



# THE TOWPATH

Published quarterly  
(January - April - July - October)

## NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

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

MUSEUM located at 120 N. Main St. (founded in 1973)

VISITING HOURS: 2:00-4:00 p.m. Sundays - June, July, August  
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MEMBERSHIP: \$12.00 / Year - \$6.00 Spouse (Life: \$120.00 / \$60.00 Spouse) July - 2007

### YOUNG NEW BREMEN BUSINESSMEN OF 1894



A group of young men who were a part of New Bremen's businesses back in 1894. This old photograph was found in the basement of Schulenberg's Store after the death of Cade Schulenberg, and the store had been sold to Gilberg & Hegemier Furniture Store in April 1959.

**BACK:** (1) Felix Boesche (college student clerking for his father in Boesche's Dry Goods Store), (2) Gottlieb ("Puss") Laut (barber), (3) John Sherman (oil well driller), (4) John Speckman (grocery clerk at Speckman, Goll & Co.), (5) Lafe Künning (dry goods clerk at Künning's Dry Goods Store), (6) Henry Schelper (driver for Minster Brewery).

**MIDDLE:** (1) William Schneider (broom maker for the New Bremen Broom Co.), (2) Wilbur Raidon (owner of Raidon's Livery Barn), (3) Jess Wessner (oil well driller), (4) Gust Künning (grocery store operator at Künning's Grocery Store), (5) William Blase (house painter).

**FRONT:** (1) Ferd Rabe (co-owner of Rabe Mfg. Co.), (2) Herbert Trautwein (broom maker at New Bremen Broom Co.), (3) Henry Schulte (blacksmith), (4) Herbert Schulenberg (owner of Schulenberg's Store).  
(N.B. Sun - 6/24/1959)

### "MIKE HUNTRY"

A foreigner who had been over here several weeks was asked what he thought of America. He said: "It's a great place - really astonishing. But there is one thing I would like to ask you. I have tried to find out about it by looking in the reference books, but they give me no information on the subject. I find in your histories a great deal about Lincoln and Washington and Grant, but there's one of your heroes that I cannot find out a word about. It's very strange. I am astonished really. I can't understand it."

Questioner: "Um - who is the man you refer to?"

Foreigner: "Mike Huntry."

Questioner: "Mike Huntry? I never heard of him."

Foreigner: "Never heard of him? Why, I've heard of him at nearly every place I've been since I arrived on this side. Every time I have been where there was a band and people got up to sing, they were sure to begin, 'Mike Huntry, 'tis of thee.' And you don't know who he was or what he did? It's astonishing, really!"  
(N.B. Sun - 1904)

★ ★ ★ HAPPY 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY! ★ ★ ★

### J. H. BOESCHE DRY GOODS STORE

John Henry Boesche was born 4/25/1831 in Hannover, Germany to John H. and Louisa (Schroeder) Boesche. John, Sr. died in 1833 when John, Jr. was 2 years old. Louisa died in 1866. John had one sister, Sophia, who married, had two children, and died in 1859.

John, Jr. came to America in 1845 at the age of 14, along with relatives with whom he had been living for the past two years. It took them 9 weeks and 3 days to cross the ocean. At one point, the vessel had been given up as lost, having drifted far off course. For 3 days, the passengers were without food & were exposed to the fury of the wind. They made it through, however, and landed at Baltimore in the fall of 1845.

From Baltimore, John went to Cincinnati, where he remained for 2 years, attending school there. After this, he worked for 2 years in hotels and restaurants. In 1849, he came to New Bremen, where he became a clerk in a general store owned by his uncle, John F. Boesche. In 1852, he started a small business for himself at Montezuma & stayed there for 2 years. In 1855, he purchased property in New Bremen and engaged in general merchandising. From 1860 to 1875, he was associated with Henry J.F. Nieter in the grain and pork business and had a thriving pork-packing enterprise. In 1870, he built a large dry goods & grocery store at the corner of Washington & Monroe Sts. which he operated until April 1897, when he sold the business to his son, Ed, who was assisted by his brother, Wm. In July 1902, the building was sold (see pg. 4).

On 4/3/1856, John H. Boesche married Louise Marie Nieter. They had 9 children: Alvina (who married Johann Koeper on 12/18/1879), Lafayette (who married Elizabeth Maurer on 3/17/1881 and lived in Fort Recovery until moving west in 1916 - he died in Spokane, WA/1937), Herman (Spokane, WA/1937), Edward (Spokane, WA/1944), William F. (who married Dorothea Künning and died in Nebraska/1944), Ferdinand (Seattle, WA/1937), August Julius (1873-1874?), Felix (Spokane, WA/1944)(see picture at left), and Clara (who married J. Clyde Oswald on 1/28/1903 and died in September 1909 at Fort Recovery).

John H. Boesche served as Clerk of the School Board for 8 years, was a member of the Village Council for several years, & also served as Village Recorder. In addition to his business in town, he also owned 80 acres of land near New Bremen. Around 1911, John & Louise moved out west to spend their declining days with their children - first in Kansas, then Spokane, Washington, and finally in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Louise died in Tulsa on 6/14/1917. John H. died 10/29/1919 at the home of his son, Lafe (Lafayette) in Tulsa. Both were buried in Willow Grove Cemetery.



## ◆ "THE TOWPATH" ◆

"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.

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[printed & mailed by Messenger Press - Carthage, Ohio]

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## DO YOU REMEMBER THE DORFERS?

by Fernando W. Bruns (N.B. Sun-8/8/1946)

William H. Dorfer and his wife, Louella (Laut) Dorfer, just recently re-established themselves in New Bremen after having been located in Dayton since 1901 when Bill took his turn in driving three mules pulling a Miami and Erie canal boat to Cincinnati, the southern terminus of the "raging" waterway, then back to New Bremen, thence back to the home port, and then on to Toledo, the northern terminal, then back to New Bremen.

Calling on Bill for information concerning this story, he informed yours truly that he entered upon his duties as a canal boat attendant a month or two after his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday 63 years ago (in 1883). This came about through his dad, Lawrence/Lorenz Dorfer, Sr., who had constructed six boats up to this period, and then engaged in plying two unsold boats named "A. J. Hodder" and "Auglaize" for several years. It was during this period that the son got his canal boat experience.

He related that the boats were in transit day and night in relays of 6 hours during every 24 hours, the boats covering 13 miles every 6 hours. On this basis of calculation, from 18-20 days were consumed in making a trip to Cincinnati and return. Large quantities of ice, lard and other pork products were shipped to Dayton, Cincinnati and other southern Ohio points, while on the return trip, the cargo consisted of groceries, liquor in barrels, beer and other sundry merchandise. On the homeward trip from Toledo, solid boatloads of lumber were transported for many years.

Later in life, after discontinuing boating operations, Bill's father, Lawrence/Lorenz Dorfer, Sr., became associated with William Rabe's Sash Factory. After retiring from that business, he busied himself in whatever he could find to do. He was an energetic and diligent man.

There wasn't any laziness in Bill Dorfer's makeup, either. Before he branched out in selling merchandise through personal contact with the cigar and tobacco trade, he functioned as driver of New Bremen's street sprinkler for several years, and also performed hard labor chores in the Van Buren and Jackson Township oil fields. This was before the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, back in the late 1800s.

**3/17/1899:** William Dorfer quit street sprinkling & accepted a position as traveling salesman for Mike A. Nipgen Co., a wholesale liquor house at Dayton.

**3/24/1899:** William Dorfer sold his street sprinkling outfit to August Braun. When August moved to a farm near Kettlersville (at Rumley) in 1909-1910, he sold the sprinkling outfit to his brother, Theodore Braun (Tom Braun's grandfather). (See picture in the April 1999 issue of "The Towpath".)

Then came the opportunity of launching out as a cigar salesman with M.J. Schwab of Dayton, Ohio until 1925, then with the Henry Strauss Co. of Cincinnati. Last year (11/14/1945), due to a heart ailment and upon the advice of his physician, he retired from active business pursuits with which he had been occupied for a period of 45 years. At the time of his retirement he was manager of the company's branch store in Dayton. His long association with the Cincinnati firm made him an ardent baseball fan and a faithful follower of the Reds, even in his last years.

(Obituary-7/10/1952)

As heralded in these columns a month or more ago, Bill and his wife moved into Lola Patterson's garden cottage on North Main St. (Before his death in 1952, he lived at 218 West Monroe St., east of Dr. Rabe's office.)

Bill Dorfer was the son of Lawrence/Lorenz & Sophia (Schwarz) Dorfer. He had a brother, Lawrence Dorfer Jr., who was also a successful Dayton businessman, and a sister, Mrs. Charles (Cora) Huffman of St. Marys. Bill Dorfer (10/2/1870-7/10/1952) married Louella C. Laut (11/15/1876-7/20/1950) on 11/25/1897. Louella was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Henry J.C. Laut. Bill & Louella were preceded in death by an infant son. All are buried in German Protestant Cemetery. Bill's parents are buried in St. Augustine Cemetery at Minster. (Obituaries-9/16/1898 & 12/20/1918)

William H. Dorfer is one of the two first owners of the new Dodge Brothers roadster to appear in Dayton. Bill used to operate a Ford, but has surely secured something that suits his fancy better. (N.B. Sun - 8/27/1915)



## HENRY DIERKER

Henry Dierker was born in Piqua, Ohio on January 18, 1854. After finishing his schooling in Piqua, he became a blacksmith apprentice, an occupation he followed for several years in Piqua and other cities in the southern part of the state. Around 1875, he came to New Bremen and became employed by Christian Schmidt who ran a general store on North Main Street. Being conservative, economical and frugal, Mr. Dierker soon had enough savings to venture into business for himself, and for several years he was in partnership with his father-in-law, George Greiwe, and later with Adam Brueggeman. When Mr. Brueggeman decided to locate elsewhere, Mr. Dierker became sole owner of the general store and the grain and pork-packing business with which he was very successful.

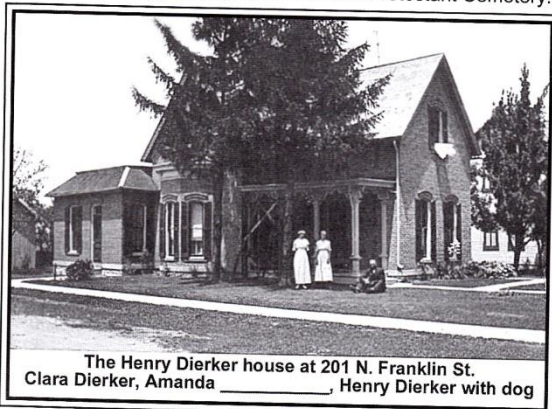
The Boesches discontinued their Dry Goods Store at the corner of Washington and Monroe Streets in July 1902 and Mr. Dierker purchased the building in February 1903, remodeled it, and in July 1903, transferred his mercantile business and dwelling to this location. On January 26, 1905, this building was demolished by a gas explosion, but was replaced the same year. (see pgs. 4-5)

Having discontinued the pork-packing business some years before, Mr. Dierker still continued the grain business and the dry goods store. He was also one of the moving spirits of the New Bremen Broom Co. and had a financial interest in The Auglaize Furniture Co. and the O.O. Poorman Co. He was President of both these companies at the time of his death in 1917. He had also been a director of the Concordia Banking and Loan Association since 1885, and since 1891 had served as its treasurer.

Mr. Dierker was a member of the Democratic Party, and was always known as a powerful factor in the adjustment of political questions. He held almost every public office, serving several terms on the Board of Education, also as township and village treasurer, President of the Village Council, and member of the Board of Public Affairs. His advice and services were also sought in many other ways.

Upon his death on January 9, 1917, Mr. Dierker was one of New Bremen's most prominent and influential citizens and was considered to have led a life most useful to the community. He had reached the age of 62 years, 11 months, and 22 days. Left to mourn his death were his wife, the former Louise Greiwe, whom he married on November 2, 1876, and two daughters and a son-in-law - Mr. and Mrs. H. Wilbur (Lillie) Rairdon and Mrs. Paul (Clara) Kluge. He was also survived by a little granddaughter, Margaret Kluge, a sister, Mrs. Mary Buscher of Piqua, and a brother, William Dierker (the cigar man). He was preceded in death by a son-in-law, Rev. Paul Kluge.

Services were held in Zion's Reformed Church with Rev. Bloemker officiating. Burial was in German Protestant Cemetery.



The Henry Dierker house at 201 N. Franklin St.  
Clara Dierker, Amanda \_\_\_\_\_, Henry Dierker with dog

Henry Dierker's previous home (above) was built by him sometime between 1881-1890. It is now owned by Larry & Donna Lane, who remodeled it several years ago. (see right picture →)



The new Dierker building many years later (late 1960s)

11/10/1905 - Henry Dierkers & Wilbur Rairdons moved into the residence portion of his new business block.

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## DIERKER GRAIN ELEVATOR FIRE

On Saturday, July 24, 1926, a fire of undetermined origin caused a loss estimated at \$5000-\$6000 when the Dierker Elevator, for many years a prominent landmark near the Nickel Plate Railroad tracks in the west end of town was destroyed.

Starting in a small building north of the elevator, the fire spread rapidly and by the time an alarm was sent in, the main building was a mass of flames. Firemen were unable to save the metal-covered building although water was thrown on it for several hours. Several freight cars standing near the tracks also started to burn but the flames were quickly extinguished and the cars moved out of danger. Smoke from the burning building was visible for miles around.

The elevator was owned by the widow of Henry Dierker (the former Louise Greiwe) and in recent years had been operated by her son-in-law, H. Wilbur Rairdon. It was closed almost a year ago and is understood not to have been re-opened since that time, although a carload of oats was shipped last week. About 100 bushels of grain were destroyed with the building. The loss is said to be partly covered by insurance.

(N.B. Sun - 7/29/1926)

## The Fire as Remembered by 5-year old Paul Lietz

"When the fire whistle blew and the fire engine came towards our end of town (34 S. Herman St.), my dad took my hand and we went in that direction. The fire was very close to my Grandmother Lietz's house just west of her back yard at 23 North Herman St. I was given very strict orders to stay in her back yard.

The building was a huge structure. I remember the firemen and the big hoses. The firemen would take long poles and try to pull down the metal roofs as the timber burned away beneath them. Smoke kept pouring out of a small window at the top. I don't remember how many people gathered there because I was too busy watching the firemen." (The Towpath" - July 1991)



The Lane house at 201 N. Franklin St. - 2007



## EXPLOSION OF HENRY DIERKER'S STORE

[N.B. Sun - 1/27/1905]

On Thursday morning, January 26, 1905, at about 8:00 a.m., the populace of New Bremen was startled by a heavy rumbling sound resembling that which is heard at the shooting of an oil well. This report, however, was so much louder and so much more distinct that even those who lived several squares away from the explosion site rushed out to discover the cause. Within 1-2 blocks from Dierker's corner, residents could see a dense cloud of dust arise from where the large 2-story business and residence block of Henry Dierker had been standing just moments before at the corner of Washington and Monroe Streets.

The alarm spread quickly and in just moments, every citizen of the town had been apprised of what terrible calamity had happened. Business houses and factories were closed and residences were deserted, so eager were hundreds of people to arrive on the scene to assist in the rescue work, for it was generally supposed that at least some must be buried in the ruins. When it was reported that no lives had been sacrificed, a sigh of relief went up from the mass that had gathered around.

The building was one of the largest and most substantially built structures of the town. Henry Dierker had only a few years ago come into possession of the property and had expended thousands of dollars on improving the building, making it one of the most commodious business rooms, while the dwelling rooms were made cozy and homelike.

At the time of the accident, every member of the Dierker family, together with employees Peter Tomhafe and Gustave Greiwe, were in the building and the fact that each one was rescued is certainly short of a miracle.

For several days past, the Dierker family had been somewhat disturbed by a gas leak which they had been unable to locate. They had never before been troubled with any leaks in the gas pipes, but just several days before, the gas company had removed the meter for the purpose of cleaning and regulating it, and after its replacement, the gas leak became noticeable.

The previous night, the gas had accumulated in such quantities that the family had been forced to arise very early and open doors and windows in order to drive out the fumes. Mr. Dierker suspected that there might be a leak in the pipes that led to the stoves in the Knights of Pythias Hall above the store room, and consequently requested Emil Laut to go up and investigate, however the leak was not found there.

Shortly after, Peter Tomhafe, who had been a salesman for Mr. Dierker for a number of years, decided to go into the cellar to see if the leak could be discovered there. Gustave Greiwe, also employed by Mr. Dierker, accompanied him. When they got down and did not smell much gas, Mr. Tomhafe struck a match, intending to test the pipes near and around the meter. No sooner had he struck the match than the terrific explosion followed, demolishing all of the north side of the building, not leaving even one brick upon another, while the south side wherein were the dwelling rooms, remained standing. The walls were so damaged, however, that they could no longer be used.

That Pete Tomhafe and Gust Greiwe came out of the wreck alive was truly a miracle. Burned and in the collapsed condition as he was, Mr. Tomhafe had enough presence of mind to go back to turn the gas off at the meter and then made his way for final exit, wrenching his back in breaking open the rear cellarway door to escape. Mr. Greiwe was also burned considerably on the hands and face, but retained presence of mind enough to assist his partner out of the ruins through the

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cellarway which led out on the porch and was the only available opening for them to crawl out. Mr. Dierker was in the store room at the rear of the building at the time and was almost completely covered up in the debris, with only his head, chest & hands being free. He received cuts in the face and head from falling debris, but with assistance from the outside, he was rescued. Mrs. Dierker and their daughter, Clara, who were in the house at the time, also suffered considerable shock. The Dierker family was taken to the home of their daughter and son-in-law, Wilbur and Lillian (Dierker) Rairdon.

Every window, mirror and much of the glass and chinaware in the house was completely shattered. A curtain pole had been driven out through the parlor window completely through the weather boarding of Mr. Koeper's house next door and would undoubtedly have gone through the wall if it had not struck a thick studding in the wall. Nearly all the windows in the buildings nearby were broken by the explosion, among which were the plate glass and windows in the upper story of J.L. Hoffmann's Drug Store, those in Koeper's Shoe Store and dwelling, Klanke's Saloon, G.A. Wiegman's Repair Shop, Jung's Harness Shop, Miss Stone's Millinery Store, Rairdon's Livery Barn, the Solms Blacksmith Shop - even several transoms in Schwaberow's Grocery a block to the west. All the local physicians were at once on the scene caring for those who had been injured. Ed Vogelsang, who was in Klanke's Saloon across the street, was knocked to the floor and for several minutes did not know what had happened. Merchandise was blown clear through the front.

The Fire Department responded at once and soon had the flames under control. The damage to the building, however, was irreparable, and the stock of goods almost worthless, having been precipitated into the cellar and damaged by fire and water. The firemen were complimented on their strong sense of duty in such inclement weather.

Mr. Dierker's loss was estimated to be over \$18,000, which was only covered by insurance for \$11,500.

The members of the Knights of Pythias Rathbone Lodge #543 also suffered the loss of their "home" which had been newly furnished a little over 2 years earlier. What was once a great pride of the Knights was now a mass of ruins. Their loss was partly covered by a \$1000 insurance policy. The Rathbone Sisters lost about \$200 on their paraphernalia, with no insurance.



J.H. Boesche had this building constructed in 1870 at a cost of \$11,000 and was the owner of it until July 1902, when he sold it to Henry Kuenzel, who in turn sold it to Henry Dierker in February 1903. (see pg. 1, also pg. 12 for another view).

The upper story was used by the International Order of Oddfellows (I.O.O.F.) until November of 1891. It then became the home of the Knights of Pythias (K. of P.) from February 1892 until the time of the explosion on January 26, 1905.



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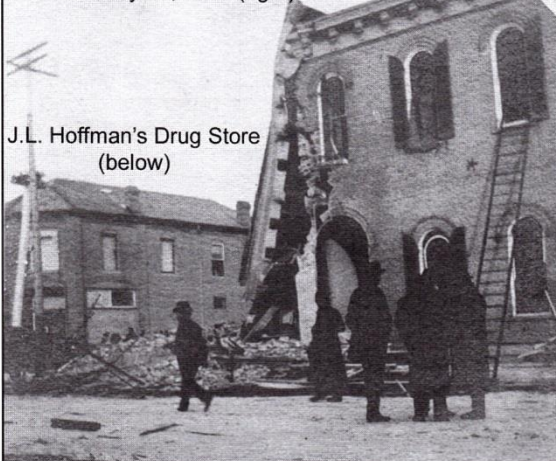
### Additional Explosion Notes

After 10:00 a.m. Thursday morning, 1/26/1905, all cars on the Western Ohio interurban, both north and southbound, were crowded with out-of-town people who came for the special purpose of seeing the ruins of the Dierker building explosion.

The St. Marys *Evening Leader* published a full and graphic account of the explosion. It was offered for sale in the evening and found ready sale.

L.E. Martindale, the St. Marys photographer, was in town Thursday afternoon with his camera and took several different views of the wrecked Dierker block and made arrangements with the Knights of Pythias to dispose of them after they were finished. He offered them to the boys at cost, who will then offer them for sale. This will be a good means to make up at least part of the loss sustained by the Lodge.

Explosion of Henry Dierker's Store  
January 26, 1905 (right)



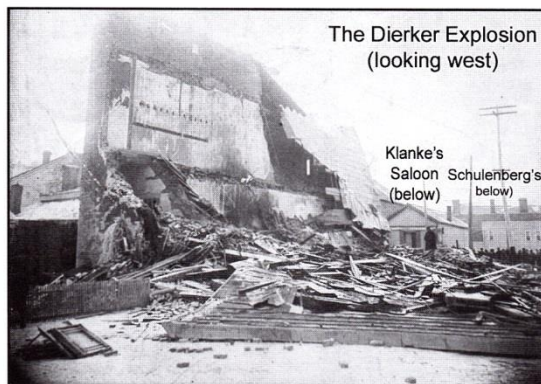
J.L. Hoffman's Drug Store  
(below)



Dierker Store Explosion - 1/26/1905  
(looking east)



Koeper's Shoe  
Store (below  
right)  
V



The Dierker Explosion  
(looking west)

Klanke's  
Saloon (below)  
Schulenberg's  
(below)



Dierker Explosion  
(looking southeast)

[Most explosion pictures furnished by Mrs. Ray (Rosa) Schott, Sr.]

**3/3/1905** - Contractor Joe Vonderhorst, who has secured the contract of tearing down the ruins of the Dierker building, started a large force of men to work on Monday. The site will very likely be cleared by the end of the month and Mr. Dierker will be able to begin erection of a new block early in the spring. The town should now take action and buy part of the lot so the street can be widened before Mr. Dierker rebuilds.

**FIRE SALE:** Bargains in all kinds of merchandise are still numerous in Henry Dierker's great fire sale in the Jung building opposite the Hotel Laut. All goods sold at half, and a large amount at less than half prices. (see picture on pg. 12).

**4/14/1905** - Henry Dierker, having disposed of the greater part of his fire-damaged goods, will discontinue doing business in the Laut and Boesel room (aka the Jung building) after this week. What little is left over will be packed up and stored away in his warehouses, while his office will be moved into the little brick building that remained standing after the disaster, in which he will for the time being carry on his other affairs and at the same time superintend the construction of the new building.

**9/1/1905** - The little brick structure in the rear of Henry Dierker's business is being torn down preparatory for erection of another to be used for storage.

### The Old Well Known Store of HENRY DIERKER

Corner of Monroe & Washington Streets  
which was destroyed by a Gas Explosion will be reopened

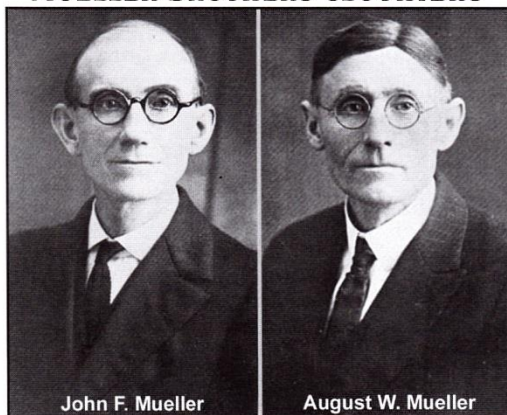
**Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1905**

We have a choice line of DRY GOODS, NOTIONS, GENTS' FURNISHING GOODS and GROCERIES which we will offer at Great Bargains. We also have a full line of Butterick Patterns constantly on hand. All my old friends and customers are cordially invited to give me a call and at the same time I hope to be able to make many new friends in the business.

Henry Dierker - New Bremen, Ohio



## MUELLER BROTHERS CLOTHIERS



John F. Mueller

August W. Mueller

The Mueller brothers, John F. & August W., were proprietors of one of the leading mercantile establishments in New Bremen and dealt in men's clothing and furnishings. Both were born and reared on the old Mueller farm just east of town (the site of the "Bloody Barn Battle" of November 1879 – see the October 2000 "Towpath" & pg. 12).

John F. (1867-1938) and August Wm. (1869-1950) were 2 of the 7 children of Henry Frederick (1837-1923) & Mary Christine (Sunderman) Mueller (1839-1897). Henry's parents were Gerhardt Frederick Müller (1807-1890) and Margaretha Magdalena Schroeder (1806-1886). Gerhardt came to the U.S. from Hannover, Germany in the 1830s and worked on the construction of the Miami & Erie canal. He later became the owner of 400 acres of farm land, of which his son, Henry, eventually became the owner of 100 acres.

John F. Mueller, the oldest of the two brothers, first took up the carpenter trade after he was grown. After 6 years, he took a course in the Becks Commercial College at Dayton preparatory to entering upon a business career. After this, he found employment as a bookkeeper in the John Garmhausen Store at Lock Two and worked there for four years until 1899, when, at the age of 32, he and his brother, August, formed an association and became engaged in the men's clothing business at New Bremen under the name of "Mueller Brothers Clothiers". They opened their first clothing store on September 2, 1899 in the Ed Purpus building.

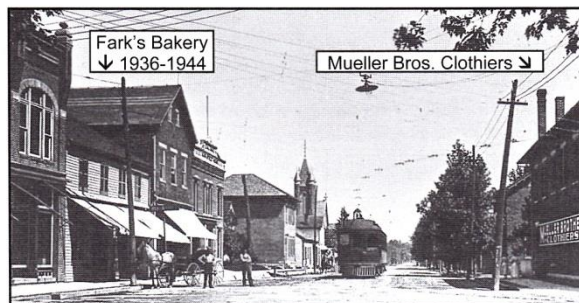
August Mueller remained on the farm until he was 23 years old (1892), when he began working in the sash factory operated by the Heinfeld Mfg. Co. He remained there until he became engaged in business with his brother.



The Mueller brothers had their first store in the Ed Purpus building (most recently, Howell's IGA). Two years later, in 1901 (N.B. Sun-4/12/1901+7/26/1901), they moved their store to the frame Charles Boesel building on the southwest

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corner of Monroe & Water Streets (103 W. Monroe St. – see bottom picture, extreme left – also pgs. 9 & 12). After four years in this location, their expanding business demanded larger quarters and in 1904 (N.B. Sun-10/28/1904), they bought the brick 50'x75' building on the northeast corner of Monroe & Main Streets from Boesel & Künning (see the October 2005 "Towpath"). Their store occupied all of the ground floor and basement and half of the second floor, the east half being occupied by John Mueller and his family. (N.B. Sun-4/7/1905)



In 1905, Mueller Bros. replaced the Boesel & Künning sign on the west wall of their new store with their own sign "Mueller Brothers Clothiers". Henry Hoffman painted the sign. (N.B. Sun-8/11/1905). In January 1910, they had the wall removed between the two business rooms. In April 1913, their brother, Henry Mueller, Jr., took the old counters used by Boesel & Künning and manufactured a black walnut desk & filing cabinet to be used in the store. (N.B. Sun-4/18/1913)

John F. Mueller married Florentine Kettler and they had 2 children – Adiel (1904-1974) and Theophil (1911-1998). August Mueller married Amanda Dinkel (1902) and had 3 children – Marie, Carl and Harold.

Mueller Brothers Clothiers continued doing business until April 17, 1937 when, after 37 years in business, they closed their doors for the last time. In May-June 1937, John's son, Theophil (Tafe) Mueller, opened his own Mueller's Men's Wear Haberdashery across the street in the room formerly occupied by the First City Bank at 115 West Monroe St. Tafe was formerly associated with his father and uncle and prior to that had been a salesman for Curlee Clothes.

**Lyons Electric - 103 W. Monroe**  
**Garman's Drygoods - 107 W. Monroe**  
**Poppe's Shoe Repair - 115 W. Monroe**



**American Legion (upstairs) - 115 W. Monroe**  
**Mueller's Menswear - 117 W. Monroe - 1969**

In 1950, Tafe moved one door west into a newly-built 30'x64' concrete block building at 117 West Monroe. By this time, the American Legion Post #241 had purchased the former Boesel Opera House in which Tafe had been doing business for the past 13 years.



**MUELLER BROS. – NEW BREMEN, OHIO****Are Positively QUITTING BUSINESS****Selling Out At A Sacrifice****STORE WILL BE OPEN EVERY NIGHT  
Come And You Will Save A Lot Of Money****READ THESE PRICES**

MEN'S High Grade Shirts – 67¢, \$1.27, \$1.47; High Grade Wool Sweaters – \$1.77-\$3.27; Fancy Dress Hose – 9¢-37¢/pair (this includes Interwoven hose of 50¢-75¢ values); Lovely Christmas Neckwear, boxed – 47¢-87¢; All Our Finest Hats, including Emersons – \$1.87-\$2.87; Boxed Suspenders – 37¢; Leather Belts – 37¢; Finest Dress Caps and Fur-In-Band Caps – 77¢; Wool Dress Gloves – 37¢; Fine Kid Gloves – \$1.17-\$3.17; Wool Work or Dress Sox – 37¢; Umbrellas – \$1.17-\$2.87; Fine Pajamas – \$1.17-\$2.77; Silk & Wool Scarfs – 87¢-\$2.67; Genuine Fur-Seal Caps – \$1.50; Heavy Yellow Gloves, Double Fleeced – 14¢/pair; Winter Ribbed Union Suits – 77¢; Heavy Ribbed & Fleeced – 94¢; Paris Garters – 17¢; Fine Handkerchiefs – 4¢-37¢.

**Men's fine rings, Swank collar & tie sets, genuine calf-skin belts with fine buckles in boxes, and all jewelry greatly sacrificed.**

**MEN'S FINE TAILORED SUITS**

Choice of the Stock ----- \$15.95 to \$21.50  
Including Sizes 35 to Big Man Stout 48

**DRESS PANTS FROM FINEST SUITS**

Sizes 28 to 50 ----- \$2.47 to \$3.97

**MEN'S FINE OVERCOATS**

Sizes 35 to 52 ----- \$11.95 to \$19.75

**MEN'S & WOMEN'S LUGGAGE**

Trunks – \$6.85-\$7.85; Wardrobe – \$7.85; Suit Cases (5 sizes) – \$1.97-\$5.97; Hat & Lingerie Cases – \$3.67-\$3.97.

**BOYS' WEAR OF ALL KINDS – With Long or Short Pants***[N.B. Sun – 12/18/1936]*

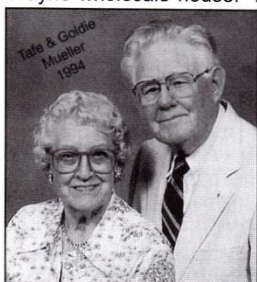
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**Mueller's Men's Wear In New Home**

Saturday is the day Tafe Mueller has been waiting for a long time – ever since he first decided he'd like to be his own landlord. Started early last spring, the store's new home is just one door west of the old location in the American Legion building (formerly the Boesel Opera House). A fireproof cement block structure, it has a porcelain enamel front with new type display windows and visual entrance and is a distinct credit to the Monroe St. business district. (see picture at left – pg. 6).

Tafe is one of the most popular of New Bremen's young businessmen. He virtually grew up in the clothing and haberdashery business, his father, John F. Mueller, and uncle, August W. Mueller, having owned and operated a clothing store for many years under the name of Mueller Brothers Clothiers.

While still in school, Tafe worked in the store in his free time and learned the business from the ground up. At one time, he was on the road selling for Grand Union, an established Ft. Wayne wholesale house. He then returned to New Bremen to

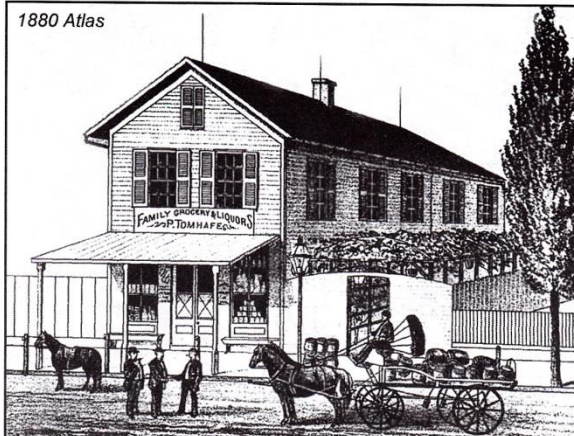


open his own business in 1937. His business career was interrupted by W.W.II when he went into the navy in 1943 and served in the South Pacific until given his discharge in December 1945. Meanwhile, business at the store was continued under the guidance of his wife, Goldie (Finkenbine) & his brother, Adiel.

*(N.B. Sun – 10/5/1950)*

Tafe Mueller retired in 1969 and in 1970 the building he had built became offices for Dr. Stegall & Dr. Stover for a number of years. (see pg. 12).

1880 Atlas



Residence, Grocery, Restaurant & Summer Garden  
of Peter Tomhafa - Main Street - New Bremen, Ohio

**PETER CLAUS TOMHAFA, SR.'s STORE  
20 North Main St.**

Peter Claus Tomhafa, Sr. was born 10/25/1839 in Harsefeld, Hannover, Germany, to Claus Tomhafa (1814-1880) and Anna Roppers(?) (1825?-1878). The Tomhafa family emigrated to America sometime after August 1863 (that is when the last child was born in Germany.) On 3/5/1868, Peter (Sr.) married Dorothea Thiesing and they had 7 children: Ernst, Ernestine (Koeper), Anna Dorothea (Pabst), Claus PETER (Jr.), Louise (1879-1880), Amanda (Lent/Dickman) and Johann Heinrich.

Built ca. 1870, Peter Tomhafa owned and operated the above grocery, lager beer saloon, outdoor beer garden & rooming house. A wooden awning reached the street and a grape arbor ran along the south side where the beer garden was – he also made his own wine.

On 10/18/1883, Peter Tomhafa committed suicide just months after his youngest child was born. Peter (Jr.) was just a little over 7 years old. Upon Mr. Tomhafa's demise, John F. Schulhoff purchased the business, including the building, and opened the first lunch room in the village, operating it as the "Famous Restaurant" for many years until the Ohio-Dow liquor license permit was increased to \$500 per annum, after which he discontinued the sale of the harder beverages, operating the place as a restaurant only.

*(from "Do You Remember" by F.W. Bruns)*
**JOHN F. SCHULHOFF'S "FAMOUS RESTAURANT"  
20 North Main St.**

**5/25/1888** – John F. Schulhoff opens his restaurant.

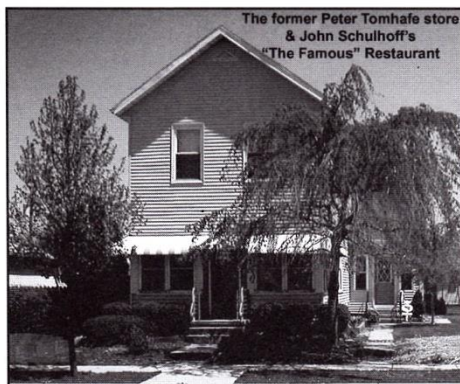
**6/1/1888** – Schulhoff's Famous Restaurant has a new business sign. Knost & Heinfeldt painted it. Go to J.F. Schulhoff's restaurant for fine lunches and meals – chicken, veal, wienerwurst, soup, etc. always on hand – ice cream every Sunday at Schulhoff's Ice Cream hall.

**6/7/1889** – **I Scream! I Scream!** The W. Place's No. 1 Ice Cream at the Famous Restaurant every Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday evening.

**5/4/1895** – **Fried Pigeon** at John F. Schulhoff's restaurant tonight and tomorrow night.

**8/3+17/1895** – Refreshing drinks, lunches, etc. to be had at all hours of the day at John F. Schulhoff's Restaurant.





20 North Main St. (cont'd. from Pg. 7)

The former Tomhafa / Schulhoff store front was remodeled for living purposes. In 1929, the house was occupied by the Charles & Emily (Schowe) Heil family and was later owned by Carman & Norma Hirschfeld.

ODD 'n' ENDS

**9/17/1909** – Barney Gerling purchased the former J.F. Schulhoff property (above) from Herman Laut for \$2000.

**5/27/1910** – Barney Gerling purchased the business room (later "The Equity") between his own residence (above) and the old French House from Herman Laut for \$1100. Mr. Gerling has moved the building back a short distance from the sidewalk and will move his marble works over there.

**3/28/1913** – Barney Gerling relinquished his position at the **New Bremen Marble & Granite Works** Tuesday, intending to seek employment elsewhere. Fred Greber informs that the shops will remain at the old place on the side of the former Finke House (previously the French House), and will be conducted without interruption.

**2/21/1919** – Mrs. Barney Gerling and children left yesterday for Kenton where they intend spending a couple of weeks with Mr. Gerling who has been employed there for some time as a stone-cutter.

**11/28/1919** – Grant Shearer this week purchased the business room on North Main St. in which **Fred Greber's marble and granite works** formerly was located, situated immediately aside of his Superior Broom Works establishment (old French House).

**Jess Wessner, the oil drilling contractor** (see pg. 1 picture) of Hartford City, Indiana, was in town several days this week looking after some business matters and also paying his wife's folks, Mr. & Mrs. Ernst Thiesing, a visit. Jess is again operating in the Ohio field, being presently located at West Mansfield in Logan County, where, with Lawrence Hoffman, son of Mr. & Mrs. J.L. Hoffman, he is leasing land with a view of sinking a number of wells. Both gentlemen are well known here and the *SUN* hopes they will be eminently successful as prospectors and producers. (N.B. Sun – 12/1/1905)

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#### Cort Lehmkuhl's Horse Drowns

Cort Lehmkuhl (see pg. 10), a farmer living 1½ miles south of town, had the misfortune of losing a valuable horse by accidental drowning early yesterday morning. The horse got loose from its manger at 12:00 midnight and jumped over a fence into the yard, where it walked into a well 30 feet deep. The noise aroused the family from their sleep, and with the assistance of neighbors, they pulled out the dead animal at 6:00 a.m. yesterday morning. The horse was valued at \$150.

[N.B. Sun – 12/20/1889]

#### Memories of the 1913 Flood

Bernard Losh, a newspaperman, was 19 and was clerking in a Dayton haberdashery in 1913. He stood by the shirts and socks until the flood water crept up his legs, then he stepped out on the street and locked the door. Two young men, holding an old man between them, splashed past. Bernie waded after them. They went through chest-deep water to reach an apartment building. Bernie dripped all over the floor, then went into the bathroom, disrobed and wrung his clothes out over a bath tub. He noticed that the tub was almost filled with water.

Recently Mr. Losh was in New Bremen where he met a man named William Dorfer. Mr. Losh looked Dorfer over carefully, and then said: "You're one of the guys who helped that old man along Third Street in Dayton the day of the 1913 flood."

Bill Dorfer (see pg. 2) perked right up and scanned the Losh features. "Ah!" he exclaimed. "You're the young squirt who wrung out his clothes in our bathtub full of drinking water." After 38 years, both remembered! (N.B. Sun – 4/12/1951)

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#### A Proud Automobile Owner

A familiar car to New Bremen people acquired a new owner this past month as Carl Arkenberg, formerly of New Bremen, sold his 1928 Chevrolet to Loren Suchland of Detroit, Michigan. Mr. Arkenberg bought the "old timer" new at Minster in 1928.

The car was of particular interest throughout this area, not only for its old age, but for the extreme care given it by its owner. Mr. Arkenberg is known to have cleaned his car inside and out after almost every time he used it.

Perhaps the title "the best owner a car ever had" can be bestowed on Mr. Arkenberg for his unique devotion to his beloved 1928 Chevrolet. (N.B. Sun – 6/28/1956)

#### JOHN A. KOEPER'S CITY BOOT & SHOE STORE Washington St. near J.H. Boesche's Store

[see pgs. 5 & 12]

John A. Koepfer leads the trade. He manufactures goods to order for the same price you buy store goods. Best hand made shoes at John A. Koepfer's sell for \$3.50. Patronize home industry and benefit yourselves and the community in general. I have frequently called your attention to the fact that I am better equipped to give greater value and lower prices than the strongest competition anywhere and I can save you from \$1.00-\$1.50 on every pair of hand-sewed shoes made to order.

(N.B. Sun – 3/1888, 2/7+6/20/1890)

#### Dollars and Sense

A little sense connected with a few cents will make dollars for any man. Something for nothing is not easily obtainable, but when you can get a good thing at the price of a poor one, you come as near getting something for nothing as anything in the world. Try this combination at J.A. Koepfer's Shoe Store. People who take advantage of our low prices never fail to be made happy. Our display of spring and summer goods are now ready and await your early inspection. All are welcome. J.A. Koepfer (N.B. Sun-4/8/1893)

#### A Cackling Hen

may be excused for making an awful big racket over a mighty little egg, but when she cackles for an hour over a china door knob, it's time to throw a brick at her. There is also some excuse for a merchant cackling a good deal over a genuine bargain, but when the so-called bargain turns out to be a door knob bargain, it is time somebody threw a brick or "shoo" at the noisy thing. There's an awful lot of cackling about bargains going on, but we'll bet they're all door knob bargains, so here goes our brick.

We'll meet any price, show better quality for the same money and do better by you than any dry goods or grocery store. I advise everybody to buy boots and shoes in a SHOE STORE – no door knob bargains about this! John A. Koepfer (N.B. Sun-6/10/1893)



### SCHROERLUKE & TOMHAFF DRY GOODS

On August 17, 1905, Henry H. Schroerluke and Peter Tomhaff opened a new dry goods store in the west half of the frame Charles Boesel building (at 103 W. Monroe St.) after the building was vacated by Mueller Brothers Clothiers.

#### H. H. Schroerluke

Henry H. Schroerluke was the son of Herman & Sophia (Heitkamp) Schroerluke and was born 10/1/1858 on a farm north of New Bremen. On 8/29/1896, he married Caroline Maurer.

For a number of years, Mr. Schroerluke was a rural school teacher in the New Bremen and Kettlersville school districts. After giving up the teaching profession, he became engaged in business at Kettlersville. During his residence in New Bremen, he also served several terms on the New Bremen Board of Education.

In April 1905, H.H. Schroerluke resigned his position as salesman with the Farmers Implement Co. in anticipation of embarking in a new dry goods business. In 1920, after 15 years in the business, he retired and he and his wife moved to Webster Groves, Missouri where he died 2/27/1936. While living in New Bremen, the Schroerlukes were members of St. Peters Church. They had 2 children: Rev. Orrin P. Schroerluke and Glenna Schroerluke. Rev. Orrin Schroerluke was considered a "son of the church".

H.H. Schroerluke was survived by 2 brothers and 2 sisters: August Schroerluke of Osmond, Nebraska, William Schroerluke & Mrs. Frederick (Louise) Heitkamp of New Bremen and Mrs. Sophia Heisler of Anna.

#### C. P. Tomhaff

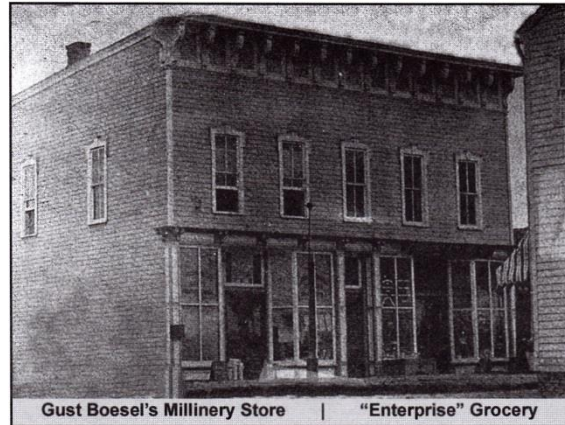
Claus PETER Tomhaff was a native of New Bremen and for many years was prominently identified with various local business institutions. Peter Tomhaff was born 8/2/1876 to Peter & Dorothea (Thiesing) Tomhaff and was married 5/10/1900 to Emma Schnelle.



At the age of 12, Peter Tomhaff started working in the Henry Dierker Dry Goods Store at the corner of Washington & Monroe Streets. On January 26, 1905, the Dierker building was destroyed by a gas explosion and fire, which was ignited when Peter Tomhaff and Gustave Greiwe went into the basement to investigate the cause of gas fumes. The building having been thoroughly ventilated, and with no signs of escaping gas, Tomhaff lit a match to test the pipes around the meter, which resulted in a terrific explosion (see pgs. 4-5).

On 8/17/1905, he became associated for a short time with H.H. Schroerluke in the new dry goods store located in the frame Boesel block on West Monroe St. In October 1906, Schroerluke & Tomhaff dissolved their partnership. Mr. Schroerluke became sole owner, however Mr. Tomhaff still assisted in the store. In August 1907, the Tomhaff family sold their property on North Walnut St. to Alvina Wehrman and moved to St. Marys where Peter became associated with the Glass Block Department Store. There he became a manager of the dry goods and basement departments for 15 years and also became a Director and Secretary-Treasurer of the company.

When Peter Tomhaff died on 8/18/1927, he was survived by his wife, a son, Carl Tomhaff of Van Wert, his mother, Mrs. William (Dorothea) Kuhlhorst (she had remarried), and siblings John Tomhaff of Hanford, California and Ernst Tomhaff, Mrs. Ewald (Amanda) Dickman, and Mrs. William (Ernestine) Koeper, all of New Bremen.



This building was built in 1880 for Charles Boesel, Sr. by William Brinkmeyer and John & George Klanke, builders, and served as two separate businesses. This picture had to have been taken sometime between 1892 & March 1898 when Henry Schwaberow moved the old William Fahrenhorst building shown on the right to the rear of the lot, built the new brick building known as "Schwaberow's Store" (later the Western Ohio Hardware) on the northwest corner of Monroe & Water Streets, and moved his business across the street.

Occupants of the east (left) side of the store over the years were Gustave Boesel, Henry C. Meyer (each as the Boston Shoe Store), Martin Knost, Herman Laut, Gregor Gast (also Boot & Shoe stores) & Mrs. George Gast (Ladies' Wear). Occupants of the west (right) side were Edward Purpus (General Store), Henry Schwaberow (Grocery), Mueller Brothers (Clothing), Henry Schroerluke (Dry Goods), Loy & Ludwig (Music House) and Ed Erhardt (Dry Goods). In September 1946, Harry F. Schroeder moved his New Bremen Hardware & Supply Co. store into the entire building from his previous location in the Boesel Opera House - a business he had purchased in 1922 from Charles J. Boesel.

Occupying the upstairs rooms over the years were John Laut (Cigar Maker), Theodore Purpus (Concordia Bldg. & Loan) and Dr. Barrett & Dr. McCormick (both dentists). The upstairs also served as living quarters at some time.

### SCHROERLUKE & TOMHAFF

Boesel's Block, east of Opera House NEW BREMEN, OHIO

#### GRAND OPENING

Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1905

#### NEW GOODS in the NEW FIRM's NEW STORE

It is with pleasure that we announce to our friends and the public in general that we will be ready to open our store for business on Thursday, August 17, 1905.

For a couple of weeks we have been busy unpacking our large new stock of **DRY GOODS, NOTIONS & FURNISHING GOODS**, shipments of which have been coming in every day, and we are glad to be in a position to state truthfully that our assortment of dress goods, silks, skirts, collars, belts, ribbons, laces, embroidery etc. has never been surpassed in this section.

Our slogan will always be

**"The right goods at the right prices"**

and we should be pleased to have all our friends in New Bremen and the surrounding country to pay us a visit on the opening day and become our customers for at least a part of their purchases.

Our experience as Dry Goods Merchants extends over a number of years and we are confident that we will be able to please immaterial what the grade of goods desired.



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### THE LEHMKUHL HOTEL

[from "Do You Remember" by Fernando W. Bruns - 2/20/27/1947]

The old Lehmkuhl Hotel, a 2 and 3 story building, (originally the Behrens Hotel, owned by John B. Behrens), it fronted on North Main Street & was the first 3-story structure to be erected "probably 100 years ago".

According to Adam Helwig, the Lehmkuhl Hotel was originally an old frame building, and was later replaced by a brick building. According to the Ohio Historic Inventory, the 2-story part was erected in 1846 and the 3-story addition was built in 1858.

This was really an old-time hostelry erected by the father of the late Cort and Carl Lehmkuhl - J. Albert Lehmkuhl. It was a favorite stopping place for farmers, who engaged in butchering hogs in the wintertime from December 1<sup>st</sup> to February 1<sup>st</sup> and hauled and slaughtered porkers from as far west as Fort Wayne, Indiana via horse-drawn wagons. If the roads were covered with a solid bed of snow, bobsleds were brought into service.

The Lehmkuhl house was their favorite stopping place for many years. Mr. & Mrs. Lehmkuhl were the parents of a bevy of girls who assisted their parents in conducting the business on a successful scale. The Lehmkuhl family was ideal in extending hospitality to their patrons and thus prospered for 24 years.

Esther (Fearing) Quist related that "My great-grandfather, Albert Lehmkuhl, built that 3-story brick building. It was an inn and travelers came for miles around and lodged there. All of my mother's sisters and brothers (children of Cort Lehmkuhl) were born there and my mother, Adelia (Lehmkuhl) Fearing, lived there until she was 16 years old (1884). Behind the house stood a large outdoor bake-oven where bread was baked and eggs were boiled by the bucketful! My great-grandmother pieced and quilted quilts on that 3<sup>rd</sup> floor many years ago."

(by Marge Lietz - July 1994)

Fernando W. Bruns's mother, Magdalene (Buckloh) Bruns, was employed by the Lehmkuhls during her girlhood days (1860s?) as a dining room waitress.

The dining room (a long room with the kitchen in the rear) was located in the center of this structure, adjoined by a lager beer saloon in the south 1/3 of the building. The north section served as sleeping quarters for overnight patrons, as did also the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> story of the building. After the Lehmkuhls discontinued the saloon business, the room

was occupied by Herman Meyer, who conducted the place for several years and later let the 3<sup>rd</sup> story for dances and other entertainment. The center portion is now (1947) rented by Mr. & Mrs. John Schierholt for living quarters.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> story, on the south (left) side of the building, was the meeting place of New Bremen's Masonic fraternity. The Lodge prospered quite a few years (see "The Towpath" - July 1999).

In June 1905, the property was sold to William Barth for \$3000 and became known as "Barth's Flat".

#### LAND TAX VALUES - Lot #11/Orig. series, #41/New series

1838-1839-1840 - John B. Behrens - \$60 value  
 1870-1880 - Albert Lehmkuhl - \$1600 total value  
 6/24/1889 - Anna Margaretha (Lehmkuhl) Elshoff died - no children  
 (was Margaretha called Gretchen?)  
 1890 - Gretchen Elshoff (heirs) - \$1190 total value  
 12/31/1903 - Ernst Elshoff killed in lumber mill accident  
 3/18/1905 - Pauline (Lehmkuhl) Isern died  
 6/9/1905 - Mrs. Ernst Elshoff's property sold to Wm. Barth for \$3000  
 1910 - William Barth - \$3000 total value

The Inman family - Albert G., wife Ollie, and children Carl & Joyce took title to this landmark from William Barth's son, Edwin C. Barth, on August 5, 1946. In 1967, the Inmans sold the apartments to Jim & Lucille Scheer, who in turn sold them to the First National Bank in 1980.

In 1983, the building was demolished. By January 17, 1983, there was an empty lot. In May 1996, the lot was sold to the Crown Credit Co., Inc. and is now a "green space". (see pg. 12)





## BRUNS MARBLE-CUTTING SHOP

Lot #12/old series, #42/new series, SE corner - 123 N. Main  
[from "Do You Remember" by Fernando W. Bruns - 2/20/1947]

"Adjoining the Lehmkuhl Hotel building in the 1870s and 1880s was the marble-cutting shop of my dad, William Bruns. Pneumatic marble-cutting tools were unknown those years and when Dad Bruns contracted for a monument or grave marker, he did it with a stile chisel and wooden mallet. Needless to say, he did it in a perfect manner and that can be substantiated by inspecting his work which bore the initials W.B. on all monuments and markers he made and sold.

Dad Bruns became a marble and gravestone cutter in his boyhood days when William Langhorst accompanied him to Cincinnati and paid a 1½-year tuition for him in a school of marble cutting." (William Bruns also served two terms as Mayor of New Bremen in 1884-1885 & 1887-1889.)

According to Mary Ann Brown's Ohio Historic Inventory done in 1977-1981, the building was built in 1852. Conveyance records show that in January 1870, Part Lot 42 (25'x60') was sold for \$50 by Frederick Langhorst & wife to Langhorst & Bruns. In April 1879, it was sold by William Langhorst & wife to William Bruns for \$160. William Bruns & wife sold it to George Schulte in May 1900 for \$250.

On the Sanborn fire insurance maps, in August 1907, the building was shown as a "repair shop". In October 1914, it was shown as a "club room". In February 1933, it was shown as an "auto repair" shop.

In November 1934, the property was sold to Auglaize County; in September 1935, it was sold to John R. & Bertha Kohler; in November 1944 to Robert E. & Margaret James; and in May 1945 to William & Clara Campbell. (Karl Mesloh relates that Walter Fischbach once had a bicycle shop here, and that Bill Campbell had a mechanic shop. Bill was nicknamed "two thumbs" and was known for working all night on race cars and drinking an ample supply of coffee.) The Campbells sold the property to Oscar Dammeyer in October 1947. After Oscar's death in January 1952, it was sold to James C. Wissman, et al. The property was subsequently conveyed to Precision Tool & Machine Co. (December 1966), and then to Norbert F. Steineman (April 1978).



Karl Mesloh collection

### PRECISION TOOL & MACHINE CO.

In 1952, Jim Wissman had a dream - a dream of a Precision Tool Company. He had \$500.00 and the help of relatives and friends. An old carpenter shop was painted, rewired, re-roofed, cement-floored, used machinery moved in, and the doors and windows were washed. The grass was cut, and shrubs and gay petunias were planted. A statue of Saint Joseph, the worker, was put in a wall-niche and men began working. A small start!

(by Jim's aunt, Ida Rose Wissman, from "Glimpses", published August 15, 1972 by Messenger Press.)

In August 1985, the property was transferred to Robert H. Kuck, II and his wife, Linda M. Kuck. It was at this time that the building received a major renovation and on 12/13/1989 the property was sold to the German Township trustees who are the current owners.

-11-



### TRUCK SMASHES INTO BRUNS BEDROOM

On Monday, July 26, 1948, at 6:30 a.m., this huge 17-ton Keeshin tractor-trailer loaded with International Harvester machine parts skidded 100 yards on the slippery roadway at the 90-degree turn of Route 66 as it came into New Bremen from the north and the driver applied his brakes to make the left-hand turn at the corner of Pearl and Herman Streets. Driver Lester Snodgrass of Chicago emerged unscathed from one of the worst accidents seen in New Bremen in many years.

Also emerging unharmed was 11-year old Billy Bruns as the truck crashed into the home of his parents, Elton W. & Daisy Bruns, tearing through Billy's bedroom and smashing the wall into the dining room before halting its mad flight.

Elton Bruns, awakened by the crash, thought his home had been struck by lightning. Rushing to his son's bedroom, he was startled to see the place splintered and Billy lying in his bed covered with debris. Assisted by Mr. Snodgrass, Mr. Bruns cleared away the debris and shook Billy, who opened his eyes, yawned and asked what was the matter! Above Billy's bed hung the Bible quotation, "The Lord is my Shepherd".

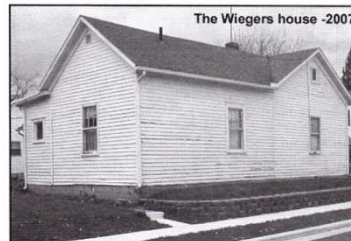
The tractor was a total wreck and damages to the trailer were estimated to amount to \$400-\$500. Driver Snodgrass was reported to have been dismissed by the company in spite of his stated record of driving 18 years without an accident.

Pending placement of a bond, Mr. Bruns refused permission to remove the truck and trailer from the house, however transshipment of the machine parts was permitted. A suit for \$20,000 damages was filed in Common Pleas court by the Brunses against the driver and the Keeshin Motor Freight Co., Inc. of Chicago.

Thousands of curious sightseers from as far away as Piqua visited the accident site all day Monday and Monday night. Police Chief Clarence (Molly) Wehrman was kept busy all day directing traffic through the crowded streets.

Photos of the accident appeared on the street the same afternoon in the Sidney Daily News. The crash was reported in newspapers throughout the nation, including the Chicago Tribune.

The Bruns family moved in with Mr. Bruns's mother, Anna, on North Washington St. His father, Fernando W. Bruns (our "Do You Remember" editor), had died on April 6, 1948, just 3-4 months before.



The Wiegers house -2007

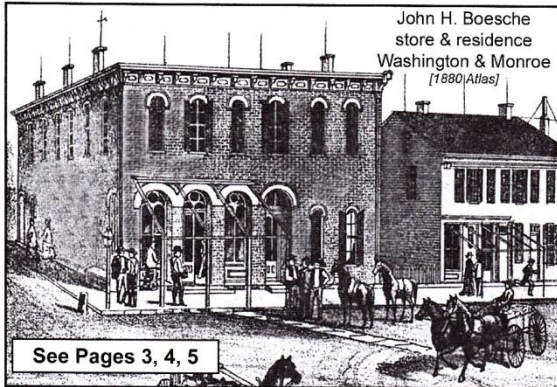
In June 1949, Reinhard Wiegers was the high bidder at the sale of the Bruns property at \$4025. He and his wife, Emma, moved there from the country and built a protective concrete retaining wall around the yard (higher than the present block wall). In the 1990s, after Emma's death, their grandson, Terry Wiegers, moved in with his grandfather and still lives there.



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## THE REST OF THE STORIES

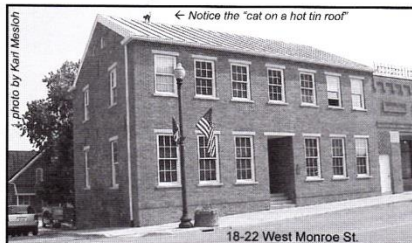
You've read the stories and seen some of the historical pictures.  
Here are some additional pictures, including what some of these buildings and locations look like today.



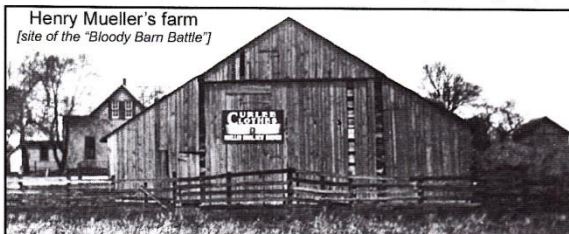
Now the Marathon station, etc. (Pgs. 3, 4, & above)



Schwieterman's Drug Store & Marathon station (Pg. 5)



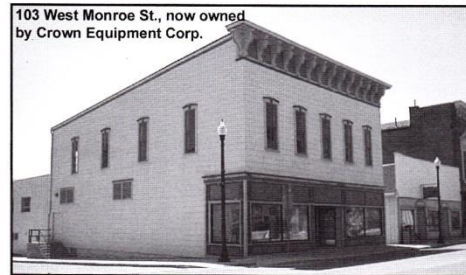
Where Henry Dierker held his fire sale (see Page 5)



Birthplace of Mueller Bros. (Pg. 6) - now a green space  
[Notice the "Curlee Clothes" sign on the barn]



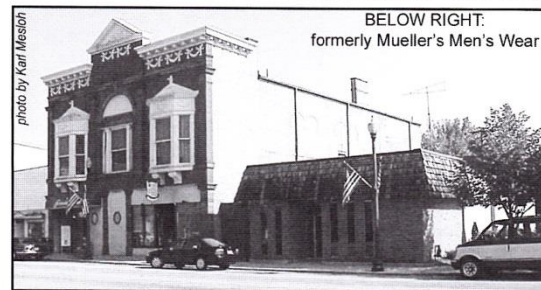
Mueller Brothers Clothiers 1<sup>st</sup> location in 1899 (Pg. 6)



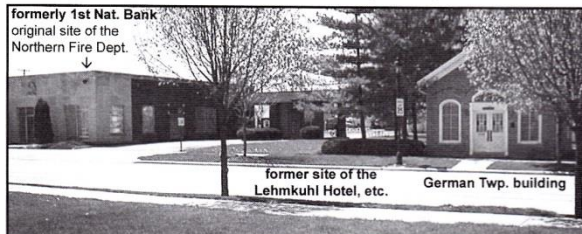
Mueller Brothers Clothiers 2nd location - 1901 (Pg. 6)  
Schroerluke & Tomhake Dry Goods Store - 1905 (Pg. 9)  
[N.B.H.A.'s old washer display on left side & old iron skillet  
display on right side by owner, Crown Equipment Corp.]



Mueller Bros. 3<sup>rd</sup> location - Monroe & Main Sts. (Pg. 6)



115-117 W. Monroe (Pgs. 6, 7)



Crown Credit Co. & Twp. building with space between  
which was formerly the Lehmkuhl Hotel, etc. (Pg. 10)



## From the Mailbox

Hello Tom:

11/19/2006

Attached is a picture that might be of interest to someone in the New Bremen area. The picture was taken when my grandmother, Lydia (Grewe)-Saer (known to family as "Missy"), visited Ohio after moving to Washington and looked up friends in New Bremen. She and my father, Richard Dunbar Cadle, are shown with the King family - family friends I have heard of, but wouldn't be able to recognize in a picture. Perhaps someone can identify them.

Gary Cadle - Medford, Oregon



Flora (Kettler) King, Richard King (son), Richard Dunbar Cadle, Lydia (Grewe) Saer, Naomi (King) Cummins/Wierwille (daughter), Jacob King.

[Identifications by Lorma (Fricke) Wiehe. Her husband, Howard Wiehe, was a brother to Ruth Wiehe, who married Richard King.]

Hello Tom:

1/14/2007

I came across another picture of potential interest. On the back, it says "Evelyn Marie Grewe (my great-aunt), 2<sup>nd</sup> from left in front row." That is the only identification on the picture, but it appears to be a school picture from New Bremen. We know that Evelyn was born July 14, 1907, so I'm guessing this is probably from around 1913.

Gary Cadle - Medford, Oregon



NEW BREMEN'S FIRST KINDERGARTEN CLASS? (in 1912)  
POSSIBLE IDENTIFICATIONS:

BACK: 1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) Edna Wittenbrink?, 3) \_\_\_\_\_,  
4) Robert Paul?, 5) \_\_\_\_\_, 6) \_\_\_\_\_, 7) \_\_\_\_\_, 8) \_\_\_\_\_.

FRONT: 1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) Evelyn Grewe, 3) \_\_\_\_\_,  
4) Clara Pauline Nieter?, 5) \_\_\_\_\_.

(See note →)



Gary & Kathy Cadle of Medford, Oregon  
9/10/2005

Tom: 9/21/2005

We want to thank you for all the time you spent with us when we visited New Bremen on September 10th (2005). We appreciate your guiding us around the city and arranging the visit with the Kettlers (former neighbors of the Grewes), with Jim and Carol Opperman (who now live in the "Grewe" house), and with Lucille. It meant a lot to me to be able to

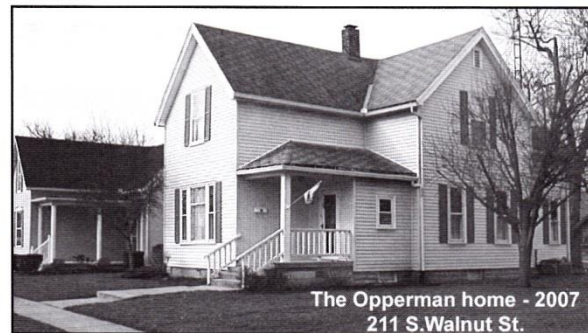
go into the home (below) that my mother, Edna (Saer) Cadle, spoke about so often. Also, meeting Bob & Betty (Weinberg) Kettler, two persons who she knew as a child, was very special. We learned much more about New Bremen than we could possibly have done had it not been for your kind assistance. Thank you again.

Gary &amp; Kathy Cadle - Medford, Oregon



The Grewe house  
211 S. Walnut St.

[See more about the Grewes in the July 1997 "Towpath" (page 11) and more about this house in the April 2005 issue. It is also the former home of our own Tom Braun.]



The Opperman home - 2007  
211 S. Walnut St.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In the January 2003 issue of "The Towpath", on page 15, I had an article about New Bremen's first (private) kindergarten class, which was started in October 1912 by Supt. Charles C. Garman. I included a picture of the 1913-1914 first grade class, from which I recognized several of the same people in the picture on the left.



-14-

Tom &amp; Lucille:

3/19/2007

Seeing the pictures of your Christmas dinner in your January 2007 issue of *The Towpath* caused me to hunt for this picture of my grandfather, Monetta Barth, and the German Christmas tree that is a tradition in our family. It was made by his father-in-law, Johann Adam Gottfried/Godfrey Finke (1852-1926), who made a tree for each of his 6 children. It is a frame with 3 circular platforms inside where scenes are displayed. These are connected by a central pole to paddles on the top (much like a windmill). Previously the heat from the candles would cause the paddles to turn and the scenes would revolve.



Monetta Barth with his hand-made Christmas tree

William Bruns's 1908 hand-made Christmas tree

My father, William F. Barth, II, took this picture (on left) and used it on a Christmas card prior to 1940. By then electric lights replaced the candles and it was set near a heat register to cause it to turn.

My sister, Linda Seling, in Pontiac, Michigan still displays this tree each year. My father and husband made a similar one for our use. I wonder if this was a common Christmas decoration in New Bremen many years ago?

Sincerely,

Becky (Barth) Hurter - Cincinnati, Ohio

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The William Bruns old-fashioned hand-crafted wooden carousel Christmas tree (above right) was displayed at our 1998 Christmas tree festival by his grandson & wife, Bill & Nita Bruns of Muncie, Indiana. (see pg. 11)

Godfrey Finke, local agent for the celebrated John Kauffman beer, took a load of beer to St. Marys Saturday to serve his patrons. It was a stormy day. We overtook Mr. Finke on the road coming back and were struck at the manner he braved the tempest. Perched on top of the beer wagon where the wind had free access, he greeted us with a Christmas cheer. He was accompanied by G. Waterman. The two bore the semblance of two lonely sparrows, perched out on a desolate tree chirping their chick-a-dee-dee in mirthful glee. Their faces were red like cherries from the cold.

(N.B. Sun - 1/2/1892)

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4/13/2007

I read the April 2007 Complimentary Copy of *The Towpath* and wish that my mom, Marie (Hoffman) Schmehl, and my aunt, Margaret (Hoffman) Buckingham, could have still been here to enjoy reading it.

When I saw the picture of August Mueller's house, it reminded me of my staying with them and being allowed to walk down to Irvin Fark's bakery shop which was on the same side of the street, just across the street from the Mueller Brothers Clothing Store. Does anyone have a picture of the bakery? [NOTE: see the July 1999 "Towpath" & also pg. 6 of this issue]

I am sending my check for a year's subscription to *The Towpath*. Sincerely, Martha (Schmehl) Coby - Celina, Ohio

Phone call to Lucille Francis:

4/13/2007



What can you tell me about the H.H. Schroeder Dry Goods Store? I have this 1908 calendar plate that my mother, Clara (Heil) Huenke, had which I am donating to your museum.

I've had it on display in my home for 30 years. I hope it will be a small part of the lovely museum.

Dorothy (Huenke) Huwer  
St. Marys, Ohio

**EDITOR'S RESPONSE:** See the article on page 9 and other related articles on pages 6 & 7.

&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;

Enclosed is my check for 2007 dues. My sister, Edna Tontrup, has been sharing her copy with me & I enjoy reading it. About time to get my own copy of *The Towpath*. Thanks.

Naomi (Schroeder) Rison - St. Marys, Ohio (4/17/2007)

&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;

I love *The Towpath* - Great Reading! My parents were Frank & Paula (Vogelsang) Quellhorst. I attended Zion's Church in New Bremen and was also married there (over 50 years ago!)

Janet (Quellhorst) Swartz - St. Marys, Ohio (4/17/2007)

&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;

Thanks for your hard work. Receiving *The Towpath* is the highlight of my mail!

Christina (Schneider) Howard - Centerville, Ohio (4/20/2007)

&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;

Dear Towpath:

5/1/2007

We just received the April 2007 issue of *The Towpath*. We always enjoy reading it and do so immediately, especially enjoying the pictures. Plus, we can always find at least one or two family names.

There were several other Meyers listed on the membership roll. Is there any means to contact them? I am doing family research on the Meyer name and would love to find others doing the same. Thank you for your help.

John & Evelene Meyer - 12939 Calle de las Rosas - San Diego, CA 92129

&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;

Lucille Francis:

4/29/2007

I enjoy reading *The Towpath* and appreciate the numerous complimentary copies that you have sent. When I received the October 2006 issue with the "West Side" school as a featured article, I decided to send a check for a Lifetime Membership - then it went into my New Bremen file folder and was forgotten until I was preparing to visit my dad, Wilbert Gruebmeier, the third weekend in May.

Sincerely,

Larry Gruebmeier - Mesa, Arizona

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Larry Gruebmeier graduated with the N.B.H.S. Class of 1964 and was one of the last students to attend the "West Side" country school, having completed the first grade when the students were transferred to the Central Grade School in town in August 1953. There were 4 students in that last class - Carole Dicke, Jerry Koeper, Larry Gruebmeier and Stanley Topp.

&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;

My dad, Leland E. Stroh of Wapakoneta, loves reading *The Towpath*. Have you ever done an article on Schlesselman's Lumber Mill? The house is still in New Bremen and sits on the canal.

Sincerely,

Katharine (Kay) Wellington (daughter)

**EDITOR'S REPLY:** No, I haven't, but I would appreciate receiving any information or pictures available on the subject.



-15-

Hi Tom:

3/31/2007

I enjoyed the January 2007 "Towpath", especially the letter from Ann (Beal) Logan from Oakville, Ontario, Canada on page 14, whose Sunderman great-great-grandparents both died in Le Sueur, Minnesota in 1913. I would appreciate it very much if you could help me contact her.

My great-grandfather, Friederick WILHELM Seeman, also went to Le Sueur in 1881 with his wife and 8 children. He died there in 1923, she in 1929.

I never see the name Seemann come up in any of the history of New Bremen, yet we know they were there. William's next oldest brother, Gustave, died in New Bremen in 1925. He married Mary Jane Parse and they did not have children as far as I know. His sister Lizette married Christian Rudolph Thiemann in 1867. They lived in Shelby County and had 8 children. His other sister, Louise, married twice - #1-John Peter Fisher (2 children - Charles & Alma), and #2-Lewis Keshner (no children). His oldest brother, Henry, married Sophia Strasburg in New Bremen in 1861 and also went to Minnesota about 1871.

We really enjoyed our visit to New Bremen and would like to come back some time.

Anna (Seeman) Hixson - Washington, Missouri

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### A FAMOUS RELATIVE!

On my last visit to my optometrist, Dr. Gene Knapke, he commented about an article I had in the April 2006 issue of *The Towpath* about the town of Amsterdam which used to be situated south of New Bremen and was wiped out by a cholera epidemic in 1849. He told me that he was a descendant of a Peter Laufersweiler who had at one time owned Outlots 3, 4, 5 in the town of Amsterdam, but by the 1860s had sold all of them.

Peter Laufersweiler had a son, John, who had a hardware store in Minster. John was married twice. He had 9 children by his first wife, then another 9 children by his second wife. One of John's children was Olive Laufersweiler, who was born ca. 1891 and graduated from New Bremen High School in 1909 in the same class as Ernest M. Botkin, who wrote the N.B.H.S. school song. (She is pictured in the 25-year class reunion picture printed in the January 1998 issue of "The Towpath".)

Conrad Laufersweiler, oldest son of Peter and brother to John Laufersweiler, moved to Iowa, married and had a daughter who married August Hilton. They had a son and named him "Conrad Hilton". This is the same Conrad Hilton who was the owner of the Hilton Hotels! (and Zsa Zsa Gabor's father-in-law.)

A wedding dance was given Wednesday evening, April 15, 1891 at the Minster town hall in honor of the marriage of Mr. A. Schunk and Miss Josie Laufersweiler. The famous "Little Six" band of New Bremen furnished the music. (N.B. Sun - 4/18/1891)

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from "The Evening Leader"

Alfrieda (Quellhorst) Wessel celebrated her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday on May 7<sup>th</sup>. She has been a member of the New Bremen Historic Association and a faithful reader of *The Towpath* for over 20 years.

She lives at the Golden Living Center, Valley (formerly Valley Nursing Home) at St. Marys.

### NEW MEMBERS THIS PERIOD (THRU 6/6/07)

[\*Spousal Memberships @ \$6.00 or \$60.00/LM]

4/27/07 Bertke, Annette (Heitkamp) - New Bremen  
4/13/07 Coby, Martha (Schmehl) - Celina, Ohio  
5/10/07 Gruebmeier, Larry (LM) - Mesa, Arizona  
4/27/07 Hirschfeld, Eric - New Bremen  
4/28/07 Jutte, Martha (Overman) - New Bremen  
4/4/07 Kettler, Ruth (Henkener) - New Knoxville, Ohio  
4/4/07 Mauch, Karen - New Bremen  
5/2/07 Nedderman, Leota (Quellhorst)(TR) - St. Marys  
6/4/07 Poppe, Larry - Anna, Ohio  
4/27/07 Rhinehart, Barbara - New Bremen  
4/17/07 Rison, Naomi A.(Schroeder) - St. Marys, Ohio

### ADDITIONS TO LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

5/18/07 Braun, Richard W.  
5/10/07 Gruebmeier, Larry (new)  
5/31/07 Haeseker, David L.  
5/10/07 Hixson, Anne (Seeman)  
4/27/07 Metzger, Mary (Henschen)  
4/13/07 Sikora, Lynn (Burkhardt?)(Dicke genealogy)

### MEMBER DEATHS THIS PERIOD

4/5/07 Headapohl, Viola (Hirschfeld)(died 4/5/07)  
3/25/07 Maurer, Virginia (Boyer)(CM)(died 3/25/07)  
5/2/07 Nedderman, Robert (died 5/2/07)

### MEMORIAL / HONORARY DONATIONS

The following donations have been received this period:

#### In memory of Lillian E. Schowe

by Bertha (Schowe) King & Gloria (King) Olson

#### In memory of Opal (Baumgardner) Wiessinger from her Girl Scouts

by Howard & Sally (Abbott) Fark

#### In memory of Robert Nedderman

by Dorothy Quellhorst

#### In memory of Viola Headapohl

by Dennis Dicke & Gen Conradi, Jeff & Lisa (Dicke) Weigandt,  
Doug & Rhonda Dicke.

### MEMORIAL / HONORARY DONATIONS

Donations to memorialize the deceased or to honor the living are welcomed in any amount. When donations in memory of or in honor of any one person or couple have reached \$100.00, a brass plate engraved with their name(s) is attached to the Memorial Plaque.

### RALPH MAY UPDATE

Appearing in the June 5, 2007 edition  
of the *Dayton Daily News* was the following  
**Obituary**

Richard May of Long Beach, California passed away on May 20<sup>th</sup>, following into death his twin brother, Edward R. (Ted), of Shawnee Mission, Kansas, who passed away less than 2 months earlier on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Dick and Ted were born in Piqua, Ohio on August 5, 1925 to Ralph & Christine May. Dick was active in sports and captained the Piqua High School football team in 1941. He often spoke of his childhood days of hiking and bicycling in the Piqua area and of his school friends who joined him in summer walks along the canal (just like his father had done before him). (Read about Ralph May in the July 2003 "Towpath".)

Despite their separation by thousands of miles during their adult lives, Dick and Ted remained close throughout.



**HARD TIMES SOCIAL**

The Pythian Sisters of Grace Temple #62 of New Bremen will give a "Hard Times Social" at Boesche's Hall on Wednesday evening, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1894 for the benefit of the Lodge. This affair will be of unique character and is bound to be amusing to all who will attend. By perusing the Rules and Regulations, a person may form an idea of what may be expected. A supper corresponding to the nature of the occasion will be given. Everybody is cordially invited to be present.

**RULES AND REGULATIONS**

I. Every woman who comes must wear a calico dress & apron or somethin' equally appropriate & leave their high-falutin' ways to home.

II. Every gent must wear their old clothes & flannel shirt. No one with a boiled shirt & a dude collar will be allowed to come unless he pays a fine of 5 cents.

**A VALUABLE PRIZE** will be given to the man & woman havin' the worst lookin' rig in the room. These rules will be enforced to the letter. A competent committee will introduce strangers and look after bashful fellers.

**EXTRA GOOD VITTLES** will be et from 8 'til 10 o'clock. Tickets to get in will be 10 cents. This takes in the supper and the whole thing.

**FINES FOR LADIES**

No apron, 1 cent; Trimmed apron, 2 cents; Hat with flowers or feathers, 2 cents; Kid gloves, 2 cents; Wool dress (old), 2 cents; Wool dress (new), 5 cents; Ear rings (plate), 1 cent; Ear rings (diamond), 2 cents; Finger rings (diamond), 3 cents; Gold watch, 2 cents; Gold frame glasses, 2 cents.

**BOOTS & SHOES**

Black boots or shoes, 2 cents; Patent leather shoes, 2 cents; Stove pipe hat, 1 cent; Stand-up collars, 3 cents; Clerical ties, 1 cent; Buttonhole bouquet, 5 cents; Carrying a cane, 2 cents; Cigars in pocket, 1 cent each cigar (Pipes exempt); Chewing gum in meeting, 2 cents; Oiled hair or waxed mustache, 3 cents; Died mustache, 4 cents; Watch (not Waterbury), 2 cents.

**TALKIN' NONSENSE**

Talkin' Lodge business, 5 cents; Flirtin', 3 cents; Makin' love, 10 cents; Spoonin', 25 cents; Tellin' secrets, ½ cent; Lookin' hungry after supper like, 20 cents; Bein' baldheaded, 10 cents; Wearin' wigs, 15 cents; Lookin' sad & lonesome like, 20 cents.

By complyin' with the above instructions, we calculate on havin' a "skrump" time. (N.B. Sun - 6/6/1894)

**GIFT SUGGESTIONS****Available from our "Catalogue"**

**MEMBERSHIPS / "TOWPATH" SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
**\$12.00 / Year \*\*\*\*\* \$120.00 / Lifetime**  
**Collection of Back Issues \*\*\*\*\* \$20.00 (+\$3 S/H)**

**OTHER BOOKS & RELATED ITEMS:**

Then and Now (Village Pictures)  
 A Journey Through Time (Miami-Erie Canal)  
 CANAL Board Game (related to book)  
 Recipes and Reminiscence (by John Dickman)  
 A Military Memoir of W.W.II (by Katy Gilbert)  
 Ralph May Remembers New Bremen  
 New Bremen Marriages (genealogy)

**SCHOOL COMMEMORATIVES:**

Central School: Paperweights, Pencil Caddies  
 1929 High School: Trinket Boxes  
 BOTH: Medallions (make nice tree ornaments)

**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:**

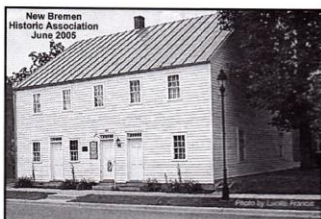
"Interurban on Main St." print  
 "Monroe St." print  
 N.B.H.A. Shirts & Caps  
 N.B.H.A. Mugs & Pencils  
 N.B.H.A. Christmas Ornaments  
 N.B.H.A. Note cards

**For More Information: Call 419-629-8902**

or

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE**  
[www.newbremenhistory.org](http://www.newbremenhistory.org)

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



**NBHA Museum - 120 N. Main St.**

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