



# THE TOWPATH

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THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

July 2019

## NBHA & ACHS PRESENT JUSTIN LUEDEKE



**Justin Luedeke, American Airlines pilot, NBHS Class of 2000, presented “Life as an Airline Pilot” to a standing –room –only audience at the Lockkeepers House in New Bremen on June 2, 2019.**

The event was co-hosted by the Auglaize County Historical Society and the New Bremen Historic Association as part of the “Our Men and Women in Air and Space” initiative, organized in conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon Mission.

Justin holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Aviation Management from the Ohio State University and graduated Magna Cum Laude from the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University.

Having previously been affiliated with Netjets, PSA Airlines (US Airways Express), and US Airways, Luedeke is now a Pilot for American Airlines for the Airbus 320 Series, International Division. An IOC Duty Chief Pilot, Luedeke has earned more than 10,000 hours of flight time. He is also a pilot recruiter for American Airlines.

Luedeke explains his background in flight, “I have always had an interest in aviation. During career day in high school, I was led around the Neil Armstrong Airport, was able to sit in the airplanes and chat with a few of the pilots in the area...From that point, I was [given] one flight lesson just before my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. After the first takeoff I knew this is what I wanted to do. Nothing compares to soaring above the earth, leaving your worries below, and breaking through the top of a cloud layer to see an incredible sunset in your view.”

“I would encourage young people to pursue their dream, no matter how long it may take to get there. Never give up and always do what you love. Anything is possible!”

Luedeke concludes, “The most magical part of my personal journey was that it all started in Auglaize County at Neil Armstrong Airport. I still remember the first flight with all the wonder of a 15 year old seeing the sunset from 3,500 feet. Today, I still hold that wonder, even from 35,000 feet.” (From press release by Rachel Barber, Auglaize County Historical Society Administrator.)



**"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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**MEMBER DEATHS**

3/30/2019 **Betty McGowan**

4/11/2019 **June Schott (CM)**

4/17/2019 **Lewis Bertke**

5/3/2019 **Pat Holmer (LM)**

5/6/2019 **Mary Ellen Patton**

5/13/2019 **Kenneth Eckhart (LM)**

6/2/2019 **Vernita Wellman**

(CM=Charter Member LM=Life Member)

**DONATIONS**

**Joe Knost**

**Karl & Ethel Mesloh**

**Monthly Raffle Winners**

**April - \$100-Sandra Conradi (SC), \$75-Lloyd Schroer (NB), \$50-Greg McCollum (NB).**

**May - \$100-Tom Phlipot (NB), \$75-Ron Schwartz (NB), \$50-Patricia Nelson (NB).**

**June - \$100-Marlene Ahlers (NB), \$75-Doris McClure (PA), \$50-Tim Bertke (NB) .**

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

**Items Recently Donated to NBHA**

Moeller Insurance ashtray by **Alan Fenters**. NBFD scrapbook, boots, photos, NBHS 1943& 1940 yearbook, Framed Photo of Beatrice Foods by **Linda Meyer**. Delores Uetrecht's Certificates, NBHS diploma, photos, small blanket by **D. Diane Zodikoff**. WOW medal, NBHS diploma, 1953 graduation speech, 1952 prom photos & program, news clippings, Stamco ashtray, old deeds for 10 NB properties by **Barb Harmony Moore**. JAYCEE creed, plaque, Jaycee news clippings, WWII greeting cards, info about Opal Menchofer by **Merrily Hoffman**. Invoices from local businesses in 1940s, POW labor paperwork from 1944 by **Dan & Sally Dicke**. NBHS coffee mug by **Diane Paul**.

**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)



**History Mystery Photo in April Towpath 2019: Joyce Holdren, Susie Hirschfeld, Rev. Holmer**

The 2002 History Mystery photo in the April Towpath is my dad, Reverend Lawrence Holmer, on the right, and Susie Hirschfeld facing the camera.

Since dad passed away in December 2017, my mom has been sharing The Towpath issues with me. Having grown up in New Bremen, I am very much enjoying reading about the history of the town, even though many of the stories were before my time. Mom and I were both tickled pink to see the picture of dad in this most recent issue!

Keep up the nice work. We enjoy this newsletter very much.

**Michele Holmer Constable** (Ohio) April 8, 2019.

*Editor's note: We are sorry to report that her mother, Pat Holmer, died on May 3, 2019.*

Thanks very much for carrying my Ferdy piece in the recent publication. I hope it is well received by the New Bremen community for what it is: some old memories of a few events that have been stuck in my head for around 60 years that still vividly portray those times. I'm happy to share them with everyone even though the majority of your readers probably have no idea who I am. I suspect there will be couple of folks from my generation who do remember that old rowboat, chained to a tree along the canal.

In appreciation of your carrying my pieces over the years, I'd love to send you a copy of each of my novels...

**Robert Gilberg** (California)

*(Editor's note: Thank you, Bob, for the novels. We have placed them in our New Bremen Authors Bookshelf.)*



**History Mystery Photo in April Towpath 2019: Jim Tontrup, Betty Komminsk, Dianne Komminsk, Mayor Urban Buschur (August 1990 Groundbreaking for Industrial Park.)**

## NBHA WELCOMES VISITORS TO MUSEUMS



**New Bremen third graders visited the Luelleman House and the Pape House in April. We enjoyed their visit.**



**Vicki Rafferty and Shirley Soellner** visited in May.

**Vicki**, a descendant of Dr. William Adolph Havemann gathered information for her genealogy research. Dr. Havemann married Anna Maria Oberwite in New Bremen in 1841 and had six children.



## A VISIT WITH KARL & ETHEL MESLOH

### Descendants of a Pioneer Family



We recently had an opportunity to talk with Karl and Ethel Mesloh. We were impressed to learn that members of this family have been connected with New Bremen since the town's founding in 1833.

The first Meslohs, who emigrated from Germany, were Karl's great-great-grandparents Johann Behrendt & Anna Sophia Margaret (Fasking) Mesloh.

Just after Johann Behrendt Mesloh and his first wife, Eleonore (Fricke) Mesloh arrived in New Bremen, Eleonore died and was buried in the St. Paul cemetery.

The next year Johann Behrendt Mesloh and Ann Sophia Margaret Fasking were married at St. Paul Church. They had one son Johann Heinrich Mesloh (1841-1919) and the 1850 Census shows the family living on farmland that they owned.

Karl's great-grandparents, J. H. Mesloh (Johann Heinrich) and Wilhelmine Boesel, the oldest daughter of Carl Boesel, were the parents of nine children. Charles Walter Mesloh (1865-1904) was their first born child and the grandfather of Karl.

During the ensuing years the Mesloh family built quite a legacy both in New Bremen and beyond.

#### MESLOH LEGACY

##### Great-Great- Grandfather

##### Johann Berendt Mesloh (1794-1861)

One of the first German Township trustees

##### Great- Grandfather

##### Johann Heinrich Mesloh (1841-1819)

Postmaster 1868-1869

Built the Mesloh home in 1870

State Representative 1873-1879

##### Great- Uncle

##### Otto Friedrich Mesloh (1867-1923)

Solo Cornetist for John Phillip Sousa's Band

##### Grandfather

##### Charles Walter Mesloh (1865-1907)

First New Bremen High School Graduate 1882

OSU College Professor

Spoke and taught 6 languages

##### Father

##### Karl R. Mesloh, Sr.

Mining Engineer

Although the family members followed their dreams to many places their roots remained in New Bremen. There has been a member of the Mesloh family living on their family farm, established by Karl's great-grandparents J. H. & Wilhelmine (Boesel) Mesloh since 1870.

**Karl's  
Parents Karl  
& Ethel  
Mesloh**



Karl says that he did not know his ancestors well. His father was born in Columbus and his mother's family was in Bellaire, Ohio. His parents went to school at the OSU and because his father was a mining engineer, they moved frequently. First to New Mexico, then to New Jersey, where Karl was born.

After a time they moved to Virginia. Karl remembers that he was then sent to Bellaire to attend school, because of his parent's dissatisfaction with the schools in Virginia. Then they were in Pennsylvania, starting in Pittsburgh, moving to Gettysburg and Hannover, then back to Pittsburgh. By that time he was ready to attend college.

He wanted desperately to attend The Ohio State University (OSU) like other members of his family but it proved to be too expensive for him. He remembers that he earned 22 cents per hour in a steel mill to earn money for college and was able to save \$1767.00. To attend OSU he would need at least \$3000.00 as an out-of-state student so he chose to attend the University of Pittsburgh.

During his time at the University of Pittsburgh he met the love of his life. Ethel grew up in eastern Pennsylvania and when her father was transferred to Pittsburgh, she chose to attend Chatham College, a school for girls at that time. To meet boys, a friend suggested that Ethel attend the Lutheran Students' Association. The same was suggested to Karl to help him meet girls. Both said, "But I am not Lutheran." Their friends assured them that being Lutheran was not necessary to meet others.

And fortunately Karl and Ethel joined the Lutheran group, met each other and hit it off right away. To this day he remembers her beautiful smile.

During their courtship, Karl's mother suggested that he bring his date to dinner and in the process asked what her name was. He responded Ethel Anderson and his mother said, "That is my name." Yes, his father Karl R. Mesloh, Sr. married Ethel Anderson and he, Karl R. Mesloh, Jr. married another girl named Ethel Anderson!

At that time WWII had ended and the veterans were returning and enrolling in college. With this program he was able to complete a four year program in three years which helped him save money.

At graduation he had \$20.00 left over from his savings. With this money he drove to New Martinsville, W. Virginia to start his new job in the chemical division of Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG) and one year later he and Ethel were married.



**Karl, Karl, Frederick, Stephanie, Ethel, Nicholas Mesloh**

PPG and Karl proved to be a good match. All four of their children were born in West Virginia. He was then assigned to a plant in Texas. From Texas, they moved to Puerto Rico where he became a plant manager. Then it was back to Texas in an area just north of Galveston and another plant manager position.

He fondly remembers that part of Texas. He played cornet in a band in Galveston and he and Ethel took classes in the art of making stained glass windows which they enjoyed very much.

Life was pleasant and predictable. He had been with PPG for 34 years when in 1984 he received the call from his father that changed his life.

He had made a promise to his parents that he would care for them so they would not be in a nursing home. His parents were then living in the family home on the Mesloh farm near Lock Two. His mother died in 1982 and now his father needed help. Karl had ambivalent feelings about the move, but said that a promise is a promise and he and Ethel moved to New Bremen to care for his father.



They had made many visits to New Bremen over the years but there were adjustments to be made by the move from Texas to Ohio. Ethel said that she missed the shopping opportunities and music festivals but felt welcomed by the people of New Bremen.

Ethel has shared her musical talents with the community. She and Edith Wissman share a love of music and together they often play piano duets. Together they provided the musical bells at St. Paul Church that are heard in the village daily.



**An aerial view of the Mesloh Farm. Karl can be spotted on the far right in his garden with the rototiller.**

Karl said he soon developed a daily routine caring for the house, yard and garden and taking care of his father. He also became active in St. Paul church, serving as president of the congregation and teaching Sunday School. This is the same church where his great –great-grandparents were members.

He and Ethel put their stained glass skills to work and designed and constructed two beautiful windows for St. Paul Church. He also became active with the New Bremen Historic Association serving as their president and as a trustee. He became interested in his own genealogy and the meaning of the German names that he encountered daily. In 1993-4 he published his extensive research about the German names in *The Towpath*.



#### **One of Ethel's favorite pictures of Karl.**

Last year, Karl and Ethel decided to downsize. Their son Karl and his family have stepped in and taken over the management of the Mesloh farm and residence.



In this article there are many persons named Carl, Karl, and Charles through the generations. Also some have the same first and last name such as Karl R. Mesloh and Ethel Anderson. However, we guarantee that following the tale will show the great family history that we heard visiting with the Meslohs.

Thank you, Karl & Ethel!

### **MESLOH LINEAGE**

#### **Great-Great Grandparents**

Johann Berendt & Anna Margareta Sophia (Fasking) Mesloh

#### **Great-Grandparents**

Johann Heinrich & Wilhelmina (Boesel) Mesloh

#### **Grandparents**

Charles Walter & Caroline (Vornholt) Mesloh

#### **Parents**

Karl R. & Ethel M. (Anderson) Mesloh

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Karl R. & Ethel (Anderson) Mesloh**

**Karl & Ethel have 4 children, 4 grandchildren  
and 3 great-grandchildren**

#### **Karl & Ethel standing beneath the *Der Heilige Geist Fenster* (Holy Spirit Window).**

**The Holy Spirit Window and the Companion Window in the south entrance of St. Paul convey their messages through doves, fire, and flames, all Biblical images of the Holy Spirit. The windows were designed and crafted by Karl & Ethel Mesloh. They dedicated the windows to the memory of Paul & Marjorie Lietz. Installation and dedication occurred in 1998.**



## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION FOR THE AMERICAN LEGION

As soon as the WWI Armistice was signed in November 1918, the soldiers began thinking about coming home. By January 1919, many troops were still in Europe and were becoming restless.

In 1917, with the arrival of the American troops, Colonel Stanton, on the staff of General Pershing and the American Expeditionary Forces, made the statement "Lafayette, we are here!" to return the favor of help received from France and especially the Marquis de Lafayette during the American Revolution. In 1919 after the war was over the restless troops awaiting passage home were often heard to say, "Lafayette, we are still here!"

In early January 1919, a new veteran group was formed with the approval of General Pershing, to raise the morale of troops still in Europe. The first caucus was held in Paris in March 1919 to decide the name American Legion and legally form the organization.

The returning veterans brought the American Legion message home and a second caucus was held in St. Louis in May 1919. To communicate with the growing membership, the American Legion weekly newsletter was first published July 4, 1919. General Pershing wrote the first column.

The organization was chartered by Congress in September 1919 and held the first National Convention on November 10-12, 1919, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

At the same time, New Bremen veterans established the American Legion Post 241, 100 years ago this year. We have included two articles from the New Bremen Sun that explain how the post was formed and who was involved.

As you read the written purpose of the American Legion in the first article, please note that today the only change made is the addition of an "s" to war.

Following the articles is a list of the charter members of Post 241, meeting places during the past 100 years, and the Commanders who have served the Post.

### AMERICAN LEGION POST

#### First One in County Organized at New Bremen

*(New Bremen Sun, 11/7/1919)*

Twenty two veterans of the World War, all residents of New Bremen and surrounding country, met at the town hall on Washington Street, Tuesday evening this week, for the purpose of organizing a Post of the American Legion. The meeting was called at the initiative of Lieut. Wm. Rabe, who came over from Wapakoneta in the evening, where he is connected with the county surveyor's office, and in a vivid manner explained to the men assembled what is the object and purpose of the

American Legion. Following is the preamble of the constitution of the Legion, and contains definite expression of purpose to enable any one to decide whether he wishes to be a member or not:

For God and Country we associate ourselves together, for the following Purpose:

*To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a hundred per cent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our association in the Great War; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.*

Only veterans of the World War are eligible to membership, the organization being national in scope, and in a way following the aims and objects of the G. A. R. as maintained these many years since the Civil War.

Each one of the twenty two men present signed the application for a charter, though only fifteen are required to start a post. It is expected that the charter will have arrived by next Tuesday, when another meeting will be held for the purpose of permanently electing officers and effecting an organization that will bear the distinction of being the first one Auglaize County and one of the first in the state.

**William H. Rabe** was born January 9, 1891, the son of Theodore and Catherine Wiemeyer Rabe. He entered the Army August 15, 1917. Assigned to 14 Machine Gun Battalion Infantry. Served in AEF, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, Defensive Sector. Awarded the Silver Star. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Rabe was honorably discharged August 14, 1919, 15% disabled.

William, a Designing Engineer of Bridges for the Ohio Department of Highways, married Florence Trau.

William died in 1977, Florence in 1994. They are buried in Greenlawn Cemetery at Wapakoneta. His siblings were Alfred Rabe (President of the Arcade) and Katherine Rabe Grothaus.



The following week, the *New Bremen Sun* reported the organization meeting of the New Bremen American Legion Post:

...Commemoration of the day was suitably provided for by smokes and refreshments and by addresses from some of the leading citizens of the town. Those who addressed the ex-service men were Mayor C. V. Huenke, Captain William Schulenberg of G. A. R., Postmaster Kunning, Mr. E. C. Kuenzel, Superintendent of Schools Jordan and Mr. F. W. Bruns. Mayor Huenke, and Messrs. Kunning, Kuenzel and Bruns especially assured the members of the LEGION that they personally took pride in the fact that the young men of New Bremen were joining in the nationwide movement to organize the ex-service men in an association similar to that of G. A. R. which has as its aim the highest standard of American citizenship.

They assured the ex-service men of the whole hearted support of the citizens of New Bremen in establishing an active Post of the American Legion. Captain Schulenberg, one of the remaining members of the GRAND ARMY, greeted the veterans of the World War as "Comrades" and stated that the American Legion has even more opportunity than the G. A. R. in as much as it is attaining such a large membership. Mr. Jordan made an enthusiastic address in commemoration of Armistice Day and encouraged the ex-service men in working for the New Bremen Post. Mayor Huenke stated that he believed the New Bremen Post would be a real active enterprise in New Bremen and vicinity and that he believed this meeting would prove to be a history-making meeting for the community.

Wm. H. Rabe acted as temporary chairman and Richard Boesel as temporary secretary. Chairman Rabe announced the application for a charter had been accepted and the Post is to be known as New Bremen Post No. 241. Then followed election of permanent officers, with the following result:

<b>William H. Rabe</b>	<b>Commander</b>
<b>Richard Boesel</b>	<b>Vice-Commander</b>
<b>George Taylor</b>	<b>Finance Officer</b>
<b>Homer Isern</b>	<b>Finance Officer</b>
<b>Jacob Maurer</b>	<b>Historian</b>
<b>Walter Bertram</b>	<b>Chaplain</b>

**Committee on Constitution:** K. E. Berend, Ivan Koeper, Irwin Heinfeldt, Jake Maurer, Vernon Neuman.

**Arrangements Committee:** Herman Laut, Homer Isern, Clifton Boesel, Roscoe Lanfersieck, Gust Ruedebusch.

The meeting was pronounced profitable to all, and as New Bremen is the pioneer in the county in organizing a Post of the American Legion another point of evidence is added that patriotism is now as it always has been at a decided premium.

*(New Bremen Sun, 11/14/1919)*

#### **The charter members of the New Bremen Post #241:**

**Richard E. Boesel, George Taylor, K. E. Berend, Herman Laut, Leo F. Sunderman, Vernon B. Neuman, Clifton W. Boesel, G. H. Ruedebusch, Herbert H. May, John Stueve, William H. Rabe, Ivan H. Koeper, Irwin H. Koeper, Ray J. Knipple, Ward H. Pape, Carl L. Solms, Irwin Dammeyer, Leander H. Heitkamp, Erwin Heinfeldt, Frederick Speckman, Arley C. Moeller.**

#### **American Legion Meeting Places:**

1920-1948 In the City Hall space above the Fire Department on S. Washington Street

1948-1988 The Legion purchased the Boesel Opera House. The upstairs was converted into a modern hall for dances. In 1973 the downstairs was remodeled into a canteen and meeting room in the former Lewis Poppe Shoe Repair Shop.

1988-Present The Legion Post moved to its present site, the igloo-shaped former White Mountain Restaurant and Dance Hall on State Route 66.

#### **American Legion New Bremen Post No. 241 Commanders**

<b>1919-1920</b>	<b>William H. Rabe</b>
<b>1920-1921</b>	<b>Jacob H. Maurer</b>
<b>1921-1922</b>	<b>Carl J. Purpus</b>
<b>1922-1923</b>	<b>Herman J. Laut</b>
<b>1923-1924</b>	<b>Arthur Miller</b>
<b>1924-1925</b>	<b>Lewis Poppe</b>
<b>1925-1926</b>	<b>Harvey Fricke</b>
<b>1926-1927</b>	<b>Ray J. Knipple</b>
<b>1927-1929</b>	<b>Irvin Dammeyer</b>
<b>1929-1930</b>	<b>Carl Pape, Sr.</b>
<b>1930-1931</b>	<b>Leo Sunderman</b>
<b>1931-1932</b>	<b>Raymond Tomhafe</b>
<b>1932-1933</b>	<b>John Stueve</b>
<b>1933-1934</b>	<b>Ray J. Knipple</b>
<b>1934-1935</b>	<b>William Huenke</b>



**1935-1936** Walter Grothaus  
**1936-1938** Harry Vornholt  
**1938-1939** Francis Hickman  
**1939-1940** John Stueve  
**1940-1941** Herman J. Laut  
**1941-1942** Lewis Poppe  
**1942-1943** Herman J. Laut  
**1943-1944** Carl Pape, Sr.  
**1944-1946** Harris Sharp  
**1946-1947** Herman J. Laut  
**1947-1948** Robert Weinberg, Jr.  
**1948-1950** Wilbur F. Hegemier  
**1950-1951** Orville Ruedeusch  
**1951-1953** Gregore Gast  
**1953-1954** Ray J. Knipple  
**1954-1955** Myron L. Kuck  
**1955-1956** Dale Fledderjohn  
**1956-1957** Paul Pape  
**1957-1958** Richard Wiedeman  
**1958-1959** Ray J. Knipple  
**1959-1960** Luther Hirschfeld  
**1960-1961** Richard Youngs  
**1961-1962** Douglas W. Burris  
**1962-1963** Alvin Dammeyer  
**1963-1964** Walter W. Melter  
**1964-1965** John A. Ahlers  
**1965-1966** Lester Howe  
**1966-1967** James W. Cox  
**1967-1969** James Donnerberg  
**1969-1970** Donald H. Greiwe  
**1970-1971** Jerry Lutterbeck  
**1971-1972** Lester Howe  
**1972-1973** Michael A. Ahlers  
**1973-1975** Nathan Hirschfeld  
**1975-1976** Les Eckert  
**1976-1977** Dennis Wentz  
**1977-1978** William T. Phlipot  
**1978-1979** Stanley Shuster  
**1979-1981** William Moore  
**1981-1983** Harold Krieg  
**1983-1984** Warren E. Rempe  
**1984-1985** Michael Suchland

**1985-1987** Lewis Bertke  
**1987-1989** Jerry Koeper  
**1989-1990** Nick Dicke  
**1990-1991** Larry Rismiller  
**1991-1992** Dennis Bushman  
**1992-1993** Dennis Gruebmeier  
**1993-1994** Larry Busse  
**1994-1995** Bob Ziegenbusch  
**1995-1996** Larry Rismiller  
**1996-1997** Nick Dicke  
**1997-1998** Roland Dicke  
**1998-1999** John Knost  
**1999-2000** Kris Kuck  
**2000-2002** Jim Stafford  
**2002-2003** Paul Maurer  
**2003-2005** John Knost  
**2005-2006** Paul Dwenger  
**2006-2007** Mike Homan  
**2007-2008** Dale Heitkamp  
**2008-2010** Roland Dicke  
**2010-2011** Paul Dwenger  
**2011-2013** Nick Dicke  
**2013-2014** Charles Sutherland  
**2014-2015** Mike Homan  
**2015-2016** Dale Heitkamp  
**2016-2018** Mike Homan  
**2018-2020** Dale Heitkamp

This year -2019-is the Centennial Celebration for the American Legion. The motto adopted for this milestone is "The legacy of the last 100 years can help guide the next 100 years."

Today there are nearly 2 million members of the American Legion with more than 12,000 Posts.

Congratulations to this organization and our local Post 241 for all the good work they have accomplished in 100 years of continuous service.



## **SOME FACTS ABOUT THE WWI UNIFORMS IN OUR MUSEUM DISPLAY**

During the past year we have featured articles about the Centennial of WWI. In this article we would like to focus on some basic facts about the WWI uniforms that our hometown men wore in their battle for freedom.

### **THE DOUGHBOY UNIFORM 1917-1918**

The United States Army decided to change its uniforms after the 1898 Spanish American War. In 1906 a British Army tailor was hired to improve the service uniform. The blue uniforms went away and new tunics appeared, made of light brown wool and fully lined, with four patch pockets and a stand-up collar. The tunic, developed in 1912, was cut to give the soldier a fitted look with matching pants and resembled the British Army uniforms.



**Leo Sunderman wearing the OD (olive drab) wool uniform and “overseas” cap. 1918-1919.**

Leo Sunderman was born in New Bremen February 22, 1893 to Wilhelm Heinrich and Katherine Schulhoff Sunderman. He entered the Army on May 27, 1918 and served in 13 Service Company Signal Corps, then Company C 324 F Signal Battalion. Private Sunderman was honorably discharged on January 28, 1919. He married Mae Miller and they had one daughter, Merilee.

A wool “overseas” cap replaced the “Montana” campaign hat in 1917 when the doughboys went to France. This cap could be stored in a pocket when the helmet was worn. The corps insignia disk was worn on the left side. The overseas cap later became the garrison cap.

The Doughboy’s uniform consisted of socks, long underwear, a pullover shirt, trousers and tunic with high collar.

The early tunics have two rows of stitching on the cuff and a full lining. Later tunics were also lined but have only one row of stitching on the cuffs and coarser wool.



**The picture shows the sleeve of Raymond Tomhafe’s uniform with double stitching. Raymond entered the army early in September of 1917. (Information about Raymond Tomhafe can be found on the next page.)**

After the U.S. Army entered the war in 1917, the Yanks were soon known as *Doughboys*. There are many explanations for this but two most commonly used are that the name came from the brown color of the uniforms that resembled dough. Others believe that the name originated from the 1916 mission in Mexico when the foot soldiers wore the new uniform and encountered white adobe dust, giving them the name of “adobes” or “dobies.”

New insignia and smaller chevrons of various colors were authorized for the Doughboy uniforms.

On the lower left sleeve a chevron, with point facing down, was placed for each 6 months of service overseas.

The chevron for rank was placed on the left sleeve halfway between the shoulder and elbow, with point facing up.

On the lower right sleeve a chevron was placed for each time the soldier was gassed or wounded.

Upon honorable discharge the soldier was issued three red chevrons. If the soldier intended to wear the uniform after discharge, the red chevron replaced the rank chevron. He was welcome to wear the uniform as long he desired





because the red chevron identified him as a civilian. This chevron protected him from being charged with impersonating a soldier after discharge.

The **puttees** were another important item of the uniform. The woolen leg wrap provided support and prevented debris and water from entering the

boots and pants.

Canvas or leather leggings also served the purpose of preventing debris and water from entering the boots and pants.



**Roscoe Lanfersieck** wearing the campaign hat and canvas leggings.

**Roscoe Lanfersieck**, born New Bremen on February 19, 1894, was the son of John and Cora Behm Lanfersieck. He entered the army on May 27, 1918 at 159 Depot Brigade and was assigned to Institution Company 2 Medical Department Camp Greenleaf. Private 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lanfersieck served in AEF August 1918-May 1919. He was honorably discharged in June 1919. He died November 17, 1956.

Over the past year, we have also printed letters from New Bremen soldiers that were preserved in the *New Bremen Sun* newspaper. It was a time of great sacrifice, death and fear for the future. It was also a time of patriotism, change and hope for the future.

The New Bremen Historic Association is grateful to the families who have donated military uniforms for our museum.

We hope that you will visit the Military Display at the Luelleman House Museum this summer and see these interesting uniforms.

If you have any questions or comments about New Bremen's WWI service men, please contact us.



**WWI Gas Mask**

**Raymond C. Tomhafe** was born on August 29, 1894. He entered the Army on 9/18/1917. He served as a Corporal with Company M, 367 Motor Truck Unit, 408th Motor Supply Train. He served in the AEF 1/31/1918 to 6/19/1919 and saw action at Aisne, Montdidier-Noyon, Aisne-Marne, Somme Offensive and the Muese-Argonne in World War I. He was discharged honorably 6/26/1919. He married Madella Uetrecht and had one son, John. He was a truck driver for the White Mountain Creamery in New Bremen. He died on October 8, 1956.



## EARLY EYEGLASSES



**A sample of early eyeglasses in our museum.**

All of these eyeglasses have been donated to and preserved in our museum. Unfortunately we don't know much of their history. What we do know is how important they were to their owners. Corrected vision most certainly improved their lives.

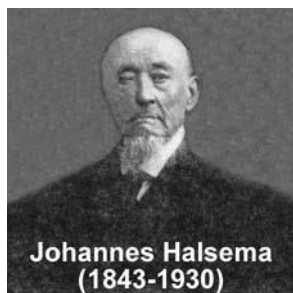
According to a Jan. 11, 1999 article in Newsweek magazine, eyeglasses are one of the most important inventions of the past 2000 years.

Where did the people of early New Bremen get their glasses? Most were probably purchased locally. It was not until 1919 that Ohio first regulated the practice of optometry with a licensure law. Before that date the field was very unorganized. There were few professional requirements and anyone could sell glasses. Locally they could be obtained from traveling spectacle salesmen or jewelry stores that offered optical services.

There were two such jewelry stores in New Bremen both on West Monroe Street. In the 1904 New Bremen Business Directory both Fred A. Ende and John Halsema are listed as jewelers and opticians.

These two gentlemen enhanced the vision and thus the lives of many early New Bremen residents. In addition, as their brief biographies show, these men and their families made New Bremen their home, contributing much to our history.

**Johannes (John) Halsema** (1843 - 1930) was



born in the Netherlands. In his village he was trained to make and repair clocks and watches despite having lost an eye as a child when he fell running with open scissors.

As a young man in the Netherlands, he married

Fronica Dutmers and soon after they decided to immigrate to America and settled in New Bremen.

Upon arrival in New Bremen in 1874 he opened a jewelry and clock making shop on West Monroe Street. In 1887 Johannes and Fronica applied for US citizenship and changed their names to John and Veronica. By 1889 his business included jewelry, clocks and spectacles.

They were the parents of nine children, all born in New Bremen. Six of their children reached adulthood, all graduates of NBHS - John Cornelius, Lucius, Eusebius "Jay", Bernard "Ben", Geciena and Elizabeth.

The New Bremen Sun called John Halsema "A Reliable Jeweler." ...*Mr. Halsema is a skilled, practical watchmaker and jeweler and those who leave work in this line with him are certain to have it well attended to. Besides this, his prices are always reasonable. Optical goods are a specialty... Our heartiest recommendations can well be given to J. Halsema, the "old reliable" jeweler.* (New Bremen Sun, 4/15/1893)

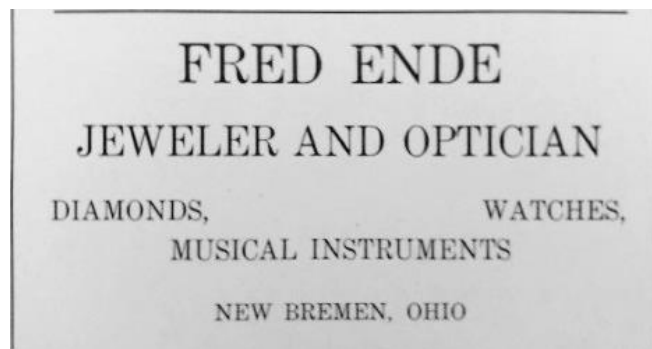
**Fred A. Ende, Jr.** (1867 - 1951) Born in New York, he came to New Bremen in 1873 with his parents where his father, Fred A. Ende, Sr., was a finisher at the Bakhaus & Kuenzel Woolen Mills.

Fred, Jr. was apprenticed at an early age to Fred Weyandt, under whom he learned the watch-making trade. In 1887 he bought the Weyandt store, which he operated under his own name, and was a jeweler and optometrist in New Bremen for many years.

In 1891 he married Georgiana Laut and their only son Elmer was born in 1892.

Elmer, an NBHS graduate in 1910, pursued a career in music. He married Grace Boesel in 1919 and was Professor of Music at University of Akron for 27 years. Upon his retirement in 1957, he and his wife returned to New Bremen and lived in the family home on S. Main Street.

In 1922 Fred Ende sold the jewelry store to his nephew, Melville H. Laut, but continued as an optometrist until 1950.

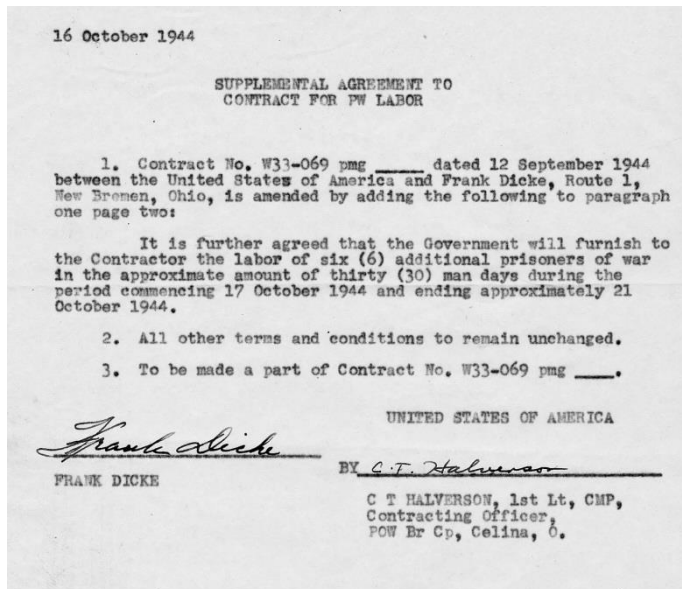


**Advertisement in 1913 *Mirage* yearbook.**



## World War II

### Services of German POWs



This is a sample of paperwork needed to acquire manual labor in 1944. The paperwork, donated to the NBHA by Dan Dicke, inspired us to research information about the Prisoner-of-war branch camp in our area during WWII.

The POW time record paperwork lists the date, names of the workers, time worked and the job "silo filling."

Dan shared that when the POWs went out to work, they were not supposed to be fed by the farmers, but his Grandfather always gave the German men some bread, cheese and summer sausage.

In the summer of 1944, WWII was raging. D-Day in June followed by the invasion of Normandy left few men home to tend the fields.

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WAR PLANTS  
NEED YOU!**

The White Mountain Creamery Co.  
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**Men or Women—Full Time or Part Time  
Apply at Any of Your Local Factories**

**You Will Receive a Call!  
BY A HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SOLICITOR**

**We Need Your Help!**

(New Bremen Sun,  
4/13/1944)

A critical shortage of manpower in Ohio was recognized and addressed by the War Manpower Commission in the summer of 1944 with the use of prisoners-of-war.

Prisoner-of war camps were established in the United States in 1943. Every state except Nevada, North Dakota and Vermont had at least one camp. In May of 1945 there were over 425,000 POWs, mostly German, in the United States.

Ohio's POW camp was established in 1943 at Camp Perry on the edge of Lake Erie and held about 8000 prisoners until it closed in 1946.

The following article from the New Bremen Sun describes the plan for using prisoners-of-war to fill the labor need.

#### PRISONERS

#### TO REPLACE DEPLETED RANKS OF MALE WORKERS IN OHIO

Asked By Ohio Administrative Office War Manpower  
Commission, Columbus

Ohio's labor reservoir has been practically depleted of male workers and because of this condition the War Manpower Commission is asking appropriate War Department authorities to make available 5500 prisoners of war for seasonal use in Ohio canneries, fertilizer plants and similar establishments as authorized by provisions of the Geneva Conference.

There is no definite assurance as yet, however, that this number will be forthcoming. At present, approximately 1100 prisoners are in the state.

E. L. Keenan, Ohio WMC director stated May 1<sup>st</sup>, in a communication forwarded to all local offices of the WMC and its United States Employment Service that prisoners if made available, would be used only in certain restricted occupations in the food or other rural industries.

"We are informing labor organizations, employers and the general public," Keenan added, "that we are not planning to use prisoners of war at the expense of civilian workers. On the other hand we cannot afford to let precious food rot, or in any way retard the 'Food for Victory' program because of labor shortages."

Requests for prisoners originate with employers, who must commit themselves in writing to pay the prevailing wage rates, and include a statement that use of prisoners meets with approval of union locals having contractual agreements with the respective employers. WMC will investigate fully before taking action in any case where a specific union local objects.

Keenan stresses the fact that employers agree to pay the prevailing wages for services of prisoners of war. There has been considerable misunderstanding on this

point. The money earned by prisoners is not turned over to them. Instead, they are issued tokens equal in value to 80 cents a daily which can be used for barter purposes at the camp Post Exchange. The remaining earnings, that is the difference between 80 cents a day and the prevailing rate, are retained by the War Department and used for camp maintenance.

Occupations in which prisoners may be used are limited by the Geneva Conference. Among other things, it prescribes that prisoners must be segregated from civilian workers, and they are not to be used in hazardous work.

WMC will forward requests to the War Department for further consideration only after it has satisfied itself that labor resources within commuting distance of the job have been exhausted. *(New Bremen Sun, 5/4/1944)*

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In the summer of 1944 it became apparent that Mercer County and nearby areas were in need of manual labor. Extra hands were needed to harvest the crops or the crops would be lost.

The War Manpower Commission authorities to allow the prisoners-of-war to assist in the manual labor needed.

Camp Perry established three branch POW camps to assist in the harvest that year. Bowling Green, Defiance and Celina were chosen as the sites for those camps.

The POW branch camp established in Celina is described in the following articles from the *New Bremen Sun*.

### **CANNING JOB AT CELINA POSSIBILITY FOR GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR 4-H Club Camp May Be Converted Into Prison Camp For Nazis**

Possibility of a prison camp being established in Mercer County was disclosed in a news item appearing in the Lima News quoting Acting County Agent Russell B. Kline of Mercer County.

The news item said that officials of certain canneries in Celina and St. Henry had said they would use prisoners of war if they were available but that officials of the canneries at Rockford and Ohio City had declined to comment.

Kline also is quoted as saying that army officials checked facilities at the 4-H club camp four miles east of Celina to see if the camp could be established there. With the prisoners would come about 70 American soldiers and officers to guard the Nazis, the county farm agent said. A high fence would be built about the camp with watch towers at strategic points, should the 4-H camp be converted into a prisoner-of-war camp for the period ending about October 15.

Prisoners would likely be brought to the camp from Camp Perry, Kline is quoted as saying.

No information on the proposed prisoner-of-war camp at the lake has been given.

The 4-H camp mentioned as a likely site for the prison-of-war camp is situated on the north shore of Lake St. Marys, west of Idlewild. *(New Bremen Sun, July 20, 1944)*

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### **WAR PRISONERS**

#### **From Camp Perry Coming To Celina, Bowling Green and Defiance**

Establishment of three side camps to house approximately 1500 German prisoners of war to aid the critical labor shortage in Northwestern Ohio was announced by the post commanding officer, Camp Perry, Ohio, Colonel Harold D. Woolley.

The aide camps will be set up at Bowling Green, Celina and Defiance, and will be under the control of Camp Perry, with American officers and enlisted personnel in charge. Some of the camps are expected to be in operation by August 1.

Italian Service Unit personnel, now in training at Camp Perry for engineer companies, will be utilized to place the former sites of 4-H Club and CCC camps in shape for housing the German prisoners.

First priority for prisoner of war labor will be to the highly critical agricultural areas in the immediate vicinity of the camps, Army officials said. All labor requests are handled by the War Manpower Commission and the county agricultural extension agents.

Tents will be used to house the Germans at Celina and Bowling Green while unoccupied buildings at the old CCC camp at Defiance will be utilized.

Present plans call for 300 prisoners to be sent to Celina, 600 at Bowling Green and 600 at Defiance.

War Department regulations provide that prisoners will not be transported more than 50 miles from any base or side camp, or stay longer than 12 hours from an Army enclosure and must be returned each night to the prison stockade. *(New Bremen Sun 7/27/1944)*

The Prisoner-of-war program ended after the war and the Celina camp became Harbor Point 4-H Camp again. The camp is still in operation.

#### **SWAP HELP ACROSS BORDER**

Farmers are used to swapping help, but this summer two countries, the United States and Canada, will swap grain harvest help back and forth across the border, the U. S. Department of Agriculture announces. With border crossing formalities suspended, Canadian threshing outfits will help harvest the western great plains crops until September 15, and American machines and crews later will reciprocate in the Canadian prairie provinces until December 15.

*( New Bremen Sun, July 13, 1944)*

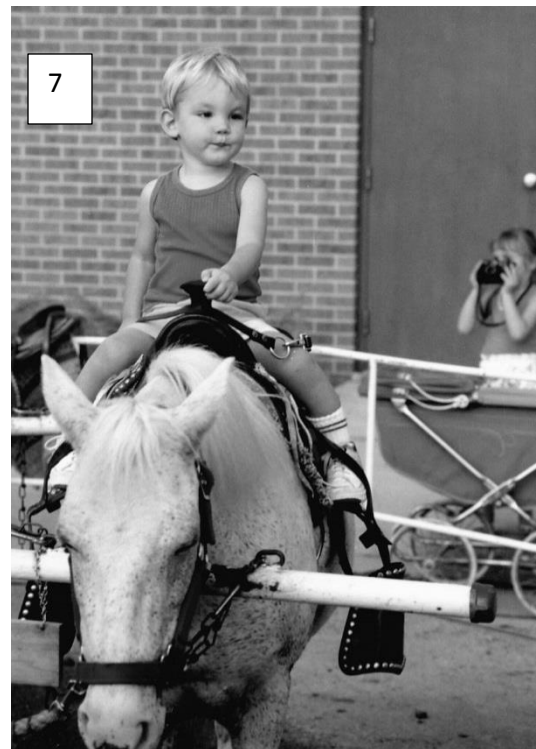


## HISTORY MYSTERY

### Memories of Bremenfest 1989

That is the history! Now the mystery is- who are these people? Please e-mail, mail or telephone your answers for each picture. We know two of the people in photo #6. We do not know the people in the other photos and would appreciate your help with this.

Our phone numbers and email addresses are on page 2. Or mail your answers to NBHA, P.O. Box 73, New Bremen, OH 45869



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## **Memorial Bench Program Begins**



Niles Harris and Lynne Harris Thompson greeted friends on June 1, 2019 to dedicate their memorial bench that overlooks the Komminsk Legacy Park. Niles shared memories about the family’s “Scrap Yard” that was in operation from 1898 to 1965. Lynne shared their family history in pictures.

*If you would like to purchase a Memorial Bench,  
contact the New Bremen Village Office.*

## **UPCOMING NBHA EVENTS**

The Luelleman House & the Pape House Museums will be open on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month, April through October, from 1-3 PM.

(The museums can also be opened at other times by appointment. Call any NBHA board member with your request.)

## **UPCOMING NEW BREMEN EVENTS**

- **July 27, 2019 Firemen’s Picnic**
- **August 16-18, 2019 Bremenfest**
- **September 27-29, 2019 Pumpkinfest**