Lampert) McCollum Barbara (Poppe) Block - Molly Lou (Kellermeyer) Manley - Mary Ann (Wellman) Samp
1950	JoAlice (Kuenning) Nieter	Virginia (Hoffman) Shaw - Joyce Ann (Laut) Hauck - Betty Jean (Quellhorst) Opperman Alice (Gilberg) Hartwig - Vera (Warner) Schmidt - Sue (McCollum) Shockney
1951	Betty (Holdren) Quellhorst	June (Hirschfeld) Hegemier - Sally Jo (Abbott) Fark - Peggy (Speckman) Henschen Betty Jo (Schwieterman) Gormley - Joan (Quellhorst) Klier - Delores (Bertke) Frank
1952	Mary (Holdren) Finke	Shirley (Hittepole) Kuck - Ruth (Westerbeck) Warner - Janice (Quellhorst) Dorsten Barbara (Harmony) Moore - Doris (Thielker) Tangeman - Virginia (Warner) Friemering
1953	Joyce (Quellhorst) Gilberg	Joyce (Inman) Holdren - Jane (Becker) Dirks - Mary Ellen (Schemmel) Kurtzman Joann (Neuman) Williams - Nancy (Quellhorst) Heitkamp - Nancy (Looker) Waterman
1954	Lois (Berning) Dicke	Janet (Westerbeck) Cooper - Trudy (Schwieterman) Kuenning - Janet (Fledderjohn) Wis Shirley (Fischbach) Pax - Phyllis (Nedderman) Fledderjohann - Evelyn (Bassler) Baur
1955	Judy (Dietrich) Horn	Norma (Berning) Lunney - Kathleen (Pence) Gunston - Betty (Tangeman) Burkard Janice (Topp) Schroer - Jane (Gilberg) Talan - Virginia (McCollum) Braun
1956	Janice (Richey) Howell	Barbara (Campbell) Ripley - Margene Howell - Marlene (Moeller) Egbert Helen (Kuck) Haeseker - JoAnn (Fark) Graves - Rosalyn (Ahlers) Stutsman
1957	Barbara (Luedeke) Fogel	Bertha Judt - Dorothy (Schroer) Koeper - Betty (Harris) Davis Linda (Coble) Jones - Rose (Pohlman) Leffel - Judy (Gast) Buck
1958	Jeanne (Braun) Inglis	Joan (Berning) Meckstroth - Becky (Bruner) Dicke - Mary Ann (Cooper) Cole Pat (Gels) D'Alessio - Jenine (Schnelle) Fanning - Martha (Topp) Ewing
1959	Pat (Grilliot) Wourms	Louise (Wittenbrink) Koenig - Edythe (Conradi) Henschen - Terry (Hirschfeld) Wagner Becky (Campbell) Hipps - Carolyn (Scheer) Sanford - Linda Marshall



1960	Lois (Dicke) Herman	Frances (Cooper) Johnson - Nancy (Kettler) Price - Genevieve Conradi - Doris (Topp) O Emily (Harlamert) Wiedeman - Lois (Wahoff) Westerheide
1961	Dianne Komminsk	Carol (Hittepole) Wilson - Sharon (Widau) Dietz - Karen (Moyer) Tostrick Kathy (Schmieder) Nedderman - Katherine (Wahoff) Kellen - Barbara (Cashdollar) Zieg
1962	Diann (Heitkamp) Bornhorst	Kathleen Topp - Jane (Voress) Koenig - Suzanne (Luedeke) Broyles - Barbara (Berning) Freewalt - Barbara (Wehmeyer) Moeller - Barbara (Mousa) Gebert - Nancy (Brockman)
1963	Diane (Kettler) Grilliot	Diane (Gruebmeier) Gast - Carol (Dicke) Ferguson - Marcia (Ashbaugh) Weadock Karen (Moeller) Farley - Bonnie (Quellhorst) Elsass - Sandra (Boesel) Bitler
1964	Beverly (Widau) Fledderjohann	Joyce (Brockman) Wente - Carolyn (Weinberg) Smith - Judy (Ahlers) Schwieterman Betty (Meckstroth) Dietrich - Roseann (Schwartz) Shelby - Nancy (Lampert) Busse
1965	Jane Belton	Judy (Bergman) Furrow - Rosamund (Jackson) Ayers - Donna (Dicke) Jacoby LuAnn (Koenig) Shelby - Sandra Tontrup - Debbie (Meyer) Lunz
1966	Debbie (Schnell) Kuck	Jane (Moore) Gruebmeier - Angela (Snow) Alfrey - Lois (Ahlers) Elking Nancy (Heitkamp) Lampert - Nan (Howe) Scheib - Carol (Stueve) Weaver
1967	Theresa (Shelby) Garner	Janice (Musset) Peysor - Mary (Podoll) Pitroff - Kay (Heinfeldt) Doseck Janet (Lampert) Pape - Betty (Schwartz) Will - Shirley (Topp) Deen
1968	Susan (Phlipot) Moeller	Mary Ellen (Bornhorst) Fry - Carol (Vandemark) Turner - Jane (Lampert) Roby Michele (Bambauer) Ziegenbusch - Jenny (Schott) Wheaton - Linda (Dietrich) Hirschfe
1969	Dianne (Wissman) Schwartz	Keri (Opperman) Muir - Kathy (Hay) Tontrup - Bonnie (Wehmeyer) Huart Debbie (McKibans) Schrolucke - Linda (Boerger) Fortkamp - Susan (Gossette) Rengers
1970	Peg (Lampert) Will	Charlotte (Pape) Schwaberow - Valerie (Wissman) May - Gwen (Silvers) McAfee Lois (Niekamp) McKibans - Dot (Phlipot) Scheer - Jayne (Sturgill) Pass
1971	Ellen (Friemering) Sims	Edith (Elking) Schwartz - Cheryl (Nagel) Kantner - Sue (Cox) Gibboney Peg (Shelby) Eilerman - Christine (Ahlers) Wilson - Beverly (Schwartz) Strasburg
1972	Theresa (Lampert) Wissman	Gayle (Miars) Kelly - Anne (Braun) Prenatt - Phyllis (Wenning) Schwartz Diane (Bergman) Moeller - Brenda (Wehmeyer) Phlipot - Sue (Niekamp) McCollum
1973	Barbara (Ahlers) Renner	Joni (Ahlers) Burger - Christine (Black) Werst - Amy (Youngs) Kramer Joyce (Elking) Moubray - Dawn (Quellhorst) Brodbeck - Ann (Stueve) Wente
<i>THANK YOU to everyone who provided married names when contacted by the Editor!</i>		

## NEW BREMEN'S EARLY MAIL SERVICE

interview with Walter Behm by Janet Fledderjohn - June 8, 1985

Walter Behm and his father, J(ohn) Wilson Behm, a former teacher at Lock Two School, both served the postoffice in New Bremen. Wilson started working at the P.O. when Walter was about 6 years old (around 1910.) At this young age, it was Walter's duty to go every afternoon when the mail arrived to get *The Evening Leader* for his grandparents. The mail was brought to New Bremen by the streetcar (interurban). The lobby would be filled with elderly people who came to get their paper and catch up on all the latest news from others.

"August Gobrecht was Postmaster at that time (9/11/1909-10/9/1913). Two of his daughters helped him - Ethel, later Mrs. Louis Kohl, and Magdalena/"Honey", later Mrs. Alvin Pape. August had been a rural carrier on R.R. 1 for a short time, followed by Mr. Ed Neuman. [On 1/1/1910, R.R. 1 was taken over by Alvin Grothaus.] This was during horse and buggy days - the mail wagon had 'U.S. Mail' painted on the side and was just big enough for the carrier to sit in, with a little room in the front. The roads then were very bad, with ruts in them. The requirement to be a rural carrier in the early years was to own a carriage and two horses. The starting salary was \$9000 per year (*Sesquicentennial book*.)

After the horses, they came out with an automobile that was supposed to be good for muddy roads. Mr. Gobrecht's car was a 2-passenger car - all open, with just a windshield. He could walk right out of the side of it. This car was called a "Metz." It wasn't made too well and they went out of business. It had a chain drive and he would get stuck a lot of times in a chuck hole. Then the farmers would have to pull him out. It wasn't really made for that kind of work, that's for sure! "

### LESTER BLANKE ON RURAL MAIL DELIVERY

"Rural Free Delivery (R.F.D.) was started in September, 1896. Before that time, the farmers had to drive to town to get their mail from the postoffice. This may have been done only once a week. R.R. 1 for New Bremen began around 1903-1904 (*N.B.Sun-9/4/1903*.) R.R. 2 was to start on 4/1/1904 (*N.B.Sun-3/4/1904*.)

One carrier took care of the territory west of town and the other carrier took care of the territory east of town. In 1940, when I began my career as a rural mail carrier, the two routes were consolidated into one because the automobile was in use then and the route could be taken care of by one person. It was a great aid to the farmers when they got their mail delivered, first by wagon and then by automobile.

We not only had first class mail, but we also had marketing mail, such as Sears-Roebuck catalogs, to pass out to the patrons. (I don't believe everybody used those Sears-Roebuck catalogs to place orders from! There were other uses for them, too....)"

from "Tales of Yesteryear" - 3/17/97

"The first mail of the day would come in around 7:00 a.m. on the interurban. There was very little parcel post then, mostly first class mail and some advertising. There were very few lock boxes - most people had a numbered box and would go to the window and ask for their mail by

number.

This was in an old building on South Washington St., (*where the Speedway Gas Station is now*) with apartments upstairs. There was a pot-bellied cast-iron stove in the back which sometimes would get really hot, then would cool off and throw no heat - it was either too hot or too cold! The plumbing was 'outdoor plumbing.'

Because of the conditions and the small size of the building, the P.O. was moved to a large, old brick building at the SE corner of Monroe & Main Streets, the former Charles Boesel home, sold in September, 1909 to J.H. Grothaus. The streetcar made the turn there to go east. The employees would help the conductor drag the mail up on the porch on the east side of the building. At this new location there was much more room, better fixtures, and more lock boxes to be rented.

The P.O. would open at 6:30-7:00 a.m., and stay open until 5:30-6:00 p.m. We got mail twice a day - 1st class, 2nd class (newspapers), and 3rd class mail (advertising). There was no 4th class mail (parcel post) then yet. The Sears catalog was a real big item. It was a big day when the catalogs came in - there were bags of them.

The village carriers started in 1923 under the Postmastership of R.W. Kuck (4/25/1922-7/1/1930.) He followed Lafe Kunning (10/9/1913-4/25/1922.) When small towns became eligible for carrier service, Mr. Kunning wouldn't apply for it - he didn't want to deny those old people their afternoon in the postoffice!

When R(einhard) W. Kuck became Postmaster, one of the first things he did was to apply for carrier service. He started out with one carrier, Frank Buckloh, who had worked for Mr. Kuck in his implement business by the railroad track on the west side of town. So Mr. Buckloh became the first carrier, starting on July 1, 1923. He was to deliver the mail all over town, house to house, but a lot of people weren't ready for it - they didn't have mail boxes yet. He would get started on the east side of town about 7:30-8:00 a.m. and worked until 5:30-6:00 p.m., but he never got to the west side of town. He was even delivering mail on the 4th of July!

On the 4th of July, there was a big homecoming at Marion, Ohio for President Warren G. Harding, and Mr. Kuck decided that would be a good way to get to talk to some of the "big wheels" about his carrier service. My dad (Wilson Behm), a rural carrier at that time, was off for the holiday and Mr. Kuck asked him to go along. They went in Mr. Kuck's Model-T touring car. When the parade started, the President's car was first, followed by body guards, etc. Finally, another big black open limousine came along and when it got close enough, Mr. Kuck was sure that it was the Postmaster General. When his car came by, Mr. Kuck went out in the middle of the street, got on the running board, stuck his head in the back seat where the Postmaster General was sitting, and said, 'I'm R.W. Kuck, Postmaster at New Bremen, Ohio. I applied for carrier service, which you granted me, but you only allowed me one carrier. He works 10 hours a day, including today, which is a holiday, but he's never gotten to the other side of town. Either you grant me another carrier, or you remove the one that you gave me, because I won't operate that way.' The Postmaster General said, 'Thank you, Mr. Kuck, for calling my



attention to this. Starting tomorrow, July 5th, add another carrier and then send me a telegram and follow it up with a letter, explaining the situation, and you can put on an extra carrier starting tomorrow.' So I was appointed on July 5, 1923 and I worked there for 46 years and 4 months. I finally got to be a clerk in the office and the last couple of years, I was Assistant to the Postmaster until I retired in 1969.

I served in three different postoffices - the building on the corner of Main & Monroe Streets, the new building built in 1955 on the NW corner of Washington & Monroe Streets, and the new building that was built in 1960 on N. Main St. in what was formerly the old City Park (when they found out that the new highway was coming through.) The First National Bank put it up & the P.O. leased the south half. This was a much larger postoffice.

The clerks started sorting mail around 7:00 a.m. and we got on our routes by 8:30. I had the west side of town, west of Main St. We delivered parcels up to 4 pounds and the size of a shoe box. The larger ones had to be picked up by the patron. Some days our mail bags would weigh as much as 45 pounds or more when there were magazines. This was all done by walking, carrying the mailbag on my back. I would do half of my route, come back to the P.O., and then do the other half. Later we got relay boxes. We could take part of our mail out, put it in those relay boxes, then pick it up on our route.

We always wore heavy-soled shoes made especially for letter carriers. When we were village carriers, we didn't need to wear uniforms, but when we became city carriers (Class 2 postoffice) we got uniforms and an increase in salary. In the beginning, we had to pay for the shoes and uniforms ourselves. Later, they furnished both and we got a uniform allowance. We wore heavy weight uniforms in the winter and light weights in the summer. Now they wear shorts.

Back then, \$8000 in receipts (stamps, envelopes, etc.) was the minimum in order to be a Second Class P.O. When the receipts increased, you'd become First Class.

I didn't have much trouble with dogs, but I had some that were just crazy about me. Beata Isern's dog would scratch at the front door when it was time for me to start out on the mail route. She'd let him out and some days that dog would walk the whole route with me! Later, when he got up in years, I'd stop for lunch and he'd go home and didn't always come back. Paul Lietz's dog liked to go along with me and Virgil Hirschfeld's dog liked to follow me, but neither one did the whole route with me like Mrs. Isern's dog.

People were supposed to have a suitable mail box or a mail slot near the walkway. In the winter time, ice was a problem. It wasn't bad on the sidewalks, but going up on the porches with wooden floors was treacherous. We had "creepers" that we fastened on our heels, but people didn't like for you to wear them because they would mar their steps and their porch. I took quite a few hard falls, but I was lucky - I never did any damage. You just had to watch your step. Right near the end of my service, we got the little push carts that you'd hang your bag on so you wouldn't have to carry it on your back. I used that for a couple of years before I retired."

## MEMORIES OF PAT (BUCKLOH) SINK

"I remember Dad delivering mail twice a day - morning and afternoon. In the winter, he always made me shovel our walks and steps because it was difficult for them to walk in the snow. At Christmas he received many gifts from his patrons. He had this job during the depression when so many others were out of work. He and Mom were most grateful for that. Dad always spoke highly of Walter Behm, Les Blanke, and Orville Ruedebusch."

"The first Postmaster I worked for was R.W. Kuck. Then came Cade Schulenberg, Herman ("Bud") Laut, and Orville Ruedebusch. He was Postmaster when I retired.

Being a mail carrier was a steady job. I started out at \$1000 a year. After all the postal employees organized the letter carriers association and the clerks organization the pay got better and we got more benefits. Before that, we just had to take what we got.

Airmail was started in 1918. Quite a few people were skittish about sending their mail Airmail, because they'd hear of planes going down and the mail burning up. In 1943, postal zoning came into effect. It was most useful in the bigger cities.

During the depression, the receipts went down since people didn't send as much mail unless it was really important.

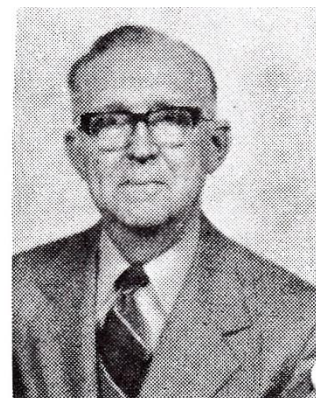
"Toots" (Laut) Blanke (Lester's wife) is probably the only woman who worked as a postal clerk in those years, except for the Gobrecht girls earlier on.

In 1923, it cost 2¢ to send a letter and a penny for postcards. When they started sending 3rd Class mail, like circulars, they cost 1½¢ to mail."

**JANET FLEDDERJOHN:** "I remember when they closed Herman St. & STAMCO built the plant across the street; the postman would walk through the middle of the plant where the sidewalk used to be in order to get to the other side. The doors were still there and there was an aisle. This is what he used to get to the other side of the plant."



New Bremen's first two mail carriers  
Frank Buckloh (1964)



Walter Behm (1971)

# In Memoriam

BETTY LOU KOMMINSK

September, 1917 - August 24, 1998

Betty Lou (Greene) Komminsk, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Vatchel Greene, came to New Bremen after graduation from Ohio State University and her marriage on December 23, 1939 to Paul Lewis Komminsk of New Bremen.

Lewis graduated from OSU in 1940 with a degree in Dairy Technology and became assistant manager and bookkeeper for Beatrice Foods, the company which had its beginnings in 1884 on 2.85 acres on the east edge of town when Lewis's maternal grandfather, Louis Huenke, and his brother, Henry Huenke, built the first creamery in northwestern Ohio, known as Huenke Brothers Creamery. [Ten years later, the name was changed to "The White Mountain Creamery", to symbolize the superior quality butter it produced - White Mountain butter was deemed comparable to that produced in the great dairies amid the White Mountains of New Hampshire.] By August, 1908, the company had expanded and a new plant was built at the west edge of town, just west of the Lake Erie and Western Railroad on the one-time Bunke farm.

Lewis Komminsk, born May 20, 1915, was the son of Harry Komminsk and Gertrude Huenke. Harry was a 1910 graduate of OSU and became a bookkeeper for the White Mountain Creamery in 1911. In December, 1928, the company was merged with the Beatrice Creamery Co., and in 1934, upon the death of his brother-in-law, Clifford V. Huenke, Harry became manager of the company until his retirement in 1958. à

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## KENNETH & RUTH FARK

We are also sorry to report the tragic deaths of Kenneth and Ruth Fark in an automobile accident on September 14, 1998. Ken's story about his days of working at the Lone Pine Filling Station was featured in the July, 1997 issue of *The Towpath*.

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The poem on the right was sent to the editor by Charles Overman of Everett, Washington. Charles is a great-grandson of John Joseph Overman and Marie Magdalena (Brucken) Overman/Bay/Wiethoff. The Wiethoffs (Marie and her third husband, Ernst) lived on 40 acres east of town. This property was sold to John & Mary (Fuelling) Luedeke in March of 1912 and is now owned by Ed Bushman, who, until this summer, operated a produce stand there.

Lewis then became manager of the New Bremen plant and also held high positions in the many branches of Beatrice Foods. From 1963 to 1967, Lewis and Betty traveled extensively to the branches in the United States and also in many other countries. When Lewis died on May 10, 1971 at the age of 55, he was also President of Riggs Food Express in New Bremen (which transports dairy products and other perishables throughout the U.S.) and other transportation companies. Following in the footsteps of his father and his uncle, Clifford V. Huenke, Lewis also served on the board of the First National Bank and was President when he died.

After Lewis's death in 1971, Betty assumed the position of Chairwoman of the Board at the bank, and the presidency of Riggs Food Express and Tranco Sales & Service, both located west of the creamery. From 1985-1997, she served as President of the First National Bank and remained Chairwoman of the Board until her death.

Prior to Lewis's death, he and Betty initiated the establishment of a New Bremen branch of the Auglaize County Public Library by way of a generous donation. After her husband's death, Betty, along with school teacher Alice Cumming, dedicated much of their time to this dream and in August, 1973, the library became a reality, being built on the land between the canal and Washington St., where the Kuenzel Mills had formerly been located.

Betty and Lewis are survived by their only child, Dianne Komminsk, who is the last member of the Komminsk/Huenke family to carry on in her parents' and grandparents' footsteps.

## LINEAGE

And sometime when I have become  
A quiet portrait on the wall,  
Will you my far descendant stop  
To think of me at all?

Suppose your hands are shaped like mine,  
You have my nutmeg sense of fun,  
Will there be one to tell you so,  
There, when my days are done?

If you love books and fires and songs  
And slipper moons on lilac skies,  
Toss me a look of shared delight  
From those, my own bright eyes!

For there is kinship in a curl,  
And keepsake in a spoken name,  
And wine of life may yet be poured  
By hands within a frame.

*Marian Clark Potter*



## A READER'S RESPONSE

Thank you for the complimentary copy of the July, 1998 edition of *The Towpath*. As the new Village Administrator of New Bremen I found *The Towpath* to be extremely interesting and look forward to reading future issues to help learn more about the history of the community. To ensure that I receive future issues, please find enclosed my check for a life membership. New Bremen has a wonderful history and I was glad to see that it is being preserved so well.

Sincerely, Anthony J. Bales, Village Administrator

*Anthony Bales, a native of St. Marys, became New Bremen's new (4th) Village Administrator, effective July 1, 1998. He replaced retiring Clarence J. ("Bernie") Art, who had held that position since April 14, 1975.*

*New Bremen's first Village Administrator was Frank McCune. Prior to becoming V.A. on 12/19/1967, Frank had served as the Superintendent of Light and Water for the Board of Public Affairs since August 1, 1946. When Frank retired as V.A. in October, 1973, he was replaced by Wayne York who served from 10/8/1973 to 4/4/1975.*

## "1938" SWIMMING POOL UPDATE

*(How much did it really cost to build?)*

In the July 17 & 24, 1998 issues of the St. Marys *Evening Leader*, columnist Hal Miller quoted as a total cost for New Bremen's swimming pool "just \$6,707." This information was taken from a June 17, 1938 issue of *The Leader*, which was just 10 days after ground had been broken. In November of 1936, a bond issue was passed for \$6,000, which was to be for N.B.'s portion of the costs, the government to pay approximately \$18,000.

In the June 6, 1940 issue of *The New Bremen Sun*, after the pool was actually completed and had been dedicated, the total costs were given as \$41,000, with the federal government paying \$28,700 and New Bremen's share \$12,300.

## WIENACHT FESTTAG

(Christmas Festival)

New Bremen Historic Museum - 120 N. Main St.

Saturday, Dec. 5 — 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Sunday, Dec. 6 — 11:30 am - 6:00 pm

This year's theme centers around our German heritage. If you would like to put up a display, donate prizes, or for more information, call:

Chairman Dorothy Hertenstein - 419-629-3320

Co-Chairmen Don & Carol Ruese - 419-629-3284

*Thank you!*

To those people who helped gather information for this issue, especially the information about the Woodmen queens - Merlin & Mary Ellen Ahlers, Bill Ahlers, Martha Plattner, Doris Wissman. Thanks also to Jim Cooper, Dale Schaefer, and Pat (Buckloh) Sink for the use of their pictures.

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Another memorial donation was received this past quarter in memory of **Irene Wellemeyer**, from Lela (Tangeman) Holmes. Also, in the last issue, a donation for Irene was credited to Mary Ellen (Taylor/Belton) Patton. This should have read Mr. & Mrs. Chas. Patton.

A donation was also received in memory of **Donald L. Warner** from his wife, Ruth (Westerbeck) Warner, and her family.

We thank you for these and other donations received.

## MEMORIAL PLAQUE POLICY

*Memorial donations are accepted in any amount. When donations for any one person or couple have reached \$100.00, a brass plate engraved with their name(s) is attached to the Memorial Plaque.*