

HISTORY MYSTERY

LOOKING BACK TO THE 1950S

All these pictures were taken in New Bremen in the mid-1950s. Do you recognize any people from the New Bremen Telephone Company or the New Bremen School? (Answers on p. 2)



#1



#2

THE TOWPATH

Published Quarterly
January-April-July-October
NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION
JANUARY 2026



#3



#4



#5

(answers on p.2)

"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 on the first Tuesday of each month.

NBHA Membership Dues

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Visit our website www.newbremenhistory.org for more historical information.

NEW NBHA MEMBERS

Carol Opperman

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12/31/2023 Art Beel

9/17/2024 Albert Fogel

1/18/2025 Paul Wayne Kettler

7/3/2025 Cecelia (Sis Harris) Coenen

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11/13/2025 Betty Burkard

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Monthly Raffle Winners

October-\$100.00-Tyson Thobe (NB), \$75.00-Barbara Dill (VA), \$50-Rose Leffel (OH).

November-\$100.00-Issac Hurley (NB), \$75.00-Jacob Froning (OH), \$50.00-Bill Poeppelman (OH).

December-\$100.00-Jeff Ahlers (NB), \$75.00-Max Fledderjohann (NB), \$50.00-John Turner (NB).

We sincerely appreciate your participation. All the proceeds help pay for our insurance, utility, and maintenance bills. So, it is always a pleasant surprise when winners return their prizes.

Items recently donated to NBHA

Portrait Amanda Kettler Thiesing (*Angela Bezouska*); Photos, Cardinal's warm-up suit, stools, brick form (*Gen Conradi*); Meadow Gold milk jug (*Larry Moeller*); 1833, 1835 land certificates, GPcemetary certificate (*Deron Goodwin*), USArmy uniform, duffle bag, footlocker (*Dale Schaefer*).

Answers to p.1 *History Mystery*

#1. Allen Sundkuhl, Toots Blanke, Elizabeth Halsema, Norma Hirschfeld, Jeannette Wagner, Gecienna Halsema.

#2. Joy Heil, Helen Schroer, Irene Bay, Anna Kuest, Bernie Heil.

#3. Ona Finke, Leona Wellman (school cafeteria 1954)

#4. Standing: Ferd Wint, John Rinehart, Robert Schauk, Elden Smith, John Poppe. Seated: Larry Looker, Jack Dicke, Bill McCollum, Dave Schaefer, Ed Conradi, Jim Opperman.

#5. Judy Gast, Martha Topp, Judy Pilkington, JoAnne Berning.



NBHA LETTERS & NEWS

Looking forward to each issue!
Your staff is doing a great job! Say hello to Tom & Ginny Braun for me!

Roger Hegemier (Ohio)

Gen & Joyce – As usual you two outdid yourselves!

-Tom Braun (NB)

Gen & Joyce - What a great read it was on the immigration patterns and surrounding circumstances for those who came before us. Your articles are informative and so interesting to read. Most of the generations outside of New Bremen and towns similar to New Bremen that have done such a wonderful job with preserving their history, have no clue what our forefathers went through to make life as we have it today. The information on the canal was also very interesting. I will be sending all this on to our one grandchild to appreciate how New Bremen came to be and how wonderfully, it has managed to save this for everyone who has followed.

Thank you so very, very, very much. **Sherry (Kuck) Biederman (Florida)**



Mason, Ohio Group Tour – Mike & Sue Pugh, Greg & Peg Effers, and (in front) Jim & Helen Fox.



New Bremen's St. Paul Women's Group visited our museums. From left: Phyllis Fledderjohann, Ann Kuhn, Bev Plattner, Janise Voll, June Oaks, Marlene Hittepole, and Sally Dicke.

Angela Bezouska donated the portrait of Reuben Thiesing's mother. Angela is the daughter of Sarah Miller Weissinger/Klopfenstein /Thiesing.

This portrait is of Amanda Charlotte Kettler Thiesing

(1881-1956). Amanda was the daughter of: Louis F. Kettler (1843-1911) & Sophia Charlotte Wiemeyer Kettler (1852-1935). Amanda married George E. Thiesing (1882-1951) in 1909. They had four children:

Paul Thiesing

Helen Thiesing Herkenhoff

Reuben Thiesing

Grace Thiesing Schroeder

Reuben Thiesing & Sarah Miller Weissinger/Klopfenstein were married in 1976.



Thank you so much for the excellent edition of the Towpath that just arrived. The articles were so interesting and pertinent to my understanding of my heritage. My great grandfather settled in New Bremen in 1857 and was a cooper. His brother came earlier, settling in Piqua and was the foreman of the flour mill there. These articles helped me to understand why they were attracted to their Ohio locations and the trades they pursued.

I have had the good fortune of finding friendship with the descendants of my great grandfather's siblings that remained in Europe. I will be visiting them late Spring and the history that this edition shared with me will be very interesting to them.

Sincerely, **Christina Schneider Howard. (Florida)**

Editor's Note: We are glad to hear from Christina Schneider Howard and learn more about her "genealogical journey" that began 26 years ago. She writes...*Little did I realize...that it would lead me to lost relatives and new friends, history books and hard-to-read 18th century German manuscripts, and atlases that reflected changes in the geography almost every quarter century...Just let it be known that the journey provided many hours of pure pleasure – and not a little frustration -as I slowly peeled away the mysteries of our proud, and sometimes turbulent heritage...*

Thank you for sharing the Schneider Family History with us and your New Bremen Connection.

The Schneider Family History begins on the next page.

(Answer to *History Mystery* p. 16: Lee Wissman, Ron Hittepole, Dale Schaefer, Dick Howell.)

The Schneider Family

By Christina Schneider Howard

The Messerschmidt was my great-great grandfather. He was the patriarch of the Schneider clan and his story – parts of which are still unknown or not understood – defines our roots and the paths of our family history.

He was known as “The Messerschmidt” (knifemaker). His real name was Georg Friedrich Schneider, born March 9, 1791, the second of six children. He also had a half-sister, born late in life to his father and his third wife.

Later in life, he moved from Niedereggenen to Emmendingen in Germany, where he would marry Karoline Gimpel from a prominent Emmendingen family, set up a business manufacturing knives and surgical instruments, and father six children. This is the story of his family and the circumstances that led his children to Geneva, Switzerland and to distant worlds, and how – generations later – we came to find each other again.

The Birth of Messerschmidt Georg Friedrich Schneider

The church was the recorder of the vital statistics of the town. It was the minister’s responsibility to keep records of births, christenings, marriages, divorces, and deaths of his parishioners. Thousands of these church records have been microfilmed by the Church of the Latter-Day Saints and are available at any of their Family History Libraries throughout the world. Unfortunately, few of the records exist prior to the end of the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) because many of the churches and their valuable records were destroyed in battle.

It took nine months to uncover Georg Friedrich’s first name – he was always referred to simply as the Messerschmidt. I didn’t expect his name to be Georg (pronounced *Gay-org* in German). Knowing what I do now, Georg makes sense because it is consistent with the naming conventions that occurred in German families. Usually, the first-born son was named after the paternal grandfather. The second son was named after the maternal grandfather. After that, the namesakes were often brothers and uncles. Girls were named after grandmothers in the same pattern. So, Georg Friedrich was named after his mother’s father, Georg Gugelmeyer. His older brother, born three years prior, was given the name of his great-grandfather, grandfather, and father, Balthasar.

To compound the confusion, people were usually known by their middle name, not their first name. To friends and family, the Messerschmidt was called Friedrich, a name that occurs in various forms throughout the next three generations of the Schneider clan in America in honor of the family’s patriarch.

The Move to Emmendingen

While sons often pursued the same trade as their fathers, Georg Friedrich’s path was a different one. He did not opt for the masonry trade as did the three generations that preceded him. Instead, he served his apprenticeship in knifemaking, later specializing in the manufacture of surgical instruments. When he was a young man, probably in his late 20s, he moved north to Emmendingen.

At the age of 35 in 1826, the Messerschmidt married 26-year-old Karoline Gimpel. Her father was Johann Jakob Gimpel, also a knifemaker. Perhaps the Messerschmidt may have moved to Emmendingen to apprentice under Johann Jakob, but there is no proof of this. However, it was not unusual for masters to marry off daughters to their apprentices.

Soon the couple would welcome their children. Karl Friedrich, Wilhelm, Karoline Fredericke, my Great-Grandfather Johann August, Louise and Maria Frederericke. The Messerschmidt and his wife were very fortunate that all six children lived beyond childhood. It was a rare family that did not experience the death of one or more children.

Messerschmidt and his family migrated to Geneva in 1850. It is believed that he was implicated in the 1848 Revolution in Germany. Messerschmidt was 57 years old then and his six children ranged in age from 23 to 10 years. They were among the many who left Germany at this time to avoid arrest, confiscation of property and even execution. It was also at this time that the second son Wilhelm immigrated to the USA and settled in Piqua, Ohio, where he worked as a foreman in a large mill.

August emigrated in 1857 at the age of 22 years. Saying goodbye to family, knowing that he would probably never see them again, could not be easy for a young man whose family had shared so much trauma and upheaval. They were never far from his mind. Each of the children are named after his father, mother, and sisters, and in surrogate, they were the baptismal sponsors for his children.

August Schneider Settles in New Bremen

While August was a cutler like his father and brother, he settled first in Piqua with his brother Wilhelm and learned the cooperage trade, in the tradition of his maternal great grandfather. He settled in New Bremen in 1859 and married Barbara Reinacher, also from the Emmendingen area. Barbara’s family had emigrated to the U.S. in 1846.

New Bremen is a small town about 60 miles north of Dayton, Ohio. It was established in the 1830s by German immigrants. Next to New Bremen is the town of Minster, also settled by German immigrants. The old ways were transferred to Ohio: New Bremen was Protestant, Minster

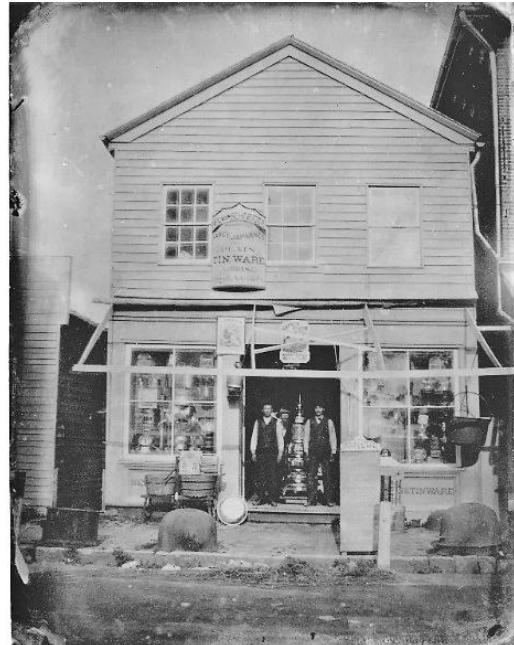
Catholic. German was the spoken language in the schools and homes until World War I. Today, New Bremen is the home of Crown Equipment owned by the Dicke family, manufacturers of the Crown Lift Truck. Thanks to the Dicke family, the town is near museum-like, with most of the commercial buildings restored to the look of the 1880s.



Harry Weigman and August Schneider at the cooper shop on Vine Street in New Bremen.

Editor's note: August Schneider owned lot 424 facing Vine Street and set up his cooper shop there. Merlin & Susie Hirschfeld purchased this lot in 1966. When tearing down the barn on this property, Merlin found tools that had belonged to August.

August and Barbara had six children, five of whom lived to adulthood. Their first child was William Frederick August, W.F., born in 1861. At the age of 21 years, this son established the Heil & Schneider Company, a stove and tinware business. Its advertising theme was *Stove Your Dwellings, Rod Your Buildings, Pump Your Wells!* In 1889, W. F. moved to Beebe, Arkansas to engage in the manufacture of staves, the slats on a barrel. He died there in 1899 at the age of 38 from tuberculosis.



The Heil & Schneider Company Tinware store in New Bremen.

The second child was Caroline Louisa Fredericka Schneider, named for all three of her aunts in Geneva. Caroline was born in 1863 and was the only one of the children to live to an old age, passing away in 1955. She married Daniel Chase and resided in Springfield, Ohio. The third child was Louise, born in 1867. She died of dysentery and is buried next to her parents in the Plank Road Cemetery in New Bremen.

My grandfather, Charles Frederick, was born in 1870. He was a pioneer in electricity and was the superintendent of the New Bremen Electric Light Company in the late 1890s, later joining the Robbins & Myers Company in Springfield, Ohio. He invented a small motor used to power a ceiling fan, a product that introduced Robbins & Myers to the world. The line of fans is branded today as the "Hunter Fan" and still sold, although no longer owned by Robbins & Myers. Charles was the superintendent of worldwide operations for Robbins & Myers. At the turn of the century, this area of Ohio was known for its engineering and industrial pioneers, including Orville and Wilbur Wright, inventors of powered flight, and Charles Kettering who invented the electric starter for the automobile, and was founder of the Dayton Electric Company, now Delphi. When Charles Kettering built his first prototype of the electric starter, he drove to Springfield on a Sunday afternoon and met with my grandfather Charles, who helped him select an appropriate housing for his new contraption.

Sadly, Charles Schneider died in 1922 of a heart attack, while at work, leaving a widow, Elizabeth Greaney Schneider, and ten children, including our father, William Paul Schneider.

The remaining two children of August and Barbara were William, born in 1872, and Gustav Adolph, born in 1880. William followed his brother to Little Rock, to go into the stave and barrel business. He died in 1917 at the age of 43 with tuberculosis. He had two children who did not live to adulthood. Gustav Adolph, born in 1880, also moved to Springfield and owned a greenhouse and flower store. Gustav also died young at the age of 41. They had one daughter who in turn had a son who never married, both now deceased.

Barbara died at the age of 48 of heart disease. August remarried and fathered a son, Otto. August died in 1906.

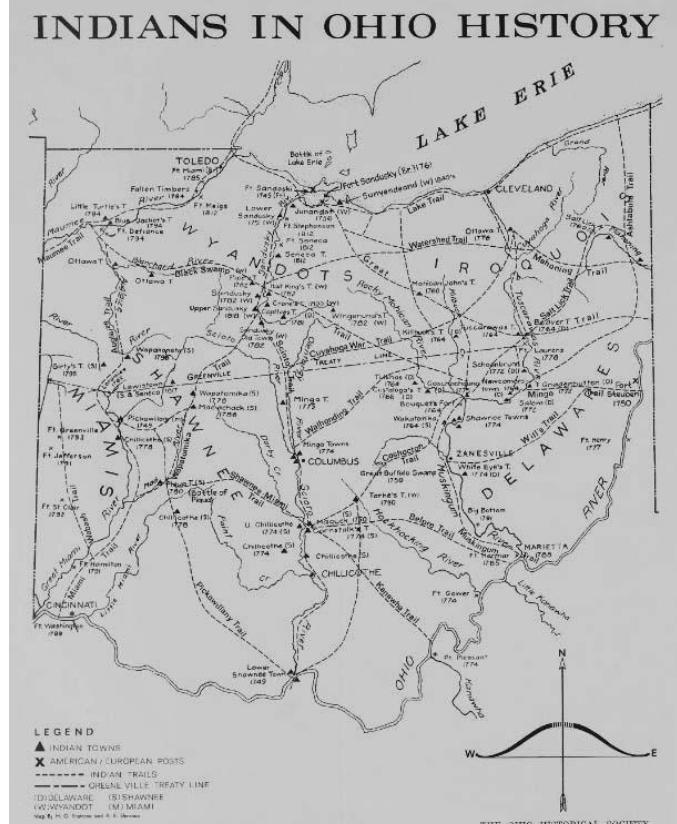
(For more information about the Schneider Family History see *The Towpath* July 2001 and October 2001 on our website.)

Where the Water Goes

Part 3

By Johanna Schroer

When you look at this old map of the Indian trails in Ohio, the most conspicuous observation is that there are very few trails in the northwest quadrant. The few that there are directly follow the river valleys. The reason that there aren't trails crisscrossing the area is the big impenetrable Black Swamp that used to sit north of us, from Sandusky to Fort Wayne.



Indian trails in Ohio.

Indians didn't "live" between the Maumee River and the Miami River, but they were quite familiar with the area. They hunted seasonally in the swamps and forests. They traveled frequently for trade, ceremonies, hunting and, occasionally, they used the trails as warpaths. The trails connected the river systems between Lake Erie and the Ohio River, thus the Mississippi River system, and eventually, the Gulf of Mexico. Indigenous peoples, including the Shawnee, Miami, Delaware (Lenape), and Ottawa, utilized these rivers for many centuries for intra-tribal and inter-regional commerce. The Auglaize-Maumee corridor was especially strategic, as it linked fertile hunting grounds, fishing sites, and agricultural villages in a resource-rich floodplain.

Tribes traded furs and hides, like deer, beaver, and otter, corn, tobacco, squash, and medicinal herbs southward via the Great Miami portage. Northward along the Auglaize and Maumee, they exchanged these for

copper tools from the Upper Great Lakes, shells and mica from the Gulf/Atlantic coasts, and flint from Indiana quarries. We have evidence of this from archaeological finds like Paleo-Indian tools transported 500 miles or more. By the 1700s, European items like glass beads, brass kettles, and firearms entered this network through indirect trade with distant tribes.

Villages along the Auglaize, such as those at Wapakoneta and Girty's Town (near the St. Marys River confluence), functioned as seasonal markets. Portages like Loramie's allowed efficient transfers, reducing travel time and risk. This system supported semi-nomadic lifestyles, with tribes like the Shawnee relocating to the Auglaize after displacements from the east (e.g., post-1720s Iroquois pressures).

What is now Auglaize County is the headwaters, or near the headwaters of several important area rivers. These rivers were navigable by canoe for much of the year, with flatboats and pirogues used by Europeans for heavier loads. Portages, such as the one near Loramie's Store, were well-trodden paths used for centuries, not more than 10 or 20 miles long, and lined with established campsites. These rivers and creeks were easily walked when frozen, with thick vegetation surrounding them.



Navigable rivers in or near Auglaize County.

The navigable rivers, going clockwise in the eastern part of the county, begin with the Scioto River developing near Roundhead, north of Indian Lake, to head to Columbus, Chillicothe and Portsmouth, and emptying in the Ohio River.

Just southwest of New Knoxville, in Shelby County, are the headwaters to the Great Miami River. It flows a southwestern path through Dayton, after being joined by

the Mad River from Bellefontaine to Cincinnati on its way to the Ohio River.

In New Bremen, the Continental Divide separates the watersheds near Amsterdam Road. The St Marys River forms here and flows north to St Marys and then northwest to Kekionga, as the Indians called it; we know it as Fort Wayne, Indiana. The St Marys River joins an Indiana river to form the Maumee River, which flows broadly into Lake Erie.

Northwest of New Bremen lies Grand Lake St. Marys, which was once a very swampy area. West of the lake, in Mercer County, are the headwaters to the Wabash River, which drains most of Indiana. The St Marys River, and the Auglaize River in Wapakoneta, both flow north into the Maumee River. The Auglaize River starts in Allen County but loops deep into our county, fed by tributaries, before it heads north again.

A traveler in the early 1800s could have made it to Piqua before the Loramie Summit would have ended river progress. Following the portage path past Loramie's store into New Bremen, the traveler would have made a choice: due north to St Marys, or northeast to Wapakoneta to resume river travel. It wasn't considered practical then for a man on foot, or with a horse, to try to penetrate the swamp. You could hack trees all day, and sleep in the mud with mosquitoes feasting on you, and still only make a couple of miles progress. The rivers were the only feasible way to traverse the swamp until the canal was built, and the swamp was drained.

The Auglaize Trail

The "Auglaize Trail" on our map refers to a historic Native American footpath and portage route centered around the Auglaize River, a major tributary of the Maumee River. This trail was not a single, formalized path like modern roads, but a network of interconnected Indian trails used for millennia by various tribes for travel, hunting, trade, and seasonal migration. It played a crucial role in connecting the interior of the Ohio Country to the Great Lakes and beyond, predating European contact and influencing early settler routes.

The trail's roots trace back to prehistoric times, likely originating from animal migration paths followed by Paleo-Indians around 10,000 BC, after the retreat of the glaciers that shaped Ohio's landscape. Early inhabitants, including Archaic period (8000–1000 BC) hunter-gatherers, expanded these into efficient footpaths for accessing resources like flint quarries, salt springs, and fishing grounds. By the Woodland period (1000 BC–1000 AD), tribes such as the Adena and Hopewell used similar routes for ceremonial travel, though major earthworks are more concentrated in central and southern Ohio.

In historic times (post-1500 AD), the trail became integral to Algonquian-speaking tribes dominant in northwest Ohio. The Miami tribes used the area for villages and hunting until displaced around 1782 after attacks by American forces under Gen. George Rogers Clark.

The Shawnee Tribe migrated in from the east after the Miamis, establishing major settlements like the Council House at Wapakoneta, built ~1793 under Chief Blue Jacket and Black Hoof. The Shawnee name for the region, "Auglaize," translates to "fallen timbers" or "river of fallen timber," referring to the area's flood-prone, debris-strewn waterways. Other groups like the Wyandot (Huron), Delaware (Lenape), and Ottawa occasionally traversed it for intertribal trade or raids.

These paths were "dry, level, and direct," as described by early surveyors—optimized for foot travel, with widths of 2–4 feet, avoiding swamps and steep hills.

Archaeological evidence, including tools and village sites, confirms heavy use along the Auglaize River floodplain, a fertile area for maize agriculture and game. The Auglaize Trail followed the east bank of the Auglaize River northward from near present-day Wapakoneta to its confluence with the Maumee River at modern Defiance. From there, it linked to the Maumee Trail toward Lake Erie. A critical southern extension was a short portage (overland carry) trail connecting the Auglaize's headwaters to the Great Miami. The main segment was about 50–60 miles, navigable by canoe where possible, with portages over flat, grassy prairies. The Loramie Portage (near Sidney in Shelby County) was the most famous, a 12-mile trail linking the Auglaize to the Great Miami, used since at least the 1600s. It featured established campsites, creek crossings, and avoided dense forests.

Key Sites along the way were Wapakoneta, a Shawnee capital and trade hub, site of the 1817 Treaty of the Foot of the Rapids, which ceded lands but reserved Auglaize villages. Fort Loramie, on the southern end, was a French trading post established in the 1760s along the portage, later a U.S. supply point during the War of 1812. The Fallen Timbers Battlefield (1794) was located where the trail met the Maumee River. It was the site of a decisive U.S. victory over a Native confederacy led by Blue Jacket, ending major resistance in the region, and resulting in the Greenville Treaty of 1795.

The Auglaize Trail formed part of a larger web, including the Great Trail (from Pennsylvania through the Ohio Country) and the Sandusky Trail, creating a "highway" from the Mississippi to the Great Lakes.

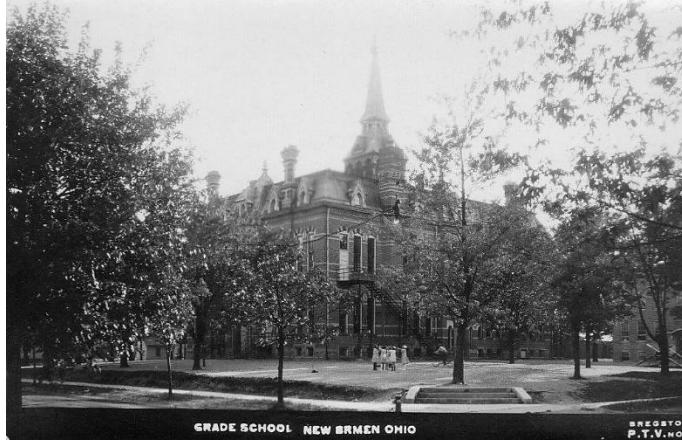
Timeline of New Bremen School Buildings

Throughout our history the citizens of New Bremen have put high value on education. Beginning with the first school in a log cabin on Main Street, adequate school facilities have always been a priority. The town continued to build larger and modern buildings as the times mandated.



1846 School building on N. Franklin Street

The second school was built in 1846 on North Franklin Street. By 1876 the population growth showed the need for more classrooms, so a two-story building named Central School was built on South Franklin Street and completed in 1878. The following year a high school program was established in Central School. When that building became overcrowded, a building for the high school program was built on the northwest corner of the campus.



1878 Central School with the 1920 High School on the right.

By the mid-1920s the continued population growth and popularity of the high school program necessitated a larger and more modern facility. The original two-story 1878 building became the elementary school, and a new high school was built on South Walnut Street opening in 1929.



1929 High School on S. Walnut Street

In 1956 an even larger, more modern facility was needed to replace the 1878 Central School elementary building. An addition was added to the 1929 high school building to serve as the elementary school. Due to increased number of students in the mid-1960s, an addition was added to the elementary building as well to the high school building. A new gym was added to the high school in 1968.



New Bremen High School and Elementary Buildings. These buildings were razed in 2020.

Over the years as the old buildings became impossible to maintain and update, the town again voted to build a new high school on East Monroe Street. This high school opened in 1999. The new elementary school was opened in 2019.

Now in 2026 both a modern elementary and high school are located on this campus. This history shows our citizens have continued to support education for over 190 years.

References:

- New Bremen Centennial (1933) booklet*
- New Bremen Sesquicentennial Reflections (1983)*
- Ralph May Remembers...*

Beyond these facts of our history, we can add some personal recollections of these schools.

Ralph May Remembers...Central School

Ralph May (1892-1981) grew up in New Bremen and was a graduate of NBHS Class of 1910. He wrote about the community and people he loved. These are quotes about his school days memories.

Writing about Central School, he remembered... *There were four high ceiling rooms on each floor...a room in the basement was used for physics and chemistry. The school library was in a little room off the stairs landing on the south side, with the school's superintendent office in the same location on the north side...There was no central heating system in the building when I started to school. A round heating stove of great dimension was in the back of each room where large pieces of cord wood supplied the heat...We had to go down to the basement to have our inkwells filled...Our forefathers built well when they erected this building, - in the selection of the site when all of us had to walk to school, - in the playground that surrounded the building, and in its architectural grandeur with its lovely central bell tower and spire....There was a time when weather signals were flown from the spire in different colored flags and shape to give the townspeople a forecast of what was coming.*

Mr. May returned to New Bremen in later years to attend an Alumni Association meeting and wrote... *the old town has changed in many ways. The High School and Elementary Building, so different from the one I attended and from which I graduated as far back as 1910. That corridor in the new building, almost two blocks in length, is a spectacle in itself. What a view it gives to the beholder!*

Gen Remembers...

Both Emily Grothaus & Gen Conradi lived near Central School. In 1955 they were headed to the Walnut Street High School on their bicycles.



The NBHS Class of 1961 entered 7th grade in September of 1955. We completed the first six grades in the elementary building on S. Franklin Street. That

Fall we became High School students. We were 12 years old, going on 13. We spent 7th grade in the high school routine, - assigned a home room and changed classes throughout the day.

Not only were the adults of New Bremen concerned about adequate school buildings, but they were also concerned about the behavior and activities of their children.

While researching this article, I discovered the Library Procedure that appeared in the New Bremen Sun during the first month of school in September 1955.

Library Procedure

New Procedure Effective as of Monday, September 26, 1955

1. The school library will be open at the following times:
8:40-8:55 a.m.
9:45-10:30 a.m.
In charge of -Judy Dietrich, Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays.
Mary Ann Cooper, Tuesdays and Thursdays.
10:30-11:15 a.m. - Virginia McCollum
11:15-12:00 a.m. - Mary Ann Cooper
12:45-1:30 p.m.-Martha Hirschfeld
1:30-2:15 p.m. - Rose Pohlman and Barbara Luedke
2:15-4:00 p.m. - Cecelia Harris
2. The head librarian is Miss Alvina Burk.
3. Study Hall teachers are in charge of the library during the periods they are assigned to Study Hall Duty.
4. Seventh and eighth grades will use the library for checking out books at the following time:
Girls-11:15-12:00. Mon., Wed., Fri.- Frances Cooper in charge.
Boys-2:15-3:00. Tues., Thurs., Fri.- Kathleen Luedke in charge
5. Seventh grade will not be permitted to use the periodicals during the First Semester of School.
6. Students wishing to leave the Study Hall to use the library must first process a library permit and have it signed by the Study Hall teacher. The library permit must indicate the reason for visiting the library.
7. A student will never go to the library before Study Halls are in order and the teacher has checked Study Hall attendance.
8. The number of students in the library at one time is up to the discretion of the Study Hall teacher and the student librarian.
9. Specific rules of conduct in the library will be:
 - A. Complete silence at all times.
 - B. A person using the library will either be selecting a book or reading a periodical. Ten minutes should be sufficient time for the selection of a book.
 - C. Students will never stand by the windows.
 - D. Committee meets or group study will never be permitted.
 - E. Magazines and reference books found in the reading room of the library will never be removed from the library reading room. Exceptions are made when requested by the teachers.

- F. Magazines, other than current, must be requested from the librarians in charge and the student will sign for same.
- G. Student librarians and Study Hall teachers in charge have authority to adopt such rules as they deem necessary for the proper conduct of the library.
- 10. Failure to comply with the library rules means suspension of library privileges.

(New Bremen Sun, 9/29/1955)

From the front page of the New Bremen Sun:

Recreation for New Bremen's young folks apparently is getting to be a popular subject for discussion among the several civic and business groups of the community.
Recreation and recreational facilities are as necessary to healthful living – mentally and physically – as sunlight and fresh air. And this is so not only of youth but also of middle and old age. Out of these talks some good must come – and, we trust some additional recreational facilities. May we add that neither the subject nor the fact of recreation should be approached on an emergency or crisis basis – but rather as a long range, continuous program or process. *(New Bremen Sun 9/29/1955)*

LET'S KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEW BREMEN

(Crimson & Gold page editorial by Janice Topp)

More and more hometown communities are listening to what their young people have to say, especially when the youth speak in a group.

Some teen-agers say that the old town seems dull with nothing to do, home gets tiresome, and school is uninteresting. So, they try to seek entertainment and things to do in other communities.

We must realize, however, that there are some social activities being made available in our town. For instance, our Teen-agers Club, which meets every first and third Wednesday night of each month, offers square and round dancing and an evening filled with fun. Then, too, on October 21, a Harvest Ball will be sponsored by the New Bremen Seniors. This social evening will be semi-formal and consist of both round and square dancing in the school auditorium.

Just recently a group of adults of New Bremen attended a meeting to gather ideas and viewpoints on setting up a youth recreational program. These adults realize our lack of facilities for recreation. However, there is a great deal of work and capital tied into a recreational program. So before the town plunges into something like this, these adults would first like to know whether or not our teens really want it, and if they would take part in it. Then, too, if a Youth Center would be provided, what kind of recreation would be wanted?

Other towns have tried such a program. Some were successful and others failed. If one would be set up in New Bremen, it would be disciplined and operated by the teens themselves.

The Student Council is asking you to present your viewpoints to them. They in turn will turn them over to this committee of adults.

Remember, you teen-age citizens can do much to make your home more liveable for others, and for yourselves.

Will you do your part?

(New Bremen Sun, C&G page, 10/13/1955)

TEEN-AGERS ORGANIZATION HOLDS FIRST DANCE OF SCHOOL YEAR

Wednesday October 5, the Teen-agers organization met at the Legion Hall for the first time of this school term.

This was the first dance for the freshmen this year and they all seemed to enjoy themselves immensely.

The records for the dance were donated by Jo Berning and Herb Topp.

The square dances were ably called by Herb Topp and Stan Dicke. We didn't know Stan could call dances, but he certainly proved to us that he knew what he was doing.

Round and square dancing lasted from 7:30 to 10:00 and fun was had by all. There was a very good attendance, and we'd like to see that many and more at the next dance.

Officers for the Teen-agers organization are John Poppe, president; David Heinfeldt, vice president; Marlene Berning, secretary; Larry Dicke, publicity agent. (Judy Dietrich, New Bremen Sun, C&G page, 10/13/1955)

On October 19th, the second Teen-ager dance was held at the Legion Hall. At 8:30 Mr. Watkins, together with Dave Heinfeldt, called a business meeting to order. Planned parties for the remaining school year were discussed. These parties will come approximately once a month.

A record library was also discussed. We will start with six records and add four per month. This should keep us up with the popular music and keep the students interested.

The rules and conduct to be followed at Teenagers were read. The students should try their best to follow these rules if they want their dances to continue.

We want to thank the Legion for the use of their hall and Mr. Watkins for giving up his time to chaperone us.

(Pat Gels, New Bremen Sun, C&G page, 10/27/1955)

The 7th grade girls are studying personal appearances, good grooming and manners. They are learning to judge folks by their appearance and action. They say they are learning a lot.

(Judy Pilkington, New Bremen Sun, C&G page, 10/13/1955)

In 1956 Gen Remembers...

On that first day of school in 1956, the **Class of 1961**, then 8th graders, became middle school students. New Bremen had never had a Middle School or Junior High School as some called it. And our class was the first and we had no idea what to expect. We soon found that our routine was different and that it was like we had taken a step backwards. We had a new name, *Jr. High*, and new junior high classrooms assigned to us in a new section of the building between the elementary and high school buildings. Our lives had changed.

Moving Day in 1956

The new Elementary School under construction was not quite finished on the first day of school in 1956. During the first few weeks of September, teachers had begun moving equipment to the new elementary building that had been added to the high school on the corner of Walnut & Plum Streets. The Big Moving Day was set for September 28, 1956, and all elementary students were transferred to the new building on that day.



The 5th Graders (NBHS Class of 1964) were responsible for carrying their books on moving day.

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

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

Kindergarten, first and second grade students changed schools yesterday, and moving day was scheduled today for the third, fourth, fifth and sixth graders.

Teachers have been clearing out library books and supplies all week via cars and school buses. The children

also make the move by bus and are charged with carrying their own books and supplies. [Mr. Blanke drove the bus to the new school that day.]

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

The bond issue for New Bremen's first new school building since the high school was constructed in 1929 was passed in 1954 and was to have been completed by August of this year. Various supply delays held up work, however, and when school started early this month, educators were forced to turn back to the old school. Some classes had to be held in the basement there due to increased enrollment. The old elementary unit is retiring at the age of 79. (New Bremen Sun, 9/28/1956)

More Moving Day in 1956 Pictures

(NBHS Class of 1964)



Reminder: The NBHA Annual Dinner Meeting will be held March 16, 2026, at the American Legion Post 241 in New Bremen. Dinner starts at 6:30 PM. Tickets go on sale February 1st.

MY OBSERVATIONS OF OUR POSTCARD COLLECTION By Karen Eckert

Many postcards (over 900) have been donated to the New Bremen Historic Museum over the years. They recently have been placed into new archival storage containers. Most of the postcards in this collection are from the early 1900s but there are a few from the late 1890s. After handling all the postcards, I'd like to share some of my observations.

First, the postcards are all beautiful as well as interesting. Postcards were used to communicate short messages or just to briefly check in with others. For example, if a home did not have a telephone, a postcard would have been sent to a repair shop asking if their wood plow was finished being repaired. Another example would be asking if a person was feeling better after an illness. Very similar to what we "text" to others on our iPhones today.

Almost all the postcards were written in pencil probably due to the fact ballpoint pens did not become a common household item until about 1960.

The early postcards were plain on the address side and included a pre-printed stamp. What a deal – a postcard and stamp all for only one cent! But later the postcards had photos or designs on one side and the other side was the functional side for an address and a message from the sender.

Postcards were very popular and used not only for brief communication with others, but also to send good wishes. In our collection I found many postcards that had been treasured and saved from Valentine's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, the New Year, and birthdays. Some of the cards were used for campaigning before an election. Photos on the postcards were buildings, houses, individuals or families, animals and sometimes jokes. Like many towns, our Main Street was featured on a postcard which made a great memory of a trip or a visit.

Thank you to those who saved and donated these little pieces of history which we can now share for many years to come.

MORE ABOUT POSTCARDS

What is *deltiology*? It is the name for postcard collecting. So, a collector of postcards is a *deltiologist*.

We have quite a collection of postcards in our museum so we thought an article on the history of postcards might be interesting.

1870-1898

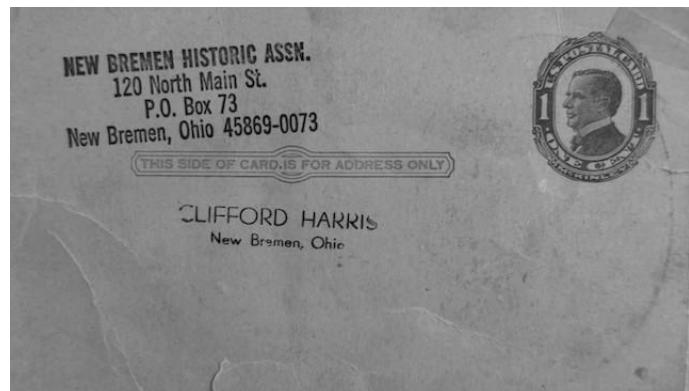
Postcards have evolved through several stages or eras. In the United States, postcards have been mailed since 1870. Initially only the U.S. Post Office could print

postcards. They became popular because they were easy to obtain and were an affordable way to communicate with friends and relatives. Postage for the government postcards was only one cent. Indeed, they came to be known as penny postcards.

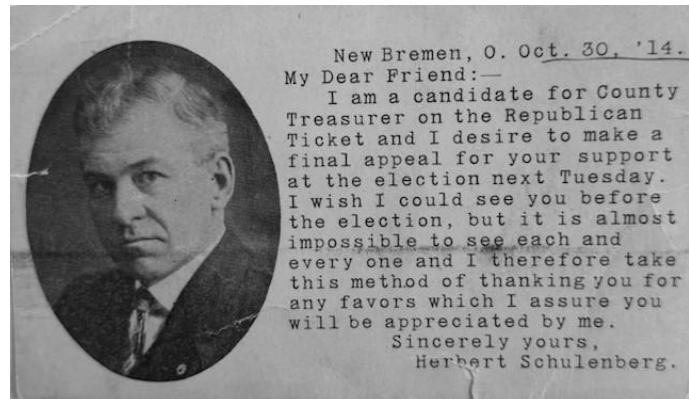
Private publishers were allowed to print postcards, but they could not be sent at the lower government rate of penny postcards.

1898-1907

In 1898 an act of Congress not only allowed private companies to print postcards but also that the cards could be sent at the lower rate of penny postcards. These early cards had one side used for the delivery address and the other side for the sender's message.



Address Side of an early "Penny Postcard."



Message side of the Penny Postcard. This card is dated 1914.

1907-1915

The next era of postcards began in 1907 and became known as the Divided Back Period. The divided back allowed both the address and the message on one side. The other side of the card could be filled with an image or photo. The era of the divided back postcard led to a great increase in popularity. Thus began the Golden Age of the American postcard. Technological advances in photography and printing allowed local photographers to print photos of their subjects on postcards. These photo postcards were affordable and easy to share with family and friends.



1909 Baseball team. Standing: second from left Ed Wellman, 5th from left Al (Mac) Huenke, far right Lawrence Roettger. Seated: second from left Irvin Wissman, far right Carl (Cotton) Wehmeyer.



The above postcard shows both sides of the 1908 postcard of the Divided Back period. The following postcards are also from this period.



Weinberg, x, x, Fred Hengen, Leonard Schmidt, Ernest Kuck, Howard Huenke, Bertha Speckman, Lily Rabe, Frances Schulenberg, Langhorst, Langhorst, Speckman, Langhorst. (Names are on the back of the postcard.)



This postcard shows Paula Luelleman (1894-1990) daughter of Henry & Anna Luelleman, Ft. Wayne. She is standing behind a billboard in New Bremen. Kamman's Saloon and Fire Dept. are in the background.

1915-1930

World War I brought about the next era of the postcard. Due to a shortage of ink, printers began producing postcards with a white border or edge.



Notice that this postcard has a white border and the basketball shows the date. Standing: Coach Ralph Kuennen, Chester Trautwein, Rich Kuennen, Lawrence Heil. Seated: Lloyd Speckman, Wallace Grothaus, Carl Solms.

1930-1945

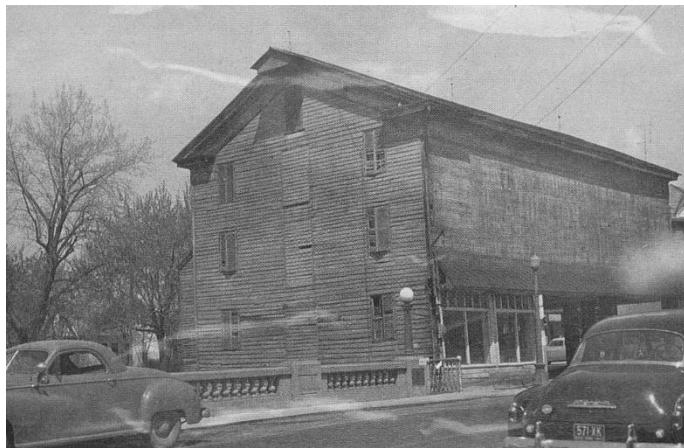
After 1930, better quality paper was used for postcards.

1945-Present

The last and current era of the postcard is the use of color photos.

THE CHANGING TIMES AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF MONROE & WASHINGTON STREETS

Long before the town of New Bremen was platted, this was the site where the old Auglaize Trail made a turn to the West. It was part of the portage route along the Loramie Summit. Later, when our streets were named, the site became the intersection of Monroe & Washington Streets.



Warehouse next to canal.

It became prime real estate when the canal opened in 1844. Here New Bremen Pioneer Carl (Charles) Boesel, Sr. built the first large frame warehouse next to the canal. Mr. Boesel had many business interests in New Bremen, but he also had a long political career in State legislature.

By the late 1800s the warehouse had been sold to the Thompson family and repurposed into a livery business. The next change came in 1901 when the Thompson Livery business was sold to H. Lester Rairdon. The *Bellefontaine Republican* newspaper reported on March 29, 1901, “We are sorry to lose our friends Lester Rairdon and wife. Mr. Rairdon has bought (half-interest) in a livery stable at New Bremen.”



Lester Rairdon ran the livery business with his brother H. Wilbur Rairdon. The Rairdon family was from Logan County, Ohio. Lester was married and had a son, Smith Rairdon, when they moved here.

Wilbur was not married in 1901 but two years later he married Lillie Dierker, part of another New Bremen pioneer family. He and his wife lived in New Bremen for the rest of their lives. However, in 1903 the *Bellefontaine Republican* reported, “New Proprietor: Mr. Lester Rairdon of New Bremen has purchased the Columbus Avenue Livery Barn.” He and his family moved back to Logan County and Wilbur Rairdon became the manager of the livery here.

When cars began a new era in transportation, Wilbur opened Rairdon’s Garage to replace the livery service. He sold cars and Texaco gas. In the 1920s he had a Willys-Overland auto dealership.



The livery barn converted to a garage & gas station ca. 1940.

After Mr. Rairdon retired, the old building stood empty until the 1950s. It was torn down to make way for a new Post Office building. That building was only used for a few years until the Post Office moved into a new building on N. Main Street. The Monroe Street location was needed for the relocation of State Route 66.



Now in 2026, the buildings that once occupied the site are gone. The land is still at an important intersection in New Bremen.

(Read more about Carl Boesel in *The Towpath* October 2005. More information about the Thompson Family can be found in *The Towpath* July 1997, rerouting Ohio state route 66 in *The Towpath* July 2025.)

LUELLEMAN BARN PROJECT UPDATE



Terry Hoying of Hoying Construction has done an excellent job of turning a questionable space into a comfortable and usable space. Wiring has been completed, the walls are insulated, and the heating/cooling unit has been installed by New Knoxville Supply. The stairway leads to the second floor of the barn, and a closet has been added under the stairs. We will soon be ready to have the floor finished. (*Pictures by Don Gagel.*)

NBHS Class of 1975 Celebrated 50 Years!



Front row: Mark Hipple, Gene Dircksen, Laura Warner Rolfes, Monika Weiss, Rita Pennington Opperman, Sandra Schmiesing Wolf, Cindy Bushman Phlipot, David Gossette

2nd Row: Rebecca Freeman Waterman, Cheryl Miller Homan, Cynthia Leiss, Carol Klein Deeg, Deb Broerman Stiger, Jayne Jnost, Michelle Finke, Karen Heitkamp Hatcher, Juliann Dicke Winner, Nancy Phlipot Ritter, Carol Hehr Brown

3rd Row: Dennis Plattner, Mike Albers, Jeff Pape, Donna Wissman Brinkman, Lee Dicke, Steve Hartwig, Lee Lampert, Bob Staton, Craig Hoffman, Joe Ritter

Top Row: Mike Holdren, Nick Ouwerkerk, Valerie Blanke, Wayne Steineman, David Goodwin, Jeff Moots, Duane Heinfeld, Alan Sommer, Don Simindinger.

New Bremen Historic Association
P.O. Box 73 New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073



NBHA Museums
120 & 236 N. Main Street

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
New Bremen, OH 45869
Permit No. 41

Address Service Requested

Please keep us advised of any Address Changes.

History Mystery



That is Jack Dempsey in the middle. Who are the New Bremen men with him? (Photo provided by Dick Howell)

(answer on P. 3)

Call, text, or email your answers and comments. We would love to hear from you. Gen & Joyce

IN THIS ISSUE

- NBHA Letters & News
- Schneider Family History
- Where the Water Goes Part 3
- School Timeline
- Postcards
- Changing Times at the Corner of...
- Luelleman Barn Project Update
- *History Mystery*

UPCOMING EVENT

NBHA ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

Will be held Monday, March 16, 2026,
at 6:30 PM, New Bremen Legion.

Tickets will go on sale February 1st.

Call any Board Member for a ticket.

The speaker will be Tim Eiting.

The Luelleman House and the Pape House Museums are open by appointment. Call any Board Member for an appointment.