



**MUSEUM located at 122 N. Main St.**  
(The Luelleman House)

# THE TOWPATH

Published quarterly  
(January - April - July - October)

## 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)

**MEMBERSHIP: \$10.00 / Year - \$5.00 Spouse**

(Life: \$100.00 / \$50.00 Spouse)

**July - 2003**

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**THE TOWPATH** is a historical reflection of New Bremen and the surrounding area - researched, written, and/or edited by Lucille (Topp) Francis, EDITOR, and published quarterly by the New Bremen Historic Association. Any stories and/or pictures that our readers are willing to share are welcomed.

### COMPLIMENTARY COPIES

With each quarterly mailing of *The Towpath*, a number of Complimentary Copies are sent to folks who 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)

### 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL COMMUNITY PICNIC



Delores Stienecker, Dorothy Hertenstein, Mary Paul, Joyce Holdren, Dru Meyer, Susie & Merlin Hirschfeld, Carol & Jay Stauffer

Our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Picnic was held Sunday, June 1, 2003 from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. on the museum grounds at 122 N. Main St. The Auglaize County bicentennial bell was brought by the county commissioners and put on display. Standing in front of the bell are those who dressed in period costumes.

### ART CONTEST WINNERS



Neven Frazee

Jenna Ahlers

Jill Rhoades

These winners of the third grade Bicentennial art contest were given watercolor kits as prizes. All of the contest entries were hung in the museum for viewing. [photos by Gen Conradi]

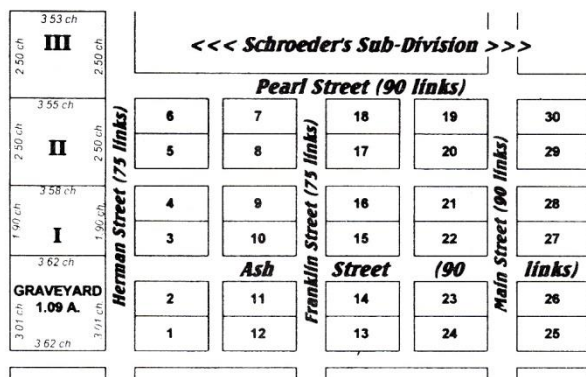
[more Community Picnic news on page 15]



# **PLAT OF THE NORTH ADDITION to the Town of Bremen**

Recorded July 23, 1845 on Page 1, Book A,  
Surveyor's record - Mercer County, Ohio  
Recorded September 15, 1845 in Book L, Pages 57-58  
Mercer County Records

Cyrenus Elliott, County Surveyor  
S.D. McMahon, J.P. - Recorder



I, Bernard F. Schroeder, of the County of Mercer and State of Ohio have caused a portion of my land to be laid out into Inlots, Outlots, Streets, Alleys - to be known as the North Addition to the town of Bremen, as described in the written Plat. It is my intention to have the same recorded as the Statutes of the State of Ohio provide.

The North Addition to the Town of Bremen, Mercer County, Ohio is laid out on the north half of the southeast quarter of Section 10, Township 7 South, of Range 4 East of first principal meridian.

This Addition contains 30 Inlots, 3 Outlots, and 1 lot for a public graveyard. There are 5 streets in this Addition, 3 of which - Main, Franklin and Herman bear  $NO^{\circ} 15' W$ . The other 2, Pearl and Ash, run at right angles thereto. Pearl, Ash, and Main Streets are each 90 links wide. Franklin & Herman are each 75 links wide.

The Inlots are each 2 chains,  $16\frac{1}{2}$  links long and 1 chain wide; the lines bounding the ends of Inlots are all parallel to Main Street, and the lines bounding the sides are all parallel to Pearl Street.

The Outlots and Graveyard lie on the west side of Herman Street. The Outlots are designated on the plat by Roman numerals. The distance of their bounding lines is marked on the plat in chains. The Graveyard contains 1.09 acres. Outlot No. 1 contains .68 of an acre, No. 2 contains .89 of an acre, No. 3 contains .88 of an acre.

The Alley on the south side of this addition is not intended to be made a part of this Addition inasmuch as the land upon which it is laid out does not all belong to B.F. Schroeder. A cornerstone is planted at the northeast corner of Inlot 19 and at the southeast corner of Inlot 24. A cornerstone is also planted at the southeast corner of each of the Outlots and Graveyard. The line bounding the west side of the Graveyard and Outlots bears  $NO^{\circ} 15' E$ .

*Bernard Frederick Schroeder*

Assessment records of 1870 show Lots 1-30 (changed to numbers 139-168) in the North Addition measured 66' wide x 150' deep. The graveyard measured 214' wide, Outlot 1 measured 132' wide and Outlots 2 & 3 measured 148' wide. These 4 outlots all measured 260' deep.

The 1880 Atlas of Auglaize County shows that Lot 4 (142-new number) was the site of St. Peter's Church parsonage. Lots 9-10 (147,148-new numbers) were the site of St. Peter's Lutheran Church. Lot 30 (168-new number) was the site of the first Zion Church. Zion's parsonage was located directly north across Pearl Street in the section designated "Schroeder's Sub-Division".

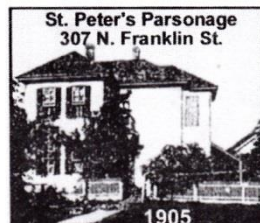
## **St. Peter's Church - 303 N. Franklin St.**

St. Peter's Church originated in 1842-43 when Rev. Fuhrman was the minister of St. Paul's Church. Several members of St. Paul's left that congregation because of a disagreement with the constitution and a difference in opinion about certain passages in the Bible. Their first services were conducted in an old school 1 mile north of New Bremen near Lock Two. Rev. Tanke from New Knoxville was the first minister. When the school board raised an objection to services being held in the school, they were held in a home on North Main Street (in what later became the Luelleman home and is now the N.B.H.A. Museum at 122 N. Main). In the fall of 1845, a permanent organization was formed with Rev. J.M. Forschner as its first minister. He served from 1845 to May 1847. Later, a log house was built on the site of the present church.

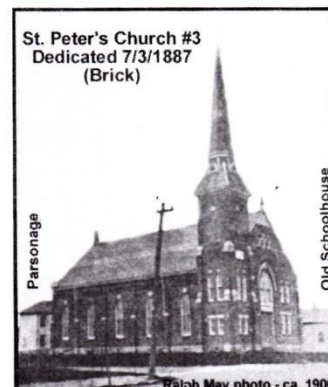
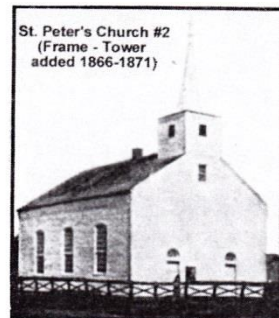
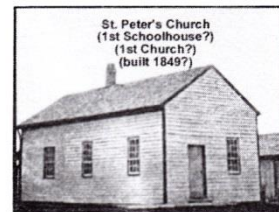
Rev. William Ekermeier organized a Sunday School in May 1867. During his term of service (1866-1871), the church building was remodeled and a tower was added.

(N.B. Sun-9/21/1895)

The parsonage, facing Franklin St., was built in 1880, during the pastorate of Rev. Conrad Betz and was remodeled in 1915, during the pastorate of Rev. Fischer.



The frame church was replaced with a brick structure during the pastorate of Rev. A. Merkle & was dedicated July 3, 1887.





### St. Peter's Church sells Part of Old Cemetery Tract

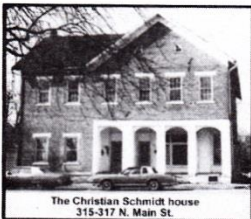
The Alton ("Sax") Harlamert Construction Co. has purchased a part of the old North Herman Street cemetery plat belonging to the congregation of St. Peter's Evangelical & Reformed Church (for \$750). Although it is known other burials were made there, only one is recorded in the church records (*Henry Rainer - 8/13/1847*). The old burial ground was abandoned "100 years ago". Later a part of it was used for a large barn for stabling horses owned by farmer-members of the congregation. The barn, too, has long since disappeared. (*When it was sold, Albert Westerbeck and Ben Tangeman sawed it in half, jacked it up, and took it home.*) It is understood the Harlamert company will erect a residence on the site next spring. (N.B. Sun - 12/27/1951)



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Two houses were built on the former St. Peter's Church cemetery grounds on North Herman Street. Sax & Dorothy (Geib) Harlamert built their house on the south half and a house was built on the north half for Carl & Alice Tangeman. The Harlamert house could not have a basement because that was the part of the cemetery that had been used for burials. However, since the Tangeman house was built on the north half where the horse stable had been, their house was built with a basement.

On July 28, 1961 my husband, Lowell Francis, and I purchased the Tangeman home that had been built on the north half of the "Graveyard". Our deed read as follows:

"The north half of the premises situate in the Village of New Bremen, formerly town of Bremen, as shown on the Schroeder plat of 1845 as Graveyard Lot, more particularly described as beginning at the southwest corner of the north half of the southeast quarter of Section 10, Township 7 South, Range 4 East; thence running east 3.62 chains, thence north 3.01 chains, thence west 3.62 chains, thence south 3.01 chains and containing in all 1.09 acres more or less and being the same premises conveyed by B.F. Schroeder to German United Evangelical Lutheran Reformed St. Peters Congregation on October 27, 1845 and recorded in Deed Book 11, page 207 of Records of Deeds for the County of Auglaize, State of Ohio.



The Christian Schmidt house  
315-317 N. Main St.

### Zion Church

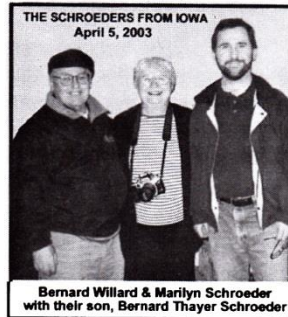
On March 6, 1865, pastor Louis Richter, along with 9 families, left St. Peter's Church and organized Zion Church. Their first services were held upstairs in the home of Christian Schmidt on the southwest corner of North Main & Pearl Streets (Lot 19) & in other private homes. A house on the northeast corner of Main & Pearl was purchased for a parsonage and a church was built on the southeast corner (Lot 30) and was dedicated in October 1865.



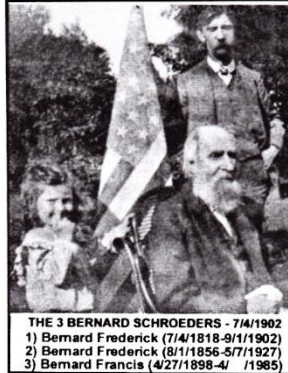
The building above was the first Zion Church. It was later used as a garage at 318 North Main Street (Lot 30). It has since been replaced with a new and larger garage. The Zion Church parsonage was moved in June 1998 from 402 North Main Street to 408 North Franklin Street.



1st Zion Church



Bernard Willard & Marilyn Schroeder  
with their son, Bernard Thayer Schroeder



THE 3 BERNARD SCHROEDERS - 7/4/1902  
1) Bernard Frederick (7/4/1818-9/1/1902)  
2) Bernard Frederick (8/1/1856-5/7/1927)  
3) Bernard Francis (4/27/1898-4/ /1985)

On Saturday, April 5, 2003, the Schroeder family from Iowa paid a visit to the N.B.H.A. museum & met with Tom Braun, Lucille Francis, and Dolores (Mohrman) Fledderjohn. They brought with them & donated a copy of the Plat Map & description of the North Addition of New Bremen which had been laid out in 1845 by Bernhard F. Schroeder in lots north of the Original Plat of 1833.

Bernhard Friedrich Schroeder [born 7/4/1818 in Drecke, Diepholz, Hannover, Germany, son of John Henry and Anna Elizabeth (Dieckman) Schroeder] came with his family to America in 1827 and settled in western Ohio, where both parents died during a cholera outbreak in 1833, leaving 2 sons as orphans. Bernard and his brother Diederick were taken in and raised to adulthood in the home of James Watson Riley and his wife of St. Marys. On 11/19/1840 Bernard was married in St. Paul's Church in New Bremen to Anna Margaretha Dorothea Mohrman [born 10/4/1824, daughter of J. Herman & Gesche (Oestermann) Mohrmann].

The Schroeders left New Bremen in 1846 after Bernard had platted a portion of his land as the "North Addition" and they moved to Garnavillo, Iowa. They lived in Garnavillo until 1893 when they moved to Emmetsburg, Iowa where both died. They had 11 children, one of which was Bernard Frederick, Jr. (#2-above photo), b. 8/1/1856 in Garnavillo.

The Schroeders of Iowa came to Ohio in April to attend activities at the Riley Museum in Celina in regard to the Riley family. James Watson Riley and his wife had raised 6 children of their own plus 6 orphan children, including the 2 Schroeder brothers, Bernard F. and Diederick.

James Watson Riley was the son of Sea Captain James Riley, who in 1815 had shipwrecked with the brig "Commerce" in the North Atlantic off Cape Bajador, Africa and been captured by a tribe of Arabs, then was sold to Moroccan merchantmen and suffered as their slave for over 2 months in the Sahara Desert. When they reached Magadore, on the coast of Morocco, he and 4 of his crewmen were sold for ransom to William Willshire, the American Consul there. After leaving his career as a sea captain, Captain Riley and his 19 year old son, James Watson Riley, surveyed southern Michigan, northern Ohio and Indiana. In 1822, Captain Riley built a 2-story frame gristmill on the rapids of the St. Marys River in northwest Ohio and laid out a town on this site which he called Willshire, in honor of William Willshire. James Watson Riley platted the town of Celina in 1834.

During the time the Schroeder brothers were growing up in the James Watson Riley home, Bernard worked in the Riley gristmill in Willshire. After moving to Garnavillo, Iowa, he bought an interest in a lumber mill and quickly added a gristmill to this operation. In 1874, Bernard F. Schroeder went on to be elected to the lower house of the Iowa General Assembly.

The Schroeder family has kept a Riley connection through all these many years by giving their children Riley names. Bernard Francis (above photo) was the son of Willshire Riley Schroeder, brother to Bernard Frederick, Jr. Bernard Francis Schroeder was the father of Bernard Willard Schroeder (top photo), and the grandfather of Bernard Thayer Schroeder, whose middle name (Thayer) is that of his paternal grandmother, Margery Thayer.



## ST. PETER'S CHURCH PARSONAGE

by Ernest G. Fischer (1884-1977)

(written ca. 1974 at nearly 90 years of age)

When we moved to New Bremen from Urbana, Indiana, I was 10 years old and entered the 5th grade in the fall.

In the spring of 1894, my father rented a freight car and with the help of neighbors and friends, packed our furniture and household goods into it. In the middle, between the two doors, a stable was arranged for our horse. Father, an older brother and I made the trip in the freight car. Mother, the girls and the younger brother came with a passenger train the following day. For the boys, it was quite an occasion since we were in the car overnight. We had some food with us and when the train stopped, Father would go out and get what we needed. For the night we bedded down as best we could. We had our dog with us too! There wasn't too much to see as the doors were closed when the train was moving. There were many stops, however, and the brakemen often looked in to see how we were getting along. At one station, our car was shifted from one train to another with the usual bumps and delays. All of this was a new experience for us, never to be forgotten!

We arrived in New Bremen some time before noon the next day on the branch of the Lake Erie & Western Railroad from St. Marys to New Bremen. Members of St. Peter's congregation unloaded the railroad car and took our things to the parsonage. Until everything was arranged there, we stayed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Tschudin on Franklin St. The mister was a Civil War veteran and entertained us with stories of the war.

New Bremen was a small town at that time. There were no paved streets and during dry weather the streets were sprinkled with water to settle the dust. Sidewalks were made of stone, board walks, brick and some just gravel. The houses on the main streets were mostly built right up to the sidewalk. The Historic Association's museum is a good example. The canal separated the town into an east and west part. On the east side, most of the buildings were on the street facing the canal (*Washington St.*) south of the (*Monroe St.*) bridge. On the west side, Monroe Street had most of the business places, although there were a few on Main Street.

Most of the people spoke German. In the homes "low German" was the principal language. I can remember only two families, Stone and Feather, that were not German. There were probably others that I didn't know or do not remember. In the stores, there were either German owners or clerks that spoke the German language. Even the Building & Loan Society had passbooks printed in German.

The parsonage we moved into in the spring of 1894 was a comparatively new building. It was built in 1880 by a local carpenter who apparently wanted to make it an outstanding example of his trade. Along the front was a porch. From it the front door opened into a hall. From the hall, doors opened into the rooms and an open stairway led to a hall upstairs that had doors to the

-4-

bedrooms. On the first floor a large living room was to the left opposite the open stairway. From the living room, a door opened to the parlor. There was also a small dining room and a large kitchen on the first floor. From the kitchen, there was an opening to the dining room, through which food could be passed for serving. This was rarely used because the family ordinarily ate in the kitchen. Upstairs the master bedroom was directly over the living room. Over the parlor was another good-sized bedroom and a large guest room.

All the rooms were heated with a wood stove except the dining room, the small bedroom, and the guest room. These depended on heat from the neighboring rooms and hall.

All the rooms except the kitchen were carpeted with locally woven rag carpets that were tacked to the floor around the edges. Ordinarily the rugs were taken up and hung on a line and beaten with a carpet beater and then swept, ready to be tacked down again.

Each of the bedrooms, except the small one, had a wash stand with soap and towels, a big washbasin, and a pitcher of water. In the lower part of the stand, behind a closed door, was a receptacle for waste-water and a chamber pot. The occupants of the small bedroom washed in the kitchen and used a chamber pot stored under their bed. During the day, everybody used the kitchen for washing.

The kitchen floor was wood and was kept clean with scrub brush and mop. In the kitchen was a range for heating and cooking. Originally wood was burned but later natural gas was used. There was a gaslight in the kitchen. The other rooms were lighted with kerosene lamps. A kerosene lantern was always available when a light was needed in the cellar and barn. A door from the kitchen opened to a large pantry where food was stored. There was also an elevator in which food could be taken to the cellar when the pantry got too warm in summer.

The kitchen was large and had a large table at which the whole family could be seated for meals. The dishes were washed in a dishpan on the table and were dried with towels. They were stored in cabinets and the pantry. Near the outside door was a wash stand with basin, soap and towels. On the wall near the door were hooks on which everyday clothes could be hung. The better clothes were in the halls and wardrobes and closets in the bedrooms.

The rear door of the kitchen opened to a brick paved patio to the summer-kitchen and well and cistern. The summer-kitchen was used in the summer instead of the kitchen in the house for preparing meals and dining. A walk from the patio led to the outhouse and barn.

In winter, the summer-kitchen was used for making sausage and other chores connected with butchering. Father always bought some pork for the winter and occasionally a quarter or a side of beef. This was stored in a narrow room on one end of the summer-kitchen. It also served as a smoke-house.



The entire parsonage grounds consisted of the "southwest quarter of the block" except for one home and lot (lot 3/141) in which a teamster lived. He had a team of horses in his barn and a dray in which he hauled freight to and from the railroad depot and did other hauling jobs.

The parsonage barn was beside the alley, along Herman Street. In the barn was a box-stall for the cow, and two stalls for the horses. We soon acquired a cow and used one stall for the horse we brought along with us. There was also a corn-crib in the barn and a space for storing a buggy or carriage and a sled. In the east end of the barn was the chicken coop and between the barn and summer-kitchen, a fenced-in yard for the chickens. On the second floor of the barn was a large space for storing hay and corn-fodder.

Behind the parsonage was another cistern and a large garden (*along Herman St.*), and near the barn, a woodshed where wood was stored for the stoves in the house. From the summer-kitchen to the alley in front of the house (vacated 9/5/1917) was a 6-foot high solid board-fence and across the front of the house, a low picket-fence. Both were removed when they needed repairs - our parents did not like the idea of being shut off from the neighbors! In their place they planted flowers and berry bushes.

An attic in the house had a place for storing magazines and the usual attic materials. In summer, the winter clothing, and in winter, the summer clothing were also stored there. A narrow stairway from the small bedroom led to the attic and a covered opening in the roof gave access to the roof when needed.

*[This article first appeared in Marge Lietz's January 1992 issue of "The Towpath"]*

#### THE FISCHER FAMILY

Ernest G. Fischer was a 1902 graduate of New Bremen High School. He taught German at Michigan Agricultural College. He was the son of Rev. Christian Fischer and Elizabeth Barbara (Burkhardt) Fischer. There were nine other children, three of whom died in infancy. Ernest Fischer died in March 1977 at 92.

When Mrs. Barbara Fischer died in October 1931, the surviving children were Rev. Theodore Fischer,

Rochester, PA; Ernest Fischer, Milwaukee, WI; William Fischer, St. Marys, OH (ran a bakery in St. Marys); Lydia Fischer, New Bremen; Mrs. Hubert (Hedwig) Konrad, who along with her husband, were missionaries in Ris Rampur, India; and Mrs. Oscar (Gertrude) Schindler of Milwaukee, WI. A sister, Lizzie, wife of Rev. Theophil Eisen had died 3/13/1919 at Sandusky, OH. Funeral services for Mrs. Fischer were conducted by the minister at that time, Rev. Theodore Papsdorf.

Rev. Christian Fischer became the minister of St. Peter's Church February 18, 1894 and delivered his first sermon May 23, 1894. He replaced Rev. Merkle and received an annual salary of \$550. The parsonage located at 307 N. Franklin St. was remodeled in 1915. Rev. Fischer resigned in November 1916, but was persuaded to stay until April 8, 1917, when he was replaced by Rev. H.S. Von Rague.

The Fischers resided in New Bremen nearly 23 years, then moved to Rockfield, WI for 8½ years, after which they returned to New Bremen, building a new home at 218 N. Franklin St. (*later the home of Frank & Ida Moots and Hulda Wiehe*). Rev. Fischer died February 18, 1953 in Elkhart, Indiana. Both he and his wife, along with their two daughters, Hedwig Konrad (1894-1959), and Lydia Konrad (1886-1967), who married Rev. Hubert Konrad in 1961 after her sister's death, are buried in German Protestant Cemetery. (Rev. Konrad became assistant pastor of St. Paul's Church in St. Marys in July, 1963.)

*[A Harold G. Fischer of Waunakee, WI is a Lifetime Member of the N.B.H.A.]*

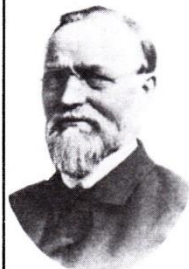
#### REV. THEODORE PAPSDORF

Rev. Theodore Papsdorf became minister of St. Peter's Church September 1, 1929, replacing Rev. Henry Klutey, who had died December 27, 1928. The Papsdorfs served for 19 years, after which Rev. Papsdorf resigned May 30, 1948, to be effective August 31<sup>st</sup>. He had spent 45 years in the ministry.

After resignation, Rev. and Mrs. Papsdorf moved to California where Rev. Papsdorf died July 6, 1974. Mrs. Papsdorf (Olga) died August 14, 1980.

*[A son of the Papsdorfs, Robert A. Papsdorf, lives in Sun City, Arizona.]*

#### MINISTERS OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH featured in this issue



Rev. Wm. Ekmeyer  
May 1866-7/31/1871



Rev. Conrad Betz  
August 1871-April 1882



Rev. A. Merkle  
April 1882-March 1894



Rev. Christian Fischer  
5/23/1894-4/8/1917



Rev. Theo. G. Papsdorf  
9/1/1929-8/31/1948



## THE RALPH MAY STORY

Ralph C. May, well-known historian and writer of nostalgic articles concerning the Miami-Erie Canal, the interurban, and other New Bremen history, was born May 20, 1892 in Piqua, Ohio to John Conrad May and Elise Alvina Schroeder. The Mays had met when Alvina worked as a domestic in Piqua. His father died when Ralph was just over two years old, on 9/7/1894. One year later, on 9/18/1895, his maternal grandfather, Dietrich (aka Richard) William Schroeder (picture), a



veteran of the Civil War, died. It was after this that Ralph's mother, who was also ailing, returned to New Bremen with her young son to live with her widowed mother, Elisa (Schowe) Schroeder in her home at 104 E. Plum St. On 2/28/1896, his mother also died, leaving Ralph an orphan, to be cared for by his Grandmother Schroeder, along with two uncles, Arthur and August (aka "Diamond Dick") Schroeder and an aunt, Adeline Schroeder. Ralph graduated from N.B.H.S. in 1910.

The interurban was a convenient form of transportation in Ralph's early life. He could take the interurban from New Bremen to Wapakoneta & on to Piqua to visit his paternal grandparents or to Lima, then take the Lake Erie & Western (L.E. & W., also known as the "Leave Early & Wait") train to Sandusky or Cedar Point; or he could take the T. & O.C. (Toledo & Ohio Central - later known as the N.Y. Central) to Columbus. He chronicled his first trip to Columbus as follows:

"I was 19 years of age before I made my first trip to Columbus and at that time (1911) it was one of the largest cities I had ever seen. I made the trip on the old T. & O.C. passenger train out of St. Marys via Moulton, Bellefontaine & Marysville. Coming up Broad St. to High St. (on the elevated tracks), my first interest was the Capitol, built in 1857. It took 15 years to build and at that time was the largest building of its kind in the U.S.

I took this same trip one bitter cold winter when I accompanied my aunt on her way to Mt. Vernon where she entered the Ohio State Sanatorium. From the RR station, we drove over some two or three miles through deep snow with a horse and buggy. The following spring (May 1913), my aunt, Adeline Schroeder, died of tuberculosis. I remember that as one of the saddest periods of my life. I was then just 21 years old.

Near Capitol Square was the old Post office, where, in March 1918, I signed up for four years' service in the U.S. Navy. The most gruesome sight coming into Columbus on the Pennsylvania RR from Piqua was the solid masonry of the walls of the State Penitentiary, with the guard house on top and a sentry standing by with a rifle in his arms."

*[See the April 2000 issue of "The Towpath" for Ralph May's stories of his early working years.]*

## A JOB IN CHICAGO

"In 1917-1918, I worked in Chicago as a bookkeeper at Englewood Hospital at 60<sup>th</sup> & Green Streets, a job I got through Herman Brinkmeyer of the Home Bank in St. Marys. I lived on 65<sup>th</sup> Street with a St. Marys friend, Clarence Maze - we both had rooms in a 3-story apartment. (Sometimes, when we would go somewhere together and introduce ourselves, the parties would say it was quite a "maze", our two names being so much alike.) The winter of 1917-1918 was bitter cold, getting to 25° below zero in Chicago. While staying in Chicago, one of the places I went was the old Iroquois Theatre on Lake Street where so many lives had been lost in a fire on December 30, 1903, one of them being an 18-year old former New Bremen girl, Rosamund Schmidt, daughter of Henry & Rosina (Boesel) Schmidt.

This was the first time I had ever been away from N.B. for such a long time, and homesickness was quite a problem. However, had it not been for the war, I might have stayed in Chicago. My draft classification was A-1, and since I knew it was only a matter of a few months before I would have to go into the service, I came back in March 1918 and enlisted in the Navy, as I could not picture myself with a rifle and a bayonet going over the top from some trench."

## 1<sup>st</sup> WORLD WAR

"I left from Chicago on the B. & O. (Baltimore & Ohio) Railroad, to Columbus, and from there to Cincinnati, where I was sworn in early in May 1918. I trained for a month at three different camps - Farragut, Dewey & Ross, but during all that time never shouldered a rifle. From 600-700 boys were coming in each day. I left Camp Ross, Great Lakes Naval Training Station, in Draft No. 475 on June 7, 1918. We went through Pittsburgh and to Washington, D.C., arriving there in time to see the eclipse of the sun and catch a glimpse of the Capitol dome. Late in the afternoon, we were again on our way, passing through Baltimore and arriving in Jersey City early the next morning, June 9<sup>th</sup>. From there, we had our first view of New York City.



Leaving the train with our sea bags and hammocks, we soon passed through the gates at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Here I saw, for the first time in my life, a battleship - the "New Mexico". We spent one night on a Hudson River steamboat, the "C.W. Morse" and were again transferred for new quarters at Ellis Island. From there, we were sent to Philadelphia and I left the Philadelphia Navy Yard on a newly-built oil tanker, "U.S.S. Cuyama". German U-boats were operating along the New Jersey coast, but we made the trip to Halifax, Nova Scotia without sighting a periscope. From there we crossed the Atlantic, in convoy, to the English Channel. It was my good fortune to land at U.S. Naval Base No. 6, Queenstown, Ireland (now Cobh). This was the first foreign country I had ever visited."



-7-

"After the Armistice was signed November 11, 1918, I was transferred early in December to England. I took the train to Dublin, crossed the Irish Sea, and found myself in London, where I spent the next three months doing a lot of sight-seeing. President & Mrs. Woodrow Wilson came from Paris on December 28<sup>th</sup>, the first American president ever to leave the U.S. and go to war-torn Europe. I was one of fifty sailors standing at attention at Charing Cross Station when he arrived, then marched the distance to Buckingham Palace with fifty soldiers and fifty marines.

After spending three months in London, I was transferred to Liverpool. I was disappointed, for like most of our men, I was anxious to get home. Our destinies, however, sometimes move in a strange way. I worked in Liverpool at the U.S. Receiving Ship. We were allowed \$2.50 per day subsistence pay, and with that we engaged our own rooms and sought our own meals. It was a change from living in barracks. Out of this rate, which more than covered our living expenses, we were able to pocket the difference. There were about a dozen of us living at the Waverly Hotel, which included one American Y.M.C.A. girl. It so happened that an Irish girl from Dublin also lived and worked there. She had come to Liverpool in 1916, a few months after the Easter Rebellion.

Having been stationed in Queenstown, in South Ireland, County Cork, for six months, I had known other Irish girls, and this made me very much interested in this particular girl from North and Central Ireland. Having something in common, we came to like each other at once, and from then on it was not long until we were going to the theater together. Soon we knew each other real well, and I was telling her all about my home in Ohio. Our friendship grew and by the time I was ordered back to the States, I knew she was the girl for me, but marriage on such short notice was impossible. Our last meeting was on Saturday, April 5, 1919.

I left on the ship "Cleveland" and after three weeks we finally put in at Hoboken, the German Piers outside New York. We had 1,973 passengers. The "Manchuria" had 4,769 officers and men aboard and arrived in quarantine the same day.



April 19<sup>th</sup>, was like Piqua about the middle of May, with the trees all in leaf, gardens growing nicely, wild flowers in bloom, and yellow-flowered gorse (an evergreen) in bloom everywhere.

Two years passed by.... On April 12, 1921, I left New York on the "Aquitania", traveling third class to get the feel of the immigrants. I arrived at Southampton a week later on the 19<sup>th</sup>, having lost the cap I had bought at Mueller Brothers in New Bremen before I left. When the immigration officer asked me my business in England, I told him I had come over to marry an Irish girl in Liverpool, who I had met in 1919. He congratulated me and made me feel that England was my own country. England, on

After spending some time sight-seeing along the way, I finally reached my journey's end in Liverpool. As my train compartment drew up toward the platform at Lime Street Station, my Christine Mary Fareel stood almost opposite the door waiting for my exit. We were married on May 5, 1921. By the middle of June, we were both back in America. What I had saved by traveling third class before made the second class return trip on the "Carmania" all the more comfortable. While I was returning to my own country and my own people, for Christine it was a Great Decision, for she was leaving the Land of her Birth, her own Native Soil, where she had lived until her 19<sup>th</sup> year. It is not such a little thing to break ties with one's country - not even in a war-torn Europe."

### A SEMESTER IN COLLEGE

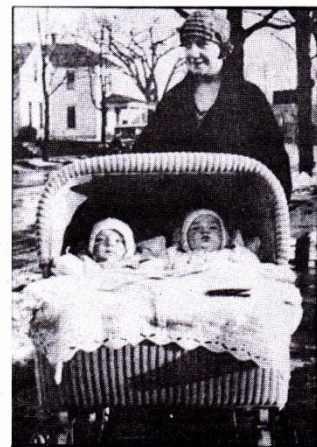
"It was my good fortune to have at least one semester in college. This was at Heidelberg at Tiffin, Ohio from the fall of 1920 until February 1921. I was going on my 29<sup>th</sup> birthday, however, and it was difficult trying to adjust to most of the younger students. I did not want to go through life without making the attempt at a college education, although even then I was very much undecided what I wanted to do. After World War I, it was not easy for some of us to take up life where we had left it when we went into the service."

### THE FAMILY

On August 22, 1922, Ralph May's grandmother, Elisa Schroeder, died at her home at 104 East Plum St. after breaking a hip. She was survived by two sons, Arthur and August, a daughter, Mrs. Louisa Casey of Piqua, a brother, August Schowe, and two sisters, Mrs. William Rabe of N.B., and Mrs. Sophie Hasebrook of Hastings, Nebraska. There were also four other grandchildren besides Ralph May.

In 1922, Ralph and Christine May started house-keeping at 1120 Broadway in Piqua, where their first son, Edgar, was born and died in May 1923. In August 1925, they had twin sons, Richard & Edward, the first set of twins to be born by Caesarean section at Piqua Memorial Hospital. Ralph wrote:

"We had to send away for a twin buggy, and when it arrived I uncrated it on the front porch. Before I had removed all of the crate, I looked at the buggy and then I looked at the door. For a moment or two I was very much afraid that the buggy was wider than the opening of the door. After it was set up, there was not much more than a quarter of an inch on either side. We did not have an automobile, and pushing the buggy all the way downtown really put me in the limelight, as a twin buggy was a most unusual sight."





"One afternoon, while Christine was getting the boys ready for the long push downtown, a tragedy almost occurred. The buggy was sitting out on the front porch. While Christine carried No. 1 out and tucked him under the covers, the front door blew shut and locked. No one was inside except baby No. 2, and he was lying on the dining room table. Christine was frantic, for any moment or two he could roll off. But a window was unlocked and the baby was rescued from his perilous position. After that, Christine was too upset to go downtown. In 1926, we moved to 1308 Washington Ave. I used to tell my boys that in all probability they would live to be 75, and then they would be writing '2000 A.D.'"



The May twins - 1935 with Ralph's 1931 Pontiac at Evergreen Lake

I was 35 years old before I ever drove an automobile. My first car was a 1927 Pontiac. Our first trip was to Niagara Falls. One of the places we stayed overnight was at Chautauqua Lake. It was there where the Chautauqua movement was founded so many years ago & sometimes put on shows in New Bremen. On the way home, we stopped in Geneva, Ohio to visit with the Ebs family who had formerly lived in N.B. Mr. Ebs had been the agent for the L.E. & W. Railroad."

#### RETIREMENT YEARS

In December 1966, when Ralph May was preparing for a January 1967 retirement from the French Oil Mill Machinery Co. in Piqua, he wrote: "This business of writing has been a lot of fun. My typewriter is an old No. 4 Underwood, the only typewriter I have ever owned. Someone has said I should get all my writings together and make a scrapbook of them and then have it made into a book. He said that my articles would make history and should not be lost. I don't think they are that important...."

In his later years, Ralph said he did sum up his years of writing by creating an index, beginning with the very first time one of his articles appeared in *The New Bremen Sun* in 1931, listing by subject and date all of his writings for the *Sun* and later for *The Evening Leader*. In 1977, as a result of all the writings through which he helped to develop an appreciation for the heritage he acquired in N.B., he was given a "Historian's Award" by the New Bremen Historic Association.

By his own account, some of his best writing was done for the Piqua Daily Call during the depression years of 1938, 1939, 1940, and 1941. After *The New Bremen Sun* ceased publication in July 1961, he wrote many pieces about New Bremen, gardening, nature, his travels, and human interest stories for the St. Marys *Evening Leader*. This period covered some 15 years, up to the time of *The Evening Leader's* K.C. (Kathryn) Geiger's death in 1975. He also wrote at least 7 years for the advertising paper known as *Troy's Sharp Shopper* and also for the *Dayton Journal Herald*.



#### GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, May 9, 1971, Ralph and Christine May invited their friends and family to a reception to observe their golden wedding anniversary. Christine was one of the first war brides ever to come to New Bremen.

Christine May died in October 1980 at 83. Ralph soon followed on September 30, 1981 at the age of 89. They were buried in Willow Grove (Lock Three) Cemetery north of Lock Two in the Schroeder family plot. Ralph used to write about visiting the cemetery. Once he wrote: "I stood beside the graves on our family lot. A rather strange thought, as I looked at my mother's grave - only a matter of four or five feet of earth separated me from her remains, a mother of whom I have no recollection in the flesh, and who has now been dead these many years. She was 23 years old when she passed away, and here I stood in my 70s."



Ralph May  
Fall 1981

Ralph and Christine were survived by their twin sons: Richard & Irene of Lakewood, California and their 10 children (7 girls & 3 boys), and Edward ("Ted") & Joan of Barrington, Illinois and their 4 children.



Ralph May's Grandchildren  
Eddie & Dougie, standing  
Connie & Kittie, seated

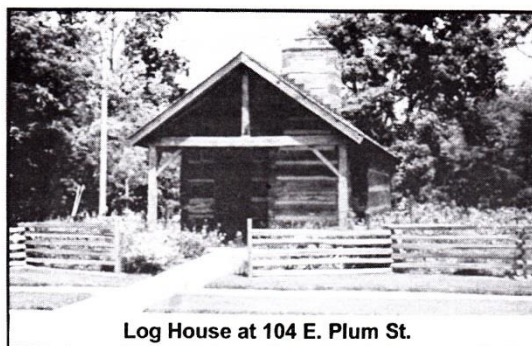
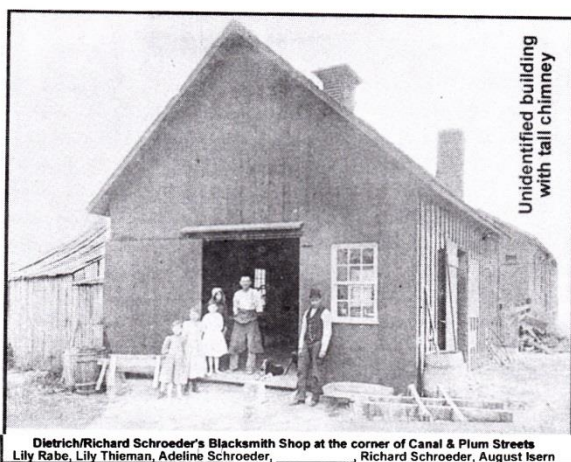


The Mays at Bremenfest - August 1978

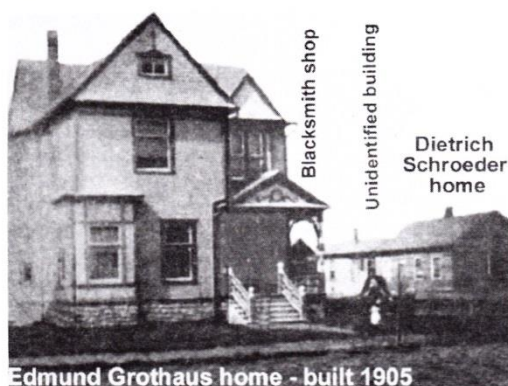
#### COINCIDENCES ~ by Ralph May, 2/19/1966

1. My name is MAY.
2. I was born in MAY 1892.
3. I graduated from high school in MAY 1910.
4. I enlisted in the Navy in MAY 1918.
5. I was released from service in MAY 1919.
6. We were married MAY 5, 1921.
7. Our first child (Edgar) was born in MAY 1923.





The former Schroeder/Ralph May (later, Harold Looker) home at 104 E. Plum St. was purchased by Crown Equipment Corp. and razed. In 1995, they purchased an 1830s log house from Paul & Mary Ann Kremer of St. Johns Rd. near Chickasaw, disassembled it and moved it to the site of the former Looker home. A rail fence surrounds the re-assembled cabin and wild flowers were planted in the enclosed yard.



**The Schroeder house - 104 E. Plum St. - ca. 1905-10**



This is the house where Ralph May lived with his' Grandmother Schroeder. [for another version, see the April 1998 issue of *The Towpath*, in which Betty (Gast) Roberts, then of Palm Desert, California, remembered her days of living in this house.] According to Ralph May: "My first home in New Bremen with my grandmother was in a small 1-story frame house with unpainted weatherboards situated on Plum St. just off Washington St. (see Grothaus picture above). It was later constructed into a 1½-story, along with other improvements, including a front porch.



The Schroeder house as it looked when the Harold Looker family lived there. (1950-\_\_?)

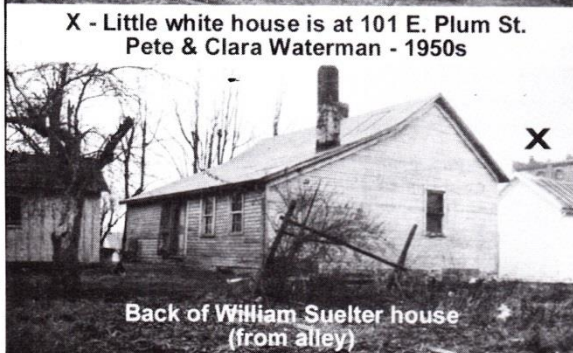
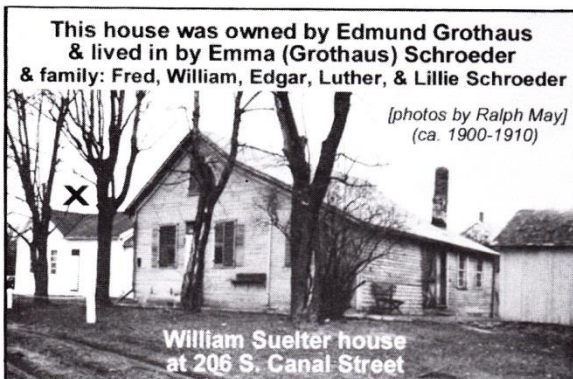


This is the former Edmund Grothaus home, later lived in by the William and Anna Topp family, most recently by Helen Topp. This house was purchased and demolished by Crown Equipment Corp. in the summer of 1999.

#### **"RALPH MAY REMEMBERS"**

In June 1983, New Bremen celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding (sesquicentennial). To commemorate this occasion, many of Ralph May's writings and pictures about and of New Bremen were compiled into a 117-page book called "Ralph May Remembers". These were sold by the New Bremen Historic Association and the New Bremen Public Library. There are still copies available of the second printing at either place for \$7.00 (+\$2.00 S/H, if mailed). If you would like to read some more of Ralph May's writings and see many of the pictures he took, please contact either the Historic Association or the Library to get your copy of this historical book.



**ANOTHER SCHROEDER HOUSE NEAR THE CANAL**

Ralph May wrote about this house [pgs.108-109 & 114-115 of "Ralph May Remembers"] with its unpainted weatherboards, slanting roof, small window panes and old chimney. It was located just across the street from where Ralph grew up with his Grandmother Schroeder. The family that lived in this house was no relation to Ralph, however these Schroeder children became very good friends of his.

The neighborhood boys played together almost every day on the grounds surrounding this old house and in the "commons" area between the house and the canal which extended south to the city dump and Rabe's Pond (now the JayCee Park). Ralph talked about the old summer kitchen, the fruit trees, maple trees, a lilac bush, a garden and the outhouse. He said the boys liked to use the slanted roof of the house to toss a ball and catch it on the rebound.

This Schroeder family moved to Seattle, Washington in 1910 after Edgar Schroeder and Ralph May graduated together from N.B.H.S. Luther Schroeder graduated in 1912 at Seattle. Lillie Schroeder had died in March 1900 at the age of 16.

F.W. Schroeder, who for 3 years conducted the shoe and boot business at J.A. Koeper's Store, disposed of same to Emil Schwede. Mr. Schroeder will go to Seattle, Washington.

[N.B. Sun - 1/28/1910]

In 1880-1890, this land (inlot 282) was owned by a Mrs. Henriette Fuelling. In August 1909, this property was sold by Edmund Grothaus to Andrew Deckman for \$500, who in turn sold it to Herman Laut. In April 1910, Mr. Laut sold it for \$550 to Mr. & Mrs. William F. Suelter.

**WILLIAM F. SUELTER**

Wilhelm Friedrich Suelter was born 6/4/1854 in German Township, the son of immigrants Christian Wilhelm Suelter & Marie Louise Hardegen. His first wife was Thekla Wilhelmine Woehler, who died in August 1906. They had 5 children, 4 of which survived their father on 9/4/1938: Emma Peak, Ewald Suelter and Bertha Meyer, all of Cincinnati, and Jessie Bangs of New Richmond, Ohio. Gustave preceded his father in death. William Suelter and his first wife lived on South Washington Street, on lot 325 (the second lot south of Cherry St., at 306? S. Washington). He also had a "William Sülter Subdivision" in the northwest ¼ of section 14, east of Walnut St. & south of Cherry St. (1898 Atlas).

Gustave, the 4 year old son of William Suelter, met with a severe accident while loitering around the swing bridge on Vogelsang (Plum) St. last Friday afternoon. A canal boat was passing, and while the bridge was swinging back to its place, he got his feet in contact with the edge of the bridge and they were nearly crushed to a pulp. The sinews were completely separated and it was thought that both feet would have to be amputated. Medical skill was quickly applied, however, and the probabilities now are that both limbs can be retained.

[N.B. Sun 4/26/1889]

In August 1908, William Suelter re-married, to Amanda (Lockhart) Rock, a Cincinnati widow who had conducted a small mercantile business there after her first husband's death. They moved to Cincinnati in November 1909, but by April 1910, they had moved back to New Bremen, into the house they had purchased at 206 S. Canal Street.

William Suelter was engaged in the carpet and rug weaving business until the infirmities of old age overtook him. (According to Ralph May, he did this in the old summer kitchen on Canal Street. When the rag carpet and rug business almost ceased to exist, Suelter sawed up his loom and used it for firewood!) Despite having an undeveloped right hand, William Suelter had become an accomplished "scribe" with his left hand to a degree that allowed him to frequently preside at the desk with pen and ink when those kinds of records were needed. He was a staunch Republican.

Amanda Suelter died in March 1944 at the Auglaize County Home where she had lived after sustaining a hip fracture. Two step-children survived her - Ewald Suelter and Mrs. William Bangs, both of Cincinnati.

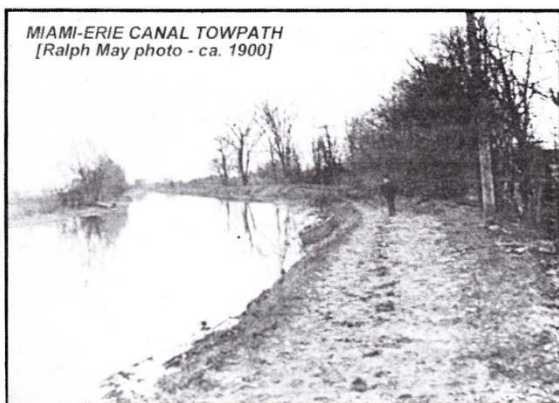
**FLOWER BED DISAPPEARS DURING NIGHT**

A twenty year old flower bed at the home of Mr. & Mrs. William Suelter of "East Plum St.", recently disappeared overnight. One day it was there - and the next morning nothing but a deep hole in the ground marked the place where the flowers had lifted their lovely heads to the sky.

The flower bed, it seems, was placed over an old cistern believed to have been abandoned and covered with heavy timbers long before Mr. & Mrs. Suelter purchased the home. Existence of the cistern would have remained undiscovered but for the collapse of the timbers and the disappearance of the flowers into the water below.

[N.B. Sun - 7/18/1929]





### ODE TO MIAMI-ERIE TOWPATH

One hundred fifty years ago  
mules kneaded your spine  
with hooves hard as cast iron,  
hammered you into immortality.

Tow lines braided like the  
golden locks of diggers' daughters  
dragged clay banks,  
carved trenches across sweat-jeweled chests.

Boat gunwales bulged with oats, gold gold wheat,  
colored corn and salt pork bellies.  
Still your serpentine back defies buckwheat seed,  
dandelions cannot break your hide.

Single trench Cincinnati to Toledo,  
super highway moved at mules' pace -  
no whip crack nudges now.  
Shawnee children played here two hundred years ago.

Boys now stalk in your domain,  
climb giant elms where grapevines  
race tree to tree - nature's swings,  
new braves learning hunting guile.

Blackberries, cattails, lily pads and mulberries  
paint your shoulders green, red and black.  
Weeping willows kneel reverently on the shore,  
leaves stroking waters.

I think you are listening for the shuffle of harness  
in the dark - bray of muscle on the bank;  
a driver urging faster pace to reach Lock Two  
Mill by dark.

You want to feel the ridge of water  
between bow and bank.  
You want waters of Lake Loramie  
to rock you every night.

*Paul Poppe - 3/13/03*

Dear Mrs. Francis: 3/14/2003  
I hope this may appeal to a wider audience. These  
are things I remember as experienced by a small boy.  
Best regards, *Paul Poppe - Edmonds, Washington*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is one of 2 poems submitted by Paul Poppe (N.B.H.S. Class of 1948). As mentioned in the January 2003 issue of *The Towpath*, Paul has been taking writing classes and has written several poems about his home town, New Bremen.

### RALPH MAY'S REFLECTIONS ON THE CANAL

"This picture was taken around the turn of the century at the first bend south of New Bremen on the way to the Amsterdam bridge. It is a peaceful scene, with the little boy standing on the towpath alongside an old row boat, and the majestic elm trees and willow trees being reflected in the water. The canal at this time was still a lovely body of water and very full.

The first summer of my married life in 1921, when I was unemployed, I wanted to acquaint my new wife with the romance and joy that this old waterway had held for me in my youth. We borrowed a canoe from my good friend, Felix Kuenzel, and embarked from the Plum St. bridge. We paddled (or carried, when necessary) the canoe down the canal, into the canal feeder and on to the west bank of Lake Loramie. There we pulled up the canoe and walked up the hill to get a good view of the reservoir. By then, it was late afternoon, so we started on the homestretch back to New Bremen.

When we got to the St. John bridge, we ran into a snag. The mill at New Bremen still used their water wheel for power and after drawing on the water for the greater part of the day, the level of the canal got below the point of successful navigation. At the bridge, I was forced to remove my shoes and socks and wade through the mud to pull the canoe up onto the bank so my wife could disembark. We secured the canoe so that it would not float away when the water rose again, and walked the highway the rest of the way home.

Early the next morning, I walked back to the canoe and brought it back to town, since during the night, the water level had returned to normal." *Ralph May*

### "Random Thoughts of an Amateur Writer"

"Although I am not always sure of having my writings published - for sometimes I am grievously disappointed - it is interesting to look forward to the possibility of seeing my lines in print. That, in itself, is many times ample reward, for nothing is so welcome to a beginner as seeing some original lines of his in print. It is the best encouragement a writer can have, and prepares him for his next article. What I see in my typewriter looks altogether different on the page of a newspaper."

*Ralph May - from "A Summer Day" published 8/9/1940*

### SOME OF RALPH MAY'S FAVORITE QUOTATIONS

"Thoughts accidentally thrown together become a frame in which more may be developed and exhibited. Perhaps this is the main value of a habit of writing - of keeping a journal, that so we remember our best hours and stimulate ourselves."

*Henry David Thoreau*

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"To a countryman, especially of a meditative turn, who likes to preserve the flavor of the passing moment, or to a person of leisure anywhere, who wants to make the most of life, a journal will be found a great help. It is a sort of deposit account wherein one saves up bits and fragments of his life that would otherwise be lost to him."

*John Burroughs*

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"Blessed is the man who can enjoy the small things, the common beauties; the little day-by-day events - sunshine on the fields, birds on the bough; breakfast, dinner, supper; the daily paper; a friend passing by. So many people who go afield for enjoyment leave it behind them at home."

*David Grayson*





Before we had a family, my wife and I would camp for three or four days out at the Loramie Reservoir during my vacation from work. We took a week when there would be a full moon. Seeing it rise over the east side of the reservoir, coming up from the horizon, it brightened up our little campsite and added much to the enjoyment of our stay along the water's edge.

We did not have a car at the time and took a bus from Piqua to Fort Loramie. With our camping equipment, we would walk to the west bank of the reservoir, rent a boat at Pauwell's Landing, and row over to our campsite on a little island off Koverman's Landing.

With a pup tent, and an assist sometimes from friends in New Bremen, we spent a most enjoyable time at the reservoir when there would be few people out there. In case of a severe thunderstorm, we would take shelter on a screened porch of a nearby cottage.

From my earliest boyhood, I have always gone out to the Loramie Reservoir, sometimes very early in spring along with the boys from my neighborhood, walking all the way from New Bremen. [Ralph May]

### EARLY NEW BREMEN VILLAGE ORDINANCES

Be it ordained by the common council of New Bremen:

(1) That any person or persons who ride on horseback on the sidewalks of the town of New Bremen shall be fined a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00 for every such offense.

(2) For every horse, ass or mule which is hitched in such a manner as to stand on the sidewalk, the temporary owner or owners shall be fined in a sum not exceeding \$1.00 nor less than 25¢.

(3) Any person or persons who shoot with a gun or pistol within the limits of the corporation to the annoyance or damage of any person or persons shall be fined for every such offense a sum not exceeding \$1.00 nor less than 25¢.

◆No person or persons shall be allowed to milk cows or feed any kind of cattle on the sidewalks of the town under penalty of from 25¢ to \$1.00 for each violation.

◆If any member or members of the Town Council who have got notice of a Council meeting by the Marshal of the town, are one hour late at said meeting, he or they shall be liable to a fine of 25¢ for each such offense. (◆deleted 6/18/1858)

[All above ordinances were passed in January-February, 1847]  
[Wm. Havemann, Mayor - Friedrich Schulenberg, Recorder]

(4) Any person or persons who conduct themselves in such a noisy manner in the streets of the town as to disturb the peace thereof, shall for every such offense be fined a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00.

(5) Any person or persons who are dragging heavy timber or saw-logs by horses or oxen along the main street, shall for every such offense be fined a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00.

(6) Any tavern or grocery keeper in the town of New Bremen who holds a ball or dancing party without having previously applied to the Mayor for license therefore and has the same granted to him, shall be fined for every such offense a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00.

(7) Any owner or owners of lots in the town of New Bremen who neglect to keep clean the street gutters before their lots, shall for every such neglect be fined the sum of 50¢.

(8) Resolved that a tax of 25¢ be levied on every dog and \$1.50 on every bitch within the limits of the corporation.

(9) Resolved that it is the duty of the Mayor and Marshal to strictly enforce the above ordinances.

(10) Resolved that any person or persons who ride or drive a horse or horses in a gallop in the streets of the town shall be fined a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00 for every such offense.

(11) Resolved that any person or persons who fight in the streets or within the corporation of the town shall be fined a sum not exceeding \$50.00 (\$5.00?) nor less than \$3.00.

(12) Resolved that all fines shall be paid into the treasury of the town to the benefit thereof.

[Sections 1-12 passed 6/18/1858]  
[John A. Künzel, Mayor - Christian Schmidt, Recorder]

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### Be it ordained by the common council of the incorporated village of New Bremen - May 10, 1867:

[Sections 4-9 & 11-12 above were repealed, and the following supplementary ordinances were passed]

(1) That any person or persons who conduct themselves in such a noisy manner in the streets of the town as to disturb the peace thereof shall for every such offense be fined a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00 or be imprisoned in the town jail not exceeding 48 hours, or both. [Jail clause added]

(2) If any children or minors shall be found on the street after the hour of 9 p.m. making any noise or behaving themselves in a disorderly manner, the Marshal shall have power to arrest and confine them in the town jail not exceeding 10 hours.

(3) If any person or persons giving a ball on Saturday evening shall allow dancing later than 12:00, he or they shall on conviction be fined a sum not more than \$25.00 nor less than \$10.00.

(4) If any person or persons, non-residents, shall offer for sale any goods, wares or merchandise at auction without having first applied to the Mayor for license or permit at the rate of \$2.00 for each day such goods are offered, he or they shall be fined the sum of \$10.00 for every offense.

(5) If any owner or owners of any show or exhibition of any kind whatever shall fail to apply to the Mayor for license or permit at the rate of \$2.00 for each day such show is exhibited, he or they shall be fined in the sum of \$10.00 for every offense.

[passed 5/10/1867 - William Grothaus, Mayor - J. Boesel, Recorder]

[The above ordinances were copied from the village's old records by Grace (Knost) Scheer and were recently passed along to the Editor by her daughter, Amy Scheer.]



# From the Mailbox



-13-

Dear Lucille:

4/11/2003

I just had to write to compliment you on the April 2003 issue of *The Towpath*. They are all great and I don't always bother to tell you so, but I was particularly impressed with this issue. The way you began with the Chautauqua, wove your way systematically through the Howard Hoffman story, into the drug store history, and ended with Dinkel's Meat Market, tying the whole narrative together was masterful. This is to say nothing of the incidentals, odds and ends, and news presented along the way.

I thought it was timely and appropriate to conclude the issue with recognition of the faithful volunteers who physically put the whole thing together – outstanding job all around!

I'm sorry Sue and I can't come to the picnic on June 1<sup>st</sup>. We are committed to judging a rose show in Charleston, West Virginia the same day. I especially wanted to check out the pie contest. It sounds a lot more interesting than judging roses! By the way, how does one become a pie judge?

Best regards,

John T. Dickman – Columbus, Ohio



Dear Mrs. Francis:

4/14/2003

Thanks so much for the complimentary copy of the April 2003 issue of *The Towpath*. I was so pleased to see the segment on Howard Hoffman and the inclusion of the correspondence between Howard and my parents, Fred & Pearl Zint.

In the early 1960s, after having heard my parents speak of Howard through the years, I had the occasion to meet the imposing gentleman in Cincinnati where he was appearing. At that time my parents lived in Cincy and I in northern Kentucky.

Within the last decade or so, as I discovered her note advising of Howard's death, I attempted to locate and contact his niece, Lillian (Hoffman) Hinsch, without success. I was hopeful that Howard might have left, somewhere, a treasure trove of memorabilia that would explain the time and locale wherein my parents either met and/or performed with Howard – no luck, sadly.

Perhaps I'll have the opportunity to meet you this summer. Thanks again. Fred Zint – Wapakoneta, Ohio

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Our genealogist, Tom Braun, reports that Lillian (Hoffman) Hinsch, born 12/13/1904 in New Bremen, died in 1985 in Scottsdale, Arizona.]



**Turpentine:** A mixture of oil & resin obtained from various cone-bearing trees, especially pines, as a substance that oozes from cuts in the trunk. Oil of turpentine is the colorless or yellowish oil obtained by distillation and is used in medicine, paints, etc.

Medically, oil of turpentine acts as a powerful stimulant and is often used as an antispasmodic and astringent. It is also capable of destroying various intestinal parasites and exhibits powerful diuretic properties. [Merriam-Webster & Microsoft Encarta]

Dear Lucille:

4/24/2003

While reading various papers left by my mother, Marge Lietz, I came across an interesting story handed down over the years. My cousin, Edythe (Conradi) Henschen confirms that she has heard the same story and it involves our great grandfather, Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Conradi.

Carl F.W. Conradi purchased the farm in German Township, Auglaize County, in 1865, the year my grandfather Louis was born. A practice at that time was to fumigate the house by burning "kamill blühen" or chamomile blossoms in a small pan in each room to purify the air. My great grandmother was not able to complete this task because of the recent birth of my grandfather, so she asked her husband to do the job. On arriving home, Carl was questioned as to whether he had burned the flowers and his reply was, "No, I just threw a few flowers here and there." (My mother claimed the story was more humorous when told in German.) Later, when great grandmother Gertrude arrived at the newly purchased house, she found a wilted bouquet of flowers in each of the rooms. This story suggests to me that my great grandfather had a sense of humor as well as a desire to please his family.

This story has also raised my curiosity about the practice of fumigation. In looking through my wildflower/herb books, I found some interesting facts. The ox-eye daisy (common daisy) contains pyrethrum, a chemical that repels insects and is used in organic pesticides. The chamomile plant has flower heads that are highly scented and possess powerful antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. Many years ago, chamomile was grown around herb gardens to protect the other plants from disease. It was also steeped as a tea to improve digestion. As you may recall, Mrs. Rabbit gave chamomile tea to her son Peter after his trip to Mr. McGregor's garden.

I'm wondering if readers of *The Towpath* have heard family stories about the use of chamomile or other herbs in early New Bremen.

I enjoy reading each and every issue of *The Towpath*. You do a wonderful job.

Best regards,

Gen (Conradi)



## MORE HOUSEHOLD HINTS

[from a notebook kept by Huldah Solms, 1914 N.B.H.S. graduate]

**WHAT TURPENTINE WILL DO:** It is a sure preventive against moths; by just dropping a trifle in the bottom or corners of drawers, chests, wardrobes, trunks & chiffoniers, it will render the garments secure from injury during the summer. It will keep ants and bugs from closets and store rooms by putting a few drops in the corners and shelves. It is sure destruction to bedbugs, and will effectually drive them away from their haunts, if thoroughly applied to all the joints of the bedstead in the spring cleaning time, and injures neither furniture nor clothing.

It will lighten laundry labor by putting a little of it in the suds on wash day. Equal parts of turpentine and ammonia will remove indelible ink when all else fails. Saturate the garment well and let it soak, then rinse thoroughly in warm water.

It will give quick relief to burns, is an excellent application for corns, is good for rheumatism and sore throat, and is the quickest remedy for convulsions or fits by applying to the back of the neck.



-14-

E-mail to Genevieve Conradi:

4/12/2003

I want to write you a brief note about the "Truth or Fiction?" article on page 10 of the April 2003 issue of *The Towpath*. Consider this a work in progress as I am trying to find out a bit more, but to our surprise there seems to be truth to the story!

The family name mentioned in the article is generally spelled Sulkowski and it is a Polish noble family descended from Alexander Prince Sulkowski, Duke of Bielsko (1695-1762). Ludwik Jan Nepomucen, Duke of Bielsko (Bielitz, in German), born in 1815, had 2 wives. The second wife was Maria Antonia Gempeler, who appears to have been born in Europe and also died there, but they were married in Albany, New York in 1853. Duke Ludwik had 5 children and I believe the last 4 were by the second wife, Maria Antonia Gempeler.

The "3<sup>rd</sup>" child, Anna Antoinette was born in "1854". I am not certain where but very likely in the United States (2/12/1858 at New Bremen?). I believe she is the mysterious princess mentioned in the *Towpath* article. The "4<sup>th</sup>" child, Alfred Adolf Johann was born in New Bremen on November 17, 1855. He died in Cracow in 1913. This much is likely to be correct, more or less.

Now for the mystery – who is Anna Antoinette? This is very speculative, but she may have been involved in the U.S. art scene, possibly with a fairly well-known U.S. artist named Douglas Volk. Unfortunately, the one reference I have found to the wife of Volk has a different name. It will take a while to track down biographical details. I do have an obscure reference to "Douglas Volk, husband of Princess Sulkowska", but we shall see. If I get anyplace I will do an article with the references I used.

Howard Reisner, Ph.D. – Professor of Pathology  
University of North Carolina @ Chapel Hill, NC

[NOTE: Howard Reisner is the husband of Emily Grothaus, oldest daughter of Walter & Katherine (Rabe) Grothaus. She and Genevieve are fellow 1961 N.B.H.S. graduates.]

Dear Lucille:

4/20/2003

Just a note to thank you once again for meeting with my husband Terry and me and sharing your knowledge, your time and yourself with us during our stop in New Bremen on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

My very special thanks for your extra care in providing me with the locations for the Schulenberg plots at the German Protestant Cemetery. We did find them. ☺



Janice (Schaefer) & Terry Overton  
Norton, Massachusetts  
4/7/2003

Please share our thanks with Tom Braun. Between you, I have received a most precious gift. My mom [Ione (Schulenberg) Schaefer] can still be so very proud of her town and its people.

Sincerely,

Jan (Schaefer) Overton

Hi Tom:

5/2/2003

I am David Koester, father of John D. Koester, with whom you have had some contact (*also a former member of the N.B.H.A.*) John was kind enough to send me the copy of the April 2003 issue of *The Towpath* that you mailed to him. I must say that I'm very impressed with your "paper". It was especially interesting to us to find two full pages of information about the Hoffman family [*John Lawrence & Anna (Koester) Hoffman*].

J.L. Hoffman died (in 1915) about 2 years after I was born, so I never got to know him. I do remember many Sunday afternoons when our family drove to New Bremen to visit Aunt Anna. Howard Hoffman, with his strong deep voice, was the only one of the cousins that I remember much about, and visits with him were very rare. I knew there were other Hoffman relatives, and now I finally know how they all fit in.

Sunday guests at the home of Mrs. Anna Hoffman, North Washington Street, were Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Hoffman & son Kenneth of North Baltimore, Ohio; Mrs. Lillian Boesel, Lima; Mr. & Mrs. Walter Hoffman, St. Marys; Mr. & Mrs. J.W. Koester, David Koester, Miss Emily Koester & Miss Margaret Koester, Piqua. [N.B. Sun – 5/12/1927]

My two visits to New Bremen in recent years (July 2000 & September 2002) were very brief – probably less than an hour each. They just gave me the urge to come back and spend more time. It would be great to talk to you and to Mr. (David) Schwieterman and visit his penthouse. This might be possible if I ever get back to visit my older brother, John, at the Dorothy Love Retirement Community at Sidney. If I do get back to Ohio, I'll certainly try to get to New Bremen and look you up. Until then, many thanks for helping us know more of the history of the Hoffman family.

Sincerely,

David Koester - Wilmington, Delaware

#### A HOWARD HOFFMAN SIGHTING!

On Thursday evening, May 1<sup>st</sup>, we were watching "Biography" on A & E TV about Tim Conway. In the second 15-minute segment, it was mentioned that Mr. Conway had played in a western movie called "Rango" and they showed a picture of him. There, standing beside him, was none other than New Bremen's HOWARD HOFFMAN!

The Editor

Dear Mrs. Francis:

5/24/2003

Thanks for your response to my request about the Kappel 1-room school #2 in Shelby County, and whether there were any still living of the 27 students who were taught by my mother, Elizabeth Grothaus, as listed in the 1920 booklet. You stated that Victor Jung, the last student to die, passed away on 12/20/2002. Thank you for this information.

After Interstate 75 was completed, I would take the New Bremen exit, so I recall the brick schoolhouse being used as a farm storage building. Since I've been told my mother drove a horse & buggy to school, it seems probable that the horse was boarded at the Kappel farm across the road.



I was very interested in the 1916 Kappel School Souvenir booklet (shown in the April 2003 issue of "The Towpath"), which shows that this must have been a traditional gift from teacher to pupils, with recognition of Superintendents and School Board members of Shelby County as a P.R. gesture.

Enclosed is a faded color postcard of Zions Evangelical & Reformed Church (ca. 1965?) for your New Bremen Church history collection. After I was discharged from the U.S. Navy in June 1946, Rev. Fritz asked me to design and build the support posts for a metal bulletin board the church would supply. This would be in the front yard below the center window of the church. With the help of my father, Herman Freytag, and my step-grandpa, Ben Vornholt, this was done. It had a solid concrete foundation below the frost line and was dug by the men of the congregation to last as long as needed. It had cut-to-order Bedford limestone caps to match the Gothic Revival of the original Akron style building – very popular with E. & R. churches at the turn of the last century.

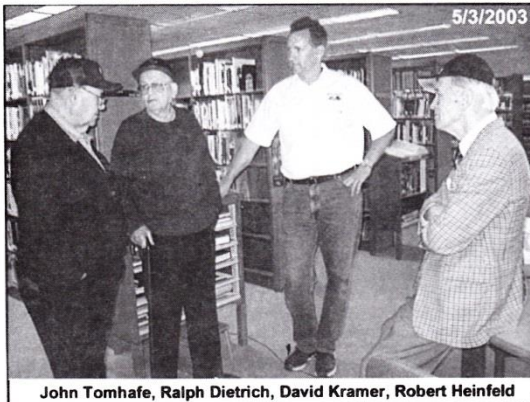
Sincerely,

Richard Freytag – Royal Oak, Michigan



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The Zion Church bulletin board, shown on the left, stood in front of the church until several years ago when the property was purchased by Crown Equipment Corp. & it was removed. When the property was owned by John & Merrily Hoffman, it was used as a general message board, as evidenced by the message about John Hoffman's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1987.

[photo courtesy of Merrily Hoffman]



John Tomhafe, Ralph Dietrich, David Kramer, Robert Heinfeld

Lots of memories were dredged up and many stories were told at the New Bremen Library on Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, when David Kramer brought his collection of New Bremen Speedway items to share with other racing fans. Among the items on display was a color video showing the Woodman queen and her court for the year of 1955 as they were to be driven around the track. If you watched closely, you could catch glimpses of Judy Dietrich, Norma Berning, Kathleen Pence, Betty Tangeman, Janice Topp, Jane Gilberg and Virginia McCollum.

## MORE COMMUNITY PICNIC NEWS



Auctioneer Tim Eiting with 1st place pie-baker, Mary Finke

Mary Finke won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the pie baking contest at our community picnic with her apple crumb pie. Her prize was 2 tickets to our upcoming Christmas candlelight dinner.

Of the 23 pie entries, Rita Heitkamp's berry pie placed 2<sup>nd</sup> and Ruth Brookhart's rhubarb pie placed 3<sup>rd</sup>. Judges were Doug Harrod, Dru Meyer and Cathy Schreima.

The winning pies were auctioned off, bringing a total of \$200. Arnie Heitkamp bought the 1<sup>st</sup> place pie and Verlin & Enola Hirschfeld bought the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> place pies.

Other entrants in the pie-baking contest were: Kathy Gruebmeier, Marlene Hittpole, Mary Lou Howell, Brenda Klein, Deb Kramer, Ann Kuhn, Dorothy Leshner, Kathy Luedeke, Michael Meyer, Mary Moeller, Carol Opperman, Kathleen Pulskamp, Jeannette Quellhorst, June Schott, Delores Stienecker, Helen Tangeman, Thieda Tontrup, Pam Wente, Carol Wilson, Helen Wissman. [photo by Gen Conrad]

## QUILT RAFFLE

The historical quilt that was raffled off at our 5<sup>th</sup> annual community picnic was won by Lawanda Gerzina of Piqua, who coincidentally was one of the creators of the quilt.

## THANKS TO PICNIC WORKERS

The following people served as museum hosts & hostesses at our community picnic on Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup>:

Dennis Dicke, Charlie & Erlene Garman, Arnie & Nancy Heitkamp, Dorothy Hertenstein, Merlin & Susie Hirschfeld, Bob Klein, Donna Lane, Jack & Deb Maurer, Dru Meyer, Lois Moeller, Mary Moeller, Dan & Kathy Nedderman, Jerry & Cindy Newman, Mary Paul, Lowell Quellhorst, Stan & Rosie Quellhorst, Carl Roediger, Joyce Ruedebusch, Don & Carol Ruese, Jay & Carol Stauffer.

Restroom monitors: Dorothy Dicke, Sally Meckstroth.

## TREASURER'S REPORT For 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Picnic

\$200.00 - Pie Auction  
\$808.00 - Quilt Raffle  
\$584.00 - Food & Ice Cream Sales  
-\$195.00 - Less Expenses

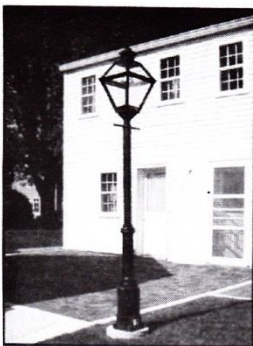
**\$1397.00 - Net Proceeds**



## NEW PERSONNEL

On April 1, 2003, two new people were added to our personnel list. Mary Moeller was elected to complete the term of Trustee vacated by Rev. Lawrence Holmer (expires in 2005). Rev. Holmer had served as a Trustee since 1991. Joyce Ruedebusch was appointed as the new Corresponding Secretary, filling the vacancy left by Phyllis Cox, who retired after serving in that capacity since April 1998.



**"NEW" ADDITION**

The old village gas light fixture that had been donated to the museum by Ray Luedeke has been refurbished and placed in the back yard of our museum near the summer kitchen on a light pole that had been abandoned by the village. It will be electrified and given a light-sensitive timer.

**UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**FIREMEN'S PICNIC** – Saturday, July 26, 2003  
**BREMENFEST** – Fri.-Sat.-Sun. - August 15-16-17, 2003

**MORE CENTENNIAL FARMS  
to be recognized**

A notice was received from the Auglaize County Historical Society announcing that they will be conducting another program this summer to recognize families who have continuously owned farms, homes or businesses in Auglaize County for 100 years or more. The Centennial certificates and plaques will be awarded at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, November 2, 2003 at the Dicke Auditorium in New Bremen. If you would like an application or more information, you can get it by contacting Barbara Harrod at 419-738-9606.

**Applications must be turned in by September 30<sup>th</sup>.**

**WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE**

At the February 2003 meeting of the New Bremen Historic Association, it was decided to form a "Ways and Means" committee to plan and implement future money-making projects for the Association. Four people were named to this initial committee: (1) Dru Meyer (to serve 1 year, as advisor - 2003), (2) Joyce Holdren (to serve 2 years - 2003 as chairman, 2004 as advisor), (3) Tom Braun (to serve 3 years, moving up to chairman in 2004 & advisor in 2005), (4) Delores Stienecker (to serve 4 years, moving up to chairman in 2005 & advisor in 2006). Each year, a new member is to be named for the next 4 year period, and each existing member will move up to the next level.

**NEW MERCHANDISE**

New Bremen Historic  
Assoc.

**SHIRTS & CAPS**

Shirts are gray with  
red lettering

Caps are white with red  
bill & red lettering

Contact the Ways &  
Means Committee  
for more information.

**NEW MEMBERS THIS QUARTER (THRU 6/12/03)**

4/21/03 Gamble, Charles – New Bremen  
 4/12/03 Henschen, Peg (Speckman) – New Bremen  
 6/3/03 Kuck, Lloyd ("Red") – New Knoxville, Ohio  
 5/30/03 Lunz, Milly – Sarasota, Florida  
 4/30/03 McDermitt, Linda (Rempe) – St. Marys, Ohio  
 5/14/03 Schweitzer, Ted – Phillipsburg, Ohio  
 4/4/03 Whitehurst, Louise (Murbach) – Middletown, Ohio  
 4/24/03 Wooton, Ethel H. (Moeller) – Pensacola, Florida

**MEMBER DEATHS THIS QUARTER**

5/23/03 Sherman, Richard (died 5/23/03)  
 5/4/03 Westerbeck, Paul A. (died 5/4/03)

**MEMORIAL DONATIONS**

The following memorial donations have been received this quarter:

**In memory of Reuben Dickman**

by John & Sue Dickman

**In memory of Orville Ruedebusch**

by his sister, Margaret (Ruedebusch) Slattery

by his daughter, Joyce Ruedebusch

**In memory of Herbert Kellermeyer, Jr.**

by his daughter, Nancy (Kellermeyer) Parsons

**MEMORIAL DONATIONS**

Memorial donations are welcomed 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.

**A BELATED "HAPPY 95<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY"**

Just as the April issue of *The Towpath* went to press, we received a request from his son to wish a Happy 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday on April 14<sup>th</sup> to N.B.H.A. charter & lifetime member, Irvin W. Hartman of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Since we were unable to include that in the April issue, we hereby send our belated wishes to Mr. Hartman and hope he has many more "Happy Birthdays".

**OTHER CURRENT NEWS**

Some of our readers might be interested in knowing about several prominent N.B. people who recently passed away - one of N.B.'s past grade school teachers, Nettie Loy, and Holy Redeemer Church's former "bearded" ecumenical priest, Father Carl G. Will. Father Will died 3/24/2003



**Nettie J. Loy**  
1906?-5/2/2003

and had served as pastor at Holy Redeemer from 2/27/1964-6/1/1981. He was also a charter member of the N.B.H.A. and his death was mentioned in the April 2003 issue of *The Towpath*, but there was not enough room for any further information.



[1976 photo]

"The world may change from year to year  
 And friends from day to day;  
 But never will the ones we loved  
 From memory pass away."