

# 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)

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 - 1999**

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## MEETINGS ARE HELD FIRST TUESDAYS

7:30 p.m. at the Library (winter time)  
MEMBERS are invited to attend.

## 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)

## DEAR READERS:

Marge Lietz, former Editor of *The Towpath* recently underwent major surgery and is recuperating at her home at 34 S. Herman St. - New Bremen, OH 45869-1414. I'm sure she would enjoy hearing from the many fans she acquired in the 8½ years she served as Editor, writing in her own special way about her memories of "the old days." Let's send her a card shower and wish her a speedy recovery.

## THE COUNTRY NEWSPAPER

I am a country newspaper. I am the friend of the family, the bringer of tidings from other friends. I speak to the home in the evening of summer's vine-clad porch, or the glow of winter's lamp. I help to make this evening hour. I record the great and the small, the varied acts of the days and weeks that go to make up life.

I am for and of the home. I follow those who leave humble beginnings. Whether they go to greatness or to the gutter, I take to them the thrill of old days, with wholesome messages.

I speak the language of the common man; my words are fitted to his understanding. Young and old alike find in me stimulation, solace and comfort.

I am the chronicler of man's existence. I am the word of the week, the history of the year, the record of my community in the archives of state and nation. I am the lives of my readers. I am "The Country Newspaper."  
*(written by Bristow Adams of the Canton Sentinel as a message of self-appraisal & re-dedication in honor of National Newspaper Week.) (from the N.B. Sun 10/7/1954)*

**THE TOWPATH** is a historical reflection of New Bremen's past - researched, written and/or edited by Lucille (Topp) Francis, Editor, and published quarterly by the New Bremen Historic Association. In the words of *The New Bremen Sun*, it is meant to be

### A HOMETOWN PAPER FOR HOMETOWN FOLKS.

We appreciate the interest shown by so many people with connections to New Bremen - past or present - and invite you to pass the word to others who might be interested. Complimentary copies are regularly sent to such people (see box at left.)

## The New Bremen Historical Museum's

### 25TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE & Christmas Tree Festival

Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>

**THEME: Silver Bells - Our 25<sup>th</sup> Year**

## **MINI-MEMORIES OF NEW BREMEN**

**by Eugene L. Jordan – Plymouth, Michigan**

In 1928-1929 Gene Jordan had a *Cincinnati Times-Star* paper route with 50 subscribers. The papers arrived each evening about 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday on the interurban - a single-unit electric-powered railcar which carried passengers, with a small section for light freight at one end. A stop was made at the Schulenberg passenger ticket and light freight service office on the south side of Monroe St. adjacent to the west side of the canal. The tracks ran parallel to and on the west side of the road in the country, but they ran down the middle of the street in town. The line stopped at Minster and the car returned through New Bremen to St. Marys.

The papers were delivered by bicycle to customers scattered throughout town, with the farthest point north being the Frey home on the road to the Lock Two Cemetery. The cost of the daily paper was 2¢ per copy for a total of 12¢ per week, with 7¢ being paid to the newspaper and 5¢ being retained by the carrier. This paper was the main source of news at that time prior to television and limited information by radio.

In 1928 the N.B.H.S. track team won the county championship for Class B (smaller schools) participants in the track meet held at the county fairgrounds in Wapakoneta. Gene's brother Myron was captain of the track team that year and earned 15 of the possible 20 points. The news was announced in N.B. by a caravan of cars driven around town with the car horns blowing loudly, accompanied by the shouts of the occupants.

Hespe's Hall next to the Crown Theater on the north side of Monroe St. was the location of N.B.H.S. basketball games, with a very small area for spectators. The backboards holding the baskets were affixed to the walls. Most of the layup shots came from the sides because the frontal layup shots posed a risk of hitting the wall and suffering injury. This hall was used by the Chevrolet dealer for a public display of the 1928 Chevrolet cars (4 cylinders) with a major styling change in anticipation of the 1929 Chevy (6 cylinders). This was the time when Ford had a major design change with the introduction of the "Model A" Ford.

Little did Gene realize that he would spend over 35 years in the Chevrolet financial department, mostly in a supervisory and administrative capacity. At the time of his retirement, he was the financial department general administrator of Chevrolet employee benefit plans with the responsibility for a central administration center for 18,000 salaried employees and 5,000 salaried retirees.

While working in the General Motors building in Detroit, Michigan he had access to the annual reports for each Chevrolet dealership. One day he looked up the report for the New Bremen dealership and it gave him a warm feeling to know that that was the place where his roots were.

The large frame building at the northwest corner of Monroe and Washington Streets housed the Wilbur Rairdon Willys-Overland auto dealership in the mid-20s. Gene's dad (Leonard Jordan) bought an Overland sedan and a Whippet sedan about that time from Mr. Rairdon.

Behind the Rairdon building on Washington St. stood Tony Schwieterman's blacksmith shop on the east bank of the canal. It was always interesting to watch Tony shape the red-hot horseshoes, cooling the shoes in a tank of water and then applying the finished shoes with nails. Gene was very impressed with Tony's making of a ring out of a horseshoe nail for him.

For a number of summers in the 1920s there was an American Indian medicine show. The live-in truck was parked on the east side of North Washington St. adjacent to Schwieterman's Drug Store. A small stage at the rear of the truck was the setting for several nights of entertainment with the performers wearing Indian dress and singing about Indian lore. At the end of the show Indian medicines and oils were sold.

The eighth grade class of boys for Sunday School at St. Paul's Church in 1928 was held in the front center rows of the sanctuary. Louis Kohl was the teacher. He told the class one Sunday that they should never do to a girl what they would not want done to their sister. Gene didn't understand what was meant by that statement until a few years later but he never forgot it.

In the mid-1920s Gene's brother Wilbert had a radio powered by a wet auto-type battery and the tuning panel had 3 dials. It was necessary to synchronize the 3 dials to "bring in" the radio signal.

Gene's parents had a Crosley band box radio with a single tuning dial which was a major improvement over the 3 dial set. The radio mechanism was housed in a metal box about the size of a tool box. A separate round speaker with a rectangular base was usually placed on top of the radio box. WLW in Cincinnati was the favorite radio station with Henry Busse's Orchestra offering popular music of the time. His orchestra was easily identified with the theme song "Hot Lips" played by Mr. Busse on the trumpet.

There was a singing team of Gene and Glen with piano accompaniment. The comedy offering was the fictitious characters of Jake and Lena, head of the Bloomer Girls' athletic team - always good for many laughs.

Gene's parents, Leonard and Wilhelmine (Laut) Jordan were members of a card club that met monthly in homes of the members and the card game was Sheephead. Humor prevailed in a spirited playing time and a good time was had by all. Family youngsters - Tommy Laut, Helen Kellermeyer (later Dammeyer) and Gene Jordan - hung loose to occupy their time as best they could.

There was a small Kroger Store (no meat) on the north side of Monroe St. a few doors west of Water St. Gene remembers a Kroger grocery truck that was a Mack with chain drive and hard rubber tires driven by a rather stout woman who fit the powerful Katrinka profile. That was well before the women's liberation movement.

The Schelper Meat Market was located on the south side of Monroe St. and a few stores west of Water St. An unusual and popular item was "gritz" made in the winter time. The main ingredients were ground pork and cooked steel-cut oats (*also called pin-oats*) plus seasonings. The mixture was placed in a large pan where it would "set up" and was sold by the slice. This was a delicious breakfast item when fried to form a light brown crust. (*It still is - I like to eat this with whole wheat bread spread with butter and molasses. John Dickman included a recipe on page 46 of his book, "Taste of Tradition." - Editor*)

In the summertime Butcher Schelper drove a 4-wheel horsedrawn open wagon with a top, carrying fresh meats which were carefully protected with heavy wrapping paper. His presence was made known by a large round bell sounded when he made stops in the neighborhoods. Gene's mother and other customers went out to the wagon to make meat purchases. (*see Marge Lietz's story and picture in the October, 1997 issue of "The Towpath."*)

Gene's paternal grandfather, William Jordan, was a teamster who hauled logs from surrounding woods to the sawmill. He maintained a full size barn with stalls for several work horses and an overhead haymow. His

house and barn was located in town on the lot next to the Leonard Jordan family home at 212 East Monroe St. on the north side of the street. (*see "The Towpath" - October, 1991*) Gene remembers taking a buggy ride with his Grandpa and Grandma (Regina Brockman) Jordan to Lock Two to the large Garmhausen Store where his Grandma made some purchases.

Gene's family moved to Toledo in 1929 where he attended a big city school as a freshman, requiring an adjustment in making all new friends. He experienced further adjustments since classmates there had more schooling in science in prior grades, causing him to study harder in that area to catch up. One day his algebra teacher, Miss Johnson, called him aside to tell him that she noticed from the records that he was from New Bremen. She then said "I went to school with Goldie Schmidt." That was a most heart-warming experience. (*The Schmidt family lived just up the street from the Jordans.*)

"These stories were drawn from my memory bank where they were deposited over 70 years ago."

*Eugene L. Jordan - June, 1999*

*Gene Jordan's first grade class picture appeared in the April, 1998 issue of "The Towpath."*

*Gene is a previous contributor to "The Towpath." His previous contributions appeared in the October, 1991 and October, 1996 issues.*

We thank Gene for sharing his memories with us. If you have similar stories to tell, we would like to hear from you.



**1926-1927 N.B.H.S. BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM**

(Photo from "65 Years of Cardinal Basketball", published by Jerry Brown in 1980)

**Pictured, left to right:**

Leander Landwehr (Junior)  
Louis Stegeman (Junior)  
Norman Fledderjohann (Fr.)  
Homer Heil (Sophomore)  
Carl Mueller (Senior)  
Orville Ruedebusch (Junior)  
Myron Jordan (Junior)  
Wilbur Knost (Sophomore)  
R.S. Miller (Coach, front)

The 1927-1928 team was the same, except outgoing senior Carl Mueller was replaced by Robert Vitz, a junior. High scorer both seasons was Homer Heil, followed by Louis Stegeman and Wilbur Knost.

Orville Ruedebusch and Myron Jordan are the two surviving members of this team. Orville lives in New Bremen and Myron lives in Leesburg, Florida with his wife of 68 years, Catherine Wehmeyer.



# **NEW BREMEN's FIRST AUTO SHOW**

**January 7-8, 1928**

## **W.J. Stappe Agency Will Display New Chevrolet at Hesse Auditorium**

First showing of the new Chevrolet in New Bremen has been announced for Saturday and Sunday, January 7-8th, by W.J. Stappe, local distributor. At least four models of the new car will be on display on these dates at the Hesse auditorium.

Invitations are being sent out today by the Stappe agency and it is believed that hundreds of interested visitors will want to inspect "the most distinctive low-priced automobile of all times" at its first appearance in New Bremen. A special orchestra, the Louise Miller-Davis orchestra of Wapakoneta, has been engaged for the showing and the management also will provide refreshments and favors for the guests attending on Saturday.

Known as the "Bigger and Better" Chevrolet, the new car incorporates all the advantages that made the old model popular and in addition embodies a host of refinements that combine to produce what General Motors officials believe will be the sensation of the automobile industry in 1928.

Beauty in appearance, performance in driving, and economy in operation are the keynotes of the car that owes its every detail to withering tests of days, weeks and road and driving conditions. Extended wheelbase, greater speed and power, four-wheel brakes, longer roomier Fisher bodies, new Duco colors, thermostat cooling, shock-absorbing springs, motor enclosure, indirectly lighted instrument panel, and other advantages are built in the new car as a result of lessons learned through 13 years of constant progress.

Seven passenger cars, including five closed and two open types, comprise the line. Every driving requirement is cared for in the makeup and appointments of the various types. The models to be displayed here will include a chassis, a coupe, coach, sedan, and the imperial landau. *(N.B. Sun - 1/5/1928)*

**See the *New Chevrolet***

**AT**

**Hesse Auditorium**

**New Bremen, Ohio**

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY, JAN. 7-8th**

**Music and Refreshments**

**A PRIZE FOR THE LUCKY ONE**

One \$100.00 Credit Coupon on any New Model Chevrolet will be given away during this showing.

This credit will be transferable.

**W. J. STAPPE**

**Chevrolet Sales and Service**

## **Dr. W. J. STAPPE**

**Veterinarian ~ Auto Dealer**

Dr. W.J. Stappe was born at Delphos, Ohio in 1883, the son of Henry H. Stappe and Mary Luebkehan, both natives of Germany. He was one of five children. Three sisters - Lottie, Elizabeth, and Nora - were still living in 1923.

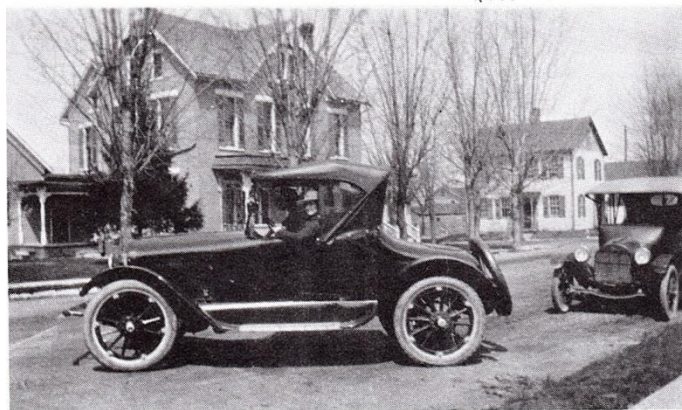
Henry H. Stappe came to America as a young man and located at Cincinnati where he worked as a blacksmith. Mary (Luebkehan) Stappe was the daughter of Gerhardt and Charlotte (Meyer) Luebkehan, who came to America and also settled at Cincinnati. (Gerhardt & Charlotte subsequently settled on a farm in Auglaize County.) After Henry & Mary's marriage, they located first at Spencerville, where Henry worked as a blacksmith for some years, later moving to Delphos, where he stayed until about 1895, when he returned to Cincinnati until his retirement. Since his wife, Mary, had died sometime before, Henry then made his home with his son, Dr. W.J. Stappe, in New Bremen.

W.J. Stappe was about ten years old when his parents returned to Cincinnati from Delphos. He completed his schooling in Cincinnati and then entered the school of pharmacy at Ohio Northern University at Ada. Following graduation, he became engaged as a pharmacist in Cincinnati for about four years. In the meantime, he became interested in veterinary surgery and entered the Cincinnati Veterinary College, from which he graduated in 1910. Upon receiving his diploma, Dr. Stappe opened a veterinary office in New Bremen at Monroe & Walnut Sts.

In 1913, Dr. Stappe acquired the local agency for the sale of Chevrolet automobiles which covered ten townships in Auglaize, Mercer, and Shelby Counties. He served as health officer for six years, and also as President of the town council.

Dr. W.J. Stappe was married to Wanda Mueller, daughter of Dr. C.L. & Helen (Eppins) Mueller of Cincinnati. The Stappes had a daughter, Vilma, who graduated from N.B.H.S. with the class of 1927. In 1929, Dr. Stappe had his veterinary office at 109 E. Front St. His residence was next door at 113 E. Front. The Stappes were members of St. Paul Church.

*(from Wm. J. McMurray's "History of Auglaize County" - 1923)*



Dr. Stappe cars? parked in front of his office & residence on East Front St.

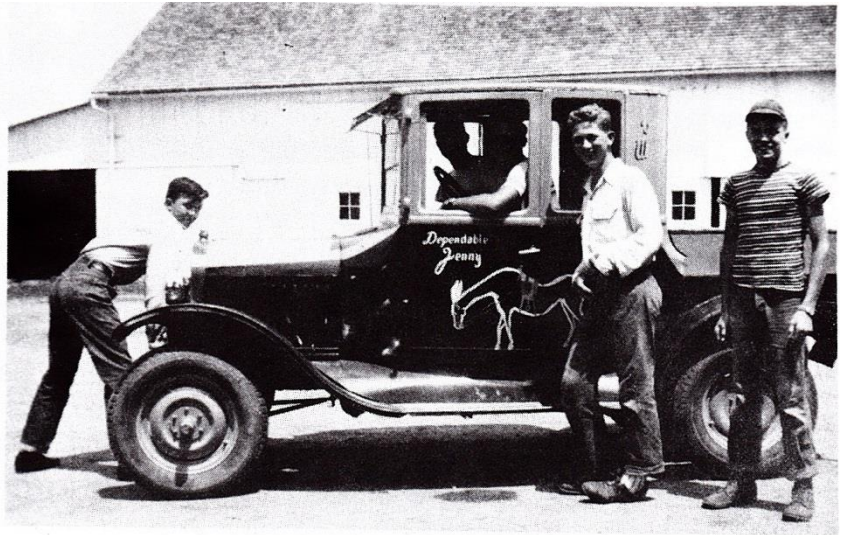
### FIVE BOYS & A "MODEL T" →

(l.to r.) Allen Mack, Rod Dexter (passenger), Duane Bashor (driver), and Duane's cousins, Robert Schroer & Dave Arnett of New Knoxville.

This photo was taken in June, 1950 on the Wellman homestead on Carter Creek Road, now owned by Dave Arnett.

(photo courtesy of Mack & Vernita Wellman.)

(Mack is also a cousin of Duane, etc.)



### THREE BOYS AND A "MODEL T"

A green, 1925 Model T Ford, with the slogan "Detroit, Michigan and Return - We Hope" painted on its side rattled into New Bremen last Friday nearing the halfway mark on its 2400-mile round trip from Lyons, Colorado. Its occupants, three happy-go-lucky young men - Rodney Dexter, Allen Mack, and Duane Bashor - the latter a nephew of Mrs. Leona Wellman of South Franklin Street, seemed to be having the time of their lives on their unusual trip despite the fact that traveling ala Model T was anything but comfortable.

The trio reported having no flats, although they burned out several piston rods which they repaired themselves on the spot. Oil consumption was rather high, though - it took no less than 12 gallons so far, but the boys explained that it was due to a "small leak." They said they spent almost as much for oil as for gas.

The boys left Colorado on June 2nd, stopping several places to visit relatives. They visited Mrs. Wellman and family until Tuesday evening when they departed for their destination - Detroit, where they will again visit relatives before heading their Model T west for Colorado.

They hope that "Dependable Jenny" will remain true to her namesake and carry them safely back home.

(N.B. Sun - 6/15/1950)





Sedan



Coupe



Touring Car



Runabout



Truck Chassis



Chassis



Fordson Tractor

## Ford

# \$5.00

## Enrolls YOU

### Ford Weekly Purchase Plan

\$5.00 starts you toward the ownership of any type of Ford Car, Truck or Fordson Tractor.

We will deposit your payments in a local bank at interest. You can add a little every week. Soon the payments, plus the interest, will make the Car, Truck or Tractor yours.

Come in and get full details.

## Advance Auto & Implement Co.

NEW BREMEN, OHIO

(N.B. Sun - 7/19/1923)

Hear the new

# RADIO - VICTROLA

AT

## New Bremen's First Auto Show

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### Hespe Auditorium

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## Saturday and Sunday

### January 7-8th

(N.B. Sun - 1/5/1928)



## ~~~RADIOS~~~

I'm sure that everyone who grew up during the late 1920s & 1930s would readily agree that the radio was the most popular form of entertainment we had - free air giving us home entertainment. One of the first people in New Bremen to have a radio was my uncle, William Luelleman, on North Main Street. His home-made set had so much volume that, with the windows open in the summertime, Ed Tangeman, who lived 1/2 mile north of town, said that he could hear Luelleman's radio.

The first radios were battery-operated (dry cell). An outside antenna was required. Those first radios were noisy - a lot of "frying" (hissing) coming through the loud-speaker. They had the speaker separated from the tubes and dials. The very first radios were troublesome for some folks as you had to "tune in" your station.

Earl Hegemier told me that when he and Paul Gilberg started their store on South Washington Street, they went to Toledo to purchase the radios they sold. Earl's father, Fred Hegemier, loaned them the capital to purchase their first radios.

One story that Earl related to me was a humorous one - the heavy-weight boxing matches were very popular and to hear the actual fight over the radio was astounding. The motorman and conductor on the interurban (streetcar) would stop their car and run in to get the latest news on the boxing matches. Passengers had to put up with their antics. This was in the middle to late 1920s.

I remember in the 1930s, after Gilberg and Hegemier had moved to 5 North Main Street, Paul would bring out a console radio and place it on the sidewalk for all to hear. Quite a number of adults as well as kids would gather around to hear Clem McCarthy describe the fight from ringside. On one occasion, Max Baer was getting a terrific pounding and John Brockie (who lived on South Franklin St.) said "It's all over, he can't take any more." Fights were tremendously popular during this early time of the radio.

Father Coughlin from Detroit was the fiery radio priest who had a large following. On Sunday afternoons, The Lutheran Hour, with Dr. Walter A. Meyer, also had a large following.

There's one thing about radio that television cannot do and that is with radio you could picture in your mind what was taking place. You caused your mind to work. Not so with television - with that form of media you are just sitting there being entertained. You don't have to do much thinking.

I'm sure that there were a number of housewives (so called because most women stayed home and

worked - it wasn't until World War II that they went to work in industry) who listened to the soap operas such as Stella Dallas, Ma Perkins, etc. in the afternoons. But in the evenings was when most New Bremen folks listened to the radio.

Most people listened to news announcer Lowell Thomas (who came from Ansonia, Ohio), followed by Amos and Andy. This was one of the most popular radio programs of all time. Lum and Abner, who followed Amos and Andy, were quite popular also. There were many programs and everyone had their favorites such as Fibber McGee and Molly and Major Bowes' Amateur Hour. On Sunday evenings there were two popular programs - Jack Benny, followed by the Chase and Sanborn Hour with Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy and the announcer, Don Ameche.

It seems like only yesterday that John Daly broke in with the announcement of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and then in April of 1945, the news flash that President Franklin Roosevelt had died.

My all-time favorite show was The Hit Parade sponsored by Lucky Strike at 10:00 p.m. Saturday nights. Most young people listened to hear the top ten tunes of the week. I'm sure that most of us got our early training with music from the radio. Radio, of course, is still with us, but gone are the glory days of the past when radio was king and TV was just a toy that electrical engineers were experimenting with. **Robert G. Heinfeld - Ada, Ohio**



Henry Wittenbrink listening to his early 1920s "Newlands" battery-operated radio with 3 dials, speaker horn, and earphones.

(Henry donated this radio, etc. to the N.B.H.A.)

## NEW BREMEN SALUTED

On July 27, 1939, radio station WCKY began broadcasting on a wave length of 50,000 watts from Covington, Kentucky. Of the more than 700 stations in the country, less than 40 had power of 50,000 watts - the maximum granted by the FCC. WCKY was said to have the clearest signal of any station in the country. One of the principal policies of the station was to extend service to rural communities and cities within the primary coverage area of the 50,000 watt station.

On Monday, August 14, 1939, from 10:15-10:30 p.m., a special program was made possible by WCKY (149 on the radio dial), and broadcast from their studios in the Hotel Gibson in Cincinnati. This program saluted New Bremen and aired special talks given by two voices very familiar to the New Bremen residents - those of Emil G. Conradi, Editor of *The New Bremen Sun* and Mayor Reuben Dickman.

The following excerpts from the 8/14/1939 broadcast were printed in *The New Bremen Sun* on 8/24/1939:

**E. G. CONRADI:** It affords me pleasure to extend greetings on behalf of New Bremen and *The New Bremen Sun* to the good friends who are listening in over WCKY tonight. New Bremen, with its varied industries, well-kept streets, and fine residences, numbers among the best small-town communities in the state. A cordial invitation goes out to all to visit New Bremen, the town of many industries, of progressive, yet conservative citizens, situated halfway between the two well-known fishing lakes, Loramie and St. Marys, in the midst of an energetic, aggressive and progressive rural section which generously supports *The New Bremen Sun*, one of Ohio's newsiest weekly newspapers which gives complete coverage of the New Bremen trade territory extending for miles in every direction. Friends who do not receive the *Sun* regularly are

invited to become subscribers without delay and join the happy family of which each awaits with anticipation the arrival of the *Sun* from week to week.

### **MAYOR REUBEN DICKMAN:**

I extend greetings to this vast radio audience from New Bremen, Ohio. New Bremen is a thriving community. The civic spirit of this municipality is accepted with high regard all through the central western part of the state.

From its inception in 1833 to the present time, New Bremen's history is one of constructive, yet conservative planning, which is evidenced in the happy environment of our people and in the substantial up-building of our town.

Our schools boast of the finest equipment and enjoy the highest rank. Our beautiful churches give evidence that the residents of New Bremen recognize their God as the giver of every good and perfect gift.

Industrially, New Bremen supplies the world markets with products such as huge iron shearing and corrugating machinery, down to the humble household broom, including rubber goods, dairy products, flour and other food products, woolen goods, concrete products, and printing.

This community of German extraction has long been known as a very clean town. Properties are all kept in excellent repair and paint. All our streets are surfaced with either concrete paving or with a bituminous material. Our municipal water system includes a water softener. The municipally-owned electric system distributes current at lowest rates. Our new modern activated sludge sewage disposal plant has attracted the attention of engineers from the New England states to the western states. Added to these advantages, New Bremen is the ideal location for small industry, for the employer is assured of an honest day's work from a thrifty and honest people.

As the Mayor of New Bremen, Ohio, and in behalf of the entire

community with its many organizations covering all types of endeavors, I extend to each and every one of you listening in a hearty welcome to visit our little city. [Reuben Dickman is now 97 years old and lives in Orlando, Florida.]

**ANNOUNCER REX DAVIS:** *The New Bremen Sun* presents a program dedicated to the citizens of New Bremen, Ohio. This interesting city, located on State Routes 66 and 274 was founded in 1833 by a group of Cincinnati pioneers. New Bremen is the home of the first centralized township school in the state, erected in 1877 at a cost of \$17,000. Today its elementary school and high school are highly regarded.

We know how far *The New Bremen Sun* has come since its establishment in 1888 with a handful of type, a small pail of black ink, and an old Washington hand press. New Bremen can well be proud of the *Sun's* modern plant and the fact that the *Sun's* subscription list offers excellent coverage of the entire New Bremen trade territory in six townships of Auglaize, Mercer, and Shelby Counties.

New Bremen has many things to be proud of - among them the Arcade Department Store, the largest smalltown department store in the state, occupying five storerooms, basement and three upper floors. New Bremen can be proud of her motorized fire department and her paved and macadamized streets. The city may be proud of her industries employing more than 400. Made in New Bremen are butter and ice cream, shears and corrugating machinery, brooms, rubber goods, concrete tile and blocks, doors, sash, woolen blankets, yarn, flour, egg-packing, and printing. Total sales each year of New Bremen products approach five million dollars. There are many other items of interest - but why not visit New Bremen? Accept the invitation extended by Mayor Dickman and Publisher Conradi to visit New Bremen. You'll enjoy your stay.

## "DOWN BY THE OLD MILL STREAM"

"Some popular songs live down through the years; others die quickly and are forgotten. Among the extra hardy ones is *Down by the Old Millstream*, written around 1906 by Tell Taylor, who grew up along the Blanchard River near Findlay, Ohio."

"Tell Taylor had been a school teacher, an oil-field roustabout and a shoe clerk before making his way into Tin Pan Alley as a young man in his 20s and writing the music and lyrics of hundreds of songs. He once confided that his favorite song was *Rock Me to Sleep in the Old Rocking Chair*."

"In the early 1900s, there were no radio stations. About the only means for a song-writer to get his works before the public was through music stores or singers in the silent movie houses and vaudeville. Tell Taylor used to sing Saturdays in the sheet-music department of the Woolworth store in Findlay. After composing a number of songs, including his most popular number, Taylor went to Chicago, where he enjoyed a brief stage career, playing in musical productions with such famed talents as Sophie Tucker and Al Jolson. From there he moved to New York City. After a failed attempt to open a publishing house, with one of his partners being New York City Mayor Jimmy Walker, he returned to Chicago, where he finally opened a publishing house under his own name, which later became the Forster music publishing house."

"One day a quartet, the Orpheus Comedy Four, called on Taylor for 'something new, something different.' This was at the time when *Alexander's Ragtime Band* and *Sweet Adeline* were very popular. The quartet wired Taylor that his *Millstream* song was scoring a tremendous hit on their tour in Michigan. In order to promote his song in New York, Taylor called on a Chicago baritone friend with an extremely strong voice to sing the song from a Broadway balcony, attract the attention of passers-by and get arrested, if possible, for creating a disturbance. The plan worked perfectly, with Broadway's horse-and-buggy traffic becoming snarled and pedestrians swarming under the balcony and blocking the sidewalk. The police arrested the baritone and the story was featured on the front pages of the New York daily newspapers."

"Sheet-music sales until then had been meager, but following the staged publicity stunt and the popularizing of the song by the Orpheus Quartet, it wasn't long until revenue from the song ran as high as \$1000 a week. Eventually Taylor sold the copyright on the song for a reported \$60,000. For several years prior to W.W.I, Taylor's music publishing business flourished. In the 1920s, he sold out and returned to Findlay to live out his life on a suburban farm he had purchased for his parents. Taylor died on November 23, 1937. A monument erected by the Findlay Elks bearing four measures of *Down by the Old Millstream* marks his grave in Van Horn cemetery near the place of his birth." (from a reprint in the *New Bremen Sun* - 10/5/1950) (originally printed in the *Columbus Sunday Dispatch*)

Tell Taylor was the uncle of Mrs. Robert (Frances Burnet) Wilson of New Bremen. In August, 1951, baritone Robert Woodrow Wilson, Sr. sang this song and won first prize in the first amateur talent competition sponsored by the Woodmen of the World Festival. He won a cash prize of \$100 and the opportunity to appear on one of the morning shows on TV station WLW-D in Dayton.

Robert Wilson received his early training as a choir boy in Findlay churches. The Wilson family moved to New Bremen where Mr. Wilson was a supervisor for Beatrice Foods from 1945 until his untimely death on December 22, 1954 at the age of 42, just one day after his 19th wedding anniversary. The family lived in the little stucco house just west of the creamery on West Monroe Street (since demolished).

## "NEITHER MEDLEY NOR ROUNDELAY"

It was a quiet evening following the Labor Day holiday (in 1951). The stillness surrounding stately St. Paul Church was broken only occasionally by the sound of happy children playing nearby, the gossipy chatter of birds registering for a night's lodging in the trees, or the raucous rumble of a harsh horn. Then suddenly from the tower high above the church there came a song loud and clear. It was *Down by the Old Millstream*.

Many listened almost unbelievably and, as though to convince them, the singer's voice, a rich, resonant baritone, was heard again in the same melody. There were other songs, too - religious songs such as *The Lord's Prayer*, but the sweet strains of *Down by the Old Millstream* seemed to linger longer.

Bob (Wilson) isn't talking much because he and his accompanist, Mrs. John (Edith) Wissman, were embarrassed no end when friends dropped in to laughingly tell them the practice session mistakenly had been switched to the tower amplifiers. Perhaps, though, it wasn't so incongruous, after all, because, like the Psalms of the Old Testament, *Down by the Old Millstream* is a song of love.

Bob was heard again today, but this time the songs were aired over WLW-D. (N.B. Sun - 9/6/1951)

## SPECIAL TRAIN HONORS TELL TAYLOR

At least one New Bremen resident had more than a passing interest in the "Old Mill Stream" special train which puffed its way from Toledo to Findlay, Ohio a few days ago under the sponsorship of the Toledo Rail fan Association. She is Mrs. Robert Wilson, a niece of Findlay's famous Tell Taylor, who wrote the immortal ballad *Down by the Old Mill Stream*.

The decorated 8-car special train, carrying some 400 passengers ranging in age from 3 months to 90 years, bumped over the old McComb, Deshler & Toledo railroad, via the Baltimore & Ohio lines, making the round-trip in one day. Rail fans were aboard from all over northwestern Ohio and southern Michigan. Scheduled stops were made at interesting places along the way. (N.B. Sun - 10/23/1952)



## **POLIO STRIKES NEW BREMEN!**

**POLIOMYELITIS**, also called infantile paralysis, is a disease caused by certain viruses that can enter the central nervous system and cause paralysis and/or death. The first large polio epidemic in the U.S. occurred in 1916. The disease achieved national prominence in 1920 when Franklin D. Roosevelt suffered a severe attack. Later, in 1934 (he became President in 1933), he helped raise funds for research by having "President's Birthday Balls" in January of each year. In 1937, the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis was formed and the slogan "The March of Dimes" was used. By the late 40s, funds were also used to help polio families pay their bills and in making respirators, hot pack machines, beds, cribs, and other supplies available.

In the 1940s and 1950s, Dr. Jonas Salk and others worked to come up with an effective vaccine. On April 12, 1955, the first vaccines were licensed. By 1960, Dr. Sabin's oral vaccines were licensed. Since 1965, paralytic poliomyelitis has become a rare disease, but in the late 1940s and 1950s, quite a few New Bremen people were afflicted with this disease. Some of those cases chronicled by *The New Bremen Sun* are as follows:

### **AUGLAIZE COUNTY's 7th POLIO CASE RECORDED (9/9/1948)**

Johnny Tostrick, 4-year old son of Mr. & Mrs. Wilson Tostrick, was stricken with a mild case of polio last week. Spinal tests at Lima Memorial Hospital confirmed the diagnosis made by Dr. Michael Rabe and Dr. R.C. Hunter, Auglaize Co. Health Commissioner.

### **FIRST CASE OF POLIO IN NEW BREMEN REPORTED (7/21/1949)**

Paul Wissman, 26, was taken to Lima Memorial Hospital yesterday, where his illness was diagnosed as polio. He is affected in both legs and was placed in an isolated ward. He and his wife, Alice, have a small son, Terry.

### **6 OF COUNTY's 17 POLIO CASES ARE FROM N.B. AREA (8/18/1949)**

The latest cases of polio in this area are Jack Hirschfeld, 35, New Bremen, and Mrs. Roger (Vernita) Scheer, 29, of Lock Two. Other cases from this area are Betty Meckstroth, 2-year old daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Rueben Meckstroth, 4-year old Donald Kettler, son of Mr. & Mrs. Harold Kettler (both of Lock Two), and James Schroer, 6, son of Mr. & Mrs. Emil Schroer of R.R. 1.

### **AUGLAIZE COUNTY's 2nd POLIO DEATH (8/25/1949)**

Hilgard C. Paul, 35, a farmer east of town, died of polio at St. Rita's hospital in Lima on Monday morning. He is survived by his wife & two sons - Robert, 7 & Vernon, 4.

### **7th AUGLAIZE COUNTY POLIO CASE THIS SUMMER (8/17/1950)**

Orville C. Ruedebusch was stricken with a mild attack of polio last week. After 2 weeks in Lima Memorial Hospital he returned home & considers himself extremely fortunate to have no lasting effects. (8/24/1950)

### **POLIO VICTIM SHOWING IMPROVEMENT (10/2/1952)**

Robert Wehmeyer, 30, is making some progress in a valiant battle against bulbar polio. He was placed in an iron lung several days after being admitted to Lima Memorial Hospital. He is married and the father of three children, the youngest less than four weeks old.

### **TWO POLIO CASES IN NEW BREMEN AREA REPORTED (9/17/1953)**

Improvement is indicated in the condition of Douglas Burris, father of 3 children, and Ronald Paul, 6-year old son of Mr. & Mrs. Orrin Paul, both polio patients at a Lima hospital. Gamma globulin has been made available to both families. 3 cases were reported earlier at Minster.

### **POLIO PATIENT REPORTED CRITICAL (10/7/1954)**

Mrs. Robert Bambauer, 32, of New Bremen is reported in serious condition at Lima Memorial Hospital. Admitted September 20<sup>th</sup>, she was placed in an iron lung immediately upon arrival at the hospital.

### **FUNERAL SERVICES HELD FOR MRS. KOCH (10/16/1958)**

Mrs. Robert (Jeanne Quellhorst) Koch, 36, was stricken with polio six years ago. She became paralyzed from head to foot overnight and lay in an iron lung for months at Lima Memorial Hospital. She then underwent treatment for a year in JTD Memorial Hospital in St. Marys, after which she was removed to her home where a room especially designed for her comfort was built.

### **A SURVIVOR'S STORY**

July and August of 1949 were hot, dry months. People had flu-like symptoms - headaches, aching muscles, and high temperatures. Some were diagnosed with polio which was determined by doing a spinal tap.

St. Rita's and Memorial Hospitals in Lima accepted polio patients. One area was set aside as a quarantine section. Visitors coming in had to wear a gown and mask - also, visiting hours were in the evening for one hour for parents or spouses only. (This was while patients had a temperature and it was most likely to be contagious.)

Treatment in the early stage was hot packs - wet, wool, heated blanket pieces that were placed on the muscles that were affected. The therapist was Betty Bachmann, who had been at Walter Reed Hospital, working with men who had been in World War II. She worked with all the patients, using massage and manipulation to strengthen and loosen paralyzed muscles.

There was also the Hubbard tank - a large stainless steel tank with warm water. It was easier to move the whole body in water.

There was a paraffin tank used mostly for the hands. It covered the hands and the heat made the muscles easier to massage and manipulate.

There were a number of small children who had polio - some under a year old. One little boy, probably 4 or 5 years old, couldn't walk, but after treatments his strength came back and one day he started to walk again, going up and down the hall. Then the nurses had to "keep up" with him!

Whenever any patient could move one finger we all found out about that and were happy for that accomplishment. Some patients who had more severe cases often didn't recover the use of their affected muscles.

There was also the bulbar type of polio that affected the breathing and swallowing. Those patients were placed in iron lungs and later rocking beds were used.

*by Vernita (Heinfeld) Scheer*



### 1941 N.B.H.S. Junior Class Play - "Sorority House"

**FRONT:** Goldie (Topp) Byram, Dorothy (Donnerberg) Feltman, Rosemary (Landwehr) Gerling, Dottie (Schmidt) Boesel (Advisor), Dorothy (Fark) Haupt, Louise (Schroeder) McAllister\*, Alice (Schmidt) Wissman\*, Lodema (Egbert) Dicke, Betty (Behm) Kishler, Dorothy (Koenig) Dunlap, Emily (Seewer) Packer, Erline (Beickman) Maich, Mary Alice (Dicke) Wittis, Helen (Luebke) Dicke.

**BACK:** Don Isern, Paul Block\*, Fred Schroer, Jr.\*, Warren Heinfeld\* (Elevator Boy), Carl Wissman, Charleen (Fark) Hunter, Bernice (Wiehe) Wittenbrink\*, Lucille (Harjehausen) Draving, Richard Black, John Heisler.

**NOT PICTURED:** Wayne Belton\*, Robert Heinfeld, June Kuhlhorst, Paul Ley\*, Charles Vornholt, Ken Westerbeck (Stage, Program, & Set) (\*deceased)

*[Pictures courtesy of Rosemary (Landwehr) Gerling & Vernita (Heinfeld) Scheer]*



NEW BREMEN CENTRAL GRADE SCHOOL  
101 South Franklin St.  
FOURTH GRADE - 1934 (BOYS)  
Teacher Miss Alberta Collins

**TOP:** Henry Wehmeyer, Fred Schroer, Jr., Charles Vornholt, Milton Jung, Ferd Luedeke, Robert Heinfeld.

**MIDDLE:** Paul Block, James Waterman, Tom Schnelle, Carl Wissman, Roman Stueve, Don Isern.

**BOTTOM:** Theodore Pohlman, Jr., Donald Waterman, Eugene Dennison, Charles Fullenkamp, Warren Heinfeld.



NEW BREMEN CENTRAL GRADE SCHOOL  
101 South Franklin St.  
FOURTH GRADE - 1934 (GIRLS)  
Teacher Miss Alberta Collins

**TOP:** Louise Schroeder, Rosemary Landwehr, Gloria Haarbye, June Kuhlhorst, Lodema Egbert, Dorothy Hall.

**MIDDLE:** Betty Behm, Erline Beickman, Alice Schmidt, Bernice Wiehe, Mary Alice Dicke, Dorothy Donnerberg.

**BOTTOM:** Victoria Brady, Goldie Topp, Iva Topp, Charleen Fark, Ladonna Nieter, Dorothy Koenig.

## From the Mailbox

Please send me one of the medallions depicting New Bremen's Central School. My daughter Sallie (Dicke) Cook was a first grader there in 1947. Betty Schnelle was her teacher. I enjoy *The Towpath* very much. Thank you.

**Vernon Dicke - Dublin, Ohio**

Please start my subscription to *The Towpath* as soon as possible. I read some issues from a former New Bremen resident living here in Florida and it is really great to read about New Bremen's people and places I remember. For any old friends who might be interested in corresponding, my address is: **Roland H. Griner - 1551 Maximillian Dr. - Wesley Chapel, Florida 33543.**

My E-mail address is: *DufferMrG@aol.com*

Dear Lucille,

Thanks for the information mailed to us on the Witte family this past February. It really was amazing how fast this all happened. My wife, Nancy, and I still chuckle how when we were looking for the Witte graves in the German Protestant Cemetery in Lock Two, we had the chance encounter with Sue Ritter. She then got in touch with you and you got back to me so soon.

Nancy and I also had a chance encounter in the Piqua Library's historical section in February with Tom Braun who was there at the same time. Nancy was shocked as she signed in to find that Tom Braun from New Bremen had just signed in before us. Small world! Tom signed us up on the spot for a one-year subscription to *The Towpath*. Oh yes, while in Ohio in January through early March, we got up to St. Marys to see Forrest Nedderman, grandson of Christ and Minnie (Moser) Witte. He took us down to his brother Robert's home on Route 66A where we visited with him and his wife, Leota. We had a great time recalling the past.

Again, thank you very much for all your help. It was very much appreciated.

**Donald & Nancy Clark - San Diego, California**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: It is indeed amusing that the Clarks should happen upon Mrs. Joe (Sue) Ritter at the cemetery. The irony is that Sue's husband, Joe, and his family - the Paul & Ruth (Gilberg) Ritter family, had lived in the same house at 17 S. Main St. that Don Clark's great-grandmother, Minnie Witte, had previously run as a boarding house for over 30 years.*

*Another coincidence is that Don Clark's mother, aunt, and grandparents (the Julius Witte family) lived in the little stucco house just northwest of the creamery on St. Rt. 274 until Julius's death in 1910. (Julius ran a sewing machine for the New Bremen Broom Factory.) This is the same house that was occupied by the Robert Wilson family after 1945. (see "Down by the Old Millstream" - page 8.)*

I enjoyed reading about Mrs. Pina Ihle, midwife, in the April, 1999 issue of *The Towpath*. Her mother, Josephine Schmutzer (1840-1917), and her children - Curt Ihle (1892-1918) and Hildegard Ihle (1894-1911) are buried in St. Augustine Cemetery in Minster.

My grandparents purchased coffee and tea from Martin Ihle. Premiums were given if a certain amount was purchased. We still have two of these premiums -

two flower pots. My family never planted flowers in them as they were too pretty. They are 11 inches high and 12 inches across. Leaves and flowers are molded on the outside and colored green and pink. I display mine in my living room and so does my sister.

*Rita M. Hoying - Minster, Ohio*

I showed the April, 1999 issue of *The Towpath* with its picture of the Pythian Sisters to my sister, Marguerite (Huenke) Rackle, of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. She identified the lady in the back row (#12) as our mother, Mrs. Albert ("Mack") Huenke (Elsie Berend). She is standing between two of her close friends, Frieda (Dammeyer) Schroeder and Hazel (Rabe) Kellermeyer.

**Louise (Huenke) Dicke - New Bremen**

Dear Lucille,

Thank you for the complimentary copy of the July, 1999 issue of *The Towpath*. Enclosed please find my check for \$75.00 for a Lifetime Membership. My parents would have really enjoyed this most interesting newsletter. I will try to find something about the McKay Woolen Mills that might be of interest to your readers. (*Editor's note: A later letter was received with some of this information. This will be used in a future issue of "The Towpath."*)

With memories, **Ruth Evelyn McKay - West River, MD**

My grandfather, Charles Heil, operated a dray business hauling freight by horse and wagon from the Western Ohio Railway Depot to merchants in the village. On September 8, 1921, he and my grandmother, Emilie (Schowe) purchased the home on Lot #62 at 20 N. Main St. from Herman Laut. This lot extended the full depth of the block (300 feet) with the house facing N. Main and a large barn standing near Water St. There was a small brick building in the middle of that long lot that held yard and garden tools. My grandfather did extensive remodeling to the house, which was then a boarding house. My grandmother had boarders, always men, for all of my growing-up years. They occupied 3 of the 4 bedrooms upstairs.

I have vivid memories of sitting on that front porch, which then was not enclosed, and enjoying one of "Specky's" high-peak ice cream cones. I lived on the present Dean Quellhorst farm on St. Rt. 66 and graduated from N.B.H.S. in 1938 and went to St. Paul's Church.

**Marge (Westerbeck) Schmidt - St. Marys, Ohio**



## BUY NOW FOR CHRISTMAS!

3½" Porcelain School Commemoratives

Add \$2.00 S/H for Medallions, Paperweights, & Trinket Boxes



### GRADE SCHOOL

Medallions (shown)

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Paperweights

\$11.50

Pencil Holders

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### HIGH SCHOOL

Medallions (shown)

\$10.50

Trinket Boxes

\$15.00

## NEW MEMBERS THIS QUARTER (THRU 9/15/99)

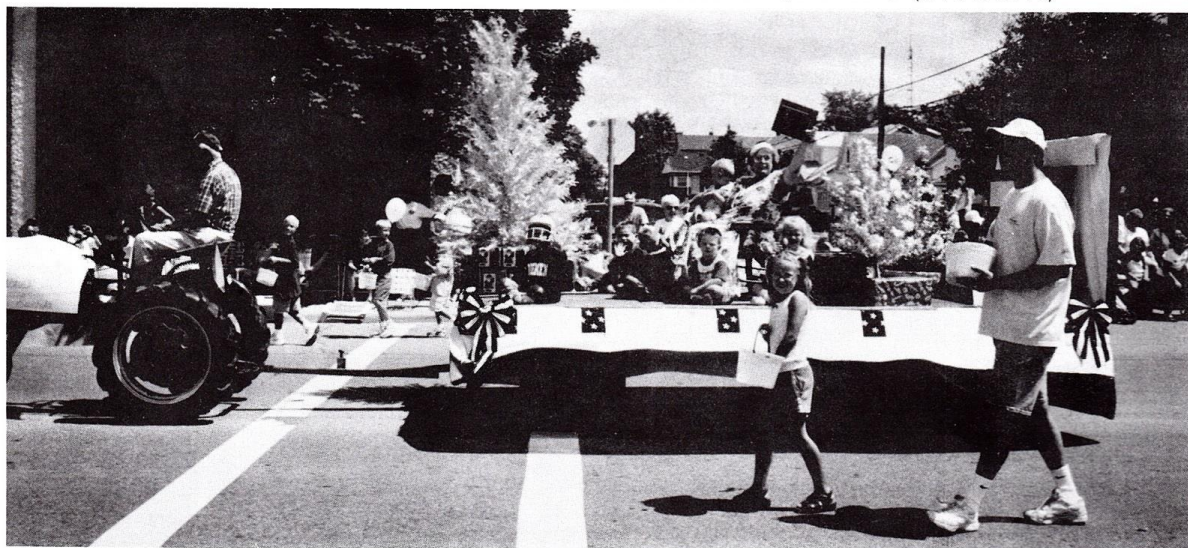
07/14/99 Braun, John (LM) - Reno, Nevada  
 06/19/99 Dillion, James - Findlay, Ohio (TR)  
 08/08/99 Dunn, Kathryn (Boesel) - Columbus, Ohio  
 06/26/99 Egbert, Marlene (Moeller)(LM) - New Bremen  
 08/02/99 England, Ned - Logan, Ohio  
 08/25/99 Ewing, Martha (Topp) - Williamsport, Ohio  
 08/25/99 Fischer, Sally (Wilson) - Minster, Ohio  
 07/30/99 Greber, William M. - Tappahannock, Virginia  
 08/07/99 Griner, Rolland - Wesley Chapel, Florida  
 07/29/99 Kuck, Don (LM) - New Bremen  
 07/22/99 McKay, Ruth E. (LM) - West River, Maryland  
 09/14/99 Poling, Marilyn (Swartz) - Worthington, Ohio  
 07/28/99 Reichelderfer, Betty J. (Burden) - Cridersville, OH  
 07/20/99 Rush, Ruth (Rempe) - Kendallville, Indiana  
 06/26/99 Scherm, Linda (Wellman) - New Carlisle, Ohio  
 08/14/99 Thompson, Lynne (Harris) - Celina, Ohio  
 07/08/99 Wahoff, Jerry - Pickerington, Ohio  
 08/25/99 Walsmith, Dorothy (Waterman) - Dunkirk, Indiana  
 08/30/99 Wiehe, Victor - Wildwood, Florida  
 06/30/99 Wilson, James E. - Bremen, Indiana

## ADDITIONS TO LIFE MEMBERSHIP PLAQUE

07/14/99 Braun, John (new)  
 06/26/99 Egbert, Marlene (Moeller)(new)  
 07/29/99 Kuck, Don (new)  
 07/22/99 McKay, Ruth E. (new)

## MEMBER DEATHS THIS QUARTER

06/19/99 Brandt, Esther (died 6/18/99)  
 07/05/99 Fark, Donald (died 7/5/99)  
 06/21/99 Greber, Arlin (died 6/18/99)  
 07/21/99 Gruebmeier, Curtis (LM)(auto accident 7/21/99)  
 09/16/99 Kettler, Howard G. (died 9/13/99)



New Bremen celebrated its 25th annual Bremenfest this year - "The Silver Edition." On Sunday, August 15th, a parade was held. The N.B. Historic Association entered a float to advertise our own upcoming 25th Christmas Tree Festival and Open House ("Silver Bells - Our 25th Year") to be held Saturday and Sunday, December 4th and 5th. We were awarded 1st Prize for Theme, with our silver Christmas trees and Christmas packages. Shown on the float is N.B.H.A. President Dru Meyer with her "charges." Driving his 1948 Farmall Cub tractor and pulling the float is 85-year old Fred Luedeke. Passing out candy are Jessica Feltz & Dr. Jamie Luedeke. (photo provided by Dru Meyer)