

# THE TOWPATH

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THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2020

# Happy New Year!

**A NEW YEAR and a time to reflect  
on the past and the future!**

## **New Bremen in 1920**

One hundred years ago the people of New Bremen began a decade of peace and prosperity. The Great War had ended and people were ready to move forward. This was a year of important changes. As a nation, voters approved two Constitutional amendments that began in 1920. Prohibition went into effect in January and women obtained the right to vote for the first time in the general election in November.

Also in 1920 people saw the beginning of a prosperous economy that lasted through this decade until it was ended by the Great Depression. It was a time of technological advancements in many different forms. This technology had the ability to change the way people lived. New kitchen appliances such as refrigerators and gas range were appearing in stores.

The pictures on the right show two kitchen appliances that appeared in the 1920s. Both of these donated items are displayed in our museum.

**...Turn to page 4 to continue this story...**



***“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)

**NEW MEMBERS**

**Matthew Knost**

**Steve & Janice Froning**

**Sher Meckstroth**

**Steven & Mary Pulskamp**

**NEW LIFE MEMBERS**

**Robert & Janet Eilerman**

**MEMBER DEATHS**

5/26/2019 **Donald Cook (LM)**

10/5/2019 **Dianne Komminsk (LM)**

10/15/2019 **Danny Shroyer (LM)**

11/2/2019 **Jay Sharp**

(CM=Charter Member LM=Life Member)

**DONATIONS**

**Bob & Betty Dietrich, Marvin Heitkamp, Craig & Sharon Mueller, Nancy Brucken, Judy & Wayne Wiehe, Robert & Brenda Klein, Stanley & Jane Scheer, Robert & Julie Ziegenbusch, Mark & Patty Cisco, Thomas & Florence Fricke, Lee & Rita Wissman, John & Kathy Dicke, Andrea & Richard Kehmeier, Harold & Irene Stammen, Edward & Rosalind Ekermeier, Larry Neuman, Barb Ziegenbusch, Jack & Beckie Dicke.**

**MEMORIAL DONATIONS**

**In Memory of Sally Meckstroth by Bob & Betty Dietrich.**

**In Memory of Brad & Ron Scheer by Teresa Harris.**

**In Memory of Jay Sharp by Alice Hartwig.**

**Monthly Raffle Winners**

**October-\$100- Wayne Lybarger (NB), \$75- Kara Prince (OH), \$50- John Pape (OH).**

**November-\$100- Kathy Topp (NB), \$75- Linda Kuenning (NB), \$50- Nancy Brucken (MI).**

**December-\$100- Matthew Dawson (NB), \$75- Rob Stauffer (NB), \$50- Frank Borchers (NB).**

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

**Items Recently Donated to NBHA**

NB Cardinal foam finger by **Mark Suchland**; Photo album from Lone Pine nursing home by **Merrily Hoffman**; 1940 & 1942 Mirage yearbooks, photos, clippings from estate of Mary Ellen Belton Patton by **Craig Belton**; Postcard written by Norbert Roettger from India to Jim Meyer by **Joan Schwartz**; NB blanket in original box by Fred Scheer; (2) 1914 White Mountain Creamery photos by **Virgil Eilerman**; 1887 NB Business Directory, Cliff Harris invoices, a J. L. Hoffman medicine bottle by **Lynn Harris Thompson**; Hand tools from the **Lewis Bertke family**; (2) small metal boxes labeled Opal Menchofer Insurance by **Jeff Bertke**.



## **NEW BREMEN NOTABLE**

### **DIANNE KOMMINSK**

Dianne Komminsk, of New Bremen, Ohio, passed away peacefully at her home on October 5, 2019, after a lengthy illness.

Dianne was the daughter of Betty (Greene) Komminsk and Paul Lewis Komminsk, both of who predeceased her. She was a graduate of New Bremen High School and Duke University, graduating in 1966 with degrees in political science, economics and history.

During her life, Dianne was the owner of Micro Fotofile in New Bremen and also served as a director of American Budget Company from 1989 through 2016. She was president of First National Bank in New Bremen from 1997 to 2000 and served as chairperson of the board of directors from 1997 through 2017.

In addition to her business activities, Dianne was a great lover of art and was a board member of the Dayton Art Institute serving on many committees with that organization.

Dianne was best known for her love of the New Bremen community and the many charitable projects she was a part of. She was a faithful supporter of the New Bremen library, schools, police department and life squad. She was a member of the board of trustees of the New Bremen Foundation for many years and was named chairperson emeritus in 2017.

One of her greatest loves was the creation and building of Komminsk Legacy Park, which she felt was a proud memorial to her family and the love they all had for New Bremen. At the time of her passing she was actively participating in the formation of the Center for Innovative Thinking through the New Bremen Schools.

Dianne was an extraordinary person who will be missed by all who knew her or had contact with her in any way.

Pursuant to her wishes, there will be no public memorial service.

Donations in her memory may be made to the New Bremen Foundation or any charity related to the arts, for that was her true love in life.

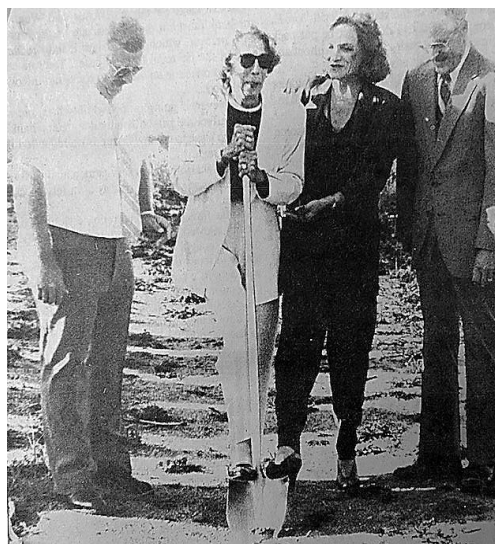
--- (Obituary /Gilberg-Hartwig Funeral Home)



**2015 Dianne & Monica Shell Groundbreaking for  
Komminsk Legacy Park**



**Mayor Pape, Christy Shell, Linda Tinsley, Michelle  
Bambauer, Dianne Komminsk, Monica Shell, Cathi Hall &  
Representative Jim Buchy (2015)**



**1990 Industrial Park Groundbreaking - Dianne with Jim  
Tontrup, Betty Komminsk, Mayor Urban Buschur**

## NBHA Letters & News

Thank you for taking time to teach us about the history of the locks at New Bremen. This will be a great way for students to visualize what the locks were. Also, thank you for the photos! I appreciate all your time.  
- **Kendra Marchal & all 4<sup>th</sup> Graders from St. Henry**

*(Editor's Note: Don Gagel provided an explanation of the locks to 65 students and 10 adults from St. Henry on October 25th. He was assisted by Larry Tangeman and Dennis Dicke.)*

My recollection of the "filling stations" revolved around Rump's, Lone Pine and Schmidt's because they were on "my side" of town. I remember that Rump's Station had a car wash that none of the others had. Lone Pine and Schmidt's were unique because they didn't have a lift they had a pit. The cars drove in at ground level and the work was done in a 6 foot deep pit under the car. I also remember Bob Gilberg working at the Lone Pine.

Schmidt's always had a supply of minnows and night crawlers for your fishing trip. Herman also had a "mini bar" where you could have a sandwich and a beer while your car was being serviced. Schmidt's was always our stopping point because Herman and his wife Alvira and my parents, Wilbur & Nina, were close friends. They would get together two or three evenings a month for dinner and cards, usually Pinochle or Sheephead and I would have the run of the TV – all three channels!

Weren't the 1950s great!!

Keep up the great work on the Towpath! – **Tom Fricke, NBHS Class of '59 (Indiana)**

I am a lifetime member and enjoy reading the Towpath. Enclosed is a check in memory of my two late brothers Ron and Brad Scheer.

I'd also like to find out if your group is interested in my NBHS yearbooks and class ring.

I hope the NBHA can take pictures of the school before it is demolished. I remember when the front was added to the high school. Again, thank you all for your efforts in keeping the New Bremen history alive. – **Teresa Harris (Colorado)**

I remember the station that was across from Rump's. It was a Gulf station that the Slife boys ran. Schmidt's, out by the bowling alley, was a hangout for me and my brothers. We would stop there for a beer before we went to Crystal Ball. – **Marvin Heitkamp (New Bremen)**

I really enjoy reading all the history regarding New Bremen as I have been away since I left for college and live near Circleville, Ohio now.

The photo is of my father – Walter Topp on the harmonica and Walt Schmitmeyer on the guitar. The woman may be a cousin, Lucille Barhorst. - **Martha Topp Ewing (Ohio)**



The History Mystery photo is my Dad, Walter Topp playing the



harmonica and Walt Schmitmeyer on the guitar. Thanks for sharing the photo, they both enjoyed playing music. – **Doris Topp Carr (Missouri)**

I am writing to formally thank Mr. Thomas Braun, Genealogist, for his expert help in researching the provenance of a wedding certificate I purchased some months ago here in Colorado.

Although I personally have no formal ties to New Bremen, I was fascinated by the beautiful certificate and extremely curious about its history. A web search led me to your organization and Mr. Braun.

I wondered how the certificate ended up in Evergreen, Colorado and I worried that it might be a precious family heirloom that some descendant of the Heitkamp-Lehmkuhl family had mistakenly given up.

Thomas Braun couldn't have been more helpful in providing information on the certificate, which hangs proudly in my home today. He told me about the Heitkamps and the Lehmkuhls and how they came to New Bremen. The depth and breadth of his knowledge is astonishing, and his willingness to share that knowledge was heartwarming, to say the least. I am sincerely grateful to him for enlightening me. I keep the information Mr. Braun sent on the back of the certificate frame, so that future generations can also know a bit of history about the families and the New Bremen settlement.

I am enclosing a modest check to the New Bremen Historical Association as a way of further expressing my gratitude to Mr. Braun. I know you will put it to good use. – **Andrea Kehmeier (Colorado)**



**Steve & Willy Campos from Tucson, Arizona visited New Bremen to research family names – Schloetzer and Pohlmann.**

**The Pape House museum received a new roof this fall!**

*...NBHA Letters and News continued on p.15*





## **New Bremen in 1920** *(continued from page 1)*

With the development of commercial radio stations news became available much more quickly. The first broadcast came from station KDKA in Pittsburgh in 1920. But radios were too expensive for most until Powel Crosley began marketing affordable radios in Cincinnati.



Henry Wittenbrink listening to his early 1920s "Newlands" battery-operated radio with 3 dials, speaker horn, and earphones.

By 1922 his Crosley Broadcasting Company station WLW was the most successful and most powerful in the area. Radio broadcasting became a source of entertainment along with information.

In 1920 people in New Bremen were entertained by movies at the Crown Theater. At this point in time, movies were in black and white and were silent but often accompanied by piano music. It was not until 1927 that the silent movies at the Crown Theater became talkies.

Another important part of the increased prosperity was the advanced technology in the auto industry. The mass production of the auto began in 1908 when Ford produced the Model T also known as the Tin Lizzie. This began the transition from horse to auto as the main means of transportation.

By 1920 this transition was about half way with autos still seen as luxuries. During each year of the decade advanced technology meant more autos available and lower prices. In New Bremen you could buy a Ford at Huenke Garage or an Overland at Rairdon's.

These facts came from our research but a much better understanding of the times is found in these two articles written by NBHS classmates, Class of 1935, Marjorie Gieseke Lietz and Bob Schroeder.

The first article is written by Marjorie Lietz. In 1975, Marjorie and Paul Lietz were married and for many years they shared their slides and stories of New Bremen with others. Marjorie also served as editor of The Towpath from 1987-1996.

## **The 1920s Schelpers' Meat Wagon in New Bremen**

By Marjorie Gieseke  
Conradi/Lietz

*The weather was hot and humid. Farmers were busy in the field next to our house on East Second Street. It was time for the second cutting of grass to make hay. Here and there some leaves in our old apple tree moved and seemed to sigh with the heat. My sister, Dorothy, and I sat on the steps of our front porch, waiting to hear the bell of the meat wagon. Our mother was hard of hearing, so this was our job on the **days the meat wagon came**. The meat wagons, pulled by faithful horses, belonged to Wm. Schelper's Old Reliable Meat Market.*



*The Schelper barn & slaughter house north of town, where Shanverton Court is now located. One of the meat wagons can be seen in the center of the picture.*

*Since New Bremen is a canal town, it was easy to divide the routes for the delivery wagons that brought the fresh meat to the busy housewives during the summer months. Mr. Lafe Neuman had the route east of the canal and Mr. Ed Jung's route was west of the canal. Keep in mind this was "back in the twenties."*

*As soon as the bell sounded in the neighborhood, we could see the ladies come out of their homes carrying a meat platter or sometimes a pie pan to hold the meat they would purchase. The coin purse was carried in an apron pocket. In the "twenties" one could purchase 25¢ worth of round steak and it was enough for a family of five!*

*The meat wagon was a box-like affair, with a seat for the driver up front, and a step on the rear of the wagon so he could reach the various cuts of meat. The scale hung from a chain fastened to the ceiling of the wagon. Sunshine furnished the light from the front and back of the wagon. The floor was lined with white butcher paper to hold the fresh meat. There were beef roasts, pork roasts, round steak, pork chops, homemade frying sausage, homemade bologna, and wieners - most likely the drivers had to take along a good supply of wieners because this was a free treat for the children along the route. In one corner of the wagon was a small supply of beef bones, in case a customer wanted a bone for the family dog. I suppose the dogs knew the sound of the bell too!*

*The meat wagons served our town well in those days,*

but this convenience passed with the years. Now, with refrigerators and freezers in each home, it is not necessary for delivery wagons.

We lived in a different "era" back in the twenties, when the man of the family came home at noon for a hot meal of meat and potatoes. In New Bremen we called it "dinner," when the whistles blew at 12:00 noon.

## Shopping in the 1920s

By Robert Schroeder

"If we don't have it, you don't need it" could have been the slogan of New Bremen's merchants in the 1920s, for the town was self-sufficient. Every necessity of life could be obtained from stores on Main, Washington or Monroe Streets. If you had walking shoes and a bag or a basket and spoke enough German to make your needs known, you were ready to shop the town.

There were no shopping carts, no bar codes, no checkout counters. You told Charlie Gilberg at Schelper's or Ray Knipple at the bakery, or Doc Schwieterman at the Rexall what you wanted, item by item, and they got it for you, item by item. You stood at the counter, exchanging town gossip the while. No one was in a hurry in the 1920s, not even Calvin Coolidge. You didn't go shopping - you went visiting.



A purchase made out of town, like Leo Kuhlhorst's Pierce Arrow touring car or like special parts for Alton Schelper's and Eddie Wehrman's built-from-scratch full-size airplane, or like Doc Fledderjohann's auburn-tinted, fits-

all wig, was a very special purchase indeed.

Harry and Frieda Schroeder's son, Bob, "worked" at his dad's hardware store from little kid on, through the 1920s and into the 1930s. "Down-town" was his wondrous boyhood play-ground and he explored its every facet. During Bob's high school and college years, his "Bill Bogers Says" column in *The New Bremen Sun* treated humorously of town personalities and events.

In the next issue of *The Towpath*, Bob, who can be depended on to see the past much more clearly than the future, will begin a series of tours of New Bremen's 1920s businesses past. First up, a visit to the imposing building then standing at the southeast corner of Main and Monroe, a Boesel "mansion" remodeled for commercial use.

In addition to the Postoffice, this hub of the transitory housed the New Bremen Telephone Company and Andy Albert's Funeral Home.

Upstairs, phone numbers soaring into the double digits (the Hardware's number was 36) were plugged in by Hilda Broerman and the Halsema sisters. Downstairs, alternating political appointees Bud Laut, Cade Schulenberg and "Sky" Kuck, played musical chairs in

the Postmaster's office, while civil servants, teamed with Orville Ruedebusch, actually ran the show. And a show it was!

*Aber das ist etwas anders.*

**See you next issue. ©1996 by Robert Schroeder**

Robert J. Schroeder was born in Cincinnati to Harry F. Schroeder and Frieda L. Dammeyer. His grandfather, Johann George Schroeder, emigrated from Germany in 1853 and lived all of his life in or near Rising Sun, Indiana, near Cincinnati. Bob's parents were married in 1917 and moved to New Bremen in 1923 when Bob was 5 years old. Bob's sisters were Catherine Schroeder Graf and Louise Schroeder McAllister.

Bob moved to New York City in 1963, beginning a second career as a playwright, drama reviewer, and writers' agent. In 1988, he founded Popular Play Service, a publishing and royalty agency. His first wife and mother of his two sons, John and David, was Grace Thiesing of New Bremen. He married Jan Henson Dow in Connecticut in 1991.

The stories about New Bremen that Bob wanted to write were not completed. He died on May 21, 1997.

After his father's death, his son David sent this information:

*My father very much wanted to write this series of articles for The Towpath. Of course, no one can write the articles that my father would have written, but perhaps your readers can help complete them. New Bremen meant a lot to my dad. His writings and plays often touched on the special qualities of life he experienced growing up there.*

*Sincerely, David H. Schroeder*

**(The following notes are from Robert Schroeder's files.)**

### **West Monroe Street (south side)**

**(1) The businesses or activities along the south side of Monroe, starting at the corner of Main & Monroe, then going east and ending at Water Street:** This would include the old Post Office building (P.O., N.B. Telephone Co., and Albert Funeral Home), the First City (Boesel) Bank (later Lewis Poppe's shoe store) and the old N.B. Hardware location in the Opera House block, the Opera House itself (upstairs), Schelper's Meat Market - Ed Jung and Lafe Neuman peddling meat from the horse-drawn wagons, Erhardt's Dry Goods, and "Bud" Laut's shoe store, later (after 1946) the N.B. Hardware & Supply Co.

**(2) The businesses or activities on the south side of Monroe between Water St. and the canal:** This would include "Peanuts" Dierker's Tin Shop, the Hotel, Laut's Pool Room, the first Woodmen Hall, Schulenberg's Drug Store, Purpus Insurance Agency, "Patty" Patterson's Barber Shop, and the freight house used by the

interurban and manned by the Thompson brothers. The Thompson house at the canal lock would be included.

#### **West Monroe Street (north side)**

(3) The businesses or activities on the north side of Monroe St. from the canal westward - including the movie theater (later the Bielefeld Print Shop and from 1968-1996, the Senior Citizens' building), the old Hespe Hall when it was New Bremen High School's basketball court as well as a dance hall (afterwards becoming the Shanghai Gardens Night Club), "Icy" Hirschfeld's Sandwich Shop, the Taylor Photo Studio (on the northeast corner of Monroe & Water St.)

(4) Going west across Water St. was Schwaberow's Variety Store, later Western Ohio Hardware (on the NW corner of Monroe & Water), the first Kroger's (between Schwaberow's and "Plucky" Laut's Jewelry Store), the jewelry store, Fred Ende's Optometry Shop, the Jacob Boesel/E.G. Conradi residence (2nd Woodmen Home), the Concordia Savings & Loan, and the Mueller Brothers Clothing Store (on the NE corner of Monroe & Main.)

#### **South Washington Street (west side)**

(5) The businesses or activities on the west side of Washington St., from Monroe to Plum: This would include reference to the former pork-packing buildings still standing on the east side of the canal when I was a kid, the canal boat turn-around, the filling station at the southwest corner of Monroe and Washington, the harness/tire shop next door, the Kuenzel Mills buildings, the Sea Breezes miniature golf course, the poultry house, Bill Combs' ice house, the Gast Blacksmith Shop (see July, 1997 "Towpath"), and Stueve's sheet metal shop.

#### **South Washington Street (east side)**

(6) The businesses or activities on the east side of Washington St. coming back from Plum St. to Monroe: This would include Rabe's Store, the Arcade, the Knights of Pythias hall above the Arcade, Speckman's Furniture, the New Bremen Sun, the bakery (later the bowling alley), Wint's Bar and Restaurant, "Dooly" Wissman's Barber Shop, the fire station, jail, & town offices, the harness shop, the cigar factory, the First National Bank at the corner of Washington & Monroe, and other enterprises that came and went.

Also included would be Urban Schwieterman's Rexall Store (on the northeast corner of Washington & Monroe), Tony Schwieterman's Blacksmith Shop, and Rairdon's filling station & car dealership in what had earlier been a canal warehouse, then a livery stable (on the northwest corner of Washington & Monroe).

#### **North Main Street**

(7) The businesses or activities on both sides of North Main St. - on the east side were the Equity dairy store, the Superior Broom Works (torn down for an auto repair

shop), Gieseke's Grocery, and Huenke's Garage.

Coming back on the west side, Henry Block's Plumbing Shop, Nieter's Store, the Doenges store & old town hall, Al Friemering's grocery/bakery and the Gilberg & Hegemier Furniture Store (the south building later served as Erma & Louie Landwehr's restaurant), the earlier New Bremen Sun location (later Kroger's, now Howell's IGA on the northwest corner of Main & Monroe).

#### **West Monroe St.**

(8) On the north side of Monroe west of Main were Elbert's Tailor Shop, the office and shop of Der Stern des Westlichen Ohio, the German language weekly paper (this space was later Dr. Rabe's office), Kamman's Coal Yard, and the Erhardt Coal Yard.

On the south side of Monroe the Gilberg Funeral Home, Otto Heinfeld's Plumbing Shop, the Halsema sisters' hem-stitching, Home Furniture store, and Doc Fledderjohann's residence (later torn down to make room for a filling station) on the SW corner of Monroe & Main.

#### **Other Memories by Robert Schroeder**

Buying an auto, and filling 'er up, in 1920s and 1930s New Bremen - an atlas and glossary of the dozen places you could buy a new car or truck, and the two dozen filling stations to service them, that had popped up all over New Bremen - starting with the 1912 Case Truck Factory in what later became the school for the retarded (now ABC Learning Center).

In preparing these articles, I will not be stressing historical facts; rather I intend to convey the "feel" of that time - what life was like in this unique village.

The First World War had wrought traumatic sociological changes in New Bremen - until that time, almost, a German colony. The Second World War brought about further irreversible changes of another kind. My articles will focus on what life was like in New Bremen, and what its people were like, in that brief sliver of time between the World Wars.....

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As we stated, the facts about 1920 New Bremen were easy to research, but the stories by people who lived during that time are irreplaceable treasures. Those stories bring the article to life giving us a unique opportunity to learn about our history beyond the facts. Now 100 years later we can see how much progress has occurred from these roots.

<p><b>We are always looking for personal experience stories to help our history articles to go beyond the facts. You can help future generations know New Bremen by sharing your memories. We welcome your help with this project.</b></p>
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## New Bremen Entrepreneurs

In 1887, J.L. Hoffman was the owner of the City Drug Store and Dr. H. Schmidt, Jr. was a veterinary physician. They entered into a partnership to develop a new business.



Advertisement from the 1887 Business Directory of New Bremen, Ohio

This business was just one of several developed by each of the men as the following biographies show:

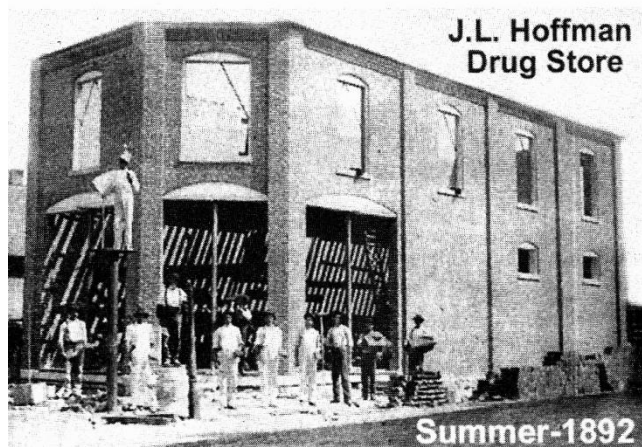
### J. L. Hoffman

John Lawrence Hoffman was born in Piqua and grew up to become a clerk in a drug store there. He came to New Bremen in 1874 to go into business for himself. He bought the City Drug Store (on N. Main Street) and joined the Ohio State Pharmaceutical Association. But he was also looking for other business opportunities.

In 1886, Hoffman, in partnership with H. J. Negus, built a grain elevator near the railroad tracks. The next year he partnered with Doctor Schmidt to sell animal medicines.

By 1892, his various businesses proved successful enough to enable him to buy a lot on Washington and Monroe Street. There he built the large brick structure that would be his drug store and home. This building with his name on the top shield still stands today.

Hoffman kept making improvements to his business holdings until his death in 1915. More information on the Hoffman family can be found in an article in the *Towpath* (April 2003).



Dr. H. Schmidt, Jr.

Henry Schmidt, Jr. was born on the family farm two miles west of New Bremen. His father, in addition to farming, was a veterinary surgeon having received his training in Germany.



Henry Schmidt, Jr., son Leonard, Alice (Huenke) Schmidt, daughter Goldie and niece Marguerite Koop

Henry, Jr. followed his father's profession, graduating from the American Veterinary College in New York. He opened an office in New Bremen and soon expanded his business by developing a line of livestock medicines. It was a cooperative venture using Dr. Schmidt's formulas



and druggist J. L. Hoffman's facilities to manufacture and sell the medications.

The success of this business allowed him to build a large barn on North Walnut Street to serve as his veterinary hospital.



**Dr. H. Schmidt's veterinary Hospital at 108 N. Walnut Street. In 1945, his son, Dr. Leonard Schmidt, razed the barn and added a new garage and office to the rear of his residence at 116 E. Monroe St.**

Later in Dr. H. Schmidt's business career *The Sun* newspaper reported on some of his other business ventures.

**2/27/1903:** Drs. G.W. Bodey & Henry J. Schmidt were in Chicago this week to purchase a dry hot air apparatus and other electrical appliances to be used in connection with the X-ray machine, with a view of engaging in the electrical healing business on an extended scale.

Dr. Bodey is a practicing physician, while Dr. Schmidt is a widely known veterinary surgeon. Dr. Schmidt has equipment of that sort for veterinary use, but the current has been tried by so many patients with good effect, that he finds himself besieged with treating human beings instead of animals.

In order to cope with the great demand for electrical treatment, Dr. Schmidt formed a partnership with Dr. Bodey. Human patients will be taken care of by Dr. Bodey. A sanitarium will be established in the Boesel building at the corner of Main & Monroe Sts. where Dr. Bodey has living quarters.

Several remarkable cures have already been recorded since the advent of the X-ray machine in New Bremen. Men crippled with rheumatism and paralysis and other alleged incurable diseases have yielded readily to its influences. Dr. Schmidt is an expert in the handling of this machine, having taken a course of instruction at a Chicago college. He expects to acquire a diploma as a graduate. He will have charge of the machine while Dr. Bodey will prescribe the treatments.

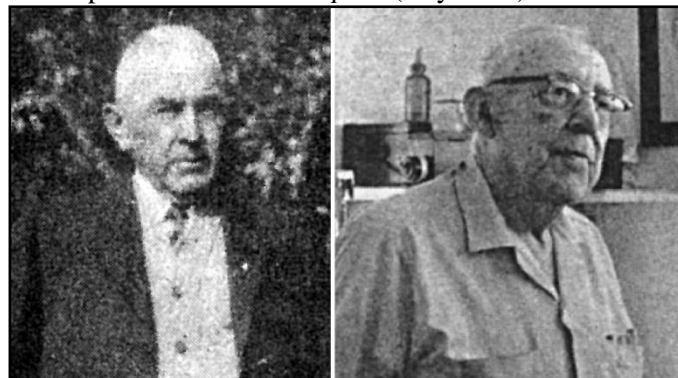
**7/31/1908:** In view of the fact that the number of automobiles in use in New Bremen is growing, and the demand is becoming more marked every day, Dr. H.J. Schmidt has concluded to open up a 1<sup>st</sup> class repair shop, with an expert mechanic.

**8/14/1908:** Dr. Schmidt says that he has opened a garage for the purpose of expanding his business. He wants to also "doctor" automobiles.

"My new garage in the north room of the J.H. Boesche building on Washington St. is now completed and I am in position to do all kinds of repairing on automobiles, bicycles, etc. I will later on be prepared to do vulcanizing. I also have for sale automobiles of different makes and grades. Come and see me."

Dr. H.J. Schmidt

Dr. H. Schmidt, Jr. died in 1934 and his veterinary business was continued by his son Dr. Leonard Schmidt. Leonard was the third generation of the Schmidt family to practice veterinary medicine in New Bremen. More information on the Schmidt family can be found in an article published in the *Towpath* (July 2004).



**Dr. Henry J. Schmidt & Dr. Leonard Schmidt**

**Leonard Schmidt** (4/15/1890-1/3/1973) followed in his father's and grandfather's footsteps and also became a veterinarian. He attended the Veterinary College in Toronto, Canada for a year and then the Indiana Veterinary College at Indianapolis for 2 years. After W.W.I, he went to Ohio State University where he graduated in 1924. Leonard married Helen Dettman (1892-1977) on 6/29/1914 and they had 3 daughters: Dottie Boesel, Alice Wissman, and another who died in infancy.

In October 1945, an annex was built north of the Schmidt home at 116 East Monroe & the office was moved there. His "operating table" was made from one of Grover ("Dooley") Wissman's hydraulic-lift barber chairs. Dr. Schmidt patented his own formula for medicine under the name of Schmidt Chemical Co.

New Bremen was surely enriched through the contributions of these entrepreneurs.



## MEMORIES from David Meyers

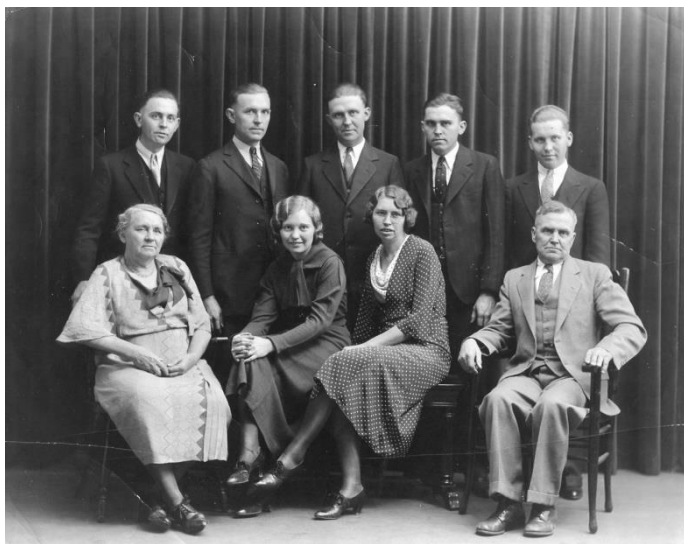
I just today received the latest issue of *The Towpath* and wanted to commend you for the consistently high quality of the publication. The latest issue is a particular delight owing to the numerous photos it contains. I also am amused by the articles contributed by my cousin, Robert Gilberg – (his mother and my father were siblings – since they provide another perspective on our family history. In fact, after reading “Tick Tock,” I was inspired to dash off a few memories of my own as “outsider” to New Bremen. Perhaps you can make some use of it. I have also attached a photo of my Grandfather Behm’s family.

Like “Bob,” as I grew up calling him, I have also turned to writing in my later years. (I believe you have several of my books in your collection.) If you would like to see what I have been doing, please check out my website [www.explodingstove.com](http://www.explodingstove.com). Thanks to both of you for the work you do.

## MY GRANDFATHER’S HOUSE

By David Meyers

By the 1950s, my grandfather, Johann Wilson Gustav Behm, was living in a two-story house at the corner of South Washington and Cherry Street. It was painted white then and still is today. Grandpa Behm had been a country school teacher for nineteen years and a rural mail carrier for another nineteen, but that was long before I came along. I was told his teaching career came to an end due to the rise of anti-German sentiment coincident with the First World War.



Front: Ida, Marie, Leora, Wilson.

Second Row: Fred, Vernon, Walter, Norman, Neale

My mother, Marie, was the second youngest of seven children born to him and his wife, Ida Fredonia Louise Koester, whom I never knew. The other children were Leora, Frederick, Vernon, Walter, Norman and Neale. Walter is probably the best known because he remained in New Bremen nearly his entire life and was also a mail carrier.

My mother left New Bremen not long after she married my father, Virgil Meyers of St. Marys, in 1932. Eventually, they settled in Columbus where I was born in 1948. But I have

many fond memories of my grandfather and that house, owing to our frequent trips to New Bremen to visit him, as well as my uncles, aunts and cousins.

**Grandfather Behm’s house on S. Washington Street as it looks today.**



As a young child, I was always amazed at the wondrous things that awaited me there. First there was the canal. It ran behind my grandfather’s house, although “ran” implies the waters actually moved. In fact, it was generally stagnant, scum-covered and home to numerous frogs, turtles and dragonflies. But I always looked forward to seeing it and hearing about my great-grandfather, Frederick “Fritz” Behm, who had been the canal superintendent and operated a boat. My mother always talked about how she would skate on the canal when it froze over, although one of her brothers once broke through the ice.

Then there was my grandfather’s house. It had two front doors. The right one opened directly into his bedroom which was also a library with several enormous glass-doored oak bookcases crammed with old volumes of the Ohio Historical & Archaeological Society quarterly. I remember thinking he probably had more books than anyone else in the family.

There also was a large Bible on a desk near grandpa’s bed. In his declining years, he had taken to reading and re-reading it and counting the words, although I never understood exactly why. He made little hash marks on a stenographer’s pad and then totaled each page.

A door opened from grandpa’s library/bedroom directly into the living room which had a fireplace. Above the mantle, hung a Civil War cavalry sword suspended from a nail. I always begged to see it. The blade had dark red stains on it, whether blood or rust I never knew for sure.

On the right side of the fireplace was a tiny bathroom. On the left was an impossibly steep stairway which made a sharp turn almost immediately. This led to two rooms, one above the living room and the other above my grandfather’s bedroom. The second room was filled with such marvelous things as a Civil War saddle on a saw horse and a large I.O.O.F. banner, as well as other “treasures” – at least that’s what they looked like to me. He also had a complete set of Frank Leslie’s Illustrated History of the Civil War, a series of oversized magazines teeming with battlefield illustrations and many maps.

When it came time to go to sleep, I was given a featherbed on the floor in the first upstairs room. And the featherbed had a legend that went with it. Somebody – I can’t remember who – told me that someone had once slept on the featherbed and it was so soft that he sank down in it and was never seen again. That was a disquieting thought for a young boy. Perhaps, that is why I have such vivid memories of hearing the trucks rumble by the house in the middle of the night and of watching cars stopped at the gas station across the street. For years, it was my dream to live in a house across from a gas station.

There was a little room, seemingly an afterthought, attached to the back of the house. It served as the kitchen. My grandfather always kept cases of soda pop on hand because he knew the grandkids hated the taste of the New Bremen water. I don’t remember ever eating any meals there because the space wasn’t really conducive to hosting many people. Besides, my grandfather’s culinary tastes were very Germanic, heavy on



fried corn meal mush, sausages and the fattest cuts of meat he could find. He also salted everything.

In his backyard, there was a rectangular wooden building that I was told had been a one room school house. It was the size of a large garden shed. From what I could see through the filthy windows, it still contained school desks, chalk boards, pull down maps and charts and a teacher's desk with a globe sitting on it. There were also dozens of spent .22 caliber shells on the ground because the building was infested with rats and someone used to go back there to shoot them.

Across Cherry Street from the one room school was a large field. At times there were small carnivals held there and, I believe, religious revivals. I remember one time somebody took me to the carnival and won for me several brightly painted wooden canes with top-hatted skulls, dogs and other types of heads on them. However, as I soon discovered, they were made of plaster and broke fairly easily.

Throughout his life, my grandfather called automobiles "machines" as in "Fred bought a new machine." He also used other quaint expressions which never failed to amuse me. Although I never knew him well, when he passed away in 1963 at the age of eighty-nine, I felt a tremendous loss. He was the only grandparent I had ever known and he was my connection to the past.

When his children got together to settle the estate, nobody wanted the oak book cases or the books – nobody but me, that is. My parents lamented the fact that they had no way to haul the book cases back home, but they did allow me to take as many books as I could manage. I still have most of them, although I donated some of the rarer ones to the Ohioana Library in Columbus so they would be properly preserved.

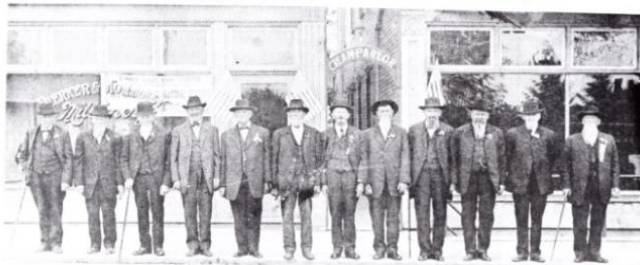
To me, a boy from the "big city" of Columbus, New Bremen was a magical and exotic place. In some respects, it still is – which is why many years ago I became a lifetime member of the New Bremen Historic Association.

The Behm family made significant contributions to New Bremen history for generations. Thank you, David, for sharing your memories. Articles like these bring our history to life.

#### Grandfather J. Wilson Behm in mail wagon 1914.



CIVIL WAR VETERANS IN 1912 DECORATION DAY PARADE  
in front of Minnie Dierker & Hilda Kominsk's Millinery Shop / F.O. Wood's (Ice) Cream Parlor & Cheap Store  
on the southwest corner of West Monroe St. & Water St. - New Bremen, Ohio



- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Fred Telman (6/25/1838-4/15/1916)       | 5. William Tschudin (11/16/1844-4/7/1917)     | 9. William Vornholt (3/2/1838-7/22/1912)     |
| 2. Herman A. Moeller (10/28/1845-7/5/1918) | 6. John William Waterman (5/19/1842-6/7/1927) | 10. Frederick Dickman (10/25/1833-5/13/1915) |
| 3. (unknown - mis-identified)              | 7. Fred Roettger (5/20/1842-1/31/1919)        | 11. Fred Behm (10/11/1844-2/20/1927)         |
| 4. Henry Schaefer (6/29/1842-10/27/1935)   | 8. Ben Schulenberg (2/12/1845-7/20/1915)      | 12. William Schulenberg (9/7/1838-1/26/1928) |

## David's New Bremen Behm Family

### Great-Great Grandparents:

#### Johann Christian & Catherina Schoenfeld Behm

(1802-?)

(1809-1894)

Johann came to America from Germany in 1849 and purchased farm land in New Bremen area.

### Great Grandparents:

#### Frederick Johann Christian & Malissa Brown Behm

(1844-1927)

(1844-1933)

Frederick was a Civil War Veteran, Canal Boat Captain, Brought mail from Botkins to New Bremen, Made First Application for Rural Mail Delivery in New Bremen area, I.O.O.F. Member, Established home on Washington Street next to son and daughter-in-law.

### Grandparents:

#### J. Wilson & Ida Koester Behm

(1873-1963)

(1873-1942)

Wilson was a School Teacher, Rural Mail Delivery carrier.

### Parents:

#### Virgil & Marie Behm Meyers

(1911-1980) (1913-1977)

Marie (NBHS Class of 1931) and her husband settled in Columbus, making frequent visits to New Bremen.

## Obituary for David's Great Grandfather

### Frederick Behm

#### CIVIL WAR VETERAN DIES

Frederick Behm Answers Final Roll Call Sunday

Frederick John Christian Behm, one of New Bremen's last few remaining veterans of the civil war, died at 4:20 o'clock Sunday morning at his home on South Washington street. His death followed an illness of several weeks and leaves but three veterans of the war of rebellion living here, the lone trio of survivors including William Schulenberg, Henry Schaefer, Sr., and William Waterman. Mr. Behm was born in Germany October 11, 1844, and reached the age of 82 years, 4 months and 9 days. His parents, John Christian and Catherine (Schoenfeldt) Behm emigrated to this country when he was but six years of age.

Too young for the army at the start of the civil war, he saw his two brothers, Charles and John, march away with the Union forces never to return. Charles was killed in action at Princeton, W. Va., and John made the supreme sacrifice in the fighting along the Guyandot river in the same state.

In April, 1865, Mr. Behm enlisted with the 1st Ohio cavalry and after the close of the war was honorably mustered out of the service. His marriage to Malissa Brown occurred at Fort Wayne, Ind., June 2, 1865. He then returned to New Bremen with his bride and established a home on the Herman Haarmeyer farm and later on what now is known as the Chas Klute farm.

For many years Mr. Behm was captain of a state boat plying the Miami & Erie canal. Later he was awarded the contract for bringing mail from Botkins to New Bremen, this city at that time being without adequate

railway facilities. Mr. Behm also was credited with making the first application for the establishment of a rural route in the district served by the New Bremen postoffice. The application was filed with the post office department at Washington, D. C., in March, 1902, and provided for a route 25 miles in length and covering the territory to the northwest of New Bremen.

Mr. Behm retired from active business affairs about 28 years ago and since then lived a happy, quiet life with Mrs. Behm in their home in the south end of town. The home adjoins that of a son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Behm, and in recent years the latter have taken care of the work in the two households.

Besides the widow, Mrs. Malissa Behm, Mr. Behm leaves a son and two daughters, John Wilson Behm and Mrs. Cora Lanfersieck, New Bremen, and Mrs. Henriette Slater, Kenton. There also are a sister, Mrs. Fredericka Ruvoldt, Dayton, 11 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

A brief ritual Monday evening by the I. O. O. F. lodge, of which Mr. Behm was a member for many years, preceded the services conducted from the home Tuesday afternoon with Rev. J. C. Melchert, pastor of St. Paul's church officiating. Services at the grave in the German Protestant cemetery were in charge of the New Bremen American Legion Post. Pallbearers chosen from among Mr. Behm's grandsons were Ernst Slater Kenton; Fred Behm, Coldwater; Fred Lanfersieck, Roscoe Lanfersieck, Vernon Behm and Walter Behm.

[N.B. Sun - 2/24/1927]

## Lola Patterson

**First Woman Tax Examiner in Ohio and First Woman in Auglaize County to be granted a Patent**

August 5, 1943

Lima, Ohio

Mr. E. G. Conradi

(Letter to Editor of *New Bremen Sun*)

New Bremen, Ohio

Dear Mr. Conradi:

I have always been a little averse to putting articles in the paper about oneself. But I am so thoroughly proud of my achievement that I would like you to put a notice of it right where the world can see it.

All of the neighbors and most of my friends know that all of my life I have made things and felt perfectly comfortable when I was in old clothes with a saw in one hand and hammer and nails in the other. Of course, the biggest part of this was necessity, if we wanted anything it was up to me to see that mother had everything she wanted so I had to make things.

Well, I have just received word that an invention for which I asked for a patent has been approved and my patent rights will be coming through any time now.

I invented a gadget for air-conditioning of a motor for automobiles and as I said I am so thoroughly thrilled, I would like you to put a notice in the paper. Today I start my eleventh year with the State, and when I started my boss told me that I was the first lady in the history of the state to be appointed to such a position. Well, I don't believe that I am the first lady in the state to be officially recognized as an inventor but I do believe (and I am sure that you would know) that I am the first lady in New Bremen ever to receive patent rights on an invention. Incidentally my attorneys were none other than Toulmin and Toulmin, who have offices in Dayton, Washington D. C., and London, England, and they were the attorneys who obtained the patent for the Wright Brothers on their airplane.

Don't you think I have a right to be proud of my earnings?

Very truly,

Lola M. Patterson

*(Sure, Miss Lola, have you a right to be proud of your earnings, wherefore your highly interesting letter is given space here verbatim. The SUN speaks for your many friends in offering congratulations on your achievements. -Editor) New Bremen Sun, 8/12/1943*

### FROM THE "RECORD OF CONCEPTION"

WHEN DID YOU FIRST THINK OF YOUR INVENTION?

**LOLA: "About July, 1937, when I purchased a new car."**

WHEN DID YOU EXPLAIN YOUR INVENTION TO OTHERS?

**LOLA: "In 1941, when I felt I had a definite idea."**

WHEN DID YOU FIRST PREPARE A SKETCH OR MODEL OF YOUR INVENTION?

**LOLA: "About August, 1941. The idea was conceived because of an old model attachment not fitting on a newer model car. My idea is to have this as standard equipment for any model car."**

## LOLA PATTERSON, NEW BREMEN INVENTOR, GETS U.S. PATENTS

Miss **Lola Marie Patterson**, of New Bremen, is believed to be the first woman to be granted a patent in Auglaize County.

On February 8, 1944, Patent No. 2,340,982 was issued to Miss Patterson for her invention of a combination screen and blanket all-weather automotive conditioning unit on rollers similar to those used for window shades. This device was attached to a bracket and would fasten over the radiator and motor of an automobile. The screen was to prevent insects, etc. from entering the radiator grid in the summer, and the blanket was to condition the radiator in freezing weather. Both the screen and the blanket could be pulled down separately and hooked to the bottom of the radiator.

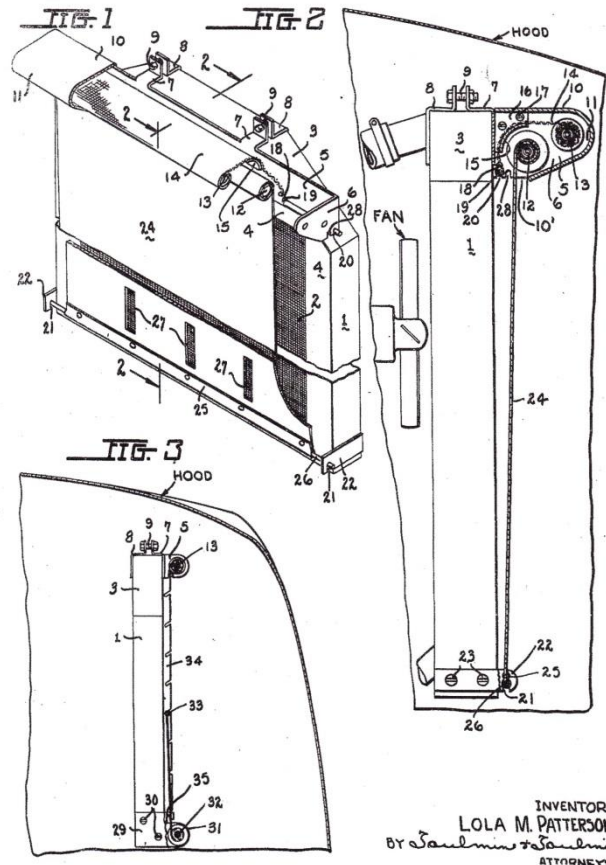
Feb. 8, 1944.

L. M. PATTERSON

2,340,982

CONDITIONING ATTACHMENT FOR AUTOMOBILES

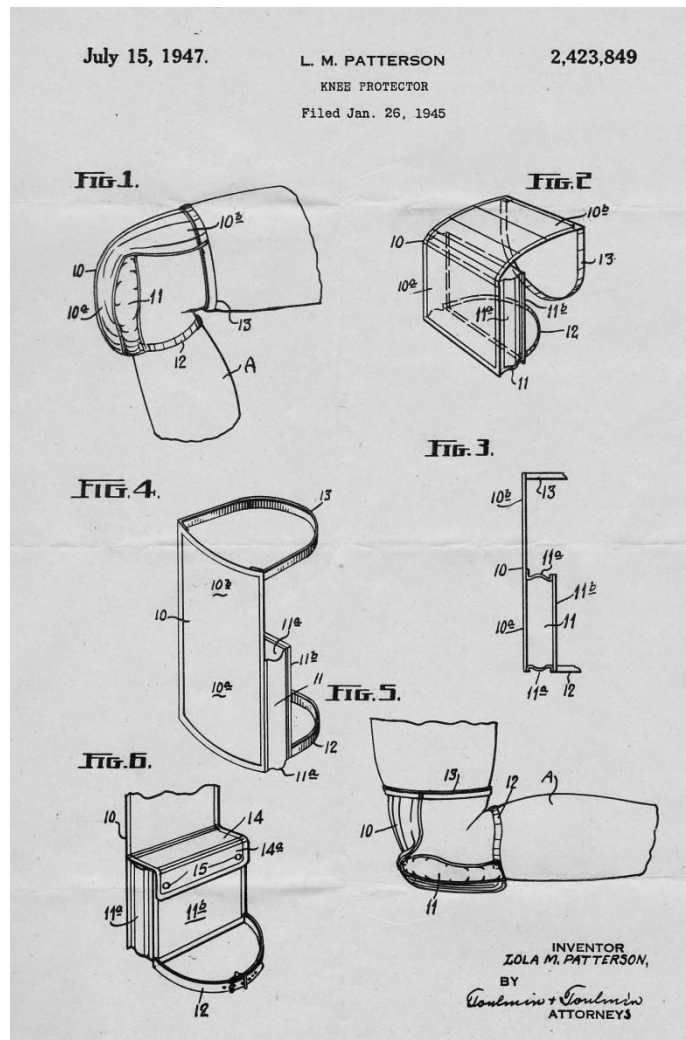
Filed Jan. 22, 1942



On July 15, 1947, Miss Patterson received Patent No. 2,423,849 for her invention of "knee protectors." These devices were made of a strip of fabric with a pocket on one end in which could be inserted a cushion of some sort and fastened



shut. On each end were attached elastic bands which would fasten around the leg both above and below the knee. The purpose of this device was to protect against "housemaid's knee" for housewives, gardeners, and others who would do a great deal of work on their knees.



Lola converted the carriage house at the back of the lot into a garden cottage in the 1930s because the main house was too large for her. She spent her retirement years living in her "garden cottage" at 17 North Main Street in New Bremen. She rented out the main house for ten to twenty years while she lived in the two-bedroom cottage.



Knee Protectors invented by Lola Patterson in 1945.

Lola Marie Patterson was born January 12, 1894 and died September 10, 1968. She was the daughter and only child of Edward L. Patterson (1867-1909) and Josephine M. Kunning Patterson (1864-1942). She worked as chief clerk in the New Bremen-Minster Gas Co. office, and later became the first woman state tax examiner for Ohio, working in Allen County, until she sustained an injury to one of her legs.

The large brick townhouse at 19 N. Main Street was built by Lola's grandfather Cort Henry Kunning in 1853. Eight of his nine children were born there. After his death in 1904, the house was deeded to his daughter Josephine Kunning



Patterson. Josephine's daughter, Lola Patterson then became the owner after her mother's death.



Lola Patterson's Patent Certificates

**ANNUAL DINNER MEETING TIME  
IS DRAWING NEAR**

Here are a few pictures from past dinners. This year's dinner meeting will be on:

**Monday, March 16, 2020 at 6:30 PM.**

**It will be held at the Holy Redeemer Fellowship Hall.**

**Our speakers will be Jerry Maxson and Gary Stueve.**



**2012**



**2013**



**2014**



**2015**



**2016**



**2017**

**Tickets go on sale February 1<sup>st</sup>. Call any  
board member for a ticket.**

...NBHA *Letters and News* continued...



### NBHS CLASS OF 1959 REUNION

On August 17, 2019, the Class of 1959 gathered at the Speedway Lanes for their 60<sup>th</sup> reunion luncheon. Photos were taken and stories were shared. Dessert was provided by classmate Oneta Lyda.

**Standing:** Dale Paul, Fred Pape, Wilbur Rodeheffer, John Schaefer, Dan Dicke, Tom Fricke, Gary Wiedeman, Daryl Koenig.

**Seated:** Jeanne Schilling Raver, Martha Topp Ewing, Janice Wiehe Howell, Pat Gels D'Alessio, Sarah Valentine Glover, Christine Richey Glass, Oneta Dicke Lyda, Beckie Bruner Dicke.



Beverly Plattner identified everyone in this picture. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 1939-1940.



**From top:** Miss Nettie Loy (teacher), Jimmy Finke, Delores Bertke Franck, Sally Jo Abbott Fark, Henry Greber, Peggy Speckman Henschen, Jean Moeller Hildebrand, Franklin Kuenning

**Middle Row:** Robert Westerheide, Carl Maurer, Molly Weinberg Nieter, Beverly Dammeyer, Carolyn Wellman Deniston, Betty Jo Schwieterman Gormly, Betty Holdren Quellhorst

**First Row:** David Friemering, Andrew Rabe, Mark Woehler, Mary Fishbach Egbert, Beverly Rump Miller Plattner, Ruth Westerbeck Warner, Darlene Bertke.

I enjoyed your article on the gas stations in New Bremen and thought that I would share this picture of Ralph Fogt with his grandson Jeff Black at Fogt's station on Washington Street. (Ralph was my grandfather also.) -  
**Kay Slattery Shapiro (NC)**

New Bremen Historic Association  
P.O. Box 73



NBHA Museum – 120 N. Main St.

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## HISTORY MYSTERY



This gentleman served on the New Bremen Board of Education in 1920. Can you name him?  
(Call or send your answers to Gen or Joyce!)



This is the NBHS building in 1920. Where was it located?

### UPCOMING NBHA EVENTS

The Luelleman House & the Pape House is open by appointment.

*(Call any NBHA board member with your request.)*

The NBHA ANNUAL DINNER MEETING will be held March 16, 2020.

Tickets will go on sale February 1, 2020

*(Call any NBHA board member with your ticket request)*

### UPCOMING NEW BREMEN EVENTS

Firemen's Picnic July 25, 2020

Bremenfest August 14-16, 2020

Pumpkinfest September 25&26, 2020