

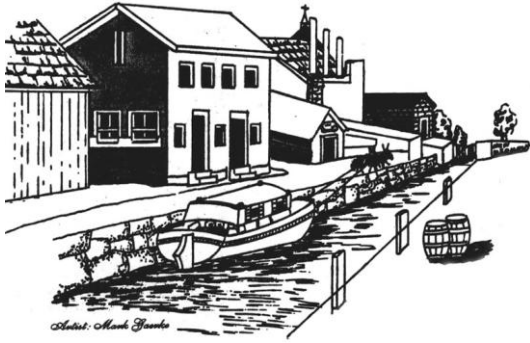
THE TOWPATH

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)
[Phone: 419-629-1014]

VISITING HOURS: 2:00-4:00 p.m. Sundays - June, July, August



MEMBERSHIP: \$15.00 / Year - \$7.00 Spouse (Life: \$150.00 / \$70.00 Spouse) April – 2011

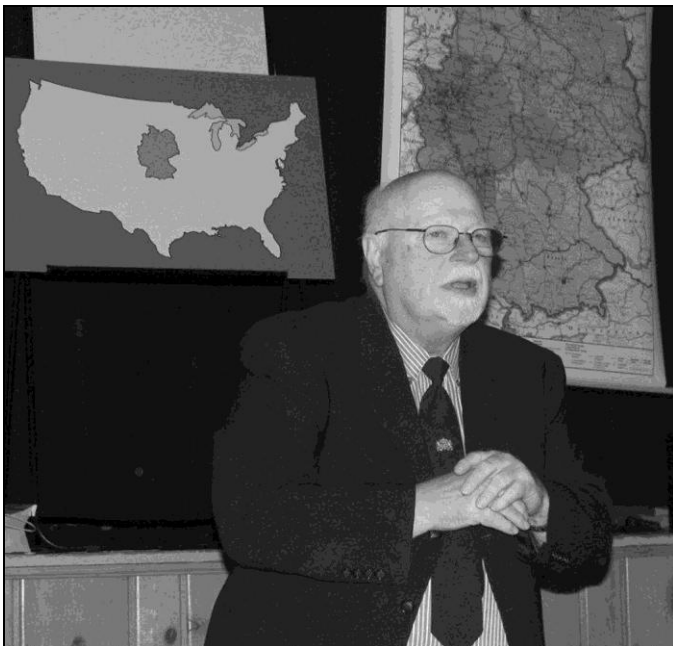
2011 ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

The New Bremen Historic Association had our Annual Dinner meeting on Monday, March 14, 2011 in the St. Paul Church Educational Building. The crowd gathered at 6:30 P.M., Rev. Becky Erb Strang gave the invocation and everyone enjoyed a German meal prepared by the St. Paul Luncheon Committee and Rev. James Egbert. On the menu was pork loin, mashed potatoes and gravy, mixed green and yellow beans and carrots, red cabbage, apple salad and rye bread. The dessert was a tasty Black Forest cake. The St. Paul Youth Group served the beverages and cleared the tables following the meal.

During a short business meeting, President Larry Dicke introduced the Board members of the NBHA. He recognized Amy Scheer, Carolyn Smith and Susie Hirschfeld as members who are going off the board. Jim Tontrup and Mary Moeller have agreed to serve another term of office as trustees. Barb Ziegenbusch, our new trustee, was introduced. All were voted into office.

Following the meal and meeting, Rev. Jim Egbert spoke about the "Influence of Germany on America". He had a display of printed materials, maps and artifacts for everyone to see. He talked about his travels in Germany and about the important contributions that Germany has made to the world.

[Gen Conrad]



ST. PAUL CHEFS & HELPERS

Cindy Newman, Jan Holcomb, Amy Scheer, Sally Dicke, Kathy Nedderman, Sandy Thieman, Kathy Topp



The St. Paul Chefs cooked their initial meal for the first Senior-Retiree Luncheon that was held in the Assembly Room at the church on January 24, 2008, with over 50 people attending. Now in its fourth year, the luncheon program was the brainchild of church member Sandy Thieman who saw a need to provide a time of fellowship and food, open to all senior and retired members of the congregation as well as the wider community, especially those living alone. The menus are varied and sometimes have a German theme to remind us of our German heritage. Occasionally, a program is offered following the meal. There is no charge for the meals but a donation can be made to help offset the cost of preparing the food.

Currently there are five "chefs" – Sally Dicke, Jan Holcomb, Amy Scheer, Sandy Thieman and Kathy Topp – who, occasionally, with other helpers (and sometimes a "guest" chef) prepare the meals each month on the third Thursday, September through May. Attendance averages about 40 persons per month. The chefs have also prepared meals for the 2011 annual New Bremen Historic Association dinner/meeting held at St. Paul and the St. Paul confirmation reunions that are held each spring. [klt]

◆ **"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 (unless otherwise noted), 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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**ASSOC. MEETINGS ARE HELD FIRST TUESDAYS
 at the Lockkeeper's House**

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REV. JIM EGBERT

[Sidney Daily News – 1/27/1999 by Jim Painter]

The Rev. Jim Egbert's work has taken him from Kettlersville to the Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis to the pulpit as Assistant Pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ in New Bremen. While he was at New Bremen (1962-1966), the church's youth group had an exchange program with a mission church, and Egbert knew that was the direction he needed to be heading.

In November 1966, he took over the pastoral role at the Pilgrim United Church of Christ, an all-black church in the inner city of Cincinnati. However, the troubled times of the late 1960s resulted in his being relieved of the post because the congregation wished to have a black minister.

From there, Egbert established himself as the leader of the Washington United Church of Christ in the inner-city Camp Washington area. That area's population is made up primarily of poor white Appalachians, many of whom are on public assistance. The church is located near the Hopple Street exit from Interstate 75.

Egbert's work has been well-known. In 1983, the Cincinnati Bicentennial Committee recognized him as one of the Greater 200 for his work with the poor and offenders.

A December 1993 *Sidney Daily News* article told of the church hosting a meal and church service every Thursday night. The church operates a free store that offers clothing and furniture to the poor. A portion of the clothing and furniture were obtained through donations from residents of Auglaize and Shelby counties who have taken an interest in his mission work.

Many of those same people have traveled over the years to work in the church's soup kitchen, housing renovation projects and other programs.

Egbert retired in June 1998, but apparently on paper only. The 67-year-old minister continued to work in the Cincinnati area.

He will continue his mission work in Hagen, Germany, which is a large industrial area near Dortmund. He will be working exclusively with alcoholics in that area. His post will have a soup kitchen, just as in Cincinnati. He will be there at least a year as part of an exchange program through the Evangelical United Church of Christ. Egbert said he will be working with laborers and many will be immigrants.

Russian refugees should feel right at home with Egbert. "It will give me a chance to use my Russian," said Egbert. "That was what I used in language school in the military." From 1951-1955, Egbert was stationed in England while in the Air Force. While there, he studied the Russian language.

[newspaper clipping from the Vilma Rump collection]

MEMORIES OF A FARM GIRL

By Lucille (Topp) Francis, Editor

In order to get things better organized in my closet, I was recently going through some research material I had accumulated. I came across this textbook which had been donated to the NBHA in April 1998 by Eugene Jordan: *History & Geography of Ohio* by William M. Gregory & William B. Guitteau, published in 1922. In it are some interesting farm harvesting pictures that bring back memories of my childhood in the 1940s and early 1950s.

I still remember using horses for these jobs although in the later years, we had graduated to tractors. I also found several videos on youtube that portray in action these jobs being done.

The neighbors would take turns helping each other. I remember riding along with my dad on a wagon being pulled by horses to go to the neighbors to help with their threshing.

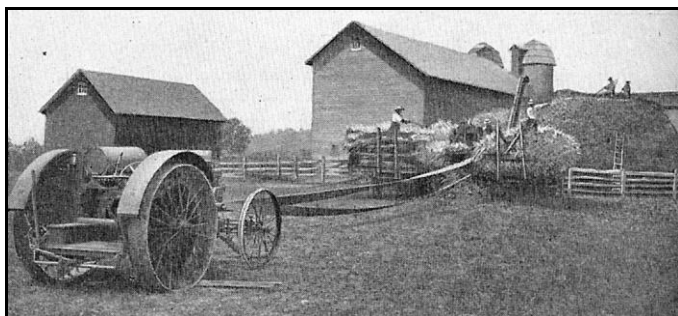


Reaping wheat / oats

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTmFVLud7EM&NR=1>
Reaping wheat with horses plus shows shocks.

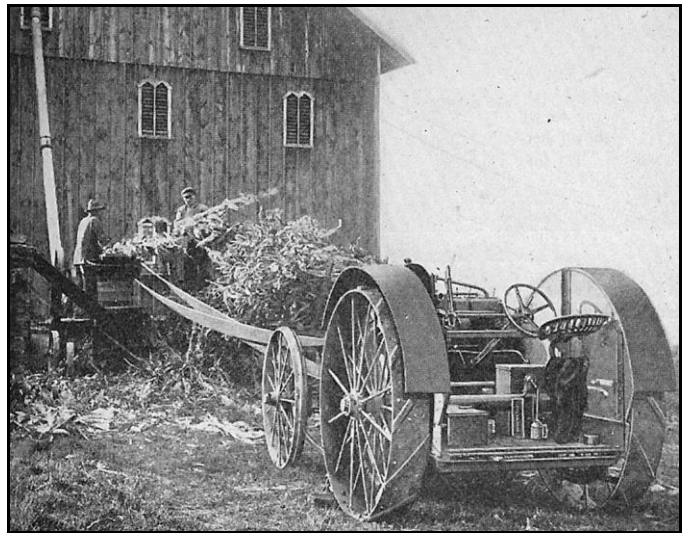
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HG6iskbneok>

Composite video of the Montgomery County, Missouri "Old Threshers" cutting and binding wheat (and grassy weeds) in 2010 with an old IHC wheat binder, then stacking the bundles in shocks. Shocking the wheat is to complete the drying process of both wheat and any weeds mixed in to prepare for threshing. Shocks are made from 5-8 bundles of wheat, stood head up together (kind of like a camp fire) with one bundle fanned and laid across the top to help shed rain. The shocks are picked up after a few weeks and tossed on a wagon to be taken to a threshing machine.



Threshing wheat / oats

Sometimes farmers' hands got caught in the thresher / corn shredder and they lost a hand or part of their arm.



Shredding corn

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdk5p4a9A1A&NR=1>
Butch and Buddy binding corn at 2007 St. Lawrence Valley Draft Horse Club Plow Days.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7XVA8gJ8Kg>
Shredding corn using a US corn shredder powered by 5 team horse sweep.



Hay loading

I don't remember having a hay loader like this. I can't remember how the hay got onto the wagons, but I remember it being picked up off the wagons by a giant 'hayfork' and pulled up into the haymow with a horse-drawn rope and pulley. I got to 'drive' our horse, Nellie...

What I do remember in the late '40s / early '50s is Frank Niemeyer Jr. and/or Alferd Sudman coming over with their buckrakes to pick up the hay from the fields and bring it up to the barn to be elevated up into the hayloft.



Photo courtesy of Shirley Luedeke

In the 1940s, buckrakes were made by modifying old cars and attaching a wooden rake that would pick up loose hay when driven backwards. Later, when baling became popular, they would pick up the bales of hay.



SOLLMANS STAND BY OLD FARM HOUSE — Lendor (left) and Arlon Sollman stand by what is remaining of an old brick farm house (not the original) on the land bought by their ancestors in 1849. The Sollmans cannot explain why the cluster of mulberry trees grew inside the old structure and all the other land around it is clear. To the left of the house is the original summer kitchen, smoke house and a lean-to shed which was added in later years. (Leader photo by Joe Glick)

SOLLMAN ACREAGE

This will be the last generation the Sollman farms, part of which were first purchased by the great-great-grandfather of Lendor and Arlon Sollman, will be in the family name.

The 87.9 acres of land, located west of SR 364 south of Montezuma (Clover Four) Road and north of Lock Two Road, was first acquired by Herman H. Duhme from the State of Ohio on May 20, 1835, for the sum of \$109.88. This was known as the "Miami Canal Lands", Piqua. The deed was signed by Robert Lucas, who was then governor of Ohio.

On Oct. 23, 1849, Duhme sold the land to Christina Sollman. Then on Oct. 17, 1867, the land was bought by John Henry Sollman.

In 1930, after the death of John Henry Sollman, the land was acquired by J. F. Christian Sollman, who owned it until his death in 1956. At that time it was acquired by his sons, Lendor and Arlon, who now own it jointly. It has been in the Sollman name now for 126 years.

Each of the two brothers, only children of Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Christian Sollman, have purchased additional land to the original acreage - Arlon to the north with his farm facing Montezuma Road, and Lendor to the south with his farm facing Lock Two Road.

Remains of a brick home - not the first house, but having good age, is all that stands on the original 87.9 acres.

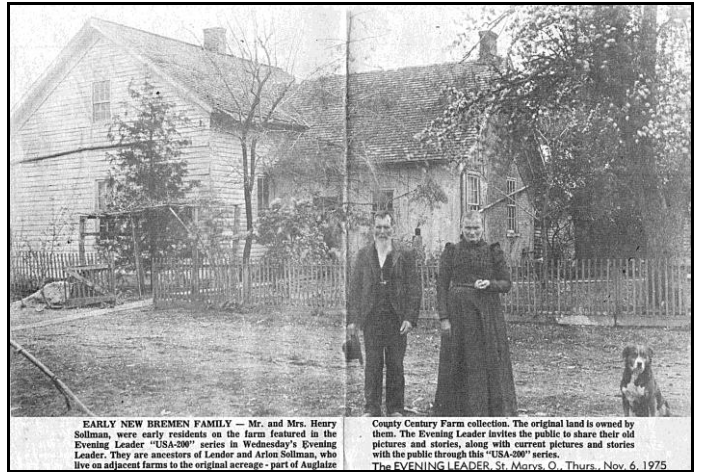
Lendor is married to Leola Teeters, a former St. Marys school teacher. Arlon's wife is the former Milda Waterman, who had been an employee of Union Savings and Loan in Lima. Neither couple has any children.

Both brothers are active in community affairs and have held membership in the Farm Bureau for 40 or more years. Both have clerked at auction sales for more than 30 years. Lendor worked on the polls for the German Township precinct for a number of years, is currently treasurer of the New Bremen Woodmen of the World and treasurer of the New Bremen Senior Citizens.

Two weeks ago Arlon received a citation when he was named "Mr. Woodman".

HISTORY BUFFS

The two brothers and their wives returned Monday from a trip to Melrose, New Mexico in search for information and pictures of relatives. They related that their uncle, Louis Sollman, had married a widow with two children. Louis owned a store and an embalming establishment in Melrose. Even though the New Bremen Sollmans had written their New Mexico relatives and had exchanged pictures in the past, they had never met the two daughters of their now deceased uncle and aunt.



EARLY NEW BREMEN FAMILY — Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sollman, were early residents on the farm featured in the Evening Leader "USA-200" series in Wednesday's Evening Leader. They are ancestors of Lendor and Arlon Sollman, who live on adjacent farms to the original acreage - part of Anglatine County Century Farm collection. The original land is owned by them. The Evening Leader invites the public to share their old pictures and stories, along with current pictures and stories with the public through this "USA-200" series. The EVENING LEADER, St. Marys, O., Thurs., Nov. 6, 1975

The Sollmans and their wives had not notified their cousins out west that they were coming. They drove as far as Clovis, New Mexico and called their cousin, Mrs. Vivian Ellis, from a hotel. They said she was really surprised and immediately notified her sister, who lives in Fort Worth, Texas, but the sister was not able to join in the reunion since she lives at least 400 miles from Melrose.

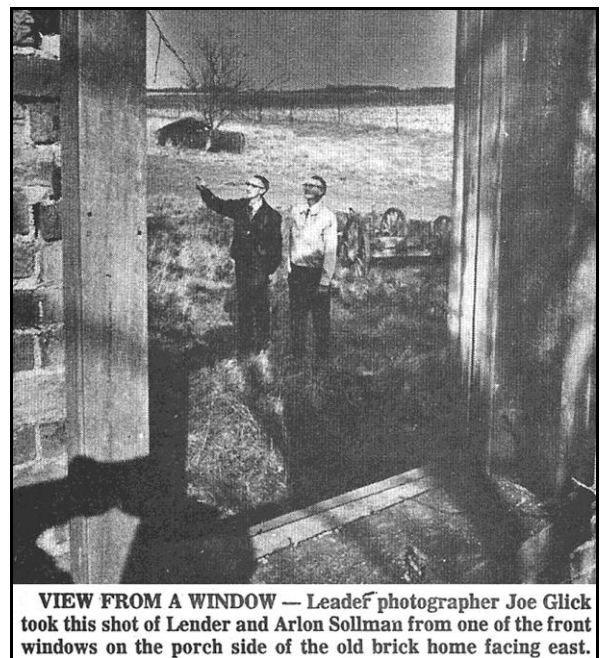
Pictures were taken of the former Sollman Store, some of the 2100 acres "Uncle Louis" owned, and the cemetery where he and his wife were buried.

The land has since been sold, although the relatives still own the mineral rights.

Both Lendor and Arlon agreed that these pictures will be treasured. They will be shown to groups, along with the many others that the sheep farmers show when they are asked to provide relaxing entertainment by means of the colored slides and narration of history and historical places, both in and around their homeland and other sites in their travels.

The two-week trip to New Mexico was the first one made jointly by the two brothers and their wives since, in the past, they would take care of each other's farms in the other's absence. Now the land on both farms is rented out, but the sheep still require care during the winter months, so traveling is done mostly in warmer weather.

The Evening Leader - 11/5/1975, by Doris Wissman



VIEW FROM A WINDOW — Leader photographer Joe Glick took this shot of Lendor and Arlon Sollman from one of the front windows on the porch side of the old brick home facing east.

A Centenarian Remembers...

[from "The Evening Leader" – 6/30/1994]

A St. Marys lady, Frederickie Gardner, was interviewed in June 1994 at the age of 105. When she died 2½ years later in January 1997 at the age of 108, *The Leader* re-ran the earlier article which I thought was interesting in that it shows how people lived "back then".

Rickie Gardner was born as Frederickie Ilgen in 1889 in Darke County near Versailles, the youngest of 11 children. Following are some memories of her childhood:

She was raised in a 1-room log cabin with plank floors, along with 7 sisters and 3 brothers. Bedding had to be put away each morning and taken out again in the evening. Her family moved to St. Marys in 1904 when she was 15. She married Omer Gardner in 1912 at the age of 23 and he died in 1967. They had no children.

Mrs. Gardner spent most of her life caring for people as a midwife and nurse, starting out as a young girl helping women when they had babies. She also helped care for elderly persons in their homes. She said she was "handy" around sick people.

The family had a cow for milk and a few wild chickens and pigs for eggs and meat. When slaughter time came around, the pigs were divided up between the neighbors. Eggs were also shared between families. For additional food, her father hunted wild turkeys and rabbits.

They also had a big garden and a few apple trees. People in those days would often bury their produce such as apples, potatoes, turnips and cabbage in straw-lined pits to keep them cool and free of insects. They would get out enough items to last for a month to avoid opening the pits too often. They also dried a lot of food by hanging it on strings from tree branches.

Bread was baked outside in a brick oven. (*The N.B.H.A. has an outdoor oven in the backyard of our museum.*) Starter yeast was carefully preserved and often given away to newly married couples as wedding presents.

CENTENNIAL FARMS

As evidenced by the active historical and genealogical societies in the area, Auglaize County residents have spent a great deal of time researching their own history and the history of the area. One way this was done was through the Centennial Farms program.

In 1971, the Auglaize County Historical Society began awarding Centennial Farm Certificates to families who had kept their farm under the same family name for 100 years or more. Many families were not eligible because, although their farms remained within the same family, they did not remain under the same surname. In 1975 the Century Ancestral Farm and Home program began.

The Sollman brothers, Lendor and Arlon, were the recipients of one of these certificates.

The program continues to thrive, with several people applying and receiving this honor each year.

"Neighbors helping neighbors" was the general theme of Mrs. Gardner's memories. While her family had a well, neighbors who didn't have one were welcome to come to their farm to get water. Neighbors also helped each other raise barns and homes, harvest wheat, husk corn and make quilts. Books, when available, were also shared. "Money was scarce, so we shared what we had, even food", she said.

Like many people living in that time period, the family tanned leather and made their own cloth by carding and weaving wool from their own sheep. Candles and coal oil were used for light, with the family often going to bed at dusk. The days began at dawn. Mrs. Gardner said her most momentous memory was the coming of electricity.

Transportation was either on foot or horseback. They also kept mules to do the heavy work on the farm.

Children in those days attended school when they were not needed on the farm to do work. Mrs. Gardner quit going to school when she was 15, so probably did not attend school after the family moved to St. Marys.

When Rickie and her husband were courting, they went to church or to parties where dancing was not permissible. They were often accompanied by a chaperone and dated for 5 years before they were married.

Christmas holidays were not much different from any other day. They didn't have a Christmas tree and didn't exchange gifts. For the holiday meal, neighbors would bring what they had and together the families would have a feast.

When Mrs. Gardner died in 1997 at the age of 108, she was recognized as having been the oldest person in St. Marys and Auglaize County.

COUNTRY BARN DANCE

With jingle of bells and beat of hoof,
Fragment of song and a lusty hail
For each bright pane of snow-heaped roof
Glimpsed over drifted hedge or rail,
The big sleigh, drawn by a sturdy team,
Comes to a stop by a tall barn door
That swings to admit a swirl of steam
And a tide of youth to an ample floor.

Homeward bound in the straw-filled sled,
The horses slowed to a jingling walk,
Each girl resting a sleepy head
On her partner's shoulder - there is no talk
While yet the shuffle of dancing feet,
The wail of fiddles, the caller's tune,
And the haunting quest of the waltz repeat
The night's new glory, and love's old rune.

(Dana Kneeland Akers - Superior, Wisconsin)

THE GLITTER OF GORDON STATE PARK ENDURES AFTER 60 YEARS

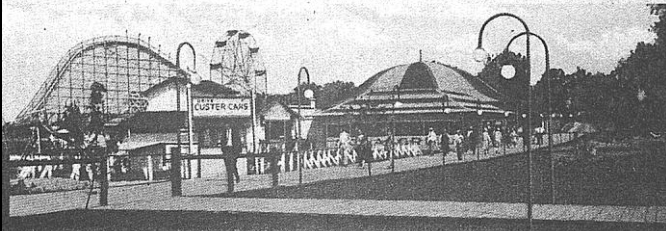
"Boy, those were the days. St. Marys had street cars and arched lights that went over the town. Kid, was it ever pretty. The whole town was pretty. St. Marys was booming then. We had everything." - Evelyn Myers

By SHERRI DIEGEL, Staff Writer

St. Marys EVENING LEADER - Thursday, July 31, 1986

Gordon State Park Mecca For Thousands

SECTION OF BOARD WALK, GORDON STATE PARK, LAKE ST. MARYS, OHIO



Atlantic City has its board walk. So did Gordon State Park, Lake St. Marys, back in the 20's.

This picture shows the Devil's Back Bone, remember that roller coaster with the curve

in the tracks - and the custer cars. The Old Mill and a high-flying swing were nearby.

The park was the mecca of thousands of people every Saturday and Sunday. Week nights during the summer the crowds were smaller.

From about 1922 to 1933, St. Marys was the Mecca of west-central Ohio because of Gordon State Park which skirted Grand Lake St. Marys.

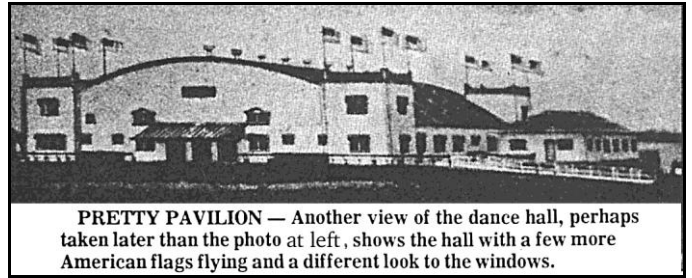
The pretty city by the lake had its own amusement park which drew snappy dressers in straw boaters and cloche hats from neighboring towns, as well as from Dayton and Fort Wayne.

The park was a little bit of Kings Island with its wicked Devil's Backbone roller coaster, its tunnel of love (the Old Mill), its speedboat rides and other attractions and a dab of Atlantic City with its concessions ranged along the boardwalk and the elaborate dance pavilion which jutted over the lake.



ALL LINED UP - Dancers (top) drove their Model Ts from miles around to gather at the large pavilion at Gordon State Park. The dance hall, which projected over Grand Lake St. Marys, resounded with orchestral sounds six nights a week. Much to the sorrow of area residents, the lovely hall burned down in December of 1931. The St. Marys Marina today occupies the site of the original dance pavilion.

The entertainment center was named for Robert Gordon Jr., a St. Marian who started Villa Nova. His relative, Frank Shuffelton, related the story of how the park started:



PRETTY PAVILION - Another view of the dance hall, perhaps taken later than the photo at left, shows the hall with a few more American flags flying and a different look to the windows.

"My great-uncle owned a lot of land where Villa Nova is now. His property line was irregular. The state approached him about selling off the points. He said, 'Let's just cut off all the points and give it to the state for a park.' Shuffelton felt his great-uncle's generosity should still be recognized. "I think they should continue the name of Gordon in the part of the park he donated in recognition of his contribution."

One of the principal investors in the park was Harold Neely, son of millionaire oil man, Lemon Neely of St. Marys. While the state owned the land, it did not own the rides, food stands, dance hall or penny arcade. Most of the entertainments were owned by the Lake St. Marys Amusement Co.

Although St. Marys isn't too far from Russell's Point, which had long sported an amusement park on its Indian Lake, the investors felt there was room for one more entertainment center in the area. "Russell's Point was all jammed up with little flimsy cottages and there was no room to expand" Shuffelton said. "They opened one here on a deluxe basis."

The park was well attended by residents of Auglaize and neighboring counties since St. Marys was well served by transport systems. Not only was there the railroad but there was "a street car line at what is now Parker-Hannifin", Shuffelton said. "People came from Wapakoneta, Fort Loramie, Celina."

"It was an interesting time for young people, because the park was convenient", recalled white-haired Paul Mackenbach. "We wouldn't have to drive to Russell's Point. Gordon Park was superior (especially the dance hall) to Russell's Point."

That oval-shaped pavilion was the site of many good times for Mackenbach and his pal, Earl Rohrbach. "We did the Charleston, the waltz, the foxtrot", Rohrbach said. "There were no Latin dances then", said Mackenbach. "The dance hall was a dandy", said Emil Limbacher. "People came from all over, even Indiana. They came from at least 50 miles around." One avid local dancer was Evelyn Myers. "My folks took me out in the evening", she said. "I was at the dance hall most of the time."

Saxi Holtsworth, a bandleader who brought his New York City orchestra to St. Marys for several weeks in the summer, was a favorite of the dancers. Mrs. Myers recalled that he played "Pink Elephants", "Johnson's Ragtime Band (the Johnson Rag? or Alexander's Ragtime Band?)", "A Precious Little Thing Called Love", and "When My Baby Smiles at Me."

Not only was Holtsworth a top saxophone player, but he was quite a character. Rohrbach remembered one of the showman's antics. "Business had slowed up at the park. To create business they took a Model-T Ford and left the car (on the railroad track) until the train came along and hit it. Word spread all over that Saxi Holtsworth's car was hit by a train. The park was just packed with people who'd come to view the destruction. He was 25 years ahead of people around here when it came to a lot of things."

During the park's spring through fall season, there was always a band playing six nights a week. (Monday was "dark night" in the hall.)

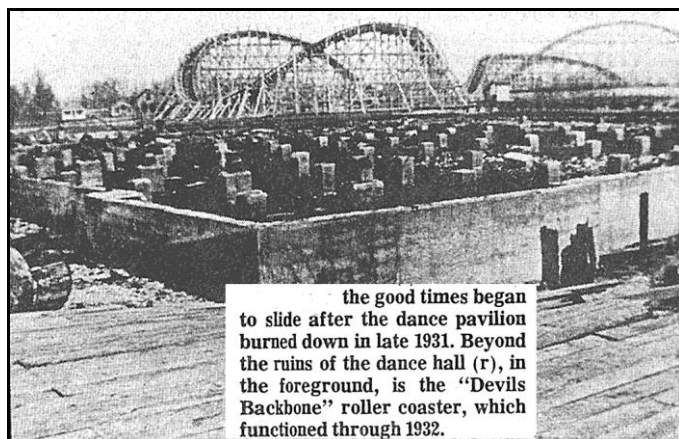
Holtsworth wasn't the only cutup to play St. Marys. "After Saxi left, there was a band that wore blazers", Mrs. Myers said. "A fellow that was in the band got married on top of the ferris wheel." The leader of that band was the legendary Sammy Kaye. Other great band leaders who conducted at the park were Guy Lombardo, Paul Whiteman and Peewee Hunt.

No matter who was playing, the pavilion was always a center of activity. It cost a dime for each dance. There were three entrances to the hall, three ticket booths and three rope boys, who would usher the dancers off after each number. Another staple was the matron who passed out soap in the lady's restroom and kept it clean and orderly.

Frank Shuffelton recalled what it was like to work in the dance hall. "When the park first started, I got a job running the checkroom. Fascinating things come from that. They'd be lining up, you'd take somebody's straw hat, and they all looked alike. They all had on neckties, so I didn't look at the man's face, I looked at the tie. I'd think 'the next one has a striped tie and he got his check, the next one has on a print tie'..."

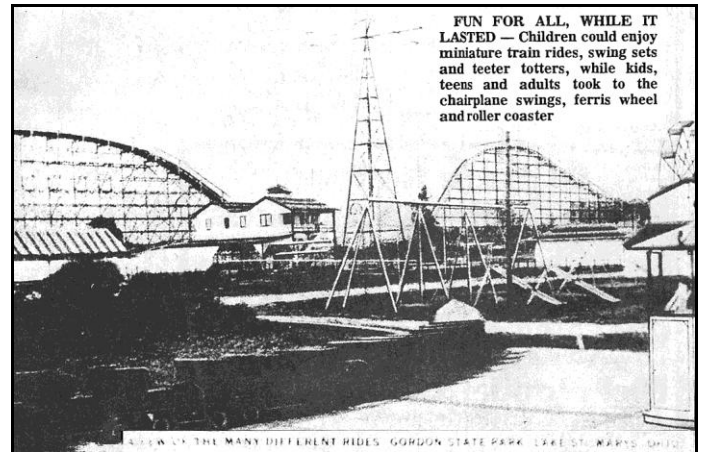
He put that memory trick to good use when he was robbed in 1927 as he worked at the Bungalow candy shop on Spring Street. By identifying the man's necktie, he helped the police catch the thief.

Shuffelton continued his education as the manager (along with Joe Simons) of the "Wind Blew Inn", a soda fountain next to the pavilion. He learned to read the weather on the lake. His predictions would dictate how many waitresses he would call in to work.



The Wind Blew Inn and the original pavilion were razed in a fire December 8, 1931. The day after the blaze, thousands of people flocked to the park to see the smoldering twin chimneys, all that remained of the pavilion.

A new dance hall was built, but it wasn't as large or as grand as the first one. After three or four years it was moved to a location on Ohio Route 364, between the two driveways of Villa Nova. Eventually, it was changed to a roller rink, but that burned down too. Both fires were thought to be arson.



Besides the dance hall, another big draw at the park was the roller coaster. "At the time, it was the worst in the state", Paul Schwepe said. "It was higher and steeper than any other. I rode it several times; it was kinda scary." Helen Baker vouched for that. "I passed out. We went down the first hill and that was the end of me. I haven't been on one since."

Shuffelton well remembered the treacherous circuit. "There were three big hills and it came down and around the corner. As far as I know, there was only one accident. A drunk got thrown out of a car on the turn. But his shoes stayed in the car."

Mrs. Myers witnessed that incident, or one similar to it. "A fellow decided to go on the roller coaster and walk from one car to another. At the first dip he dipped all right - he fell off. Dr. Charles Heap, the park's physician, said if the fellow had been sober, he'd have been hurt."

According to Mrs. Myers there was a contest for local people to name the \$50,000 roller coaster when it was installed. "Johnny Vore, the undertaker, named it 'the Devil's Backbone'."

Another popular attraction was the Old Mill. "The lovers would take that", Rohrbach said.

The penny arcade drew a lot of youngsters who would shoot guns and play games. Schwepe recalled one unusual game in which the participant had to hit a target. When he did so, he tripped a lever which released a door. A little pig would run through the door to lap up a pan of milk.

A \$10,000 merry-go-round, bump cars, a miniature railway, pony rides, a mystery funhouse and chair-plane swings were other patronized amusements.

The boardwalk, an expanse of boards which were raised off the ground, was a popular place for strollers. There were benches along the sides for the more sedentary and 10 or so concession stands. "You could talk or visit on the boardwalk", said Schwepe. "A lot went on. You'd see who you could meet or who was there."

Mrs. Myers savored memories of the boardwalk food. "Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Heil had a hamburger stand. It was the best hamburger I ever ate."

Other older St. Marians recalled barbecued pork sandwiches, which were a great attraction at the park. "They had a pig on a rotisserie next to the dance hall", said Rohrbach. Helen Baker said it was her uncle who had the concession. "They sold them for 25 cents apiece, which was a lot of money. But oh, how they sold 'em. He had a special recipe to make the sauce. He paid \$200 for that recipe."

Mrs. Baker's husband Paul also had a money-making venture at the park. "On Sundays he would give speed-boat rides on the lake for about \$1.50", she said. "Back then, nobody had those kinda boats. I didn't like 'em. I didn't like water." "Baker's boats were the first fast boats on the lake", Shuffelton claimed.

"People just rode around to sightsee", Limbacher said. "There wasn't much skiing. It wasn't the craze then."

There were other ways the lake and the park worked together. "On the Fourth of July, 1932, there was a sham World War I battle on the lake – 'The Battle of the Argonne', fought by members of the Ohio National Guard."

On Independence Day the park always hosted a splendid fireworks display, which was launched from a barge on the lake. "They had the best fireworks I ever saw, a lot of statue types - Niagara Falls, the American flag", Schwepe said. "They'd go up, and you'd think it was over, then 25 bombs would explode. They had fireworks about every holiday as a drawing card."

Another way for the park owners to pack in spectators was to allow a circus to perform on the grounds. In 1932, the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus made its way to St. Marys. The general manager, Jess Adkins, was a native of the town and the lion-tamer was Clyde Beatty.

The park was certainly crowded on days the White Mountain Creamery sponsored a picnic for its employees and customers. Ten to fifteen thousand visitors would attend the event. People could use the disks they removed from milk bottle caps to get discounts on rides.

However, the happy days at Gordon State Park could not endure. After the first dance hall burned, the park began to decline for a variety of reasons. "When the

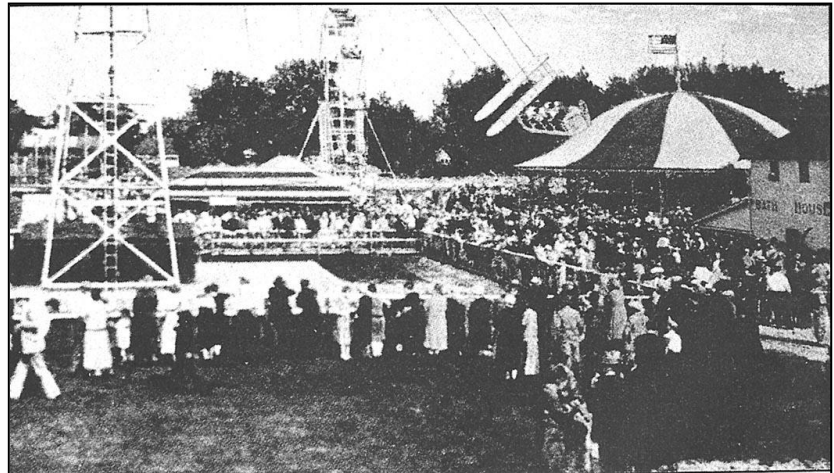
depression came, that started the skids on it", said Schwepe. "Nobody had money. The Depression didn't hit this area until 1931. It hit the big cities in 1929. It took two years to come to the rural areas, but it picked up sooner in the cities. If the park had started up five or six years earlier than it did, it wouldn't have been hurt."

The Russell's Point park, which was established long before Gordon State Park, survived into the 1970s. Limbacher believed he knew why. "Their dance hall wasn't any better, but they drew better crowds. We're a little off the beaten path. They're closer to Columbus on Route 33. More people would come up from the big cities."

Although the Depression hurt, another menace to the park was windstorms. The roller coaster and the Old Mill were so battered by May of 1933 that their remains were sold for junk. All that was left of Gordon State Park by then was the Pier dance hall. But it just didn't equal the original pavilion.

Many older St. Marians feel if that first dance hall hadn't burned, the park would have lasted. "It would have been a lot different in St. Marys. Celina Road would have been built up now", Rohrbach asserted.

"After the dance hall burned down, things kinda went haywire", said Evelyn Myers. "It is sad because it was a nice amusement park for everybody."



MANY ATTRACTIONS — Gordon State Park had it all in what was a deluxe amusement park for the era. At top, park visitors enjoy the chairplane swings, ferris wheel and merry-go-round. The bath house, which

accommodated sun bathers is at the right of the photo. Below, a crowd of "lovers" gathers outside the Old Mill, which featured a romantic boat ride. The roller coaster is at the right of the photo.

OLD MILL AND DEVIL'S BACKBONE, GORDON STATE PARK, LAKE ST. MARYS, OHIO



WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was established in May 1935 during the Great Depression to provide jobs and income to the nation's unemployed. It was the largest of the "New Deal" agencies. The WPA administered various building projects as workers repaired bridges, extended electricity to rural areas, and built roads. Many public buildings, parks and airport runways were constructed. Although most of the jobs were in the area of construction, there was also an Arts Program that included painting murals in public areas, cataloging pieces of art, compiling written histories of communities and live theater productions.

The WPA provided relief to about a third of the nation's unemployed and was a popular program. The pay, based on region of the country, degree of urbanization and the skill of the worker, ranged from \$19 to \$94 per month. During the first six months of the WPA program, 173,000 men and women in Ohio were employed. In 1939 there were 360 WPA construction workers in Auglaize County and 56 WPA workers in sewing centers, libraries, playgrounds, the court house and city buildings within the county.

A June 22, 1939 article from *The New Bremen Sun* presented an interesting dilemma for the workers in Auglaize County. The state safety representative from Toledo made a rule that all WPA outdoor workers had to keep their shirts on, wear a hat and take six salt tablets each day while working to prevent sunstroke and heat exhaustion. The idea of the salt tablets was borrowed from steel mills where men perspired profusely and lost valuable salt from their bodies which led to heat prostration. Today it is known that workers do better without the salt tablets but do need adequate oral fluids and head covering. And this is where the WPA workers ran into trouble. The State Department of Health required that all drinking water sources in rural and out of the way places in Auglaize County be tested and approved for use. Several Auglaize County farms and communities learned that their sources of drinking water were dangerous and unsafe, even though the residents had been drinking the water for years and this left the workers without adequate water supplies.

The New Bremen swimming pool on Plum Street was constructed by WPA workers. (See *The Towpath* – October 2009) Construction began on June 8, 1938 and was completed in May of 1940. The WPA also constructed bridges and one of the last of those bridges on the New Bremen-New Knoxville road was replaced several years ago by the county. WPA construction workers also constructed outhouses. The outhouse in the above picture was purchased by Lambert Conradi in 1938 for \$18.00. He always referred to this structure as "the office".

The program had its critics and some thought the WPA meant "We Poke Along". Employment began to improve in late 1939 and the agency was restructured and renamed Works Projects Administration (WPA). The WPA ended its mission on June 30, 1943 when employment improved with the war effort. [Gen Conradi]



Edythe (Conradi) Henschen with 1938 WPA outhouse

(★(★)★)

A LOOK BACK AT "THE PRIVY"

by Katy (Berning) Gilbert

[*The Evening Leader* - 4/12/2000]

When I was a child, most everyone had an outhouse. "Privy" was another name given to the outhouse and my grandpa, Eddie Egbert, often called it the "beckhoos" which meant the "house out back".

Outhouses were small wooden buildings with air vents under the eaves. Some had crescent moons (women) or stars (men) cut in the door. Usually there was a box or bench type seat with one or more holes cut into the seat - maybe one at a lower level for a child.

The building sat over a deep hole or pit where all the waste matter would go. Old catalogs (which were always abandoned when the only pages left were the slick picture pages), newspapers, or even white popcorn cobs were provided for clean-up.

Most outhouses were built in the backyard. The distance was usually balanced by odor and convenience. Most were built with wood (with large cracks for ventilation) or with clapboards. A few were built of brick or stone. You've heard the saying. "built like a brick outhouse" - meaning, of course, that it was well-built and looked good. Our brick outhouse had a screen up and under the eaves of the roof down to the walls to help keep the flies and wasps out of the building. The floor was cement and so was the base of the seat, with an actual toilet seat to sit upon. We had the luxury of toilet paper that we bought in a store and Mom put lime down in the hole to cut down the odor.

Thousands of these privies were built throughout the U.S. in rural and urban areas - wherever needed. The cost of construction was about \$25.00 per unit.

These buildings were prime targets for pranksters, especially at Halloween. Tipping them over was the thing to do - with or without someone in the building.

Those were truly the "Good old days"! [Edited by Imf]

Curators' Corner



LOVESEAT SHIPPED BY CANAL BOAT

An interesting piece of furniture arrived at the NBHA museum recently. Sherry Biederman, daughter of Bill Kuck, shipped a loveseat from her home in South Carolina to New Bremen. The loveseat was originally purchased by her great-grandparents, William and Catherine (Helwig) Schulenberg of New Bremen (pictured on page 11 of the January 2011 issue of "The Towpath"). They ordered the furniture from Cincinnati and then had it shipped to New Bremen on a canal boat. Sherry reports that she still has the matching "slipper chair" that was also shipped on the canal boat.

Her grandparents, Ernst and Frances (Schulenberg) Kuck were married in 1915 and lived at 12 N. Main Street in New Bremen. They had the loveseat and slipper chair in their home. Ernst and Frances had one son, William Henry Kuck. Bill graduated from Miami University School of Business in 1938 and moved to Findlay, Ohio to work for Marathon Oil Company. His work at Marathon was interrupted by W.W.II and he served in the Army from 1941-1946. Bill and Virginia (Waldo) were married and made their home in Findlay. The family loveseat and chair became theirs and also moved to Findlay. Bill and Virginia had three children - Sherry, Richard and Nancy. Later the loveseat and chair traveled to South Carolina to the home of Sherry Biederman, daughter of Bill and Virginia Kuck.

The loveseat has now been returned to New Bremen. Please stop by the museum and see this historic and much traveled loveseat. [Gen Conradi]

From the Mailbox



12/20/2010

Enclosed are dues for 2011 and 2012. Enjoyed the journal of the W.W.II soldier (Orville Ruedebusch) that you printed in the October 2010 issue of *The Towpath*. Any articles about the W.W.II era are always interesting. Merry Christmas.
Howard Dicke – Scottsdale, Arizona



Dear Lucille:

1/24/2011

You were right (in regard to my phone call) – *The Towpath* was in the mail at the post office this afternoon after I called you! Looking forward to reading it!

I've been sorting through boxes of things I've saved for many years thinking I'll clear them out. But it's too hard to throw away pictures and other things that have a lot of meaning and memories of family and friends.

One of those is an autograph book going back to the early '40s that I got from my Aunt Ruth on my 18th birthday. It was fun to read and remember the people who wrote in them – friends, family, classmates and teachers. Some funny, some philosophical!

I was wondering if *The Towpath* ever had an article about autograph books. (See the January 2008 issue.) I don't think kids have them now – everything's on computers, isn't it?

That reminds me of a poem I wrote last year called "What's This World Coming To?" I'm sending a copy and my check for *The Towpath*. I'm turning into a grumpy poet – usually write silly poems for my grandkids, or sometimes more serious.

Thanks again for all you do to bring back memories of life in New Bremen!

All good wishes,

Carol (Dammeyer) Cook – Texas

What's This World Coming To?

What's this world coming to, my parents used to say,
As my grandparents did before them and now I do today.

There are so many hi-tech things that I don't understand.
It's awfully confusing – people staring at their hands!

The texting and the tweeting – people poking in their palms.
Even little kids are doing it – hardly anybody's calm!

They say they're multi-tasking and they still can hear me talk;
But it seems more like they're telling me to go and take a walk!

I think real people are important and they must matter too,
Just as much as that hi-tech stuff;
That's how I feel – How about you?

-by Carol Cook

DELIVERY OF "THE TOWPATH"

If 'everybody else' has gotten their Towpath and you haven't, be patient. Some Post Offices take as much as 3-4 weeks for delivery. Carol's took over 2 weeks.

N.B. Historic Assoc. – *The Towpath*: 1/28/2011
I recently received a copy of the January 2011 issue of *The Towpath* from a friend of mine.

You had a delightful article in there from a contributor by the name of Joan Brown (as well as a letter to her from her son John on Page 14).

I have known Mrs. Brown for a little over 52 years now. She is a wonderful woman. As a small boy, Joan used to help me with my homework and always encouraged me to try again "until I got it right". She told me that learning to read and *write* was something important - something that little boys had to learn to do - as well as girls. She also, later in life, encouraged me to go into college and would do whatever was needed to make sure I received a good education.

Joan was also there if I had problems at school - or got a speeding ticket - or the police gave me a ride home because I'd snuck out of the house at 3:00 in the morning.

Joan was there many, many times for me over the 52 years I've known her. In fact, she's still there for me today. For you see, Joan is my mother. I am the son whose letter she sent to you - I am Johnny.

For many years my mother has written professionally. She obviously feels very strongly about your organization and your publication that she would contribute to it. Inasmuch, please accept my enclosed donation to assist with your vision.

Sincerely, *Joan's son, Johnny - Dayton, OH*



Dear Gen Conradi: 3/11/2011

We had a wonderful time in New Bremen during October. Thank you for sending us "The Towpath" including the Koop info.

Sincerely, *Joan (Walsh) Fick - University City, MO*



Lucille Francis: 2/16/2011

My name is David Stilwell and I work for The Minster Machine Co. I recently attended a meeting where I was given a copy of the January 2011 issue of the New Bremen Historic Association's publication, *The Towpath*.

I was very impressed with the quality of the publication. I was interested in an article which I believe was originally authored by Marguerite (Koop) Kunning about John Fredrich Koop.

John Winch, the CEO and owner of The Minster Machine Company has asked me to research the history of the Henry Koop residence in St. Marys Township. This house and property is currently owned by the Winches (Minster Machine) and is used as a guest house and training center for Minster customers around the world. I am working on a history of the property, which we hope to make available for guests who stay at the house.

In the footnotes of the John Fredrich Koop article there is mention of a book that had been donated to the NBHA called "*Twice Told Tales*" about the Koop family. I was wondering if that publication might be available for viewing for research purposes. I would also be interested in any other articles you might have about the Koops in your archives.

Thank you for your consideration and best regards,

Dave Stilwell

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

[Dennis Dicke, Recorder]



NEW MEMBERS THIS PERIOD (THRU 3/20/11)

[^Spousal Memberships @ \$7.00 or \$70.00/LM]

2/5/2011 Brady, Neal - New Bremen
1/20/2011 Brucken, Nancy - Ann Arbor, MI
1/19/2011 Burgess, Kevin - Chagrin Falls, OH (rejoined)
1/19/2011 Burgess, Ryan - Columbus, OH (rejoined)
3/11/2011 Fick, Joan (Walsh) - University City, MO
2/7/2011 Hansel, Kay - Mendon, OH (TR)
1/20/2011 Hirschfeld, Gary E. - Findlay, OH (LM)
2/8/2011 Holdren, Tony - New Bremen (rejoined)
1/19/2011 Schroer, Lloyd - New Bremen (LM)
2/19/2011 Sophiajohn, Pamela - St. Marys, OH
2/21/2011 Stroh, Nancy - Wapakoneta, OH (TR)
2/5/2011 Wagner, Ted - New Bremen
3/18/2011 Youngkin, Betty - Dayton, OH

ADDITIONS TO LIFE MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

1/28/2011 Brown, Joan (Franks)
1/20/2011 Hirschfeld, Gary E. (new)
3/2/2011 Koeper, Barbara (Forwerck)
1/19/2011 Schroer, Lloyd (new)
1/24/2011 Young, Ann
1/24/2011 Young, William

MEMBER DEATHS THIS PERIOD

1/24/2011 Bordewisch, James (died 12/7/10)
2/9/2011 Fledderjohann, Scott (LM) (died 2/9/11)
1/28/2011 Hansel, Leona (Harjehausen) (died 1/28/11)
1/29/2011 Maurer, Arthur (CM) (died 1/29/11)
3/5/2011 Oehrtman, Timothy (died 3/5/2011)
2/3/2011 Ruese, Donald (CM)(died 2/3/11)
12/18/2010 Schulenberg, Janet (Bliss) (LM) (died 12/18/10)
2/2/2011 Steinke, Lucille (Schierholt) (died 2/2/11)
2/20/2011 Stroh, Leland (died 2/20/11)

MEMORIAL / HONORARY DONATIONS

The following memorial donations have been received this period:

In memory of Robert G. Heinfeld

by David Fogt

In memory of Donald Ruese

by Rudy & Linda Copeland, Larry & Dianne Dicke, Stan & Dona Mae Kuenning, Ethel & Karl Mesloh, Richard & Betty Plattner, Carol, Tim, Caren & Suzanne Ruese, William & Alicia Schemmel, Delores Stienecker, Dr. Kenneth & Kitty Ziegenbusch.

In memory of William Greber

by Mary Greber

HOUSE WARMING – JANUARY 1, 1900

Mr. & Mrs. Cornelius Koop, who recently moved into their handsome new home situated on the site of the well-known and time-honored Koop tavern 2¼ miles north of New Bremen on the St. Marys Pike spent their New Years in the midst of a houseful of invited guests in what is commonly called a house warming.

ENVISIONING FUTURE OF VISITORS' CENTER

The Lockkeeper's House Retreat Session was held on January 26, 2011 at the Lockkeeper's House in New Bremen. The purpose of the session was to build community consensus about the use and future of the center, create a 'wish list' and 'to do' list and identify steps for the process.

The "Miami-Erie Canal Visitor's Center" (MEVCV) is located at Lock One in New Bremen. The center is more commonly known as "The Lockkeeper's House". Those in attendance for the retreat were Larry Dicke, Carl Roediger, Diane Paul, Dennis Dicke, Delores Stienecker, Mary Moeller and Genevieve Conradi from the New Bremen Historic Association Board. The Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association (MECCA) was represented by Neal Brady and David Stilwell. The Village of New Bremen was represented by Wayne York and Karen Mauch. Scott Frey represented the Southwest Auglaize County Chamber of Commerce. The all-day retreat session was facilitated by Pamela Sophiajohn. Lunch was catered by New Bremen Coffee Co. & Books.

The session opened with introductions and a review of the transportation grant that was written and obtained for the construction of the MECVC. Neal Brady presented a slide show depicting displays and features of other visitor centers. The assembled group then set to work to define the purpose of the MECVC or Lockkeeper's House in New Bremen. They identified who we serve, what we offer, who we are, how we serve and who is responsible for what activities. Important and useful dialog was exchanged and a plan was formulated to develop displays. All participants in the retreat workshop are looking forward to future work and discussion.

[Gen Conradi]



Larry Dicke, Scott Frey, Pamela Sophiajohn, Wayne York and Neal Brady at the meeting

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES?

Membership in the New Bremen Historic Association entitles you to **The Towpath**, published four times a year. Yearly payment is required by March 15th of each year to assure uninterrupted delivery of **The Towpath**. Check your label now to see if your dues need to be paid. A PD-10 means you are not paid for this year and need to send your dues now. If your label says PD-11, you are paid for 2011.

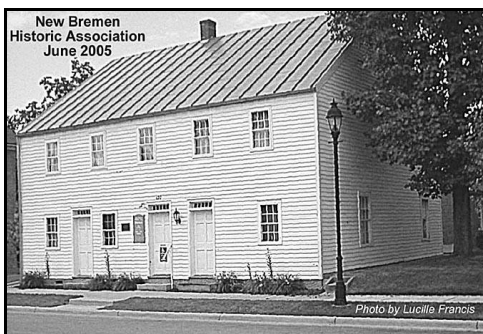
If your label says LM or CM you are a Life Member or Charter Member and you are not required to pay yearly dues because you paid a onetime fee in the past. Of course, donations are always welcome to cover the expenses of printing **The Towpath**.
—Dennis Dicke

UPCOMING EVENTS

ANNUAL PICNIC and OPEN HOUSE
Sunday, June 5, 2011 - 11:30 A.M.
At the Museum

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

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NBHA Museum – 120 N. Main St.



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