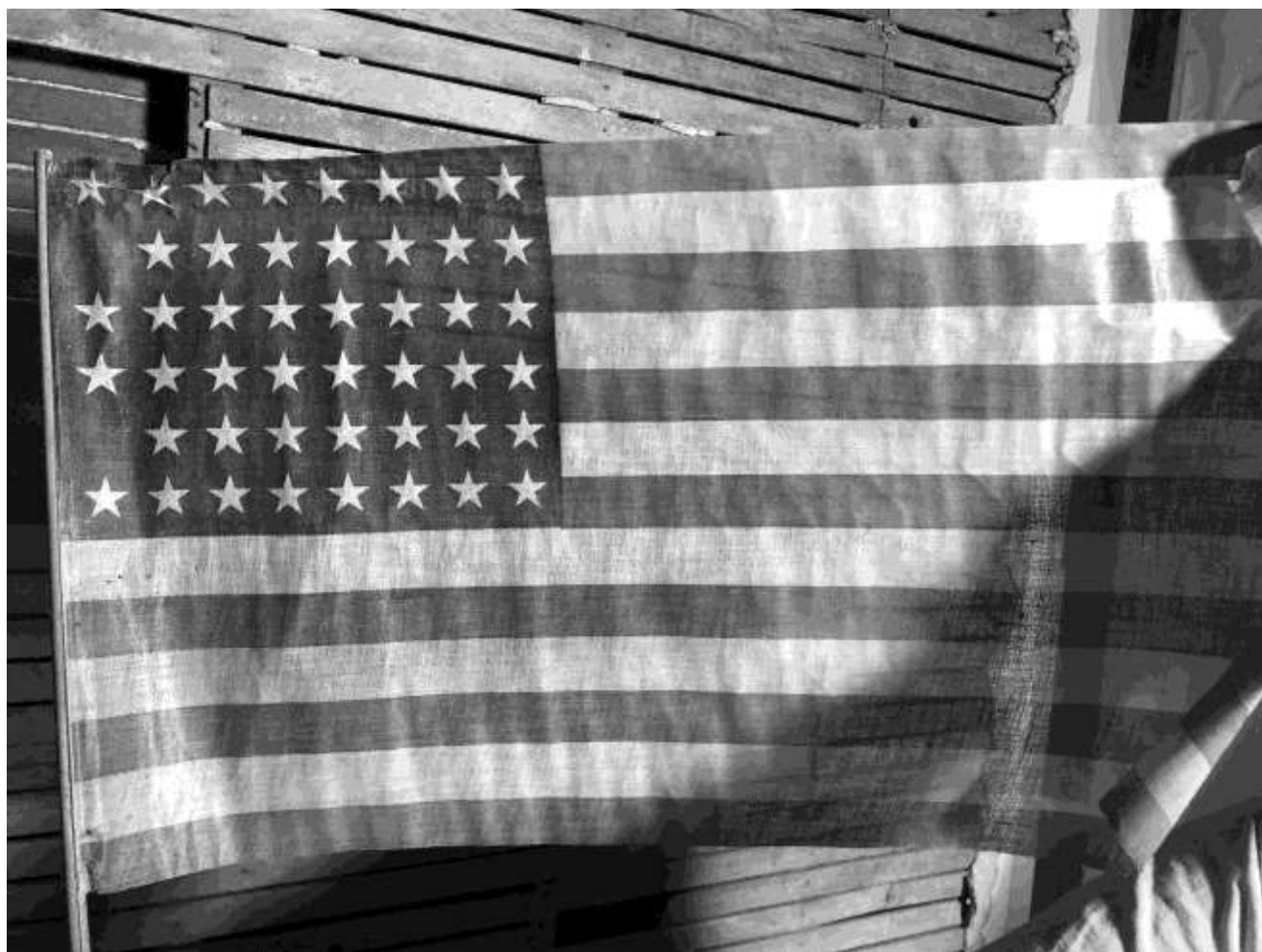




THE TOWPATH

Published Quarterly
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THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION
JULY 2020

HIDDEN TREASURE!



Rob and Denise Stauffer recently found an interesting artifact in their New Bremen farmhouse walls. When removing kitchen plaster in March, they discovered a rolled up 46-star U.S. flag behind the lath boards. The 46 stars date the flag 1907-1911. Oklahoma became the 46th state in 1907, and New Mexico was the 47th state in 1912. Ohioan William Howard Taft was inaugurated as the 27th President in 1909.

The flag had fallen into a wall cavity from the attic above. The couple plan to frame and display their find when renovation is completed. Denise is the 6th generation to live on the family farm, originally purchased by German immigrants Rudolph and Karoline Bertke in 1874.

We are happy to feature historic items from our members! Contact Gen or Joyce to share an item.

“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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NEW MEMBERS

Tamara Fullerton

MEMBER DEATHS

5/3/2020 **Jack Moeller**

6/3/2020 **Charles Garman (CM)**
(CM=Charter Member LM=Life Member)

DONATIONS

Jason This

Stanley & Dorothy Hirschfeld

Karl & Ethel Mesloh

Mary Dickman Lirones

Monthly Raffle Winners

March-\$100.00-Wayne Steineman (NB), \$75.00-Marlene Klose (NB), \$50.00-Mark Turner (NY)

April-\$100.00-Pam Elking (OH), \$75.00-Craig Hirschfeld (CO), \$50.00-Doug Roediger (OH)

May-\$100.00-Ed Schwartz (NB), \$75.00- Kathy Topp (NB), \$50.00-Sue Schmackers (NB)

June-\$100.00-Joann Bruns (NB), \$75.00-Ann Bornhorst (NB), \$50.00-Mike Suchland (NB).

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

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)

It is now possible for you to access the most recent issues of *The Towpath* online. To do this we will need your email address to set up your account for online access. To do this, send an email to info@newbremenhistory.org and request online access. This email goes to Jack Gilberg, our webmaster, and he will set you up with a temporary password in a reply email giving you login information and instructions how to access the *Towpath*.

Items Recently Donated to NBHA

Kuenzel Mills and Kuenzel family assorted items, 1916 NBHS class picture **by Dan Kirby**, 1940 Huenke for Commissioner license plate **by Mike Staton**, Assorted vintage cameras **by Julie Paul**, 5 boxes of Komminsk family photos & papers **by Bill Wentz**.

Visit our website
www.newbremenhistory.org



NBHA NEWS & LETTERS



New Bremen history. Kudos and a “well done” to all involved. **Nick Paffett**

Just read the recent Towpath (April 2020). I didn’t expect for you to run two stories, but I’m not complaining either. After the issue came out, I heard from a distant cousin I hadn’t heard from in several years. So that was nice. I was hoping I would reconnect or make new connections.

These are strange times we’re in. I just returned from a nice, long walk. The sun was bright, the clouds were high, and the flowers were out. All in all, a beautiful day—as long as you didn’t give much thought as to why there was so little traffic and so few people. Hope things are fine up your way. Thanks for running my stories. Best regards, **David Meyers (Ohio)**.

I just finished reading my copy of *The Towpath* that Gen sent me. Thank you so much for sending that to me. What a thoughtful idea.

There are many items in the publication that I enjoyed. Here are some of them:

The article about Edith Blanke Wissman was so inspiring to read due to her clear wisdom on happiness. I was delighted to read that she has truly enjoyed her life, and found meaning and joy through creating a strong sense of community in many different areas. And it sounds like New Bremen was a wonderful place to develop and sustain all of these meaningful relationships. (Her comments remind me of all the psychology research that has shown how central a sense of community is for happiness/meaning in life.)

On a less profound note, I liked the little comment in another part of the newsletter describing how a doctor would just open his door to the waiting room and ask in the room of patients “Who is next?” How things have changed.

Notwithstanding, the historic pandemic images and public health announcements for cholera and other diseases were fascinating to see, and made me feel like not much has changed since 1849! It made me pause for a moment to think about people dealing with pandemics in prior times. That was the most common I’ve ever felt to someone in the 19th century.

Also, reading about the description of New Bremen as filled with pretty homes and a canal helped to decorate the picture I have already begun forming for the day that my mom and I make our road trip. I wish we could come now. **Heather Adams (Massachusetts)**

I enjoyed reading this issue (April 2020). Very interesting. You girls are doing a good job. **Marvin Heitkamp (New Bremen)**

Thanks for all your hard work on New Bremen History. **Teresa Harris (Colorado)**

We had a lot of fun with the Nicknames Quiz in the recent Towpath. Once again the Towpath was great! **Karen Eckert (New Bremen)**.

From Website: Ruff is a German name from Rudolph. It is High German for Famous wolf. My family is from the German state of Baden –Wurttemberg. They came to US in the 1700s and now live in South & North Carolina. I really liked the article about German names on website. **Robert Ruff**

Last month (April), the **New Bremen CIC** partnered with the **New Bremen Historic Association** for a Community Scavenger Hunt. Participants who submitted correct answers were entered into a drawing for \$10 gift certificates to one of our local restaurants.

The winners were:

Ted Meyer – gift certificate to Speedway Lanes
Andy Bernhold – gift certificate to Hog Wild
Isaac Hurley – gift certificate to Casa Lupita
Tim Bertke – gift certificate to 17 West
Mia Hirschfeld – gift certificate to Bolly’s

A big thanks to Rodney & Abi Suchland and Angela Hamberg for putting this all together.

The Community Scavenger Hunt can be read and printed at:

<https://newbremen.com/community-savenger-hunt/>

From Robert Gilberg: His submission of “Tick Tock” has been accepted for publication in the San Diego Writers and Editors Guild (SDWEG) 2020 anthology, *The Gilded Pen*. **Congratulations, Bob!** (“Tick Tock” can be read in the *Towpath* October 2019)

I was interrupted before completely finishing the last issue. It was just last night when I read your nice piece about Dr. Fledderjohann that I saw you’d included an excerpt from *The Last Road Rebel’s* short story, *The Carbide Cannon Incident*. It was way cool to see it and re-read it so many years after writing it. Thank you for including it and for the plug. **Bob Gilberg (California)**

I understand that during my birth, July 16, 1935, there was an eclipse of the moon, and Dr. Fledderjohann and Dad sat on the cistern cap (just outside the bedroom), watching the eclipse, as Mom was “doing her thing.” Needing a birth certificate many years later, I discovered at the Court House, no record of me? Enjoy your efforts.

Janice Quellhorst Dorsten (St. Marys)

Editor: Sounds like someone forgot to file the paperwork of Janice’s birth. Hope it was not too difficult to get that fixed. Janice is the daughter of Wilbert and Helen (Luelleman) Quellhorst. Helen was the daughter of Wm. H. F. and Ida (Heinfeld) Luelleman. Janice is a graduate of NBHS Class of 1953. She married William Dorsten of St. Marys.

And yes, there was a total lunar eclipse on July 16, 1935.

I wanted to thank you for the copy of *The Towpath* you sent me. It arrived the other day and I can see why you’re very proud of it. It’s a most interesting and informative avenue into

...I really look forward to the next issue of the Towpath. I love the historic articles that you publish and always look forward to your "History Mystery." It brings back a lot of good memories. Keep up the good work! **Tom Fricke (Indiana)**

...I really enjoy the Towpath. I remember being taken to Dr. Fledderjohann's office when I was injured falling off my Cousin Dorothy's bike. It was across the from my grandparent's home on S. Main Street. Dr. Fledderjohann patched me up and sent me on my way.

I also member my Grandma Dickman sending me to the Arcade for cottage cheese which she put in a large bowl and sugared it. **Mary Dickman Lirones (Michigan)**

NBHA NEWS

ANNUAL MEETING POSTPONED

The Corona (Covid-19) Virus Pandemic has altered many life styles and future plans for all of us. Ohio's protocols are in place and specify what we must do to get through this pandemic and stay healthy. Our NBHA Board wisely postponed the Annual Dinner Meeting in March 2020 and cancelled board meetings in April and May.

The Board did meet on June 2. One item discussed by the Board was a new date for the Annual Dinner Meeting. With hope that the Annual Meeting can be held this fall, the Board will review the matter next month.

President David Maurer would like to remind all persons who have purchased tickets for the 2020 Annual Dinner Meeting that their tickets may be used when the dinner is rescheduled. If anyone would rather have their money refunded, they may contact a board member.

The following is a list of accomplishments by the NBHA Board of Trustees and appointed Board Members in 2019:

NBHA in 2019

- Conducted business meetings and drew winners for the Raffle Fund-raiser each month.
- Conducted the Annual Dinner Meeting in March at the Holy Redeemer Fellowship Hall.
- Published the Towpath each quarter.
- Curators accepted and documented artifact donations.
- Board Member and Genealogist Tom Braun assisted many persons with genealogy research and placed obituaries in Library.
- Established a committee to sort and store collections.
- Installed new locks on doors at both museums.
- Maintained lawns and flower beds at both museum locations.
- Completed Repair and Maintenance to buildings.
- At Luelleman House-repair of siding & broken window, painted summer kitchen & barn windows, painted outhouse, AC repair.
- At Pape House -had new standing seam roof installed.
- Thanked "History Mystery Man" Don Radebaugh for visiting New Bremen and making the video.
- Hired Jack Gilberg to develop new website.
www.newbremenhistory.org
- Established Work Days to clean museums and attic of Luelleman House.

- Opened both museums on 4th Sunday, April through October. Also opened museums at other times by appointment.
- Co-hosted with Auglaize County Historical Society "Our Men & Women in Air & Space" featuring Justin Luedeke at Lockkeepers House.
- Provided Picture Show of Old New Bremen at Elmwood Assisted Living Facility.
- Participated in Auglaize County Fair historical display and provided golf cart rides.
- Supported Chamber of Commerce in managing the Annual Christmas Tree Festival.

Obituary

Jack R. Moeller, age 94

Of Kansas City, MO, formerly of Rochester, MI and New Bremen, OH died on Sunday, May 3, 2020 at a hospital in Kansas City, KS after a brief illness. He was born on July 28, 1925 in New Bremen, the son of the late Raymond W. "Caddy" and Alfrieda M. (Vornholt) Moeller. On June 13, 1949, he married Hilda E. Roben on the campus of Oberlin College, and she died on January 2, 2016. Surviving are his children, Susan Moeller of Kansas City, MO, and Kurt (Judi) Moeller of Ellington., CT, and his three grandchildren: Katie (Blake) Billmyre, John Moeller and wife Celine Croft, and Chloe (Dan) Kardos; a brother and sister-in-law, James (Pat) Moeller, and a sister-in-law Ruth Moeller, all of New Bremen and also several nieces and nephews. Along with his parents and wife, Jack was preceded in death by his siblings and in-laws: Tom Moeller, Pauline (Vernon) Dunham, Louise (Charles) Hay, and Verneda Moeller.

Jack was a 1943 graduate of New Bremen High School. After graduation, he was drafted in September to fight in WWII. He served as a Staff Sergeant in the United States Army, serving in a support unit to General Patton's unit until his return home in 1946. After the war, he went on to further his education at Oberlin College, graduating in 1949, and later graduating from Princeton University with his Ph.D. in 1955. Following his graduation from Princeton, he took a fellowship in Germany. He spent most of his career teaching at Oakland University in Rochester Hills, MI. He was a German Professor and the department chair from 1964 until his retirement in 1993. It was in this time that he was also involved in writing many German language textbooks for use in high school and college classes. Jack loved to write, and it was his real passion in life. Outside of writing, Jack was an accomplished pianist, he had an appreciation for the arts, and he also loved to play Bridge.

Jack will be inurned next to his wife, Hilda, at the Grand Lake National Cemetery in Holly, MI at a later date. Gilberg-Hartwig Funeral Home is assisting the family locally, and condolences to the family can be left online at www.gilberghartwigfh.com

The Life and Times of New Bremen Pioneers --- The First Fifty Years

Around 1830 some of our heritage families were planning a life changing event as they immigrated to the United States. At that time Societies were developed to organize immigrants with similar interests. The Bremen Society was formed in Cincinnati in 1832 by 33 immigrants from Germany. Their plan was to buy land and settle a new town to be named Bremen. The Society sent two of their members as scouts to select land for the town. At that time the plans to extend the Miami Erie Canal from Cincinnati north to Toledo were well known and made land along the route prime real estate.

Traveling north from Piqua along the Auglaize trail the scouts came to the fertile Black Swamp district and found suitable land on the dividing ridge called the Loramie summit. Here the land was partially cleared by Native American people before they left Ohio. Ten acres were purchased from the government for one dollar per acre. The land was surveyed and divided into 102 lots with one lot reserved for each of the members of the



Bremen Society. The plat was recorded in Mercer County on June 11, 1833.

Then the building of Bremen could begin. One of the scouts stayed at the site of the settlement and began building the first log hut. The other scout returned to

Cincinnati. Six families of the Society agreed to accompany him to Bremen to become the first settlers. The group required two weeks to travel the 120 miles.



An 1830s era log cabin located in New Bremen. (Relocated and restored by Crown Equipment to remind us what New Bremen looked like in the 1830s.)

Upon arrival all six of the families lived in the 12 by 14 foot log hut until they could build their own cabins. Soon other members of the Bremen Society followed and the task of building the town began as they chose their

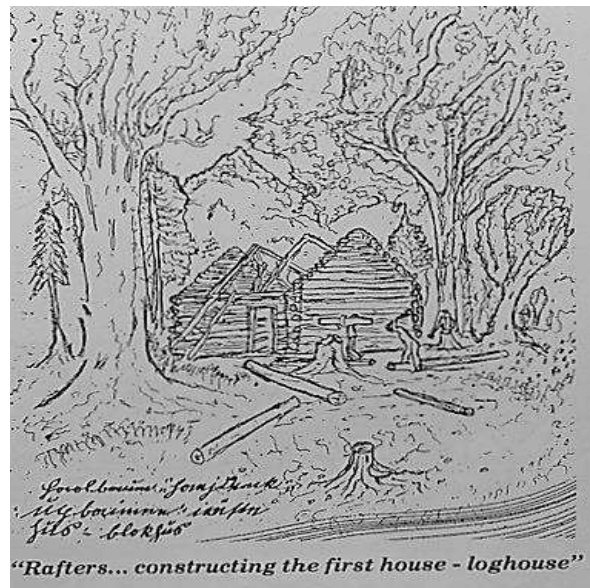
lots. Some people built on their lots while others sold them and bought land to farm.

Within the town the first public building was a log school house that also served as a church. At the end of the first year about 35 families were living in town or farming nearby. In 1835 the name was changed to New Bremen when the post office was established.

Two years later New Bremen was incorporated as a village under the provisions of a bill passed by the state legislature. The village became governed by council and a mayor in 1837. During the beginning years, settlers labored together to clear the land and construct homes. As early as 1836 they banded together to form a volunteer fire department.

Businesses arose along Main Street to meet the needs of the residents. The first was a general store opened in 1836 and later advertised in the *Sun* newspaper as the oldest business house in the village.

Other pioneers bought acres for farming. They worked to clear the land, and then build houses and barns from the logs. A first person account of this time comes from Liwwät Böke (1807-1882) a pioneer who with her husband Natz emigrated from Germany in 1834 to settle in Mercer County, Ohio. Her writings and drawings from that time are of great historic value. The work was done with quill pens she made herself. Preserved and translated from German, her work was compiled by Luke Knapke into a book titled *Liwwät Böke, Pioneer* published in 1987 by the Minster Historical Society.



This excerpt from the book tells her thoughts about starting to clear the land and building their home on the 80 acres they bought in 1835.

"It is indeed an important notion to describe how hard and tedious it was, the time it took to clear the land of all these trees and underbrush. The forest is a vast,

attractive, wonderful sight to see and enjoy, but that one cannot eat or wear."

She says that "*...the farmer must also be a hunter; his wife and children depend on him for venison and all food. The usual food is wild game which we take or kill or trap in the woods or creek.*"

As time passed the Böke farm and others in the area were developed as opportunities became available. In another passage she noted, "*...between the stumps we sow corn oats and rye, and I have a small garden. Hay we cannot sow yet there is not yet room. Indian corn is very important for our eating in winter. We planted an orchard. We now have a horse and Natz made a harrow of wood.*"

Progress was also occurring in New Bremen much of it due to the Miami and Erie Canal. The canal supplied jobs for the pioneers during construction and operation. It was opened to New Bremen in 1838 and completed from Cincinnati to Toledo in 1846. This initiated a time of prosperity. Businesses and farmers were able to transport their goods to market economically. Pork packing became a major business and large warehouses stored grain for shipment.

Soon new businesses using the water power such as flour, woolen and flax mills appeared along the canal. Still more businesses, hotels and restaurants were needed to accommodate the influx of people. The opening of the canal and businesses led New Bremen to become a bustling hamlet of some 700 people.

In 1849 the settlement was plagued with a cholera outbreak that took more than 150 lives. Those who survived had such disruption of their family life and work that it took years for the town to recover. The census of 1850 shows only a population of 344 in New Bremen. In the next few years the town recovered and the commercial district expanded from Main Street to Monroe Street east to the canal. Frame buildings and some large brick structures replaced log buildings.

The town was enacting more laws. According to town records it became illegal to drag timbers or saw logs along the main streets of town. There was a 25 cents fine for letting your horse stand on the sidewalks.

On the east side of the canal a new town was platted in 1853 named Ober Bremen (Upper Bremen). This town had its own council and mayor. The citizens voted to build a separate town hall, fire department and school.



The main street of Ober Bremen was along Washington Street beside the canal. A rivalry developed between people living on opposite sides of the canal. As the canal began to decline the towns agreed to

cooperate to get the railroad through town.

In 1876 the union of the two towns was accomplished and Ober Bremen was annexed to New

Bremen. A new school named Central (Union) School was built on South Franklin Street in 1878. In that year a total of 858 youth were being educated in the New Bremen School District consisting of the Union School building and the West and North rural school buildings.



New Bremen 1862 map



German Township 1862

New Bremen pioneers had built an impressive village in the first fifty years!
-JDR



DEAR DEER, WHERE ARE YOU?
Under the Eagle's Nest, Fast Asleep!

The following article appeared in *The New Bremen Sun* on May 1, 1952:

**REPORTS CONTINUE OF
DEER OBSERVED IN
NEW BREMEN AREA**

Continued reports are being made of a deer in this area, the animal first having been seen by Emil Vornholt on a farm west of New Bremen. Several deer are known to have been in eastern Auglaize county in recent years but this is the first time any has been reported near New Bremen.

State officials claim Ohio's deer population is increasing. A recent aerial survey by the game management section of the Ohio Division of Wildlife definitely established most of the deer are in Adams, Licking, Vinton, Harrison, Huron, Lake, Medina, Ashtabula, Columbiana and Portage counties.

It is difficult to believe that spotting a deer west of New Bremen became a newsworthy item in 1952. Why is this article significant?

Ohio was covered with massive forests when the Europeans arrived prior to 1803. Deer were abundantly running around Ohio. Ohio's earliest residents, Native Americans, used the deer for food, clothing, shelter and tools.

But according to information from ODNR Division of Wildlife, when Europeans arrived in the early 1800s, there were not only deer but also bears, gray wolves, bison, elk, mountain lions, river otters, beavers, and wild turkeys.

By 1904, all the deer had been killed in Ohio. In just under 100 years the Europeans who settled Ohio had removed the trees and killed the wild animals. The last elk had been killed in 1840.

Deer were reintroduced into Ohio beginning in the 1920s following the lead of other states. With the reintroduction and the natural migration of herds, deer were seen in 28 counties by 1937 and in all counties by 1956.

The first regulated hunting season was in 1943. The first deer hunting allowed in all counties was in 1979. In 2000 the Ohio deer herd was estimated at 800,000. In 2017, the deer herd was listed at 670,000.

In 2020, I see deer frequently by the sides of roads or running across the roads while I am driving.



The Eagle

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

-Alfred Tennyson

Bald eagles were common in Ohio until the forests disappeared thus eliminating the tall trees that they needed for nests. The declining numbers were first noted in 1920.

Only 417 nesting pairs of eagles existed in the lower 48 states in 1963. The Bald Eagle was placed on the endangered species list in 1966. The use of DDT insecticide had decimated the numbers. The pesticide had washed into the rivers and streams and was absorbed by the fish that the eagles depended upon for food. It affected their eggs making them infertile or with very thin shells that destroyed the eaglets. As adults died, they were not replaced.

The numbers of Eagles had dwindled and were on the brink of extinction. A ban was placed on DDT pesticide in 1972.

In 1979 there were only 4 pairs of nesting eagles left in Ohio. The pairs of eagles have slowly increased since that time. In Ohio this year 707 nests have been counted with 4 nests in Auglaize County.

“The bald eagle is a symbol of American strength and resilience,” said Gov. DeWine. “The eagle’s comeback in Ohio and across the country proves that we can overcome any challenge when we work together.”



-G.C.

Goodbye, South Walnut Street School...



Diane Kramer, Elementary School Principal, took members of the NBHA on a final tour of the Elementary/Middle School building on Walnut Street. Demolition will occur later this summer.



The 1929 High School building on Walnut Street. It was replaced in 1999 by the new building on East Monroe Street.



The South Franklin Street school building was in use from 1878 to 1956. It served the elementary students only from 1929-1956.



The elementary school was moved from S. Franklin Street to Walnut Street on September 28, 1956.



Joe Topp, Jim Wilson, Bill Moore, Mark Froning, Stan Topp, Bonnie Quellhorst, Donna Snavelly, Jim Elking, Ann Gossette



Diane Kettler, Sharon Maby, Don Scheer, Larry Gruebmeier

Today was the first school day in 79 years at New Bremen that the first and second grade students failed to show up at the old (Franklin Street) school building. What's more, the teacher didn't even make it. It's neither a case for the health nurse nor the truant officer, however, but one for the moving van.

New Bremen elementary students are in the process of vacating the old grade school which was built in 1877 in favor of their new \$490,000 building. The new unit is located across town and has been added to the (1929) high school building.

Kindergarten, first and second grade students changed schools yesterday, and moving day was scheduled today for the

third, fourth, fifth and sixth graders.

Teachers have been clearing out library books and supplies all week via cars and school buses. The children also make the move by bus and are charged with carrying their own books and supplies. *[Mr. Blanke drove the bus to the new school that day.]*

Once in the new building, teacher and students alike take a tour of the new 14-room structure, hoping to get the "newness" feeling out of their systems as soon as possible so that the classroom routine can start again.

The bond issue for New Bremen's first new school building since the high school was constructed in 1929 was passed in 1954 and was to have been completed by August of this year. Various supply delays held up work, however, and when school started early this month, educators were forced to turn back to the old school. Some classes had to be held in the basement there due to increased enrollment. The old elementary unit is retiring at the age of 79.

(N.B. Sun – 9/28/1956)



The elementary entrance on Plum Street.



**Sandra Berning, Diane Gruebmeier, Susan Salutz,
Karen Moeller, Clarence Kohler, Joe Knost**

A memory: The NBHS Class of 1961 became 8th graders in 1956. I remember feeling demoted and confused that year. The year before, as 7th graders we had been part of the high school and followed the pattern of changing classrooms. Then when we became 8th graders, we were designated middle school students and had to remain in that part of the new building. (Gen Conradi)



Tom Westerbeck, Joe Katterheinrich, Jerry Koeper, Marlene Schoenlein, Sandra Boesel *(Photos by Mildred Ashbaugh)*



An addition in 1968 enlarged the high school building on Walnut Street and served New Bremen high school students until 1999.

When the high School building on East Monroe Street was completed in 1999, the Walnut Street building became home for the middle school students.

The following pictures of the 1929 high school were taken by Don Gagel on our recent visit.



The Library



Gym Floor



The 1929 Gym



Chemistry Lab



Scoreboard

Trophy Case on main floor.



The stairs for many years for many students.

And now some older photos for high school memories...



Meeting in the Library with Miss Burk



A basketball game in the gym



The 1981 Alumni Dinner Meeting



Dodgeball in 1954



Preparing for the Prom in 1954



The High School Student Body in school year 1954-1955



Coming Home

By Bob Gilberg

This year of the Corona Virus,
April 5, 2020.

She's talking about amoebae, zygotes, stamens, pollen, Cambrian layers, capillary action, aquatic life, birds and bees, pollen, trees, mammals vs. reptiles, warm-blooded vs. cold blooded, and more, seemingly all at the same time up there. I'm confused and bored. What do I care about that stuff; I want to talk about dual carburetors, tube headers, and hot ignition systems. This is biology, but I'm a Gearhead; what am I doing here?

I went back to staring out the long line of tall windows next to my row of seats in that second floor, south-east facing classroom. The one where we all took biology from Mrs. Hurley, civics from the school Superintendent, **Mr. Houshower**, or Hush, as we called him, and English Lit. Mrs. Hurley taught us about prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, colons, semicolons, a thing called a dangling participle, conjugation, and other mysteries I forgot by the time the bell rang. And we had to read *Silas Marner*! God, that was boring! 240 pages of dense, Victorian narrative with minimal dialog or punctuation on page after page packed with intimidating WORDS—and no action! No fights or chases, no foul language or sex! I wanted to read *The*



Three Musketeers, or *The Catcher in the Rye*, but the school didn't have them in the curriculum or library. But I read *Mandingo* during the dead hours of my part-time job at the gas station. I could see why they omitted that one in our Literature class....

The only class we had in that room that kept my attention was the civics class taught by Mr. Houshower that every graduating class had to take, and no substitutes. It wasn't so much the dynamic (just kidding) way he taught it, or the subject of our hallowed, three co-equal branches of government and how that worked; it was fear. The fear of getting sideways with Mr. Houshower. As Superintendent, he had all the power: power to wilt you into a dead weed (that biology thing again) with that head back, down-his-long nose stare, or some cutting remark that might as well have neutered you in front of the entire class; or the coup de grâce of being instructed to sit in his office until your mom came to pick you up, hours later after everyone had left school but the teachers. No, you couldn't go home with your friends—not today!

So, except for civics, I stared out those windows. The view wasn't all that great: the baseball field, the grassy

field where we played touch football or soccer, where coach Schauk did a half-gainer trying to show us how to kick the soccer ball in his street shoes and suit during recess, the school bus garage, and farm fields and far-off silos. But I could see better things. Imaginary things I knew about by reading books in the library during study hall.

Who studied in study hall, anyway? I didn't read history or trigonometry or chemistry in study hall; but sailing ships and Cape Horn, or adventures by Englishmen in the Congo, or strange temples and pyramids in Peru! If I could find my way out of that school—by graduation if no other way---but preferably by a lucky meeting with a famous world adventurer at the Dairy Queen—or stumbling onto the set of a movie shoot around our county somewhere and the director yelling, “Hey kid. ... yeah you! Didn't I see you in that class play last week? You could be in my movie. Wanna' audition?” that I'd get to fame and riches—or at least New York or other exotic places.

None of those happened, but I did “act” —using the word loosely—in class plays. In my junior and senior years, I was on stage, dreaming that would be my way to the exotic life I saw for myself out there in the clouds, far beyond the soccer field. Mr. Houshower was the director in our senior class play, “Night of January 16th”. I “starred”—a term also loosely used—in two roles: as Homer Van Fleet, a boozy private investigator, and Larry Reagan, a wealthy low-life with way too much swagger. Hush was amazed seeing me at the audition. Audition, not as in the plural form of the word, but singular. And audition is another loosely used term; grabbing is closer to the truth. In our class of twenty-five students, filled with farmer's kids who only wanted to get out of school so they could be farmers themselves, riding tractors pulling ugly contraptions. Acting wannabes' were scarce and finding enough classmates to fill the cast was always a problem, which resulted in me playing two characters. Those not fancying themselves as actors needed to take care walking too close to the auditorium when the audition was in progress; one was in danger of being grabbed . . . but there was hope that it might help your civics grade.

“Mr. Gilberg, or I should say, Mr. Road Rebel (the Road Rebels was our hometown car club), I am pleased to see you here. You can be in the play if you can remember your lines,” Hush said, almost—but not quite—smiling at me beneath a steely glare through steel-framed glasses, his skeptical curiosity very apparent.

Hush was someone we had to respect for more than being our school Superintendent. He'd been an officer in Army Intelligence in WWII and had been among the first Americans into the concentration camps. Showing his personal collection of photos taken during that experience



was a traditional, key part of his civics lessons on styles of government. His head tilted back, haughtily looking down his long nose in disgust at all undemocratic forms of government and dictators,

and thinking about his photos of piles of corpses, we couldn't miss the point of his lectures. With Stalin lurking behind all the bad news in the newspapers in those days, we didn't need to see or hear much more; those photographs and his narratives were all that was necessary to convince us about our Democracy. We believed Hush turned out more true patriots—those being “us”—than any other high school in the county, and maybe the entire state of Ohio.

Hush also acted in and directed plays in his student years at Bluffton College.

“Mr. Gilberg, you've missed your last three lines. Go down to the boy's locker room and study them and we'll try it again when we do another run-through,” he said sternly to me as I'd blown it again. Tail between my legs, I sulked off stage and down the stairs to the boy's locker room. I lit a Lucky Strike, pulled the script out of my hip pocket and sat down to re-read my lines in the places where I blew them because I was looking at beautiful Judy, my mind filled with longings to date her.

I was doing pretty well on the lines, about half-way through the Lucky Strike, when Ted came down the stairs, threw the door open and yelled, “Mr. Houshower says to put that cigarette out and get back up here!” How the hell did he know about the cigarette? Head down and staring at my feet, I went back up onto the stage.

“I could smell your cigarette up here, Mr. Gilberg! Take your place on stage!”

I managed to get through the second run-through without looking at Judy and forgetting my lines. I wondered if my staring at the off-stage curtains would look like poor stage presence but didn't care; that was where the off-stage line coach was standing. I wouldn't say my timing was great, seeing as how the line coach, eyes bugging out and mouth about to open, looked like she'd shoot me if I didn't get that next line out correctly and on time. But then, where would Hush get another actor?

That was when I realized escape from my hometown wouldn't be to Hollywood. But I still believed in the dream. I knew I would find myself going off to faraway places and be away for years doing things that couldn't happen in New Bremen before I would ever return home. And when I finally did return, everyone would say, “Bob, is that you? Where have you been? We've all been wondering about you: what happened to you, where did

you go, are you okay . . . and will we ever see Bob again?”

Naïvely I believed everyone would still be there and thinking about me! People move, get married and have kids and forget about life-before-kids . . . or die. You move on; they move on, the world moves on, and everyone moves—scatters is a better description—with it.

But my favorite daydream was the one where I became a fearless and successful racing driver. It went well with my gear-head persona—and I wouldn't have to remember any lines! And in that case, no one would wonder where I'd gone; they'd all know because they'd read about me in the news almost every week: Bob wins at Sacramento; Bob wins at Milwaukee, or the big one: Bob wins at Indy! I loved that dream!

To be honest, along with those daydreams, there was another distraction that kept me in the 50th percentile, mediocre-grades-class of student: the pretty girl who sat to my right. She sometimes wore a skirt with a malfunctioning zipper on her left side that I couldn't ignore. Thinking that one day, when everything aligned just right: malfunctioning zipper, petticoat twisted, slip slipping, and any other garments out of control, with sneaky sideways glances—God forbid she'd see me staring at her skirt—I'd be able to see something: bare skin, colorful underwear, or anything unexpected. It drove me crazy. But crazy was thinking that with all the things girls wore under their skirts in those days, I'd see something through that half open zipper.

Just another impossible dream, but dreaming had become my major—and my escape: seeing my future in the clouds out those windows, or when I became bored with that, a peek through that malfunctioning zipper. Only a bored teenager knows how to waste time like that. What was my real future to be? Did I have one?

-60YEARS LATER- “Oh, I remember you; you are Fred and Delight's boy. Your mom told me you went to California or somewhere out west. Are you coming back home?”

Thirty-five years in leading edge computer, communications, and microelectronics, a dozen patents in microcircuit design, a shared Emmy award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for Excellence in Television Engineering, a novel microcircuit that saved the troubled little San Diego company that pioneered digital HDTV, global travels, and four well reviewed novels later: “It's nice of you to ask, but as the saying goes, ‘How you gonna' keep ‘em down on the farm’ so probably not. But I would like to look out those windows again before they tear the old school building down.”

JERRY MAXSON, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR, 1960

I started teaching in Cleveland in 1957 at Newton D. Baker Jr. High School, grades 7, 8, 9. I taught the 7th and 8th grade math and science and was the basketball and track coach. After three years, I decided that I would like to try coaching high school basketball. I am originally from Troy, so I looked for openings in this general area. Teaching jobs were more plentiful at that time, especially if you were qualified in math or science. One weekend, I came down from Cleveland and interviewed at Bethel, Miami County, Versailles and New Bremen. I was offered a job at every place to be the basketball coach and teach math. I picked New Bremen because I liked the school and town and thought that New Bremen probably had a good basketball tradition since they had been to the state tournament the year before. Little did I know that it hasn't happened since.

So when I was hired in 1960, the school's total coaching staff was doubled from one to two. My coaching job was the high school basketball, both varsity and reserve. I also found that I was actually the athletic director because I had to arrange the schedule, call schools, figure out a date, hire referees and buy equipment and uniforms. I didn't have to sell tickets. That was another job. Roger Zoll was the other coach hired at the time. He had the baseball and junior high basketball. He had to arrange his own schedules. Jerry Schacht, who I replaced, actually did both jobs. I can't imagine what that was like. My teaching schedule consisted of phys. ed., health, and 7th and 8th grade math, for which I was paid \$4200.00. I got \$500 for coaching and I don't think it even went up during the nine years that I did that.

I never had a reserve coach or assistant. My wife Sue washed all of the basketball uniforms every week. We didn't want to take the chance of letting the boys take the uniforms home to be washed because something might happen to them. At the end of the season she got \$25.00 for this. John Knost was my head manager from 1960 until he graduated and did a fantastic job. He even did some babysitting when Sue was gone and I had a late practice. I'm not sure I could have survived without him.

That first year, we couldn't find an apartment in New Bremen, so we lived in New Knoxville. Sue said it was the worse year of her life. I would leave early in the morning, driving our only car, a VW bug. She was stuck at home with not much to do. Going from the big city of Cleveland to New Knoxville was quite a culture shock. Beth was born on November 11, of that year, the day of my first game. We beat Botkins. That is the one birth date that I always remember-11/11/60.

Basketball was a completely different game at that time, played in those little gyms. The big gyms then were Cridersville, Buckland, Sidney Holy Angels, Fairlawn and St. Marys. Most teams played zone defense, didn't press and ran set offences with plays. We played in the Auglaize County League: Waynesfield, Cridersville, Buckland, New Knoxville, Minster and New Bremen. Every team was played home and home. It was good, even competition. Minster and New



Knoxville were the biggest rivals. At the end of the season was the County Tournament to decide who would continue on. My first two years I had Dan Nedderman who was an excellent player and a few years later, Mark Froning who was equally as good. Dan set the school scoring record of 41 points for one game his senior year. Mark Froning broke the record his senior year scoring 43 points in the Auglaize County Tournament final against New Knoxville. We won that tournament, the last one that was played.

Some of the referees that I remember from those days are Jim Prince, Ferdie Murphy, Dwight Wilger, Doc Staley and the Snavelly brothers. I always liked having Ferdie Murphy because he was a high school classmate. Doc Staley was the one that everyone remembers. He was a show in himself.

Being the so-called athletic director, I was pretty much in charge of all the money that was taken in at the basketball games. Now there wasn't a lot because of the size of the gym, but I could spend it any way I wanted. If I wanted the team to eat at Wint's before an important game, I would get a blank check from Doris Howe. She would say, "Let me know how much you spent." One year the team got flu shots, paid for by the athletic department. We bought every player two pairs of shoes, one for practice and one for games. Sometimes a third pair would be bought. A few years, at the end of the season, the money would be gone, so if we wanted to buy new uniforms, we would run an athletic carnival to raise money.

The big change came when Jerry Brown and Jay Stauffer were hired. Part of Jerry Brown's job was being the athletic director, so my free spending was over. Actually, this is when a lot of changes were made. After I quit coaching, they hired a reserve coach, freshman coach, cross country, track, on and on until you arrive at where we are today. I think, overall, with all of the sports that we now have, boys and girls, there are about 30 coaches. Things have changed. **Jerry Maxson, (2013)**



Roger Zoll and Jerry Maxson with the New Bremen team in 1961

Thank you, Jerry, for sharing your memories!

Jerry & Sue Maxson



DIXIE HIGHWAY

Former Towpath Editor, Lucille Francis, asks:

I recently saw several mentions of the "Dixie Highway." I remember back when I was a kid, the few times we went to Dayton, Pop would mention taking the Dixie Highway. I was wondering why it was called that?

Lucille attached an article from the *New Bremen Sun* that mentions the Dixie Highway.

NEW FILLING STATION TO OPEN SATURDAY

South Side Service Station Owned by Irvin Koeper, Albert Schmidt

Opening of the **South Side Service Station**, located at South Washington and Cherry streets, has been announced for Saturday, November 10, by the managers, Irvin Koeper and Albert Schmidt. A dust cloth will be given free to every motorist purchasing five gallons of gasoline on that day.

Work on the station, which is owned by Chas. Block, was started late in September and is being completed this week. It will be the fourth filling station to be operated here, the others being the **Refiners**, corner Washington and Monroe streets; the **Lone Pine** station, Pearl and North Main streets; and the **Johnson** station, North Herman Street.

In addition to handling Sunoco gasoline, motor oils and greases, an agency for Dayton tires also will be maintained in the South Side Service station. A complete battery sales and service system has been installed as has also a machine for washing automobiles.

The station is ideally located because of an expected heavy increase in traffic entering New Bremen from the south with the completion of the last link of paving in the road leading from here to Piqua and then over the Dixie highway into Dayton.

(*New Bremen Sun*, November 8, 1928)

I, too, remember hearing about the Dixie Highway when I was a child. We often went to Sidney, Ohio to visit relatives who lived on Wapakoneta Avenue. But my mother always called this street the Dixie Highway. I remember that the street sign definitely read Wapakoneta Avenue, not Dixie Highway, but apparently I never questioned the discrepancy.

Recently there have been news reports about a desire to change the name of the Dixie Highway in the South because the name is considered racist. So, why is Dixie an offensive name? What is the Dixie Highway? Where was it in Ohio? To answer the questions that arose I went on-line to investigate this matter. To my surprise I found a plethora of material about the Dixie Highway. In fact, one writer in 2006 researched and documented what is left of the Dixie Highway in Ohio.

"Dixie" was the nickname adopted by the eleven states that seceded from the United States and became the Confederate States of America prior to the beginning of the Civil War. It is thought that the name Dixie refers to those states south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Daniel Decatur Emmett wrote the song "Dixie" in 1859 for a Minstrel Show in New York. The southern states adopted the song as their own and it became a marching song for confederate soldiers.

The Dixie Highway was planned in 1914 to connect the United States Midwest with the Southern states. It was not a single highway but rather a network of connected paved roads built between 1915 - 1927. It was the first north-south paved interstate highway that began at the border of Canada in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and ended in Miami, Florida.

In Ohio, the Dixie Highway entered Toledo from Michigan and then dropped south through Lima, Cridersville, Wapakoneta, Botkins, Anna, Sidney, Piqua, Troy, Vandalia, Dayton and Cincinnati. In 1973, I-75 was completed and became the new

Midwestern corridor to the Southern states. The old Dixie Highway route has become County Road 25A in our area.

Thank you, Lucille, for sharing the article about the South Side Service Station and your question about the Dixie Highway. I am sure many of our readers appreciate this information about our highways.

-G. C.



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HISTORY MYSTERY



Bremenfest 1986. Who are these members of the American Legion Auxiliary?



The NBHS Band in the 1986 Bremenfest Parade. Who is holding the banner?

Please help us identify the individuals in these photos.