

# THE TOWPATH

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THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

April 2016

## ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

The Annual Dinner Meeting of the New Bremen Historic Association was held on March 21 at the Holy Redeemer Fellowship Hall.

The crowd of more than 120 people enjoyed a delicious meal featuring local favorites catered by Speedway Lanes. The meal ended with a choice of luscious desserts donated by Board Members.

After a short business meeting, Greg Parrott the speaker for the evening entertained the crowd with stories of his time in New Bremen as our history teacher. Not only did his expertise influence our students but it laid the framework for our Historic Association and we are grateful that he shared those memories with us.

The first raffle drawing of the year was then held. The lucky winners were Stan Kuenning, Carolyn Deniston and Daryl Vanderhorst. The event ended with a drawing for door prizes.



Greg Parrott with his students Craig Hoffman, Phyllis (Kramer) Rose, Myra (Schneider) Hanenkratt, Greg, Brenda (Hittepole) Utz, Janet (Gruebmeier) Eilerman, Shelly Finke, Dave Hirschfeld, Deb (Fledderjohn) Hirschfeld.



*It was a privilege spending time with Niles Harris while he was in town visiting his sister, Lynne Harris Thompson and good friends, Barbara and Kermit Freewalt. During our brief visit we laughed about growing up in a fishbowl community, reminisced about his remarkable military career and talked about what it was like navigating his way through the unexpected world of fame he now lives in. I was struck by how he has remained true to his beginnings and was warmed by his strong family relationships, especially with his father, whom he fondly calls "Pops." Now in his early 70's, his long grey beard and ponytail confirm his independent nature and his noteworthy tattoos testify to what really matters to him.*

*-JoAnne Berning Meckstroth*

## **Niles Harris ... A Home Grown Boy Living Large**

**By JoAnne Berning Meckstroth**

In the Buffalo Bar in Deadwood, South Dakota, a gregarious and fun-loving man with a funky top hat stands at the bar swapping stories as he serves up a beer and a shot. To look at him, you may see a man whose appearance belies a hard life, while the tales he tells reveals the true story. Ones of growing up in the small town of New Bremen, a young boy who by the age of ten, knew he was joining the army.



At 19, he was a paratrooper with the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne, known as "The Herd," where he barely survived a harrowing battle in Vietnam. His childhood heroes, Uncle Al and

neighbor Jack Moyer entertained Niles with their war stories, instilling in him a desire to serve his country. It was his survival amidst so much loss that set Niles to the task of living big in honor of those who could not do so.

It was in the Buffalo bar that two up and coming country singers pulled the full story out of Niles Harris. "It was early in the morning, about 7 a.m...." Niles recalls before his voice trails off. "The first blast just about wiped out our squad. It was one helluva big ambush, leaving 48 Americans and 400 North



Vietnamese dead." Hearing of his life "after" and his annual ritual of toasting those friends lost, inspired Big & Rich to write the song *8<sup>th</sup> of November*. This song put them at the top of the music charts while Niles, not looking for attention, became a household name as actor Kris Kristofferson introduced him on every country music station in America. The song lyrics begin in 1965 as Niles says goodbye to his family, Jean

and Cliff Harris and his three sisters, to fight for the Red, White and Blue. And as the lyrics claim...*He was 19 and green, with a new M-16, just doing what he had to do.*

However, Niles' story really begins in New Bremen where life was peppered with lessons to be learned. Lessons of accountability, hard work, generosity and honor. The overshadowing of the watchful eyes of not only his parents, but the ENTIRE town, kept this rascally boy pretty much on a straight-and-narrow path. Although some would say that wiggle room could be found because Niles was one of those mischievous youngsters who pushed those limits further.

Niles cannot remember a day that he didn't work in Cliff Harris' scrapyard business. As early as five years old, Niles' Pop kept him busy doing chores around the "yard." He worked alongside his Pop welding, maneuvering cranes, baling steel, cardboard and rags. The scrapyard was a gathering place on South Main Street, in the middle of town, where the locals would come to buy or sell needed junk. As he went about his chores, Niles overheard all the stories as the men shared funny and sometimes juicy and risqué gossip. He was often the recipient of some light-hearted teasing. "Now Howard Huenke was a real jokester!" said Niles, "He would laugh, stretch his arm out real fast and slap me alongside the head saying he needed to measure his arm. I never did figure out when to duck!" He did, however, learn to dodge bullets.

Niles and Pops spent many hours driving around New Bremen and neighboring towns looking to buy, sell or barter scrap metal with each stop giving opportunity for another quick visit. Because of this, most of the parents around town knew Niles, which could sometimes put a kink in his mischievous nature, at least the "not getting caught" parts. As he got older, but not quite old enough, he would drive Pop's pickup around town regularly, being sent as far away as Piqua to pick up sheet metal at the Hartzell factory. Grinning proudly, Niles claims never to have been picked up and never to have had an accident!

His mother Jean, was well known for her compassion and care for those in need. One chilly day at school Niles noticed a kid wearing a coat that suspiciously looked like his "fancy" coat. Now Niles only had 3 coats; his junkyard coat, his school coat, and his fancy coat. While he never had any idea what the "fancy" coat was for, he still wanted to know what this kid was doing in HIS coat. In true straightforward Niles fashion, he went up to the kid, asking, "What are you doing wearing my coat?" Niles was not surprised to hear that his mom saw the boy walking past their house shivering, so she called him inside and gave him a coat. Niles learned first-hand about giving and caring for others. Jean always had a hot meal for hobos passing through town and others less fortunate, even providing a small cottage in the back yard for one.





Hard, honest work was a way of life. Not only did he work for his Pop, he also had a paper route. The best part was meeting his friend at the end of their routes to swap customer stories. The Dicke Service Station was on his friend's route. Every day his friend would toss the rolled up paper somewhere in the vicinity of the station while taking a shortcut through the driveway, ringing the bell inside the station as he rode his bike over the hose. Paul, the station owner, upon hearing the "ding" would quickly scoot from under the vehicle he was

working on and run outside to gas up the customer he thought was waiting. Instead of a paying customer, he would see the back of that paperboy riding down the sidewalk. Full of frustration Dicke decided to teach this boy a lesson. As collection day rolled around, Paul was prepared. When the paperboy came by to claim his monthly delivery fee, Paul threw a handful of pennies into the air and said, "Here is your money, son, go find it. This is the same way I get my newspaper from you."

As in any town, there tends to be a place where kids gather. In New Bremen, the canal towpath was the center of activity. On snowy days, the hill behind the junkyard was filled with kids sledding on anything they could find. A big banana box from Howell's IGA was the best. When the canal froze over, it became a skating rink. On the Fourth of July, Niles and his buddies had their very own fireworks display. Their "underground" supplier, kept them in all the firecrackers, cherry bombs and roman candles they could afford. The supplier never let slip where he got the explosives, but as long as they had the cash, the night sky burst with rainbow colors and loud blasts of their own making. Niles grins, "I figure our 'back-alley agent' made a killing on those annual sales."

Niles, always looking for an adventure, occasionally played hooky from school, reporting it was not at all as Mark Twain portrayed. Instead of a carefree afternoon floating down the Mississippi River on a homemade raft, he and a couple classmates hid under the damp, muddy canal bridge. Odds were that it was only a matter of time before someone in town called them out of hiding. "Someone was always watching and telling," remarks Niles.

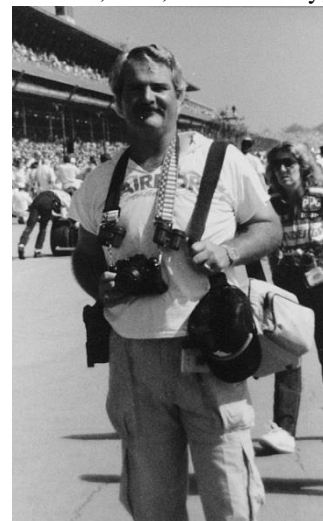
Sometimes Niles antics required a stronger response, like the dreaded Mayor's Court. Niles blames his friend, claiming he talked him and another friend into breaking windows out of the old, vacated elementary school on South Franklin Street. He convinced them no one would mind, since the school was going to be torn down anyways. Niles said, "The sound of shattering glass was pretty sweet until someone ratted on us." When the three boys entered the ominous makeshift courtroom, Mayor Lloyd Laut lined the guilty in a row, and staring from one to the other, gave them a stern warning to never cross his threshold again.

He never returned to Mayor's Court. But Niles admits he had a wild streak in his teen years and ran around with some hell raisers and hoodlum types (you know who you are). When itching for trouble, they headed to Rabbit Town, an area in St.

Marys known as the place to go if you wanted a good fist fight. News of rumbling in the streets got back to the local police chief. When Molly Wehrman confronted Niles of wrongdoing the first thing his Pop would say is, "When did it happen, because if it was during the day, Niles didn't do it, he was working for me at the junk yard." If it was after work hours all bets were off. Reminiscing, Niles ponders for a moment and smiles, "You know, for all the trouble we got into, we all turned out pretty good!"

Racing was a huge part of Niles' life. He and Pops worked the tracks at the New Bremen speedway and despite the distance, they rarely missed the Bump and Carburetion Days in Indianapolis. "Going to Indy was a really big ordeal," recalls Niles. "Since there were no concessions, we had to bring our own food and drinks." Meeting up with other New Bremen friends at the bus stop in downtown Indianapolis, they jostled the heavy Coca Cola coolers filled with sandwiches, soda pop and beer onto the city bus that would then take them to the race track. Niles laughs, "One time someone dropped a whole jar of mustard on the bus and the guy behind him stepped right into the middle of the sticky yellow mire." Kicking his foot backwards, he nailed the guy behind him, who, unfortunately, spent the day with a bright yellow streak of slime down the front of his shirt, smelling like a mustard and bologna sandwich.

Unsurprisingly, Niles had access to places at the Indy track most spectators never saw. It all started on Veteran's Day with a race special, allowing free entrance into the pit to any military man in full uniform. Racer, Danny Ongais, also known as "Pedal to the Metal" saw his airborne patch and called him into his garage. Niles said, "Since he was a former paratrooper, we hit it right off, and Danny badged me up as part of the safety crew." Then, Ron Burton, the designer of the Indy 500 programs, saw a Pentax camera slung over his shoulder and badged him up as an amateur photographer. With safety and filming badges, he could go anywhere. Niles was also a racing consultant for World Wide Sports, guiding professional photographers (who knew nothing about racing) on what specific things to film. "It was quite an experience," remarks Niles.



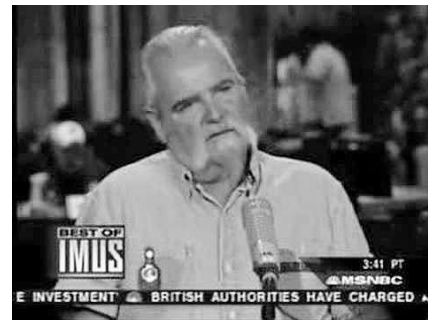
The words "New Bremen Speedway" connected him with some of the best racing networks in the United States. Niles smiles and says, "All I had to say is New Bremen Speedway and I was in." When he talked about preparing the dirt track and pushing the sprint cars with Pop's pickup, they were all ears. Invariably, the drivers would mention the good eats at the New Bremen Lions Club chicken fry. "Of course," Niles jokingly says, "I never told them the coleslaw was made in my bug infested backyard by hairy armed, cigarette smoking Lion's Club members and when those tiny particles landed in the slaw, the man in charge just shrugged figuring the extra protein was good for them."

While traveling internationally, he also visited the major European tracks and had a chance to meet Princess Grace Kelly and her husband, the Prince of Monte Carlo. "She was as nice as she was pretty," remarks Niles.

After military retirement, Niles spent a number of years managing bars at the International Airport in Atlanta. Managing a business in Atlanta was a big culture shock for a man who was all about honor and respect. He now faced dishonest and unscrupulous types who dealt with kickbacks and other seedy activities. Niles said, "I just couldn't line up with their way of doing business. My Pops always taught me to be honest and to keep others honest as well." He often heard the story of a farmer coming to Granddad Bessel's scrapyard to sell some rags and paper. The bag was lifted onto the scale and the farmer was paid by the pound. After the farmer left, big rocks were found in the bottom of the bag. Granddad sat those rocks beside the scale and waited. Several years passed until one day the farmer returned to buy some scrap metal and Granddad pointedly placed the big rocks onto the scales along with the scrap metal. Without addressing the farmer and his earlier misdeed, a silent message of expected honesty and integrity was made.

Niles shakes his head and remarks, "It has been a wild, amazing ride." Since the *8<sup>th</sup> of November* song became popular, he has become good friends with people like Kris Kristofferson, Big & Rich and the famous wildlife artist and

through the help of music stars Lynyrd Skynyrd and Big & Rich, Niles and others. With a big grin on his face, he remarks, "It was a fantastic day of honoring the vets and in one day, we raised \$600,000 with \$450,000 going towards the memorial."



In spite of his sudden and unexpected fame, Niles has remained a true patriot, never forgetting his beginnings. Being interviewed by talk show hosts Lester Holt, Don Imus of MSNBC and many others, Niles often commented, "I came from a small, mid-western town, with only 26 kids in my graduating class and one stoplight. We were proud of our country. We didn't wait to be drafted, we joined up."

So many stories...so many memories. All combined to mold Niles Harris into the man, who would eventually become the subject of a song documenting the courage that he and his buddies showed as they fought and many died, on the *8<sup>th</sup> of November*. Yes, a wild ride indeed.

**For further information about Niles, type his name into your internet server and enjoy the videos, stories and an excellent 51 minute documentary of the infamous battle on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, 1965.**



#### Niles with Big & Rich, Country Music Singers

patriot Craig Bone. Countless veterans have called and written him just to talk... authors contacting him to write his story and numerous fundraisers wanting him to help them raise money for their cause. Laughing, Niles says, "And another highlight was all the Hollywood-type parties where I would come hungry and leave full." With buffet tables laden with delicacies, he

unashamedly lined those tiny plates of delicious food up his arm, often going back for more. Niles never got the etiquette memo that said eating light was the established behavior at these parties. Instead he ate like he was a starving artist.

One of his most gratifying efforts was being a part of a fundraising rally to help build the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Division Memorial in Ft. Benning, Georgia. This was made possible



#### Niles and his classmates celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their high school graduation in 2013.



50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, CLASS OF '63, NEW BREMEN HIGH SCHOOL, AUGUST 10, 2013  
Top Row: Nancy Brockman Conrad, Barbara Wehmeyer Moeller, Linda Rempe McDermitt, Suzanne Luedeke Broyles, Diann Heitkamp Bomhorst, Niles Harris, Harold Suchland, Lavern Wente  
Middle Row: Carole Warner Eversman Laveen, Barbara Bering Freewalt, Sarah Shaffer Belton, Julia Grothaus Zebe, Kathy Topp, Barbara Mousa Gebert, Danny Shroyer, Larry Heil  
Front Row: Max Fledderjohann, Frank Richey, Jim Dicke II, Nick Grilliot, Roger Bomhorst, Bill Dicke

## Cats and Tin Cans

*New Bremen Sun*, June 25, 1920

A gentleman stepped into the SUN office, Tuesday forenoon and accosted the writer with this statement: "Fred Tangeman is as tenderhearted as he is long." Upon inquiry as to the cause that led him to that statement he told the following story:

Coming down to work, early Tuesday morning, Fred Tangeman, efficient lineman with the Telephone Company, spied a cat with a salmon can slipped over its head, more than a la Happy Hooligan, and noting its vain efforts to extricate itself from a state in which the poor animal would have sooner or later met its death, Fred drafted a willing passerby into service for the purpose of effecting a separation between cat and can. His own coat served as a shield against possible scratches or bites from the frightened feline, and by means of a pair of tinner's snips the can was removed from the animal's head. No sooner was the cat liberated than she started on regular Chevrolet time down Monroe Street, seeking shelter at her regular place of abode.

Upon further investigation it was found that the can had become temporary refuge of a young rat about one fourth grown, and this had proven the temptation for Mrs. Feline to force her head into a place from whence she found it impossible to extricate herself without foreign aid. The relater then requested the SUN to make mention of the fact if people would bend back the top of an empty can before throwing it into the rubbish barrel, accidents like the one of Tuesday morning could scarcely happen. The operation above referred to was performed in Mrs. Stone's front yard, on Main Street, and was witnessed by a small group of on-lookers, Cashier G. A. Kunning of the First City Bank having been the willing assistant in successfully carrying out the humanitarian process.

### More About Cats & Tin Cans...from Gen

The hero of this story was the son of Herman Heinrich and Mary Sophie (Landwehr) Tangeman. He was born in 1886. He had a younger brother Oscar and a sister Gertrude Tangeman Prueter. Fred married Amanda Mueller in 1917 and they had one son, Verley. For 23 years Fred worked for the New Bremen Telephone Company. Then in 1936 while working as a lineman he suffered severe, debilitating injuries when the pole he was climbing broke. He had fractures and internal injuries and was in the hospital for many weeks and was not able to return to his work. Fred never regained his health but was able to drive Walter Thompson's freight truck a few hours each day.

In 1940 Fred and Amanda purchased the house and property at 235 N. Main Street (The Pape House Museum). Another unfortunate accident in 1947 while

loading freight caused his death. Amanda remained in the family home until 1967.

**Happy Hooligan carved by Herman Lietz in the early 1900s**

Another fascination about this story is the use of terms that our younger generations may not understand. For example he refers to the distressed cat as "more than a la Happy Hooligan." From 1900 to 1932, the Happy Hooligan comic strip was very popular and ran in newspapers. It depicted a well-meaning hobo who encountered a lot of misfortune and bad luck but he never lost his smile and good nature. So the writer of this story is saying that this poor cat had encountered bad fortune but was not smiling like Happy Hooligan, the comic strip character, would have been.

Once released from its dilemma, the cat made "Chevrolet time" down Monroe Street. This phrase refers to the popularity of the Chevrolet automobile at that time. Louis Chevrolet was focused on building a lightweight, fast 4-cylinder car and on Memorial Day in 1920, his Chevrolet won the Indianapolis 500 averaging almost 100 mph.



The story teller then adds some advice to prevent this dilemma from happening again. Remember that this was in the days of rubbish barrels, burn barrels, barns with rats and cats and dogs seeking adventure and mischief in the garbage. This was before the days of recycling and plastic garbage bags. Try to remember the last time that you encountered a rat in the rubbish.

As I read this article about a kind man helping a frightened cat almost 100 years ago, I tried to remember when I had read such a positive story in the recent news.



## IT ALL BEGAN WITH A LITTLE GIRL NAMED ALICE

Walt Disney began his career in the motion picture industry in the 1920's during the silent picture era. His first venture into silent films was the production of a series of short comedies starring a little girl named Alice. The character of Alice was played by a live child actress who had comedy adventures in a cartoon world.

### Lois Hardwick with Walt Disney

It was the success of these Alice comedies that allowed him to expand his business into the Walt Disney Studio in Los Angeles. By the end of the 1920s, when talking pictures became popular, Disney had the first major studio designed specifically for sound animation and it later became home to all the classic Disney characters including Mickey Mouse. So the Disney Empire began with the popularity of a little girl named Alice.

Who was the child actress who played Alice? During the seven years the comedies were filmed, Alice was played by three girls with last being 10 year old Lois Ann Hardwick who starred in "Alice the Whaler" in 1927.

### Agnes (Langhorst) Hardwick & Daughter Lois

Lois was the daughter of Agnes (Langhorst) Hardwick and the granddaughter of Edward and Anna (Schulenberg) Langhorst of New Bremen.

Lois not only starred in "Alice the Whaler" for Disney, she went on to act in Buster Brown comedies as Mary Jane.

After her work in movies Lois married and moved to Chicago. Lois Hardwick Minervini was buried in New Bremen's German Protestant Cemetery after her death in Chicago in 1968.



### LOIS HARDWICK SIGNS NEW MOVIE CONTRACT

New Bremen Girl To Be Starred In  
"Buster Brown" Comedies  
[N.B. Sun - 6/14/1928]

While the path to stardom in the movies is beset with almost insurmountable obstacles which try the patience and artistic temperament of older actors and actresses working in front of the klieg lights, Lois Hardwick, a former New Bremen girl, has found it comparatively easy to emerge from obscurity to a place of prominence in the Hollywood movie colony. She is the 11-year old daughter of Mrs. Agnes Hardwick, and a granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Langhorst, New Bremen.

Lois first was heard of in the movies when she played in "Alice" comedies for Winkler Productions, and also has worked in comedies turned out at the Hal Roach studios.

Her latest contract is with Stern Brothers, producers of "Buster Brown" comedies, as announced in the appended article taken from the June 9th issue of the Universal Weekly.

"It is in the "Buster Brown" comedies that the Stern Brothers believe they have the most fortunate array of new talent. In the first place there is a Mary Jane, selected from a field of 500 applicants. She is little Lois Hardwick, one of the screen's brightest youngsters."

"She will be remembered as Alice in the "Alice" comedies of last year. She also played in a number of features, among them "Seventh Heaven," "The Enemy," "The Crowd," and "Lilac Time."

**Lois Hardwick, daughter of Stanley & Agnes (Langhorst) Hardwick starred as "Mary Jane" in 26 Buster Brown comedies in Hollywood.**

Note: Lucille Francis, Editor of *The Towpath* from 1996-2011, also wrote about Lois Hardwick in the April 2001 issue of *The Towpath*.

## HONORING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Since our beginning in 1973 we are fortunate to have people willing to give of their time, talents and money to make the NBHA grow and prosper. Our organization has no paid positions so all that has been accomplished has been done by volunteers.

In addition to serving on the governing board, trustees and appointed members volunteer extra time to projects such as the maintenance of our museums. Their hours of work on the interior and exterior of both museums have saved many dollars and allowed donated funds to be used for more needed specialized repairs. Over the years their work at the museums and other NBHA events made them our ambassadors to the community and visitors.

These people have volunteered their time and talents to our organization. Trustees make up the governing board and from their ranks come our president and other officers. Our trustees serve a term of 3 years and can be re-elected.

### 1973-2016

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We are grateful to all our volunteers and hope no one has been overlooked. If you know of any additional names please let us know and we will add them to our list.



The committee that organized the tables and desserts for the Annual Dinner Meeting on March 21 represents just one example of a project accomplished by our volunteers.

From left: Diane Paul, Max Fledderjohann, Genevieve Conradi, Larry Dicke, Judy Meckstroth, Dennis Dicke, Dave Maurer.



## Biography of Reverend Herbert A. Dickman

Herbert August Dickman was born August 5, 1878, in New Bremen, Auglaize County, Ohio. He was the youngest son in a family of 10 children (Heinrich Friedrich 1857-1911; Caroline Marie 1859-1926; Christian Johann 1861-1943; Julius Bernhart 1862-1941; Wilhelm Ludwig 1866-1868; Gustav Friedrich 1867-1926; Theodor 1870-1956; Rosina Elise 1874-1963; Harry Friedrich 1876-1878; and Herbert August 1878-1958) of Hermann Heinrich (1836-1889) and Henrietta nee Meier Dickmann (1837-1903).

Herbert's early training for life was received in the public school of New Bremen. Upon finishing the eighth grade (probably in 1892 or 1893) he decided to dedicate his life to the teaching profession. In those days age and college education were of little importance in securing a teaching position in the public schools. He traveled to the county seat (Wapakoneta – the exact date is unknown but is presumed to be 1893 or 1894, when he was 15 or 16 years old). He was a frail, but studious child and a voracious reader. It was his intent to acquire a temporary teaching certificate by passing a minimal requirement test because of his age. Instead of the minimal test, he passed the regular certificate qualification test and became a full-fledged teacher at the young age of 15 or 16.

He assumed a teaching position in the one-room school which he had attended. The exact year is uncertain (probably 1895), but suddenly he became violently ill with what was probably acute appendicitis. His life was in serious danger. The attending physician, a Dr. Stone, the New Bremen physician at the time, held vigil as long as possible but finally announced that, if the fever did not break by morning, it would be necessary for him to operate. The kitchen table was prepared and the crude instruments of the time were boiled and laid out aside the table. In the 1890's, surgery was tantamount to a death sentence. Herbert, though deathly ill, was aware of his plight and vowed that if the Lord would spare his life, he would devote the rest of it to Him. That night the fever broke and by morning the pain had subsided and it was obvious that he had passed the crisis. True to his word, he sought to enter the ministry.

His early church training had been at St. Paul's Church, originally called the German

Evangelical Lutheran Church. Around 1845 the church left the formal synod and became a free church, retaining its strong Lutheran leanings. In order for him to become a pastor it was necessary that he attend seminary, which meant a catching up on his formal education that ended with the eighth grade. He, therefore, entered Fort Wayne (Indiana) Academy, a Lutheran preparatory school. However, his stay in Fort Wayne was brief. He was of frail body and health and simply could not take the intense hazing administered by the students at the Academy. He returned to New Bremen after only a week, perhaps two.

As Herbert was preparing to enter the ministry, he sought the advice of his pastor, Reverend F. W. Bertram. Bertram was a liberal in his theology and his thinking and strongly encouraged the young Herbert to continue his education, not in the old Lutheran tradition but to take a more modern, up-to-date approach. Under



Bertram's influence, in 1896 Herbert enrolled in the Senior Preparatory Department of Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio. Hiram College had been founded by the Disciples of Christ in 1850 as the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute. It received its collegiate charter and changed its name to Hiram College in 1867. Herbert did not enroll in the actual college after completing the preparatory work in 1897 but instead, again upon the advice of Rev. Bertram, entered Meadville Theological Seminary, Meadville, Pennsylvania. Meadville taught anything but the traditional Lutheran (Protestant) theology that he had grown up with. Meadville was a Unitarian school, which has since

been absorbed by and become a part of the University of Chicago Theological Schools.

Herbert attended Meadville for four years and graduated June 1, 1901. During some of his years at the Pennsylvania school, his mother, Henrietta, moved to Meadville and provided him with home-like surroundings while in college. After all, the rest of the children were on their own and Gustav was running the New Bremen farm. So she seized the opportunity to provide the most conducive atmosphere for her youngest son as he undertook his studies for the ministry. Even before graduation he had already received a call to the pastorate of the St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church at Pomeroy, Ohio.

He was ordained into the Christian ministry on June 9, 1901, in St. Paul's Church in New Bremen. On the following Wednesday, June 12, he was united in marriage



with Miss Lillian Marie Sunderman of New Bremen, who joined him immediately in taking up the pastorate in Pomeroy. He was installed in the Pomeroy parish as pastor on June 30 by Reverend F. W. Bertram, his home pastor in New Bremen and who presided at his ordination.

Herbert's seminary training was soon tested in Pomeroy. One night a frantic father knocked on his door, imploring the pastor to come to his house where his daughter lay gravely ill. Of course, he heeded the call instantly. He began to gather his communion supplies and hitch up the horse to the wagon. Along the way he became troubled – what can he tell the child, how can he comfort the family? What hope could he possibly offer? His training in secular humanism at Meadville left him defenseless. He had no answers, just an empty feeling of helplessness. What should he say, what should he do? As he neared the house, he forgot about Meadville and reached in his bag for his Lutheran catechism. In it he found the strength that not only provided hope to the family but salvation of his ministry. He had been re-empowered by the Holy Spirit. His ministry was once again firmly founded.

Owing to continuing health problems and to the moist atmosphere at Pomeroy as the result of frequent Ohio River floods, he was advised by two physicians to seek a drier climate. Hence, he sought a church location and left in February 1902 to become the pastor of St. Mark's Evangelical Protestant Church at Clark and Freeman Streets, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Herbert served the Cincinnati parish most successfully. He was one of the most noted and respected ministers in Cincinnati. His sermons were frequently published in the city newspapers, which carried his name and talents far beyond the boundaries of Cincinnati. He served as St. Mark's pastor until November, 1903, when he was called by the St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church in Hamilton, Ohio, to succeed Reverend C. A. Herman who had recently passed away. For seven years he led a successful ministry in Hamilton. However, his conviction that a definite experience of salvation was necessary for each individual was not accepted by the entire congregation. Nevertheless, 125 of their number, mostly younger folks, supported his preaching. He reluctantly resigned in November 1910 and founded Bethel Church of Hamilton in December 1910 with these 125 supporters. The church experienced continuous growth, and he served as its pastor until his retirement in March 1948.

In June 1941 great honor was awarded him by Bob Jones College in Cleveland, Tennessee, which institution bestowed upon him the honorary degree Doctor of Divinity.

His marriage resulted in the birth of four children, 2 sons (Reuben 1902-2003 and Alvin 1907-2002) and 2 daughters (Edna 1905-1984 and Alberta 1914-1994).

Upon retirement in 1948 Herbert moved to New Bremen to assist in the care of his aging and ailing mother-in-law, Louise Sunderman. During the next 5 years he served as a supply pastor and pastored at Christ Church in New Bremen. In 1956 he moved to Winona Lake, Indiana, to "live in an intellectually stimulating environment." In 1958 he drove to Hamilton, Ohio, to speak to the church he had founded forty-eight years earlier, suffered a heart attack, and was taken to Fort Hamilton Hospital. For 10 days he appeared to improve, but died suddenly on December 14, 1958. He and his wife are buried in the German Protestant Cemetery in New Bremen.

This article has been submitted by John T. Dickman, the son of Reuben and Eleanor (Purpus) Dickman and the grandson of Rev. Herbert A. Dickman. It is actually a transcription of the handwritten autobiography that was found in the large family German Bible. The last paragraph has been added by John. The picture of Rev. Dickman was taken by Connie Dickman Laasko, John's first cousin.



**This is a picture of Reuben Dickman, 99 years old, the son of Herbert Dickman with his son John and daughter-in-law Sue at the NBHA Picnic in 2001.**

(Photo by Gen Conradi)



*Val and I enjoyed The Towpath for many years. He is now gone, but I continue to read it and enjoy the memories it brings back to me. I've been in a "writing workshop" for nine years and often write about New Bremen. In looking back, I found one I wrote seven years ago. It occurs to me you might find it appropriate for The*

*Towpath.* **Susan Schulenberg Rabe** (Geneseo, New York)

## FILLING STATION PUMPS

**By Susan Schulenberg Rabe**

The Sunoco filling station was at the corner of Main and Monroe Streets, the beginning of our downtown, and a block from our house. It was summer and I was almost six years old. I loved to look down the street about noon and wait to see my Dad coming home for lunch from downtown. His store was at the end of the block going up from the filling station.

Many days mother would see me across Franklin Street and let me walk alone to the filling station to wait for Dad. I loved going down there all by myself-past Gilberg's Funeral Home, the house where the scary couple rocked on their porch, the brick house right up to the sidewalk where the Halsema sisters had the town's telephone exchange in their living room and baked bread in their kitchen and Friemering's Furniture Store with the big glass windows that always had beds in them. Then came the open corner, the filling station pumps and downtown.

The corner was busy, had our only stoplight, with Kroger across one street and the Post Office across the one towards my Dad's store. I'd stand and watch the light change, the cars move, and sometimes see people I knew. The filling station employees kept an eye on me, I guess, with cars pulling in and out and always called to me a big "Hi, Susie." Soon they were my friends and I'd walk up to the station door to peek in to see them. Then I began following one of them to the pumps when he'd fill a car's tank. The smell was special-made me smile, feel floaty, and I liked that feeling. In time I forgot to watch for my Dad and he'd have to call me again and again so we could walk home hand-in-hand. Later that summer one of the filling station employees must have called my mother

to say they worried about my hanging around the pumps so much and thought it was not safe for me.

Mother gave me a talking-to. She said I had become a bother to the filling station employees and would now have to stop and sit on the Friemering Store steps to wait for Dad and not go any further toward the corner. I did as I was told but it wasn't as much fun. I sat and looked at my reflection in the big glass windows, when I went down to wait for Dad, which wasn't as often now.

One day that September, Mother was making me a new school dress, sewing away in our dayroom off the kitchen. She told me to play around the house so she could try on the dress from time to time. Also off the kitchen was a closed-in back porch where she kept a little four-step folding ladder. She often used it to get down her cleaning things from a ceiling-high cupboard in the kitchen and I'd sit with her on the back steps when she used "Energine" to remove spots from clothing not easy to wash. I suddenly remembered that it smelled like the gasoline pumps.

Her back was turned to me as she sewed, so I quietly carried the ladder from the porch and wedged it open between the stove and cupboard. I climbed up slowly, stood on the counter, opened the cupboard door and could just reach the Energine at the front of the third shelf. I leaned back against the cupboard, unscrewed its small lid and sniffed – yes, it was like the filling station pumps. And again I got that floaty feeling. So I took one more sniff, put the top back on, put it on the shelf and backed down to the top of the ladder from the counter. I got down one step and then just fell backwards onto the kitchen floor.

Needless to say, Energine disappeared from my life, just like the gasoline pumps and Mother gave me quite a talking-to when I came to.



**The Sunoco Filling Station on the southwest corner of Monroe & Main Streets was built in 1935. This is how the corner would have looked when Susan waited for her Dad. The station was sold to the Pure Oil Company in 1945. (See next page for more information on this corner.)**

The corner of **Monroe & Main Streets** mentioned in the preceding story is rich in New Bremen history. The buildings that have occupied this space are documented in these pictures.



**Location: The southwest corner of Monroe and Main Streets. These pictures were taken sometime before 1935.**

Dr. F. F. Fledderjohann purchased the brick house on this corner in 1910. This type of house we call a canal house. Along the sidewalk there were huge maple trees, so large and so thick they gave constant shade to the east side of the street.

After the house was demolished (1934-1935), a filling (gas) station building was built by owner George Gross of Anna. Arnold Hegemier was the manager, assisted by Elmer Kellermeyer. The station was sold to Pure Oil in 1945 and Edgar Rump and his son Ed took ownership.

In 1966 it became a Union 76 station and remained on this corner until 1990. In 1990, Ed Rump, Sr. & Ed Rump, Jr. built a new station on the southeast corner of Route 66 & Amsterdam Road.

The NBHS Class of 1965 visited Rump's Service Station in the school year of 1953-1954 when they were in the first grade. Edgar and Eddie Rump

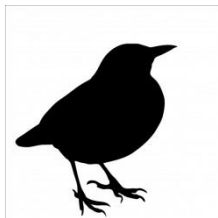
welcomed the children. The teachers were Dorothy (Geib) Harlamert and Barbara (Poppe) Block.



Beverly (Widau) Fledderjohann submitted the pictures given to her by Mike & Rosie Shelby. Beverly, Mike and Rosie are all members of the Class of 1965. Thank you for sharing the pictures!



**This is how the southwest corner of Monroe & Main Streets looks today.**



## BLACK BIRDS

### And the City Park – Have Become a Subject of Discussion

*(The New Bremen Sun, August 12, 1904)*

The blackbirds have usurped the city park. That is something very unusual when it is taken into consideration that within a half of a mile on every side of the town there are large and beautiful natural groves which would make excellent roosting places for the birds. But they have selected the park, and in such numbers that people have actually begun to think about the matter seriously, for though the park is a public place it is doubtful in many people's minds whether birds may there enjoy the same privileges as the taxpaying citizens of the town.

They certainly do, but then the feathered guests ought to be governed by the same laws of decorum as the people. But here is where comes the "rub." In the first place do they on account of their numbers create untold noise and confusion in the neighborhood of the park every evening when then they arrive and every morning early when they awake from their slumbers and rouse themselves and each other for another day of action. To that, however, the people do not object much, for to many ears that is music as certainly the Maker had intended it to be.

But it is not safe to sit in the park any more for reasons that must be obvious to everyone. Of course, the seats might be cleaned every day, and yet it would be impossible to occupy them after the birds arrive in the evening. That is the time when the park is mostly in demand, and therefore the matter has become serious.

Now mediation has arrived at that state where the consideration of ways and means comes in, and many and prolonged have been the conclaves among the young men of the town as to the best and quickest method of either causing the blackbirds to hunt up another roost or exterminating the race altogether, for it must be remembered that the parlor is a warm place these summer evenings and the front porch is in great demand by the other members of the family. So the park is the only recourse left.

Suggestions have been many and varied, but the ideas seem to have almost centered on two plans, one of which will undoubtedly be adopted. The one is that the entire population turn out some evening and with rocks and sticks convince the birds that they are in the wrong place.

But the other is a very serious plan which is also very questionable in its propriety from a moral as well as a legal point of view, and that is to chase them with shotguns. There might be a shadow of an excuse for this method of procedure if all other methods had failed, but as long as every other means has not been exhausted this method would certainly be unjust, not only because the blackbird is on the protected list nor because the city laws forbid shooting within the corporate limits, but because the birds innocently pursue a natural inclination.

They are not doing any serious harm, but only causing some people a little inconvenience. Do not shoot the birds on such little provocation.

City Park in  
the early 1900s.  
The park was  
located across the  
street from St.  
Paul Church and  
behind the Post  
Office.



## NEW BREMEN ORDINANCES

June 18, 1858

1. Any person or persons who ride on horseback on the sidewalks of the town of New Bremen shall be fined in a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00 for every offence.
2. For every horse, ass, or mule which is hitched up in such a manner as to stand on the sidewalk, the temporary owner or owners shall be fined in a sum not exceeding \$1.00 nor less than 25 cents.
3. Any person or persons who shoot with a gun or pistol within the limits of the corporation shall be fined for every such offence in a sum not exceeding \$1.00 nor less than 25 cents.
4. Any person or persons who conduct themselves in such a noisy manner in the streets of the town as to disturb the peace thereof, shall for every offence be fined in a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00.
5. Any person or persons who are dragging heavy timber or sawlogs by horses or oxen along the main street, shall for every such offence be fined in a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00.
6. Any tavern or grocery keeper in the town of New Bremen who holds a ball or dancing party without having previously applied to the Mayor for license thereof and have the same granted to him shall be fined for every offence in a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00.
7. Any owner or owners of lots in the town of New Bremen, who neglect to keep clean the street gutters before their lots, shall be fined in the sum of 50 cents for every such neglect.
8. Resolved that a tax of 25 cents be levied on every dog and \$1.50 on every bitch within the corporation limits.
9. Resolved that it is the duty of the Mayor and Marshal to strictly enforce the above ordinances.
10. Resolved that any person or person who ride or drive a horse or horses in a gallop in the streets of the town of New Bremen shall be fined in a sum not exceeding \$5.00 nor less than \$1.00 for every offence.
11. Resolved that any person or persons who fight in the streets or within the corporation of the town shall be fined in a sum not exceeding \$50.00 nor less than \$3.00.
12. Resolved that all fines shall be paid into the Treasury of the town.



## School Days, School Days, Good Old Happy School Days in New Bremen



**Top Row, left to right: Annabelle Brown, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher; Edgar Schroeder; Arthur Barth; Orie Cron; Carl Wehmeyer; Irvin Fark; Todd Taylor; Elmer Ende. Second row from top: Romey Gast; Earl Solms; Albert Meyer; Unknown; Leo Conradi; \_\_\_ Pape; Ben Laut, drummer; W. T. Trump, Superintendent. Third Row: Elizabeth Halsema; Grace Boesel; Ada Solms; Frieda Dierker; Unknown; Hilda Kellermeyer; Anna Rempe; Maggie Ziegenbusch. Bottom Row: Clara Luebckeman; Helen Heil; Dorothy Boesel; Myrtle Kunning; Flora Mohrman; Oscar Schneider; William Woehler; Robert Weinberg.**

**(Photograph taken in school year 1902-3.)**

Here is a photograph that will delight the heart of almost anyone, especially those still living who were in this fourth grade class of Miss Annabelle Brown, in the old Central school building, on the first floor in the southwest corner.

What makes this photograph so interesting is that with one or two exceptions I have the name of each pupil. For some unaccountable reason, I am not in this picture, although I was in this same class. Surely, I was home on account of some illness; otherwise, I cannot understand why I was not in the group. I got the photo from Mrs. Elmer Ende, and with the help of Clara Luebckeman (Mrs. Elmer Kellermeyer, Celina), who visited with us on a Sunday afternoon, we were able to identify each one except where I have made note with a question mark. Except for two girls whose faces are partially blocked, the photographer made an excellent picture. And what a drummer boy we had standing beside our superintendent! Later on, we marched in to our classes by the sound of a triangle.

Miss Brown was a strict disciplinarian; she kept a rubber hose in her desk which she applied quite often on

the unruly boys, and to this group I was no exception, as I well remember. I recall once that she threw a book across the room at one of the pupils.

The charm of such a photograph, after all the years that have passed by, and of those who have passed away is one of the heartfelt considerations that come to one as we grow older. It seems as only yesterday we were still playing on the old school-ground during the recess period. Not a half dozen of these pupils are still living; but how well we remember all those who have passed away. Not all continued on through high school; and those that graduated were in the class of 1910.

-Ralph May (1892-1981)

### WHO WAS RALPH MAY?

He was New Bremen's well known historian. Ralph was raised in New Bremen by his grandmother Elise Schroeder in her house on Vogelsang Street (now called Plum Street). He was a graduate of NBHS Class of 1910. His love of his home town and the preservation of its history was shown in the articles he wrote, such as the one on this page.

His articles were compiled into a book entitled "Ralph May Remembers" and published by the NBHA. This book with its many pictures has become a treasure of information on early New Bremen.



**Ralph & Christine May**

Here is an excerpt from one of his articles entitled "At Home for the Alumni":

*...I like to walk the streets which I knew so well in my youth. And how well kept they are and how tidy and trim are all the homes. Going up Vogelsang Street (Plum Street) and crossing the canal bridge, I thought about the wonderful playground of Vogelsang's field (Komminsk Legacy Park) with the creek running through it. It was all grass and a lovely hillside sloping down to the creek. The creek meandered through the field and in the spring was the source of some of our purest pleasures. And in the winter it was a safe place to slide before the canal was tightly frozen over....*

We hope that as the time for family and class reunions come, our readers will preserve their history by sending us stories and photos (with as many names as you have) for publication.

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



## LETTERS

Thank you so much for sending *The Towpath* with the article about Catherine Schroeder Graf. She was always one of my favorite relatives growing up! **Carol Cook (Friendswood, Texas)**

**Editors: Genevieve Conradi**

**Joyce Ruedeusch**

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**Genevieve Conradi**, Historian's Scrapbook...419-629-2764

We got a call from **Leota "Otie" (Fark) Busse** saying she enjoyed the article about her classmate Catherine Schroeder Graff. Otie said the article and especially the high school pictures brought back many happy memories. She thought working with her classmates to publish the *Mirage* of 1940 was one of the highlights of their senior year. We appreciate Otie sharing her thoughts with us.

...I'm Daniel Johns, married to Ruth Block, who is in a nursing home. She has dementia. I visit three times weekly and feed her lunch which allows me to check her swallowing. Ruth is 85. I read *The Towpath* from cover to cover for sheer enjoyment. Thank you. Please accept a donation to keep it coming. **Daniel Johns (Del City, Oklahoma)**

Dear Members: It has been 77 years ago that I graduated from New Bremen High School. The last time we celebrated was in September 2014. Since then three members have died. The only ones left are John Dicke, Jim Moeller and myself, Betty Waterman McGowan.

The minute I receive *The Towpath*, I have to sit down and read it cover to cover. It brings back many happy times. Keep up the good work. Enclosed is a donation to a wonderful group of people. **Betty Waterman McGowan, Class of 1939 (Phoenix, Arizona)**

...I really enjoy reading every issue of *The Towpath* and just discovered the Facebook site. Now I can really keep up. **Judy Mueller Jones (Oviedo, Florida)**

Enclosed is a year's membership for myself to *The Towpath*. I so much enjoy a reminiscence of my earlier years and updating of people and the community in which I grew up. Please add me to the list of members. **Robert Weinberg (Findlay, Ohio)**

Enjoy *The Towpath*. Think of New Bremen each day. Born there 7-23-1929. The Pape House was there when Mrs. Fark lived there. Always had our families for great meals and great visit...**Richard Huckriede (Pratt, Kansas)**

**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)

## LETTERS, Continued

After reading the article about Candy Memories I thought about the penny candy store in my home town. The town of Edison, Ohio was and still is a town of about 500 to 700 people. Oscar was a good old boy who owned and operated Oscar's Candy Store. Oscar loved the Cleveland Indians and Cincinnati Reds. Oscar had to hear all of the details about our Little Baseball games and he always had a few stories of his own. For a quarter you would get a full bag of candy and Oscar never counted out the candy one at a time, he counted in handfulls. My favorite penny candy was half inch square taffy wrapped in paper and called Kits. My favorite candy bars were Oh Henrys and Signets. Keep up the good work. **Denny Burnell (New Bremen, OH)**

I enjoy the many articles in the magazine. Very good work...**David Heinfeldt (Watkinsville, GA)**

## NBHA MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### DONATIONS THIS QUARTER

Jack & Beckie Dicke, Stanley & Dorothy Hirschfeld, Edward & Rosalind Ekermeier, Barb Ziegenbusch, Duane Heinfeld, Daniel & Ruth Johns, Betty McGowan, William & Cynthia Young, Mary Ann Seyfried Clemmons, Dick Falkner, Franz & Elizabeth Sauerland, John Pape, TLC League, Roberta & Elmer Halker, Jerry & Sue Maxson.

### Items Recently Donated to the Museum

Gast Construction Co. bottle opener, 1949 New Bremen Telephone Directory by **John Pape**, Teacher's Plan Book that belonged to Lloyd (Pete) Blanke by **Joyce Ruedebusch**.

### NEW MEMBERS

Robert Bernhold  
Kurt & Angela Dammeyer  
Brian & Susan Toomey  
Robert & Shirley Weinberg  
Randy McCune  
Kendra Covert  
Robert & Kathleen Boykin  
Robert & Janet Eilerman  
Nick & Diane Grilliot  
Robert & Linda Rump

### NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Robert Bernhold  
Bernard Nedderman  
James & Judith Waesch

## MEMBER DEATHS REPORTED THIS QUARTER

12/6/2015 **Dr. Victor Stegall (CM)**

1/23/2016 **Beverly Wilt (LM)**

1/23/2016 **Selma Geib**

1/29/2016 **Bernard Nedderman (LM)**

1/29/2016 **Florene Bushman**

(CM=Charter Member LM=Life Member)

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

**IN MEMORY OF BERNARD NEDDERMAN** by Nancy Bishop, Jean Carr, Virginia Yahl, John & Joyce Gilberg and others.

**IN MEMORY OF WEBSTER & SELMA GEIB** by

Robert & Kathleen Boykin

**IN MEMORY OF SELMA GEIB** by Virginia Shaw, Melvin & Barbara Settler, John & Merrily Hoffman.

## NBHA RAFFLE WINNERS 2016

**January-** \$100.00 to **James Stephens (NB)**, \$75.00 to **Marlene Hittepole (NB)**, \$50.00 to **Thomas Phlipot (NB)**.

**February-** \$100.00 to **Tom Fledderjohann (St. Marys)**, \$75.00 to **Amanda Schweissguth (Marthasville, MO)**, \$50.00 to **Kay Shapiro (Cullowhee, NC)**.

**March-** \$100.00 to **Daryl Vanderhorst (NB)**, \$75.00 to **Carolyn Deniston (Westerville, OH)**, \$50.00 to **Stan Kuenning (NB)**.

Board Members especially thank those winners who have chosen to increase the profits by returning their winning

NBHA Financial Report for 2015

2015 Annual Report		
Balance 1-1-2015	\$	47,658.38
<b>INCOME:</b>		
Auglaize County Grant	\$	750.00
Book Sales	\$	554.70
Christmas Tree Voting	\$	-
Donations	\$	58,201.27
Historic Association Annual Dinner	\$	2,175.00
Life Members-New	\$	2,000.00
Membership Dues	\$	5,350.00
Memorials	\$	2,700.00
Raffle Income	\$	8,337.50
Total	\$	80,068.47
<b>EXPENSES:</b>		
Bonds	\$	100.00
Christmas Tree Festival	\$	242.48
Dues	\$	92.61
Historic Association Annual Dinner	\$	1,754.00
Luelleman Museum	\$	3,705.05
Insurance	\$	1,082.00
Lawn Maintenance	\$	1,031.94
Misc. Expenses	\$	262.91
Office Supplies	\$	444.39
Pape Museum	\$	5,404.28
Postage	\$	15.60
Prints	\$	500.00
Raffle	\$	3,730.01
Real Estate Taxes	\$	40.00
State Taxes	\$	30.98
Towpath Mailing	\$	788.61
Towpath Printing	\$	3,165.00
Utilities	\$	2,177.06
Total	\$	24,566.92
Balance 12-31-15	\$	103,159.93
New Bremen Foundation Investment	\$	13,267.52
Petty Cash	\$	40.00
Total	\$	116,467.45
Reporting Period: 1-1-2015 thru 12-31-2015		
Dennis Wm. Dicke - Treasurer		

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

**New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073**



**NBHA Museum – 120 N. Main St.**



**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!

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