



THE TOWPATH

Published Quarterly

January – April – July – October

THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2014

THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION UPDATE

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

The Annual Meeting for the NBHA was held on March 17th at the Holy Redeemer Fellowship Hall. A delicious meal was catered by Speedway Lanes. During the brief business meeting, President Larry Dicke introduced members of the NBHA Board and asked that a vote be taken to reinstate three Trustees who have agreed to serve another term. The featured speaker for the evening was Jerry Maxson, a retired New Bremen teacher/ coach and charter member of our Association.



NBHA Annual Dinner Meeting- March 17, 2014



Jerry & Sue Maxson

Jerry Maxson was born in Troy, Ohio on April 13, 1935. He graduated from Troy High School in 1953, Wittenberg College in 1957 and got a Master's degree from Wright State University in 1973. He started teaching in Cleveland and came to New Bremen in 1960 as a teacher of math and phys. ed. He was also the basketball coach. After coaching the boys varsity and reserve for 9 years, he later coached the girls varsity for 12 years. He and his wife Sue have two daughters, Beth Monnin of Minster and Suzanne Maxson of Indianapolis. He still does some substitute teaching and tutoring in math classes. Jerry and Sue were part of the original group that founded the New Bremen Historic Association.



Frank Kamin, Dan Miller, Dennis Burnell with Jerry Maxson
A Special Musical Treat- "Strobing in the Fog"



NB Boys Basketball Team Helped Serve the Dinner

For more pictures from the dinner and information about fundraising events, go to page 15.

"THE TOWPATH" is a historical reflection of New Bremen and the surrounding area published quarterly by the New Bremen Historic Association. We welcome stories, pictures and suggestions of topics from our readers.

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Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month

Membership Dues

\$25.00 per year (includes spouse/S.O. at same address)
Lifetime membership - \$250.00 (includes spouse/S.O. at same address)

Payment is required by January of each year to assure uninterrupted delivery of *The Towpath*.

All levels of membership receive "*The Towpath*."

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

(Dennis Dicke, Recorder)

NEW MEMBERS

Lois A. Dicke

Tim & Kim Hemmelgarn

David & Debra Hirschfeld

Dean & Katherine Hirschfeld

Carolyn Inman

Chris & Teresa Kuck

Chris & Oneta Lyda

NEW LIFE MEMBERS (LM)

Christine Hirschfeld Kelser

MEMBER DEATHS

Vernon Westbay 1/28/2014

Bill Philipot 1/29/2014

Vernon Doenges 2/2/2014

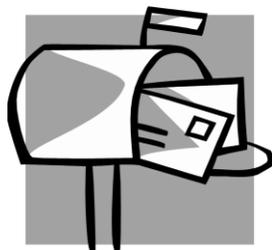
Sue Quellhorst (LM) 3/11/2014

New Bremen...a town that has not left the past in the past, but has threaded it into the present and the future.

---From a letter written by **Duane Holm**, April, 2013

Dear Readers: Thank you for your calls and letters. We love hearing from you.

Gen & Joyce, Editors



MAILBOX

Hello there. We so enjoyed the January issue of *The Towpath*. We're enclosing a small gift towards the purchase of the house at 236 N. Main.

Though I am considerably older than Julie, I remember pleasant times in her home as my Mom and Dad, Emil and Marion Bassler, were friends of her parents, Walter and Katherine Grothaus. I believe my brother, Tom, was in her sister Emily's class. I also enjoyed the article about her aunt and uncle's house.

In the article about Stanley Scheer, my mother-in-law's name is spelled wrong. Dorothy Baur, not Bauer. Mom always bragged about what a great student Stanley was and I know she would be thrilled if she were still alive to read this article... Keep up the good work... **Evelyn (Bassler) and Bob Baur, Mt. Sterling, MO.**

The Towpath arrived yesterday and I want to thank you for the great work that you do. I was gone most of the day but when I got home from choir rehearsal last night, I had a message on my answering machine from Marlene Froning regarding my observations of her uncle Henry Westerheide. I am sorry that I missed talking with her but the call reinforced my own feelings about how fortunate we were to live in the place that we call home and how it continues to resonate in our lives through stories and recollections that appear in each issue of *The Towpath*. There is so much publicity about winners of the mega cash lotteries these days but I certainly feel that we all won a really big lottery by being born and/or raised in New Bremen... **Stan Scheer, Richfield, NC.**

It is with a great deal of sadness that I tell you my wonderful mother, Beverly A. (Gast) Roberts passed away on July 7, 2013 after a long illness. She was 97 ½ years old! She loved her association with the New Bremen Historic Association and your continued publications. Thanks for keeping her connected to that time in her life... **Diane Laxineta, Manhattan Beach, CA.**

I enjoyed the latest issue of *The Towpath* as I do each issue...The traveling couple on page 13 is my aunt and uncle, Sophie & Adolph Koenig. Sophie Lutterbein Koenig and my mother Flora Lutterbein Warner were sisters. Flora married Raleigh Warner and they had four children: Wilbur Warner (mentioned in the Julius Zwez article), Evelyn Warner (married Warren Heinfeld), Edwin Warner who died at 5 months and myself, Vera

Warner who married Guy Schmidt. Our families all seem to be inter-twined in some way.

I remember Myrl Smith, our elementary principal and 6th grade teacher. Also remember that there was no school secretary so 6th grade students were responsible for answering the office phone during class time – not that there were many calls.

Always such interesting articles. Keep up the good work... **Vera Warner Schmidt, Celina, OH**

FROM THE NEW BREMEN SUN ARCHIVES

List of Letters

Letters addressed to the following persons which have not been taken within the week ending **Feb. 1st, 1888**, are in New Bremen Postoffice awaiting their claimers:

Conit Oma, Donnerberg Henriet, Dietrich Anne, Doenges John, Dierker William, Egbert August, Fullriede Carl, Finke Cath., Fuelling Herman, Gast Bertha, Havischer Wm., Hill H. R., Hirshfeld John, Kasten Wm., Koepfer Wm., Lameyer Mary, Luelleman Wm., Laut Ferd, Landwae H., Meyer Fred, Masonbrink Henry, Moeller Franklin, Mueller Herman, Niehing Henry, Nieter Henry, Quellhorst Mathilde, Quin O., Scheots Cora, Tangeman H., Uetrecht Fred, Vornholt Minnie, Vornholt, Wm., Wherrey E., Watermann Wm., Wiegmann Henry, Westing D. **Edward Purpus, P. M.**

An automobile is a useful machine for more than one purpose. Carrier Gobrecht of route No. 1 has amply demonstrated that his little Metz runabout is a valuable asset for the delivery of mail among rural patrons. While the roads are in good condition he is able to complete his trip in 3 ½ hours, leaving the post office at about 8:30 in the morning he manages to be back frequently at 12 o'clock, while very seldom it is later than 12:30. Of course, at times the roads are bad he is obliged to draft his horse and buggy into service, and then the trip consumes about three hours more. *The New Bremen Sun*, May 2, 1914

Did You Know? Dale Schaefer has the distinction of scoring the first point for any team in a regulation game in the new St. Marys gymnasium. Dale scored a foul shot in the B squad game. *The New Bremen Sun*, December, 4, 1952

INTERVIEW WITH LLOYD SCHROER

The first chapter of Lloyd Schroer's life occurred during the Great Depression. He was the third child of six born to Clarence and Esther Tostrick Schroer arriving on October 22, 1935. His sister Betty is the oldest and the only girl. Don was next in line and Lloyd is three years younger. The next three boys are Kenny, Warren and Richard. Lloyd carried the nickname of "Peanut" like his dad and brothers but was known as "Yang" to his family.



Lloyd at Home on the Family Farm

In 1941, he started school in Kettlersville but was there for only one month when the family moved to the Tostrick farm near Lock Two on the banks of the Miami & Erie Canal. Lloyd has fond memories of growing up with his sister, brothers and best buddies Roland "Possum" Meckstroth and Bill "Lop" Snider.

Many of the boys' activities centered around the canal. In the winter they skated all the way to St. Marys. In the summer they gathered carbide from Bambauer's Blacksmith Shop and blew up cans on the canal. The boys spent many hours building dams across the canal and then swimming there even though they had a pond on their farm.

Lloyd's school years were busy. He enjoyed playing basketball, participation in class plays and his involvement with the FFA program. He was also expected to help with the farm chores.



New Bremen FFA. Lloyd is 3rd boy from left.



**Lloyd and His New Bremen High School
Basketball Team 1953-54**

Lloyd graduated from New Bremen High School in 1954. A new phase of his life came about when he joined the army and left for basic training at Ft. Knox shortly after graduation. After basic training he was sent to France, just 70 miles south of Paris, to a unit that supplied troops to Germany. He was pleased that his troop had a barracks to live in rather than tents. Janice Topp wrote to him faithfully each day while he was away and sent him banana cake and other delicious snacks.



**Lloyd was selected to be in the
Army Honor Guard**

He believes that his Army service was a valuable experience for him. During this time he discovered the value of friends and colleagues, and found through hard work and following good advice he could accomplish what he set out to do. "The word can't is not in my vocabulary," says Lloyd Schroer. An example of Lloyd's "can-do" attitude was his ability to secure an early release from his army service to attend Janice's Senior Prom. Lloyd used his mustering out pay to buy an engagement ring. He and Janice became engaged to be married at the Prom in 1956.



**Lloyd and
Janice**

Lloyd worked at Bremco Mills that summer and began to think about what he wanted to do with his life. He decided to become a mechanic and enrolled at Baily Technical School in St. Louis in November of 1956. He studied automotive diesel mechanics under the GI Bill.

Three days after graduation from Baily Technical School he accepted a job at Tranco Sales & Service. Tranco was a company in New Bremen that provided trucks for the Meadow Gold Creamery. As a mechanic, Lloyd was responsible for doing whatever was needed to keep the trucks running.

His years at Tranco provided Lloyd with valuable learning experiences that would assist him with all his business ventures. In 1976, after the death of the owner, Mr. Komminsk, he knew it was time to begin looking for a new job.

Lloyd answered an ad in the newspaper and was hired by Kirk National Lease as the Service Manager in Sidney, Ohio. As Service Manager he was responsible for the maintenance of 300-400 lease trucks. Within two years he was named Vice President of Operations. In 1985 he and James R. Harvey had an opportunity to buy the company and KBT (Kirk Brothers Transportation).

Through their hard work over the next 20 years, Kirk became the largest privately owned company in Shelby County. It was also one of the top twenty in the Miami Valley.

Lloyd retired from Kirk in 2008. Today he looks back at the trucking business and marvels at the new technology and the changes that he has witnessed. When he began at Tranco, truck engines boasted 175 HP. Today trucks are powered by engines with 500-600 HP and yet get better gas mileage. In those early days he knew each part in the truck but today systems are more complex and problems are identified by the computer system. He is sold on the new electronics and other improvements.



40 Year Anniversary of Paradise Acres in 2007

Since his retirement, Lloyd has concentrated on farming. Growing up on the family farm and participation in F.F.A. led to Lloyd's dream of one day owning his own farm surrounded by a white board fence. He succeeded in both endeavors but while he enjoyed farming, painting and maintaining the fence required too much time and thus he removed the fence.

Married in 1957, Lloyd and Janice are the parents of three daughters. Vicki is the oldest and is married to Tim May. They have two children, Jessica and Keith. Debra their second daughter is married to Dave Hovestreydt and has two children, Garret and Jamie. Their third daughter Lori is married to Kurt Rindler. Lori and Kurt have three sons, Jacob, Nathan and Owen.

**Deb, Lori, Vicki,
Lloyd & Janice**



Lloyd and Janice both enjoyed learning about new places and meeting others through their travels. During their life together they visited all 50 states and traveled in 26 different countries. They tried to find trips that exposed them to new cultures and ways of farming. They went on farm tours through Brazil, Argentina, Peru and Chile. They visited the feedlots in Texas and learned about underground irrigation systems. They toured Costa Rica and Panama and took a ship through the Panama Canal. They saw the wheat harvest in the Dakotas and the beluga whales in Manitoba.

Other years found them on a photo safari in Kenya, Africa or touring castles, churches and WWII sites in Europe. They rode mules to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and saw the ever-changing colors of the landscape.

They made frequent trips to the Caribbean Islands. Janice loved to be near the beach and Lloyd enjoyed snorkeling in the clear waters. Other favorites were trips to Hawaii, Alaska and San Francisco.

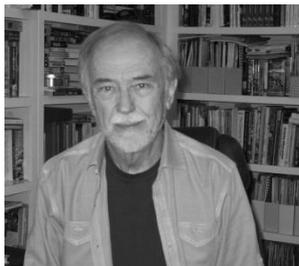
Their travels together ended in the fall of 2008 when Janice's health began to fail and she required increased care. She died on January 6, 2013 surrounded by the love of her family.

Now Lloyd is in the next phase of his life. We are sure it will be filled with many interesting ventures.

This article is an excerpt from the book *Chapters of My Life* which he published for his family and friends. It was our privilege to work with Lloyd to share his story.

**Lloyd &
Janice**





Duty Calls

The Civilian Air Defense Ground Observation Corps of New Bremen

By Bob Gilberg

The New Bremen Opera house burned the other day damaging a major landmark in the town's heritage. Its official name was the Boesel Opera House; the Boesel name dating back to the earliest founding of the town by settlers from northern Germany. New Bremen was basically a transplanted German town for most of its history. People were still even speaking German there during my high school years in the late 1950s!



Boesel Opera House in New Bremen (circa 1990)

I remember the old Opera House not because I had ever seen an opera or play there, as it was originally used for, but for two other reasons: it was the location of the New Bremen Civil Air Patrol's, Ground Observation Corp's watch post, and also the home of the American Legion and had a dance floor where our "Teenagers" monthly dances were held.

The Teenagers dances were arranged and chaperoned by Carl Watkins, our cardigan sweater, hush puppies loafers wearing History teacher and baseball coach. This was at the time when, for kids all across America, the pop music of the 40's and early 50's was about to be thrown under the bus and replaced by Rock and Roll. I'll never forget the look on Carl's face as he watched us dancing to Little Richard's *Long Tall Sally* at a Teenagers dance when Little Richard first broke onto the Pop music scene. I remember him shaking his head and muttering something to his pretty wife about "frantic, fanatic, crazy" and other words to the same effect. I knew Carl was wondering what had happened to Perry Como and Guy Lombardo. Where was *Moonlight in Vermont* and *How Much is That Doggie in the Window?* We weren't thinking about them anymore; it was Bill Haley and the Comets, Elvis and Little Richard.

And, I was thinking about the nights I was spending up on the roof of the Opera House, crouching in a little hut that was built up there as the New Bremen Ground Observation Corps' watch point for Operation Skywatch.

In the early fifties, it was the height of the Cold War era. We believed that any day back then, the skies could be black over New Bremen with Russian bombers headed from over the

North Pole, on over New Bremen, on their way to Dayton, Ohio and the Wright Patterson Air Force base.

In addition to the cold war problems, other things were going on in the skies. It was the era of the UFO. Flashing lights and streaking objects moving through the sky at unheard of speeds and with unbelievable agility were being seen more commonly across the country and even the rest of the world. Notions of alien beings from distant planets surveilling Earth as a potential conquest were in the back of every ones minds. A new genre of science fiction movie had evolved and several were on the silver screens in the early '50s: *The Day the Earth Stood Still* had shocked us, *This Island Earth* had fascinated, and *When Worlds Collide* made us nervous about new ways to die. *The War of the Worlds* made us all understand that we may not have been alone in the universe!

Against this backdrop, the Federal government initiated a new Civilian Air Defense Project to observe the skies at thousands of points across the US and provide a traceable monitoring system for enemy aircraft warning until the "DEW (Defense Early Warning) Line" was constructed across northern Alaska and Canada. Thousands of observation points were to be manned 24-7 by two person crews working in four hour shifts; constantly watching for, and reporting the movement of all planes in the skies visible to each watch post.

The government was looking for 500,000 volunteers. About the only requirement was the candidates needed to be at least eighteen years of age, have good vision, stay sober, and be available for two hours each week. They were having trouble with the 500,000 volunteers. I was twelve in 1952 and they were happy to have me and my brother, cousins and other friends.

The specified ideal observation post was a tower twenty to thirty feet in height with a good field of view in all 360 degrees of the compass. I think some leeway was given on this point however in view of the fact that a Russian attacking force was unlikely to be flying northward over New Bremen, Ohio on an inbound target run. So some limits on visibility were probably acceptable.

The first, temporary observation post was simply an army surplus tent in Cliff Harris's back yard. Cliff Harris had some military aviation background and had been named Ground Observer Corps coordinator for New Bremen, and was tasked with the responsibility of setting up an observation point and finding "manpower" to man the post. The tent was a temporary installation until a real, high point post could be built.

It was mainly there for training purposes-officially. We had manuals that showed the various Russian airplanes we were to be looking for, how to tell the different sounds of single, twin and multi-engine airplanes, and instructions on how to report in on the occasions when we spotted suspicious planes in the vicinity. But, there were tall trees nearby to the East, the North and the South, and the Harris's two story house was just over to the west, around 60 feet away. We didn't have much in the way of views towards any of the horizons, but we did have a really good view straight up. That is, if it wasn't cloudy or raining which was not that infrequent in Ohio summers.

We needed a real observation post with good, all-compass-points views. And that's where the New Bremen Opera House came into the picture. While we were guarding the country

from the backyard tent, some of the town's men built an observation hut on the roof of the Opera House. To reach the observation hut, one needed to go into the Men's coat room, enter a small closet, and climb up what was essentially a ladder built onto the wall with bolted on rungs. By climbing that ladder, you could finally go out onto the roof and walk across a kind of walkway leading out to the observation hut. Benches had been built around the sides of the hut so we didn't have to



Orville Ruedebusch in the observation hut on the roof of the Opera House

either stand or sit on the floor for the entire 4 hour shift. All four sides were enclosed by waist high railings with wide top surfaces, presumably to use for steadying our binoculars when getting close up views of passing airplanes and probably to keep us from walking all around on the roof as well!

Of course, there was no vision limiting roof. No roof meant no observing in stormy weather; we'd just have to risk sneak attacks in the rain. The possibility of lightning and thunder storms while up on the roof in that hut (platform really) was also a sobering factor.

There were clipboards chained to the railings for recording our spotting activities, and *the telephone*. *The telephone* was an intimidating device: no dialing was needed! All you would do to report an aircraft sighting was pick it up. As soon as you picked it up and put it to your ear, you would hear, "Colonel Wilson here, please give your report, New Bremen."

That was really weird, but impressive; a twelve or thirteen year old kid picks up a telephone and here's this stern, important sounding voice asking for your report! It made you feel really important. I always had visions of talking to a man with medals all over his chest, who was sitting in a situation room somewhere, probably down at Wright Patterson, with charts all over the walls with little airplanes being moved around on them by lower level airmen as the reports were phoned in.

But, we never had very much to report. New Bremen was not on any flight paths as far as I could tell. There was the occasional multi-engine plane flying by, off in the distance, but never any going by overhead, so we never had any real idea of what we were seeing. We could usually tell if it was single, twin or a multi-engine plane from the sound, but never saw any that were close enough to tell if it was an American or Russian craft. I think we could figure out if it was a Piper Cub or maybe a Cessna, since there were occasionally some of those around.

But they didn't sound at all like a War Bird: there is no mistaking the sound difference between a mighty fighter or bomber sound versus that of a puny 4 cylinder personal aircraft. But, to be on the safe side, we reported those just as well: "Single engine, unknown aircraft flying at low altitude toward the southwest; time 5:39 PM, July 19, 1952," we reported. "Thank you, New Bremen; over and out" was the reply from the man with all the medals.

This was hot stuff! I'm 12 and helping defend the country! We even had little pins from the CAP (Civilian Air Patrol) to wear on our shirt or jacket lapels. (Wish I still had it...)

Better yet though, were the UFO's we saw nearly every night. Watch the dark skies long enough and hard enough and you were bound to see something strange. Strange like lights off in the distance moving silently through the night. But, no sounds! "What could that be?" we asked each other. Most all airplanes in those days had piston engines and propellers; and they were far from silent. Of course we didn't know about environmental effects such as thermoclines and how temperature layers can reflect or channel sound in ways that can redirect, or even hide it.

We didn't know about the effects of wind direction on sound either. They just had to be UFOs with strange new silent propulsion systems! After all, we were hearing reports of UFO sightings all the time, and had been keeping up on all the latest sci-fi movies coming from Hollywood. And, everyone knew about project "Bluebook": the Air Force project to investigate and report on all the UFO sightings. The mystery was: the Air Force wasn't talking about it! Their refusal to release any information was all the proof anyone needed to know of the actual existence of extra-terrestrials skittering all over our skies.

Summer went on and it came around to the Woodmen Festival. This was mainly, at that time, a street carnival that was held right below the Opera House on the town's main and widest street. The Carney workers set up all kinds of carnival rides and entertainment booths just below and in front of our Observation Post. With all the noise and lights, not to mention the distraction of seeing it all just under our post meant we weren't reporting much in the way of intruding Russian bombers, or even UFO's for a full week. We spent most of our shifts watching our friends down below lining up to ride the Caterpillar, or the Bullet, or the Flying Scooters.

But, we didn't leave our post. We were dedicated to staying up there just in case fifty or so Russian bombers flew in, low overhead, avoiding Wright Pat's long range radar.

However, I did manage to see my cousin Tommy, crash a Flying Scooter into the 2nd story of the Amstutz Egg Hatchery directly across the street. He managed to do that by cutting his scooter in very close to the central engine and strut mechanism, so that when centrifugal force took his scooter out as far as the chains could extend, he glanced off the 2nd story brick wall. The scooter was damaged with some bent sheet metal, but the egg hatchery was undamaged. It was my understanding that the ride was then shut down and relocated farther into the center of the street so that no wild kid would manage to do that again.

After the Woodmen Festival ended, things went back to the hum-drum of UFO's and far off, multi-engine aircraft

reportings, but little else happened. So, like any twelve or thirteen year old kids, we needed new things to maintain our interest between sightings.

Well, Howell's IGA was just down the street and they had left their large stacks of watermelons out overnight! Such was the security of life in the 50s in a small town like New Bremen. We didn't take many, and they only cost twenty five cents each; how bad was it to help ourselves to one every now and then when in the service of our country? We did feel bad about the watermelon rinds smashed on the sidewalk and street below though, and swore we'd never do it again - every time.

We also found that hiding behind the front wall by the edge of the roof provided a great position for launching water balloons at late night, passing semi-trailer trucks. We had convinced ourselves that it was good training for launching Molotov Cocktails in the event of the possible up-coming Russian invasions. "Russian tanks heading south on Ohio Rt. 66. We're attacking with Molotov cocktails," we imagined.

Eventually, it became too cold to stay up on the unsheltered Observation Post as the summer turned into fall, and school duties were falling back onto our shoulders. The grand defense of the country was going to have to be put off until better weather and the end of the school year next spring. The Russians weren't going to attack us over the winter anyway, were they?

I guess the DEW Line finally got built by the next year though, because the call for volunteers never went out again.

At least, they didn't call me.

This story is excerpted from Bob's stories about growing up in New Bremen. He is currently working on a book about his memories and hopes that it will be published soon. The book is entitled *The Last Road Rebel* and is a warm, humorous and thoughtful remembrance of his days in small town Ohio, including events ranging from the hilarious to the sad and then self-discovery. Thank you, Bob, for sharing this story and we can't wait to read your book!

Observers plan For Operation Skywatch

(The New Bremen Sun-June 26, 1952)

All student members of New Bremen's Ground Observer Corps are instructed to report for duty at the American Legion Home at 1:00 o'clock Saturday afternoon, June 28. The order was issued by Clifford Harris, supervisor and Robert G. Shafer, assistant supervisor.

Plans are being made here to participate in Operation Skywatch to be launched on or about July 14 in 27 states by the National Civilian Defense Authority.

Listed among the volunteer observers enrolled with the New Bremen Post are Frank Dicke, Maurice Boerger, Paul Ritter, William Bollenbaugh, Jim Kuck, Roman Stueve, Wilson Braun, Tafe Mueller, Merlin Fischbach, Tom Kuenning, O. C. Ruedebusch, James Pape, Alvin Dammeyer, Walter Maich, Ray Knipple, Earl Prueter, Harold Moyer, Frank Topp.

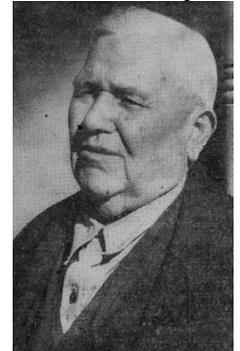
Hugh Casebolt, Paul Casebolt, Carl Richey, Lee Wissman, Vernon Luedeke, Roland Luedeke, Bill Campbell, Jr., Jack Moyer, Dick Howell, Robert Rump, Jerry Dennis, Andrew Schwierking, Harry Brewer, John Rinehart and Richard Roediger.

HISTORY OF THE BOESEL OPERA HOUSE

126 YEARS AGO IN NEW BREMEN

Most of the young men in New Bremen are desirous of seeing an opera house here soon; and the only thing that refrains them from building one themselves is the financial inability. Suppose some enterprising business man take hold. It would be the best investment he could make. It would not only tend to keep young folks in New Bremen and build up the city, but it would also bring him nice reward to his pocket book. *The New Bremen Sun, April 1888*

The Opera House building became a reality in 1895 when it was built by Charles Boesel, Jr. Designed by Columbus architects Kremer & Hart it was constructed at a cost of \$6925. The Opera House was located on the top floor of the building and was the site of many concerts, plays and school graduations. New Bremen's American Legion Post 241 bought the building in 1948 for \$12,500. They saved the stage but converted the rest of the Opera House into a multi-purpose meeting hall. In 2014 the Opera House, now owned by Crown Equipment Corporation is undergoing another renovation with an addition. This will add a new look to downtown New Bremen but the Opera House building will continue to serve an important role in the community.



Charles J. Boesel, first manager of Opera House, Tickets for the performances were sold at the Hardware Store located in the lower level of the building.



Recent photo of the Opera House with new construction.



*During his presentation at the Annual Dinner we found our featured speaker **Jerry Maxson** is also a poet. We had many requests to include a copy of the poem he wrote about *The Hotel*, a special landmark in our hometown. He shared this excerpt from his speech and the poem.*

We live in a nice little town. You don't have to go far to realize that New Bremen has a lot to offer that other towns our size don't. To name a few, we have a pavilion, a bike museum, a theater that shows first run movies and a first class restaurant. Now Bollies is a unique place, but I'm talking about La Piazza. However, that location wasn't always La Piazza. The restaurant before it was The Grill. Before that, Old Baloney. One step further back was Lock One, but in the beginning, it was called the Hotel. Now there is a big difference between what the Hotel was and what La Piazza is, but I have a lot of good memories about the Hotel. Years ago I wrote a poem about what it was like.

Hotel Bar

There is a place in our home town whose name will never die.

Describe it to a stranger and they think you told a lie,

For it's a famous landmark that is known both near and far.

The place that's close to all our hearts is called

The Hotel Bar.

The name that's written on the sign outside says Hotel Bar.

But everyone just says hotel. They know that there's a bar.

They also know that there is not one room to rent at all.

So how the name hotel has lasted, no one

Can recall.

The décor has a well-used look of vintage "43".

And any changes that were made are really hard

To see.

The beer stained floor and tables, have known a lot

Of wear.

The vinyl covered booths and stools are cracked
Beyond repair.

The Hotel serves a lot of food to people
Around here.

My favorite is fried chicken and a pitcher of
Draft beer.

Their tenderloins are probably the biggest in
The state.

It's a rare occasion when it won't fill up
Your plate.

On Saturdays the downtown coaches' club convenes
At eight.

To talk about the latest game. Deciding this
Team's fate.

"You can't play zone. The offense stinks. I say this crap
must halt."

And know right where to place the blame. It's all the
coaches' fault.

Bartenders seem to come and go behind the
Hotel bar.

But one stands out above the rest. His infamy
Goes far.

"uh-huh, uh-huh is what he says. The special and white
bread, uh-huh.

I don't know how the dodgers did, but how about
The Reds, uh-huh".

Jim Schnelle

Then after the Hotel closed, I wrote this last verse.

There was a place in our home town whose name
Will never die.

The stories that you heard today are true
And not a lie.

It was a famous land mark people knew from
Near and far.

The place that we will not forget was called
The Hotel Bar.

Continued...from the last issue of *The Towpath*

**BIOGRAPHY OF
JOHANN FREDERICK JULIUS ZWEZ
(1837-1901)**

*Written by Mr. Zwez (circa 1900) and translated by
Mrs. Elizabeth Zwez Neuman, Mrs. Carolyn Neuman
Sunderman and Dr. Ernst Rose*

2nd INSTALLMENT – CIVIL WAR SERVICE

...I was told that war had been declared and when I asked the reason for this, I was told that the South had seceded from the North, and that the Northern states wished to abolish slavery in the South. The spirit of patriotism was so high in New York at this time that many volunteered their services for the army of the United States.

I was so interested and influenced by this patriotism, and as an unmarried man, I decided to do my duty and fight for the noble cause and to prove the value of my citizenship. In order to do this, it was necessary for me to resign my position in Union Hill and volunteer in the Cameron Rifle Division Infantry Regiment in Company E. Later the regiment was named the 68th New York Volunteer Regiment, which served for the duration of the war under that name.



My induction into the Army occurred on August 10, 1861, by Captain [Albert von] Steinhausen. Since we had no rifles at first, we trained with clubs and had to

stand guard and learned all the military discipline.

On August 24, 1861, we marched from New York to Washington under the direction of Colonel [Robert J.] Betge. Upon our arrival in Washington we passed in review before President Abraham Lincoln, who gave a stirring address; then we marched across the Potomac River into Virginia, into the land of the enemy. Our first stop was at Hunter's Chapel where we joined the German Division, commanded by General [Louis] Blenker and brigade commanded by General Karl Schurz. During the winter of 1861 and spring, 1862, we did guard duty and took frequent excursions into the South to trace and find the location of their troops. At this time we were receiving additional military training and we became very anxious to meet the Southern rebels and engage in combat with them.

Finally May, 1862, we broke camp and marched to meet the rebels. Who was happier than we to receive the word to go forward! With singing and hurrahs, we marched further into Virginia, the land of the rebels.

After several days of marching, we arrived on June 8,

1862, at Cross Key, Virginia, where we dealt severe blows but also received the same in retaliation. Here I was wounded for the first time (in the knee) but it was only a flesh wound and the knee joint was all right. I was taken in an ambulance to a hospital in Jackson, Virginia to receive treatment for recovery. In fourteen days my wounds were entirely healed so I could re-enter the services of my regiment. Since there are many books written about the war, I will mention only the battles in which I fought and those things which are especially important to me and my experiences.

The second Battle in which I engaged was on August 9, 1862, at Cedar Mountain, Virginia and the third Battle on August 29 and 30, 1862, at the Battle of Bull Run (Groveton). Since we were on cannon duty and the noise was so extreme, like that of an earthquake, my right eardrum was broken.

The fourth Battle was at Chantilly, two miles from Fairfax Court House, Virginia, September 1, 1862. The fifth battle was on May 2 at Chancellorsville in 1863. After this battle we learned General Lee had marched his troops over the Potomac into the Northern states of Maryland and Pennsylvania. We immediately reversed troops and marched hurriedly to Edward Ferry, crossing the pontoon bridge over the Potomac, arriving first in Fredericksburg in Maryland and there went to Emmetsburg and then seven miles to Gettysburg.

Here we immediately engaged in Battle as our First Army Corps (we belonged to the 11th) had almost been overcome by the enemy. July 1, 1863, was a hard day for us that on this day we had to flee from the attack of the rebels. Many of our men were wounded and killed and taken prisoner. Among the latter (as a prisoner) I had to suffer as all day our regiment had to form the vanguard and had to return to this shelter and here was captured. Now we had to march involuntarily as prisoners to Hagerstown, Maryland, from there over the Potomac to Martinsburg, [West] Virginia and from there marched to Richmond, Virginia.

Upon arrival there we were stripped of our personal possessions and placed in Libby Prison.

After being here several weeks, I was taken in company with others (prisoners) to Belle Island in the James River. Pen cannot describe our extreme suffering. Hunger, insects, and extremely cruel treatment daily brought much illness and suffering.

Finally after two months of suffering and almost starved to death, I was paroled. We were taken to a neutral place and there prisoners were exchanged, and returned to their troops. Rebel troops, in good healthy condition and we, suffering human beings, were exchanged. We were taken by way of Petersburg to Richmond to a neutral place and then by ship to Annapolis, Maryland, and quartered in a parole camp.

After two months when I had fully recovered I traveled from Annapolis to rejoin my regiment, which had been sent to Bridgeport, Alabama, after the Battle of Gettysburg. During my absence, my regiment had engaged in the Battle of Chickamauga. The last battle in which I also engaged was at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge under the command of General [Joseph] Hooker and General Thomas from November 23 to 25, 1863.

In December 1863, there came a call from President Lincoln for the old soldiers to re-enlist. The rebels had planned, when the three-year enlistment of our troops had finished, that thereby our army would be weakened considerably.

Then they would inflict a good defeat on the Northern states and would carry away a victory but President Lincoln anticipated their intentions and they had made their bill without the innkeeper. President Lincoln promised to every soldier who would enlist again, not only to hold him for the enlistment period which he had not yet served, but also to grant him a bounty of \$400 and, in addition, a furlough of thirty days.

Since we had fought in most battles already and had already suffered rigors and, since there also existed good prospects for a close end of the war, I agreed with several comrades to these conditions.

For this purpose I went now to New York for thirty days and experienced there with my comrades, the most beautiful and splendid hours. After the end of the furlough I was fully recuperated from many rigors and was healthy again, and I traveled to my regiment, which was stationed near Chattanooga, Tennessee. Since our army was on its way to Atlanta, Georgia, we had to remain in Chattanooga as a garrison for the protection of the railroad, so that the provisions could be sent to the advancing army. My regiment and I would have marched forward gladly with General Sherman's army but our new Colonel, Prince [Felix] Salm-Salm, who always had the cannon fever feared the blue bullets could arrange it so that we'd remain behind. The service for us now was harder and more difficult than when we were going into battle. For in battle one is not killed from behind, but can look openly into the face of death. Once again, we had to go on, marching, namely from Chattanooga to Knoxville, Tennessee. And we marched through the following places: Loudon, Philadelphia and Cleveland, likewise situated in East Tennessee.

When we arrived in Knoxville, we were no longer needed since the rebels had already been defeated by General Burnside and his army. Therefore we had to return again to Chattanooga. The bushwhackers gave us plenty to do. They cut telegraph wires at night and broke the rails in order to cut off our more and more advancing army from provisions and munitions. In every such case

we had to accompany, with loaded guns, the pioneers who possessed all kind of tools in order to repair again the perpetrated damage. We often had to accompany the wagons through the mountains in order to collect provisions. At other times it was said that guerrillas made a certain place unsafe. One time we received a strict order to discover a guerrilla party of 60 people and to make them prisoners if possible. They were said to be encamped in a place forty miles distant. We marched during the night and experienced a disagreeable surprise. For here and there came shots from the bushes but they did little harm since we paid close attention. At four o'clock in the morning we succeeded with the help of a spy familiar with the whole region to surround the whole guerrilla group of sixty men and to make them prisoners. Most of the guerrillas were southern farmers who worked in their fields in the daytime but at night kept to the bushes with their rifles in order to help those which were standing in the casements of the fort. Whenever we were standing watch, we were permitted to smoke in order to somehow keep away the mosquitoes. To this was added another affliction. We were namely obliged to eat the worm-eaten crackles [crackling?] and rancid bacon sent there. For it should be said to the same of Colonel Salm-Salm and his so-called quartermaster that they sold the fresh rations sent to us in Savannah and put the money in their own pockets.

Nevertheless, we also had some nice times. When we were off duty we set out to catch crabs and oysters, which here were abundant. The crabs were cooked; the oysters were eaten raw. And thus every time we had an excellent, delicious meal. There I was dismissed with my whole regiment from United States service on December 23, 1865, since we were among the first regiments who marched to the front at the beginning of the war. During this war, I served four years and four months.

When I had been dismissed, together with my regiment, we traveled by steamer from Fort Pulaski to New York, where we once had enlisted for military service, and where we now changed back to civilian life. From New York I made a trip to Treskow in Carbon County in the state of Pennsylvania, where a brother of my stepmother, Louis Degenhardt, was superintendent of a coal company, whom I visited upon his urgent and friendly invitation. After I had stayed there for a few weeks and had spent there very beautiful hours, I continued my journey to the state of Ohio.

The final installment of Mr. Zvez's Biography will be included in the next issue of <i>The Towpath</i>
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History Mystery Page

Thank you, everyone, for your phone calls, e-mails and letters! Are you ready for the new challenge? Remember to write, call or e-mail your answers.



Do you remember when the High School on Walnut Street looked like this? Do you see anyone you know in this picture from the school year 1954-1955?



The Arbor Day Program at the Central (Union) School in the early 1950s. Were you there when they began the program with the Pledge of Allegiance?

History Mystery Page (continued)



Who is painting the cupola at the Jaycee Shelter House?



Walking along Herman Street to their new home in the late 1950s. Who are they?



Bremenfest Bed Races 1982- Who are they?



In 1960 the CCL Groups donated money to benefit the school playground. Can you name these people?



Bremenfest Bed Races 1980- Can you name them?



Can you name these teachers honored for service in 1961?

History Mystery Page For January 2014 Issue



Dr. Henry J. Schmidt, son Leonard, Mrs. Henry J. Schmidt (Alice Huenke), daughter Goldie Schmidt & Marguerite Koop, their niece. This photo was taken about 1910. In 1914, Dr. Leonard Schmidt married Helen Klopf. They had two daughters Dottie (Jacob Boesel) and Alice (Paul Wissman).



Oatie Busse with Wayne Fark and Andrew Schwierking in 1945.



Verlin Hirschfeld, Kenneth Griewe and Dr. Victor Stegall. A member of Dr. Stegall's staff remembers that Mr. & Mrs. Verlin Hirschfeld hosted a reception in honor of Dr. Stegall and Dr. Stover when they opened their new medical practice in the summer of 1970.



This is Julia Dammeyer Fark in front of the hardware store located in the east half of the lower Boesel Opera House building. The hardware store was located there from 1922 to 1946. The business then moved to the SW corner of Monroe & Water Streets. In 1950 the retail part of the business was moved across the street to the NW corner of Monroe & Water Street.

Kathy (Fark) Maurer told us that her mother, Julia Fark, worked at the Hardware Store. Julia is a graduate of NBHS Class of '38.



Sophia and Adolph Koenig (about 1955). Adolph was the Secretary-Treasurer of the Mercer-Wapakoneta National Farm Loan Association. This organization was formed by federal legislation in 1916 to increase credit to farmers. It is now known as Farm Credit. Adolph & Sophia Koenig are the parents of Victor, Helen and Robert Koenig.



Standing: Evelyn Waterman, John Koeper, Seated: Joyce Quellhorst, Miss Alvina Burk in 1953. Evelyn, John and Joyce are members of the NBHS Class of '54.

THANK YOU, TO THESE FOLKS FOR RESPONDING TO THE HISTORY MYSTERY PAGE-Don Luedeke, the Office Staff of Dr. Victor J. Stegall, Evelyn & Bob Baur, Bill & Jane Moore, Pat (Gels) D'Allesio, Stanley Scheer, Kathy (Fark) Maurer, Jim Hay, Oatie (Fark) Busse, Jean (Blank) Warner, Bev (Rump) Plattner, Vera Warner Schmidt.

THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC

ASSOCIATION UPDATE (continued from page 1)

It is a pleasure to announce some great news about our Association's fund raising efforts.

RAFFLE BEGINS!

When the Board voted to purchase the house at 236 N. Main Street, they determined that additional monies would need to be raised to pay the utilities and other expenses at this property and the Luelleman House.

The Board decided to have a Raffle in which 3 winning entries would be drawn each month. The winners receive \$100.00 for first place, \$75.00 for second and \$50.00 for third. The first drawing of the year was held at the Annual Meeting. Subsequent drawings will be held monthly at Board Meetings with an ending date of February, 2015.

The winners for March are Julia Graves (St. Marys) \$100.00, Lilyann Schweissguth (Marthasville, MO) \$75.00 and Lewis Bertke (New Bremen) \$50.00.

A \$20.00 donation enters one name in the Raffle or enter 3 names for \$50.00. There is no limit on the number of times a person can enter. There is no cut-off date for accepting entries so enter now by sending your donation. Send donation to:

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

Be sure to include your full name and your address.

You will help the New Bremen Historic Association preserve the history of our town and have some fun as well. The Board is pleased that so many people have supported this fundraiser.

WE MET OUR CHALLENGE!

In the January issue of *The Towpath*, we invited participation in a "Challenge Grant" toward the purchase of the property at 236 N. Main Street. The family of Merlin & Susie Hirschfeld challenged the NBHA to raise \$20,000. They in turn promised to match that amount as an incentive for others to give generously. Our readers have been very generous and the challenge has been met! Since we received over \$53,500 in donations plus the \$20,000 from the Hirschfeld family the board members voted unanimously to use the money to pay the remaining mortgage amount. Now that the property is mortgage free, donations can be used for the next phase of the project. This phase involves the preservation work on the 1865 house. Work has begun on the walls, floors and bathroom. We will keep you updated on the progress. Your donations are still needed to keep this phase of the project moving along.

Our donors include : LAST QUARTER- Judy Meckstroth, Hirschfeld Family, Dave & Debra Hirschfeld, Dean & Katherine Hirschfeld, Genevieve Conradi & Dennis Dicke, Barb Ziegenbusch THIS QUARTER- Anonymous (2), Max & Bev Flederjohann, Tim & Kristy Eiting, Bill & Pam Wente, Stanley Hirschfeld, Gene Topp Drainage, Janet Koenig, Lois Moeller, Jason This Attorney, Larry & Nancy Busse, Sandra Conradi, James Kettler, Robert & Evelyn Baur, Bob & Nancy Price, Tom & Sandy Thieman, Jerry & Sue Maxson, Franz & Elizabeth Sauerland, Carl Roediger, Holly Hotchkiss, Rob Ziegenbusch, Lee & Rita Wissman, Howard & Emily Reisner, Daniel & Ruth Johns, Mark & Renae Gaerke, Wayne & Kathy Maurer, Ned & Susie Moeller, Kim Moeller, Bill & Edythe Henschen, Elmer & Roberta Halker, Robert Braun, Jim & Janet Dicke, Sheryl Biederman, Curtis & Ruth Brookhart, Tom & Maryalice Dicke, Dianne Komminsk, John & Carol Turner, Stan & Dona Mae Kuenning, Steve & Cheryl Fark and the NBHS CLASS OF 1964 Members - Larry Gruebmeier, Joyce Ruedebusch, Tom & Joyce Wente, Gerald & Carole Ferguson, William & Bonnie Elsass, Duane Dammeyer, Jim & Janice Wilson, Richard & Barbara DeRoxtro, Jim & Pam Elking, Roger & Marcia Weadock, Marlene Olberding, Karen & Gary Farley. (These donations are being pooled as a class gift to mark the 50th anniversary of their graduation.)

Look for more updates and raffle winners in the next issue of *The Towpath*.

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING



**New Bremen Historic Association
P.O. Box 73**

New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073

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PLEASE KEEP US ADVISED OF ANY ADDRESS CHANGES.

If your newsletter is “undeliverable”, it will be returned to us, costing us from **\$2.50-\$3.00** per copy postage!

UPCOMING EVENTS 2014

Membership Status Code - Check your address label
PD 14 – Means you are Paid through Dec. 2014.
LM P-11 - Means you Paid for a Lifetime Membership in 2011.
LM D-11 - Means you are a Lifetime Member and made a Donation in 2011.
CM P-76 - Means you are a Charter Member and Paid in 1976.
CM D-11 - Means you are a Charter Member and made a Donation in 2011.

You can still participate in the Raffle Drawings. Send your name & address and a \$20.00 donation (or 3 names for \$50.00) to:

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

**Raffle Drawing at each NBHA Board Meeting
(April, 2014 through February, 2015)**

**May 3 & 4 BE A TOURIST IN YOUR OWN
HOMETOWN**

**All museums throughout Auglaize County
Will be open from 12-5 PM
(The Luelleman House and the Lockkeeper’s
House will be open 12 to 5 PM both days)**

**June, July, August.....Luelleman House
Museum will be open to the public
on Sundays 2-4 P.M.**

September 26 & 27.....Pumpkinfest

**December, 2014.....Christmas Tree Festival
and Open House at the Lockkeeper’s House**