



THE TOWPATH

Published Quarterly
January-April-July-October
THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION
January 2018

**THE NEW BREMEN CARDINALS WON THE FIRST STATE TITLE IN SCHOOL HISTORY.
GO CARDINALS!**



To the team – “Thank you” will never be enough. You gave us something we have been hungry for, for so long. Through the battles for a conference championship, through the gauntlet for a regional championship, and through the fight for a state championship – **We cheered you.**

To our coaches – The three of you were not raised in our town yet you had a complete understanding of what this town wanted and you had the drive to give it to us. You instilled greatness into that team. You will forever be Cardinals. I hope you could hear us all season long – **We cheered you.**

For anyone that has worn the Crimson and the Gold – You now have peace. Your heartbreaking defeats and your desire to bring home the gold lead us to today. The “what ifs” and “if only” don’t hurt quite as bad anymore. They still hurt, but not as bad. After that volleyball hit the floor, so did your

burdens. And when New Bremen was finally crowned as State Champs – **We cheered for you.**

For anyone who has called New Bremen “home” – Whether you could be at the game or not, your voice was heard. Your passion, spirit, and joy were felt by everyone in attendance. From all of us there – **We cheered for you.**

And to the best small school conference in the USA – The MAC. And our neighboring towns. Thank you for being such fierce competition and showing us what it takes to become champs. You all know how hard it is and we are proud to join your ranks. Your support during our struggles and your support during our success are appreciated beyond words. Finally, as State Champions - **We cheer with you!**

By Rodney “Munch” Suchland, November 11, 2017

(Picture by Diane Paul. Identification on page 16)

"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.

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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)

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NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Robert & Kathleen Boykin

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MEMBER DEATHS

9/12/2017 **Rosemary W. (Landwehr) Gerling** (LM)

9/17/2017 **Jean (Blank) Warner**

9/17/2017 **Chris Kuck** (LM)

10/4/2017 **John E. Dicke**

10/5/2017 **John A. Ahlers** (LM)

10/9/2017 **Erline (Topp) Garman** (CM)

11/2/2017 **Chris Lyda**

11/5/2017 **Catherine (Schroeder) Graf** (LM)

(CM=Charter Member LM=Life Member)

DONATIONS

Betty Quellhorst, Darlene Neuman, Nancy Brucken, Craig & Sharon Mueller, Robert & Brenda Klein, Deanna Anderson, Louise Davis, Barb Ziegenbusch

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

In Memory of Don Pape by Roger & Cheryl Pape, Scott & Darlene Pape, Mark & Charlotte Schwabero Family

2017 Monthly Raffle Winners

October - \$100 Keith May (NB), \$75 Roger Dicke (NK), \$50 Rod Brandt (NB)

November - \$100 Mary Maurer (St. Marys), \$75 Linda Dicke (NB), \$50 Kitty-Hunt Ziegenbusch

December - \$100 Richard Poppe (NB), \$75 Rod Brandt (NB), \$50 Martha May (St. Marys).

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

ITEMS RECENTLY DONATED TO MUSEUM

Columbia Graphophone, cylinders, NB yardsticks, Lock Two knife sharpener, 1880 Aug. Atlas by **Steven Schroer**; NBHS sweater letter by **Tom Braun**; Zenith (1937) radio' Kuck oil can, Lock Two advertising items, misc. items by **Roger Dicke**; NBHS class ring, Stamco items by **Lee Wissman**; Schnitzelbank, tools, scythe, shoe lasts, WWI & WWII uniforms of Carl Pape,Sr. & Carl Pape, Jr., pictures, First Natl bank bag, 1941 Prom program, WWII pamphlets by **Craig & Martha (Pape) Fowler**; 1932, 1969 (2) NBHS class rings by **Bob & Betty Dietrich, Michael & Linda Hirschfeld**.



LETTERS

My Grandmother, **Catherine Synck Gagel**, lived in the Lockkeepers House as a teenager. I took a closer look at what I could find about my grandmother

and learned that she was born June 24, 1880 in St. Sebastian and died from infection and complications of gall bladder surgery at age 56, ten years before I was born.

I'm including the two pictures that I have of her, one on her wedding day and one later on. How many years she lived in the Lockkeepers House is unknown, but she was married at 19, so I assume it was in her teenage years. The story I heard was that she was NEVER eating fish again, since she had one too many (carp?) from the



canal while she lived in the Lockkeepers House. At the time the Catholic Church required no meat to be eaten on Fridays so she would fry fish for her children but none for her. She would eat a cheese sandwich instead.

My Grandparents Michael & Catherine (Synck) Gagel

Here's a link about my grandmother's brother, Henry Synck.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HenrySynck>.

He ended up owning New Idea in Coldwater. He may have been the person who financed the purchase/startup of the Gagel Hardware store in 1917 but nothing is written down about it.

Don Gagel, NBHA Board Member

Thank you for the mention, in a recent edition of *The Towpath*, about the contribution to the New Bremen Historic Association of the Garmhausen history begun by Grace Garmhausen Murbach and more recently compiled by her daughter, our cousin, Louise Whitehurst in cooperation with Louise's son, John.

The Towpath readers might be especially interested to read about the heyday of Lock Two during the time the Garmhausen family owned the store and the grain mill. The account can be read in the copy the NBHA gave to the New Bremen Library.



Our father, W. J. Garmhausen, Garmy, along with his sisters Grace, Ora and Peg, had an interesting childhood growing up by the canal. My sister Janet, brother Charles and I, all grew up hearing Dad's many stories about Lock Two and New Bremen. What was clear was how much Garmy and his sisters loved the life and times in these two towns. The family history is worth paging through for that aspect alone!

The family was pleased to make their history available to the New Bremen Historic Association and, through them, the New Bremen Library. We hope area residents will enjoy a look back to an earlier time of life along the canal at Lock Two and New Bremen.

**Sincerely, Betsy Garmhausen Hunter
and Janet Garmhausen Bock**

Dear Joyce, Thank you for the extra October Towpaths. I enjoyed reading the latest issue very much. I've shared my Music Lessons article with daughters and grandkids.

The New Bremen music section was fun. I was one of the little kids watching the band march down Franklin Street. It didn't happen often, but we sure got excited when it did. I loved the photo of the accordion students. Lucille Topp reminds me so much of her sister Kathleen. I didn't realize they looked so much alike. Lucille and Kathleen played accordion duets together at school and church variety hours. Might they have some stories of their experiences to share in the Towpath?

I remember the coffee cakes. They were so simple and delicious. When I was very little, my mom took me and sister Emily on walks around New Bremen. I remember often stopping at a bakery where we kids usually got a slice of coffee cake (yes, they were always cut lengthwise) or a sweet roll. I believe this bakery was on Washington Street, somewhere south of the bank building. Does anyone else remember it?

Also noted two names in the list of 1920 Ohio State University students-Aaron Vogelsang and Eleanor Purpus. Aaron was my dad's cousin (my Grothaus grandmother's maiden name was Vogelsang.) Aaron became a doctor in Toledo, Ohio. I remember visiting his family at their home there in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Eleanor was John Dickman's mother and my mom Katherine's good friend. Like John, she was a good baker. I remember having wonderful sweet rolls at her house on South Franklin Street.

Thank you so much for your and Gen's work on the Towpath. You are appreciated.

Julie Grothaus Zerbe, Colorado

Hello. Our dad enjoyed reading the Towpath and especially our trip to the Pape House in 2015. Enclosed are contributions to the historical association. He was proud to be from New Bremen.

Thank you, family of Don Pape

I don't do too well on the History Mystery quizzes, but I do enjoy reading the family history segments. It must take a tremendous amount of time tracking the genealogies and the appropriate photos that match the stories. Huckster always had kind of a bad connotation in my mind, but now I know they were just vendors. Emil Conradi's narrative of the trip out West was fascinating. I hope there is another chapter coming. I often wondered why Marge (Lietz) referred to a late night snack as lunch. It's becoming clearer to me now.

You ladies keep up the good work. I am already looking forward to the next issue!

Sandra Epstein Conradi. South Carolina

Hello. I have been a subscriber to the Towpath for many years. My Grandfather, Lloyd G. Speckman (1900-1986) was in the boy scouts. There was a brief mention in the Towpath years ago about him returning from a scout trip. I think it was from the *New Bremen Sun*. The trip was sometime between 1910 and 1918. I believe he graduated from New Bremen High School in 1918.

My son has attained the rank of Eagle Scout, and I am planning his Court of Honor in October. I would love to make a display showing his family legacy of scouting, but I can't find that Towpath!

If you could find any information on Lloyd Speckman's Boy Scout participation, I would love to be able to include it in his ceremony.

Thank you ever so much!

Martha Speckman Shaffer, Georgia

Editor's Note: We sent the information to Martha and she reported that her son had a great Eagle Court of Honor.



Eagle Scout Alexander Shaffer with his parents Martha (Speckman) Shaffer and Shawn Shaffer

For some reason when I sent the e-mail the spelling was changed regarding our twins Alexi and Olivia Wilker. Wilker is the correct spelling, not Walker.

Dennis Burnell, New Bremen



The NBHS Class of '52 held their 65th class reunion at Speedway Lanes in New Bremen on Saturday, September 23rd. Front row: Dorothy (Moeller) Sunderland, Beverly (Rump) (Miller) Plattner, Louise (Lamphar) Wieggers, June (Hirschfeld) Hegemier, Peggy (Speckman) Henschen, Betty (Holdren) Quellhorst, Mary (Brueggeman) Klein. Back row: Howard Fark, David Friemering, Robert Finke, Gene Stebbins, Stanley Hirschfeld.

Those unable to attend were: Delores (Bertke) Frank, MariLou (Richey) Wuebbenhorst, Joan (Quellhorst) Klier, Jeanie (Glass) (Ganger) Rigbsby.

Deceased members are: Wayne Brady, Carolyn (Wellman) Denniston, Mary Ann (Fischbach) Egbert, Sally (Abbott) Fark, Betty Jo (Schwieterman) Gormley, Kenneth Griewe, Jean (Moeller) Hildebrand, Carl Maurer, Dr. Robert Westerheide.

(Information and picture submitted by Beverly Plattner.)

TO OUR READERS-

Thank you for taking time to give us your feedback on The Towpath.

We enjoy getting your letters, calls and article suggestions.

A huge thank you to those sharing stories.

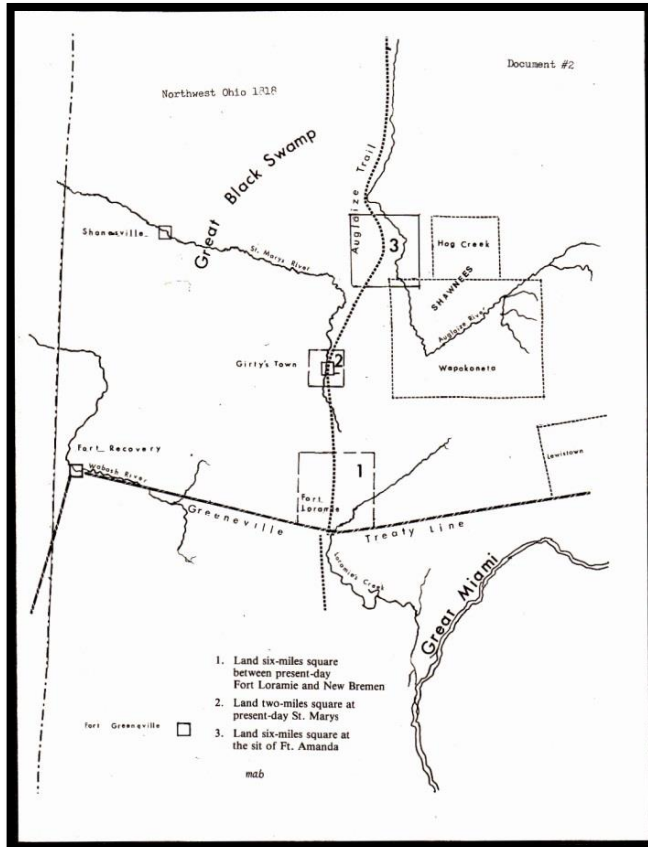
As editors we value your help so...Keep your comments coming!

Gen & Joyce

The Auglaize Trail before New Bremen

New Bremen was platted on a portage area of the old Auglaize Trail. By the time New Bremen was settled in 1833 the trail had been in use for many years. It was first used by Native Americans as they moved from one navigable water source to another. They would have covered the miles between Loramie Creek and the Saint Marys River on foot before they could again move by boat.

In the late 1700s the trail was used by the armies of General Harmar and General St. Clair during their campaigns in the Northwest Territory.



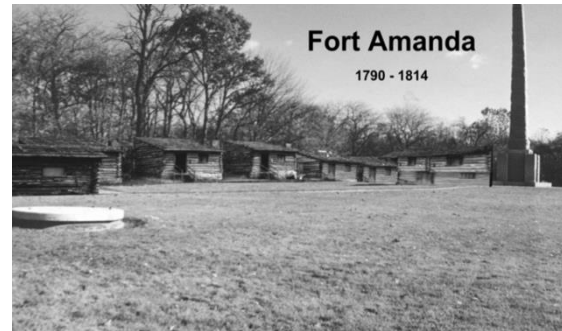
This map of Ohio in 1818 shows the location of the Auglaize Trail, the rivers, the Greenville Treaty Line, and the forts established by General Wayne. (New Bremen Sesquicentennial Book, 1983, map by Mary Ann Olding)

The third campaign known as the Northwest Territory Indian War was led by General Anthony Wayne. He recognized the importance of the Auglaize trail and was the first to build forts along the route. Fort Loramie and Fort St. Marys controlled those rivers and further north a fort was built at the head of the Auglaize River.

Troop movement between those forts followed the Auglaize Trail portage through our area. Also General Wayne built the forts to keep a supply line open as he moved northwest. He found the portage area was on level terrain usable by heavy wagons. So not only was there troop movement along the portage but it was also used by

the many wagons needed to carry supplies to the forts. After the Greenville Treaty was signed in 1795 most of these forts were abandoned.

During the term of President James Madison, the War of 1812 was declared and these forts were put into use again. The abandoned forts were enlarged and renamed. Fort St. Marys was renamed Fort Barbee while the fort at the head of the Auglaize became Fort Amanda. They were rebuilt and manned by the Kentucky militia. Some of their officers had served with General Wayne and used his idea of creating a supply line to support the army. The Auglaize Trail was again used by the militia as they came north from Kentucky.

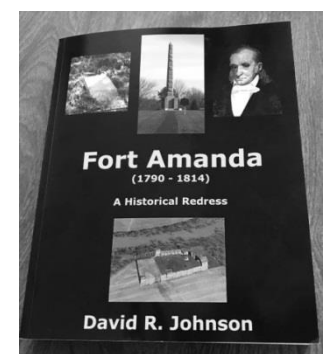


This photo has been altered to show how buildings in the fort might have been placed when the fort was in operation. From the book *Fort Amanda-A Historical Redress* by David R. Johnson.

In 1813 a company of the Ohio militia under the command of Brig. Gen. John Wingate traveled through our area from Cincinnati to Ft. Amanda. They were a replacement garrison sent to take over the fort from the Kentucky militia. Their trip of over 120 miles took 14 days in February 1813. During that march and for the rest of his time at Ft. Amanda a journal was kept by one of their officers William Schillinger. In his journal he noted travel was often slowed by water crossings but when they reached Fort Loramie and began the flat 12 miles of portage they were able to reach St. Marys in less than 1 day.

Schillinger's journal was transcribed by historian David R. Johnson and is part of his book "Fort Amanda - A Historical Redress." Johnson's research is quite detailed and is the result of many years of investigation.

The information presented here and much more is found in the 350 page book available on Amazon. It is highly recommended to our readers interested in the history of our area before the founding of New Bremen.



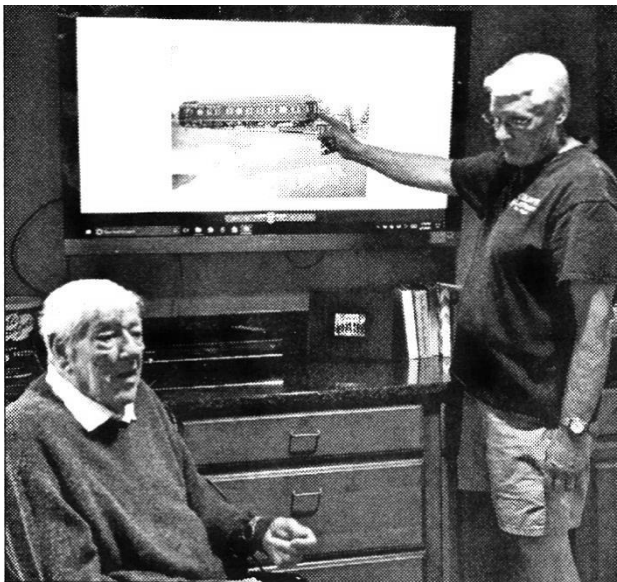
HARDWARE, HISTORY GO HAND-IN-HAND

New Bremen native shares his stories

By Art Barnes (Sidney Daily News)

Hardware and history go hand-in-hand when a New Bremen native shares stories laced with his broad sense of humor – such as polishing spittoons as the start of his career.

At 89, Stan Kuenning still works five days a week, rolling his motorized wheelchair around the True Value hardware store on State Route 66. He spoke recently to his fellow residents of Elmwood Assisted Living about “the good old days” in New Bremen.



Art Barnes | Sidney Daily News

Stan Kuenning (left) and his son Scott talk of a retired Pullman railroad car travels down Main Street with the help of a tow truck in New Bremen en route to being converted into a four-bedroom suite for visitors to Crown Equipment Corp. The Kuennings recently spoke at Elmwood Assisted Living about connections between history and the hardware business in New Bremen.

Part of his presentation was about New Bremen’s history, particularly as a cargo and passenger stop on the Miami-Erie Canal. “That’s what made New Bremen a metropolis,” said Kuenning. The village, just 23 miles east of the Indiana border, “had four and five story buildings where people stayed when they came from far away to catch a canal boat.”

He told of hog drives: “Hogs will stay together when they’re driven in a herd, but cattle or horses will stray off.” As many as 400 pigs a day would be loaded on canal boats – along with passengers – in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in the days before cars and trucks were common.

Kuenning was born in 1928, and his hardware career began when he was 11. Boys wore knee-length

“knickers” to school until the fashion change to ankle-length black slacks.

“My mother was ironing when I asked her for \$1.89 to buy some long black pants,” he said, when relating the Great Depression years. “She didn’t miss a stroke in her ironing when she said, ‘Son, I don’t have \$1.89,’ so I decided to get a job.”

His first stop was at the local hardware store, “where I asked the owner if he could hire a young boy to sweep floors or wash windows. He said, ‘Yes, you can do that every day after school, but your No. 1 job every day is to empty and polish three brass spittoons – one at the front door, one at the cashier and one at the rear door,’ ” Kuenning said.

He worked at the hardware store until he turned 18 in May 1953, as the Korean War was ending, and he was notified to get a physical to be drafted into the Army.

“They told me not to go to school or anything because they’d probably call me up in September. So I quit my job in the hardware store, when I got a call from my uncle in Miami Beach, Florida, to work at the Hollywood Beach Hotel.”

He started out mowing lawns and progressed to parking cars. “I made \$200 a month plus tips and mailed \$50 back home every other week,” he said.

In those days, most Florida hotels closed from May to September because temperatures got hot and hotels weren’t air-conditioned.

“I heard about a man from Cincinnati who needed someone to drive him home. The next morning I asked him if I could drive him to Cincinnati. He didn’t know where New Bremen was,” Kuenning said.

“It took five or six days,” Kuenning said, “because there weren’t any interstate roads back then. We had to drive through every town and village on back roads. I drove into his garage on Reading Road in Cincinnati and helped him unload his baggage.”

Then, Kuenning said, “The man asked me, ‘How are you going to get back to New Bremen?’ And I said ‘like this’ (as he gestured with his hitch-hiking thumb). So he said, ‘Nah how ‘bout I’ll buy you a train ticket to New Bremen?’ I said, ‘That would be fine, but we don’t have a train in New Bremen.’

So he said, ‘Well, Stan. Let me take you to the Greyhound station and get you a bus ticket.’ I said, I’m sorry, but we don’t have a bus station in New Bremen.’ So he gave me \$50 and agreed to me hitch-hiking, because everybody did it back then.”

Drivers also were more tolerant of hitch-hikers. “I got a ride after only two cars passed me on Route 25 and rode all the way to Piqua. Then I saw a truck marked ‘Morsey

Eggs, Minster, Ohio.’ Mayor (Frank) Morsey was driving and he knew my mom and dad, so he drove me to my front door in New Bremen, and I still had the \$50 in my pocket.”

Kuenning was not drafted into active-duty military service, but he enlisted for a six-year hitch in the Army Reserve. He rose to the rank of staff sergeant as a mortar artilleryman, attached to the Company K Reserve unit in St. Marys, which was not called to combat.

He continued his hardware career during those years, having returned to his old job at New Bremen Hardware. In 1953, he bought the Western Ohio Hardware, then the second hardware store on West Monroe Street. He cobbled together \$18,000 from his life savings, a bank loan and family borrowing.

“That was a lot of money back then,” said Kuenning. “The average man’s salary was \$25 a week. My mother-in-law said she hoped I wouldn’t get the bank loan because we wouldn’t be able to pay it back before we went on Social Security!”

Actually the loan was paid off much sooner, as Kuenning, while operating the store with his wife Dona Mae, also took over a hardware supply route through eight stores in area towns and villages.

“The True Value store in Celina was one of my customers, and I saw that their supplier’s goods were cheaper than mine, so I joined True Value,” buying into its co-op operation.

Through the years, Kuenning’s hardware business focused on “local industry and people buying light bulbs. Heck, some of them are still alive and buying from us today. That’s why I come to the store. Elmwood is a nice place, but every morning my son, Scott (owner of the True Value Store), or his wife, Linda, picks me up and brings me to the store about 9 o’clock, and I stay till 1:30, meeting people and take them to whatever they’re looking for.”

In his early hardware years, Kuenning’s work included sales to Crown Equipment Corp. He recalled, “Crown originally made temperature control vents for home furnaces.” Kuenning’s friend, Jim Dicke, and three family founders then progressed through the growing television market, manufacturing antenna rotors.

“Then Jim’s father -in-law suggested the company should build a cart that could hold a ton of merchandise and one person could move it,” Kuenning said. That proved to be the start of developing Crown lift truck-manufacturing that today employs 14,000 people with corporate offices in Germany, Australia and China. “And they’ve been good customers ever since,” Kuenning said.

As Crown grew to a multi-billion-dollar, world-wide corporation while New Bremen’s hardware business remained relatively local (the Kuenning family also owns

True Value stores in St. Henry and Wapakoneta), the friendship of Stan Kuenning and Jim Dicke didn’t wane until Dicke died, Nov. 11, 2016.

When Crown had a Dayton office in the Arcade Building, “If I was in Dayton, I’d drop into his office when I saw his car parked outside,” Kuenning reminisced. “All I had to do was stick my head in and say ‘Jim,’ and he’d say ‘Stan’ and reach into his bottom drawer for a deck of cards, and we’d each put up a quarter and play one hand of five-card stud.

One of us would walk away with 50 cents, just like the good old days,” he said with a laugh. “But the hardware business has changed dramatically in recent years,” Kuenning said.

“Dona Mae (who died in February 2015) didn’t know anything about the hardware business when we got married in 1948, but she learned the paint business, and she was good at it. We always said if we had to stay open on Sundays, we’d sell the business because we always went to church. Now today, Sunday is our biggest day!”

In a daydream moment, Kuenning said, “If I could dial the 11 numbers for a phone call to heaven and Dona Mae answered, I’d say, ‘Guess what we’re selling now. We’ve got women’s ready-to-wear clothing.’ Her reply would be, ‘You’re shi**in’ me!’”

With another anecdote, Kuenning brought his hardware memories full circle, relating, “Just a few years ago, a restaurant called The Pub opened in the building that once was New Bremen Hardware. After dinner there one night, I went to the restroom, and there was the same toilet where I washed and polished spittoons 75 years ago.”



(Photo by Dr. Sandra Conradi)

**Jim Dicke, Stan Kuenning & Dave Schwieterman
in 2014.**

Marguerite Koop Kunning (1901-1997) was born in New Bremen, the daughter of Cornelius & Emma (Huenke) Koop. Because her mother died just six weeks after her birth, Marguerite was reared in the home of Dr. Henry & Alice (Huenke) Schmidt. She graduated from NBHS in 1919. In this article, Marguerite shares her memory of growing up in New Bremen. The 2017 pictures have been added to show how the buildings look today.

PEOPLE AND PLACES IN NEW BREMEN I LIKE TO REMEMBER

By Marguerite Koop Kunning

Shall we start with the late spring day when, on my way home from school, I saw that Hoffman's Drug Store was polishing their soda fountain. How beautiful I thought the ornate marble fixtures and the tall cut-glass



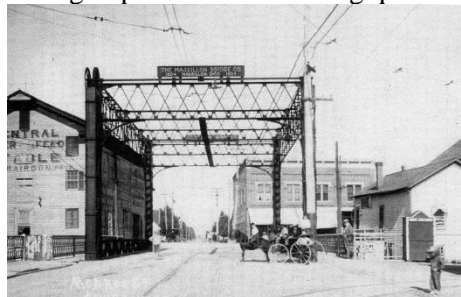
soda-straw holders were. When all was in order, one could anticipate that long awaited chocolate soda on the next Saturday evening.

The corner of Monroe & Washington Streets in the early 1900s. The Drugstore is to the left.

Mr. J. L. Hoffman, the druggist, was a kindly,

comfortable man who knew just what one needed and was sometime singing hymns to himself in the back room as he prepared it. He was also available if one should get a bug in one's eye while roller-skating.

Around the corner, going south on Washington Street, was Mrs. Haines' Millinery Store. Here I felt very much at home for her daughter was my best friend. Mrs. Haines made me feel welcome, whether to try on hats in her store or to go upstairs to their living quarters where potted



hyacinths bloomed on the windowsills even in winter.

Across the Monroe Street lift-bridge, going west about a

block, was a picture-book shop resembling those I saw in Germany years later, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Fritz. In September the tiny triangular show window had nice new pencils, white and yellow lined tablets and bright red erasers which was all one needed to be educated. The school furnished the books and the good teachers. At Christmas time there were beautiful post cards one sent to friends and in February there would be unbelievable lovely valentines. Inside the shop were shiny glass cases filled with sparkling glass dishes of candies. One looked and looked and asked, "How many of these do you get for a penny?" Mrs. Fritz, in her white starched apron, was never impatient. Both she and Mr. Fritz must have liked and understood children, though they had none of their own or I would not still remember their ready smiles and unending patience.



Schwaberow's General Store built in 1898 at the corner of Monroe & Water Streets.

Directly across the street was the fine store Henry Schwaberow had built. It was a large store which had lovely living quarters for them upstairs. I was sometimes taken there for afternoon visits and I recall the pleasure of looking out of the large windows and seeing the busy street from there. This store also had a candy counter. Mr. Schwaberow had built a step-up in front of it for the younger of us to better see his candies and to ask the same question about the penny purchase. They too were a childless couple, but everybody's children seemed to be their children. The china and glassware department was one of a kind. Mrs. Schwaberow was from Cincinnati and her excellent taste for quality combined with beauty was evident in this department. My parents shopped here and many of the keep-sakes we have today were purchased there.

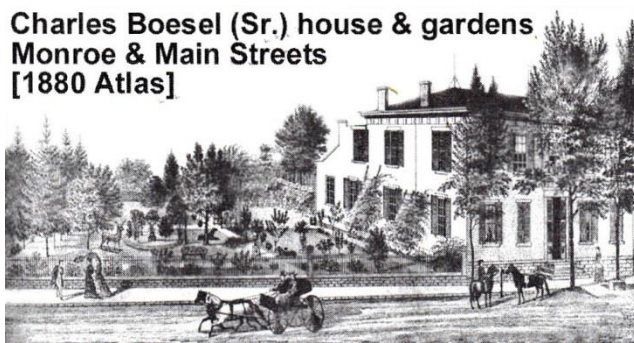
Across the street, again going west toward school, one passed the First City Bank. In fall there would sometimes be a row of very shiny perfect apples of different varieties which Mr. G. A. Kunning sometimes lined up along the narrow window ledge. This was just one of his many



outside interests while he took care of the “banking business” for many people in his friendly, competent way. He would sometimes wave to us as he saw us looking at his beautiful apples.

Boesel’s Opera House housing the First City Bank in the lower right corner.

Next to the bank there was a wrought-iron gate at the east end of a wrought-iron fence along a brick sidewalk. This fence between the bank and the first home he built in New Bremen closed in the side yard of the Charles Boesel home. It was no longer a home at the time of my remembrance but the building still had the wide porch on the east side which overlooked what had been the Boesel’s yard. That yard was still beautiful though rather unkempt. The two large crabapple trees kept blooming every spring for all of us to enjoy and there were two rather weather-worn statues of a large dog and the other an Indian Brave. The gate and yard were not for public use even in my day and I only used it when it was necessary to cut down the distance to school so I could make it there before that tardy bell rang!



**Charles Boesel (Sr.) house & gardens
Monroe & Main Streets
[1880 Atlas]**

NOW IN 2017



The drugstore built by J. L. Hoffman in 1892, was purchased by Mr. Urban J. Schwieterman in 1916. This is how it looks in 2017.



Once Schwaberow’s Store, Now Crown Offices.



Opera House. NB Coffee Shop in lower right corner

Carl Boesel owned all the land on the south side of Monroe Street from Water Street to Main Street. He built his home at the corner of Monroe & Main. His house became the city building and housed the Post Office for many years. After it was torn down other businesses were located on this corner. Today it is the location of a beautiful Crown building that is used for offices.

Mr. & Mrs. E. G. Conradi made a trip to the west coast in the summer of 1904. Mr. Conradi wrote a series of letters that were published in the New Bremen Sun so that his friends in New Bremen could follow his travels. This is the second letter of the series. Published in the New Bremen Sun, June 3, 1904.

INCIDENTS THAT WERE NOTED

And Impressions Received From Them

By a Newspaperman on Journey to the Northwest

*In the land of the Decotahs,
There the Falls of Minnehaha
Flash and gleam among the oak trees,
Laugh and leap into the valley.*

--Longfellow

In my previous communication I stated that we had reached our station in Chicago just in time on Sunday afternoon to leave at 3:00 o'clock over the C. M. & St. P. R. R. and arrive in Milwaukee at 5:15 schedule time. On account of some arrangement in the yards, however, we arrived at the station nearer to 6:00 o'clock than to 5:00.

This station gives one a good impression of the city, as before it lies an open square which has been converted to a park containing beautiful flower beds and many shade trees, giving one an idea of ease and rest which are two great component parts in the make-up of German-Bohemian Milwaukee.

Milwaukee and Chicago – what a contrast between the two cities. In the latter one finds nothing but hustle, bustle and hurry, everybody trying for dear life to make that prospective dollar slide into his own coffer, while in Milwaukee, though it contains about 300,000 inhabitants, and has possibly as many human beings to the square mile as Chicago, everybody follows his avocation with a deliberateness and calmness that is truly remarkable, especially for one who himself thinks he has become accustomed to a more strenuous life. The streets are in consequence never congested with traffic, the stores never crowded, and accidents are of rare occurrence.

Yet in proportion the writer believes that Milwaukee has more millionaires and other wealthy people to the square mile than Chicago has. At least he is called to this conclusion by the countless beautiful, yes magnificent, dwelling places erected along the lake front and along other fine avenues.



Here we really experienced what a quiet, open Sunday means. There is no closing law or custom in existence here at all. Whether one is a saloonist, a merchant, a cobbler, a tailor, or in fact anything and he desires to keep his place of business open, why he simply opens the doors and no one takes offense. Saloons, groceries, barber shops, restaurants, candy stores and drug stores were open all day, while dry goods, clothing, millinery and all other kinds of business closed at noon. The large department stores were the only ones closed altogether.

But at six in the evening nearly everything, except saloons and restaurants, close every day of the week. Then is when the older as well as the younger people spend a couple of hours in the cafes and palm gardens or at the theatre. Ladies as well as men go into the palm gardens, seat themselves around tables, drink a glass of beer or a few of beer or wine, have a social chat, and then retire. This is done generally, and no one seems to be the worse for it.

On Monday morning we found our "old" gray-haired uncle Frank T. Boesel at his office in one of the principal buildings on Grand Avenue. He immediately elected himself as our guide, and proceeded to conduct us to some of the fine government and city buildings, occasionally introducing the writer to some of his friends, who seem to number legion. He also accompanied us to the large plant of the Herold Printing Company, where the famous "Acker und Gartenbau Zeitung" is published, and where we had the pleasure of meeting Mr. H. H. Coleman, the business manager of the firm, who gave us a very courteous reception.

Mr. Boesel then gave an excellent view of the lake front along the residence district of Prospect Avenue; and here is where the impression was received that Milwaukee must have scores of millionaires and wealthy people. He also accompanied the writer to the immense plant of the Pabst Brewing Company, probably the largest brewery in the world – employing year in and year out upwards of 8,000 people. They have a guide employed whose sole duty it is to escort visitors through the plant, showing them the bottling department, the packing departments, the immense malt houses, the ponderous brewing vats, the power plant that by the way has the largest engines, flywheels and belts that the writer has seen anywhere, the storage rooms where they claim to have stored continually 40,000 barrels of beer.

The sightseeing trip is wound up in a modest little reception room where the amber fluid is tapped by the gallon and everybody; visitor or employee is welcome to all he wishes to drink. The room has little tables and

comfortable chairs where the people seat themselves and drink at their leisure. All the buildings of this and the other many breweries of Milwaukee are fine structures, but the residences of the Pabsts are simply palaces.

We were loath to leave Milwaukee because of the attractiveness of the city, but since our journey ended not there, we boarded the "Pioneer Limited" of the C. M. & St. P. R. R. at 8:50 on Monday evening, May 23, rode all night across the state of Wisconsin, crossing the Mississippi at about 4 o'clock in the morning at LaCrosse. The gray dawn was just beginning to break when we crossed the Father of Waters, and then for many miles we followed its course, the mighty stream which as it flows southward becomes in reality what its name implies, flowing along on our East, while to the West rose the bluffs abrupt and steep with here and there a deep gorge through which came trickling a little stream from some distant meadow, to add its mite to the ever growing river.

Soon, however, we cut away from its banks and proceeded for many miles through a monotonous farm region, only to meet the river again shortly before entering St. Paul and once more to cross it. Amidst the weeping of the West Wind, who blew his gushing tears into our faces, we entered the Union Station of St. Paul at 7:25 Tuesday morning.

Before the day was ended, however, old Boreas had caused his petulant stepchild to cease weeping, and instead was himself putting forth every effort to clothe the Capital of Minnesota in the wintry raiment which it had but a few weeks past cast off for a six months' summer. St. Paul mud is as hard to purify as New Bremen mud, so the streets were really worse this morning than they had been last night.

Many of the earlier paved and less used streets of Minneapolis as well as St. Paul are still covered with wooden blocks, and these being broken in places makes those streets very bad indeed. Of the two cities St. Paul has dirtier streets than Minneapolis especially in the wholesale district. This may, however, be accounted for by the fact that St. Paul is situated on a very hilly surface, almost like Cincinnati, and Minneapolis on a practically level ground.

Upon arriving in St. Paul, which though much smaller than Minneapolis, seems to do a far greater business, we were not long in spite of hackmen, cabmen and meal-crier in finding a desirable location, the Merchant's Hotel, a large five-story brick and stone building on the corner of East Third and Jackson Streets, occupying almost ½ of a block, where we were given fine accommodations.

After viewing the city in general, the large business houses, the beautiful residence district and the magnificent new state house, built of polished white

marble inside and out, and having taken a view of the city and river from a high bridge built over a railroad that crosses the river, probably 60 feet or more up in the air, we returned thoroughly tired out.

After a good night's rest we boarded one of the St. Paul & Minneapolis electric cars for Minneapolis, where we admired the large business blocks, the clean and perfectly kept streets, the enormous flouring mills and the Falls of St. Anthony. The latter have been so thoroughly brought under the control of man for his mercenary purposes, that surely much of the original beauty is lost.

We returned about the middle of the afternoon and took a car out to Ft. Snelling. Here we did not see much of what we had expected for the fort is under reconstruction and everything is topsy-turvy. The old tower is there all right, and the bridge, across the Minnehaha, leading to the fort, gives one of the most beautiful views of natural scenery that the writer has seen next to Niagara Falls. From here a Bus-Line runs to the Falls of Minnehaha, in good weather only, when there are sufficient passengers but as this was a sort of an Ohio March day there were only three other visitors there besides us, and the Bus did not run. So we did not get to the "Wayward Minnehaha, with her moods of shade and sunshine," but on our way back we certainly shall, even if we will be compelled to walk through mud two miles from Ft. Snelling.

Minnehaha must certainly be in her mood of shade, for in all these long two days we have not had a gleam of sunshine. However, we are content for being in the "land of the Decotahs, the home of the Ancient Arrow-Maker," and if we understood his language as Hiawatha did of lore, we should certainly order from him an arrow head for each one of our friends at home to keep as a memento.

Tonight, at 10:15 we shall start for the far West.

E. G. Conradi, St. Paul, May 25, 1904



Sun Printing Company in the early 1900s. From left: Fridolin Purpus, Emil Conradi, unknown, Otto Schneider, Ruth Wittenbrink (Mrs. Ed Schunk), Carl Schrage, L. Sunderman.

NEW BREMEN PIONEER IS ALSO A MAN OF MYSTERY

Martha Speckman Shaffer sent us two newspaper articles about the first major criminal case in Auglaize County. Her Great-Great-Grandfather Frederick Herman Speckmann was named in this case but the disposition remains a mystery. She suggested that we share the information with our readers.

From the *Toledo Blade*, 1848:

Tragical Affair- A man by the name of John P. Behrns, late of this city, was killed by a blow of a hoop pole on his head, given by Fredrick Speckman, in the town of Bremen, Mercer Co., on Wednesday last. Speckman was provoked to give the blow in consequence of violence towards his wife by Behrns, who was her uncle. —*Toledo Blade*, May 1st.

From the *Lima News*, June 16, 1940:

Disposition of First Murder Case Remains Mystery in Auglaize- New Bremen Man Died from “Blow on Head,” Coroner’s Jury Decided; Records of Final Action Are Believed Lost

Wapakoneta, June 15 – The disposition of Auglaize County’s first major criminal case – the murder of John Behrens at New Bremen – will forever remain a mystery as far as county annals are concerned, and it is doubtful if many residents of the village can recall thru stories handed down the final ending of the case.

Behrens died April 23, 1848, several months after origination of this county from parts of Allen, Mercer and Van Wert-cos, in the home of John Meyer from a blow on the head, suffered several days previous.

Packet ships operating on the now abandoned Miami & Erie Canal between Toledo and Dayton form a picturesque background for the story, according to testimony given by various persons at an inquest conducted by Joseph Owens, then coroner of the county.

Owens was notified of the death on April 24 and immediately ordered the German Township constable to impanel a jury of 12 men to be present at the inquest.

Many of the jurors selected were unable to write English as records show that they signed their names in German, and it is presumed that the inquest was conducted in that language and later translated to English for record.

The jurors selected, many of their last names still in existence, were C. W. Cowan, George McCune, John



Rickley, W. Stoyer, Jacob Morelin, L. H. Heusch, J. Christopher Kringle, John Kuenzel, William Haverman, B. Wellman, E. Wiehle and Charles Boesel.

The first witness called was one Dr. J. H. Nieberg, who testified that the deceased died as the result of a blow on the head, believed to have been inflicted April 19. Nieberg’s story goes on to relate that Behrens believed himself sufficiently recovered on the 22nd to take a packet boat to Toledo, but that on the following morning his condition was worse and he

died later in the day.

The doctor’s testimony also showed that he questioned the deceased as to how he received the blow and at first was told that he fell to the floor of a boat. Later he retracted the story and said that one Frederick Speckman had struck him with a *loop*-pole as he entered the latter’s home.

One Andrew Gerbich also was called to the stand and told the jury that Behrens, in company with a Mr. Lemcoole, came to his place on April 19, saying that they would take the packet ship for Toledo. Lemcoole requested a cot for Behrens, telling him that the latter was sick. However, they remained all night, according to the testimony.

The 12 jurors, after hearing the testimony, returned a verdict of “death by violence from a blow on the right side of the head, above the ear on the temple bone, and do further find that Frederick Speckman struck the blow.”

Here the case ends, according to records on file in the courthouse. A diligent search failed to unearth final disposition of the case and the final outcome may forever remain a mystery unless a search of the musty archives in the attic of the courthouse produce further records of the case.

A search for additional records in the case also revealed that the first 50 criminal cases in the county are not listed in the criminal journal. What became of the records also remains a mystery as a group of papers labeled “odds and ends” contain several cases not listed on the journal but failed to reveal the closing records of the Behrens murder.

After reading the newspaper articles from 1848 and 1940, we began looking for more information about Frederick Herman Speckmann.

From the source, *History of Auglaize County* by William J. McMurray, 1923, we learned...*Frederick Speckman, who for many years was one of the leading business men of New Bremen, having become engaged in business there in the ‘50s of the last century (1850s), in*

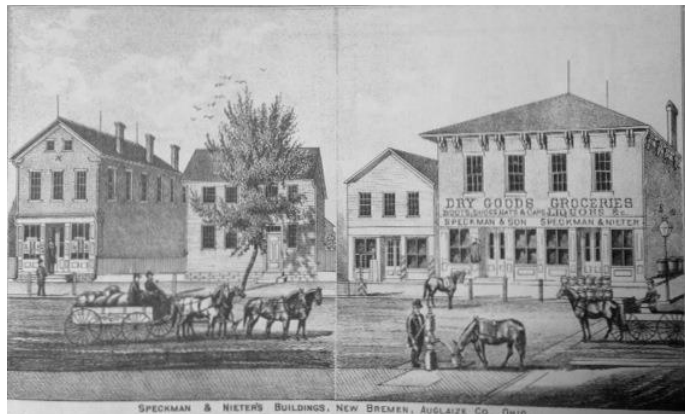
the days when the operation of the canal made New Bremen one of the liveliest towns in western Ohio, was but 17 years of age when he came to this country.

After a short residence at Cincinnati he came on up into this part of the state and located at New Bremen, where after his marriage he established his home. He had been trained to the cooper's trade and not long after locating at New Bremen started a cooper shop there, which up to the time of the close of the Civil war did a great business and furnished an outlet for the great quantities of hoop poles which in those days of the big timber provided a ready source of revenue for the farmers on the timber lands for miles about the place and also provided a market for the products of the big stave factory that was in operation there.

In 1852, F. L. Nieter bought an interest in this cooperage business, the firm continuing under the name of Speckman & Nieter.

In April, 1864, Mr. Speckman and Mr. Nieter started a grocery store, which they presently enlarged to include a general line of goods suitable to the trade and at the same time carried on a lucrative private banking business. As was common with grocery stores in those days they also carried on a saloon business and as another side line were engaged as auctioneers and criers of farm sales, as need arose in the community, it being written of them in one of the old chronicles that they were "the only men in that locality who were first class auctioneers."

In 1876, Mr. Speckman took his elder son Frederick B. Speckman, into the business...In 1881, Mr. Nieter became a partner in the general goods business as well as in the grocery and the firm name then became Speckman, Son & Co., this firm in addition to this general mercantile business also carrying on an extensive trade in grain and pork and held besides some valuable real estate, both in farm lands and town property...



Speckman & Nieter's Buildings, 1880 Atlas of Auglaize County

As another source of information about Frederick Speckman, we read the minutes of the German Township meetings and learned that Mr. Speckman took his oath of office as Constable of German Township in 1853. We also learned that Mr. Speckmann served as German Township trustee in 1865 and 1866, with many of the meetings being held at his home or store in Ober Bremen. His business partner since 1852, F. H. L. Nieter served as the German Township Clerk and also as the Justice of the Peace for many years.

In regards to the Lima News article we tried to find information about Mr. Behrens and Mr. "Lemcoole." After the opening of the canal from Cincinnati to Toledo in 1845, the town of New Bremen started to grow. Numerous hotels or lodging facilities began to spring up to accommodate the canal travelers. One such hotel was the Behrens Hotel (circa 1846) on Main Street in New Bremen, owned by John B. Behrens. It later became known as the Lehmkuhl Hotel. (*From Towpath, July 2007, p. 10*)

In summary, the disposition of the case has not been found and the outcome remains a mystery. Perhaps the records have been lost due to time or transition from one county courthouse to another. An early fire in Mercer County courthouse also destroyed many records. It is not a mystery though that Frederick H. Speckmann was a competent businessman and provided valuable service to the township and town as a constable and township trustee. Perhaps he was protecting his wife as stated by the *Toledo Blade*.

In 1898, his granddaughter Viola Speckman Laut wrote, that Frederick Speckmann was *one of the most successful and prominent grain and pork dealers in New Bremen, has accumulated all his wealth by industry and good management and by shrewd, practical business principles, for he started out on his own responsibility with very little means. No man in the town is better respected or more highly esteemed than Mr. Speckman and he has a very pleasant and comfortable home here.*

Frederick and his wife Catherine had nine children but only one survived to adulthood. Catherine died with the birth of the ninth baby. He married a second time in 1866 to Elizabeth Brockman nee Polsdorfer and had three children: Wilhelmina, John and Alvina.

Frederick H. Speckmann died in 1912 at the age of 87 years.

IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

Food brings us together in times of trouble just as it does in times of joy. Living in a small town like New Bremen gives us a great support system in the hard times. This has been true for generations. People have shown their support of family and friends by sharing food, especially comfort food. The dictionary defines comfort food as the food people eat when they are sad or worried. Often it is a sweet food or one they ate as children that brings the most comfort.



What is your ultimate comfort food? Many of us would answer chocolate cake. It is so popular there is a national Chocolate Cake Day celebrated January 27 each year. No one really knows when chocolate cake became popular enough to have a special day but the cakes have been made for decades in many countries.

Our German ancestors were familiar with chocolate and probably brought some recipes with them to New Bremen as this history of chocolate in Germany indicates. Chocolate was first available in German pharmacies. It was sold as a tonic but the high price made it a luxury item available only to the rich.

King Frederick the Great of Prussia and the famous German poets Goethe and Schiller were known to be chocolate connoisseurs. It was not until the beginning of the 19th century that lower prices made chocolate more popular. Higher sales caused the beginning of a chocolate industry in Germany. The first factory was founded in 1804 by J.F. Mithoe. His factory used steam engines to produce a product called "steam chocolate". Soon many other factories followed and chocolate was more affordable and used in baking.

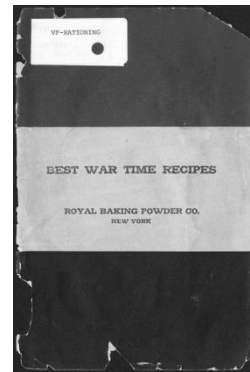
This long history of chocolate and its use as a comfort food could be the reason it was made and shared by our ancestors in times of trouble. Cooks kept making chocolate cake even when some ingredients were in short supply. We found three recipes for chocolate cake that were adapted depending on which ingredients were available.

The first is from **WW I** when home cooks were urged to conserve wheat flour so more could be sent to supply our troops. This recipe is from the 1918 Royal Baking Powder Company book titled *Best War Time Recipes*.

WWI Chocolate Cake

1/3 cup shortening, 1 cup brown sugar, 2 squares chocolate, 1 cup rye or barley flour, 1/2 cup wheat flour, 3 teaspoons Royal Baking Powder, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/2 cup milk, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 1 cup chopped walnuts.

Cream the shortening, sugar and melted chocolate. Add rest of ingredients and bake in a greased loaf pan in a moderate (350 degrees) oven for 35 to 45 minutes.



The second recipe comes from **The Great Depression**. It was a time when many families had very limited food budgets. This cake uses no eggs, milk or butter because those ingredients were expensive.

Depression Chocolate Cake

1 1/2 cups flour, 3 tablespoons cocoa, 1 cup white sugar, 1 teaspoon baking soda, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon vinegar, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 5 tablespoons vegetable oil, 1 cup water.

In a greased 8 inch baking pan mix the first 5 dry ingredients. Make 3 wells in this mix and add vinegar in one, vanilla in the second and the oil in the third. Pour water over all. Mix well until smooth and bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes.

During **WW II**, rationing was implemented and made home cooks conserve butter and eggs. Innovative cooks still made chocolate cake using mayonnaise. This is the recipe used by Clara Topp Schroer.

Chocolate Mayonnaise Cake

1 cup sugar, 1 cup mayonnaise, 2 teaspoons baking soda, 2 cups flour, 3 tablespoons cocoa, 1 cup water.

Mix together, Pour into a large dish that has been greased and floured. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes.



LOCK ONE COMMUNITY ARTS IN ACTION

Lock One Community Arts (LOCA) is a grass roots non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to bringing professional performances and great art experiences to the Auglaize, Mercer & Shelby County regions. Started by three New Bremen families in 2001 and now led by volunteers across all our communities, LOCA's purpose is to enrich the lives of our communities with entertaining and inspiring art experiences.

LOCA presents five artistic performances per year in the James F. Dicke Auditorium at New Bremen High School. In addition, LOCA is proud to extend additional performances to the wider community including schools & nursing homes through their community Outreach Program.

LOCA's November 12th show featured *Cadence*, an A Cappella vocal group from Toronto, Canada. The four musicians, without instruments, thoroughly entertained the audience with their vibrant and lively songs. On November 13th and 14th, LOCA, through their Outreach Program, sponsored *Cadence* to entertain and educate 6th, 7th, and 8th grade children from ten area schools. The kids listened to great music and learned how to perform and mimic musical instruments using only their voices.



A few LOCA Board Members with Cadence Performers. Back Row: Don Gagel, Jan Gagel, Kurt Samson (Cadence), Lucas Marchand (Cadence), Barb Topp, John Palmer, Ross Lynde (Cadence). Front Row: Kaye Wint, Connie Schafer, David Lane (Cadence), Jeanette Pahl, Phyllis Palmer, Beverly Poppe. Board members not present when photo was taken: Tim May, Keith May, Rhonda Gill, Diana Hartwig, Peg Meiring and Frank Turner. (Photos and article submitted by Phyllis Palmer)



History Mystery



Do you remember this store?

Where was it and who was the owner?

(See story on Page 6.)

NBHA NEWS

- Letters have been mailed to remind members to pay their 2018 NBHA yearly dues.
- Carol Turner has joined Mary Moeller & Gen Conradi in the sorting/storing project at the museum.
- Our NBHS Class Ring Collection is growing. We now have 1925, 1927, 1932, 1935, 1940, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1961, 1964, 1965, 1969.
- The 2018 Annual Dinner Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 20. Please mark this on your calendar because this will be a special meeting and dinner. It will be held in the old high school on Walnut Street and tours will be available. Tickets will go on sale February 1st.
- Logan O'Neill, Chairman of the Christmas Tree Festival this year, did a great job. Here is a picture of Logan & his family.



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

New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073



NBHA Museum – 120 N. Main St.

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

Cardinal Team on Page 1 Identification:

Standing: Assistant Coaches Jan Beyke & Andrea Quellhorst, Josie Reinhart, Ellie Roettgerman, Rachel Kremer, Julia Goettemoeller, Paige Jones, Macy Puthoff, Ashton Heitkamp, Tara Springer, and Head Coach Diana Kramer. **Kneeling:** Katie Howell, Diana Heitkamp, Taylor Paul, Abbi Thieman, Blake Snider, Madison Pape, Claire Pape.

The Christmas Season began in New Bremen on November 27, 2017 with a community gathering to light the Christmas Tree, hear the NBHS Chorus sing, drink hot

chocolate, visit with Santa Claus and see the Christmas Tree Festival in the Lockkeepers House.

