



THE TOWPATH

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THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

October 2019

45th Bremenfest

August 16-18, 2019



Parade Grand Marshal Ruth Ann Schwieterman



“THE TOWPATH” is a historical reflection of New Bremen and the surrounding area published quarterly by the New Bremen Historic Association and mailed to all members. We welcome stories, pictures and suggestions of topics from our readers.

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Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month.

Membership Dues

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

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

NEW MEMBERS

Carol Denoyer

Fred & Margaret Pape

Andrew & Jan Doenges

MEMBER DEATHS

None reported this quarter

(CM=Charter Member LM=Life Member)

DONATIONS

Duane Heinfeld

Monthly Raffle Winners

July-\$100-Duane Dammeyer (CA), \$75-Brian Alig (NB), \$50-Lee Dabbelt (NB).

August-\$100-Kay Slattery Shapiro (SC), \$75- Joe Hamberg (NB), \$50-Ed Schwartz (NB).

September-\$100-Gregory Bornhorst (NB), \$75-Cathy Maurer (NB), \$50-New Bremen Senior Citizens (NB).

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

Items Recently Donated to NBHA

Minster Bank night light **by Dave Kelch**; August Dierker tin match holder, various NB school items, a 1930 Wints lunchroom card, Lone Ranger photo card from 1940s, milk bottle cream stopper **by Ned Scheer**; NBFD dress shirt worn by Charlie Garman **by Amy Webster**; NBPD uniform **by the NBPD**; Albert Funeral thermometer **by Mark Schwabero**; Stamco items & photos **by Janice Schumacher**; USAF dress uniform (Tom Kuenning), USAF briefcase with maps, manuals 1950s **by Pat Meyer**; Antique doll bed (made by a great grandfather in New Bremen) **by Sherry Biederman & Richard Kuck**; WWII Army Air Corp uniform worn by S/SGT Verlin Hirschfeld, photos, plaque **by Craig Hirschfeld, Gary Hirschfeld, Chris Kelser**; NB blanket tag, small end table made in NB **by Karen Eckert**; Photos, invoices of Sunoco Station, Novelty Furniture Co of NB **by Alice Hegemier**; Parent's baptismal certificates, Grandparent's marriage certificate, Gruebmeier sale notice **by Betty Seitz Ritter**.

NBHA NEWS

The NBHA Board of Trustees have compiled a list of maintenance projects.

Pending Projects include:

- Replacing roof on Pape House.
- Replacing 21 year-old AC system at Luelleman House.
- Updating website

Projects completed include:

- Trim painted on barn & summer kitchen.
- Siding sections on Luelleman House lost in windstorm have been replaced.
- Temporary repair of AC system at Luelleman House.
- Light fixture & post scraped, painted, and now working.
(See history below.)



NBHA Board Member Don Gagel painting Street Light.

Natural gas to power outdoor light-posts arrived in New Bremen in the summer of 1888. That fall home owners began to install natural gas fixtures inside their homes to replace the use of kerosene lanterns. Electric lights came in slowly at the turn of the century.

This historic New Bremen street light fixture was donated by Ray Luedeke with the post from the Village. It was electrified by Merlin Hirschfeld and used to light the yard of the Luelleman House for many years.

This summer Don Gagel's repair brought it back to life. He replaced the socket and light sensor and gave it a great paint job.



LETTERS

I quickly passed through New Bremen several weeks ago. I was shocked to see my grandparent's home at 12 N. Main Street surrounded by parking lot... We ate lunch at the hotel. Tom (Braun) did catch me up on Crown's expansion everywhere!

You all continue to do a magnificent job for all of us that have any connection to New Bremen. I love all the stories in the newsletter. Thank you so very much for all the time that you spend for the enjoyment of all of us. —**Sherry Biederman (Florida)**

Gen, thanks for being New Bremen's "ambassador" during the History Mystery Man's visit to New Bremen. What a wonderful video and what a great promotional piece about our town. —**Kathy Topp (New Bremen)**

Just a note to say I saw that great "article" about New Bremen on Facebook. Nice job. —**Nancy (Kettler) Price (Pennsylvania)**

Have watched the recent History Mystery Man video many times now. Enjoyed seeing you as tour guide and am totally in awe of the amount of history you have. I learned several new things about Bremen that I did not know. So thank you for that.

Also saw some people I recognize like Jim Elking at Bicycle Museum, Marlene Berning Hittepole at the Lock One Theater. My great niece (my brother Jon's granddaughter) in the old hotel, now 17 West...

—**Jane Belton (California)**



***Does anyone have any information about this picture that was displayed on the video?

Have you seen the video? Google: New Bremen History Mystery Man and click on the video.

PICTORIAL TOUR OF WASHINGTON STREET THROUGH THE YEARS

This tour begins at the corner of Monroe & Washington Streets and covers the first block of South Washington Street. The buildings pictured were on the east side of the street. Kuenzel Mills occupied the canal lands on the west side of the street.



Boesche Building at the SE corner of Monroe & Washington Streets circa 1880s.

This building housed J. H. Boesche's dry goods and grocery on the north side and a residence on the south side. The International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) occupied the upper floor.

When Mr. Boesche retired, the building and business was purchased by Henry Dierker. A gas leak and subsequent explosion demolished the building in 1905 but was replaced the same year by Mr. Dierker.



READERS: Please share your photos and memories about South Washington Street with us! Call, write or email Gen or Joyce.



The Dierker Building circa 1905

The north side of the Dierker Building became the home of First National Bank in 1919. A residence was on the south side.

Next to the Dierker Building was a building that housed two businesses. On the north side was Koeper's Shoe Store for many years. The south side of the building had a number of occupants and uses over the years.



One of the occupants was the Blasé & Gieseke Grocery

The Dierker Building and Koeper's Shoe Store were demolished in 1970 to widen the intersection and to make room for a gas station. This summer (2019) the Marathon Gas Station on that corner closed and was demolished.





South Washington Street circa 1930 with view of Kuenzel Mills buildings on the right.



New Bremen Fire Department circa 1900 with a barber shop on the left and another on the right. Notice the very muddy street.



Muddy street was replaced by brick street circa 1908-1910.

Joseph Lanfersieck had a barbershop in the old building to the left of the Fire Department that was at one time a warehouse for items shipped on canal boats. The warehouse can be seen in the Fire Department picture on this page.

The picture below shows the barbershop after the old warehouse building was replaced with a brick addition.



Two businesses were in the building south of the Fire Department. On the left was Ernest Tomhafe's barber shop.



On the right was Fred Kamman's Elk Café. In 1919 this building became Wint's Restaurant.



Wint's restaurant and bar was in operation from 1919-1981. To the right of Wint's was the American House building.



During the busy days of canal travel, the American House housed visitors to New Bremen. The south side of the building served as a bakery for many years - Star Bakery, Moeller Bakery, Knipple Bakery. Both Wint's and this building were demolished in the early 1990s.

The building south of the American House building was the residence of Theodore Rabe at one time.



In the 1960s, Ernie's Barber Shop was in the next building and The Esquire Shop (1969-1989) just south of it.



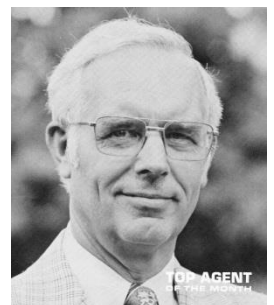
An early picture of The Arcade which was in operation from 1903-1953. The buildings were sold to Crown in 1953.

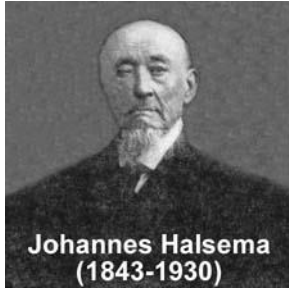
The Arcade was formed through the merger of four New Bremen businesses – Speckmann & Nieter Dry Goods and Groceries, Faehl & Nieter Furniture, Rabe's Cheap Store and Wiemeyer's Cash Clothing. It was the largest department store between Cincinnati and Toledo at the time. A dance hall was located on the second floor. It is now the corporate headquarters for Crown Equipment.



Crown Corporate Headquarters 1987.

A special thank you to Jim Moeller. He provided a hand drawn map to help us look at this section of S. Washington Street.





New Bremen Notables The Halsema Family

The Halsema family came to New Bremen from the Netherlands. Johannes and Fronica Halsema were married in the Groningen province of the Netherlands in 1874 and shortly after came to Ohio. They planned to join his brother Lambertus then living in the area.

Johannes had been trained as a clock maker and chose to settle in New Bremen and open a business on West Monroe Street. Over the years the business evolved into selling jewelry and eyeglasses in addition to clocks. The Halsema family lived in the same two story brick building as their shop for over 50 years.

Johannes and Fronica had nine children with six surviving to adulthood. All six of their children graduated from New Bremen high school. This was quite an accomplishment during those early years of education.

New Bremen high school had its first graduate in 1882. When the oldest son John Halsema graduated he was only the seventeenth alumni of NBHS. Encouraging the graduation of all of their children shows the Halsema family's high regard for education. It was surely a family priority and set the graduates on the path to productive lives as seen in these short biographies.



John Cornelius Halsema 1876-1941

John graduated from New Bremen high school in 1893 and went to Miami University. He taught in various Auglaize County schools for over 50 years always continuing his education. After graduating from the Ohio State University

with his master's degree he became the principal at New Bremen. He left that position to become the superintendent at Minster for 28 years until his death.

Lucius Herman Halsema 1881-1901.

Lucius graduated high school in 1897 and taught school for two years before attending college in Dayton. He was a bookkeeper at the Dayton Cash Register Works when he died suddenly at age 19. His obituary in the *New Bremen Sun* newspaper stated ...*Great opportunities lay before him and he would have made his mark in life.*

Eusebius Julius Halsema 1883-1945

Eusebius or Jay as he was known became a graduate of NBHS in 1889. He went to the Ohio State University and graduated with a degree in civil engineering in 1907. The next year Jay accepted a position with the Philippine government Bureau of Public Works. On his first leave he returned to New Bremen to marry his classmate Marie Boesel. Except for his army service during WWI, Jay and Marie made their home in the Philippines and both are buried there.



Bernard Sylvanus Halsema 1885-1951

Bernard graduated in 1903 and went on to further his education at the Ohio State University. He became an electrician and made his home in Chickasha, Oklahoma.



Hilda Broerman, Geciena Halsema, Anna Kuest, Elizabeth Halsema

Geciena V. Halsema 1886 - 1975

Geciena graduated in 1905 and while still in school began working for the New Bremen telephone company. She continued working as one of New Bremen's telephone operators for more than 45 years.

Elizabeth A. Halsema 1893 - 1965

Graduating in 1910, Elizabeth continued her education in Dayton. After her mother's death, she returned to New Bremen to live in the family home with her sister and care for their father. Elizabeth also joined her sister as a telephone operator for many years until dial phones were developed.

More information about the entire Halsema family can be found at their website www.halsema.org.

WHAT GAS STATIONS DO YOU REMEMBER?

A call from my friend, classmate and former NBHA board member, Judy Meckstroth, prompted me to do some research about the gas stations in New Bremen, now that only one station remains.

The only station that remains in New Bremen is the Sunoco station known as Cardinal Express built by Edgar & Ed Rump in 1990 at the corner of State Route 66 & Amsterdam Road.

The Marathon Station that was established in 1970 on the SE corner of Monroe & Washington Streets was closed this summer.

A comprehensive article about New Bremen's filling stations was written by Lucille Francis in the April 1998 issue of the *Towpath*.

In this article Lucille Francis gathered memories about the stations from Delores (Schroer) Stienecker, Paul E. Dicke, Karl Warner and Alice (Schmidt) Wissman. She included pictures of most of the stations.

Lucille began her article by saying that filling stations began to "spring up" all over town in the 1920s and 1930s. This was probably a result of the increase in the number of automobiles being driven and thus the need to buy gas and oil.

As time went by, the term filling station was replaced by service station when additional services were added to the businesses. Service Stations provided attendants to not only pump the gas but also check the oil and clean the windshield, provide car repairs, oil changes, tires, batteries, maps and even restrooms for the motorist.

Another change began in the 1970s when stations became self-service with customers pumping their own gas and fewer stations provided repair service.

Below is a list of the "filling stations" that Lucille included in her article:

- **South Side Service Station** at SE corner of S. Washington & Cherry Street was opened in 1928. Paul Dicke bought the business in 1947 and his son Don took over the business in 1960. It was purchased by Crown Equipment in 1995 and now is solely used by Crown.
- **Refiners, later known as the Sohio station**, located on the SW corner of Washington & Monroe. In the 1930s it was run by Harold Mohrman. Others who ran this station were Alvin Wagner, George Knost, Les Neuman, Paul E. Dicke, Bob Klose, Luther Hirschfeld, Ray Luedeke, Ted Rollins and Bud Pratt. It was torn down some time in 1968-1970.
- The **Marathon Station** on the SE corner of Monroe & Washington. It was opened in 1970 at the same time the Sohio Station across the street was removed. The Marathon station closed this summer.
- **Teddy Doenges' Tire Shop** at 7 S. Washington Street. Moved to N. Main Street, just north of Zion Church and opened **Cities Service Station**.
- **H. W. Rairdon's Garage and Texaco Station** on the NW corner of Washington & Monroe. It was torn down in the early 1950 to make way for the short-lived Post Office on Monroe.
- **Virgil Horn's Station** was on the NE corner of Monroe & Walnut Streets.
- **A Pure Oil Station owned by Alvin Dicke** was on the SE corner of Monroe & Walnut Streets but was moved to Herman Schmidt's station in 1935.
- **Herman Schmidt's Station** was on N. Herman Street, then State Route 66, near the railroad track and the last stop for those on their way to the New Bremen Speedway.
- **The Lone Pine** at the corner of N. Main & Pearl Streets in 1958.
- **Leo Huenke's Garage** at 202 N. Main Street, the NE corner of Main & Second Streets. Now the site of Bolly's Restaurant.
- **Central Auto Garage**, SE corner of Main & First Streets, built about 1932.
- **A Sunoco Station, later became Pure, Union 76** was built on the SW corner of Monroe & Main Streets in 1935 and managed by Arnold Hegemier, followed by Irvin Koeper, then Ralph Fogt. Edgar Rump took it over in 1946. In 1990 Edgar and son Ed built a new station on the SE corner of State Route 66 & Amsterdam Road.
- In 1948 **Ralph Fogt** built a station on the NW corner of Washington & South Streets. This was torn down in the mid-1990s.

At least six or seven of the stations were in business when I was learning to drive in the 1950s.





Below are some of my memories and those of my peers from that earlier time:

My mother always went to Rump's for gas and oil changes. When I began to drive, I remember buying gas at Rump's Service Station. In fact, I remember buying a "dollar's worth" which would not get me very far today. But before I could drive a car, I took my bike there to put air in the tires. I also bought ice cream bars or popsicles there. I remember watching Edgar and Eddie looking under hoods and changing tires. I was never chased away and they always answered my questions.

After I graduated from high school and left New Bremen I did not get home very often. But when I would come home I would stop at Rumps to get a tank of gas and they always greeted me by name and with conversation like I had never left. I can still picture Edgar cleaning the windshield with the paper towels and a spray bottle. That memory always comes to mind when I clean the windshield on my car. - Genevieve Conradi, NBHS Class of 1961



I remember Dad buying gas at Ralph Fogt's station. They had a pop machine that always sold chocolate pop.

North of Fogt's was Dicke's Station. We went there one time because they were giving away free small piggy banks. I still have mine. The Dickses were our neighbors at one time.

The Sohio Station in the center of town had a flag pole and a drinking fountain and we always stopped there on our way home from school.

Across the street, in a big old building, was a garage and I think that they sold gas there. I remember being fascinated by a safe that was inside the building.

One block east, on the NE corner of Monroe & Walnut was a building that I think had been a gas station at one time. The whole building was picked up and moved somewhere when we were in the lower grades.

Of course, I remember Rumps. I also remember Central Auto. I also remember Doenges Tire Shop. I use to go there with my Dad. I believe I still remember the pumps in front of the place. I was told the top floor was a dance hall at one time.

My Dad talked about the station that was in the building where Bollys is now located.

I bought gas at the Lone Pine many times. They had the tallest pine tree in town after Wagners on Jefferson Street



cut their tree down. I believe the tree at the Lone Pine was struck by lightning and had to come down later on. When we would ride the Ferris wheel at the carnival, the two tall pine trees would stand out. I believe the Lone Pine Station owners had an old car, like a reconditioned 1940 Chevy.

I also remember, I think, the remains of a station on old Route 66 across from the bowling alley.

One station close to New Bremen was where Route 29 turns off Route 274 on the way to New Knoxville. When we were kids the station was not used but left intact. The old gas pumps were there and the yard was filled with old threshing machines.

It has been fun resurrecting these old memories.

- Ned Scheer, NBHS Class of 1961

My Dad always went to Rump's Service Station for gas, oil changes, tires, batteries. I remember how Edgar would lift the nozzle and fill the tank, check the oil, and clean the windshield at every visit.

Before I could drive I would stop at Rump's to buy candy. Then after I began driving I continued at Rump's like my Dad. I do remember that they were closed on Sundays so if I needed gas for the weekend I had to remember to get there before they closed on Saturday.



I also remember a gas station that was across the street from Rump's, but it was not there very long. I think it was a "76" station. Crown bought the building and used it as a store room for drums of oil.

- Dennis Dicke, NBHS Class of 1961



My Dad went to Paul Dicke's Station for gas. Paul was a truck driver and so was my Dad. I also have memories of going to the station out by the bowling alley with my Uncle Leo. This is where he bought bait for our fishing trips. I also remember the Lone Pine Station, Rump's, the Sohio Station on the SW corner of Monroe & Washington. -Judy Meckstroth, NBHS Class of 1961

What are your memories of gas stations in New Bremen? Please share your stories with us. Call or write Gen or Joyce!

Tick Tock

By Robert Gilbert

Only the ticking of the brass and marble mantle clock broke the dead silence in the stifling, airless parlor. I sat in the same chair in the same room of the strange house where I'd spent the previous two days. Most of it spent sitting in that chair. I didn't understand why I was there then and can only guess at it now. No one ever explained it that I remember. The owners of the house were a mystery to me then, and still are today. I had the impression the house was just a few blocks away from my Aunt and Uncle Ritter's house; but that's now a 70-year-old memory. I have no idea why I remember it that way.

We'd been staying temporarily in Aunt Ruth and Uncle Paul's home after they invited my family to stay with them when we moved back to our hometown after the war ended. The civilians, including my dad, who worked at Wright Patterson Air Force Base were no longer needed to rebuild the big bomber engines being shipped back from Europe, so everyone had been let go, en-mass.



Robert & Ron at government housing complex

I slept in that strange house in a huge bed that was larger than I imagined a bed could be. It was so high off the floor I had to climb up on it using a stool kept at the foot of the bed.

My brother and I had slept in little bunk beds as far back as I could remember when we lived in our tiny government-built home near Dayton.

The cooing sound of turtle doves floated into the second-floor bedroom through open windows in the warm, early summer morning hours as I remained late in that big bed with no reason to get out. I didn't know they were turtle doves, or know anything about birds for that matter because there weren't any birds around the stark government housing we lived in during the war years. There were no trees around those Fairborn, Ohio cabins, crammed together like a refugee camp with little grass in our bare dirt and mud lots. And no berry bushes or seed-bearing flowers for an occasional bird that might stop on a fence. The birds were just little specs flying high above, looking for a better place to land and forage. And because of the war rationing, no one was putting out breadcrumbs. But there in central Ohio's farmlands, New Bremen's bird life outside the windows and on the lawn were a fascinating new experience for me.

There was nothing for me to do in that big house so I pretended to sleep, listening and wondering what birds

could make such a soft, peaceful sound. I'd never heard the sweet, gentle bird calls of doves. So I waited in bed, enjoying the bird's singing until the lady called me to breakfast.

The lady of the house—she didn't seem to have a husband—would get me up to have my breakfast in the kitchen where I ate my scrambled eggs and toast and drank my milk sitting alone at an old, dark stained wooden table with its four matching, uncomfortable chairs. Uncomfortable to sit on and worse to lean back against because of the right angled, straight backed, solid hardwood backrest. I could just reach up to the table surface for my plate, forcing me to half stand for each forkful. She served my lunchtime baloney sandwich with a glass of lemonade, and my evening supper of meatloaf, potatoes, and iced tea to me—alone—there, too. She was kind enough, but the food was unappealing, and, with my uneasiness, I had no appetite—only questions she didn't seem to want to answer. Staying with me for a short while to see that I was eating, she answered with phrases like, "time will tell," and "you should ask your father," or "maybe in a little while." All put-off answers kids get to know too well....

I may have known her name back then but nothing about her and why I was there. It was summer; I was six years old and had just completed first grade. I should have been out playing with my older brother, Ronnie, and our cousins. But I didn't know where Ronnie was; I hadn't seen him since dad put me there—in that house. I didn't know why my parents had left me with this unknown woman, and worse, had no idea where they were. My dad left me with the woman and disappeared. Was this going to be my new home? If anyone told me the reason for these things, I guess my six-year-old brain didn't understand.

There were no books or magazines to help my days go faster, and in 1947 there was no TV. And, if the house had a radio, I never heard or saw it. In those days radios remained off during the workweek in daytime hours, probably because there was little programming other than farm reports. Radios were for evening or weekend amusement with amateur hours and mystery programs, or kid's shows on Saturday mornings. I liked the Buster Brown show!

She may have had a radio in her private room, though.

It didn't seem like any children had ever lived in that house; there was no closet full of old toys or a kid's playroom. It felt like only old people had ever lived there:



the parlor with its spittoon by the glassed-in fireplace, cigar ashtrays on most tables, fancy crocheted doilies on the furniture, windows with lace curtains backed by heavy opaque curtains reaching almost to the high ceilings, old black and white photos of stern-faced men and women who looked like they'd just attended a funeral, an old house smell scented with stale cigar smoke, and, except for the mantle clock's ticking and hourly chimes, total silence.

The woman lived there in near complete silence—like a ghost. She wore clunky, low heeled leather shoes she walked in without making a sound. I'd see her going between rooms, or just as a shadow in the hall or a doorway with a quick glance at me as I sat in that wingback chair. She didn't say a word or smile or wave—just the glance.

I don't know how I slept there without having nightmares—it was a place fit for ghost stories: two floors with an attic above the top floor, and a cellar reached through a narrow doorway and down a dark stairway off the kitchen. The stairway to the attic was behind a low, locked door at the end of a long hallway connecting the upstairs bedrooms. She needlessly told me to stay out of the cellar and attic; I had no interest in going into either place, anyway. A heavy padlock on the attic door was enough for me: was it keeping me out, or something in? But not knowing about ghost and horror stories at that age, those places were creepy enough even without thoughts of ghosts. Lying in bed at night in that second-story bedroom, I wondered what could be on the other side of that attic door only a little way down the hall. Maybe it was the sixth sense thing that all kids have: *I don't trust this.*

So, nearly terrorized by the mysteries of that big house, I sat waiting for something to happen. Anything! Waiting in the parlor wing-back chair and listening to the mantle clock ticking and the muted outside sounds of turtle doves singing their sad songs, or the occasional strange sound of a car crunching past on the gravel alleyway behind the house. The crunching sound was worrying when it stopped after dark, somewhere behind that house and I was in bed but not yet sleeping. While it could have been a neighbor's car pulling into their barn, the sound of a car stopping at night in the alleyway had me thinking of robbers and gangsters or other scary things.

Most houses in New Bremen were on lots with paved streets out front and gravel alleys passing behind the barns in the backyards. It was common for homes to have barns back then because the town wasn't far removed from the days of horse-drawn farm equipment and delivery wagons. Barns were a little scary themselves: old ramshackle, two-story buildings with hay lofts on the second floor—*what could be up there*—and dark, unused

tool rooms or chicken coops in the dingy back areas—*what could be back there?* I'd never been in a barn before the lady took me out to the chicken room once to collect eggs. I didn't go back again, which was fine with me because the place felt too creepy. To me, old barns all looked creepy with their weathered wood, peeling paint, and dilapidated, abandoned look. And there was one right behind that house, just outside of my bedroom window! *What could be in there?*

And what could be in that cellar? Or in the attic?

In the daylight hours I sat in the wingback chair and waited, hour after hour, listening to the mantle clock ticking and the doves cooing. But waiting for what? And wondering if I'd ever see my parents again. And when could I go back again to our temporary home at my aunt and uncle's place? *Why was I here, anyway?*

"Bobby, your mom wants to see you in the bedroom," my dad said as he walked me through my aunt and uncle's front door. *What's this about,* I thought. *Am I in trouble? He just brought me home!* He pushed the big, floor to ceiling pocket door to the side for me and I stepped into my parent's makeshift bedroom. Mom was lying in the bed, propped up with pillows and a light sheet pulled up to her waist, tenderly clasping something to her breast.

"Hi Bobby, honey. This is your new brother, Richie," as she gently turned his pink face to me.

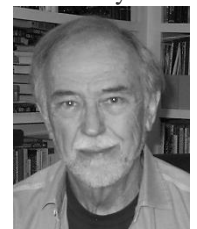
I sure didn't see that one coming! But hey, who notices baby bumps at six?



Robert Gilberg Bio

Bob is a retired semiconductor executive with thirty-five years of experience dating from the earliest days of transistorized computers to today's world of digital High Definition TV and the connected home. He has numerous patented designs for computer and communications microcircuits. His team received an Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Emmy Award for digital television anti-piracy systems. Bob is the author of four books: his memoir, "The Last Road Rebel and Other Lost Stories", and novels, "Alice Chang", "A Simple Twist of Fate", and "Starvation Mountain".

A career with multi-national corporations took him around the world, and with Nikki, his wife of 52 years—a travel expert and consummate traveling companion—they added many exotic locations. They are theater and music lovers with life missions of seeing the greatest musicians of their generation and the finest theatre in San Diego. Two dogs, a canary, and an African Grey parrot Coco, complete their family.



THE WWI SAGA OF A NEW BREMEN SOLDIER...From being gassed to becoming a Hero!



We have this **WWI gas mask** in our museum. Why is it important to display? It was during WWI that gas masks were first introduced.

During this war both sides engaged in trench warfare which tended to deadlock the fighting forces. To end the deadlock, poison gas attacks were carried out with disastrous consequences. People injured by exposure to these poisons were labeled as "gassed."

This was the first conflict where gas warfare was used on a large scale. Chlorine gas and then phosgene gas canisters were shot into the trenches. To offer defense against these lung irritants, gas masks were developed and issued to all those in danger.

That meant that all soldiers, civilians and even animals used by the armies needed protection. The masks used filters to keep the wearer from inhaling harmful gas fumes.



These masks were so necessary for protection that gas training became part of the AEF soldiers' basic training. Soldiers needed to don their masks quickly as soon as the gas alarm sounded. Drills mandated that soldiers would be able to don their gas masks within 6 seconds.

Initially the masks, though uncomfortable, gave good protection

against the lung irritant gases. Then in 1917 a new gas threat was added that made the masks less effective.

Mustard gas was known as the king of war gasses. Contact with mustard gas causes burns and blistering injuries. Mustard gas was probably the cause of the injury to New Bremen soldier Lewis Poppe. Read more about him in this article:

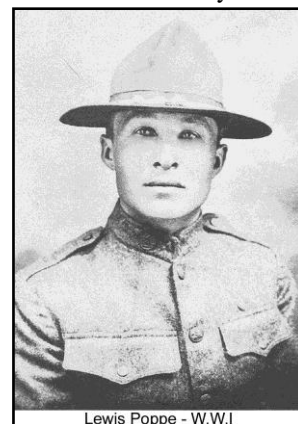
LEWIS J. C. POPPE

Lewis J. C. Poppe of New Bremen, Ohio was a private in Company D, 16th regiment of the First Division on October 10, 1918. His squad was on outpost duty to cover the withdrawal of the American unit, which had advanced into an area swarming with members of the Von Hindenburg army in the Verdun sector of France.

Lewis had the membrane burned inside his mouth from a gas attack on the previous day by the Germans. In spite of his injury, he volunteered to fill the nine canteens in his squad with water from a well that was supposed to be nearby.

Lewis lost his way in the gray dawn looking for the well. Unarmed, he came upon a lone German soldier. Lewis's first thought was to quietly withdraw, but then he recalled how he had aided in the capture of a German lieutenant the day before and this helped him decide to overcome the lone man. He crept up to the unsuspecting soldier and in the German language warned him that an outcry meant death. Lewis told him that he was with a detachment of 60 Americans, hidden behind a ridge.

Lewis Poppe's bluff worked but his courage sank when the lone German soldier told him there were 16 other German soldiers in a dugout below and that he was standing guard for the group. The sentry then clambered into the hole and advised all of the Germans to surrender. The group agreed, with one exception, and this man wanted to attack and kill Poppe but was overpowered and disarmed by his peers.



Lewis Poppe - W.W.I

Lewis Poppe then enlisted the aid of the Germans in filling the canteens. The sentry knew the location of the well and helped Lewis find it. Lewis and the sentry told the 16 infantrymen to remain where they were. On the way to the well, Lewis found a loaded rifle in a ditch and picked it up. The German carried the canteens and in single file, all the men marched to Poppe's squad with Lewis Poppe, the doughboy, bringing up the rear with his new-found rifle.

On the next day, help arrived for Lewis and his squad and the New Bremen soldier was on his way to Hospital 123 for treatment. It was there that he again encountered the lone German sentry that he had captured. The German had been wounded while carrying American casualties under German fire. Poppe learned that the name of this man was Max Christochowitz, just 18 years of age, and they became friends.

Through the next ten years they corresponded and finally through arrangements by Poppe, Max came to visit in New Bremen. Two weeks later Max had obtained a position as an accountant with the City Loan and Savings Co. in Lima.

Lewis Poppe's feat of capturing 16 Germans would probably never have come to light if he and Max had not joshed each other about the event at the William Paul Gallagher Post of the American Legion in Lima. Veterans of the Lima post and Post 241 in New Bremen tried to gather reports about Poppe's bravery in an attempt to recognize and document the heroic feat. Max Christochowitz found it hard to believe that Lewis Poppe had not been decorated for his bravery but Poppe had not heard from members of his company after that day in France.

Note: Lewis's daughter, Ruth Kuck, says that Lewis received a Silver Star medal later with the help of Congressman John Levi Cable, U.S. Representative from Lima, for gallantry in action. He also received the W.W.I Victory Medal with three medal clasps (metal bars attached to the ribbon indicating the campaign he received the award for - Meuse-Argonne, St. Mihiel, Defensive Sector.)

After Lewis returned home from military service in 1919, he started a shoe repair shop in New Bremen and later opened a shoe store which he continued to operate until the time of his hospitalization on Sunday, October 22, 1972. He died the following Saturday on October 28th, leaving his wife, Clara (Dicke), whom he had married on August 29, 1917 and four children: Rachel (George) Olin, Carl Poppe, Ruth (Vernon) Kuck, and Paul Poppe.



Joachim and Wilhelmina (Conradi) Poppe with their children. L to R: Emma, Lewis, Florence, Leo, Edward, Marie, August, Clara, Minnie.



LEWIS & CLARA POPPE FAMILY
Lewis, Rachel, Carl, Ruth, Clara (Paul in front)

Bilingual Young People

This story may have had a different ending if Lewis Poppe (NBHS Class of 1912) was not bilingual. During the time he was growing up in New Bremen, the majority of his generation spoke both English and German. How did we come to have bilingual young people at that time?

Formed by German immigrants the bustling canal town of New Bremen retained their German language for many years. With the merger of New Bremen, Ober Bremen and Vogelsangtown and a progressive school system by 1878, many of the young people could read, write and speak in both English and German.

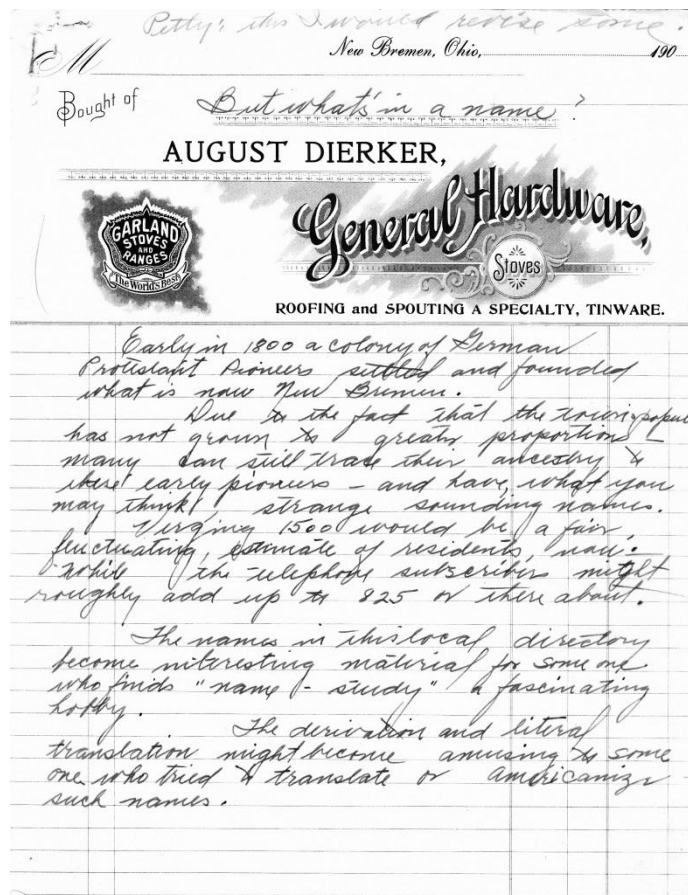
When the threat of the Great War loomed, strong anti-German feelings rose throughout the country and some school systems banned teaching the German language. New Bremen continued to offer students German language classes and many families continued to speak German at home and with their friends. The New Bremen churches continued to offer German services until the early 1940s. By the 1950s the German language was rarely heard.

On the next page please read some excerpts from the "musings" of Esther Fearing Quist (NBHS Class of 1913) another one of New Bremen's bilingual students as she reads the telephone directory of the early 1960s.

Telephone Book Musings

Esther Fearing Quist wrote this one evening (circa 1960) while reading the New Bremen telephone book. She said that this would have been impossible to do in later years when the telephone book was a combined listing for several towns.

It is interesting to note that the "musings" are written on bill-of-sale paper from the August Dierker hardware store. The first wife of Carl Quist was Wilhelmine Dierker, the only daughter and child of August & Wilhelmine (Volpp) Dierker. Esther Fearing was the second wife of Carl Quist.



She continues to write and list names that she thinks might be a challenge to translate: Griesdorn, Feldwisch, Helmstetter, Huenefeld, Pitsenbarger, Kitzmoeller, Pickenbrock, Puthoff, Langbrake, Rutschilling, Schroerlucke, Schmiesing, and Zumberger.

Musing along these lines, while having an evening alone, the entire New Bremen telephone directory took on possibilities. I wondered how our citizen's names would appear, if translated, names whose pronunciation must also puzzle many new-comers.

There were some names for which there seemed no translation, fascinating no less. For example, Doenges (pronounced locally as "Dun' yes."

The Low German word for "iron" is pronounced "Esern" yet here we have a family "Isern" who are known as "Esern."

Some of us who still recall some of the Low German dialect are quick to recognize such definitions-as "kuck" meaning "to see" and not "to cook", as you might suppose. Really things are not what they seem.

Notice, "Blasé" translated would sound ludicrous as a "blister" or "to blow" so it will keep its original pronunciation.

Due to a custom existing in the days of our pioneers, many family names have lost their identity through ownership changes. For, should there have been no male heir, the eldest daughter acquired the homestead and in the event of marriage her betrothed took on the name of the estate. Other sales transactions, similarly, changed a name, resulting in brothers having different surnames. Instances of this happening are cited in the families of Isern, Sanders, Lehmkuhl, Speckman and Beckman...

...In 1833 the name Boesel appeared and still is listed-you pronounce it as tho it were written Bazel, because you have difficulty with the German umlaut "oe" hence you say Bazel.

Our retrospect takes us back to "Wiehmeyer"-pioneers of 1834 and again a study in German, for "ie" in German is "e" and there for "Weemeyer. This holds true in the case of Niemeyer, too, but would one translate it saying "Nevermeyer"?

So what with all the "Meyers", such as Gruebmeier, Nuessmeyer, forgive me "Nutmeyer", and Hegemeyer. Should Kellermeyer become "cellarmeyer"? And wouldn't our Misses Ekermeier sound strange as "cornermeyer"? So Eschmeyer, Huelsmeyer, Dietmeyer, Schmitmeyer are only a few of the Meyers mentioned here...

...Some families had taken on the name of the region where they lived. Possibly at a crossroad or corner and you had Luedeke or Gieseke since we know that an "eke" is a corner.

Her musings continue for 20 pages as she names all the names in the New Bremen directory. She closed her musings with:

For a fitting close, let me add that a certain professor of who we are proud bears the name of "Ende". So "Fearing" (which happens to be my maiden name) that you might be bored, we will close this cross section of little America as seen through the eyes of a reader of New Bremen's telephone directory.

Esther Fearing Quist
(1895-1972)

2019 NBHS CLASS REUNIONS



NBHS CLASS OF 1955

Left to right: Ken Schroer, Phyllis (Nedderman) Fledderjohann, Lois (Berning) Dicke, John Hoffman, Becky (Westerbeck) Cooper, David Kuck, Bill McCollum, Roland Luedeke, Dale Schaefer, John Rinehart, Stan Quellhorst, Lee Wissman, Kenneth Dicke.

The Class of 1955 met this summer at John & Merrily Hoffman's residence for a good meal and conversation.

NBHS CLASS OF 1964



The Class of '64 gathered on Saturday August 17th for their 55th Class Reunion.

“We are submitting this picture because we all look just the same!” said the Class of 1964.

New Bremen Historic Association

P.O. Box 73

New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073



NBHA Museum – 120 N. Main St.

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HISTORY MYSTERY



This picture was taken 50 years ago in the Woodmen Home on Monroe Street. What are their names?

(Call or write to Gen or Joyce with your answers.)

(The History Mystery photos of the 1989 Bremenfest that appeared in the July 2019 issue of the *Towpath* have not been identified.)

UPCOMING NBHA EVENTS

The Luelleman House & the Pape House will be open on Sunday

September 22 and October 20

From 1-3 PM

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

The NBHA ANNUAL DINNER MEETING will be held March 16, 2020. Tickets will go on sale February 1, 2020

UPCOMING NEW BREMEN EVENTS

September 27-28, 2019 Pumpkinfest

October 27, 2019 Cider Time

Parade at 1:30

Trick or Treat from 3-5 pm.