



THE TOWPATH

Published Quarterly
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NEW BREMEN HISTORIC
ASSOCIATION
October 2020

BREMENFEST MEMORIES



Bremenfest, the New Bremen fundraiser for projects that benefit the community, began in 1975. This year would have been the 46th festival but was cancelled due to the Covid-19 virus. Hope to see you there next year!

Thanks to Don Gagel for sharing these pictures of good memories.



“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

Rex & Shirley Fledderjohn

Ron & Kathy Tontrup

Pat & Jamie Lampert

William Meiring

Dennis & Leah Wente

Cheri Scheer

MEMBER DEATHS

3/20/2018 **Jerry G. Scheer (LM)**

6/23/2020 **Rev. Ralph Quellhorst (LM)**

8/19/2020 **Charles Vornholt**

(CM=Charter Member LM=Life Member)

DONATIONS

Rex & Shirley Fledderjohn

New Bremen Women's Club

Duane Heinfeld

Monthly Raffle Winners

July-\$100.00-Jean Coffin (FL), \$75.00-David Watson (OH), \$50.00-Matt Otto (NB)

August-\$100.00-Mike Homan (NB), \$75.00-Mary Ann Voisard (OH), \$50.00-Phyllis Dicke (OH)

September-\$100.00-Roger Rutschilling (NB), \$75.00- Julie Ziegenbusch (NB), \$50.00- Connie O'Neill (NB)

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

Items Recently Donated to NBHA

Knife carried by Alvin Wagner in WWII, 1921 athletic medal, Sunday School pin, vintage religious medal, Brucken token, Wints token, Crown key ring, Stamco money clip, Fire Dept badges, Zion Church photo (dedication?), box of Zion church paper materials (membership rolls, yearbooks, bylaws) donated by **Ted Wagner**. Two framed needlepoint flowers made by Felix Kuenzel and donated by **Gloria King Olson**. A 1968 NB Speedway ticket, American Budget ashtray donated by **Karen Eckert**. A Brucken cigar box, First National Bank fan, White Mountain calendar, Jacob Fritz ink blotters, Last issue of New Bremen Sun (1961), Stamco newsletters, Pad of paper with Schwede imprint, 1992 NBHS alumni program donated by **Mary Brueggeman Klein**. Cherry cupboard made in NB by **Rosemarie Goodwin**. Neuman Family photos, WWI registration for Levi Neuman by **Darlene Neuman**. Luelleman, Heinfeld, Quellhorst photos, NBHS Reunion booklets, NB books by **Dorothy Quellhorst**. NBHS alumni programs, photos, Crimson & Gold newsletters 1965-66 by **Dennis Bushman**.

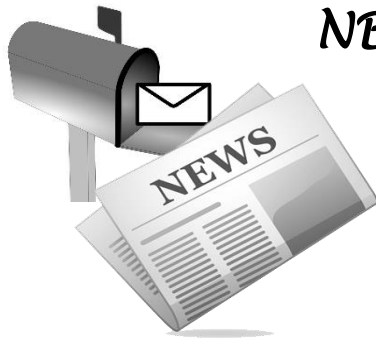
Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month.

Membership Dues

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

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

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



NBHA NEWS & LETTERS

Thanks so much
for sharing our flag
story in the Towpath!

(July 2020) We appreciate all you do for such a great publication. **-Rob & Denise Stauffer (Ohio)**

I follow your Facebook page and am interested in finding out how long the Heinfeld & Klanke furniture will be on display, as I would like to visit. I am also wondering if you can tell me if Robert & Hazel donated the dining room table and buffet that is on display. They are my parents and I know they donated my Grandmother Heinfeld's dining room set years ago. The buffet looks like the one I remember as a child and I would love to see it again. **-Marianne Heinfeld Bove (Ohio)**

Editor: Yes, this furniture belonged to Otto & Ida (Gieseke) Heinfeld, your grandparents. We would be happy for you to come and see the furniture and our museums. We have two houses with displays. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 virus makes visiting unpredictable, but hopefully you will come for a visit when it is safe. Call me or any Board Member when you would like to visit, and we will give you a tour.

Please accept this check to return to the New Bremen Historic Association. I was fortunate to win 2nd prize in your July 2020 Raffle, and I want to give my winnings back to you for my love for New Bremen, Ohio, and the Historic Association.

I have never lived in New Bremen, but my Mother Jane (Block) Watson, my grandparents, Henry Gustave & Edna (Grieve) Block, as well as my Great Grandfather Charles Block, along with the large family of sons and daughters of Henry & Edna, all were born there, so New Bremen is somewhat of an adopted home to me.

There is no one in that family still living in New Bremen, but they surface in the Towpath every now and then, and I so much appreciate my heritage and history of New Bremen. It is a thrill and an honor for me to have won a prize.

I love that small town that holds a large place in my heart, and this is another small way to give back to you all. Thank you again, and God Bless New Bremen, OH, and all the people, past and present.

-David G. Watson (Dayton, Ohio)

A New Bremen Sun Editorial from 100 Years ago

THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

But why get so wrought up about it? Men talk as if the very perpetuity of the Republic depended upon the result of this election and as if the only way to safeguard their beloved country were to shout and pound the table, lauding their own candidate to the skies and condemning the other to the depths. The perpetuity of the Republic is not at stake and, if it were, this would not be the way to assure it. Excited controversy is not argument; it leaves each excited contender more fixed in his opinions than ever and full of spleen and hate. Excitement of this kind though not always confined to political campaigns; it is egotism personified. The victim assumes that he must be wholly right, though he never is, for there are two sides to every question, and proceeds to try to prove it without a dash of judgment or balance or self-control. The childishness of it all is amusing to the calm and fair-minded observer, but the victim suffers. Excitement and anger have a positive degenerative effect upon the spiritual being, for each attack leaves him less tolerant and less kindly. Let us have our opinions and let us stand by them manfully but let us be calm in forming them and calm in holding to them, realizing always that the other man also is entitled to his own views and that, after all, his views may be the right ones for aught we really know.

In this connection it is refreshing to note that although politics have warmed up to a pretty high temperature in New Bremen and many have been the forensic bellicose outbursts in the past few weeks, yet local pride causes party contentions to be cast to the four winds when it comes to selecting candidates who are sharing citizenship with the ordinary resident of the modest village. New Bremen, for instance has two candidates for county office, one happens to run on the democratic ticket while the other has chosen to share weal and woe with the republicans. These are none other than Wm. H. Rabe, candidate for surveyor on the democratic ticket, and Richard E. Boesel, candidate for probate judge on the republican ticket. Favors for them will be exchanged as freely and as liberally, next Tuesday, as if protective tariff and league of nations had never been invented.

Not infrequently does one hear on street or in mart, after two political opponents have argued with each other a while as to the respective merits of the candidates up at the top of the ticket, how one will say, "Well, how about Bill Rabe?" and the republican answers, "I'm for Bill till the cows come home. How about Dick Boesel?" and promptly the democrat answers, "I'm for Dick till the last dog is dead?" Unless present indications are unreliable New Bremen is going to give its two candidates a complimentary vote that'll prove a real eye opener. (New Bremen Sun, October 29, 1920)

The NBHS Class of 1972 Remembers First Grade

NBHA Board Member Karen Dabbelt Eckert collaborated with classmates Chris Ahlers Wilson, Rex Fledderjohn, Dave Heinfeld, Jeff McCollum, Sue Schmidt Schmackers and Peg Shelby Eilerman and submitted this thoughtful review of memories.

With the old school being torn down this summer, several 1972 NBHS graduates were reminiscing about the good old days. It has been 60 years ago, and this is how we remembered our First Grade in 1960.

The New Bremen Elementary School on Plum Street was only a couple of years old. Most of us finished a fun-filled year of Kindergarten with Mrs. Ann Kuhn as our teacher. We started out First Grade with a total of 73 students divided into two classrooms. Over the years, students moved away, one moved in, along with an addition of a foreign exchange student our senior year. We graduated with a total of 60 students which was average for our school at that time. Popular class names were Deb, Jim, and Sue—there were three of each. The most popular street address for our classmates was Franklin Street.

In 1960, the first-grade classrooms were located in the hallway to the left of the elementary office. There were only four classrooms down that hall, two first grades to the left and two second grades to the right. Mrs. Harlamert and Mrs. Nicely were the first-grade teachers. We remember many sweet, funny, interesting, bizarre, and/or traumatic stories pertaining to that year.



Mrs. Harlamert—Grade One



Mrs. Nicely—Grade One

School Started day after Labor Day

Back then the first day of school was right after Labor Day. A week or so before you would buy school supplies such as pencils, a pink eraser, a very dull scissors, ruler, crayons, paste and something like a Goldenrod tablet. These supplies were carried in your school satchel; a bag carried on the shoulder by a long strap and typically closed by a flap.



First day of school in 1960 for Karen & Steven Dabbelt.

Many of the girls would have recently gotten a home permanent or a pixie haircut and the boys a fresh buzz cut over the holiday weekend. Either way, in our opinion no one looked extremely cute...not that our parents didn't want us to look cute, we assumed it was either the current style or our mothers were too busy to spend a lot of time fixing hair every morning in 1960.

Boys wore button down shirts, pants (no jeans) and either brown or black laced up leather shoes. Girls wore jumpers/skirts/dresses with leather shoes and ankle socks. We all remembered we got one new pair of leather shoes per school year. It didn't matter if your feet grew or how worn they got, there was no such thing as getting another new pair of shoes during the year.

When cold weather arrived, girls would wear pants under their dresses to keep warm during the walk or ride to school and on the playground. (As far as girls wearing pants to school, the girls in our class were finally allowed to wear pants, not jeans, beginning in 1971 the start of our senior year.)

Smells of School

When the school doors opened for the new school year you would immediately be overcome with the "school smell." It was not a bad smell, just smelled like school and it felt like you were just there yesterday and didn't even have the summer off. Back then you didn't know who your teacher was going to be for the year until you got to school on the first day and read the class list posted by the classroom door, either 1A or 1B. After finding your name on the list, did you get the teacher you wanted? Are your best friends in the same class? Finally, after the long summer break those two very important questions in our little minds were answered.

Everyone would then go into their assigned classroom, remove items from their satchel, hang up their satchel/jackets/packed lunches in the lockers on their assigned hook ALWAYS in alphabetical order. (Beginning in Kindergarten, you always knew who was going to be your locker neighbors all the way through your senior year.) The morning announcement over the loudspeaker was one of the first daily rituals followed by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. (We vaguely remembered reciting the Lord's Prayer in some of our grades.)

The Three Rs

According to our actual handwritten report cards the subjects for first grade were Reading, Spelling, Handwriting, and Arithmetic, along with Music and Art. We really forgot how simple it was back in 1960 first grade! Other than morning and afternoon recesses and lunch, we remained in our classroom all day. The music and art teachers came to our rooms. The class was divided into three groups for reading and during that time the groups not participating had to work on assignments.

AUGLAIZE COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
REPORT TO PARENTS
AUGLAIZE COUNTY, OHIO

Pupil: Sue Schmidt
First Sue Middle Sue Last Schmidt

Born: July 19 1960
Month July Day 19 Year 1960

Source of Birth Data: Parents Certificate Color: White

Date Entered: September 6, 1960

Date Withdrew: _____

Father: Ernest Schmidt
Mother: Barbara Schmidt
Guardian: _____

Teacher: Madeline Giesley
School: New Bremen Local

Grade: One School Year 1960-1961

TO PARENTS
This report card will be delivered to the pupil on Wednesday following the close of such day's work at school. You are requested to give consideration to the contents of the report. Your friendly cooperation will be welcome in order that the best possible development of the talents, abilities and habits of your child may be secured. Visit your school occasionally, and confer with the teacher.

L. F. SCHUMAKER
County Superintendent of Schools

The chalkboards were the most important teacher's aid in regards to instructing and were used all the time for all subjects. Every day after school the chalkboards and the erasers were cleaned. There always seemed to be a lot of chalk dust. Many of us still remember and can sing some of the songs we learned in music class. Our artwork would get taped to the hallway walls

or hung throughout our rooms.

Physical Education was not listed on our report cards and we are not sure if we had it in first grade. However, we did find a slip of paper from Mrs. Wissman titled Physical Education Report which had to also be signed by a parent. We do remember going to the multi-purpose room and riding on scooters during Phys. Ed. at some point during grade school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION REPORT

+ above average
N average
- below average

Name: Karen Dahlbott

+ Interest and cooperation

+ Natural Ability

+ Health Habits and Proper Attire

Skill Tests: _____

Mrs. Martin Dahlbott
Mrs. Wissman

Paste & Pencil Sharpener

We remember a very large jar of paste in each classroom. When our little individual paste jars would get empty, the teacher would take paste out of the large jar and refill ours. We all remembered standing in the "paste line." The bookshelves in front of the windows were filled with books, puzzles, and other miscellaneous learning items.

There was always a pencil sharpener bolted down on top of the bookshelves. Typically, we would sharpen our pencils very slowly because you could stare outside the window and take a break from learning. In one of the first-grade classrooms, there was a glass bowl with a little turtle in it on the bookshelf next to the pencil sharpener. It lived for a while and then "something" happened to it. We think one of our classmates squeezed it a little too hard and the teacher flushed it down the toilet. Some of us were very upset about this event and even cried...poor turtle.



Karen Eckert reliving her memories inside the First Grade lockers.

Misbehaving & Punishment

Was there punishment for bad behavior? Yes, children were punished if they misbehaved or were accused of misbehaving back then. Typical punishment was sitting in the corner or being sent to the lockers. The lockers had individual push doors, but they were totally open from

end to end so you could walk around in them if you were sneaky about it.

If the behavior was very bad you would have to stand out in the hall next to the classroom door for everyone to see you, although very few people would see you because the students in that area did not leave their classrooms.

One student would occasionally talk excessively in late morning and wanted to be sent to the lockers because of his/her hunger. This student would then open lunch pails and eat the cookies, etc. Some of us remembered other forms of punishment were administered as well.

Recess

Who did not love recess? Swings, teeter-totters, merry-go-round, slides, monkey bars, jungle gym, bars/rings, red rubber balls, jump ropes, tag, Red Rover, made-up games, boys chase the girls and maybe just running around for 15 minutes.

Looking back, old playgrounds were dangerous, but we did not know it and certainly didn't care. There were always lots of cuts and scrapes, broken wrists, arms, and legs since there was no padding under any of the equipment, just stones. Even though you hung on for dear life, one never knew when you would be thrown off a very speedy merry-go-round. The little girls always had to make sure they flipped over bars fast or were able to hold onto their skirts at the same time during all of their activities. On hot days, their legs might get burned going down those shiny silver metal slides. But all in all, we always had so much fun!

Lunchtime

Oh, the smell of school lunches! Every class would line up single file and walk to the cafeteria. Since all grades were in the same building, sometimes on the way to the cafeteria we would see high schoolers walking out of Industrial Arts, Vo-Ag, or the Band room. We would look them over and thought they were so old, pretty, nice, and/or even scary.

Some of our favorite lunches were Johnny Marzetti, chili soup, peanut butter & jelly sandwiches, cookies, and cakes. Pizza and salads were not offered for lunch back then. Your teacher sat at the end of the cafeteria table and checked to see if EVERYTHING had been at least tasted. There was a lot of moving food around on your plate, and sometimes putting food in your mouth and then going to the restroom to spit it out, especially if it was cooked spinach or succotash.

Another classmate mentioned if you were out of school sick and didn't have a sibling in school, Mrs. Harlamert would put together the school work you needed to catch up on, then personally deliver it to your house after school and there would always be a treat enclosed, too.

There is so much more we could have written about our first-grade year, but we are going to wrap this up by asking two questions. When you read the above, couldn't you just smell your old classroom, jump ropes and red

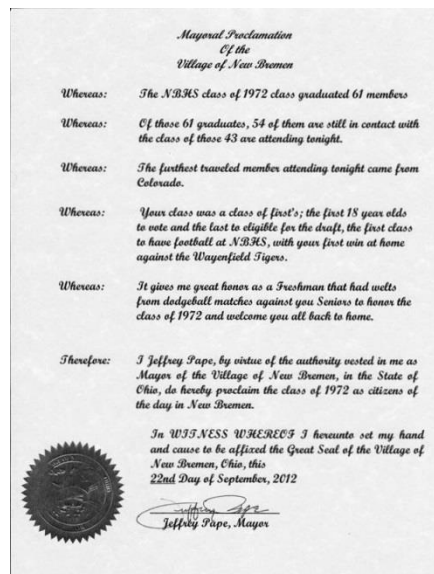
rubber balls, pencils, paper, paste, pink erasers, chalk, crayons, floor wax, sweaty kids after recess, cafeteria food smell flowing down the hallway and the School Nurse's office? And do you remember the sound of children talking, singing, yelling, and screaming during recess and school bells ringing?

We really did have a lot of fun during the first grade, especially getting to know classmates we would spend time with over the next twelve years and even beyond graduation. Hopefully, this article will bring back some of your own wonderful New Bremen Elementary School memories as well!

Editor's Note: Thank you, Karen and the Class of '72, for sharing your memories. We look forward to hearing more memories of school experiences and will be happy to publish them in a future issue.



NBHS Class of 1972



Proclamation from Mayor Pape for NBHS Class of '72 Reunion in 2012

1954 Case Solved by New Bremen Police Chief Clarence Wehrman



Left by Pranksters, Upended Corn Shocks, Solved by Clue

Exhibit A has a real meaning for five New Bremen teenagers who thought the Hallowe'en season a good time for upsetting 21 corn shocks on the Howard Wiehe farm east of here.

New Bremen police made an investigation the following morning and within a few hours the youths were going through an embarrassing session in the court of Mayor Souders.

Three times they were given a chance to come clean with the officials and as many times they chose to deny, collectively and individually, any involvement in the affair. Their attitude brought on an impasse which threatened to continue indefinitely until Police Chief Wehrman introduced his now famous Exhibit A—a billfold belonging to one of the boys and found by him in the Wiehe corn field. Shamefacedly, then, they admitted their guilt.

After being lectured by Souders, the pranksters were escorted to the farm to put the shocks back into place. They were escorted by Wehrman, who, remembering that he, too, once had been a boy, jumped in and helped them. Deputy Sheriff Art Lawler, called here for the court hearing, watched from the sidelines. (*New Bremen Sun* 10/29/1954)



Clarence A. "Mollie" Wehrman, (1893-1967), was the son of August and Louise Bambauer Wehrman. In 1928 he married Rose M. Wissman.

He served the Village of New Bremen as Police Chief and Street Commissioner from 1940-1960.



March 10, 1949. Mollie Wehrman removing snow.

From the New Bremen Sun, February 20, 1958...

A lone bandit entered the First National Bank at 9:15 a.m. today (Thursday) and left with approximately \$2,000 in cash. The exact amount of money will not be known until an audit is conducted.

The man, about 30, weighing about 180 pounds, wore a nylon stocking covering his face to conceal his identity. After entering he huddled the three customers, who were in the building, along with the employees, into a back room while he scooped up what loose money he could find, into his pockets and ran.

Outside he entered a black and white 1955 or 1956 Buick which he had parked in an alley behind the Lester Laut residence. When making his get-away, he found that the alley had been blocked by a beer truck wanting to make a delivery at Wint's Restaurant. Seeing this the bandit brandished his gun at the truck driver and told him to move—which he quickly did.

Clarence Wehrman, the local marshal arrived within a few minutes after the alarm was sounded and other help arrived within fifteen minutes from the State Highway Patrol, as well as the Sheriff departments of Auglaize, Shelby, and Mercer counties.

It was later reported that clothing was found along the Amsterdam road, which might have been discarded by the bandit to confuse his pursuers.

E.F. Day, of the local bank, expressed his appreciation for the speed in which the law enforcement officials responded to his urgent call for help.

The West Side School in German Township

Did you attend a one-room school as a child? Mary Brueggeman Klein did, and she has shared her scrapbook filled with memories. Her first 6 years of school were spent in the West Side School. She is a NBHS graduate, Class of 1952. She married Johann Klein in 1953 and reared four children, Robert, Carol, Donald, & Joyce on the family Centennial Farm. We hope you will enjoy sharing her memories.



West Side School Building in 1954

My Grandpa, my Dad and I all attended this one room country school. I attended from 1st grade through the 6th grade. My teacher all the six years was Miss Bernice Ludeka.

The school had one big coal furnace and two grates. The teacher had to go down to fire the furnace on the cold wintry days. We had outdoor toilets and a well for water. We all hung our water cups on nails on the side of the garage by the well.

When I was in the 6th grade there were 21 students in the school. At Christmas time we would set up a stage and give a nice program for all the parents and friends. The building was crowded. Then Santa came and brought everyone a gift of a small bag of hard candy and an orange.

The school closed in 1953. The building was sold the next year and remodeled to become a two-story home.

-Mary Brueggeman Klein



Barbara Schwarck reading to students at West Side School with teacher Miss Bernice Ludeka.



The students of West Side School in 1946 with their teacher Miss Bernice Ludeka.

(German Township Special School "Westside School" on Rt. 364 west of New Bremen)

Back Row: Mary Brueggemann, James Hehr, Bernice Ludeka, Walter Vondenhuevel, Kenneth Greiwe,
Middle Row: Kenneth Dicke, Anna Louise Schmidt, Thomas Kettler, Stanley Hirschfeld, Paul Nedderman, Ned Dammeyer, Betty Vondenhuevel, Louise Kettler, Louis Kettler
Front Row: Joyce Quellhorst, Stanley Dicke, Lucille Topp, Earl Dicke, Stanley Quellhorst, Phyllis Nedderman, Larry Dicke, Eileen Vondenhuevel.



Bernice Ludeka taught at the West School from 1940 until its closure in 1953. In a newspaper article, written by Doris Wissman for the Evening Leader, 3/11/1976, Bernice described a typical day in the country school.

...at times included a ground hog in the basement coal bin, mouse traps in the desks and an experimental student getting jammed in the wastebasket. She spoke of the plays on the platform in the corner and felt that having the same students for six years brought about a more close relationship - that older brothers and sisters would help the younger ones.

She said she had compared students after graduation and in their adult life and felt many have done very well even though they started school in a little red schoolhouse.



West Side School students eating lunch



1944 picture Joyce Quellhorst, Betty Vondenhuevel, Phyllis Nedderman, Joyce's friend, Mary Brueggeman, Louise Kettler, Anna Schmidt, Eileen Vondenhuevel, Lucille Topp

West Side School Board Members 1940-1952

Bill Kuhlhorst, Emil Brueggeman, Frank Niemeyer, Sr., Raymond Kettler, Henry Wittenbrink, Lendor Sollman, Lafe Topp, Ralph Dicke, Forest Nedderman, Carl Greiwe, Robert Wehmeyer

School History in Ohio

Schools were being built throughout Ohio as the population grew. By 1914 there were 2674 school districts in Ohio, with many of them serving one-room schoolhouses. In Auglaize County that year, there were 24 school districts with 95 one-room schoolhouses.

The one-room schoolhouses that dotted the countryside began to disappear or were repurposed when the motor vehicles became common to transport the children to the central school. Then the number of school districts in Ohio also began to decrease. Ohio now has 611 school districts and the last one-room school in Ohio closed in 1967.

Since 1976, Auglaize County has had six school districts-New Bremen, Minster, New Knoxville, St. Marys, Wapakoneta, and Waynesfield-Goshen.



LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE—Students of Auglaize-co's last remaining one-room schoolhouse gather on the steps while their teacher, Miss Bernice Ludeka, opens the door. The school is located near New Bremen.

Auglaize District Fights for 1-Room School

The once familiar sight of rural children enroute to a one-room schoolhouse is fast disappearing in Auglaize County.

Where there once (1928) were 55 one-room schoolhouses throughout the county, they have gradually diminished until there remains only one, in the German Township Special district near New Bremen. It is located just north of the intersection of Routes 274 & 364.

Recent state legislation is making it more difficult for operation of small schools and will next year require a minimum of mills tax levy to qualify for additional state aid. At the present time there is a minimum requirement of 6 mills.

The German Township local school district has an approximate area of 5 1/2 square miles with a small part of it in Mercer County. The tax rate is \$4.60 per \$1000 valuation in the 10-mill limit and 2 mills approved by the voters.

This fall the voters must renew the 2-mill and approve an additional 1 1/2-mill levy for its continuance. The school receives \$343.62 additional state aid and has approximately \$4,736 for its yearly operation.

The German Township board of education, however, has been firm in its determination to retain the modern and efficient one-room brick school.

Altho it is generations old; it has adopted numerous up-to-date features. Pine paneling decorates the walls below ample blackboards. It is heated by furnace and lighted by fluorescent lights on rainy days and large paned windows on sunny days.

Miss Bernice Ludeka, a pleasant and mild-mannered schoolteacher has taught at the school for 12 years. Two buses transport the 25 children to and from the school.

At noon, with the exception of two, the pupils eat lunch at the school. On birthday occasions they enjoy a "treat" and sing "Happy Birthday." (*The Lima News* 9/23/1951)

Brief History of New Bremen School District

The story of schooling in New Bremen began in 1833 in the log schoolhouse built by the settlers for the children of the young town. In New Bremen's early years before 1878, there were four schoolhouses in the German Township district – Central School on N. Franklin Street, Ober Bremen School on Cherry Street, North School near Lock Two and the West School, west of New Bremen on what is now SR 364. Ober Bremen School, North School and West School were all one-room schoolhouses. Central School on North Franklin Street served the children in New Bremen.

With the merger of Ober Bremen and New Bremen in 1878, a new building, the Central (Union) School, was built on South Franklin Street. This school included classrooms for students based on age and a high school course of study for the older students. The Ober Bremen school building on Cherry Street was then abandoned

The North School building, also called the Lock Two School served students from 1857 until its closure in 1923. It was located at the crossing of the New Knoxville & Lock Two Roads, southwest of the cemetery.

We do not know when the West School was established, but we do know that it was part of the New Bremen School District at its beginning. In 1913 the West School withdrew from the New Bremen School District and operated independently for 40 years. In 1953 the school was closed, and the children were transported to the school in New Bremen.

Bernice Ludeka Special Recognition Day 1983



**Walter Vondenhuevel, Ken Greiwe, Bernice Ludeka,
Mary Klein, Stan Hirschfeld**

An Open House was held on November 3, 1983 to honor former schoolteacher, Bernice Ludeka. The special recognition day was held to honor this woman who taught in the German Township Special School District, commonly known as West Side School from 1940-1953. The special day was organized by the 6th grade class of 1946 pictured above with Miss Ludeka. Other students in that class, but deceased, were Paul Nedderman and James Hehr.



**West Side 6th Graders in 1946
Mary Brueggeman Klein, Walter Vondenhuevel,
Paul Nedderman, Stanley Hirschfeld, James Hehr,
Kenneth Greiwe**



**Stan Hirschfeld with Bernice Ludeka holding Plaque
awarded by her Students.**



**Former West Side Students: Betty Wenthe Beyke, Larry
Dicke, Bernice Ludeka, Eileen Vondenhuevel Byrley,
Barbara Schwarck Tostrick**

**Thank you, Mary, for sharing your priceless
scrapbook of memories.**

OHIO'S CANALS

By Gordon Mitchell

The Birth of Ohio's Canals

After the War of 1812, Ohio had become a growing state in the union. Her population had grown from about 231,000 in 1810 to about 581,000 in 1820. Unfortunately, Ohio was not a very prosperous state.

Many of Ohio's farms were producing an abundance of crops and livestock but received little money for them. Farmers could get more money from the larger cities along the East Coast than from Ohio's cities. Because Ohio was so far away from these larger cities, it was difficult and expensive to export her crops and livestock to those cities and to import manufactured goods from those cities.

There were very few roads connecting Ohio to the East and most of them were poorly built and poorly maintained. Hauling freight by wagon was very expensive and very time-consuming. Waterways were a much cheaper and a much easier way to haul freight.

At that time, the State of New York was building its Erie Canal, which would connect Albany and the Hudson River with Buffalo and Lake Erie. Such a canal would connect Ohioans living near Lake Erie to markets in New York City. A system of canals in Ohio could connect much of the state to Lake Erie.

In 1816, future Ohio governor, Ethan Allen Brown, wrote to New York's governor, De Witt Clinton, about building a canal in Ohio and asked for his support. Ohio had supported construction of the Erie Canal.

On April 23, 1822, the governor appointed James Geddes, a New York engineer who had worked on the Erie Canal, to survey Ohio for the best canal routes.

On February 4, 1825, the Ohio legislature voted 92 to 15 to authorize the construction of Ohio canals. This act was titled, *An Act to provide for the Internal Improvements of the State of Ohio by Navigable Canals*. This act also reorganized the Canal Commission and created a Canal Fund Commission. This legislation was referred to as the Canal Act.

The Canal Act authorized two canals in Ohio. The Ohio and Erie Canal, which was a compromise between the central and the eastern routes, and the Miami and Erie Canal, which followed the western route.

On May 24, 1828, Congress provided land grants to Ohio for canal construction. This land was used in the construction of the Miami and Erie Canal between Dayton and the Maumee River. This land grant amounted to ½ of 5 sections in width on each side of the canal route, which totaled 1,230,521 acres. However, these land parcels were to follow the boundaries of the rectangular surveys and only covered unsold federal lands. Each alternate unsold section was reserved to the federal government for their own uses. This federal land could not be sold at less than \$2.50 per acre.

Of those land grants, 500,000 acres of those federal land grants in northwestern Ohio were to be sold in half-quarter sections (80 acres) to the highest bidder. The money would be used to pay the canals' construction costs. In return, these canals were to be used as public waterways and the federal government would have free use of them.

The initial cost estimates for these two canals were \$6 million. However, the final costs came to about \$16 million in construction and about \$25 million in interest on the loans.

Contracting the Work

During the construction, the canals were divided into sections of approximately ½ mile each or a single lock. Each section was let as a single contract to any bidder. The terms of these contracts varied according to the length of these various sections and to any other stipulations. Advertisements for these bids were usually placed in local newspapers.

These advertisements brought out a variety of contractors. Some of these contractors did all the work themselves and some of them sub-contracted for certain jobs. Some of the contractors were local and some came from distant places. Some even followed the construction bids along the canal as the work progressed.

Construction costs per mile varied between the two canals. Construction costs for the Ohio and Erie Canal were approximately \$10,000 per mile. Construction costs for the Miami and Erie Canal were approximately \$12,000 per mile.

Constructing the Canal

All sections of the canal had to meet minimum standards as set by the contract. Before there was any digging, all of the land along both sides of the canal had to be cleared and grubbed for at least 20 feet. No stumps over 1 foot high could remain. If any water from the canal was to be spread over adjacent land, the timber of that adjacent land was to be cleared and removed.

Whenever possible, the canal beds and banks were lined with clay. This was to prevent or to reduce water leakage from the canal.

All canal culverts and locks were made of stone or wood. Both the culverts and the back walls of the locks were puddled with several 6-inch layers of a mixture of clay, gravel, and water.

If the canal crossed a stream that was too large for a culvert, an aqueduct was constructed. These aqueducts were made of stone or wood and had stone piers. Some of these aqueducts were roofed.

Canal Measurements

The canal's measurements had to meet minimum specifications. The bottom of the canal channel had to be at least 26 feet wide, the water line had to be at least 40 feet wide, and the depth of the water had to be at least 4 feet. The cross-section of the canal was actually a trapezoidal prism.

The banks on both sides of the canal also had to meet minimum standards. The canal towpath had to be at least 10 feet wide at the top. The towpath was usually placed on the side nearest the river. The berm on the opposite side of the canal had to be at least 6 feet wide at the top. This berm, or "heel" path, was sometimes used to tie the boat to shore. Both of these banks could not be less than 2 feet nor more than 4 feet above the water line.

Canal Locks

Because Ohio was not flat, numerous locks were needed along the canal to raise and lower the water levels. These waters were raised or lowered an average of 6-12 feet per lock. If the rise or drop were greater, then more than one lock would be used.

All the locks had to meet minimum specifications as well as the canals. Each lock had to be at least 90 feet long, at least 15 feet wide and at least 20 feet deep.

The canal lock walls had to be at least 5 feet thick at the bottom and at least 4 feet thick at the top. Larger blocks were usually placed at the ends of the locks.

Large buttresses were built at the gates at both ends of the lock. These buttresses were 20 feet long at the upper gate and were 17 feet long at the lower gate.

All the facing stone was hand dressed. Long foundation stones were set well below the level of the canal bed and were set upon solid rock or upon a strong timber crib resting upon a thick gravel puddle.

Most of the locks on the eastern canals were made of sandstone and most of the locks on the western canals were made of limestone. The stone was quarried from as near a source as possible. If quarried stone was not available, the locks were made of wood. Most of the locks in northwestern Ohio were made of wood.

The floors of the locks were made of wood, usually of white oak. The first wood floor layer was about 1 foot thick and was laid longitudinally. The second layer was made of white oak or white pine and was laid crosswise. Because this wood was underwater, it would not be exposed to the air and would not rot. Waterlogged wood would also swell and would make for a tighter fit.

Each lock usually had 2 mooring posts on both sides of the lock. These mooring posts, which were made of white oak, were located near the gates. Their purpose was to keep the boats secure within the lock.

The canal walls usually had indentations for the lock's gates. These indentations would protect the gates from any damages done by the canal boats.

The gates at both ends of the locks, sometimes called "whaler gates," were usually made of thick white oak. All the hinges and other related hardware were made of wrought iron.

Each gate was a miter gate that was manually operated. When closed, these gates formed a "V" with the point facing upstream. The pressure from the upstream water helped keep these gates closed. The "V" was to insure that the gates would not open at the wrong time and release large volumes of water into the lower channel.

Most of the gates had wickets located near the bottom. These wickets, which worked like a butterfly valve, were manually operated to permit the water to flow in or out of the lock and to raise or lower the water level within the lock. Raising or lowering the water level in a typical lock meant a gain or loss of about 100,000-120,000 gallons of water.

Many of these locks had accompanying overflows, races, or sluices for removing any excess water from the canal. After a heavy rain, these sluices removed a large amount of this excess water. The water usually flowed downward over spillways to the lower channel or tumbled into an adjacent stream.

Many communities began around these locks, especially along the same side as the towpath. Aside from the lock tender's house, barn, and shed, there might be a mill, a tavern, an icehouse, and a stable. The larger communities probably had a bridge and a warehouse.

The Canal Workers

Finding both skilled and unskilled workers was not too difficult. Many of the workers had previously worked on the Erie Canal and were experienced at this work. The skilled workers consisted of blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, and other craftsmen. Most of the unskilled workers were French, German, and Irish immigrants.

During the early years, the unskilled workers were paid 30 cents a day or about \$6-10 a month, plus food, lodging, and a daily ration of up to 4 gills or jiggers (6 oz.) of whiskey. Later on, the pay rose to \$12, then \$15, and finally to \$26 per month. These workers worked from sunrise to sunset. They usually lived along the canal routes and built makeshift "shanty towns" in some of the larger cities.

During the off-seasons, local farmers and their sons often hired themselves out to work on sections of the canal. Many farmers were paid \$4-5 per acre to clear and grub the land prior to the excavations.

Because of the high demand for canal workers, jobs were plentiful. At one time, there were up to 4000 canal workers in Ohio. Some areas even suffered from a lack of workers.

Even convicts from the state penitentiary were used in canal construction. On January 30, 1827, the Ohio legislature had passed an act that allowed these convicts to serve their sentences doing canal construction.

Aside from the hard work, the canal builders faced other difficulties. Diseases, such as malaria, dysentery, typhoid, and cholera, were common in the construction camps. Because of these diseases, work was suspended during the summer months in some areas.

Sometimes, crewmembers would get into fights with local villagers or with each other. These fights could be caused by excessive alcohol consumption or by ethnic rivalries.

Mortality rates amongst the workers were often high. Many unmarked graves were dug in the canals. About 1 person died for every mile of canal built.

The Miami and Erie Canal

Construction of the Miami Canal began at Middletown on July 21, 1825. Governors Morrow and Clinton were also present at this dedication. Work on this canal began immediately.

The Miami and Erie Canal, which was initially called the Miami Canal, was originally planned to connect Cincinnati and Dayton. This 66-mile canal followed Mill Creek through Cincinnati and the Great Miami River through Hamilton, Middletown, Franklin, and Dayton.

The Canal Act had promised to extend it to Lake Erie at a later date. Because Ohio was sparsely populated north of Dayton, construction of the canal to Lake Erie proceeded very slowly.

The Miami Canal reached northern Cincinnati in 1828 and Dayton in 1829. However, the canal was not completed through Cincinnati to the Ohio River until 1834.

In 1831, public opinion had favored extending the Miami Canal. In 1833, the Ohio legislature allotted money to extend the canal another 32 miles to Loramie Creek, north of Piqua. This extension was known as the Miami Extension Canal. This extension also followed the Great Miami River and ran through Troy and Piqua.

In 1836, the Ohio legislature allotted more money to extend the canal to the junction of the Auglaize and Maumee Rivers.

At this junction, the Miami Extension Canal would join the Wabash and Erie Canal, which extended to Lake Erie at Toledo.

North of Piqua, the Miami Extension Canal level rose and crossed the Loramie Summit. This summit was about 23 miles long and was the divide between the Miami River Basin and Maumee River Basin.

To provide water for the canal in the summit and its adjacent sections, 5 reservoirs were proposed, but only 3 were built. The Loramie Summit received water from the Loramie Reservoir (present-day Lake Loramie), which was completed in 1843, and from the Lewistown Reservoir (present-day Indian Lake), via the Miami River and the Sidney Feeder Canal, which was completed in 1852. The Sidney Feeder Canal was 18 miles long and had no locks. Both reservoirs would provide water from the summit to as far south as Dayton.

North of the Loramie Summit, the Grand Lake St. Marys Reservoir was built to provide water for the canal as far north as the Wabash and Erie Canal. Until Hoover Dam was built in the 1930s, Grand Lake St. Marys was the world's largest man-made lake.

North of the Grand Lake St. Marys Reservoir, between Kossuth and Spencerville, a large "Deep Cut" was dug between the St. Marys and the Auglaize watersheds. This cut, dug through a glacial moraine of hard blue clay, had a depth of 5 to 52 feet and a length of approximately 6,600 feet. Using about 4-5 thousand workers, this cut took 4 years to complete.

The Miami Extension Canal totaled 114 miles. Its measurements were 50 feet wide at the water line, 36 feet wide at the bottom, and 5 feet in depth.

The Miami Extension Canal connected with the Wabash and Erie Canal at the town of Junction, west of Defiance. The Wabash and Erie Canal's measurements were 60 feet wide at the water line, 46 feet wide at the bottom, and 6 feet in depth. From Junction, the Wabash and Erie Canal followed the Maumee River for about 69 miles to Toledo.

The Miami and Erie Canal, which covered 249 miles, was finished in 1845. The entire canal had 184 lift locks, 3 guard locks, and 22 aqueducts. The engineers on this canal were Samuel Forrer, Byron Kilbourne, and Jesse L. Williams. The initial estimated cost was \$2,929,957. The final cost was \$8,062,680.

On March 14, 1849, the Ohio Legislature officially named this the Miami and Erie Canal. This newly named canal consisted of the Miami Canal, the Miami Extension Canal, and the Ohio sections of the Wabash and Erie Canal.

Other Canals in Ohio

Although the Ohio and Erie and the Miami and Erie Canals were Ohio's 2 longest canals, they were not the only canals in Ohio. A few lesser canals were later built in Ohio. Unlike the longer canals, which were built with public funding, these lesser canals were built with both public and private funding. Unfortunately, most of these lesser canals were financial failures.

Ohio and Pennsylvania Canal (completed in 1840)

Hocking Canal (completed in 1843)

Sandy and Beaver Canal (completed in 1848)

Walhonding Canal (completed in 1841)

Warren Canal (completed in 1840)

Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal (completed in 1843)

Muskingum River Improvement (completed in 1841)

Problems of the Canals

After the canals were completed, they faced numerous problems. They were constantly in need of repairs. Flooding and erosion could easily damage embankments, locks, culverts, and aqueducts. Sometimes, angry residents sabotaged sections of the canals. Local farmers often used the canals for dumping their refuse.

During the winter, the water in the canals would freeze, which could cause ice damage to them. However, to avoid ice damage, many canals were drained during the winter.

A frozen or drained canal also meant that there would be no canal boats using the canal during that time, at least in the northern part of Ohio. In southern Ohio, some of the canals could stay open during the winter.

If Ohio were suffering a long dry spell, the water level in the canals would be too low for the canal boats. Even the reservoirs might not have sufficient water.

Repairs were often slow and expensive. Many of the repairs were done during the winter months when the canals were drained.

The Demise of the Canals

Because of the canals, Ohio became a fast-growing state with a growing economy. Towns along the canals had prospered greatly and many new towns were built along these canals. Unfortunately, these prosperous times were short-lived.

By 1850, the railroads were outcompeting the canals. Although transporting freight and passengers by rail cost more than by boat, the railroads were much faster than the canal boats. Railroads were cheaper to build and maintain than canals. Railroads did not have to rely on large water sources and could operate year-round.

In 1861, Ohio leased their canals to private operators, who neglected them. In 1878, Ohio took back the canals but did little to repair or maintain them.

Still, the canals tried to stay in business. The canals were still operating into the early 20th Century. Between 1902 and 1910, there were attempts to revitalize the canals. The Ohio legislature appropriated about \$1,380,000 for repairs.

Unfortunately, a devastating flood that hit much of Ohio on March 23, 1913, destroyed many of the canals' banks, locks, culverts, and aqueducts. This finally sealed the fate of Ohio's canals. Ohio's canals officially closed in 1929.

The article was written by Mr. Mitchell who works for Columbus Metroparks. It has been edited for this publication. For the entire article with references, please contact us.)



A preserved section of the Miami & Erie Canal in New Bremen.



NEW BREMEN STREETS

Recently while driving a visitor around New Bremen we were asked how Herman Street got its name. The short answer is we do not know. Read on for the information we did collect about

street names. After some research we learned streets are usually named by the developers. The names then need to be approved by the town government before they are official.

North Herman Street is one of the streets located within the original plat of New Bremen. The town was formed from ten acres of land purchased from the government for one dollar per acre. In 1833 it was surveyed by Robert Grant of Mercer county and divided into 102 lots each 66 by 300 feet. The town plat was recorded in June, 1833 under the name Bremen. The document states *streets and alleys are designated in said plat.*

We found no record of how or when the names were chosen for the streets. Research shows the most used street names are Main, First, and Second Streets. It seems likely the reason those names were chosen. Water Street is near the site of the creek that formed the headwaters of St. Mary's River. This street also runs along the Miami & Erie Canal which was finished in 1845.

That leaves Herman and Franklin as street names used in the original plat with no easy explanation. The definition of the name Herman means *army man* or *soldier*. Franklin means *free landowner*. Those definitions could be clues but cannot be proven. So, we have no definitive answer to the question about how those streets were named. We welcome any more information.

As the town grew and subdivisions were added, the developers chose street names that were meaningful to them and the area. Our Washington and Monroe Streets were not part of the original plat but did follow the trend still in use today to name streets for important individuals. Other street names are from nature such as animals: Fox and Bear or types of trees: Walnut, Cherry, or Plum.

Ober Bremen (Upper Bremen) was platted in 1853 and developed into a separate town before it was annexed to New Bremen. Front Street was the site of their town hall and fire department.

In 1856 another town, Vogelsangtown, was formed from the Frederick Vogelsang farm along South Franklin and South Main Street with Vogelsang Street being the southern border. This town was annexed to New Bremen by the end of the Civil War in 1865. In the early 1900s Vogelsang Street was changed to West Plum. This is the only documented name change of a street that we found.

When our industrial park opened, the streets were named for New Bremen's early industries. In newer areas of town, we find streets names for people who played an important part in New Bremen history. For example, Burk Street and Harlamert Street near the school are named for special teachers.

Check out New Bremen street names and think about - What's the reason for that name?

Streets may have names, but they must also be cared for. The following clips from the *New Bremen Sun* describe some problems encountered by our village years ago.

PLENTY OF MUD

There is an abundance of mud on our streets now. It is of the sleek glossy variety and covers every inch of surface. The pedestrian of course likes to gaze on that silent, shining sea of mud and wades through it with as much alacrity as though he were passing through the gates of Heaven. The male pedestrian goes at it with a hop step and a jump fashion, while the female treads lightly and seeks to alight on the shallowest spots, and sometimes makes an inspection trip of a block or two before making the attempt. A person equipped with high boots, of course, pays no attentions to the mud. When he has a good supply of it hanging on to his pedal extremities and finds navigations retarded, he like a barn yard fowl, raise his foot and give it a jerk. This mud sticks closer than a friend.

(New Bremen Sun 1/1/1897)

VILLAGE COUNCIL'S PROBLEMS

If ever a village council had serious problems confronting him, surely New Bremen's solons are altogether in a class by themselves along this line. For some years increased and varied traffic in and thru town has caused the authorities more or less difficulty in arriving at a solution as to how to take care of the gravel and crushed stone streets. From time to time a coat of oil was applied in early summer which proved effective against dust and the general wearing away in summertime, and for a while proved somewhat effective against frost and thaws in winter and spring. However, the past winter brought so much open weather and so much rain has caused the streets to suffer under heavy and continuous traffic so that today there is not a decent road leading into or out of the village. It is evident that neither oil nor salt, nor even crushed stone treatment will suffice to place the streets into condition to resist the wear and tear of winter and early spring. True, prospects are fair for a north and south end paving, connecting with the state highway both ways, but that will scarcely be completed before bad weather sets in next fall. Yet even at that, east and west Monroe and the cemetery road are not included in a paving program nor are any of the other streets, and the village council may well ponder about ways and means as to how to meet the situation. Eventually it will mean an unusual expenditure, and how to meet this will prove more than a mere pastime.

(New Bremen Sun 3/15/1923)

FROM OUR MUSEUM



This photo was found in the attic of the house at 16 S. Franklin Street in the early 1970s. It was donated to NBHA in 1976 by Doris Ward. Reverend Tom & Doris Ward lived in this house from 1972-1976.

This picture is thought to be Louise Kohl Purpus (1810-1890), the mother of Theodore, Louis, and Edward Purpus. The three brothers emigrated from Germany in 1866 and came to New Bremen. Then their parents Louis and Louise (Kohl) Purpus emigrated also to live with their children already in America.

Theodore L. Purpus (1844-1946) built the house at 16 S. Franklin Street in 1890.

Quarantine signs from the 1900s. The signs were placed on homes to alert others to keep their distance. Quarantines, social distancing and masks have been useful and effective means to slow the spread of communicable diseases for many years.



The Boys of Summer 1946-1949 County Champions each year



Top Row: Coach Cindric, Jack McCollum (Sr) SS, Charles Schmidt (SR) OF, Tom Purpus (JR) 2B, Roger Schaefer (SO) OF, Jim Rosslet, Bat Boy

Middle Row: Jack Friemering (JR) OF, Jerry Brown (SO) OF, Bill Schneider (SR) P, Jim Ashbaugh (SR) 1B, Charles Dickman (JR) C

Front Row: Paul Quellhorst (JR) 3B, Carl Inman (JR) P, Don Sharp (SO) C & P, Tom Block (SO) P, Paul Poppe (SR) OF, Dave Waterman (SO) P

"We had just gotten new uniforms. Hence the picture. We had a lot of fun and we were told that it was a pleasure to watch us play together. Just a bunch of young innocent boys not knowing or caring what the future held in store for some of us. We were good!" --Paul Quellhorst

(The Boys of Summer picture was donated by Dorothy Quellhorst.)



A lunch tray from the Walnut Street Elementary School.

Wonder how many of our readers have eaten their lunch on these trays? What was your favorite lunch?

The Class of 1972 named theirs in the article on page 4.

On this page we have pictured some interesting items that can be seen in our museums. Please plan a visit soon. Call any NBHA Board member for a tour.

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

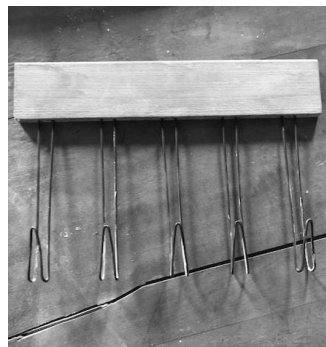


1. Can you name the streets at this intersection in the southwest part of New Bremen?

(For more about New Bremen Streets, see page 14.

2. And we ask for your help identifying the people.

Call, text, or write to Gen or Joyce!



This item in our museum was commonly used in school classrooms. How & why was it used?

Call, text, or write to Gen or Joyce!

For Museum tours, call any
NBHA Board member.

Visit our website
www.newbremenhistory.org