



THE TOWPATH

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

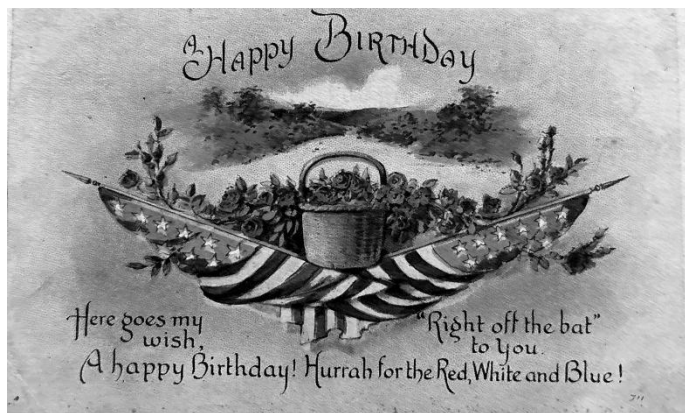
AMERICA'S BIRTHDAY

The United States celebrates a milestone event this year known as **AMERICA 250**. This event honors the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The focus is not only on the past but also on looking into the future. One element of the celebration is to make July 4th the largest day of charitable giving in United States history.

Celebrations will continue throughout 2026 as Americans commemorate our nation's history. Closer to home, Ohio is celebrating events in all 88 counties. More information can be found at www.america250-ohio.org.

While our 250-year anniversary is known as the Semi-quintennial, in 1926 the nation celebrated 150 years or the Sesquicentennial. That year a world fair named the Sesquicentennial International Exposition was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from June through December. President Calvin Coolidge gave the Keynote speech. The theme was *America Welcomes the World* with 23 nations participating.

There were many items available in 1926 to honor the nation's birthday. One such item that has been preserved is a postcard that announces *A Happy Birthday and Hurrah for the Red White & Blue!*



Postcard postmarked New Bremen 1926 and sent to Orville Ruedebusch, a 16-year-old boy living on R.R.#2, New Bremen.

In 1926, 100 years ago, it was a time of economic prosperity that brought on social and cultural changes. The economic boomtime saw mass production increase. Also, there was greater availability of electricity. These changes worked to spur purchase of automobiles, household appliances and radios.

In New Bremen the population of 1500 could purchase these items and more at local businesses. Rairdon's New Bremen Garage sold Overland cars and accessories while Leo Huenke's Garage was the agency for Dodge Brothers Motor Cars. The Arcade Department Store carried an assortment of household appliances. Radios could be purchased at the People's Radio & Gift Shop, founded in 1926 by Paul Gilberg and Earl Hegemier.



(New Bremen Sun ad in 1926)

The NBHA is celebrating our Nation's Birthday by sponsoring an **OPEN HOUSE** and **ICE CREAM SOCIAL**.

MARK THIS ON YOUR CALENDAR!

**OPEN HOUSE AT THE LUELLEMAN HOUSE
AND THE PAPE HOUSE
And
ICE CREAM SOCIAL
Sunday, September 13, 2026, from 1-3 PM**

FREE ICE CREAM

1976-BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATED

50 years ago, what do you remember?

- Jimmy Carter defeated incumbent President Gerald Ford in the Presidential election.
- Apple Computer Company and Microsoft Company appeared.
- NASA's Viking I & II explored the planet Mars.
- First Legionnaire's Outbreak led to discovery of the Legionella bacteria.
- The hit film "Rocky" was the highest grossing film of the year.
- The average cost of a loaf of bread was fifty cents.

Ohio went all out celebrating the Bicentennial. There were many types of events that promoted patriotism as they educated and entertained. The American Freedom Train, displaying historical artifacts, traveled to all 48 contiguous states and passed through many Ohio towns.

Ohio also participated in the Bicentennial Communities project. This project supported local initiatives and sparked interest in family histories

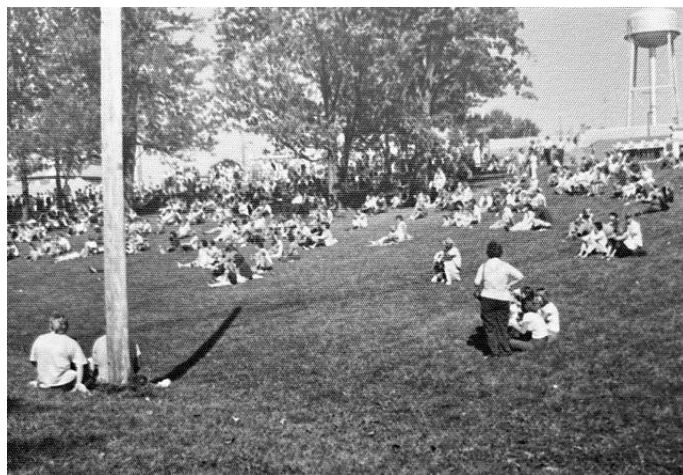
New Bremen, Ohio participated in the **1976 United States Bicentennial** through the national "City Spirit" initiative, which encouraged local communities nationwide to involve residents in the country's 200th birthday. New Bremen used this cultural milestone to celebrate its own heritage, prominently featuring the opening and dedication of the **New Bremen Historic Association Museum** on July 4, 1976. [New Bremen Historic Association +2](#)

New Bremen's Bicentennial Legacy

- **The Museum's Origins:** As the nation marked its Bicentennial, the New Bremen Historic Association (founded in 1973) raised funds through local pledges to purchase and restore the William Luellenman House at 120 N. Main Street. It was fully paid for and officially dedicated as the local historical museum on July 4, 1976.
- **Historical Plaque:** The museum features a "Spirit of '76" Founders Plaque honoring the more than 130 charter members and citizens who helped establish the local history initiative.
- **National Register:** Following these Bicentennial preservation efforts, the Luellenman House underwent a major restoration and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. [New Bremen Historic Association +1](#)



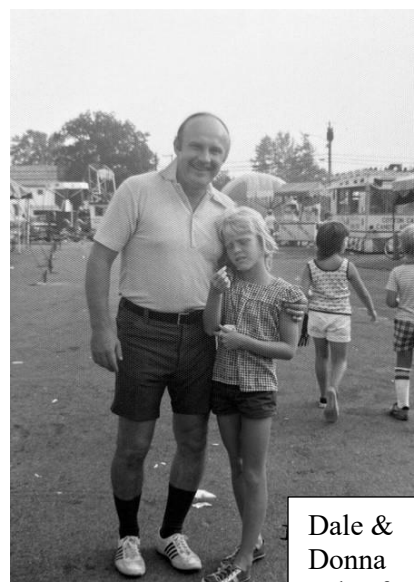
New Bremen Band in 1976 Bremenfest Parade.



Bremenfest, the community picnic for New Bremen, enjoyed its second year in 1976. It provided a mixture of German and American foods, games, rides and musical entertainment over a three-day weekend with the Heritage Parade on Sunday afternoon.



New Bremen Fire hydrants sported unique and colorful new paint that year.



Dale &
Donna
Schaefer
1976

“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

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

Lifetime membership - \$250.00

NBHA, P.O. Box 73, New Bremen, OH 45869-0073

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

NEW NBHA MEMBERS

**Karen Donnerberg Seibert
Carol E. Krigbaum**

MEMBER DEATHS

1/18/2026 **Eric Furry (LM)**
2/22/2026 **Dale Hirschfeld (LM)**
4/5/2026 **Karl R. Mesloh (LM)**
4/12/2026 **Don Applegate (LM)**
4/26/2026 **Alice Hartwig (LM)**
4/30/2026 **Thomas Moore (CM)**
5/7/2026 **Dale Schaefer (CM)**
5/14/2026 **Dorothy Hirschfeld (LM)**
(CM=Charter Member LM=Life Member)

DONATIONS

Karl R. Mesloh, Judith Waesch

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

In Memory of Karl R. Mesloh by Beverly Plattner.

In Memory of Donald Lee Applegate by Doris Cook, Heather & Barry Steinke, Michael Loyer, Helen Rouhier, Donna & Kenton Kuffner, Mary Stueve, Mike & Sharon Schnell, Eugene Ballweg, Wayne & Kathy Gruebmeier, Genevieve Conradi & Dennis Dicke, Beth Alvey, Kim Moeller, Kurt & Donna Kuffner, & Anonymous.

Monthly Raffle Winners

April-\$100.00-Mark Hopf (NB), \$75.00-Marlene Klose (NB), \$50-Jan Fiser (NB).

May-\$100.00-James J. Scheer (OH), \$75.00-Brandon Klose (NB), \$50.00-Judith Waesch (OH).

June-\$100.00-Duane Dammeyer (CA), \$75.00-NB Senior Citizens (NB), \$50.00-Jace Suchland (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

STAMCO newsletters, NBHS programs, 1966 Class photo, yearbook (*Dennis Bushman*); Photos, WWII ration books, NB books, Confirmation certificate, family photos, NB Girl Scout clipping, Woodmen Drill team photo, church yearbooks (*Bev Plattner*); NB football jersey (*Bob Staton*); Photos, scrapbooks, dolls with Red Hat theme (*Dru Meyer*); NBHS basketball booklet 1915-1980, NB calendar, Photos, White Mountain Creamery Patron, aerial view of creamery, 1951, 1954 Mirage, NB Centennial booklets, Holy Redeemer 1971 book (*Pat Wilson*); WWII uniform-O.C. Ruedeusch, ration books, military shoeshine kit, US Postal blazer, Speedway program, Basketball program 1968-9, (2) Anna Kuest photo albums, pencil box, programs St Paul, 1925 confirmands photo, 1931 St Paul annual report. (*Joyce Ruedeusch*)

NBHA LETTERS & NEWS



Good issue. Thanks for researching my suggestion. I'm looking forward to future installments of New Bremen

through the years. 1860 maybe?

Believe it or not I remember the Broomshop fire even though I was only 4 at the time. My parents put us in their bedroom in the front of the house and got on the roof with buckets of water. Burning straw was flying all over the neighborhood. One man was on the roof of the school with water. ---Emily (Grothaus) Reisner (NC)

I always look forward to each issue of the Towpath. I especially enjoyed the story of the Old Town Clock in the April 2026 issue.

We moved to New Bremen in 1947, just about the time that the broom factory burned down. Dad was the pastor at St. Paul Church, and I can remember Mom wondering how we would ever sleep with the clock in the steeple bonging every half hour! After a few nights we were used to it and probably would have awakened had it not rung.

During my high school years, the biggest problem with the clock was that I could never get away with coming home late or trying to tell my folks that they must not have heard me come in. The clock gave me away every time!

I hope it is still ringing out the hours after all these years. ---Evelyn (Bassler) Baur (MO)

Received \$100 from drawing. Such a pleasant surprise. Thanks. Simply the best Historic Society, in all areas, there is. Keep up the wonderful work. ---

Jim Scheer (OH)

...I always look forward to receiving the Towpath.

---Judy Waesch (OH)

The April 2026 Towpath was quite interesting, especially the description of how the original streets were laid out. Joyce's (Ruedebusch) Herman Street and my Franklin Street made the original streets, but our addresses were south of Monroe, the original southern boundary. (Thanks to my sister Emily for the suggestion about the original settlement.)

Regarding the photo of Joyce's birthday party: I think it is me sitting to the right of Joyce. To my surprise I do not recognize any of the other girls at the table. The two girls with their backs to the camera could be Janet and Carol Stueve. Did anyone else identify some of the others? The article about the Broom Company fire was interesting. I actually remember that! The date given for the fire is November 26, 1947...coincidentally, my mother's birthday. She would have been 46 that day. I would have

been just shy of three years old. We were woken in the early morning hours by some commotion. Our house, 28 S. Franklin St was just a few blocks from the fire, and my father was up on the roof spraying it with water. I think about that fire from time to time, but I did not remember exactly when it happened.

The grocery advertisement on page 11 is amazing. The low prices! Wow! Sometimes when I was about 10 my mom would send me down to the IGA to pick up some items and a few dollar bills always was sufficient.

Loved the photo on page 12 of the little girls, all with cute bob haircuts, lined up with hands on each other's shoulders. Ruth Rabe, on the right was my cousin (her dad Alfred Rabe was my mother's brother and Kathy Schwartz's grandfather.) I don't think I've ever seen a photo of her as a little girl.

Page 14, "A Free Trip to Foreign Countries," Orville's journal excerpt about his experience crossing the Atlantic in 1943 (a fraught time to be on the Atlantic in a big ship) on the Queen Mary, and subsequent reunion with his Army Postal Unit in 1971, also on the Queen Mary then docked permanently in Long Beach, California, was amazing. He was a very good writer. Enough of my ramblings! -Julia (Grothaus) Zerbe (CO)

NBHA NEWS

The New Bremen third graders stopped at the Luelleman House on May 15 during their history walk. We enjoyed their visit!



Third grade visitors 2026. (Photos courtesy of Don Gagel)

(Additional photos on page 11.)

This picture shows the finished floor in the Luelleman Barn project. We are pleased with the results. Finishing touches can now be completed and display cabinets installed.





NEW DISPLAY AT LUELLEMAN HOUSE MUSEUM

Perhaps you have
been to Boston and
visited the USS

Constitution in the Charleston Navy Yard. It is a three-masted wooden-hulled frigate and the oldest warship still afloat. The USS Constitution was built in 1794 and launched in October 1797. It is one of six warships that were built to defend the United States from pirates and foreign navies. It served well in the War of 1812 and earned the nickname of “Old Ironsides” when cannonballs bounced off its strong oak hull. Still a part of the US Navy for over 200 years, it has many tales to tell about the history of the United States.



Replica of USS Constitution on its way to museum.

Now you can view a replica in the Luelleman House Military Display. This replica was constructed by Paul Lietz in the 1970s. Taking several years to complete, it required a steady hand. After completion, Paul built the case to hold the ship and proudly displayed it in his home.

(It has been donated to the NBHA and is on display at our museum.) This ship model is just one of the several donations from the Lietz estate.

First, some information about Paul and Marjorie Lietz. Paul Lietz was born in New Bremen to Herman and Alma (Heil) Lietz on July 1, 1921. He died in 1996. He had one sister, Dorothy Lietz Ruedebusch. Starting school was difficult for Paul because he only spoke German and the teacher was speaking English. This caused him to feel sad and want to go to his home that was across the street. Soon though he learned English and did well in his studies.

After graduating from high school in 1940, Paul entered business with his father, Herman Lietz, in the Lietz Furniture Shop. Herman was a well-known wood craftsman, first employed at the Klanke Furniture Company and then Superintendent of the Auglaize Furniture Factory.

Their plans were disrupted when Paul was called into military service in the spring of 1942. He completed special training and served in the Signal Corp in the South Pacific until October 1945. *(His military scrapbook and photo album have also been donated to the NBHA).* His father died in 1943 while Paul was away serving his

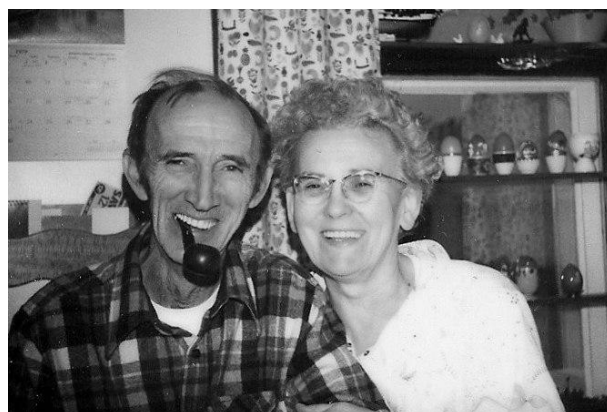
country. Upon discharge, Paul returned to his home and the Lietz Furniture Shop and carried on the family tradition of fine wood craftsmanship.

Marjorie “Marge” Gieseke was born in New Bremen to Arnold and Elsie (Awrey) Gieseke on January 4, 1918. She died in 1999. She had two sisters, Dorothy and Evelyn. She started school at age five and married Carl Conradi at age 17, the same month that she graduated from high school. She quickly learned to speak German because that was the language spoken on the family farm with Carl’s parents and brother. They had two children, Edward and Genevieve. The family experienced tragedy when Carl took ill and died the same day in 1944 when Edward was four and a half years, and Genevieve was one year old. Marge then moved to town with her parents and began working outside the home.

In 1974, Marjorie Conradi asked Paul to do some needed repair work in her home. Even though they grew up in the same neighborhood, they soon became reacquainted as adults and found that they liked each other very much and shared many of the same interests. They married the next year.

Both were interested in the history of their families and their hometown. Paul was well known for his interest in photography that began at age fourteen, when he received a photography kit for Christmas. Marjorie also became interested in photography when she won a camera at Schulenberg’s store at the age of twelve. After their marriage, they could often be seen walking around town with their Nikon cameras, recording history through their photos. *(Those photos are another donation to the NBHA.)*

Both Paul and Marjorie were involved with the New Bremen Historic Association from the beginning. Marjorie, a charter member, served on the Board and became the first editor of The NBHA newsletter, *The Towpath*. Paul’s construction and woodworking skills were put to use in museum maintenance. Their donations of time and talent have been so valuable in helping to preserve our heritage.



Paul & Marjorie (Gieseke/Conradi) Lietz



Ginny, Tom, & John Braun

DAMMEYER FAMILY HISTORY

By Thomas Braun

In Germany, the surname *Dammeyer* means a *farmer who lives near a dam or dike*. The Dammeyers that settled in our area near New Bremen came from a small town called Glissen, Lower Saxony, Germany. Near Glissen, the Weser River flows northwest to the city of Bremen, Germany and empties into the Baltic Sea. The Dammeyer's church was located across the border in Ovenstaedt, Westfalia, Germany. The Wiehe family that settled in New Bremen were also from Glissen, Germany.

My great great grandparents Heinrich Wilhelm Friedrich "Henry" Dammeyer (1778-1850) and Margarethe Elizabeth Sophia Meyer (1806-1888) were married July 4, 1830, in Ovenstaedt. Henry was 42 and Margarethe was 24 years old. Sometime after they married, they traveled to America with Henry's brother Christian Dammeyer. Christian died in 1837 at the age of 39 and is buried in the St. Paul Churchyard in New Bremen.

Henry & Margarethe Dammeyer were New Bremen Pioneers. They purchased 40 acres of land on November 20, 1834, in Mercer County on Tri-township Road north of Route 274 for \$170. (This land is now part of Auglaize County.) The County Recorder was J. W. Riley.

Henry and Margarethe's first child Sophia Catherine Wilhemine (1837-1914) was born March 23, 1837. Sophia married Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Hoewischer in 1855. They had a child, Eliza, but divorced in 1861. Sophia then married George Frey and later moved to Hillsboro, Illinois. They and Eliza are buried in Hillsboro.

Henry and Margarethe's second child was my great grandfather Wilhelm Heinrich Friedrich "H. F." or "Fred" Dammeyer (1840-1923). H. F. Dammeyer remained around the New Bremen area to help clear and improve the land in his boyhood and later was employed on the Miami & Erie Canal from 1859-1866. He purchased his first 80-acre farm in Mercer County in 1866. On January 24, 1867, H. F. Dammeyer married Augusta Thieman (1850- 1927). Augusta was born in Germany and at the age of two years came to America with her parents Herman and Margaretha Thieman. The union of H. F. and Augusta Dammeyer was blessed with 8 sons and 3

HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY! May 8, 2026 TOM BRAUN

daughters. The 7th child was my grandfather Lafe Arthur "Levi" Dammeyer (1882-1968).

In 1894, Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Dammeyer and their children moved to their newly acquired farm of 120 acres that was one and a half miles north of their original farm. Their son Gustave married and moved to the original 80-acre farm, which he bought in 1896.

Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Dammeyer remained on their 120-acre farm until 1908. Then with the help of the children and a lot of honest sweat and toil they had accumulated enough money to buy a property on N. Main Street, New Bremen, to which they retired for the pleasant "evening time" of their life. In January 1917 they had the pleasure of celebrating their Golden Wedding anniversary there.

My grandfather Lafe Dammeyer attended the Commercial School in St. Marys and learned bookkeeping and shorthand skills. In 1908 he began his career as a secretary in Chicago. In 1910 he married Hilda Neuman and took up residence in St. Marys. There he worked as a timekeeper at a machine shop. Later they moved to New Bremen, and he worked as a timekeeper for the Case Company and the Streine Company. In 1921 they moved to the farm on Route 219, owned by August Neuman and purchased the farm in 1945. Their daughter Delilah married Wilson Braun and became the proud parents of Tom, Robert, and Jeanne Braun.

Great Great Grandparents

Heinrich Wilhelm & Margarethe (Meyer) Dammeyer
(2 Children)

Great Grandparents

H. F. "Fred Henry" & Augusta (Thieman) Dammeyer
(11 Children)

Julius (Rosine Tontrup, Emma Wissman), Gustave (Christine Rump), Theodor (Laura Huenke), Edward, William (Ida Kamman), Amanda (Leo Huenke), Lafe (Hilda Neuman), Otto (Ida Neuman), Adelia (Edwin Nieter), Oscar (Anna Luelleman), Frieda (Harry Schroeder)

Grandparents

Lafe & Hilda (Neuman) Dammeyer
(4 Children)

Delilah (Wilson Braun), Paul (Orpha Lyon), Margaret (Rueben Meckstroth), Harold (Martha Worthman).

Parents

Wilson & Delilah (Dammeyer) Braun
(3 Children)

Thomas & Ginny (McCollum) Braun
(1 son -John Braun)

Robert Braun

Jeanne Braun Schoenberger
(1 son- Jeff Schoenberger)

Editor's Note: Tom Braun has served as genealogist for the NBHA for many years and has a wealth of information to share about family trees. Tom would like to help you gather your family history. Please call, email, or write to him with your questions. (419-629-8902, tomandginnybraun@gmail.com, NBHA, P.O. Box 73, New Bremen, OH 45869-0073



The Dammeyer family attended Tom's Birthday Party.

Seated: Karen Dammeyer, Ginny Braun, Jeanne Schoenberger, Pat Snyder, Beth Dammeyer, Karen Dammeyer (Brent's wife)

Standing: John Braun, Tom Braun, Jeff Schoenberger, Todd Dammeyer, Brent Dammeyer, Scott Dammeyer.



The McCollum Family at Tom's Birthday Party.

Front Row: John Braun, Tom Braun, Ginny Braun

2nd Row: Jean McCollum, Greg McCollum, Ann McCollum, Sue Shockney, Marsha Stevens

3rd & 4th Row from left to right: Kim Tracey, Teresa Tracey, Dale Topp, Steve Shockney, Brad Smuts, Jayne Smuts, Susie McCollum, Jeff McCollum, Jerry Topp, Deb Dues, Karen Lewis, Dan Dues, Judy Borges, Jeanne Braun Schoenberger, and Jeff Schoenberger

McCOLLUM FAMILY HISTORY

By Thomas & Virginia Braun

There has been a McCollum family in the New Bremen area since 1926 when LeVerne Waterman of New Bremen married Walter (Bill) McCollum of Van Wert, Ohio. **Great Great Grandparents** To tell the story of their arrival we will focus on Virginia "Ginny" McCollum Braun and begin with her *Great Great Grandparents*, Joseph & Elizabeth *McCallum* who left Ireland about 1831 and immigrated to Canada. By 1836

this family had left New Brunswick, Canada and were living in western Pennsylvania. Their first two children were born in Canada; the next five children were born in Pennsylvania.

Great Grandparents Joseph & Elizabeth's middle child, James Monty McCollum married Elizabeth Jane Mounts in Amity, Pennsylvania in 1861; *Ginny's Great Grandparents*. James and Elizabeth Jane moved with the Mounts family to Washington County, Indiana, just north of Louisville Kentucky, in 1866. By 1879 they had relocated to Van Wert, Ohio. Records show that they had twelve children.

Grandparents Their son, William Henry McCollum, born in 1869, married Anna Gribler in 1896, *Ginny's Grandparents*, and became the parents of five children- Oscar (1897-1946), Ladoyt (1900-1900), Cecil "Pete" (1901-1933), Florence (1903-1997), and Walter (1907-1971).

William Henry, died in 1910 at the age of 41 years when Walter, the youngest of the five children, was only three years old. In 1913 their mother, Anna, married Joseph Maxwell (1857-1941). A daughter Catherine was born to them in 1918.

(It is interesting to note that Ginny's Grandmother, Anna Gribler McCollum, was the daughter of Charles Gribler, a native German, who also served in the Civil War in the United States. Her mother, Mary Agnes Schott (Schaadt) Gribler, was born in Holmes County, Ohio. The Gribler family moved to Van Wert about 1874 and raised their ten children there.)

Parents In 1926, Walter "Bill" McCollum from Van Wert, married LeVerne Waterman from New Bremen. They settled in New Bremen and raised their family; Patricia (Warren) Topp (1927-2006), Jack (Audrey Lampert) McCollum (1929-1984), Sue (James) Shockney (b.1933), Janice (Donald) Voglewede (1936-2025), William (Barbara Bramlage, Ann Rutschilling Poppe) McCollum (b. 1937), and Virginia (Tom Braun) (b. 1938).

MORE NBHA NEWS...

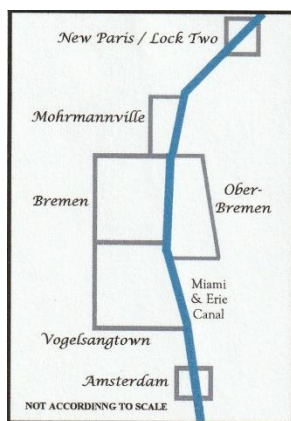
Sister & brother, Jennifer Gerding Shaver & David Gerding, came to visit this spring to learn about their New Bremen ancestors. Tom Braun welcomed them and shared "a wealth of information" about their family tree.



In the last issue of The Towpath, we learned about the original site of New Bremen. We also learned that the original Bremen charter signed by the 33 members stated that they planned to establish a town for Germans of Protestant faith. The following article written by Fr. David A. Hoying CPPS gives us more information about the influence of early church leaders who served in New Bremen and the issues they encountered. Not only did the Germans from the northern and southern parts of Germany speak different languages, but they also arrived with different cultures which made unification difficult.

NEW BREMEN

By Fr. David A. Hoying CPPS



The Six Villages

The community of New Bremen began as a cluster of small villages or hamlets: **Bremen** proper was located on the west side of the Miami & Erie Canal. **Amsterdam** was located on the Miami & Erie Canal to the south of Bremen. **Mohrmanville** was established to the north of Bremen. **Ober-Bremen** was situated on the east side of the

Miami & Erie Canal across from Bremen.

Vogelsangtown was to the west side of the Miami & Erie Canal and south of Bremen. **New Paris** or **Lock Two** was at the site of Lock Two to the northeast of Bremen. A vote was taken, 12 October 1875, on the issue of whether or not to annex Ober-Bremen with New Bremen. The issue passed with 161 for annexation and 16 votes against. By 1878, the remaining villages followed suit.

Amsterdam was founded not by any German immigrants, but by an American couple living in Dayton, **Richard Howard and Anna Marie Ames**. He was originally from Massachusetts. The village was platted and entered, 10 July 1837, and the lots were sold by William Potter as attorney in fact. The village consisted of 65 lots, each 52 feet by 132 feet, and ten out-lots. The population of the village was ravaged by the cholera epidemic of 1849, and the village, except for its name, gradually vanished

Johann Heinrich Garmhausen [1831-1911] {*Dötlingen, Oldenburg*} settled at New Paris after 1852. He purchased property there, with a sawmill from **Bernard Heinrich Koop**. Garmhausen made over the sawmill into a flour mill, utilizing water power from the canal, and produced an excellent flour. The locals knew the place as **Schliesen Twe** (Lock Two). An old saying came about indicating the taking of a timely and long way around to arrive somewhere, as going "Nao Ägypten bei Schliesen Twe"- *To Egypt by way of Lock Two*.

At the southeast corner of Section 9 [SE¼ SE¼], **Johann Bernard Behrens** [1798-1848] {*Huntlosen, Oldenburg*} established an addition to Bremen. It was platted 15 October 1838 and entered 15 February 1839. Nothing seems to have developed with this eleven-lot addition

Bremen Proper

Bremen proper began in Cincinnati with the drawing up of a charter by the newly formed **City of Bremen Society**. The thirty-three-member society charged **Friedrich Heinrich Schröder** and **Albert Friedrich Windeler** to search for a suitable tract of land. Scouting first in Ohio, then into Indiana, they returned to Ohio and agreed upon a site in Mercer County. The site may have been selected because it had been partially cleared by Native-Americans. Windeler returned to Cincinnati to appraise the society members of the find. Schröder remained at the site of the village and raised a shelter for the first settlers, 12 feet by 14 feet.

Windeler returned with several companions, making the 120-mile trek in 20 days. At the end of the first year the population numbered 25 families. Windeler purchased, 4 August 1832 80 acres of federal land in Section 10, the S½ of the SE¼, for \$1.00 an acre at the Piqua Land Office. The town of Bremen was platted for Schröder, 11 June 1833, at the SE¼ of the SE¼ of Section 10 consisting of 40 acres, by Robert Grant, Mercer County Surveyor. He divided the town into 102 lots, each 60 feet by 300 feet. Each member of the society received one lot and the rest were sold at \$25.00 per lot. The plat was presented by Heinrich M. Helm, Justice of the Peace at Saint Marys, and entered and recorded as Bremen, 13 June 1833, by Robert Bigger, Deputy Recorder of Mercer County. The land patent was issued by the federal government, 27 November 1833. Sadly, the village was deprived of F. H. Schröder's leadership, who succumbed to cholera in September 1833.

The name of the village was changed from Bremen to **Neu Bremen** or **New Bremen**, when the post office was established, 12 May 1835. The state of Ohio already had a village named Bremen, so the change was necessary. The village was incorporated, 23 March 1837. When the first village election was held, 12 April 1840, **Gerhard Heinrich Klefoth** [1800-1878] {*Schledehausen, Hannover*}, a teacher, was elected the first mayor of New Bremen.



Saint Paul Church

The first settlers at Bremen and of the other villages were nearly all Evangelical Lutherans. The first church, **Saint Paul Evangelic and Lutheran Church**, was founded 11 June 1833, by 16 individuals. A lot was

donated, 2 February 1834, and a blockhouse was erected upon it for \$40.00. The building served as both the church and the school. A parsonage, 30 feet by 20 feet, was erected, 3 February 1835, by Heinrich Friedrich Siemer for \$198.00.

The Pastors



The first pastor at Bremen was **Lebrecht Ludwig Hinsch** (sometimes recorded as Henze), and he made a monthly visit to Bremen from Piqua. He was born, 1769, in Anholt-Köthen. (His Christian name Lebrecht, was a name made familiar by the ruling family of Anholt-Köthen.) He was a member of the Reformed Church which followed the Heidelberg Catechism. He studied at the University of Halle and at Bremen, after immigrating in 1793 from Holland, he was ordained, 21 May 1794, in Reading, Pennsylvania. He first ministered in Creagersville, Maryland, and moved that congregation to Emmitsburg, Maryland. In 1804, he came to Zion Reformed Church, Arendtville, Adams County, Pennsylvania. His charge consisted of five congregations, and at times he assisted at the Reformed Church in Gettysburg. He was also very involved in the conference work of his denomination. Leaving Pennsylvania in 1833, he relocated to Piqua, Ohio, and pastored two congregations, one at Stillwater, Miami County, and the other at Bremen, Mercer County, Ohio. In 1835, after giving up Bremen, he took on another congregation at Greenville Creek, also in Miami County. At Piqua, in 1837, he established and published a newsletter, *Evangelischen Religiose Zeitschrift*. He used the title “*Pastor Father*”, and died at Piqua, 1 August 1861. He was at the time, the oldest living pastor of the Reformed Church.

Hinsch ascribed to an attitude prevalent across the various German Protestant denomination—Lutheran, Evangelical, and Reformed, that held to denominational openness. The opinion was held that a pastor could be elected to serve a congregation in any of the various German denominations without concern for his own personal confession. Thus, the same congregation, because of its pastor, could be known at one time or the other by all the denominational names—Lutheran, Evangelical, and Reformed. Hinsch was also open to the union of all the various German denominations. The downside to this openness, was that within a congregation, differences and divisions could easily arise between pastor and congregants and as well amongst members. The surfacing of such disagreements and divisions, often resulting in great bitterness, diminished denominational openness through the 1840’s. Denominational boundaries, especially doctrinal, were restated, and affirmed, and brought the practice to an end.

The first resident pastor in Bremen was **Heinrich Ludolph Meÿer**, who came as a member of the City of Bremen Society. He had been elected to replace Schröder as business manager of the settlement company. He became Bremen’s first postmaster, 12 May 1835. Although Meÿer had been a pastor in Cincinnati, he did not come to Bremen as a pastor. Only in August 1835, (another source gives April) was he elected as resident pastor, for a yearly salary of \$300.00. His first service may have been 30 August 1835.

Prior to Meyer becoming pastor, the congregation drew up *Articles of Association* for the **Saint Paul Evangelic and Lutheran Church**, Monday, 6 April 1835, in preparation for incorporation. At this time four trustees, two elders, and six deacons were selected. The congregation ratified its first constitution, 30 August 1835, and was incorporated, 30 November 1835. The congregational constitution was renewed, 21 May 1845, but the congregation voted, 25 July 1845, to be free of association with any denominational synod.

Meÿer already had a well-known history in Cincinnati as a pastor, and was as well, a victim of congregational division. From Luneburg in Hannover, Meÿer started his life as a merchant, before he took up his theological studies. As a theological student he immigrated to New York and resumed his studies. His first pastorate was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which was followed by a brief pastorate at Zion Church, Arendtville, Pennsylvania. In 1820, he was named pastor of Sankt Johann Kirche (Saint John Protestant Church) in Cincinnati, Ohio. The church, located on Arch Street between Broadway and Ludlow Streets, was founded in 1814 by Pastor Joseph Zaestein. Meÿer affiliated the congregation in 1822 with the Evangelical Lutheran denomination. Meÿer oversaw the expansion of the congregation and was responsible for the building of two churches for the congregation. The first was built in 1824, on Third Street, between Broadway and Ludlow Streets. The second was built in 1832 on Sixth Street, between Walnut and Vine Streets.

Following the opening of the new church, trouble for Meÿer at Sankt Johann came to a head. Meÿer was accused by the southern Germans, mainly from Swabia and the Palatinate and speakers of High German, for favoring the northern Germans, mainly Hannoverians and speakers of Low German. Adding to the controversy were doctrinal issues between the two factions. The northern Germans tended to be orthodox and conservative, while the southern Germans tended to be progressive and liberal. The southern Germans favored a Zwinglian understanding of Holy Communion, while the northerners maintained the traditional Lutheran understanding of the sacrament. Meÿer resigned the pastorate in September 1833. However, his resignation did not quiet the turmoil in any measure.

Meÿer's successor at Sankt Johann, **Batzien (? Sebastian) L. H. Lauer** could take the troubles for less than two years. In calling for a new pastor, two candidates emerged. One candidate, **Wilhelm Möllmann**, was a Low German from Menslage, Hannover. The other was a Reverend Steinmaier. Facing the reality of pastoring a cantankerous congregation, Steinmaier pulled his candidacy, and fled back to Germany. Möllmann, by default, became the pastor. Also considering the difficulties presented by the congregation, he sought to resign but could not. The divided congregation, at a moment of unity in 1838, decided the best solution was to dissolve the one congregation and become two. The southern Germans chose to keep the church building and pay the northern Germans money for their part. The northerners retained the pastor, but he was soon to die, 8 May 1841. The northerners founded the **Norddeutsche Lutherische Kirche**, also called the **Plattdeutsche Kirche**, the **Osnabrücker Kirche**, and the **North German Lutheran Church**. The church was located at Walnut and Ninth Streets.

Upon resigning, Meÿer became involved with the **City of Bremen Society**, whose members had been his supporters and were members of the new congregation. It appears that Meÿer at this time was a weary man, worn out by the turmoil. Thus, he may have been reluctant to become pastor in Bremen. In coming to Bremen, he may have anticipated freedom from southern Germans, his antagonists at Sankt Johann, however, this was not to be, for in August 1833 several families from the Palatinate, the Bösel, Paul, and Mauer families, settled at Bremen. Bremen now mirrored the same mix of people that made up Sankt Johann. Considering the uniformity in culture and language that first prevailed in Bremen with the Diepholzers, Oldenburgers, and Hannoverians, the coming of settlers with a different culture and language, surely altered the expectations of the original settlers and the history of the village.

Meÿer used *Lewis* as the American version of his name Ludolph. His pastorate at Bremen was of short duration. He resigned in 1837 and died the following year, 10 September 1838.

The next pastor to serve in New Bremen, **Peter Bernard Friedrich Wilhelm Fuhrmann**, was born in Hardenberg, Overijssel, Netherlands, of Westphalian parents. Prior to immigration he lived in Saxony. Fuhrmann joined a colony of 300 families originating in **Mühlhausen, Thuringia**. They were responding to an invitation given by **Carl and Johann Augustus Röbling** (the future bridge builder) to settle in Pennsylvania. The Röbling brothers founded **Saxonburg** as the place of settlement. The colonists sailed from Bremen to Baltimore, and the first settlers arrived at Saxonburg, 21 March 1832. Fuhrmann was the colony's first pastor and held services in private homes and the open air. He

strongly encouraged the settlers to persevere. However, in 1834 he left as he could make no living there, as he was often paid in produce for his services.

Fuhrmann made his way to Ohio, locating in Huron County, serving there and at Sandusky. He moved to Springfield and took upon himself a wide mission territory. He reached out to fellow Lutherans scattered in far off corners of the wilderness. He founded several congregations: Saint John in Marysville, 3 January 1838, and Saint John in Kenton the same year, and visited Wapakoneta. He accepted the call to be pastor in New Bremen as well in 1838.

While serving the growing congregation in New Bremen, Fuhrmann made numerous visits to Fort Jennings, beginning as early as 1843. Fort Jennings was founded by **Heinrich Joseph Böhmer** [1807-1868] {Vechta, Oldenburg}, on the land of the former military post. Heinrich Joseph Böhmer, a Catholic, had been the teacher in Minster, 1836-1838. Böhmer and Fuhrmann may have met in 1838. Fort Jennings presented an unusual situation in having a *Simultaneum Kirche*. Such a church was often found in the homeland, where one church building was shared between two confessions, Catholic and Lutheran. Böhmer had a blockhouse erected in 1840 that served both the Catholic congregation and the Reformed congregation and was as well used for school. When Fuhrmann left New Bremen in 1847, he settled at Fort Jennings. His pastorate was brief, for he died there, 20 November 1849, possibly of the cholera. In his will, he named Heinrich Joseph Bohmer, his "*esteemed friend*" as his executor and the guardian of his children.

Fuhrmann's leaving Bremen in 1847 came at a time of momentous change. The congregation of Saint Paul had voted in 1845 to be free of all synods. In 1845 several families left Saint Paul and established Saint Peter Church. The historical record is silent about the causes precipitating such a transition. No account telling of any troubles, dissatisfactions, or conflicts has remained for us.



A Hannoverian, **Herman Heinrich Julius Conrad Borchers** came to Saint Paul as Fuhrmann's successor, in May 1847. Upon immigration, his family settled at Lancaster, Fairfield County, Ohio. The details of Borchers's early life are not known. He may have begun his ministry in Fairfield County.

When Borchers left New Bremen, April 1858, he went to Seymour, Jackson County, Indiana. Outside of Seymour he founded Saint Paul Church. He served there from 1858 through 1881. The site of his congregation became known as Borchers, being named after him. He died, 16 November 1884, at Hope, Bartholomew County, Indiana.

Saint Peter Church

To Saint Peter came its first pastor, **Friedrich Caspar Adolph Conradi**, in early spring 1847. Conradi and his brother Johann Philipp Conradi were natives of Nassau. They both studied and worked at **Rauhe Haus** (*Rough House*) in Hamburg and Bremen. The Rauhe Haus was an Evangelical institution founded for juvenile reform, and offered ministerial, diaconal, and catechetical studies. The two brothers joined the **Kurhessischen (Hanauer) Sendverein für Deutsche Protestanten in Nordamerika** (Hessian Mission Society for German Protestants in North America). The brothers prepared themselves to be *Kolonatsprediger* (*Colony Preachers*). They were both chosen to serve the church in Ohio. They left from Berkersheim, and landed in New York, 26 August 1844. Going to Columbus, Ohio, they affiliated with the Joint Synod of Ohio. Philipp went on to Wooster, Ohio, and Adolph to Hamilton, Ohio. He arrived there in December and became pastor of Zion Church. He completed the erection of the new church, and saw to its dedication, 21 June 1845.

Violence erupted in Conradi's life in early 1847, when Pastor Fischer of Saint John Church in Hamilton, printed a slanderous letter against Conradi in the Cincinnati *Volksblatt* [Vol. 11]. Rocks were hurled through the windows of Conradi's house, with one breaking his arm, and posed a potential danger to Conradi's child sleeping in that room. His horse was also poisoned. The incident was reported in the Lutheran periodical, *Der Lutheraner* [Vol. 3, #13 - February, and #19 - April 1847]. His congregation's council wrote a letter in his defense and vouched for his integrity. The violence caused him to resign, and he came to New Bremen.

In western Ohio, Conradi proved to be a zealous pastor, visiting Lutherans in Celina and Wapakoneta, and founding two congregations in Saint Marys in 1849 - Saint Paul and Zion. In the midst of his work, he succumbed to cholera, 10 August 1849.

New Bremen, Ohio

Census	Population	Growth % +/-
1850	344	-
1860	379	10.2%
1870	528	39.3%
1880	1,169	121.4%
1890	1,239	6.0%
1900	1,318	6.4%
1910	1,586	6.4%
1920	1,562	-1.5%
1930	1,485	-4.9%
1940	1,484	-0.1%
1950	1,548	4.3%
1960	1,972	27.4%
1970	2,185	10.8%
1980	2,393	9.5%
1990	2,558	6.9%
2000	2,909	13.7%
2010	2,978	2.4%
2020	3,034	1.9%

New Bremen Census and Growth Record.



NBHA NEWS continued...3rd Graders visit 2026



This *Living Biography* is about Henry A. Vornholt 1859-1950 and was written by Andrew Kay. It was published in *The Evening Leader* on December 17, 1949. Mr. Vornholt was the son of Gerhard Heinrich & Maria (Blanke) Vornholt.

Henry Vornholt, New Bremen, Has Battled Illness All of His Life but He Observed His 90th Birthday With Keen Interest in Life

By Andrew Kay

To see a man 90 years old, who has had to battle against sickness and physical infirmity all his life, mentally keen and awake, still interested in community improvements, and laughing till the tears rolled down his face, is indeed a refreshing sight. Such was our privilege while calling on A. Henry Vornholt just west of New Bremen on highway 274. The cronies of his youth who were hale, robust and hearty have nearly all departed from the scene, some of them unexpectedly early, but by carefully husbanding his physical resources and by the grace of God, Mr. Vornholt was privileged to celebrate his 90th birthday last October 20.

Born in German Township in 1859, his father a carpenter, died when he was less than a year old. They were residing at the time on a 20-acre tract near New Bremen. Thereafter his mother returned to her folks, the Henry Blanke family, who lived nearby. As a child he was frail and sickly. Before he was 2 years old there was the day when the family doctor called in the morning and said, "I do not expect him to live through the day." That was 88 years ago. He said "in my day I've taken gallons of medicine. I was so sickly as a youngster that I wasn't able to go to school till I was 8 years old. Then I went to the Lock Two School but very irregularly. Most of my schooling was in German, since the teachers mostly had just recently come from Germany. When we went to confirmation instruction we had to go 4 days a week, and then we didn't go to the public school at all. But all during my school days I missed much because of sickness. As a boy of 14 or 15 I got yellow jaundice and was yellow as a pumpkin. Two years later I got typhoid fever, and they thought I was going to die. Next, I got the flu and again they thought I was going to die. I just didn't seem to be able to get over this and had a severe cough which lasted into the summer. Finally a neighbor persuaded me to go to a doctor. The doctor told me to take a quantity of peppermint and wild cherry bark and boil them together and make tea out of it. Then I was to put into that a pound of rock candy so it would develop into a syrup. Into that I was told to put some whiskey to keep it from spoiling in



summer. When finished I had a half gallon of medicine and I was to take a tablespoon before breakfast and at dinner and supper. I don't know if the medicine did it or not, but somehow my cough left me. Next, I got pneumonia and again it looked as if I would die. Next, I was operated on for the removal of a tumor. Then there were minor illnesses in between. In 1936 I was operated for the removal of a cataract from my right eye, and so now I can read again." Yet here he is, 90 years old and still going.

I asked if he did much reading. "Yes," he said "I read quite a bit. I read *The Leader* every day and I have read every one of the Biographies. I think it's fine of *The Leader* to print them. We like to read about people that we know instead of always about strangers." (Thank you, Mr. Vornholt!)

But his battle against ill health has not kept him from living an active and interesting life, from participation in community activities. He recalled that one of his teachers, the late Theo. Purpus lived to be 101 years old, and he himself would like to live to be a hundred.

In 1882 he married Sophia Wolters, sold his original 20 acres and bought a 62-acre farm in Mercer County for \$50 an acre, and there took his bride. He farmed all his life. The only buildings on this farm were a 1-room log house and a log stable and an unfinished little frame building. He built a barn while there, enlarged the house and put up other buildings. "Then one day a man came to our house and offered this farm to me here west of New Bremen. This is a 100-acre farm and we paid \$55 an acre for it. Here we moved just 50 years ago. In 1931 we sold the farm to my son Emil and moved to New Bremen. In 1933 my wife died and then I came back here to live on the farm. And I want you to tell in your write-up how good Emil and his wife are to me. I couldn't wish to have it nicer. They are wonderful to me."

(Andrew Kay does not doubt the latter statement. The kindly banter carried on between them and the fact that Andrew Kay was served 2 delicious pork sandwiches during the course of the interview, bespeaks their hospitality!) Among Mr. Vornholt's earliest farm recollections is the thrashing season. "Wheat would be thrown on the floor of the barn and would be beaten out by the hoofs of horses, the horses going round and round until the grain was out. I would ride the middle horse and with one hand lead another horse on a leash. When grandfather thought the wheat was about out of the sheaves I would get a little rest. They would remove the straw with forks, sweep the grain together and later run it through a fanning mill to remove the chaff, and then a new supply of sheaves would be put on the floor, they

would put me in the saddle again and the process would start all over.”

I asked regarding memories of his youthful social life. Their activities were very limited, he said. While still single he never owned a bicycle, nor a horse and buggy, and never hunted or fished. But he would sometimes go out on Sunday nights. “We would always foot it”—he said “and we usually went to the home of some one of us where the boys and girls of the neighborhood would get together. There we would play games, and of course the boys would take the girls home. We had great times.” I asked about the games. “Most of them I have forgotten” he said, “but the one I still clearly remember was called ‘Katz Aus’— (literally translated Cat out!) For this the girls would be in one room and the boys in another. Some one would be the leader. There would be a chair with a girl sitting on it in the middle of the room. An empty chair was beside her. She would then tell the group which boy she would like to have sit next to her. Then the boys would be brought in, one at a time. If it was the wrong boy, the girls would shout in unison—‘Katz Aus!’—if the right one— ‘Katz Bleib!’ (Cat remain!)—and then the boy would sit with that girl during the rest of the game. This game, it seemed, was especially enjoyed by the girls for it afforded them an opportunity to convey heart preferences to the boys. Thereafter the process would be reversed, the boys doing the choosing. Wrong choices would elicit a ‘Katzlein Aus!’ (kitten out!) from the boys and the right one would be greeted with a whimsical and tender ‘Katzlein bleib!’ — (Kitten remain!). When the boy in turn chose the girl who had chosen him, it could almost be taken for granted that he would have first chance at taking her home.” Mrs. Emil Vornholt (nee Ida Brockman) was ironing in the kitchen while Father Vornholt was relating the foregoing. “Pa, --didn’t you also play post office?” she called, jovially. Now it was that Mr. Vornholt laughed till the tears ran down his face. Other social affairs included sleigh rides and bellings at weddings, and of course wedding receptions. “A wedding usually meant a good time for everybody.”

Mr. Vornholt remembers the Civil War distinctly. He remembers how his uncle had all his affairs in readiness and had a bundle packed and was ready to leave on a moment’s notice. “He wasn’t drafted. But a cousin of mine was. I remember when he came home on furlough. I can still see his uniform. We just looked and looked at him. Then one day all the church bells in New Bremen were ringing. My grandfather put out the saddle on his best horse and galloped off to New Bremen. We knew something important had happened. Soon we saw him coming down the road in a cloud of dust. ‘The war is over,’ he had said, choking with emotion. And that meant that my uncle wouldn’t have to go to war.”

In addition to his family and farming activities, Mr. Vornholt was always keenly interested in any

innovations, in new machinery and new ways of doing things. Many of the things he promoted didn’t survive, but he had the fun of trying. “We started a Grange. But that didn’t work out. We worked until we got a county agricultural agent to help us with our farm problems. We started a ‘Horse Insurance Company’ which did nothing but insure horses. That went out with the horses.

Then we started a ‘Protective Association’ to protect ourselves against burglary, thieving or whatever else. We even had blood hounds at our disposal. One night someone called to say that there was someone at his chicken coop. So, we got out the blood hounds. But they didn’t seem to have been properly trained, for they went from one track to the other, and finally got on the track of someone who couldn’t possibly have been near the place, causing us all a lot of embarrassment. At the next meeting of our association, we decided to quit the blood hound experiment. But we wanted something to play with. So, the late Frank Kuenning made the motion that we originate a Farmers Picnic at New Bremen. That was in 1915 and really went over until about 15 years ago.”

Mr. Vornholt was also one of the organizers of the Farm Bureau, a Township Trustee for 6 years, a real estate appraiser, deacon and treasurer of the St. Paul church in New Bremen, and a promoter of such community movements as he considered worthwhile.

His 6 children are Emil, with whom he resides; Wilson and Harry who conduct the Vornholt Funeral Establishment in New Bremen, Mrs. Lydia Fark of St. Marys, the late Mrs. Clara Hoeper of St. Marys, and a son Walter, who died many years ago. Mr. Vornholt’s snow-white hair and beard and his genial disposition reminded us of the scriptural verse “The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.”

Parents: Gerhard Heinrich & Maria Blanke Vornholt
Their only child, **Henry A. Vornholt married Sophia Dorothea Wolters.**

Henry & Sophia had six children.

Lydia Vornholt Fark (1883-1953)

Emil Vornholt (1886-1960)

Wilson Vornholt (1888-1977)

Clara Vornholt Hoeper (1890-1940)

Harry Vornholt (1896-1971)

Walter Vornholt (1899-1900)

ANNA KUEST HAD A ZEST FOR LIFE

By Joyce Ruedebusch

In a previous issue of *The Towpath* (October 2012), we wrote about Anna Kuest (1886-1981) and her work in Washington DC during WWI. Included in the article were excerpts of letters written to her family in New Bremen.

We are privileged to have not only these letters but also a large collection of photo albums and scrapbooks that Anna created during her 95 years. In examining these items, it seems a theme of curiosity can be found. Anna was a person of many interests. Her curiosity led her to follow many of her interests just as it led her to travel to Washington DC in 1918.



Anna Kuest is getting ready to deliver freshly baked bread.

After the war ended, she chose to return to New Bremen. She came back to the house on E. Monroe Street where she lived with her mother and sister, Ida. Her widowed mother, Wilhelmina (Nussmeyer) Kuest had purchased the house in 1910 from Louis & Hattie Piehl. Soon after Anna's return this became the

base for their home baking business.

For many years the Kuest family sold their baked goods on Friday and Saturday. They were well known for delicious coffee cake, bread, and buns. Customers could pick up the items at the house or have them delivered by Anna.



Anna Kuest displayed baked goods in the living room of her house on E. Monroe Street.

Anna's sister, Ida, is in the kitchen of their home.



To help with the delivery, Anna decided to learn to drive and purchased a car. In accomplishing this goal, she became the first woman of her family to do so. Anna was the youngest of the six children of Henry and Wilhelmina (Nussmeyer) Kuest.



Ida Kuest and Emma (Kuest) Ruedebusch, sisters of Anna Kuest (circa 1940s) sitting on the bumper of Anna's car.

During her life she owned several cars and drove family and friends on many trips.

Anna's curiosity also played a part in her next field of employment. Her interest in the telephone and how it was operated led to her 30-year career with the New Bremen Telephone Company.



Hilda Broerman, Geciena Halsema, Anna Kuest, and Elizabeth Halsema at the New Bremen Telephone Company board.

Anna Kuest worked as a telephone operator until the company changed to a dial system in 1955. Then she wrote this poem:

“NUMBER PLEASE” IS HEARD NO MORE

*A telephone exchange- we have no more,
The room is empty, and they’ve closed the door;
The board which served twenty-four hours each day
For thirty-five years, now is put away.*

*Now no more “Number Please” they’ll hear us say
But use the dial now, that’s the new way.
We’ve heard some say they’ll miss the human touch,
They’ve been so used to it and meant so much.*

*We too will miss the voice we no more hear;
Some voices we have heard for many a year,
For some folks it seems rather hard to try
The new way, but they’ll like it by and by.*

*Now we the operators one and all
Would like to thank all those who made a call
Or wrote a friendly note in which they’d state
That what we’ve done they did appreciate.*

*We’ve only done our duty, but were glad
When we were told good service they had had,
Sometimes we’ve tried subscribers’ patience too,
When we were slow in getting their calls through.*

*If only all mistakes that we have made
Will be forgiven then we’ll feel well repaid.
Our service here is ended and we’ll say
Goodbye – and may God bless you every day.*

---Anna Kuest

This is just an example of the myriads of poems Anna composed for many occasions. Her family knew that birthdays were always celebrated with a poem and a box of homemade candy from Anna. This poem was written to her brother John Kuest on his 95th birthday:

TO BROTHER JOHN

*To you my brother John I say
Best wishes I extend today,
December eighth again is here,
And you will start another year.*

*It was in eighteen-seventy-five
When at Kuest’s home, you did arrive,
Now ninety-five years have gone by,
It surely seems time does fly.*

*How quickly these years came and went,
Your whole life on the farm was spent,
Your working days have come and gone,
We know that time deeps marching on.*

*Your children take good care of you,
You sure admit that this is true,
Best wishes, I again extend
And with this line my poem will end.*

---Anna Kuest

As Anna became known for her poetry, others began to request poems for special occasions. She kept copies of most of her poems, and some are noted “by request.” Being bilingual like most New Bremen persons her age, she had the talent to write in both English and German.

As noted, Anna left a legacy of items that help us identify important events of her time. Along with her collections of poems and journals, she had numerous photo albums. All the photos were carefully identified. Her curiosity led her to collect stories of local interest culled from the newspapers. These scrapbooks have become a source of ideas for *The Towpath* articles. The total collection gives a glimpse of life in New Bremen from 1910-1970.



Anna’s zest for life led her to many adventures and challenges including climbing ladders to pick the best fruit.

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Early New Bremen
Henry Vornholt
Anna Kuest

Upcoming Event

Ice Cream Social
September 13, 2026
1:00 – 3:00 P.M.
Free Ice Cream
Visit Luelleman House & Pape House Museum
to Celebrate America 250
Open July 19, August 23, September 27
1-3 PM



The 60th Reunion of the NBHS Class of 1965 in August 2025.

Seated front row: Nancy Lampert Busse, Bonnie Topp Heidt, Joyce Isenberger Thornsberry, Ron Kremer.

Row 2: Roger Henschen, Rick Froning Diane Headapohl Paul, Betty Meckstroth Dietrich, Mary Dicke Mueller, Mary Wissman Chenault, Kathy Fark Maurer, Carolyn Weinberg Stucky, Beverly Wehmeyer Gilberg, Linda Rupert Meyer.

Rows 3 & 4: Randy McCune, Dean Harlamert, Dave Wint, Jay Kettler, Bob Dietrich, Terry Wissman, Gary Hirschfeld, Jon Belton, Tom Scheib, Beverly Widau Fledderjohann, Jerry Maxson (Teacher & Coach), Mike Shelby, Tom Young, John Knost, Jack Knost, Rosie Schwartz Shelby, Barb Forwerck Koeper, Lynne Harris Thompson, Larry Busse.