



# THE TOWPATH

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THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION  
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## VISIT NEW BREMEN MUSEUMS

In the last issue of *The Towpath*, we reported on getting displays ready in our museums for visitors.

This summer we have used the hot & dry weather to update our buildings and outdoor displays. The 1878 barn at the Pape House has received a new roof and siding. Our volunteer Shelby Frideger scraped and painted the 1895 bridge rail made by the New Bremen Bridge Company.

The fall season would be a good time to reacquaint yourself with all that New Bremen and our museums have to offer. The Luelleman House and the Pape House are open by appointment with a call to any board member.

These pictures show some of our recent visitors.



**Jill Gilliom, Donna Eschmeyer Gilliom and Jim Gilliom from Milton, Washington. Donna spent summers in New Bremen growing up.**



**Marjorie Hartman Kik (East Lansing, MI), Jessica Hartman Janego (Owosso, MI) came to New Bremen to work on their family tree with Tom Braun.**



**Thomas Dicke (NBHS Class of '56) with his wife and family members toured the museums with cousins Dennis & Larry Dicke.**

*Lois Moeller contacted us about her wish to donate some items to the NBHA. (See more about this on page 5.) While talking with her we found that she had written this article about her life for her children. She kindly gave us permission to include it in The Towpath. We chose Lois to be our New Bremen Notable.*

## My Life

By Lois Gensler Moeller

I was born in New Bremen, Ohio on June 16, 1925. I was supposed to be born in July, but I arrived early and was a "blue baby." My daddy told me I was so small I could fit in a shoe box. Dr. Ferdinand Fledderjohann told my parents he wasn't sure I would survive. Well, that was 91 years ago.

I don't remember the first few years of my life but I do know that we moved to Dayton, Ohio when I was two years old and my sister, Martha Jean, was born there. Daddy worked at the Frigidaire Company in Dayton, a large company that made refrigerators, among other things.

I was four years old when we moved to a new two story house on Brookline Avenue in Dayton with my aunt and uncle. The first floor had a living room, dining room, kitchen and breakfast nook. The stairway to the second floor went up at the end of the living room and at the top of the stairs was Aunt Hulda Solms Bishop's room. Next door to her room was my brother George's room which he shared with Uncle Fred Solms. Down the hall at the end was the bathroom. Mother and Daddy had a large room across the whole front of the house and Jean and I each had a bed in there along with my folks.

The Great Depression of 1929 hit the country while we lived on Brookline. The stock market crashed, banks closed, people lost their jobs and money and many felt despair. Daddy hurt his foot at the Frigidaire Company

and was in the hospital for a while and was laid off from his job.

### The Gensler Family



**George, Jr. & Lois with their Daddy George Gensler.**

When Daddy got better he got a job with International Harvester Company in Springfield, Ohio. He would take a bus from Dayton to Springfield and then drive a new truck chassis from Springfield to Lodi and come back home on the bus. He was gone from home a lot at that time but he was willing to take any job just to earn enough money for us to live on. When Daddy was home he would spend a lot of time playing with us; he was a good Daddy.

We moved back to New Bremen when I was seven years old and first lived with Grandma and Grandpa Solms. Daddy went to work for Grandpa Solms at his feed mill and sawmill which was located at the south end of New Bremen on Herman Street.

We eventually moved to a house on Pearl Street and lived there until I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. It was one mile from our house to the high school on Walnut Street. We didn't have a cafeteria at school so we walked home at noon and back again which made a daily walk of about four miles.

There were quite a few kids living in the neighborhood and we spent hours playing ball, roller skating in the street, playing *Go Sheepy Go & Kick the Can*, riding our bikes and anything else we could think of that didn't cost any money because it was still during the Depression. Daddy only made \$25.00 per week and they paid \$25.00 per month rent, so there was little money left to spend foolishly. We had a huge garden back of our house and we got a lot of our food from it. Mother canned food so we could eat it during the winter. Mother made all of our clothes. Aunt Frances Keating would give Mother her dresses and coats and Mother would take them apart and make clothes for us. Mother was a good cook and housekeeper and took pride in her home. Both our parents worked very hard to give us a good life. I'm not sure I would have done as well under the circumstances.

While I was in high school I played in the band. I





started playing French horn in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and then in

**Lois, George & Martha Jean in the NBHS Band**

high school I played clarinet. We did not have a football team so our band activities were mostly concerts in the park in the summer and at school in the winter plus marching in a few

parades. I also took piano lessons for what seemed forever, but was never very good-no self-confidence- so I never wanted to play in front of anyone. I was also in the high school chorus and the Girls Athletic Club, playing basketball and volleyball. I took a general business course in school, no college prep courses as I knew there was no money for college. My fondest dream was to become an interior decorator.

My special boyfriend in high school was a year older than me and we went together for about two and a half years. While I was a senior he was drafted into the Army as WWII had already started. When he started urging me to get married, I knew I wasn't ready for marriage, so we broke up and he was upset. I felt bad to have to do it while he was in the service but I knew we weren't meant to be together even though he was a very nice person.

My brother graduated from high school in 1941 and went to Dayton to work at Patterson Field, which is now Wright Patterson Airforce Base. George always wanted to be a pilot and he made many models of airplanes that he hung from the ceiling in his bedroom. He enlisted in the Army Air Corp and became a pilot in November 1942.

I graduated from high school in 1943 and worked for a couple of months in the ice cream department of the White Mountain Creamery. That summer my Uncle Clarence Keating arranged for me to have an interview at the Sherwin Williams Paint Company in downtown Cleveland. I interviewed for a secretarial job and got it. I lived with my Aunt and Uncle in Lakewood, a suburb of Cleveland and they were good to me.

I didn't have a car and due to gas rationing I either had to walk or take a bus or street car. I rode the bus to work every day. The bus stop was over a block from our house and then it took an hour to get to downtown Cleveland. After I got off the bus I had to walk to the

terminal tower building (train station) and walk through a tunnel that ran under the street to get to the Midland Building where I worked on the 18<sup>th</sup> floor. At Sherwin Williams I sang in an all-girls chorus. We sang at Veterans hospitals where wounded soldiers were brought for treatment. We also sang at an opera in Cleveland where Roberta Peters was the main soloist. For a small town girl it was quite an experience.

While I lived in Cleveland I attended Fenn College for one semester. I would have continued but Fenn College was on the east side of Cleveland and I lived on the west side and since I was going after work it meant I had to go home late at night and walk home from the bus stop about midnight. I was afraid, so I quit school and my college education was very short.

My brother George was killed in service on May 26, 1945. As a pilot he flew a C-46 plane and served in the China-Burma-India Theater. The planes transported supplies to troops in China from bases in India. This route was known as flying over the "hump"- Himalayan Mountains. On this day his plane had engine trouble and all had to bail out. His parachute did not open and he died from the injuries. I, too, had wanted to be a pilot but I gave this up after my brother died. I stayed in Cleveland until September 1945 and then I returned to New Bremen to be with my parents.

**George W. Gensler, Jr.**



After coming back, I got an office job at the American Budget Company and worked there until January 1946 when I went to work for a brand new company called Crown Controls Co. I was one of the first employees and continued working there for about 56 years in the accounting department. I watched the company grow from a couple of employees to the largest employer in Auglaize County and to become a well-known international company.

I met Adrian (Adie) Moeller that year when he came into the office to get a car title notarized so he could sell his car. Adie was the oldest of four children of Edgar and Olga (Hegemier) Moeller. He must have thought I was worth pursuing as he asked his dad to ask my dad how old I was, because he thought I was too young to date him. When he found out I was 21 years old he asked me out and our dating went on from there.

He would take me to Dayton to hear the big bands like Glen Miller, Guy Lombardo, Harry James, Russ Morgan and others. We also went to some dances. He was a good dancer and had good rhythm. He taught me to

dance and I could get along fine with him and never wanted to dance with anyone else.

A lot of our dates involved sports. He was a scorekeeper for the high school basketball teams, so that meant we went to a lot of games. He also played basketball for the New Bremen American Legion team—so more basketball games. He also played baseball. And then there was always his favorite sport—tennis. A lot of our dates were very exciting with him playing one sport or another and me watching, but I did learn to enjoy sports that way.

I finally decided Adie was really a pretty good guy and in May 1947 he proposed and I accepted. I received my engagement ring on my birthday in June and we decided to get married December 27, 1947. Mother made my wedding dress and the dresses for four attendants. We had the reception at home.



We had a beautiful wedding and it was a beautiful night. There was between 6 and 8 inches of snow on the ground and when we came out of the church after the wedding, we were greeted by Adie's Uncle Wilbur Hegemier and brother Warren. They had borrowed a horse and Grandma Moeller's sleigh and took us for a sleigh ride around town and over to the reception.

#### Adie & Lois

Adie worked for Minster Machine Co. but he did not like his job. I tried to encourage him to go to night school. He finally decided he would like to go into accounting so he enrolled in Northwestern Business College in Lima and went to classes two or three nights a week for five years. I went with him and visited my sister, Martha Jean Rader, while he was in school. Our lives were pretty hectic for a few years but it paid off as Adie secured a position at Crown Equipment Co. as assistant treasurer & accountant for 33 years.

When we married, rental apartments or houses were almost nonexistent due to all the boys returning home from the services. We lived with my parents for 6 months until an apartment became available. In 1956 we bought land just west of New Bremen from Adie's Aunt and Uncle, Carl & Lucille Moeller.

We started to build our brick home that fall and moved in in October the next year. Our house started out as a five room house with a one car garage but ended up with seven rooms, a two car garage, large glassed-in porch and finished basement. We spent 33 ½ happy years there raising our children and enjoying the country and our horses.

Both Adie and I retired from Crown in 1982 due to the beginning of Adie's battle with Alzheimer disease. I wanted to care for him and keep him at home as long as possible. In 1989 after his disease progressed to the point where he couldn't help take care of the yard and house anymore, with much sadness, we sold our country home and moved to town. His disease continued to progress and eventually required more extensive nursing care in a facility.

In the fall of 1991, due to added expenses and the fact that I needed to be around people, I went back to work part-time in the accounting department at Crown Equipment Corporation. Adie died on April 24, 1993.

God has been very good to me and has given me many loving and happy times and a few sad times, but He has always given me the strength to get through the bad times. I am thankful to God for my loving parents and grandparents, for Adie, for my son Todd and daughter Kim. I thank God for my daughter-in-law Julie and my three grandchildren—Timothy, Heather and Rebecca.

For the really sad times in my life, first there was the death of my brother George in WWII. He was 21 years of age. I was also sad with the death of my parents and my sister. The saddest time in my life was witnessing Adie's ten year battle with Alzheimer disease. However, I am grateful for the many happy years we had together.

I am also grateful for my friends, and for my job at Crown. I don't know how many more years I have on this earth, but I thank God for giving me good health and much happiness. **It's been a very good life.**

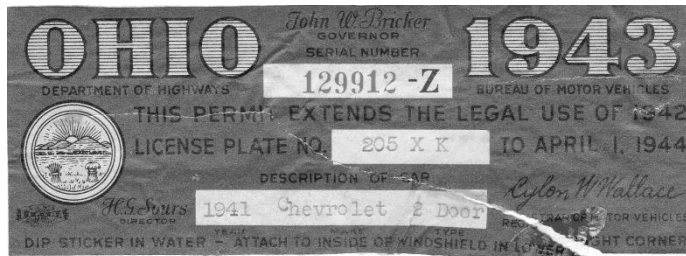
#### UPDATE

*In 2016, Lois is happily living on a pretty much independent basis at Elmwood in New Bremen. Her son Todd is a partner in a law firm in California. Her daughter Kim Moeller was ordained into the Christian ministry of the UCC and now serves a church in Wisconsin.*

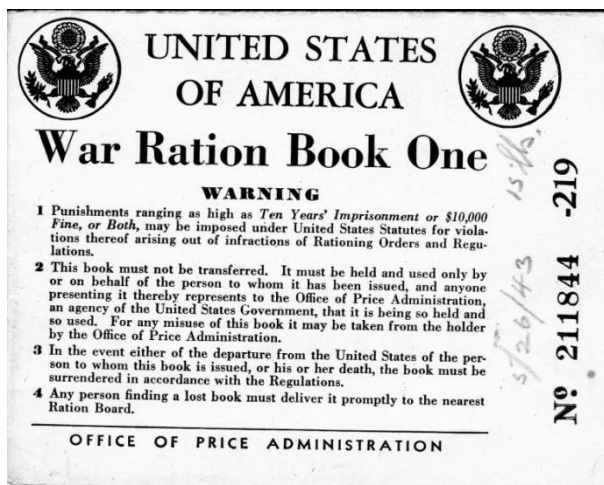
*Thank you, Lois, for sharing your story.*



## MUSEUM HIGHLIGHT



BMV 1943 permit to extend use of 1942 license plate as part of war effort to conserve metal. This permit was attached to the inside of windshield in lower right corner. The lettering is black with the background in red.



First ration book or "Sugar Book" issued May 4, 1942. Sugar was rationed to 0.5 lb. per week for each person in the family. By Nov. 1943 the following items were rationed: typewriters, gasoline, bicycles, footwear, silk, nylon, fuel oil, stoves, meat, lard, shortening, food oils, cheese, butter, margarine, processed foods, dried fruit, canned milk, firewood, coal, jams, jellies, fruit, butter.

Token Holder with blue & red tokens or "OPA Points." The small red & blue tokens were issued to make change for ration coupons. The red token was used for red stamps (meat & butter). The blue for processed food. (A dime has been placed below the tokens to compare size.)



These item were donated by  
Adrian & Lois (Gensler)  
Moeller Family

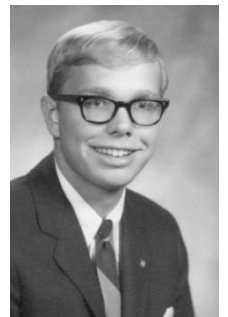
## HISTORY MYSTERY



1. A group of New Bremen children circa 1900.

Anyone you know?

2. This young man will be celebrating a special class reunion next year. Do you know his name?



3. Who is this person getting ready for the 1953 inauguration of Dwight D. Eisenhower?

Answers: 1.(Front) Goldie Schmidt, Grace Boesel, Susie Vornholt, Helen Bienz, Dorothy Boesel (2<sup>nd</sup> row) Gertrude Boesel, Olga Vornholt, Irma Elbert, Paula Vogelsang, Esther Vornholt, Meta Boesel, Norma Boesel (3<sup>rd</sup> row) Richard Boesel, Adiel Stern, Elmer Ende 2. Don Kuck 3. Cade Schulenberg, (the father of Susan Rabe on page 10), in downtown New Bremen.



## **Auglaize County: in Motion!**

Rachel Barber, Administrator for the Auglaize County Historical Society (ACHS) told us about AUGLAIZE COUNTY: IN MOTION! This initiative has been awarded an Ohio Humanities grant and will weave together the many heritage/ cultural sites in the county that reflect motion or movement. The project will create a more unified effort in interpreting the history of Auglaize County.

Auglaize County is home to many interesting and unique historical sites. Within the county there are 23 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and seven Ohio Historical Markers. Auglaize County has five village historical societies and four county sites. The New Bremen Historical Association is one of the village historical societies.

"We love working with the New Bremen Historic Association," says Rachel Barber. "Think of all the great motion-related sites in this one village alone. You have the Bicycle Museum, the Lockkeepers House, the Pape House and the Luelleman House, the Kuenning-Dicke Natural Area and the home base of the Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association."

In addition to these sites we have a history of our citizens' involvement in motion. The following article is an example how a New Bremen family- The Kuenning's- were part of **Auglaize County: In Motion** in 1919.

## **AUGLAIZE COUNTY'S WRIGHT CONNECTION (Orville, that is...)**

**By Katy Gilbert**

According to information I received this past year, Auglaize County has a Wright connection. That connection was Hulda Kuenning of New Bremen.

Hulda Kuenning was born July 13, 1899 to Frank D. and Augusta Lehmkuhl Kuenning of New Bremen. She was born at a time when the canal boats still journeyed up and down the Miami-Erie Canal. Just four years before the Wright Brothers would take their first flight in 1903. As others born during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> or early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, she saw and experienced the many changes in transportation, from horse and buggy to airplane. But Kuenning was also fortunate to have met one of the early pioneers of flight.

Kuenning was living on her father's farm about one mile north of New Bremen. It was 1919 when the 48 year old Orville Wright came to the farm house and asked to use the telephone, another new invention. Wright's plane had developed some problems and he had landed in Kuenning's pasture.

Kuenning had been instructed by her mother not to call any numbers that weren't in the book because the phone company would charge more for those calls. So when Wright requested the use of the telephone, Kuenning politely asked if the number was in the book.

Negotiations were made and Wright used the telephone to call Dayton and ask his crew to come to the Kuenning farm to bring Wright and the plane back to Dayton.

Kuenning expressed surprise at how lightweight the plane was and how effortlessly the crew lifted it over the fence and onto the flatbed truck.

After that first flight, Wright's plane often came to the Kuenning's pasture. Kuenning explained Wright's visits were frequent and "we all got acquainted." When she was asked about her impression of seeing Orville Wright's plane in the sky, she said it didn't seem all that strange. She noted her father was in the livestock business and they were used to seeing strangers pass through the area.

Kuenning got an unexpected chance to fly in Wright's plane during the summer of 1920. The annual Farmers Picnic at Kuenning's Grove was August 15 that year. It was a large event that drew a crowd of some 1,500 area farmers.

As Kuenning's father was preparing the grove for the event, Wright flew over the site and landed.

Kuenning's father invited Wright to fly his now much improved plane over the fields during the picnic and give rides to anyone wanting to fly. "You'll be first," Wright told Kuenning's father. But her father declined saying he liked to keep his feet on the ground. However he did agree that his daughter be first to fly that day.

Kuenning said she wasn't nervous about going up because the motor had been vastly improved from the days the plane sputtered out in the pasture. The flight was no higher than the treetops and Wright pointed out the various homes in the neighborhood. "It was wonderful," Kuenning was reported to have said. But as wonderful as the flight had been, Kuenning said she'd rather ride horses. She never flew again.

Hulda Kuenning Gross Diedrich (1899-1992) was the daughter of Frank Dicke Kuenning and Auguste Lehmkuhl Kuenning. Hulda had four brothers-Frederick, Allen, Marvin and Carl. Allen Kuenning is the father of Stan Kuenning.

The Kuenning Farm was located just north of New Bremen on Rte 66A. The part of the farm known as Kuenning's Grove was the site of the annual New Bremen Farmer's Picnic and later became the site of the New Bremen Speedway.



## What it's Like Growing up in a Small Town and Becoming a City Girl

**It's nothing like what you read about in books.**

**By Adeleine Whitten**

I grew up in a small town. Like a *really* small town. I'm talking about a town that you can walk completely across in no time, a population of 3,000, and a graduating class of 68 people *from the only school in the district*.

Yeah. So I grew up in a small town. And I couldn't wait to leave.

Throughout my high school career, I literally counted down the days until graduation. I yearned for the city, for the culture, and mostly, *for things to do*. As soon as I got accepted into a college three hours away from home, the waiting became even harder. I was the only person from my high school in the past four years to go to my college, so I wouldn't know anyone there. It was going to be a whole new adventure for me.

It wasn't until I got to college that I realized how different my life was from everyone else I was going to school with.

My new friends talked about their graduating classes of 200, 500, 1000 or more. They said they didn't know everyone they walked with to get their diplomas. When they went to the store, they wouldn't stop and talk to anyone whereas I would see at least three people I knew before I even got there. They've never been to their county fair. They've never had eggs or milk fresh from the farm. It completely flabbergasted me.

Did I miss out on big-city life, or did they miss out on small-town life?

Now that I live only 20 minutes from Cleveland, I carry pepper spray at night. I walk down the street and don't see a single person I know. I don't go to garage sales, and I don't go to farmer's markets. It's just a totally different lifestyle than what I grew up with. I go to

Starbucks and art museums and symphonies and plays. It's not that it's bad; it's just different.

The fact of the matter is that people in big cities have a totally wrong idea of what it's really like to grow up in a small town. They're not romantic like you see in movies or read about in books-what's so romantic about having the same twenty people to date from kindergarten until the day you graduate high school? We don't have cute shops, we have corn and cows. And we never actually get that cool new kid that TV shows love to make their main characters. But what we do have is something so much better: community.

I've witnessed firsthand the way people in my small town come together, whether it be in times of celebration or times of tragedy. Most of the people that live in my village are either family or close enough to be considered family. Neighbors still come over to ask for sugar. We have community bake sales. All you have to do is mention your parents' or grandparents' names and everyone immediately knows who you are. A small, loving community helps to shape everyone who ever has the honor of being in it, including me.

So even though I'm a city girl now, my small little hometown will always hold a special place in my heart. There may be more to do where I live now, but the people whom I grew up with are irreplaceable – and I'll bet all 3,000 of us would agree.



**Adeleine Whitten's NBHS Graduation**

**Adeleine at College**

**Adeleine grew up in New Bremen and is the daughter of Rebekkah Fry & Glen Whitten.**

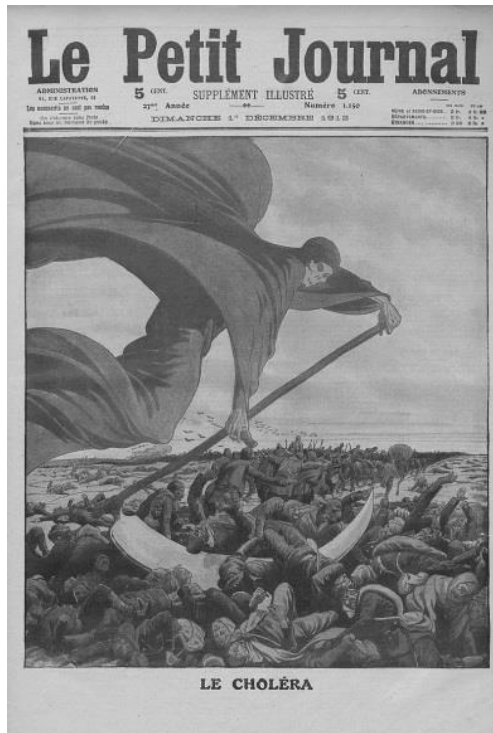


## CHOLERA ORPHANS

New Bremen was greatly affected by cholera in 1849, the second cholera pandemic that occurred in the world. The disease had caused more deaths more quickly than any other disease in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It even affected our 11<sup>th</sup> President, James K. Polk. He left office in 1849, returned to Tennessee and died of cholera three months later.

An individual might be well in the morning and was dead by nightfall. In just 10 weeks that year about 20% of the population of New Bremen died. Most of the deaths were recorded in St. Paul Church records as due to cholera.

It was not known at that time what caused the illness. Some believed it was a result of poverty and a poor environment. Others suspected it might be contagious disease but did not understand how it spread. It would be a number of years before the cause and treatment of the disease would be found.



Willshire. As an adult, Bernard lived in New Bremen and was married in St. Paul Church to Anna Margaretha Dorothea Mohrman. Several years later he platted the North Addition of New Bremen, those lots north of the Original Plat of 1833. After moving to Garnavillo, Iowa, Bernard bought interest in a lumber mill and gristmill and in 1874 went on to be elected to the Iowa General Assembly.

In 2003, descendants of Bernard Schroeder visited New Bremen and our museum to explore their roots and shared the story of their ancestor who was an orphan of the cholera epidemic.

The **Gieseke family**, Johann & Sophia (Kraas) Gieseke, emigrated from Germany in October 1846

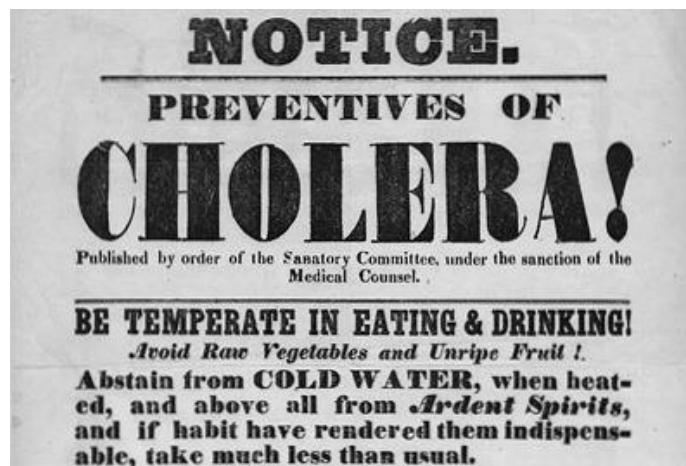
with their seven children ranging in age from three to 21 years. They settled on a farm east of New Bremen (Daryl Koenig farm) and joined the congregation of St. Paul Church. Johann died of malaria in the summer of 1847. This must have been devastating to the wife and children after such a short time in a new country but somehow the family managed to stay together. In the summer of 1849 the cholera epidemic struck and two of their children died. Because of the many deaths, the undertakers and grave diggers could not take care of all the dead. So with the help of neighbors the bodies were buried near the log house which was the family home.

(Johann & Sophia Gieseke were the great-great-great grandparents of Genevieve Conradi.)

**Louise Wehrman Finke** told the *New Bremen Sun* how she was rescued as a babe in her dead mother's arms:

*...she was about five months of age when the epidemic broke out and her father was one of the victims. Burial had to made without delay as the citizens were dying one after the other and the supply of caskets had run out so that the lifeless forms were laid in rudely constructed boxes and buried as hastily as possible. The men returning from the burial of her father and coming to the house to look after the ailing mother found her cold in death with the child still resting in her arms snuggled to the lifeless breast of the mother who had loved her. Before making disposition of the mortal remains of the mother, diligent search was made for a place to leave the child.*

*As a last resort, her uncle finally appealed to a Mrs. Wilhelmi, then residing at Lock Two...and though she*



New York City 1832 Handbill

### Family Stories

Many families in New Bremen were affected by the deaths of parents or children which created much sadness and severe challenges for the early settlers. Some examples:

The **Schroeder family** came to America from Germany in 1827 and settled in western Ohio. Both parents died of cholera in 1833 leaving two sons, Bernard & Diederick, as orphans. They were taken in by James Watson Riley, the son of Sea Captain James Riley, and his wife of St. Marys to be raised to adulthood. During the time the Schroeder brothers were growing up in the Riley home, Bernard worked in the Riley gristmill in



*already taken in four orphans up till then, her faith and inbred mother-love opened her heart and home for just one more tiny baby which was cared for with as much affection and concern as if it had been her very own child. Soon the child was known as Louise Wilhelmi, and retained that name until it came time for her confirmation, to be received into membership of the St. Paul Church. The pastor, Rev. Carl Heise, felt conscience-bound to inform the child of her real name, and after consulting with the foster parents, it was agreed that he impart the information. Mrs. Finke to this day remembers how shocked she was and what days of anguish she went through when she found that she was an orphan and had grown up under an assumed name.*

*However, the kindness and love showered on her by Mr. & Mrs. Wilhelmi during her childhood days are always a source of fond remembrance for Mrs. Finke, and to this day she honors the remembrance of them who took the place of her real parents, and enjoys to tell the story of how affectionate they were, and always showed deep concern in her welfare. By this time, however, the community had recovered from the ill effects of the cholera epidemic and things in general were moving in the even tenor of their way. Louise Wehrman, as she was then known, was now obliged to shift for herself, and she earned her own living until she entered into wedlock with the late Captain Henry Finke, and reared a family of seven children without a single death in the family outside of her husband who passed away 28 years ago.*

*Mrs. Finke's is but one of the sad stories which had their origin in the year when cholera raged in this part of Ohio and almost wiped out the young settlement in the primeval forest where it had been founded 15 years prior to the epidemic. Most of the tales known now are such as have come through tradition from parents and grandparents. (New Bremen Sun, April 6, 1939)*

Louise Wehrman Finke was New Bremen's oldest resident at 98 years, 4 months and 3 days old when she died on June 19, 1947. She had 7 children, 19 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren and 11 great-great grandchildren at that time.

### Controlling Cholera

John Snow, a London physician and medical scientist found a link between cholera and contaminated drinking water. It was spread by water and food that was contaminated with the offending bacteria. Cholera was discovered to be a human disease spread by travel. It was found that ineffective sanitation systems caused the spread of the disease on routes. In New Bremen, in 1849, the Miami & Erie Canal had been open to traffic for only three years and with the flow of traffic it opened a pathway for the spread of cholera.

It took another 30 years of study in the field of microbiology to identify the offending organism and

develop public health standards of sanitation to stop the spread of disease. Cholera is still present in the world today and it continues to be a serious problem in many third world countries. There have been no cholera outbreaks in the United States since the early 1900s. We have learned that it is preventable by adequate sanitation, water treatment and vaccines.

Once the public health standards were identified it was necessary to name officials to enforce them. Ohio established a State Board of Health in 1886. New Bremen formed a Board of Health in 1889. The *New Bremen Sun* reported:

*The Board of Health is now fully organized. The officers are Mayor Bruns, president; Fred Wiemeyer, clerk; Dr. M. S. Ekermeyer, health officer, and Herman Pape, sanitary police. They will be ready for effective work within a fortnight. (New Bremen Sun, 1-18-1889)*

The Rules & Regulations of the Board of Health were published in the *New Bremen Sun* on January 18, 1889. This publication has sections labeled the Health Officer, Contagious Diseases, Burials and Burial Permit, Report of Births and Deaths, Nuisances and Food.

When they knew the cause of contagious disease the citizens of the town did all they could to insure there would be no more epidemics causing hardships like the cholera orphans.

*We doubt whether there is a better, more alert or energetic Board of Health in the State of Ohio than the one in New Bremen. They exercise the strictest precaution and while the people go about their business and probably pass a remark here and there concerning New Bremen's excellent sanitary condition – never thinking that there is a Board of Health here, - the school rooms are being systematically disinfected and watchful eye kept on all sickness of a contagious nature. The Board of Health does not receive half the credit it deserves. It is on the alert all the time and battles unremittingly yet without display against the spread of epidemics. It is a boon to a town to have a Board of Health of that kind and a health officer like Dr. Ekermeyer. (New Bremen Sun 11-27-1896)*



Dr. M. S. Ekermeyer



## SUIT OF CLOTHES

By Susan Schulenberg  
Rabe

It must have been mid-summer, because I remember it was warm. Our house was on a main street of town, about a block and a half from the train tracks. The train came smack through there every other weekday about 4:30 or 5 pm, and stopped for an hour or more. The stop gave the hobos, or bums, as we called them, time to get out of the boxcars, and head into town – two blocks away. There was only one direction to go – east into town – any other direction was into open farm country.

That was time enough for the bums to knock on a door and hope to get a meal, or head to the main drag and get some old newspapers to sleep on or under that night. It was 1934 or 1935, and I was either four or five, and the effects of the Great Depression were still evident.

**Norma Schulenberg**

Many of the bums stopped at our house, large and close to the street, and mother often fed the men, on our front porch steps, if she had enough food already cooked, and wasn't in a hurry for an evening meeting or event. How they looked and behaved was important to her. I could sit and talk with one of them if she gave permission. They were different, they were from outside, and they had no job or money, mother told me. They fascinated me and I was glad when she fed them and let me sit near them, on the porch steps.

One particular time I remember, because she stayed around to talk to the man as he ate. He was young – maybe early 20s – and spoke well, and was very polite and clean, I guess. When she asked him where he was heading on the railroad, and where had he come from, he answered, "I'm from a small town in northern Michigan, and my parents know I'm on the road looking for work. Dad lost his job, and they're having a rough time, and I just thought I should take off and be on my own, and give them less to worry about. I'm 19, almost 20, and my older sister is married and lives near them."

"Well, where are you headed to find work then?" mother asked.

"I thought maybe Cincinnati, by the Ohio River, might be a place with more jobs, so that's where I'm aiming to go," he answered.

"Well, Cincinnati's a city, and pretty big city – do you have some clothes with you, so that you can look for a job when you get there?" He picked up the cloth bag next to him and showed her he did have some things with him. She then surprised him, I guess, and me, when she said, "Don't leave when you're done eating – just wait a few minutes, please. Do you have time to do that before the train leaves?" He nodded yes, and she walked quickly into our house.

About five minutes later, as I just sat there and tried not to stare at him eating, she came back out. "I think I may be able to find a few things for you, maybe even a suit. My husband has put on some weight and I have two shirts he can no longer wear, and ties I can give you. Do you know what size pants or jacket you wear?"

He looked up, rather stunned, and his words stumbled when he said, "I'm about medium, I guess, but don't really know my sizes because I don't have a suit." Mother looked at him intently, for a second, and said she'd be right back. Into the house she went again, while he still ate and I still stared. Soon, back out she came – and I had heard her talking inside, maybe on the phone. She was excited I could tell, but didn't know why, and I just waited and watched.

"Young man," she said, "I just called my friend, Minnie Quist. Her husband has put on weight, too, and I know she's put aside a suit or two he can no longer wear, and he was about your size and height. I asked her if she could bring over one of those suits for you to try on, as you'll need a proper suit to look for a job in Cincinnati. Both of us have daughters, so there's no son to use the clothes. She'll be here soon, so if you're finished eating, come on in and try on one of my husband's shirts. That should help us figure out if this is gonna work."

He stood up, just looked at her, gave her his empty plate, picked up his cloth bag, and he, and then I, just followed Mom into the house. So I wouldn't be a bother, I think, she told me to just sit on the couch right there in the living room, for a while, which I did. He went into our day-bed room where she had laid out the two shirts. He seemed a little embarrassed, so mother closed the door for him to change. In a few minutes he came out beaming – Dad's white shirt liked nice on him – and mother had two for him. Then she held up two ties she said Dad never wore, and he could have them too, if he wanted them. It made me smile to see him smile, and mother seemed so pleased.



Then the back door opened and we heard a “Yoo-hoo” from Minnie. Into our living room she walked, carrying a light gray suit on a hanger. Mother told her that this young man was heading to Cincinnati, and she thought the two of them could put together a proper suit of clothes for him when he went job-hunting. She then turned to him, and said, “What’s your name, son, so I can introduce you to Minnie, myself – I’m Norma – and my daughter Susan, there on the couch.”

He quietly said that his name was Herman Bauer, and mother’s strong, excited retort was, “For heavens sakes, you’re of German stock, just like we all are.” He nodded, smiling, and she introduced him to Minnie then told him to get back in that room, try on the suit, and we’d wait out here. She almost pushed the man into the room, slamming the door. Then she and Minnie began to talk, and I did not know what was happening, but everyone was happy, so I just stayed on the couch.

Soon the door opened and he came out, wearing the suit, shirt, one of the ties, and just stood there, with his arms by his side, looking a bit awkward. Both women sighed, and said it was a “wonderful fit.” But then Minnie said, “What about shoes and socks?”

He immediately responded that he thought his black shoes would be fine for the gray suit. They looked down, agreed and nodded. Mother ended the exchange by saying Dad could easily throw in a pair of gray socks. Two adult and ebullient women, one pleased and stunned young man, and a small bewildered girl, formed the tableau for that special moment.

Then mother burst out with, “But you’ll need a grip for your clothing.” In Ohio, during my youth, a suitcase was often called a “grip.” We had some old grips up in our attic, and up the stairs she raced, knowing his time to get to the train was drawing near. Down the stairs she soon came with an old, but usable small suitcase, grabbed a dust cloth from the day-bed room closet, wiped the grip, and handed it to him. “You’d better hurry and change and pack this, as your train’s due to leave pretty soon.” She said, panting a bit.

He turned quickly, went back into the day-bed room, changed into his brown cotton pants, tan shirt, and crumpled lightweight green jacket. As he came out, carrying the grip, and looked at my mother and Minnie, he said, “Would you please write your names and addresses on a piece of paper for me? I would so appreciate that. And I don’t know how to thank you for this kindness, and for what you have given me to help me find work. I’ll remember this village, and I’ll remember you.”

Mother grabbed a pad of paper from the corner desk, wrote their names hurriedly and our address, ripped off the top sheet and gave it to him. “Thank you,” he said, as he shook each of their hands, waved to me, and walked

quickly out the front door, down the steps, and turned toward the tracks and boxcars, heading south to Cincinnati. He wore the same clothes as before, but had a new, if somewhat old grip, to carry his new, now his own, suit of clothes.

About four years later, as I recall, mother received an envelope, and the handwriting on it was unknown to her, and the postal stamp said it came from Baltimore. She looked quizzical because she did not know anyone from Baltimore. It was from Herman Bauer. He had, in time, found a job and moved east, ending up in Baltimore. He was about to marry, and wrote he could not rest until he thanked her, told her he was doing well, and would she please tell Minnie, and say hi to Susan.

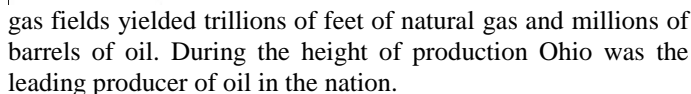
When Dad came home for supper that night, mother was in a tizzy to tell him the good news. He listened and then wondered about all the fuss over something that happened four years ago. She calmed down, started to explain it all to him again, then stopped and just savored the memory. I remembered and savored the memory as well. My mother seldom sat still, and it pleases me to recall that what she could do, in an hour or more, was sometimes exceptional, and often quite decent.



**Sue & Val Rabe, Mrs. Michael Rabe, Andreas Rabe, Norma & Cade Schulenberg**



**Cade Schulenberg and daughter Sue.**



The first local venture was the New Bremen Natural Gas Company which started in April 1888. Interest in the venture was so keen it began with more than 100 stockholders. Gas was procured from the Arkenburg well four miles north of town.

The installation also caused some inconvenience. The *New Bremen Sun* newspaper reported:

This notice was posted by the town:

Ads in the paper promoted New Bremen as being "in the midst of the gas region" and the company offered free gas to manufacturers who located here. Business was good and the first of many dividends was declared for the stockholders. By 1891 the company had four gas wells.

## Oil and Gas Boom Times

The discovery of oil and gas deposits in our part of Ohio began a dozen years of boom times. Oil and gas production, like building the canal, was responsible for much growth and development during those years. Wells drilled into the Trenton limestone of the Lima- Indiana oil and

Soon other oil companies were drilling in various spots. The Thirteen Oil Company was formed by local men. Neely-Clover Company, led by St. Marys oil tycoon Lemon Gray Neely, was hired to drill wells. Neely- Clover was one of the companies working offshore in Grand Lake St. Marys. The reservoir was the site of one of the world's first offshore oil derricks.



Not all wells came in as expected because the oil and gas fields overlapped. Some wells drilled for gas showed mostly oil. That was the case when the New Bremen Natural Gas Company sold three oil wells to Manhattan Oil Company and transferred leases on four farms. Finding gas instead of oil caused the Wooden Shoe Oil Company to sell their well on the Brueggeman farm to New Bremen Natural Gas. In addition they sold leases on 600 acres of excellent gas territory.

Production peaked in 1896 and then gradually declined as larger fields were found in Texas and Oklahoma. The New Bremen Natural Gas Company was sold to Kerlin Brothers in 1898. By then the gas street lamps had been changed to electric incandescent lights.

*The oil field around New Bremen will soon go down in history. Derricks are being torn down, the pipes pulled and hauled away. (New Bremen Sun 10-1901)*

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## New Bremen's Town Clock



Clock repair in 1975.

When installed in the tower of St. Paul Church in 1891 it was known as the town clock. These items about the clock were reported by the *New Bremen Sun* newspaper publisher, A. C. Buss. The articles are presented just as they were written 125 years ago.

**February 14, 1891** - A committee is out soliciting for a town clock to be put in the tower of the new church. The clock will cost in the neighborhood of \$800 and the committee is on a fair way of having gathered in the required amount.

**March 14, 1891** - The necessary amount of money has been subscribed for the town clock and the next thing in order will be to buy the clock. The soliciting committee has done excellent work and the people of the town have responded magnificently. Next summer when the big bells are intact and the huge hammer comes down on them sending a "gong" through the air, we will appreciate the immense advantage an never for once rue the mite we have given to it.

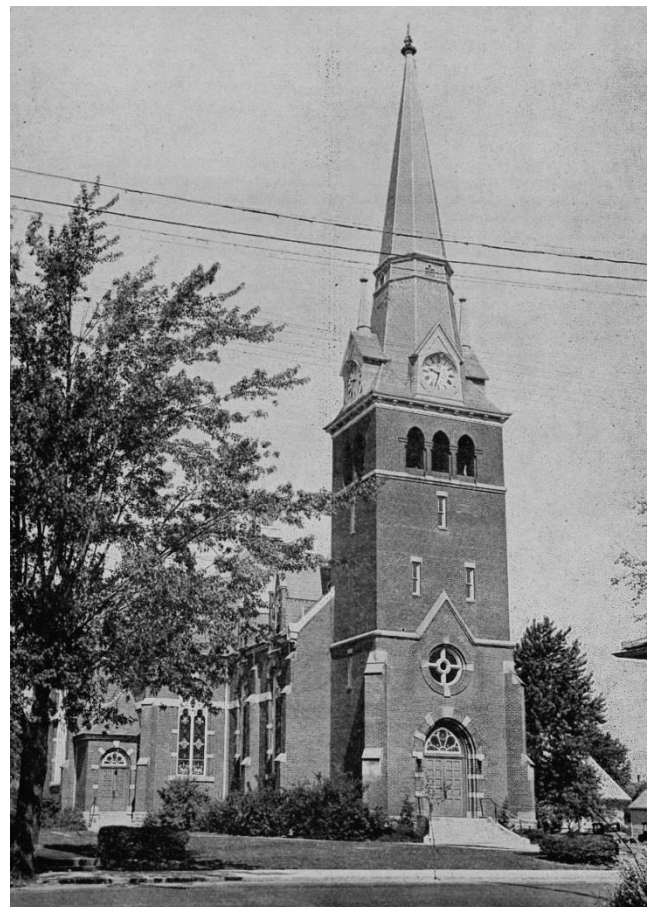
**March 21, 1891** - John Halsema, jeweler has sent in an order to the Seth Thomas Clock Company, New York for an \$800 town clock to be placed in the new church tower. This company is one of the best in the world and will furnish first-class work. The clock will be manufactured according to the directions sent by Mr.

Halsema and will arrive here sometime in the month of May.

**May 9, 1891** - The time will soon be at hand when the two big bells will be removed from the old St. Paul Church tower. The machinery for the town clock has arrived and is ready to be put in place at any time. The bells have a splendid ring and when in their new quarters will throw out their sound with bigger force from the fact that they will hang in the open air. They have done many years of active service and we suggest that before being taken out of their old home they be tapped once for each year they have served the community. Everybody in town would be counting the taps.

**June 6, 1891** - The church bells were removed from the old to the new church tower last week by Messrs. William Brinkmeyer and Herman Heinfeldt. A person could at once distinguish the difference in sound. The clock is now being put in place by John Halsema, jeweler. This machinery would have been put up sooner but several pieces of it were lost on the way coming here.

**June 13, 1891** - The town clock is in working order. The dials point out the hour of the day and when not observed by the eyes, the bells promulgate its message by striking every half hour.



St. Paul United Church of Christ, established in 1833.





## LETTERS

I read the entire Towpath. Very well written with an abundance of information. Our tombstones in the old Jewish Cemetery have many of the same symbols of grief and loss—broken limb, tree cut down.

Keep up the good work.

**Sandra Conradi, Mt. Pleasant, SC**

---

Both Tom and I enjoy reading The Towpath. Good job! To all of you!

I especially enjoyed the pictures of the first graders making a field trip to Rump's gas station. I was with them as their teacher!

Teaching in New Bremen schools was truly a great experience. Every teacher on the staff was my mentor. They taught me how to teach. It was a positive experience for a brand-new teacher.

New Bremen was a great place to grow up and a great place to begin a career.

**Barbara Poppe Block, Rockford, IL**

*(NBHS Class of 1950, First Grade teacher in New Bremen 1953-54)*

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Enclosed is membership application for my sister, Joan Mueller Maloy. I have enjoyed my membership so much that I want to share *The Towpath* with her. We used to visit Schwieterman's Drug Store in the summers when visiting our grandparents, Verona & Howard Huenke.

**Judy Mueller Jones, Oviedo, FL**

## NBHS Class Reunions

Our community sponsored festival, Bremenfest, is a time that brings many visitors to town. This year's 42<sup>nd</sup> Bremenfest was no exception. Several honor classes of NBHS graduates chose the festival as a time for their reunions.

See the pictures of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Class of 1966 and the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Class of 1961.

Has your class had a reunion? Please send us information about your reunion and a picture, if you have one, and we will publish it in the next issue of *The Towpath*.

## The Class of 1961 Celebrates 55<sup>th</sup> Reunion



Attending were: (front) Genevieve Conradi, Barbara Kuck Dill, Judy Meckstroth. Emily Harlamert Wiedeman, Judy Scheer Wiehe, Marvin Moeller, Doris Topp Carr, Allen Paul, Dennis Dicke, John Tostrick, (back row) Herb Richey, Lois Dicke Herman, Nancy Kettler Price, John Bornhorst, Fred Moeller, Karl Kittel, and Jerry Maxson, teacher.

## The Class of 1966 Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion



(Photo Courtesy of Mike Meyer)

**Front Row:** Mr. Kurtzman, Nancy Moots, Mr. Turner, Mr. Jerry Maxson, Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Edith Wissman **Middle Row:** Byron Lunz, Debby Meyer Lunz, Betty Brandenburg Magato, Deanna Sollman Anderson, Marlene Wiehe Ahlers, Joann Wittenbrink Boyer, Tom Topp., Donna Dicke Jacoby, Dru Luedeke Meyer, LuAnne Koenig Shelby, Doris Bornhorst Krieg, Pam Moeller Elking, Margie Schoenlein Tilz, Jane Belton, Sandy Tontrup

**Back Row:** Bill Meiring, Jim Hay, Bob Niekamp, Harold Krieg, John Turner, Mike Suchland, Bill Lampert, Bruce Mousa, Dennis Bushman, Bob Cashdollar, Jim Scheer.

**"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**

**Marvin Heitkamp**

**Joan Maloy**

**MEMBER DEATHS**

6/11/2016 **Gary Henry**

7/6/2016 **Mack Wellman**

7/10/2016 **Clarence Leshner (LM)**

7/24/2016 **Johann Klein (LM)**

8/3/2016 **Ron Hittepole**

(CM=Charter Member LM=Life Member)

**DONATIONS**

**Col. Shirley Schelper**

**MEMORIAL DONATIONS**

In Memory of: **Henry & Edna Block, Karl Block, Marybelle Block Jordan, Dorothy Block Dammeyer, Jane Block Watson, Betty Block Tansey, Paul Block, Helen Block Malmberg, Ruth Block** by Tom & Barbara Block

In Memory of: **Roger & Leota Busse** by Richard Huckriede

In Memory of: **Ron Hittepole** by Various Donors

**NBHA RAFFLE WINNERS 2016**

**July-** \$100.00 to **Robert Moeller (NB)**, \$75.00 to **Jeffrey Bertke (NB)**, \$50.00 to **Dave Hirschfeld (NB)**.

**August-** \$100.00 to **Ellen Topp (NB)**, \$75.00 to **Jacob Froning (London, OH)**, \$50.00 to **David Rawers (NB)**.

**September-** \$100.00 to **Ed Doenges (NB)**, \$75.00 to **Doris Krieg (NB)**, \$50.00 to **Marlene Klose(NB)**.

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

**ITEMS RECENTLY DONATED TO MUSEUM**

Artwork by Ryan Timmerman; STAMCO nameplate by Dave Hemmert; New Bremen items (25) donated by Stan Kuenning, including bride Josephine Boesel's headpiece and beeswax piece worn by groom Louis Ruese in 1891; Roger Busse's baseball uniform donated by Larry Busse; family history and pictures donated by Donna Eschmeyer Gilliom; E. H. Lameyer trade token by Carin Heitbrink Rindler-Osterfeld.

**Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month**

**Membership Dues**

\$25.00 per year (includes spouse/S.O. at same address)

Lifetime membership - \$250.00 (includes spouse/S.O. at same address)

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

**New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073**



**NBHA Museum – 120 N. Main St.**



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LANDMARK IN NEW BREMEN AND SUPPORT  
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Order this special shirt at [www.spiritsplash.com/nbha](http://www.spiritsplash.com/nbha) from **Oct. 1st through Oct 31st**. The shirts will be shipped after Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Monday, Nov. 28, 2016 – New Bremen Christmas Tree Lighting by the New Bremen/New Knoxville Rotary.**

**Nov. 28, 2016 – NBHA Christmas Tree Festival at the Lockkeepers House begins. The displays may be seen after the tree lighting and during the week during regular Chamber hours. The displays may also be seen during special Open Houses on Sunday Dec 4 & Dec 11.**

**Sunday, December 4 – Christmas Tree Festival Open House at the Lockkeepers House from 1:30 to 4:00 PM. A photographer will be available to take photos of your children, family and pets for a nominal fee.**

**December 11 –Christmas Tree Festival Open House at the Lockkeepers House from 1:30 to 4:00 PM.**

**Visit the Luelleman House and the Pape House this Fall. Call 419-629-2764 for appointment.**