RALPH MAY

Remembers...



Ralph May Remembers New Bremen

www.andyniekamp.com



Ralph May 1892-1981

www.andyniekamp.com

Preface

While enjoying the activities related to their avocation, some people, indirectly, provide their friends and community with priceless treasures. These people, somehow, seem to be around at just the right time -- when their craft is most appreciated. Ralph May was that type of person; New Bremen is the fortunate, and most grateful, community.

Blessed with a keen sense of observation, a love to write and a mind that provided instant recall, Mr. May has given us a series of short stories reflecting his boyhood days in New Bremen. These stories are further enriched by his hobby of photography, and a desire to capture the most descriptive images. He even climbed the water tower to get an "aerial" view of the "Dinky" passing through town; also climbed to the roof of the old Central School Building to get the special picture he wanted.

Even as he grew older, and subsequently moved away from New Bremen, Mr. May continued to write about the community and people he loved. Over the years, many of these articles have been published in the St. Marys "Evening Leader." We are, indeed, grateful to the publishers of the "Evening Leader" for permission to reprint the Ralph May articles and thank them for their cooperation.

Additionally, our thanks are extended to The Friends of the Library for sponsoring this project and for their financial assistance; to the family of Ralph May, who gave permission for this endeavor; the Lees' Printing Company; and to the members of the committee, Paul and Majorie Lietz, Elodie Sollman, Donna Watkins and Paul and Alice Wissman.

www.andyniekamp.com

Contents

NEW BREMEN CENTENNIAL REMEMBERED. . . . 6

Includes illustration of the original Seal of New Bremen. 6

ALONG THE TOWPATH. 8

Sailing On Rabe's Pond. 8
Coming 'round The Bend. 9
Cornshocks And Indians. 10
Lock No. 1. 11
Great Pick And Shovel Project. . . . 13
The Last Canal Boat. 14
Swimming Under The Amsterdam Bridge. 15
Annual Family Picnic. 16
The Thompson House. 16

GOLDEN RULE DAYS. 18

At Home For The Alumni. 18
McGuffey Readers. 19
Football In 1908. 19
Wood-burning Stoves. 20
Spencerville Football Games. 21
Atop The Old Central School. 22
Class Of 1910. 22
Commencement 1894 and 1897. 24
New Bremen Revisited. 24
Return Of Football. 25

AN INDUSTRIOUS COMMUNITY. 26

Hardware, Iron And Groceries. . . . 26
Recollections Of Schulenberg's Store.27
Buttermilk For The Asking. 28
Backhaus And Kuenzel Mill. 29
Toy And Fancy Store. 30
The Klanke Factory. 31
Rabe's Factory. 32
Bread - Five Cents A Loaf. 34
Greber's Art Gallery. 34
Garmhausen Building Going Up. 36
Dried Prunes, Salted Herring And Bric-a-brac. 36
Halsema's Storeroom. 37
Boesel And Kunning Dry Goods. . . . 38
Old Time Banking. 40
Boesel's Opera House. 40
Monroe Street A Mud Path. 42
Barber Shops. 42
Threshing Machines. 45
Lanfersieck And Grothaus Plow Shop. 46
The Hoffman Building. 47
Koeper's Shoe Store 47

FROM MUD TO BRICKS. 49

Washington Street At The Turn Of The Century. 49
Old Pictures Have Charm. 50
Sea Of Mud. 51
Kuenzel Mills. 52
New Intersection. 53
New Bremen - Yesteryear. 54

NEW BREMEN CELEBRATES. 56

New Bremen Picnic Grounds. 56
Fourth Of July Celebration. 57
Decorating Graves. 59

www.andyniekamp.com

Old-Time Thanksgiving. 59
Christmas In New Bremen. 60
Decoration Day. 61
Memorial Services For McKinley. . . .62

THE WINTER YEARS. 63

Skating On Rabe's Pond. 63
Winter Sports. 64
Old-Time Winter. 66
Thirty Below. 66
Winter Lectures At Boesel's Opera House. 67
Business Of Cutting Ice. 68

OUT-OF-TOWN CONNECTIONS. 70

"Dinkey". 70
Lake Erie And Western. 71
Depot Finds New Home. 71
Interurban. 72
Served Community Well. 73
Lest We Forget. 75

FUN AND GAMES. 77

Oyster Suppers. 77
Visit To The Reservoirs. 78
Vogelsang's Field. 79
Skinning The Diamond. 80
Tri-County Fair. 80
Old Ball Field. 82
Memories Of Bob Ewing. 83

PLACES OF WORSHIP. 83

Candy, Nuts And An Orange. 83
Painting In Zion Church. 84
Christmas Eve. 85
Kite Flying And Easter Fires. . . . 85
Sunday School Picnic. 86
75th Anniversary Of Zion's Church. . 87
Zion's Church Celebrates One Hundred Years. 88
St. Paul's And St. Peter's 89
Just A Rubble. 90

MOSTLY ABOUT PEOPLE. 92

Boesel-Mesloh Reunion. 92
Fine Old Brick Residence. 93
Boyhood In New Bremen. 93
Cluck's Nest. 95
Early Scene In New Bremen. 96
An Old Home. 97
Miss Maud's First Graders Move On. . 98
Look-back To The Gay '90's. 99
White Mountain Picnic. 100

OVER THE YEARS AND LONG AGO. 101

Picking Chickens. 101
Speaking Of Books. 101
The Bloody Barn Battle. 103
Gypsies, Pedlars, And Umbrella Menders. 104
New Bremen From The Air. 105
Where Are They Gone?. 108
Adam Helwig Letters. 110
Gas-fired Furnaces. 110
Goose Feathers. 111
Leisurely Walk To Lock Two. 112
Recollections Of A Boy Hunter. . . 113
An Old House In New Bremen. 114
Forty-five Minutes To New Bremen. . 115
Summer Attire In 1800's. 116
One More Canoe Trip. 117

www.andyniekamp.com

NEW BREMEN CENTENNIAL REMEMBERED

It is forty years since New Bremen held its Centennial celebration. At that time, as a Weekly Contributor to the New Bremen Sun I wrote on "Things I Like Best to Remember about the Centennial." On this anniversary year I hope my readers will like to reflect on what I had to say at that time. I may not be here for the one hundred fiftieth anniversary!

"I came to New Bremen late Saturday afternoon about the hour when the exercises were being opened at Mueller Brothers corner. (That was at the corner of Main and Monroe Sts.)

As I came into town, past Koop's Ten Acres, I could not help but think of the many Saturday evenings, after I had had my bath and my supper, how I left my home and walked down to the heart of the business section, visiting the great mercantile establishments, making my purchases, getting a new Henty book at the Arcade library, and meeting the boys at Schulenberg's store or at Hoffman's corner. How good it was to feel that you had a home, a friendly community in which to live, good health, and looking forward to our graduation from high school.



Coming back from this reflection of the past, I saw new faces in almost every direction that I looked. People were going here and there; and my, was it hot! I went to the Crown Auditorium first as I wanted to see the historical exhibit. I knew there would be a surprise in store for me. A photograph of the Cataract Fire Company's canal boat outing to the Loramie reservoir caught my attention as I went on one of those outings as a little boy.

There were other canal boat photographs, one donated by Mr. Sunderland of St. Marys, together with an interesting canal boat advertisement: "See Ohio from a Canal Boat." There was a canal boat kitchen clock on display in Laut's Jewelry Store, and a miniature canal boat model by Herman Lietz. Another model of a canal boat was on display near the Home Printing Co. An old tin pump, loaned by the Thompson Brothers, of the type used on the canal boats to take care of the leakage. The boys in my neighborhood worked those pumps for a ride to the lock from the Plum St. Bridge.

In farming equipment, there were two flails and a cradle used in the harvesting of grain. A picture of an old-time threshing. Alongside the flails was a yoke used on oxen. Truly, with such weight on their shoulders, they were "beasts of burden." Nearby was an old beehive of the most ancient type made from straw and as pictured on one of our school readers.

There was an old wooden pump reminding me of Hawthorne's story, "The Town Pump," printed in McGuffey's Reader and with which most of us were familiar. There used to be such a pump across from the Arcade corner near the old Mill house.

From the pioneer home of New Bremen, there were spinning wheels; flax combs; four poster beds; trundle beds; baby cradles and carriages; cooking utensils of all kinds, skillets with very long handles; sausage machines; food choppers; coffee grinders; rolling pins of enormous size and weight; candle molds and snuffers;

www.andyniekamp.com

oil lamps of a very crude design, lanterns, and in particular the one used out at Mueller's barn when the robbers were discovered and the one was shot as they came from their hiding place in the haymow, one of the most exciting times in the old hometown many years ago.

There was a homemade hobby horse; music boxes; zithers; a homemade pair of skates; old bicycles; old trunks; old chairs and rockers; a porch settee and a combination cradle; old hats; old shoes; baby clothing; dresses; petticoats; bustles; hoopskirt skeletons; a Civil War soldier's uniform; carpenter tools of all descriptions, each and every part made by hand; Indian arrowheads and relics; old coins and paper money; old Bibles; school readers; legal documents; tin-types, school photos, maps, etc. A complete catalog is almost impossible. The outcome of all this should be the formation of an Historical Association in New Bremen with plans for a permanent exhibit. Who would have thought, before the Centennial, that so much of the past had been preserved?

Fred Wiemeyer's map of Ohio, dated 1834, displayed in the Arcade window, was most interesting with no railroads being shown at that time. The Miami & Erie canal was completed only as far as Dayton. Auglaize county had not yet been born; we were then all a part of Mercer. North of Wapakoneta was an Indian reservation.

Knipple's Bakery is situated in what was once known as The American House, one of the leading hotels of New Bremen. An old cut of this hotel was on display which showed a large yard adjacent to the hotel and a barn nearby where the horses were kept. In those days a livery stable was kept in connection with each hotel. A hack in the yard had the words "BREMEN-BOTKINS:" painted on the side. A piece of the old hotel stationery that I have stated that a horse sale was conducted every two weeks. This building, still standing, is one of the landmarks on Washington St.

There were few things on exhibit that called back the Tri-County Fair. August Dierker had a few of the Premium Books in his store window. Anyone who recalls the good times the young people had at Presidential elections could not help but feel overjoyed at seeing one of the old coal-oil torches on display. Each marcher in the parade carried one of these blazing torches. After the parade we were given a treat of wieners and buns at Speckman & Nieter's Dance Hall. Even those boys whose parents were Democrats shared in these feasts. Some old party member thought of these defeats, time and time again, and put up a family picture of William Jennings Bryan in the Auditorium.

Three photos of Rabe's Cheap Store were interesting to see as around the holidays it was the most frequented store in town with its vast collection of toys. Other photos were of John Koeper's Shoe Service, the New Bremen Machine Shop, the Plow Shop, St. Paul's Church fire, St. Paul's Church in winter with the scaffolding built around the steeple, and a very old picture of St. Peter's Church.

We did not get to bed very early that Saturday evening. On our way home, we went up the old towpath, passed the Thompson House and the lock to the Plum St. Bridge. The moon was setting in all its glory back of the Central School building. It was most beautiful and almost like a sunset. Early Sunday morning we were awakened by an electrical storm and the long drought was broken by two heavy rains between five and ten o'clock in the morning. I heard the church bells ring at six while I was still in bed. Yes, it was the same old town as when I lived back there in the old days. I had slept in the old home, coming back to live over a part of my youth.

Church services were conducted by former New Bremen youths. Sunday afternoon was like one of the old Lincoln Chautauquas with Elmer Ende and Howard Hoffman on the platform. But it was still hot! Along about five o'clock the temperature dropped some twenty degrees. From then on, the remaining days were pleasant although I was sorry to have missed the parade and I was told I had missed one of the best parts of the Centennial celebration.

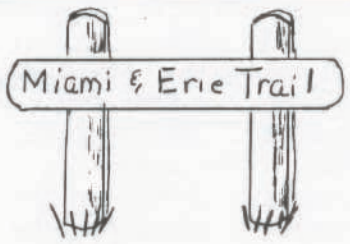
On the following Tuesday most everybody went out to the grove north of town. An Alumni meeting and luncheon was held, the first in many years. There were former students from almost every class that

www.andyniekamp.com

graduated from dear old N.B.H.S. The Class of 1910 (Halley's Comet) had the largest representation of any one class. Taylor's studio took a group photo of all alumni. This photo and the Historical Booklet will always bring back the Centennial in a most delightful way.

In closing I cannot help but quote from Emerson's 'Historical Discourse at Con-Cord,' delivered on the Second Centennial Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town, September 12, 1835, almost a hundred years ago, and about the same time when the first settlers were coming to New Bremen. I have changed the quotation to apply to our own Anniversary: "The Town of New Bremen begins, this year, the second century of its history. By a common consent the people of New Bremen have seen fit to observe the occasion. We have thought it becoming to commemorate the planting of our dear old hometown. The sentiment is just, and the practice is wise. Our ears shall not be deaf to the voice of time. We will review the deeds of our Fathers, and pass that just verdict on them we expect from posterity on our own."

ALONG THE TOWPATH

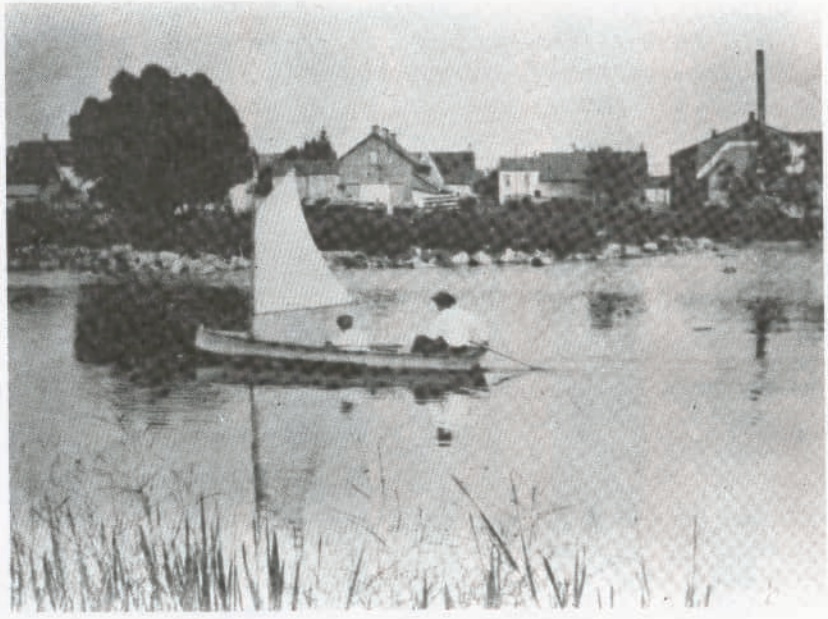


Sailing On Rabe's Pond

The boys in my neighborhood in New Bremen were fortunate in having Rabe's Pond so close to where they lived. Of course the whole area of the canal, of which Rabe's Pond was an outlet, added to our pleasure in so many ways during all the seasons of the year. And at that time it was a beautiful body of water with hardly any pollution of any kind. In fact, during our winter sports on the canal, if we were thirsty all we did was to make a hole in the ice and stretch ourselves out and drink the cold water with no ill effects that I can remember.

This view of a sail boat looking out over the area of Rabe's Factory and that part of town is a most unusual photo which I had enlarged from a small picture in the photo album of Felix and Helen Kuenzel. It is the only time that I can recall such a scene on the pond, and the wind seems to be drifting them along real nicely, with a steersman at the back of the boat.

How well we remember Rabe's Pond with its boat houses and skating in the winter. It was a wide area over which we could



Gliding Along on a Peaceful day

www.andyniekamp.com

take long strokes and buck the wind or have it to our back, going far to the south into what we called King's Pond where the bullrushes grew and where the muskrats built their homes.

The winter harvest of cutting ice began on the pond where a horse-drawn marker perforated the ice in the regular size of the cakes, later to be cut open and a water way made to the two ice houses beside the canal near the Plum St. bridge, where it was taken up into the large storage areas. Ice cutting was always so interesting to the boys; and if it held over on a Saturday some of us might be employed with a pike pole pushing the large cakes from near the pond to the lift gangway where it was taken up to a high point and then by gravity fed into the ice-mow.

The whole area of the pond was filled up many years ago and this part of the town is nothing at all like it was when I was a boy in New Bremen, even though the canal was changed little except in the flow of the water.

There is nothing like an old picture to bring back memories of our youth. The old dumps are clearly visible along the north shore. But trash in those days was at a minimum; we seldom if ever threw anything away. And so many things were picked up at the dumps and sold at the J.A. Long poultry house where we could pocket a few pennies for what we retrieved at the dumps.

Rabe's Pond will long be remembered by the older folks of the town, particularly those who lived in my neighborhood, and it is such a pleasure on my part to present this old photo.

Coming 'round The Bend

I was one of those fortunate lads to be brought up within a half block from a swing bridge in New Bremen. There were three of these bridges in the town and one lift bridge over the main street, and the boats were still coming through when I was a boy.

Seeing a boat coming round the bend south of town, it was not long until a group of boys and girls would gather on the bridge, leaning over the railing and waiting for the boat and the mule team as it drew closer and closer until the bow would gently bump the bridge open, being guided to the one side by a stretch of timbers extending out into the water from the bridge. You see, the bridge had to be bumped from the one end in order to properly swing it round on its track midway to let the boat pass through.

There was a circular track on which castor-like wheels moved in turning the bridge from one side to the other. The track was located to the one side and that end of the bridge was weighted down with heavy limestones to give it the proper pitch in swinging around.

The approach to the bridge from the highway was in a curved pattern to match with the curved structure of the bridge platform, with an opening of several inches to permit the bridge to move freely.

It was quite a thrill in those days, to get the bump of the bridge when the bow of the slow-moving boat hit the heavy timber on the outer side of the bridge. Sometimes after the boat had passed through, the bridge might only swing back part way, and then the lock tender or whoever might be near-by would have to push the bridge back in place so the children could get off and traffic be resumed.

These bridges were convenient for the old threshing machine outfits to take on water. When tractors were steam-operated a water tank was coupled on behind and on crossing the bridge, it was such an easy task to throw over the large intake hose and by a hand-pump draw water from the canal before going on to the next threshing operation.

Leonard Hill, of Piqua, and I were fortunate in locating the pivot pin and part of the track on which a swing bridge turned, near Bunker Hill in Shelby county on the line of the Miami And Erie Canal. "Towpaths", the publication of the Canal society of Ohio, reported that we had located the pivot pin in its October, 1969, issue--the same one in which my article on "Swinging Bridges" first appeared.

www.andyniekamp.com

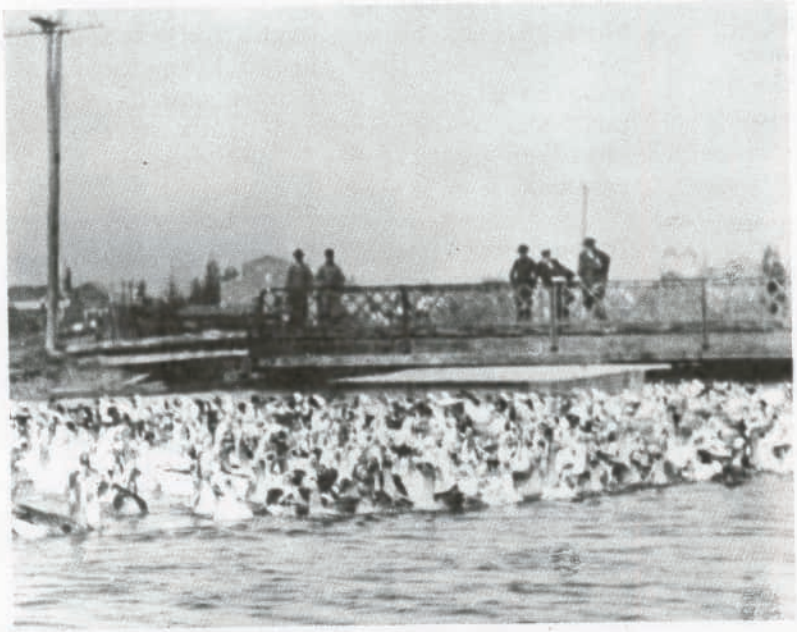
More About The Bridge...

Ralph May of Piqua, a frequent contributor of articles to The Evening Leader in the past, sent in the accompanying picture and said his thoughts went back to the old swing bridge that was located over the Miami Erie Canal in New Bremen at Plum Street during his youth, after he read in The Leader that the present bridge is going to be replaced with a conduit.

May resided in New Bremen before moving to Piqua many years ago. The photo of ducks and geese from the poultry house was taken in 1905 from the south.

He said the swing bridge was the type that was bumped by the bow of the canal boat to open it up as it swung around on a steel track mounted underneath and on castor-like wheels with the short end of the bridge heavily ballasted with lime stones.

This, he said, was to give it the right pitch and to bring it back in place after the boat had passed through.



Gathering of Geese

May said this area was the spot market ducks and geese were driven for the day, and in the evening returned to the nearby poultry house to be fed. Men would stop to take on water as they went from one farm to another in the threshing season. Volunteer firemen would bring their pumper to the bridge and practice to see how far they could throw a stream of water down Vogelsang Street which is what Plum Street was named from the canal to the west limits of the village. He said some of the boys would help by going up and down holding onto the long handle on both sides of the old pumper.

According to May, there were two other bridges of this type in New Bremen--one at First Street and the other at Second Street. The bridge on Monroe Street was a 'lift' bridge or one that would swing around to leave the canal boat pass underneath.

Said May, "While skating on the canal, one had to walk around the bridge to get on the other side. We had a long stretch of the canal to skate on south of this Plum Street bridge where there was not another one of this type until you reached the outskirts of Minster.

We could skate under the Amsterdam bridge and also the one known as the St. John's bridge.

He continued, "The canal in those far-off days was a lovely body of water, providing us with a recreational area during all the seasons of the revolving years."

Envisioned May, "How interesting it would be if it would somehow, or other, again be a moving stream of water as in the old days."

Cornshocks And Indians

This photo taken from the old towpath makes an interesting view. It was taken when all the trees were bare, with the sun casting shadows on the towpath. The canal at this time was still a lovely body of water and very full. There were lovely fields on either side of the canal south of town. One always found a walk along the towpath a fine bit of recreation. Sometimes going as far as

www.andyniekamp.com



Along the Towpath

the Amsterdam bridge, with two bends in the canal. At certain seasons one could see a blue flag in blossom, or down along the way a clump of wild roses. During the swimming season one had to make his way through the tall sweet clover with honey bees on almost all the blossoms. A long row of Osage-Orange, or hedge-apples, still survive - or were there not too long ago - near the Old Boat. Sometimes the older boys tossed our clothes on some of the higher branches where we found it difficult to retrieve them and be fully dressed as we came back home.

This spot overlooked a rugged area where we had many Indian battles, fought with corn-cobs with chicken feathers stuck in the pithy end to give them a good flight at the target aimed, and the boy who was hit with one of the corn-cobs had to fall over in the deep grass and play "dead." While on the subject of corn and corn-shocks - a boy always found it quite a thrill to brave Nature in the raw, and make an opening in the cornshock and crawl inside on a day when it was rather cloudy and with just a little bit of rain. The shelter it provided, with the look outside over the bare, harvested field was as near as we ever got to the life of an American Indian.

In looking over this old scene I am reminded of a very happy boyhood in the old hometown. Were it not for the canal our days could never have been so happy, Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter. Each season had its own joy in the many sports that we engaged in, - after school hours and the holiday periods.

In one of the best books on an Ohio Boyhood along the canal, William Dean Howell's in "A Boy's Town," said the boys really led a kind of amphibious life; as long as the long summer lasted they were almost as much in the water as on the land. It is a most engaging book with happy illustrations by Henry Farney who illustrated so many of the old McGuffey School Readers and "Boy's Town" - Eugene Wood's "Back Home," a rainy day with either of these two books is a most delightful occasion.

Lock No. 1

It was quite a thrill to ride a canal boat from the Plum street bridge to the lock, sometimes working the hand-pump for the free ride. We would wait for the lock to fill up and the gate opened; and then step off the boat after it had entered inside the lock. The clearance on each side was about a foot. Then, after the gates were closed we would watch the boat as it slowly sank to the level of the canal on the other side, as the wickets were opened and the water left out.

The Feeder Lock of St. Marys was no doubt constructed so that boats could enter the reservoir from the canal. On their way to Celina, they would have to be propelled by huge oars operated from the stern, for there was no towpath along which the mules could trod. That would have been an interesting voyage across the lake; but I wonder how often they got stuck on some of the submerged stumps!

www.andyniekamp.com



Lock One at New Bremen

One of the interesting places in old-time New Bremen, was the wooden lock opposite the Thompson House. As a short cut home from downtown, I would sometimes go down the towpath from the Monroe St. bridge and cross the lock to the Mill side. The board walk across the lock was entirely open on both sides and it was frightening to look down to the depth of the water below, especially after nightfall. I remember quite well, one evening, when the fire bell rang and it was reported that the Thompson Boy was missing. His body was later recovered in the water underneath. Evidently in crossing this same walk, or in running he fell overboard.

There was a time when the older boys of the town went in swimming at the lock in the evening, for in those days swimming trunks were unheard of. You could hear their loud shouting and splashing in the water from the Monroe Street bridge, as you passed by. They would dive from the uppermost part of the lock, into the water below, which was quite a feat. For the younger set, our swimming hole was the Old Boat, south of town, where we cut away part of the towpath and made mud steps to the water.

Lock No. 1, the first lock on this side of the watershed, was already in a decrepit condition when I was a boy in New Bremen. It was leaking badly from both sides; later replaced by the present concrete structure. From New Bremen north, for some distance, it seems that the locks vary little from being a mile apart. My acquaintance, however, did not go beyond Lock 3.

North of Piqua, to Lockington, there are the remains, in a good state of preservation, of eight stone locks, all within a distance of four miles. The wooden gates have long since deteriorated; but some of the timbers still hold at the bottom of the locks. There are grooves in the stone from where the towing ropes dragged. And at Lockington, there is an old Lock Tender's House; and you can see where the boats were raised on stiles for necessary repairs.

Some years ago, when I first came to Piqua to live and when the wooden gates were in an upright position at the lock at Landman's Mill, I found a robin that had built its nest on the decayed part of the middle posts. How strange, I thought, to think that a robin would

www.andyniekamp.com

think of such a thing in connection with this old waterway.

Comment and discussion about the old Ohio canals will never cease. Someone, not too long ago, in the Ohioana Magazine, asked what was the most difficult part of the Miami & Erie Canal to construct? The answer: the forests of Paulding County, and the "deep cut" south of Spencerville, where it was cut through the St. Marys moraine. The shortest and most logical route was not chosen because sufficient water was not available at the summit (or divide) to operate a canal.

Great Pick And Shovel Project

On July 4, 1825, Ohio began one of the greatest pick and shovel projects the State has ever known--the digging of the canals.

The efforts to raise the necessary money, the construction difficulties, the outstanding men who left their imprint on the history of Ohio and the final great day when the first canal boat traveled all the way from Lake Erie to the Ohio River is one of the most ineteresting stories in the history of the State.

The canals raised a poverty stricken pioneer State, sparsely settled and with only a small portion of the land area cleared, to one of the greatest States in the nation.

The story of how the people lived, the life on the canal, the experience of travelers on the old packet boats and the picture of a race of pioneers building a great State is a most intriguing part of Ohio's history.

When the great effort was finished, the State had a thousand miles of canals.

Today, only a few of the deep excavations, the high earthen banks and the massive structures of cut stone are left to remind us of our debt to those who built Ohio's first transportation system.



Lock and the Lower Level

www.andyniekamp.com

New Bremen's position along the canal was unique in that we were situated between the two reservoirs and had the first lock on the other side of the watershed from where the flow of water was to the north and south. Although the old wooden lock has long since disappeared, we have in its place a concrete structure which still maintains the level of the canal to the south and with a flow of water down below to the north.

Then, too, we have the original Lock Tender's House, in a deplorable condition, I admit, but which could be restored and made into a permanent museum which would be an all-year-round attraction, along with the lock and the canal, for tourists and those interested in Ohio's early canal history.

With the Deep Cut to the north, the St. Marys Reservoir and Feeder, Lock No. 1 and the Lock Tender's House at New Bremen, the Loramie Reservoir and the Twenty-Mile Level to the south, and the stone locks at Lockington, we have in this area the best historical attraction along the whole route of the Miami and Erie Canal.

If a flow of water from the Loramie Reservoir could be restored and all pollution of the canal be eliminated, what a pleasant stream of water it could become, well stocked with fish and boating be revived. I could never understand why all the flow of water from the Loramie Reservoir should be diverted to the south and into the Loramie creek.

The old mile-stones along the canal are most interesting. Many of these still survive and I wonder what became of the one just south of town near where the old swimming hole used to be? Does someone have this in their back yard? It was taken up out of the ground some years ago when the canal was dredged.

As a member of the Canal Society of Ohio, and with so many happy recollections of my boyhood along the canal in New Bremen, I certainly hope, with all the plans for the park area on Washington Street, after the Mill buildings have been taken down, that the canal may not be neglected and that every effort will be made to restore the Thompson House and make it into a museum.

P.S. The State of Ohio, along with the Ohio Historical Society, is at present making the Col. John Johnston Indian Agency House, farm and log barn into a State Park. One of the most beautiful stretches of the canal, running parallel to the Great Miami River, just east of the farm will have a mule-drawn, canal boat to take passengers from a quarter of a mile up to the State Dam and the original stone Lock No. 8. Hundreds of visitors will tour this area in a few years, at the same time visiting the stone locks at the Lockington Site. Naturally, they will then continue north on state route 66, for the reservoirs, passing through New Bremen at our canal site when the park is completed after the mill buildings have been taken down. If the canal area is maintained, and the Thompson House restored and made into a museum, one can see how all this will be a distinct advantage to the town.

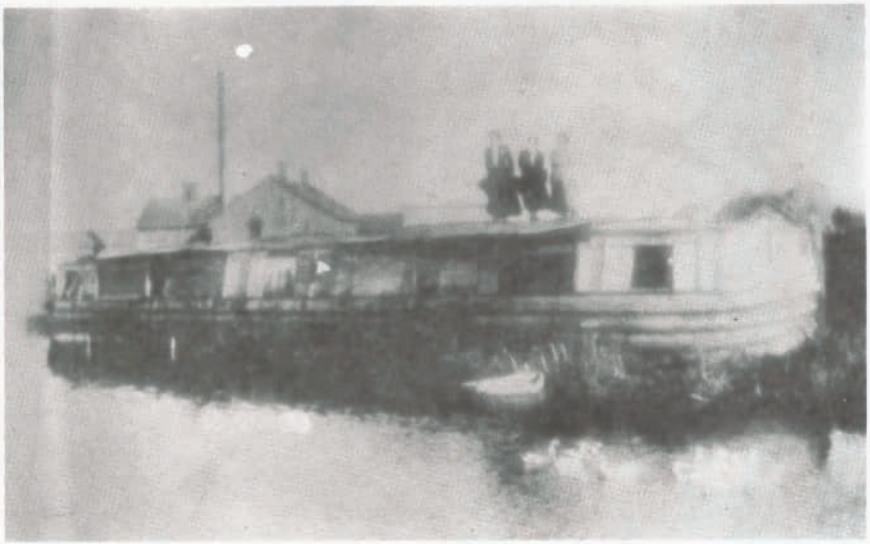
The Last Canal Boat

Mr. Doyle and his son lived on this boat during its last days. There used to be a postcard view sold in the New Bremen stores with the title, "Electric Mule," of this old boat. The 'Electric Mule' designation was derived from the fact that at one time the boats were to be propelled by a trolley line along the towpath. It was used for a time between Dayton and Cincinnati but did not prove successful.

This old boat was beached on the east end of the canal some distance north of the Second St. bridge, where I think the old Allen Handle Factory was located on the Lock Two Rd. It would be so interesting to know who the three women were who are standing on top of the boat. And what an interesting view it is with the ducks swimming in the water beside the boat.

Whole families lived on the canal boats during the heyday of its operation; and children were born on the boats the same as in the homes of the villages that the boats passed through. I recall reading in The Leader where some St. Marys area woman was born on a canal boat.

www.andyniekamp.com



Canal Boat Beached

Swimming Under The Amsterdam Bridge

I see where they are taking down the old Amsterdam bridge, a land and water-mark these many years, but not the original bridge that was constructed across the canal at this point.

In my boyhood days the sides of the bridge were boxed in and painted red, I believe. It was always a pleasant walk along the towpath from the Plum St. bridge to Amsterdam when the towpath was more passable than it is today.

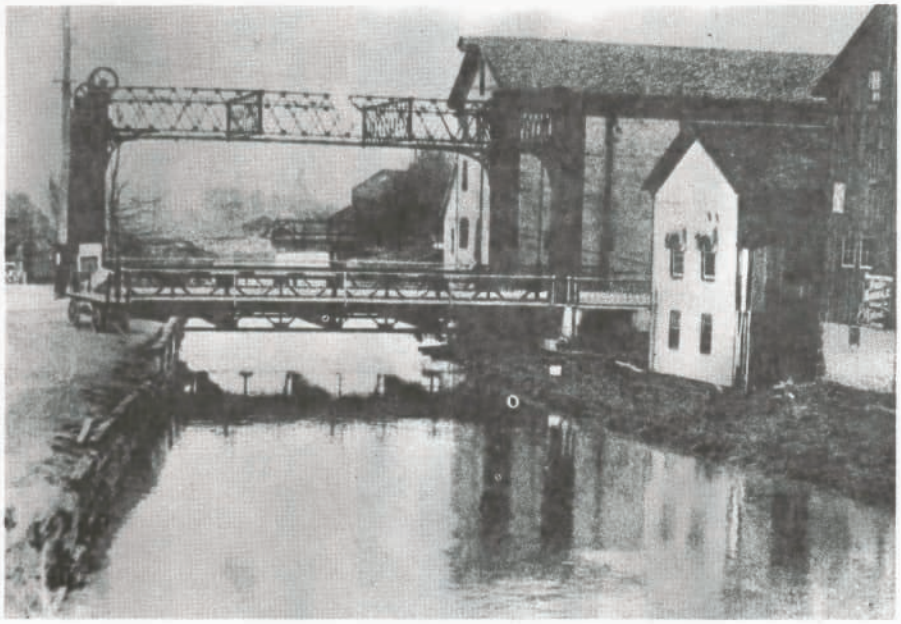
In the shelter of the bridge, high overhead, we could undress and have a delightful swim where the canal was of such depth that we could easily wade across and sit on some huge lime stones at the other end. If a wagon crossed over the bridge as we were swimming, a lot of the dust and gravel would fall through the crevices into the canal.

After our swim in the canal, we would follow the road to the Lake Erie & Western railroad track and then skirt the highway in that grassy section where we would rob a bumble bee nest on our way home to the old Picnic Grounds and then into town. It was one of the most wonderful outings of that day when the canal was a lovely body of water and the countryside so fair to see and behold. I don't think boys rob bumble bee nests anymore as we did when I was a boy in New Bremen.

It is interesting to show one of the old lift bridges, this one over Monroe St. in New Bremen. The canal at that day found boats still passing through along about the early years of 1900.

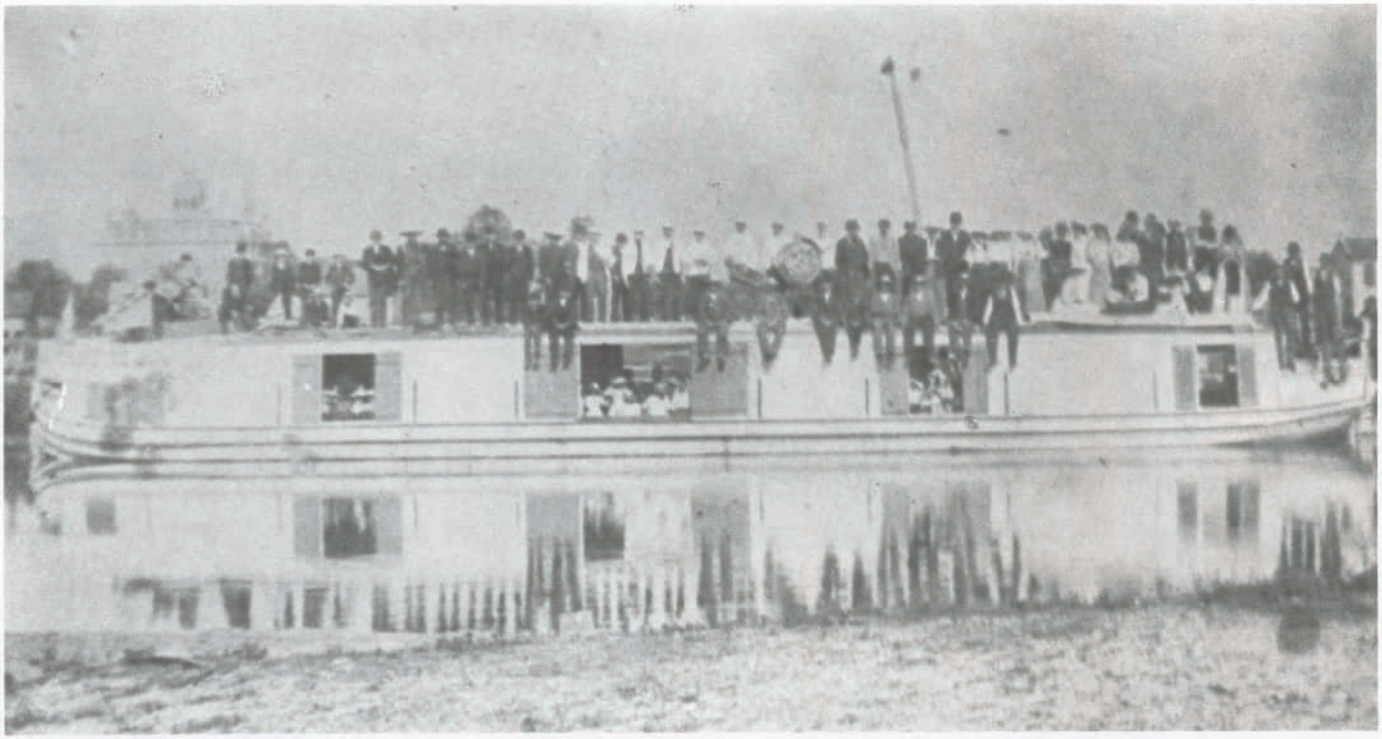
There were beautiful elm trees near the canal towpath where the canal makes its first bend on the way to Minster. All those lovely trees and the woodland west of the canal are gone; and where I remember some of the townsmen held trap-shooting and the boys in my neighborhood went out to recover the disks that were not shattered in the shooting.

It is interesting to note that some action is being taken to restore the canal through Minster and New Bremen, and then on to St. Marys.



Monroe Street Bridge

www.andyniekamp.com



Fire Department Charters State Boat

Annual Family Picnic

The two Volunteer Fire Departments of New Bremen would charter the State Boat out of Dayton for their annual family picnic to the reservoir during the summers of the early 1900's. As a lad, I was fortunate to accompany my uncle and other members of our family one one of these outings; and I well remember the trip on the canal to Minster and beyond to the entrance to the Loramie Feeder right up to the west bank of the reservoir. The round-trip was twelve miles, passing under overhead bridges and bumping the old-type swinging bridges.

The Little Six Band went along to provide entertainment; while most of the women and children were down below and the older folks stood on the top deck for most of the voyage. The scene in the photograph is along the west bank of the canal between the Plum St. bridge and the lock, and where Front St. dead-ends on the east.

The all-day picnic along the west bank of the reservoir and down below along the Loramie Creek, with lemonade for the children and other good things to eat, fishing in between and seeing such a large body of water, provided an exciting day, long to be remembered, especially by the younger folks. No steamer departs for Europe now with such thrilling majesty as when this boat took off for the reservoir on the Annual Volunteer Fire Department Picnic.

The Thompson House

The photograph shown here is a most interesting one, from the album of Felix and Helen Kuenzel. It is a good picture of the old Thompson House, beside the lock, and the building where ice was put up during the winter. Not often was the canal drained of its water; and the boys here were taking in the fish as fast as they could gather them up. The group standing beside the old wooden lock are taking in the scene.

About the time when this photograph was taken, there was an old canal boat beached up along the bank some distance beyond the Second St. bridge, which was used as living-quarters by the Doyle family--father and son, I believe. It used to be

www.andyniekamp.com



Fish For The Taking

shown on postcards; unfortunately, however, I do not have one. It was the last boat in the New Bremen area; and what a museum piece it would be today had it been preserved!

If you looked from the Monroe St. bridge north, at the turn of the Century, the canal was still a lovely body of water and mule teams tracked up and down the towpath pulling the boats between the two bridges.

Far to the left, beyond the swing bridge at First St., was the old Dierker warehouse, a pork-packing place during the winter months where hogs were cut up and lard rendered and where you could get a basket of spare-ribs for a quarter with sometimes a pig tail thrown in for good measure. And there were cracklings available for the asking. One time my grandmother gave me a dollar for a hog's head which I brought home and with which she made gruetze.

Over to the right across from the bridge, was the old Lanferseick & Grothaus Plow Shop, the building which was recently removed to make way for the educational building for the retarded children. Along the street, bordering the canal, is the old home of the Kellermeyer family, with the building where rag carpets were made from the many balls of strings of cloths sewed together and woven in between brightly colored twine. There were still quite a few vacant lots in town at that time.

The State of Ohio could have maintained the canal in much the same way as it was if they had not abandoned the canal feeder at the Loramie reservoir, with a part of the overflow going into the feeder instead of all of it passing over the bulkhead and into the Loramie Creek. We would then have the canal through Minster and New Bremen as it is today north of St. Marys as far as the Deep Cut near Spencerville.



The Thompson House

www.andyniekamp.com

GOLDEN RULE DAYS



At Home For The Alumni

I had not been in the old town since last October. That hardly seems possible considering how long I lived there and how close the town is to Piqua where I have also lived for so many years. I was there for the Alumni meeting and I came early so I could saunter around a bit.

I like to walk the streets which I knew so well in my youth. And how well kept they are and how tidy and trim are all the homes. Going up Vogelsang St. and crossing the canal bridge, I thought about the wonderful playground of Vogelsang's field with the creek running through it. It was all grass and a lovely hillside sloping down to the creek. The creek meandered through the field and in the spring was the source of some of our purest pleasures. And in the winter it was a safe place to slide before the canal was tightly frozen over. I recall that when the snow was deep, we could jump off the culvert into the creek below, without any ill effects, except that we sometimes found it difficult to extricate ourself in time for the last bell at school.

That area where the high school now stands was known as the Catholic Church grounds. It was a wide open space with the church building at the south end as of today. The church was unused; it still had the pews, the altar, and the crucifix on the wall. The rear room had cupboards where we still found some candles. On the grounds itself we always had our Easter fires, a thing which our boys and girls today know nothing about. These were always great events during that holiday season, although sometimes marred by the older boys setting off the fires before time.

To the east of the Catholic Church grounds was Speckman's field. This was a vast pasture ground, with a cow-shed where we took shelter while flying our kites in inclement weather. I like to recall how my grandmother would give me a nickel and have me go to Old Lady Speckman (no disrespect) and get a large armful of rhubarb. A long walk led up to the farmhouse from the gate on what is now Plum St., but which then was hardly more than a lane leading to Wellman's place. And Mrs. Speckman had an old-fashioned flower garden where I sometimes went for flowers when we did not have enough of our own for Decoration Day. The milk house had many crocks and it was always interesting to take a peek inside. They regularly employed a young country girl to do the house-work. I wonder, sometimes, what has become of her!

But one of the great all-time places in this part of the old town was the school grounds, as it was in my days. It is still a wide open place marred only by the school bus garage, where we played ball all summer long. We would "skin the diamond" in the spring, set out all the bases and dust off the home-plate. Several large elm trees were far to the south - back of Hermsmeyer's, - and if we could knock a ball that far, while batting flys, we were doing pretty good. Oh for a game of ball on that field with some of my old cronies!

Our end of town was known as Frog Town, a name derived from Rabe's Pond, an extension of the canal, and King's Pond, an extension of Rabe's Pond where rushes grew and where we could always find a nest of muskrats, interesting to a boy. To this day, I am somewhat touched when I see one in our old hydraulic. And in one of John Burrough's books he has a

www.andyniekamp.com

beautiful photograph of such a nest.

But my rambles are getting me nowhere and I must hurry off to the Elementary school building for the Alumni dinner and reception. What an interesting time we had and how nice to meet so many old graduates which we had not seen for such a long time. Let the years glide by; we are still young in spirit, although birthdays come and go and we are never quite sure how long our days may be. We are still amongst the living.

McGuffey Readers

I delight in looking over some of my old school books, and, particularly, old McGuffey Readers that my aunts and uncles used when they went to school. The illustrations by Farney and other notable artists of that period in McGuffey's are most touching in bringing back that era of time in the old Central School Building. My prized possession is McGuffey's First Eclectic Reader which I used in the first grade under our teacher, Maud Stone. And along with our English text, we also had our German Primer, Erster and Zweiter Teil all in one volume. For we all studied the German language as well as the English. Sorry to say, however, that I never learned to speak it correctly. My grandmother talked to me in Low German but I always answered in English. I never made a passing grade in German, but, somehow or other, through the kindness of Mr. Schrage, I got through high school. We read such German classics as Schiller's William Tell and Goethe's Mina von Barnheim; also Wallenstein's Todt.

Coming downstairs rather early this morning for my breakfast, which is my habit on weekends, the thermometer on the outside of my back porch registered an even zero. And that is really cold considering all the warm weather that we have been having the past three weeks or more. After breakfast I walked several blocks on the crisp snow in the middle of the street to my son's vacant house on Broadway, to see if everything was in order. When the snow squeaks under your feet, you know it is right smart cold. I walked to Zion's Church one bitter cold morning back in New Bremen and I well remember how the snow made the same sound these many years ago. When we got to the church we stood over the hot air register (a big one) to warm ourselves through and through before we sat down to our classes. And believe me, there were some cold days back in the old hometown. Two of our windows upstairs are almost completely covered with frost. The moon was very bright early this morning and I watched it sink below the western horizon after I finished my breakfast. Tonight it will be full.

Football in 1908

A 1901 copy of the New Bremen High School Year Book "The Mirage" contains a picture of the 1908 football team. Identification of the players as pictured was not given but here are a few excerpts of the account on "Athletics" as written by Herbert Garmhausen, now deceased.

"N.B.H.S. has been noted in years gone by for turning out a good football team. The H.S. Team had not been beaten since 1903. This gave the team of 1908 too much confidence in itself, and led some of the players to think that they could play without practice. The first game scheduled was with Spencerville, at Spencerville. The N.B. Team was in very poor training, nevertheless it put up a good game. Spencerville scored in the last half but missed goal.



Central School

www.andyniekamp.com

"The N. B. line-up was as follows: Hengen, L.E.; May, L.T.; Kattman, L.G.; E. Gieseke, R.E.; Taylor, Q.B.; Oberwitte, C.; Gieseke, R.G.; Schmidt, R.T.; R.T. Rabe (Mgr.); Feldwish, R.B.; Garmhausen, (Capt.) R.H.B.

"Defeat at times is good. It proved to be in this case. Having found out that a team can not play well without practice, it worked hard for a few weeks under the direction of Coach Haveman. Then beat St. Marys 22 to 0.

"Thanksgiving 1907 the Alumni and H.S. played a 0 to 0 game. The H. S. team of 1908 and the Alumni played a game on Nov. 27. This again resulted in a tie score 5 to 5.

"During the season the Alumni aided by several H.S. boys, played two games with the St. Marys city team. The first resulted in a victory of 4 to 0 for N.B. The score was made on a drop kick.

"The second game was played Thanksgiving, N.B. was greatly handicapped, many of the boys having gone to college immediately after the first game giving them no chance to practice as a team. Whereas the St. Marys team had played the season together. Nevertheless the N.B. team played their usual "stiff game." The result was a tie 0 to 0."

Several class games were played during the season. The Juniors beat the Seniors 5 to 0. The Sophs and Freshes played a 0 to 0 game.

"The first N.B.H.S. baseball team was organized this spring. The prospects for a winning team are good. A schedule is being arranged but is not completed at this writing. Here is hoping that the boys will be as successful on the diamond as on the gridiron."

Wood-burning Stoves

Pictures of the old school building surely will gladden the hearts of all who see it and remember sitting in those class rooms of many years ago. There were four high ceiling rooms on each floor with an added classroom built above the hallway on the north side of the second floor. A room in the basement was used for classes in physics and chemistry. The school library was in a little room off the stair's landing, on the south side, with the schools superintendent's office in the same location on the north side. If your teacher sent you to the superintendent's office, you knew you had it coming to you.

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. Bids were received in the summer by the Board of Education to supply the large quantities of wood that were required for the school term. This wood had to be brought up from the basement. In later years, a central heating system was installed with a blower operated by a steam engine. We had to go down to the basement to have our inkwells filled and it was so interesting to spend sometime down there to see the engine running, and to talk to the school janitor as well. The top of the furnace was so close to the floor of the second grade room, that the floor caught on fire and it was a wonder that the building did not burn down.

It will be most interesting to have some of my readers help me identify these more than fifty pupils in Miss Maud's class, such an unusually large number for any teacher to handle at that time when much smaller classes are the usual thing today. How could they all receive some instruction? But what a most interesting group of boys and girls that we have here, well clad, bright looking youngsters, eager to learn and make their way in the world.

In the accompanying picture are:
Top Row, left to right: (Those I can identify).
Miss Maud; I. Koeper; ?? W. Laut; ? H. Hoffman; ? C. Wehrman; F. Greber; F. Jung; Sup't. O'Tooil.
Second Row from top: ? C. Gast; ? ? ? ? ? H. Flack; ? ? ? C. Kunning; ? ? ?
Third row from top: L. Schroeder; (the only one I can identify)
Bottom row: C. Kussman; (the only one I can identify)

www.andyniekamp.com



Miss Maud's First Grade Class of 1899-1900

I hope the names of many others will be forthcoming in future issues of The Leader. A word of caution: if you have any old group photographs, write the names on the back of the picture for future generations. It is such an easy thing to overlook, and once forgotten cannot be supplied in many instances.

It is now some years since this fine building was taken down, and a pity that it is no longer there. It could have been made into a museum and have added much to the historical significance of the town. 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. I was up in the building on several occasions when all of this was about to come 'tumbling down'. 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.

P.S. The First Grade photograph was given me by Mrs. Leo Sunderman.

Spencerville Football Game

The last football games, for this season, were played last week. I saw only one game this fall, when Piqua beat St. Marys early in the season. It was a pleasant evening with the moon coming over the horizon toward the end of the game. The band performance--which we never had in the old days--is one of the highspots of the game, as it is played today, locally and with the universities.

Back in New Bremen the games were played at the old Tri-County Fairground, about a mile east of the town. Except for the players, most everyone walked the distance; and the games were always played on a Saturday afternoon. There was no admission charge, as I remember. But they may have passed a hat around towards the end of the game.

In my high school days, I played in 1908-09. The one game I remember so well was when we went to Spencerville. That game gave us a ride on the interurban to St. Marys, from where we travelled by hack along the old canal route to Spencerville. Coming home, it was a dark night; and there was some fear that

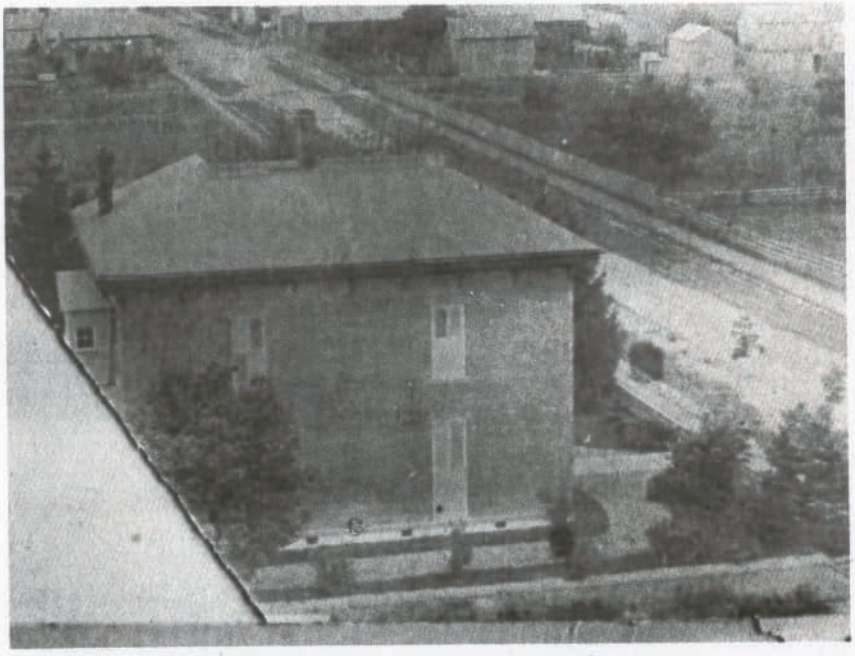
www.andyniekamp.com

we might get off the road and go headlong down into the Deep Cut. What I remember best of all, while coming home in the hack, was that some of the boys smoked cubebs, giving the impression, to our chaperone, that it was a cigarette. I think we got home on the last car to New Bremen.

It has been a long time since N.B.H.S. has had a football team. But the memory of the games, and the players, is not easily forgotten, when we recall those happy days when we practiced in Vogelsang's Field, after school, with coach, Dr. Haveman, giving of his time in an effort to make us a winning team. We changed our clothes at home, or in the basement of the old Central School building, where the uniforms were kept from one year to the next.

Atop The Old Central School

This bird's-eye view, looking northeast from the Central School bldg., shows no homes at all along the east side of Franklin St. to the corner at Monroe. All, with one exception, is a broad expanse of grass-land enclosed with a wooden fence. Even a large part of Franklin St. is covered with grass.



From Atop the Old Central School

The old Boesel residence, in the foreground, (now the Clifford Barth home) has not changed any from what it is today, on the outside. No houses, with the exception of one on the corner at Monroe, are in this area. The yard to the north of the Boesel property was quite a show place in my day, and some of the tall cedars can be seen.

In looking over this photograph, I like to think of the one that I took from the water works standpipe, as far back as 1905. In looking for a vantage point from which to take a view of the town, I could not think of a better place than this high point which would overlook the Klanke Factory and the Central School building and yard.

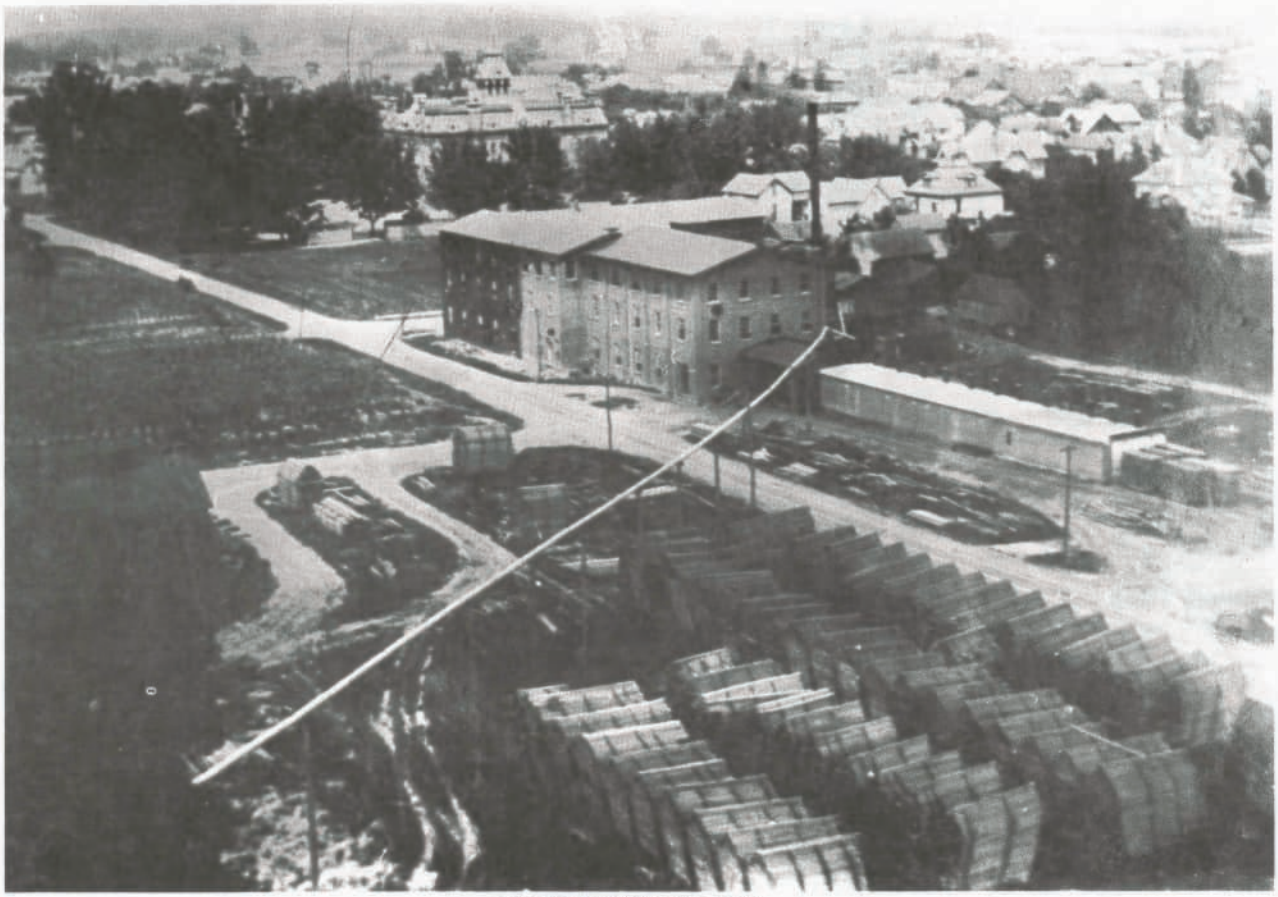
Along with this old-time view, I am showing the old High School Building (a part of the collection that Elmer found at the hotel) from which you will note the small size of the maple trees surrounding the school yard, and which could not have been growing very long when this photo and the other one was taken.

I still think it was a mistake to destroy such a fine old building--and landmark--as the Central School Building.

Class of 1910

In our boyhood, Elmer Ende and I had much in common. First, there was stamp collecting, in which our enthusiasm ran high; and many were the time when we would go over each other's collection, examining with care old and new issues, making some trades, going over approval sheets from the Quaker Stamp Co., Phil. or the Toledo Stamp Co., Toledo, Ohio. And in all our efforts to comprise a good collection of U.S. and foreign issues, the late Fred Schroeder, who lived in New Bremen at that time, was our main inspiration. His most valuable album was lost in transit when the family moved to Seattle, Washington.

www.andyniekamp.com



Klanke Furniture Factory

After stamp-collecting, came photography. Both Elmer and I had a 4x5 plate camera, with tripod and all the paraphernalia to do our own developing and printing. Making Cyko prints or Azo post cards in the kitchen after the supper dishes had been put away, was one of the delights of taking pictures. Elmer's home at that time was beside the Jewelry store, where I visited with him on so many occasions. One always had to pass through the store, to get to the kitchen, with all the display cases and the endless ticking of all the clocks. Later, when Victrola phonographs were sold at the store, one could play some of the records.

When Elmer moved to their new home on South Main St., so different from the living quarters beside the jewelry store, I found it quite interesting to visit with him in his upstairs room where we could talk about books and go over some of the Roycroft publications, particularly the Little Journeys of Elbert Hubbard. The standard classics in Everyman's Library were coming into use and we were adding them to our library as our funds held out. Elmer was reading the novels of Cooper and Hawthorne and I was reading those of George Eliot. We were both very much interested in the essays of Emerson. In politics I would say we then were Socialists and somewhat free thinkers in Religion.

Elmer was a musician, an artist, and a very good extemporaneous speaker. And he had been to Buffalo, N.Y., for the Pan-American Exposition in 1901. He was most fortunate in knowing what he wanted to do after he got out of high school, while I was groping around wondering where I could first find employment. Elmer had distinct advantages that some of the others in our group did not have, and he looked forward to a sound education in music and in the liberal arts.

Our high school days were some of the happiest in our life. We both detested mathematics-algebra and geometry were beyond our comprehension. History and Literature were more in our line. I recall our first introduction to Latin and seeing Mr. Erwin conducting a class

www.andyniekamp.com

in the translation of Virgil's AEneid. We were familiar with the German language, but here was something entirely new. It seemed as though the portals of learning were just beginning to open before us. It was a period of growth, of studies and books, and of high hopes. Sixty years have passed since our class graduated from high school. It was in 1910, the year of Halley's Comet.

Commencement 1894 and 1897

If New Bremen had an Historical Society it would now have two possessions. Two commencement announcements were received this week addressed to the Historical Society or the Superintendent of Schools, New Bremen, Ohio, Auglaize County. They were sent by Carl Vitz, 323 Waverly Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45215.

Mr. Vitz is the son of Rev. Martin Vitz, minister in New Bremen from 1888-1895 and president of the Board of Education part of the time.

The announcements were from the class of 1894, the sixth annual commencement of New Bremen High School and the other is from the Class of '97, the eighth annual commencement.

The 1894 event was held Friday evening, June First at the Odd Fellows Hall and the one in 1897 was held Thursday evening, May 27th at 8 o'clock at the Boesel Opera House.

The class motto in 1894 was "Our Marathon is Won." In 1897 the motto was "We've Reached The Hills, The Mountains Are in View."

Six graduates were members of the ;94 class and included Clarence R. Backhaus, Thomas W. Stone, Otto G. Schmidt, Julius Vornholt, Henry Heitman and Albert Conradi.

In 1897, there were nine graduates--Lillian Grothaus, Bertha Voeckell, Frank C. Kettler, Christ W. Dieckmann, Lucius H. Halsema, Charles E. Steinebrey, Adolph Klanke, Theodore H. Tangemann, and Laf. M. Gagle. This also includes names of the members of the Board of Education, which were Henry F. Jung, President; William Dierker, Secretary; Gustave Boesel, Treasurer; George Heinfeldt, August Finke and John Hespe. George W. Tooill was the Superintendent. Both announcements have an outer cover of heavy parchment paper. The first inside page has scenery, flowers, and script, with the program on the next page and members of the class on the following page. All the class members participated in the program.

Writing on the announcement of the class of 1894 which also bears an invitation "The class of '94 requests your prescence" is in black ink, whereas all the wording on the 1897 Commencement announcement is in gold ink.

One is threaded with a gold ribbon and the other with pink and blue floss.

New Bremen Revisited

In contrast to my visit in New Bremen for Decoration Day, when one's thoughts naturally tended towards those that have passed away, I again went up north to attend our Alumni Association and meet and shake hands with all those who are still living, some of whom I had not seen for quite a few years. And how pleasant all this can be on a perfect summer evening, with a drive through the countryside at this time of the year.

As usual, I always try to arrive an hour or so before our gathering takes place. This gives me a little time to saunter over some of the streets and review in my mind how 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!

There are some faces one never sees at an Alumni gathering. Why, I do not know. And there are others who seldom miss. I recall Dan Hoffman, from Toledo, who was always there. Dan passed away some years ago, so we will never see his smiling face again, with always some interesting comment on the old days. Dan and I used

www.andyniekamp.com

to ride our bicycles out on the New Knoxville rd., sometimes going as far as the Canal Feeder.

From as far away as Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Sarasota and Tallahasse, Florida, there were those in attendance. And with one graduate from the Class of 1903, the list covered a span of over sixty years. So sorry not to see any from the Honor Class of 1904, but we wish them well. I sometimes think of myself as an 'old-timer' but when I look over the list in the High School Annual of 1909, I am quite a 'modern.' And there are quite a few living.

How wonderful life can be! Here I am at 72 when my parents both died before I could have any recollection of either of them in the flesh. I never thought it could be. I like to quote from my favorite authors. In David Grayson's "The Friendly Road," (one of the best books to be read at this time of the year), he uses the expression, "Surely it is good to be alive at a time like this." So I felt, in the darkness of the highway, going back home to Piqua after such a pleasant time in the old hometown.

And that strawberry pie, topped with Dream Whip, what a delicious dessert! I had to forego some of my meat in order to put it away. Such an opportunity only comes a few times in one's life. We never had strawberry pie in my youth.

Return Of Football

Ralph May, of Piqua, a member of one of New Bremen High School's early football teams, returned to New Bremen Saturday night for the dedication of New Bremen's football field and to attend the opening game between New Bremen and Minster.

Appended is Mr. May's favorite comments on the game and return of football to New Bremen. He includes, too, a news item from the Quarter Century Column in the New Bremen Sun in 1932, reporting the touchdown that didn't count because of a penalty on the play.

It was a happy occasion to be in attendance at the dedication and the first home-game at the new field on Saturday evening as I came up from Piqua to take part in the festivities. New Bremen is a progressive little community when you consider it was only a few years ago when thought was given to bring back football to the N.B.H.S.

So much was accomplished during this brief time, and the Athletic Booster organization is to be highly commended for its initial effort and the splendid field that has been built with all its facilities that go today in the playing of football. It is a far cry from what it was like out at the old Fairgrounds in the early 1900's.

The stands were filled without a vacant seat anywhere that I could see. There was some doubt at first as to how many would come out for the game. And what a joyful crowd it was, with a good performance of the N.B.H.S. Marching Band between the halves of the game. Their playing of "Rain Drops Falling On My Head" was very very well done, all of which added so much to the enthusiasm of the spectators. We had no music in my day of playing football.

Jerry Brown, high school principal, had called me up a week ago to ask whether I would take part in this opening game in introducing a few of the old-time players who might be in attendance. How fortunate, during all these years that have passed by, to be still amongst those living when I look over these old team photographs and see the faces of all those who have departed from us. I hope a group picture, in a suitable frame may be placed in the high school foyer showing these old-time players. That would be a nice memorial to bygone days. We are still looking for more photographs of teams between 1903 and 1908, also any others between 1911 and up to when the last team played.

I always enjoy my trips to New Bremen. The weather was so good and the evening could not have been better for the spectators and the playing of the game. And the prayer of Rev. Fr. Will, imploring clean sport and a keen rivalry between the players, may, I hope, always be foremost in the hearts of all the teams and the students at the school. I could not have enjoyed myself more as I sat amongst the crowd.

Nov. 1, 1907: "Repeated fumbling and

www.andyniekamp.com

penalties inflicted for off-side playing, tackling of players, signaling for a fair catch, etc., undoubtedly prevented our high school team from defeating Spencerville last Saturday.

Spencerville received the first kick-off and lost the ball on downs soon after. New Bremen, by a series of end-runs and scrape-tackle plays carried the ball down the field, being repeatedly fined, but making the distance fine, until "Little Garmy" crossed the Spencerville goal line for a touchdown after a 40-yd. run. The touchdown failed to count, however, the referee penalizing New Bremen for an off-side play.

The game ended without either team scoring.

AN INDUSTRIOUS COMMUNITY



Hardware, Iron And Groceries

From my earliest recollections, I was always closely associated with Rabe's Store and the Rabe family that lived next door. One of my first pictures as a growing-up boy was taken in the Rabe living room along with a group of family relatives. It was about the time when the photographer, REX, was taking pictures of all the children in New Bremen.



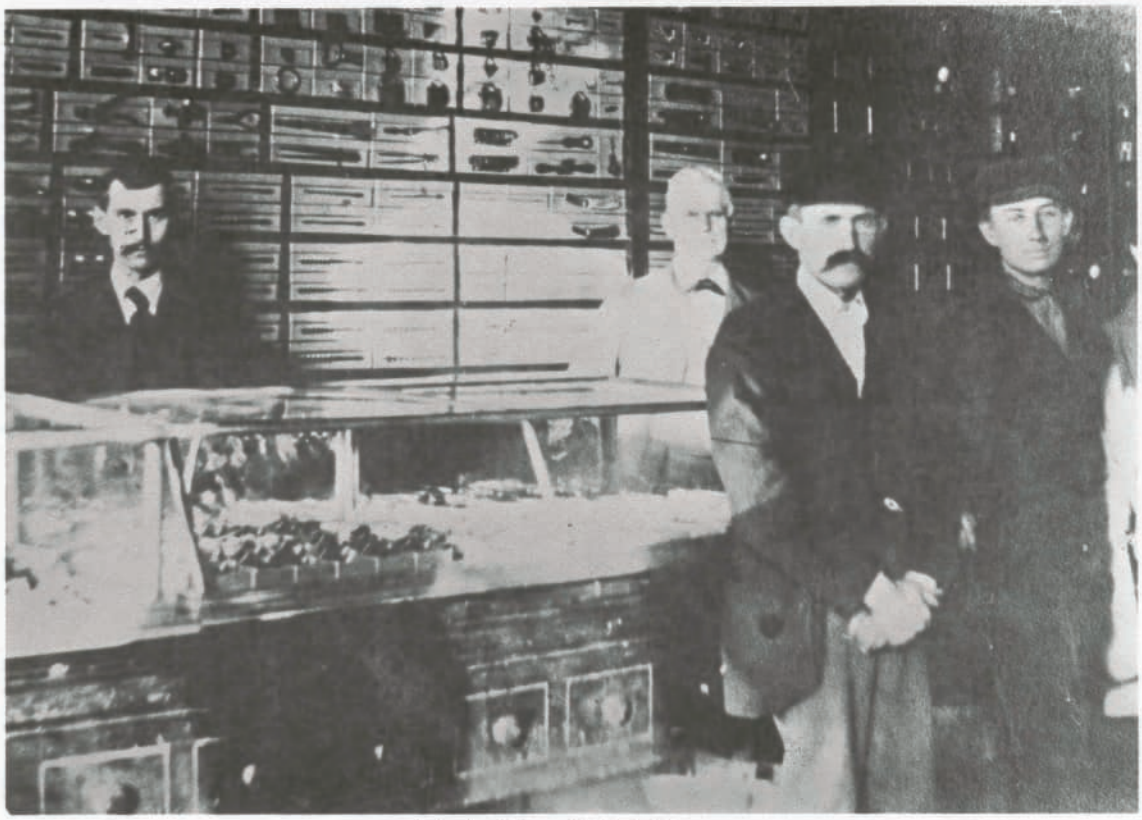
Rabe's Store

Rabe's Store had a particular attraction for me: a hardware and grocery store where you could purchase almost anything that you needed at home. From lamp chimneys to coal oil; glass in any size that you might need; Sweet Wheat chewing gum, red hots, stick candy and candy kisses with little verses inside the wrapper; plug tobacco and ABC smoking mixture; anything in the way of hardware, paint, rope and even gun powder and dynamite, the latter used by the farmers in blowing up stumps.

One of the most unusual things about the store was a little bar at the rear where customers, making a good sized purchase, were treated with a portion of beer. You could also get schnaps at the counter, with a glass of beer to wash down the strong drink. For the boys, there were star crackers in a well-filled bowl, cheese and herring in a dish, intended for customers, but well taken by neighborhood boys making any kind of small purchase.

A large heating stove in the central part of the store had an iron railing around it with comfortable

www.andyniekamp.com



Interior View of Rabe's Store

chairs on two sides where you could lean against the counter. Then, there was a card table where the older neighborhood men played sheephead and another game which I believe, was called '66.' There were little compartments at each end of the table to hold a glass of beer with no fear of knocking it off the table.

It was at Rabe's Store where I read THE CINCINNATI POST in the morning before I went to school and THE CINCINNATI TIMES-STAR in the evening after supper. And on Friday evenings there was always a copy of THE NEW BREMEN SUN. The Cincinnati VOLKSBLAT was there for those to read in the German language.

I am sure I got a liberal education listening to the conversation amongst the older people gathered at the store of an evening, sitting round that old stove until nine o'clock closing time, when Joe Klanke and Ed Lanfersieck could retire to their homes for what part of the evening was left to them before they went to bed.

"Dick & Fink" are in front of the store in the winter scene. This was my uncle, August Schroeder, and Arthur Finke. The inside store view is a very good picture of Joe Klanke and William Rabe. Of the three in front I can only identify Frank Speckman, and August Schroeder with the long German pipe. The photographs were taken by the late, Ferd Rabe, and were amongst the negatives that I got from Ferd when I purchased his old plate camera. I could only wish that I had a photo of the little bar in the back of the store.

Recollections Of Schulenberg's Store

One goes back some years to ponder over what Schulenberg's store was like when I worked there on weekends while in high school in New Bremen. My grandmother and I had just come back from a month's vacation in Lincoln, Nebraska, and just before school was to take up, Herbert called at the house and inquired whether I would be interested in working at the store on Saturdays and Sundays. I was going to Preacher School at the time, on Saturday mornings, and so I had to give this up for the time being.

www.andyniekamp.com



Schulenberg's Store

Few stores in New Bremen were more frequented than Schulenberg's, where the Western Ohio interurban ticket, freight and express office was located, a drug store where all sorts of patent medicines could be purchased, but no prescriptions as Herbert was not a registered pharmacist. The soda fountain was at the head of the store, open only during the summer months, as was the custom in those days, with an ice house in the rear that was filled every winter during the cutting season.

One could hardly enumerate all the merchandise that could be obtained at Schulenberg's store, from tobacco to candy, wallpaper, books, magazines, kodaks, and even at one time, before I began to work there, a few items on the shelves of groceries and sundry articles. During the Christmas holidays there was a most interesting display of toys. One could purchase musical instruments too and three or four pianos were sold at that time of the year.

One got a liberal education in storekeeping at Schulenberg's store. Besides I learned the selling of tickets for the vast connections on the interurbans at that time, with the freight and express business, all of which were handled in connection with the almost hourly arrival of the cars, with two freights a day on the siding besides the freight house. I really worked those days, and although what I was paid was hardly worth mentioning, I am sure it kept me out of a lot of mischief that I might have got myself in had I not been so employed over the weekend holiday.

On graduation from high school in 1910, I looked for a more paying job, and having learned the interurban business I took over the Pacific Express business in St. Marys, later also ticket agent for the Western Ohio at that place when the two agencies went together in the Palm Hotel building, and, later, across the street in the Fountain Hotel lobby. I was only 18 going on 19 in those days and had three employees under me, handling what in those days was quite a large sum of money.

I was lucky to get a job at Schulenberg's store, when there were such few openings for boys of my age at that time. One could sell papers, pick chickens at the Poultry House, sell junk, or lather up customers at a barber shop on Saturdays; but, all in all, there were few opportunities to learn something worthwhile as I was able to learn working at Schulenberg's store.

Buttermilk For The Asking

I have some very pleasant memories of this old creamery which stood on a site just east of town on the Fairground Road, now a part of the corporate limits of the village, I believe. The outgrowth of this old building, later, became the huge establishment of the White Mountain Creamery, now incorporated with the Beatrice Creamery, at one time,--in Lincoln, Nebraska,--said to be the largest creamery in the world.

Most of our trips out to this old creamery were made through Speckman's lane and then on through Wellman's field, which seemed a short-cut and a more interesting route to take than by the highway. But did you ever walk through a harvested field in your barefeet? Not very pleasant, I can tell you, with the difficulty finding the bare ground between the wheat stubbles.

www.andyniekamp.com

During the summer months, with our pail for buttermilk, these trips were made almost every Saturday. Buttermilk was had for the asking, while you could drink all you wanted, with globules of butter, before filling your pail on going home. And we could purchase a pound of butter for two cents less at the creamery than what we would have to pay in town.

There was a pond just south of the creamery where we would play and sometimes get out on a raft or look for frogs. The creamery was operated by a steam engine and the pond supplied the boiler with water.

The excess buttermilk was drained into a well at the hog barn, and from there pumped into troughs for the many hogs that were fattened here as an adjunct to the operation of the creamery. We always spent some time at the hog stable.

Mohrman's ditch, a pleasant little creek, ran north from the creamery, and here we would also tarry for sometime, particularly so on account of a redhaw tree which stood near its bank not far from the highway. I wonder if boys eat redhaws nowadays? They were a pleasant fruit to our diet, when in season, and I remember this tree quite well.

Coming back to town on the highway, we would take the lane at the first turning that leads to Vine St., where the Shoettley families lived at the edge of town, and which was the short-cut to our house on Plum St. We lost some of the buttermilk on the way home, I am sure; but there would always be enough left for a glass or two (salt added), and enough for pancakes which my Grandmother would make. We did not have the packaged varieties found in the stores nowadays. And there were flour pancakes and potato pancakes, some of which, as they were made at home, seem to be a lost art in culinary practice.

So many errands that we did at home had many added attractions, and going out to the old creamery, on a summer day, was one that the boys in my old neighborhood thoroughly enjoyed. And from the creamery, it was only a short distance to the old Fair Grounds, where we would climb the high fence, near the horse stables, and then roam the area to our heart's content, running up and down the seats in the grandstand, or still looking for a lost coin in front of the bar underneath. What a climax to our summer vacation, to look forward to The Fair!



White Mountain Creamery - West Side

Backhaus And Kuenzel Flour Mill

The late F.W. Greber, a professional photographer in New Bremen, took many interesting pictures relating to the early scenes in New Bremen and of so many family groups. His photographic gallery was located on North Main St., near Zion's Reformed Church. The accompanying photograph, taken in 1910, shows all the employees of the mill and the office force.

As a boy, one always enjoyed 'going to the mill.' I would purchase a quarter's worth of screenings for the chickens, or possibly a sack of corn meal; then, in between times, I would get weighed, go back to the engine room to see the steam engine and talk with the engineer, as I was very much mechanically-minded at that time.

www.andyniekamp.com



Backhaus and Kuenzel Mill

It seems so strange, nowadays, coming into New Bremen and not seeing the old building or the woolen mill, so recently removed from the scene where they so long occupied their site. I only wish they would restore this bare ground into a village green where flower beds could be planted and the whole area made into a park. It is rather unsightly as one sees it today coming into town.

Of all those out in front of the mill, only Ed Wellman survives, to the best of my knowledge. A sack of Gold Lace flour is in the window. It is interesting to know that the Lock Two mill is still operating, as, so many mills, along with all the local breweries, have passed away. I recall how I used to make all the steps to the top floor to get a better understanding as to how flour was made from the whole grain and the bran separated from the kernal inside.

From left to right, here are the names of those shown in the photograph: Fred Schowe, Julius Gilberg, Godfrey Kuenzel, William Grewe, Omar Packer, sitting down below, who was the engineer, William Weinberg, Chas. Goll, Eddie Wellman and Henry Schaeffer on the wagon.

Chas. Goll was a familiar sight in the homes of New Bremen as he made all the local deliveries, and I can still see him as he stopped his wagon on Canal St., and carried a large sack of flour into the kitchen of our home where my grandmother baked six or seven loaves of white bread, a loaf of delicious brown bread, and three or four coffee cakes to hold us over for the ensuing week. And I always remember so well the biscuits which she would slice in two and put back in the oven for zweiback. Those were the days of my youth in New Bremen.

Toy And Fancy Store

Here is another of the old-time photographs found at the Hotel bldg. by the late and old-time classmate of mine, Prof. Elmer Ende. 'Edward Purpus, General Insurance Agent,' occupied this frame building which long ago was replaced with the brick edifice now standing on the same location, and where the New Bremen Sun & Stern, des Westlichen Ohio was for so many years published.

Next to the store building was a meat market where I remember going on cold winter mornings for ten or fifteen cents worth of meat, sufficient for our noonday meal. It was owned by a Mr. Dinkel, the family later moving to Lima, I believe.

A lady with an umbrella, and a small child are standing to the one side; two middle-aged men are lounging out in front of the store; and two boys, with straw hats are crossing the street as the picture was taken. Who they were can never be known. Let this be noted by anyone having old photographs--write the date and the names of the persons on the back, for future generations.

The word "Fancy" as applied to a store, is a new one to me. Whatever is designated, I do not know. There are a variety of coal-oil lamps in the middle window! Other objects I cannot identify. With a reading glass I can see two or three baby carriages out in front. Four hitching posts were available for out-of-town customers.

These frame, mercantile buildings were the first to be built in the old home town; a few yet survive in almost any community with apartments above that

www.andyniekamp.com

were usually occupied but now so often vacant. Sometimes another business was conducted upstairs and I am thinking of the old frame building on Washington st. known as the 'Bakery building, but which in former times was "The American House," one of four or five hotels in the town. This store building still in use, is one of the oldest buildings on Washington st. An old wooden stairway led to the rooms upstairs where for so many years John Laut had his cigar factory. Compliments of the Season was a favorite brand sold throughout the area.

Getting back to Ed Purpus' Toy and Fancy Store, I find myself wondering what the old town was like when this picture was taken. I know it was long before I made my trips to Dinkel's Meat Market. Old photographs such as this one are always most interesting. I am ever on the lookout for them, and I can see how elated Elmer must have felt when he discovered the cardboard on which they were displayed, at one time or other, in the hotel lobby or office.

I still have five more which I hope to present, along with some further elucidation, if I can get the material ready before the series run stale.

The Klanke Factory

A lady from Park Ridge, Illinois, writes to the Chamber of Commerce, in New Bremen, inquiring about an old wardrobe (armoire) which was made by the old Klanke Furniture Company, and as to its approximate age. It had a shipping tag attached to it with a dealer's name in Delphos,Ohio. The letter was forwarded to me by Mr. Frank McCune, Administrator of The Village of New Bremen, for a reply to the letter from Mrs. Robert Grandi.

I told her in my letter about the old Klanke factory and sent her a photo of the plant that I had taken many years ago from the old Water Works tower; and I told her to write to the Allen County Historical Museum, in Lima, in reference to the old furniture dealer in Delphos by the name of J.F. Vonderumbse, as I had no connections with anyone in that city. In her letter she sent along two photos of the old wardrobe which came from her great grandparents, and which I told her would be almost a hundred years old. These wardrobes were the first to be manufactured by the Klanke



Ed. Purpus Toy & Fancy Store

www.andyniekamp.com

Company, later to better known by their Roll-Top Kitchen cabinets. They tried to get a patent on the "Roll-Top", but since it was much like the old roll-top office desks, it could not be granted.

After the fire in 1913, when the plant was destroyed, they took over the old Meteor factory in Piqua, with the local residents in New Bremen establishing the Auglaize Furniture Company introducing the Three-In-One library table; drawer desk, bookshelf on both ends, with the convenience of a beautiful library table all in one, and in many styles and finishes.

(Picture of Klanke Factory appears on Page 23)

Rabe's Factory

Charles Dudley Warner, in his book "Being a Boy," has delightfully told of his country boyhood in Massachusetts. It is still a favorite book of mine, along with Thomas Bailey Aldrich's "The Story of a Bad Boy."

I don't think we were really bad boys back in New Bremen, although we did get into trouble occasionally. In a town the size of New Bremen, we knew all the boys, some bad, some good. I am not sure about the category in which I fitted--probably in between somewhere.

But I was interested in many worthwhile things, the first of which was stamp collecting, the second amateur photography. And no doubt these two hobbies kept me out of much mischief.

Most of our stamp collecting was in local issues, and these we obtained by going through the waste baskets of the different offices in the town. Later, of course, we got interested in foreign issues, when we had a little recourse to money, for these had to be bought from approval sheets from the Toledo Stamp Co., in Toledo, and the Quaker Stamp Co., in Philadelphia.

But when I bought a 4 x 5 plate camera from Ferd Rabe, life took on a new interest. With my carrying case, tripod, and opaque cloth that I threw over my



Rabe's Factory Before 1900

www.andyniekamp.com



Rabe's Factory About 1910

head to focus, I took pictures of many notable scenes in and out of town. You may not believe this when I tell you, but on a boyhood visit in Lincoln, Nebraska, back in 1907, I covered the City on foot from one end to the other with my camera. Not long ago, I sent a batch of these old prints to the Editor of The Lincoln Evening Journal, along with an article on my Nebraska visit. With quite a few of my photos, and with excerpts from my article, I was given a full page in the first news section of the January 4, 1964 issues. Such is fame; and it all goes back to my early boyhood in New Bremen.

I spent a great deal of my leisure moments at Rabe's Factory, where my uncle was the engineer, and in the factory office where I could look over the pages of The American Lumberman, try my hand using the Smith Premier typewriter, pore over the bookkeeping of Ferd Rabe and his handling of figures, and watch August Rabe at the drawing board in the architect's room. Those were the "days," and I shall never forget them.

Working with wood always interested me; but I had no mechanical ability and was not very successful making things. But there was always a nice stock of wood at the factory and I made several specimens of furniture which I still have on hand. On cold winter mornings I would get up early and accompany my uncle to the factory to watch him fire up the boiler and then, after breakfast, watch the start of the steam engine for the daily operations. To see him pull the cord for the whistle, then gradually open the steam valve,--all this had a fascination for a boy.

It is interesting to me, along with this article, to show two old photos of Rabe's Factory. They were taken between an interval of some years and show the progress that was made at that time. Ferd Rabe, now approaching his 90th year, is the last of the Rabe family.

www.andyniekamp.com

Bread - Five Cents A Loaf

Years ago, New Bremen always had a bakery. The old frame building where it was located still stands on Washington St., and it is one of the oldest buildings in that block. The bakery was on the south side, while the north end of the street was used for residential purposes. At one time this building was known as The American House which my grandparents operated for a time. To the north of the building, there was an open yard where carriages and horses could be put up. I still have a sheet of the stationery from this old hotel with a printed note at the top: "Horse sale every two weeks."

In the old days the bakery was known as The Star Bakery, as you see from the photograph with the two employees out in front on the bench. Potted geraniums are on the sidewalk, and the two hitching posts. A part of the stairway on the side can be seen. It led up to the room upstairs which in my time was the John Laut cigar manufactory, and where three or four men were employed. For one not accustomed to such a place, the odor of the tobacco could be quite suffocating as I found out in my youth.

Coming back to the bakery, one could buy a loaf of bread for 5 cents and what a welcome change it was to taste bakery bread from the home-baked loaves that we were so accustomed to. A slice of it, spread with butter and dipped in coffee disappeared in two or three bites as it almost melted in your mouth. Then, there was pound cake, which came with white, chocolate and pink icing, and which cost only 10 or 15 cents. It was a real treat to bring one of these home on a Saturday evening.

The group of young men shown in the picture was taken in the old bakery directly in front of the oven where you see the door wide open. I am sure it was a Thanksgiving repast when good fellows got together the evening before the holiday. These young men were in their prime, and so typical of the young men at that time: the very early 1900's.

I like old photographs and I have many of them in my collection of old-time New Bremen. This is one of my very best and it was given to me by Harry Koeper when my wife and I visited him and his wife in Portland, Oregon; and, as far as I know, from last report, Harry is still amongst the living. All the others in the picture have since passed away. For one who remembers them so well in the old days, -in a flight of fancy, they all come to life again - old familiar faces.



Star Bakery in New Bremen

As one thinks of the world today, one is reminded of that poem by James Whitcomb Riley, "The Old Times Were The Best." "...Yet a feeling's ever present
That the Old Times were the Best."

Greber's Art Gallery

In my earliest years in New Bremen, F.W. Greber conducted the first Art Gallery, as it was called, in New Bremen. It was across the street from Zion's Church. A frame, two-story building with the Art

www.andyniekamp.com



Gathered at Old Bakery

Gallery upstairs where skylights were provided on the north side. There were display windows in front, facing the sidewalk, where we could see samples of his photographs on our way to Sunday school or whenever we happened to be in that part of town. One picture I remember so well was taken at Dr. Schmidt's veterinary barn showing four or five deer shot in Maine by New Bremen hunters in the early 1900s. The late Peter Erb and Dr. Schmidt were in the picture standing alongside the four or five deer hanging on a rack.

Any collection of old photographs in New Bremen, taken from plush-covered albums with metal clasps, will show that Mr. Greber took very good pictures,all on solio paper in the early days of photography. These photos are all very sharp and clear, more so than those of a later date in black and white. Children and family groups, infants, married couples and the hardy pioneers of the village were photographed in large numbers, some of which I still have from our old family album.

My first picture in an Art Gallery in New Bremen was taken by "Rex" up above the Arcade building where I believe he took pictures of every boy and girl in town. These were little black and white photos mounted on small cards and inexpensive--otherwise so many of them would not have been taken. Whenever I see one of these old-time photos I am carried back to my earliest years in the old hometown. And I know there must be many of them still around.

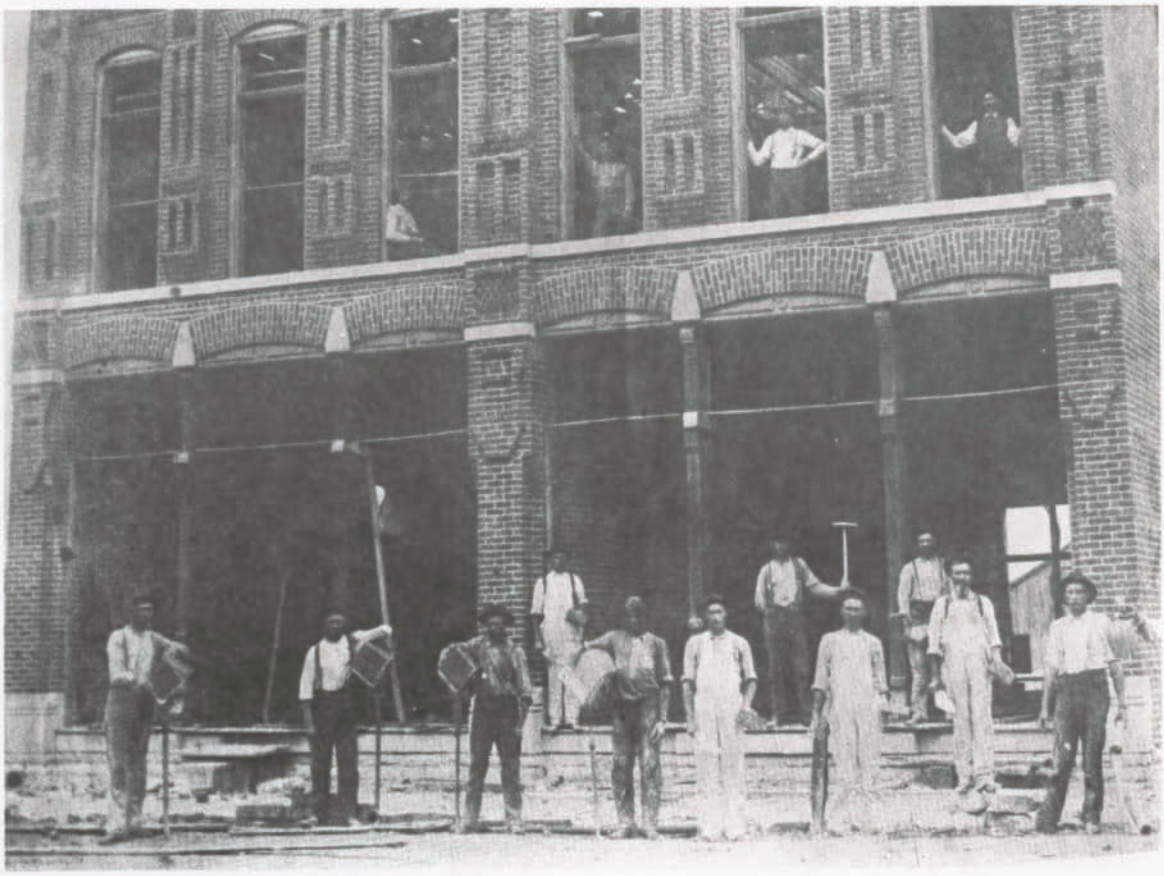
A panoramic picture of F.W. Greber, of real merit, has recently come into my possession. In one of my write-ups on the St. Marys reservoir, I mentioned the old Kilo Club that often got together on the south bank of the reservoir where they had their clubhouse. Roman Stueve called me on the phone and said he had found the picture in his father's place of business and he would like for me to have it. I could not pass up such an offer and I have had a great deal of pleasure looking over this group of men. The picture stands almost three feet high, in two sections, looking over the reservoir and the club house.

When Roy Hoverman came to New Bremen and opened up his art Gallery, a new era began in New Bremen. What I wouldn't give to have more of his many photographs taken in the old hometown! Roy belonged to the younger set and his studio was in the old brick building across from the hotel. Wedding parties, coming in from Minster, were a great attraction in those days, as they came in with a great deal of fanfare and absorbed everybody's attention who happened to be around.

Visiting in Rochester, N.Y. this fall, I walked from downtown out on East ave. to the George Eastman House and Museum, where Photography, Old & New, can be seen in a wonderful display of pictures and camera equipment. One Civil War photograph I cannot forget--dead soldiers lying on the battlefield at Gettysburg on that hot summer day.

To me, photography has always been most interesting. All the more because I not only took the pictures with an old plate camera, but I developed my own negatives, made my own prints by coal-oil light, and endeavored to earn a little money printing some of my pictures on Azo postcards. I had little success in this enterprise, but, many years later, when I owned a No. 2A Brownie kodak, pictures that I took in England and during all my residence here in Piqua have a value that grows dearer and dearer as the years go by.

www.andyniekamp.com



Progress at Lock Two in 1874

Garmhausen Building Going Up

William Garmhausen, right posed with the construction crew that erected the Garmhausen Block in Lock Two back in 1874 when this picture was taken. Third from the right is Jacob Vanderhorst, a young immigrant from Holland, grandfather of Andrew Bergman, Perry and North streets, through whose courtesy this picture is reproduced.

Mr. Vanderhorst participated in the construction of many business blocks in St. Marys, New Bremen, Lock Two and other communities in the area during his long years of service as a mason and contractor.

The Garmhausen building with its brick pattern work front is still standing in Lock Two. For years it housed the Garmhausen Department Store which did a thriving business back in the Canal Boat days.

Eleven workmen posed down front were joined by the four workmen at the upstairs windows. Back of the men posed at the windows, beams and supports in the interior of the building can be seen.

Residents of New Bremen and Lock Two may be able to identify some of the men on the picture.

Dried Prunes, Salted Herring

And Bric-a-brac

The above picture of Schwaberow's store was taken about 1900 with the street unpaved, as you will see, and with the hitching posts and chain outside. Henry, with several bystanders and one or two clerks are out in front. This grocery and bric-a-brac and chinaware store was one of the neatest-kept in all the town. I admit the turnover of merchandise was not too great; but it was always a pleasure to go inside this well-kept store.

The grocery part of the store was on the west side, and the counter always had an interesting display, several of which I well remember; a box of prunes or ap-

www.andyniekamp.com

ricots, and some dried, salted herrings. Occasionally, one could lift a herring or a prune or an apricot out of a box, all of this going along with our purchase of a nickel's worth of candy at the noon hour, on our way to school. Henry had a machine where you could drop in a nickel and sometimes get ten cents worth of candy for your nickel. It always paid off in full, so it was not a 'game of chance.'

I remember a school tablet that he sold which was called KING BEE. It was the most sheets for a nickel but they never kept together very well. Most of our school supplies, however, were purchased across the street from Schwaberow's at Jacob Fritz' store, which I hope to write about at some later date. It was one of the smallest stores in town but noted for its sweets of maple chews (3 for a penny), and licorice buttons (6 for a penny).



Schwaberow's Store

Halsema's Storeroom

Thursday, May 15, was Ascension Day. Back in my boyhood, it was the day when we went to the Loramie Reservoir, unless the weather was against us; but by the middle of May, as compared with Good Friday, when we made our first outing at the reservoir, the sun has made such progress for the full enjoyment of a summer day.

Coming from St. Marys early in the evening, I had anticipated spending the hours before darkness in seeing a part of the town that I knew so well when I was a boy. And what could be more delightful than a stroll at that evening hour when all the earth was bursting out in new growth. A lilac bush on Vogelsang St. in its best stage of bloom, and a Wisteria vine on Main St., caught my fancy as I went by. It was good to see some of these old homes again; and, for awhile, I almost had the thought that I had never left the town, after all these years that I have been away.

The trees around the old school-ground gave way to many thoughts of long, long ago. They were there when I entered first grade, although much reduced in size except for the tall ones facing Herman St. I looked up to them with reverence in my eyes and I thought of that west school-yard where most of our recess period was spent. The gravelled yard was not kind to us in a fall; but yet I would rather have had it than so much asphalt of the present day.

I found the door open at STAMCO and went inside for a look around with but a few men working on the night shift. I was amazed at the sight of the shop, for I knew it as a rather small place when I worked in the office at the old Auglaize Furniture factory. I am going back there on another day to show an old photograph that I took when most of the area was a corn field.

Walking over on Monroe St., I wanted to see where the old Halsema property had been taken down. In the store-room, we took our kitchen clocks to be repaired, or my grandmother's glasses; and then there was always some candy to be bought, leaning over the showcase and seeing a batch of rock candy with strings dangling out at the end. It was such a store as described in the novel, "Cranford," by Mrs. Gaskell, one of the most delightful English writers.

www.andyniekamp.com



New Bremen Band on Monroe Street

Passing on up the street, I found the door open at the Legion Hall and made my way upstairs. I got up close to the stage, much as it was in my day of Class Contests, stage plays and medicine shows, and in my graduation on a hot summer night, or when the girl's dresses stuck to the wicker chairs or rockers. At Boesel's Opera House, as it was known in my day, we first saw Uncle Tom's Cabin, and The Great Train Robbery, when moving pictures were first coming in.

The view of the canal was not too impressive. I walked the towpath several times, looking over to where the old warehouses used to be and the mill buildings. If a part of it could be turned into a Village Green, I am sure it would add to the attractiveness of the town.

Schmidt's Corner is still very much the same; and the old dwellings on North Main St. are most interesting to see. But the City Park has undergone a drastic change. I have an old picture with all the maple trees and the band stand. There used to be ice cream socials, with Japanese lanterns strung from the branches of the trees. And in the old Town Hall, Fire Dept., and jail, during Presidential elections, I used to shuttle-forth telegrams from the Dinkey Station to the vast assemblage upstairs. We ran back and forth in those days not even having a bicycle.

Because of the highway closing, in going back to Piqua, I went out on South Franklin St., passing the site of the old Picnic Grounds, making the turn and following the railroad to the Amsterdam Rd. Shades of evening were falling fast; I had the road almost all to myself; I could hear a meadow-lark calling, or see a redwing blackbird perched high up on a wire. It was one of the most pleasant evenings in May. And with thoughts of the town where I grew up, it could not help but be a pleasant ride back to where I now reside.

Boesel And Kunning Dry Goods

It has been such a pleasure this refulgent summer to ride my bicycle out into the country, going as far as Lockington on county roads not heavily traveled. I

www.andyniekamp.com

always get off my wheel on coming to a hill as the walk and pushing the wheel aside gives me needed rest for the miles ahead.

Passing a clover field in full bloom, when the wind strikes you in the right direction, is such an experience in sweet-smelling perfume that you can carry back home with you after your long ride in the country. How the bees must enjoy these blossoming fields, and what a pretty sight the fields make from the highway!

This has been one of the greenest summers that we have ever had; only now is the grass beginning to turn brown in a few places since the rains have let up for a while. The days are just now beginning to warm up after a decided spell of cool weather. In fact, we had warmer weather in June than in all of July. A niece of ours from England has been visiting with us and she has so delighted in the sunshine and the warmth of our summer. Many English tourists go to Spain to bask in the sun while on holiday.

It is always interesting to get a letter from someone who has been away from New Bremen for some years. I sent Richard Kunning, who now lives in North Carolina, a photo of his grandfather's old store, one that Elmer Ende discovered in the Laut Hotel. Richard identified most of those out in front, and so I am asking The Leader to show the picture in an enlarged view, as when it was previously shown they had not had their new equipment which has made the reproduction of pictures in the paper all the more interesting from what they were like years ago.

Here are the names, left to right: standing on the ledge is Gust Gilberg. Next, in shirt sleeves is my father, with yours truly in a dress. Next, also in shirt sleeves is my Grandfather Kunning with Chester. Henry Goll is in the doorway. I do not know the other two. The young fellow next is Pearly Heinfelt. Seated is Herman Pape with Edward in a dress. Uncle Lafe is behind Edward. Next is Ella and Will Dorfer. She was Ella Laut. The man with the horse is August Schroeder. The next man in the doorway is Ernest Kuck. The photo was taken at the turn of the century and before the interurban line was built. I am sure older residents of New Bremen will find his comments interesting. After the Kunnings vacated the building, it was taken over by Mueller Brothers clothing store, and Bill Utrecht had a grocery store on the east side.



Boesel and Kunning Dry Goods and Hardware

www.andyniekamp.com



Boesel Bros. and Co. Bank, in 1890's

Old Time Banking

This one photograph of Boesel Bros. & Co. Bank, although having no date on the back of the photograph, probably dates back to the early 1890's, from the mode of dress on the men out in front. Only two that I can identify, left to right in the rear of the two elderly men standing on the front step, are the late Adolph Boesel and Julius Boesel. The young bank clerk besides the window may be identified by others seeing this photograph.

The view of the First City Bank, a picture taken many years later, along about 1910 I should say, pictures Elsie Muller, Gust Kunning and Adolph Boesel. This was a more up-to-date establishment in the west room of the Opera House building. It shows the one stairway leading up to the Opera House and the vault which was operated by a time lock, a new innovation for banking in New Bremen.

The First City was the bank that I frequented in my youth, and I recall so well the machine which Mr. Kunning operated with his fingers to dole out the small change including the large silver dollars frequently handed out at that time.

Boesel Bros. & Co. bank had a huge safe which stood on the floor which might easily have been broken in had any robbers attempted the task.

I recall how quickly Mr. Kunning could add up a row of pen and ink figures, going down the line lippity-cut at which I marvelled, but which came to him so easily after working at the bank for so many years and without the use of an adding machine.

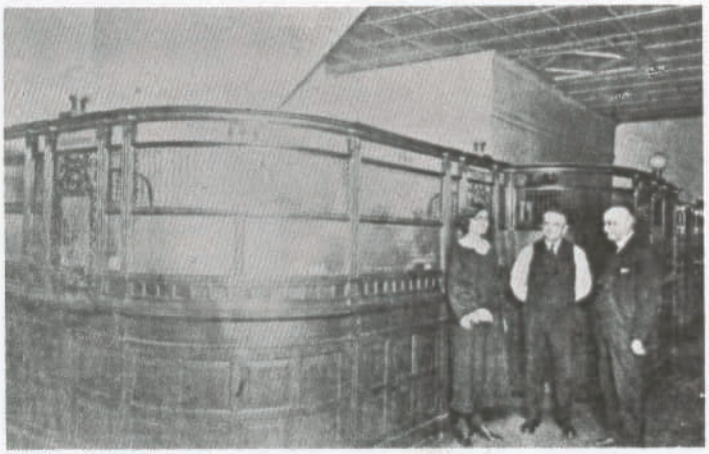
Pardon this intrusion of a personal note, but except for the war I might have accepted a job in a Chicago bank. I was classified A-1 in the draft and could hardly wait until I got back in New Bremen to spend a few months before going on to the war.

Boesel's Opera House

Almost every town of a thousand population or more had an Opera House. Today, the high school auditorium has, in most places, taken its place fortunately, in New Bremen, the building was taken over by the American Legion and the old stage is very much like it was in the old days except for much of the scenery which has gone astray.

Back in the Gay Nineties and the first decade of the twentieth century, Boesel's Opera House and the old K. of P. and Odd Fellow hall were the real community centers of the town.

In the Opera House, we first saw "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and got our initiation in dramatic art, with Simon Legree, Uncle Tom, Topsy & Eva. The street parade and the bloodhounds always preceded the show



First City Bank About 1910

www.andyniekamp.com

just about the time school was let out. If some of us did not get to see the show, we at least saw the parade and we could see and read the bill posters. I well remember the almost breaking of my heart when my first request to go was turned down on account of my youth and how I cried myself to sleep about the time when the first curtain was going up. No other road show, except perhaps "Abie's Irish Rose," coming much later, had such a general popularity as "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Hengen's, Laut's, or Gobrecht's orchestra usually opened up the theater session in October. A few weeks later the high school Lyceum course was announced and season tickets put up for sale. Our lecture courses were always well attended. We heard such speakers as Lou Beauchamp, Edward Amherst Ott (Sour Grapes), Ralph Parlette, Herbert Leon Cope. (Leonard Grewe and I got Ralph Parlette's autograph at the Hotel Laut.)

In melodrama, we had "The Missouri Girl," "The Country Kid," "Tony the Convict." Each winter brought at least one Patent Medicine Show with free acts of vaudeville. The most famous of these was Doctor Leon. Schulenberg's store sold his medicine after he left town.

There were few events that we looked forward to with such anticipation as attending a show at the opera house. The village "cut-ups" always reserved about a half-dozen seats in the second or third row from the back on the left-hand side. To be anywhere near this group was a treat. No one could come in without some bright remark, especially if that person was one of our school teachers. Some of the men would go across the street to Wissman's saloon for a glass of beer between the acts.

Along about February, we had our Farmers' Institute. Some act of mesmerism or hypnotism would usually come to town during the winter, but more frequently these were held as a part of the medicine shows. About the last stage performance was a home-talent production. Later in the spring came Class Contests and Graduation exercises. After this ordeal was gone through we looked forward to the famous Kinsey Komedy tent show that played for several weeks, nightly, on some vacant lot, with a parade every evening. I remember so well the young lady who played the snare drum and who also took a leading part in the acting.

The old tent shows which travelled from town to town by wagon played on the Cath-



NBHS First Orchestra

www.andyniekamp.com

olic church grounds, Kunning's lot, Vogelsang's field, and on the north end of Water street.

Jim Moore, of Poultry house fame, had the first real showing of moving pictures in Boesel's Opera House. Here we saw our first moving picture of some scenes in the Rocky Mountains in Colorado and the never-to-be-forgotten, "The Great Train Robbery."

In those days, no one was exceedingly rich and no one exceedingly poor. The town was delightful chiefly because our homes in it were happy.

Here are the names of those in our first New Bremen High School Orchestra: First Row: Ed Gobrecht, William Rabe, Walter Grothaus, Minnie Dierker, August Gobrecht, (the Director), Clarence Kah, Erwin Garmhausen.

Back Row: Paul Kuenzel, ? Sherman, Margaret Stone, Stephen Boesel, Frieda Boesel, Walter Weinberg, Harry Nussmeyer, Kurt Behrend and Charley Gast.

Monroe Street A Mud Path

I was particularly interested in seeing the picture of the old Laut Hotel in The Leader and the article by Doris Wissman on all the changes that have been made in the building since the time when I lived in New Bremen.

This old photograph which I am showing was taken before 1900 when Monroe street was a mud path and before the Western Ohio Interurban line had been built. There are hitching posts all along the way, with a horse and buggy standing at the location where the post office was located in the frame building occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Schulenberg upstairs.

Far to the left in the picture is the frame building on the corner with a wooden platform out in front which was a saloon and much later taken over by Joe Brucken's cigar store. The tall building next to it was one of the old Boesche warehouses; and just across the street is the Dierker building, some few years later partially destroyed in a gas explosion.

To the right of the hotel is the building later occupied by August Dierker as a tin shop and store where all kinds of heating stoves and utensils were sold. I think the previous owner was a Henry Aue, as only a part of the sign can be read.

The Upper Twin Towers were a false front to make the building more imposing and somewhat in the height of the brick block. I feel as though the new front to the hotel detracts architecturally from what it was like in the old days with the large plate glass window. Travelling men sitting in the lobby had a nice view of the sidewalk out in front and the passerbys or what was going on outside.

I recall one very interesting interview that the late Leonard Grewe and the writer had with one of our top Lecture Course speakers. He was staying at the hotel overnight for his appearance at Boesel's Opera house, and we went to the hotel to get his autograph, something of real importance when we were students in high school. He wrote on a scrap of paper, in pencil: "Let's stay acquainted Ralph Parlette, Oct. 4, '09, Chicago."

The Schulenberg-Laut brick building with the adjacent hotel and its very imposing front as it was in the old days gave New Bremen quite a metropolitan air which was greatly enhanced when the interurban came into the village and when the streets were paved. At this date, it is difficult to believe what the town's streets were like during the winter and spring when they were a sea of mud and you could only cross at the intersections where large stones had been laid.

It would be interesting to go over the hotel register and note all the names of those who put up for the night; and I wonder if the present proprietors still have this old register book which could recall past days of noted people who might have been guests of the hotel.

Barber Shops

For quite a few years, I had the agency for The Pennsylvania Grit, a weekly, family newspaper that is still being published and sold in our locality. In

www.andyniekamp.com



Schulenberg-Laut Block

selling these papers on the weekend, I made the round of the town's stores and particularly, the barber shops, always an interesting place to go on a Saturday.

The first and oldest one that I can remember was that of Ernest Tomhafe, on Washington st. Few places held so much of interest as his shop. He raised and sold canaries on the side, and the back room was filled with cages containing these singing birds, never a moment but what they were giving out their musical tones.

Mr. Tomhafe was not only a tonsorial artist, but an excellent wood carver and an artist who could copy a picture in pencil and crayon that he would frame and hang in his shop. The one, from the old "Police Gazette" titled "Ankles Demoralizes the Barbers," few of us old-timers can never forget. Incidentally, he was, without a doubt, the oldest subscriber to that barber shop weekly in New Bremen. The photographs were very tame compared to those we now see in our playboy magazines.

A lemon tree grew in a large tub in his front window and I remember that it bore fruit almost every year. A brother Mr. Tomhafe was one of the first in our area to enlist in the U.S. Navy, and I recall a photograph on the wall of the old battleship "Brooklyn," in drydock. A shell from one of the guns from this ship rested on the shelf beside the large mirror and next to the bottles of bayrum and witch-hazel.

A haircut, and having your neck shaved (5¢ extra), was always interesting to look forward to. One other shop that I frequented, where a young man was learning the trade, gave out "sample" haircuts, and we sometimes took advantage of them. But when the razor's edge was used back of our ears, we were always a little bit fearful.

Laut's barber shop, in the basement of the Schulenberg-Laut bldg., I did not visit very often. Downstairs, it was a little out of the way; later, the shop was moved upstairs. But Patty's Shop, next to Ende's Jewelry Store, where the

www.andyniekamp.com

two buildings are separated by a walk in between, was the most frequented by the boys in town. Here we could always see the best in cartoons in the latest issue of "Puck" and "Judge." Patty was always a great favorite among the boys, but never had a good word to say about the paper I was trying to sell.

Then, over in the next block on Main St., where "Dip" Schneider operated a shop, I found it most interesting to get a hair-cut and, while waiting, read "Harper's Weekly," in the first years of World War I. Looking back, the "waiting period" in a shop, with hardly a dull moment in the conversation or in looking over the reading material, was most always interesting, and when we answered the barber's call of "next," and seating ourself in the chair, it was good to see our reflection in the mirror and anticipate being well-groomed when we stepped out.



Tomhafe's Barber Shop

In two of the shops in town there was a bowling alley nearby, and also easy access to a saloon. The old-time friendly touch of some of these shops seems to have passed away. It is more strictly merchandising today; and with the usual "appointment," one comes and goes with little relish for the time spent there. It was not so in the old days.

If a boy made 50¢ lathering up on a Saturday, he pocketed the money cheerfully, knowing that it was about all he could expect at that time. And as a boy, we worked long hours for that 50¢. The kids nowadays, having so much of everything, little realize how far a nickel went in the early 1900's, or how hard we had to work to make such a small wage.

Along with the old-time photographs I had published in The Leader, sometime ago, that were discovered by the late Prof. Elmer Ende in the Laut hotel lobby, now the Hollingsworth Hotel, I have this old photo of what we always knew as "The Dierker Building." In the old picture, it is shown as "Boesche's Dry Goods Store." The building was erected by the late J.H. Boesche, prominent merchant and warehouse man, later acquired by the late Henry Dierker.

The photo of this building is of particular interest to me as it was the building of the Dierker Explosion of which I have also written, the photograph so well shown in the German Festival History of New Bremen. The I.O.O.F. (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) had their lodge hall above the store, with the entrance on the Monroe St. side. The other half of the building was used for residential purposes, even as today when the building was rebuilt after the explosion.

The motley group out in front, if it could be shown as I see them through my reading glass, is made up of store employees, a group of bystanders and a mixed group of youngsters with one being held up in the arms of one of the men. A horse and buggy with the structural iron of the old bridge across the canal can be seen to the right.

The unpaved streets at that time had special stone crossings, where pedestrians could walk, the women holding their skirts high, free of dust or dirt in the revolving year. Hitching posts were provided for the country people; a few of these still survive along with the stone block making it easy for the women to step out of the buggy.

When Mr. Dierker took over the building, he sold groceries as well as a complete line of dry goods. I often frequented this store, with its high ceilings and the office in the rear where we looked for stamps in the waste basket. I do not recall ever being in the lodge rooms. Besides the I.O.O.F. sign above the store front, there was another one on the side of the building, in a triangular shape, that read F.C.B. (Friendship, Charity &

www.andyniekamp.com



Boesche's Dry Goods

Brotherhood.) The boys interpreted it to read 'Fresh Country Butter.'

No date is shown on this photograph. The Boesche's Goods Store picture was evidently taken in the 1880's. It is of historical interest as it pertains to the old town. The Monroe St. bridge part of which is shown, was one of the earlier type bridges across the canal. The boats went underneath as the bridge swung around from a hand-operated shaft or crank.

Threshing Machines

Wellman's farm was the nearest farm from where I lived in New Bremen, and the boys in my neighborhood seldom missed going out there while the threshing of wheat was in progress. And the steam whistle on the old tractor engines, as they moved through town, was most interesting, as well as the "chug-chug" of the engine and the slow-moving vehicle.

Whenever a threshing caravan crossed the Plum street bridge, they would take on water from the canal. The heavy intake hose would be thrown over the bridge railing and the man on the water tank would operate the hand pump. A threshing caravan consisted of four vehicles: the steam tractor, the water tank, the separator (or threshing machine, as we called it), and the house trailer in the rear. It was an interesting outfit as it went from farm to farm and criss-crossed the town.

After the long belt was in place from the fly-wheel of the tractor to the separator, - quite some distance away - and the blower stack headed in the direction where the straw was to fly, then the shocks of wheat were brought in and the process of threshing began.

The blower stack moved from side to side as the straw stack began to build up. To the boys, the engineer and the man who directed the piling up of the straw seemed to have the most interesting jobs. The men who hauled in the shocks of wheat and then pitched it up onto the feeder had to work fast to keep the separator on the go. A long wagon bed on the side of the separator received the grain; and six or eight men made up the work force.

It used to be said that the men refreshed themselves from the sweat and blowing chaff from the contents of a whiskey jug kept in the cool grass in some distant fence corner. I don't know how true this may be; but I could never figure out how whisky could keep you warm in winter and cool in summer!

The women at the farm house always had a good meal prepared for the men, at

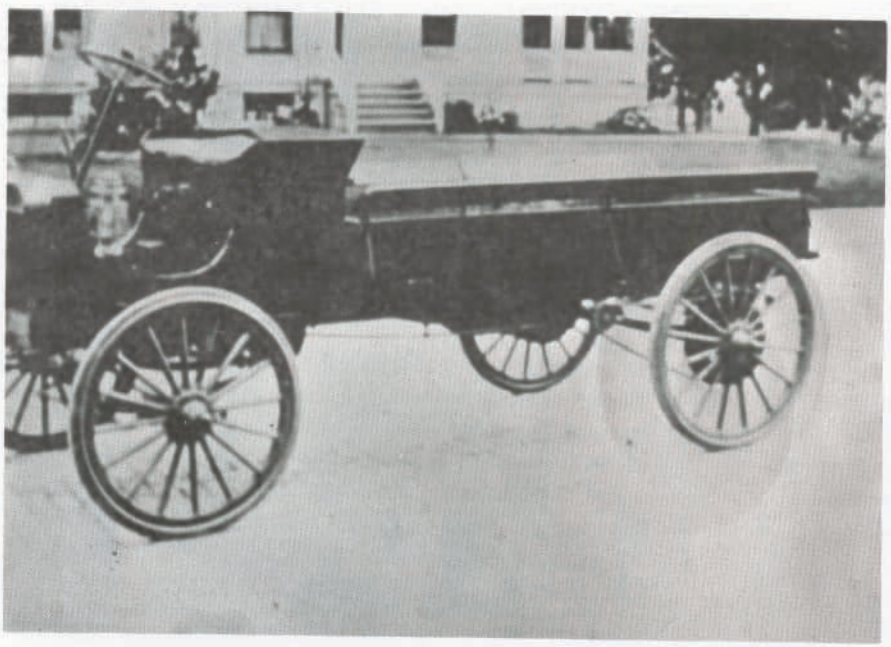
www.andyniekamp.com

which, sometimes, a boy or two might participate. Not too long ago--1927 or 1928--when threshing had changed little from what it was like when I was a boy, I spent an afternoon on a farm north of Piqua. I then took the pictures of a scene which has now passed away, along with the old-fashioned reaper, and the shocks of wheat in the field. Wheat shocks in mid-summer, and corn shocks in the fall, were two of the most picturesque scenes on the farm--as a landscape view to photograph or to put in color on a canvas.

"Through the ample door of the peaceful country barn,
A sun-lit pasture field, with cattle and horses feeding;
And haze, and vista, and the far horizon, fading away." Walt Whitman

Lanfersieck And Grothaus Plow Shop

I still remember the old Plow Shop quite well from my youth. It was the first place where I saw molten metal come from a furnace and poured into forms to make plow shares. It was a rather unique industry for New Bremen, and shipments were made throughout this whole area of Ohio. Later, bridge building and other structural iron work took over when the plow manufacturing business tapered off. But the name, Lanferseick, Grothaus was always associated with the building.



Case Automobile

When automobiles were coming into general use, a Mr. Case came to New Bremen and took over the building for the manufacture of the CASE truck with hard rubber tires and a rather extensive body and a chain-drive mechanism. Fortunately, I have two postcard views showing the type of vehicle that came out of this building. Mr. Case is at the wheel, with one of the engineers standing by and ex-postmaster, the late Lafe Kuenning sitting up in front. Interesting to note is a horse-drawn wagon, with driver, at the office building.

I do not have the data on how long this business continued; but at the time it seemed to be the coming thing, when stock was quickly subscribed and great hopes were in view for a new industry in town.

With so many of the old buildings having come down the last few months in New Bremen, former residents living elsewhere, and who have not been back for many years, will hardly recognize the old town, especially with the new view on Washington St.

I did grieve when the Central School building was razed. So many of us went through the grades, from first to graduation and it was almost as much a part of our lives as the house in which we lived. For the time in which it was built, and the long years in which it served our growing youth, our forefathers planned well for the years ahead. I doubt very much if there was another building that served education for as many years as our old Central School Building.

I am glad the view of the canal from the First St. bridge, looking north, along the old Plow Shop is still very much the same as it was when I was a boy, and walked the towpath to the old brick building for a basket of spare ribs and several pig tails. It was the last place where pork packing was continued along the canal during these winter months, known as Dierker's warehouse.

www.andyniekamp.com

Some years ago, calling on Lina Brucken, I thought the view of the old canal, from her kitchen window, was as fine as I had ever seen considering how long I had been away from the old town. It was about as far as we would skate to the north end of the canal.

Since another old structure is being taken down in New Bremen, I thought it might not be amiss to call attention to the manufacturing that was carried on in this rather large building.

The man third from the left is Jacob Vanderhorst, immigrant from Holland, the grandfather of Andrew Bergman, Perry and North streets, St. Marys. The picture is one of a number Mr. Bergman has which shows buildings that Mr. Vanderhorst had a hand in constructing. He was a contractor who worked throughout this area, erecting buildings which have stood the test of time.

Some New Bremenites may recognize others in the picture.

The Hoffman Building

Do you recognize this building? It was in the process of construction when this picture was taken back in 1892. The area where it stands is in a construction area today--highway construction.

It's the Hoffman Building at New Bremen, now occupied by the Schwieterman Drug Store at the intersection of highways 66 and 274.

Koeper's Shoe Store

As a place of business, this store, I believe has the longest continuous service of any mercantile establishment in New Bremen. Ownership has changed over the years but today it is still Koeper's Shoe Store,--Ivan Koeper, Prop.

In an issue of The Dayton Daily News for Sunday, Sept. 23, 1934, under the caption "Leafing through pages of the New Bremen,



Do You Recognize This Building?

www.andyniekamp.com

Ohio Album," there is a picture of the old store (same building) with five employees out in front and the proprietor, John A. Koeper. Here are the names: Ernst Thiesing, Martin Knost, Mrs. E.W. Laut, Henry Fritz, and Julius Gilberg. At that time--so the newspaper reads; only Gilberg remains to tell how they made boots and shoes in those days.

This old interior view, shown herewith, acquired from Harry Koeper some years ago when I visited him in Portland, Oregon, is the store I remember best, with the drop-off to the cobbler's room in the back. All the details in this picture cannot adequately be shown in a newspaper reproduction, but let me enumerate a few; two coal oil lamps hang from the ceiling beside which is one electric bulb. With the old light plant just off Monroe on Water St.,--to the south--a break-down occurred now and then at which time the coal oil lamps were put into service. And they no doubt hung there from the time when there was no electric service.

In front are two comfortable seats where I am sure I have sat as a boy, with the foot rest on the floor. Breaking in a new pair of shoes, in the old days, was a trying period in my experience. And there were times when you got a pair that would 'squeak.'

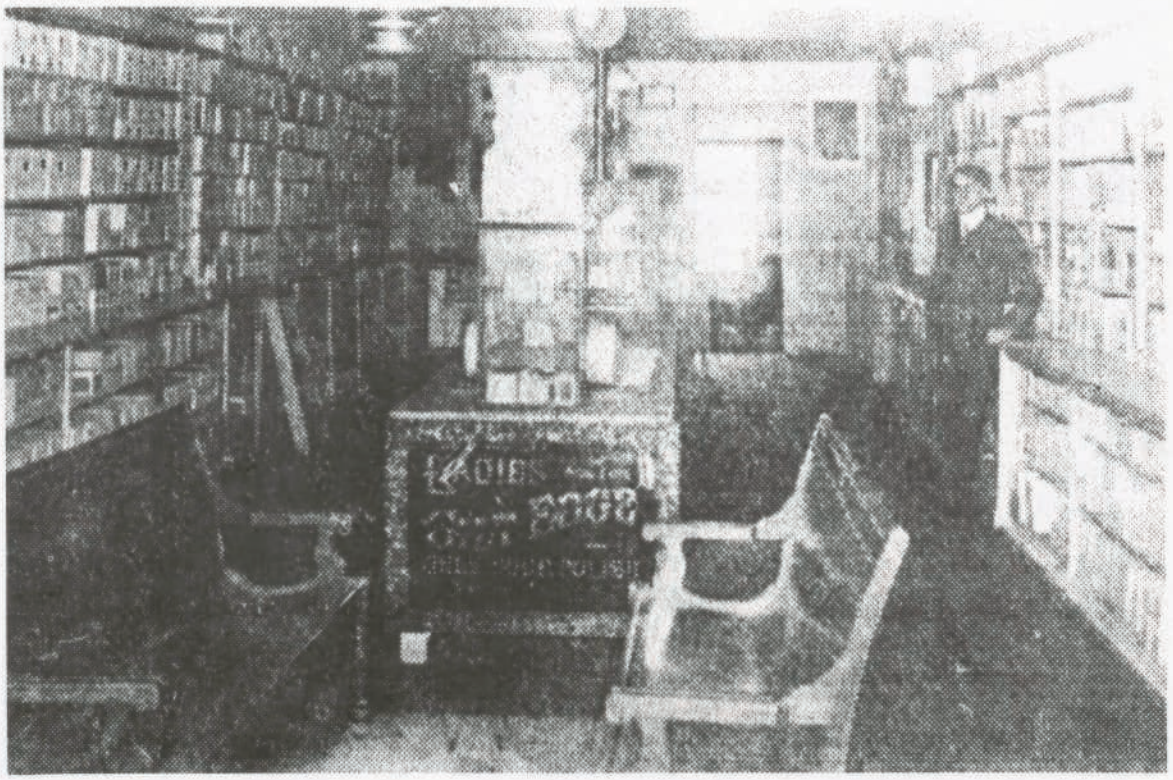
As one grew up, it might be our good fortune to own a pair of patent leather shoes with a row of buttons going up to the top. Are there any of the old button hooks still about?

Harry Koeper is standing on one side, when this photo was taken, evidently waiting for a customer to come in for a fitting. I am sorry I did not ask Harry who took the picture.

Shoe strings, of various lengths, are hanging from a rack against the wall in the rear of the store. The cash drawer manipulated by pulling on certain wires under the drawer, was far to the rear. One could go from the store, into the room next door, later to become the site of the Post Office, when John Koeper was the postmaster.

How well I remember the W.L. Douglas gun-metal shoe. But I am not sure that it was sold at Koeper's. These shoes sold for $3.50, and as a boy I remember getting them half-soled several times before they wore out their usefulness on the old schoolyard.

A wooden boot, set out on a pedestal, is



Interior View of Koeper's Shoe Store

www.andyniekamp.com

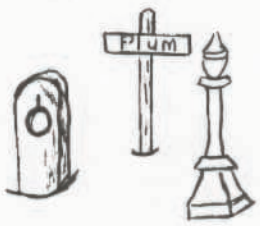
shown in the picture, taken 1889, in the Dayton paper. All the men pictured in that picture are wearing huge aprons, indicating that the making and repairing of shoes was big business in those days.

Ernst Thiesing (father of my beloved 2nd grade teacher, Miss Clara) who worked for John Koeper at that time,--1889--still repaired shoes to the end of his days. I see him sitting on his bench in the old Arcade Shoe Dept., a friendly man and a first rate cobbler. What a pleasure to put on a pair of shoes after he had resoled them!

As a boy, one cannot forget our first high, button shoes. It was a long time before we wore oxfords, as low shoes were first called. Patent leather was the height of fashion, even though they creased terribly in due time, and eventually broke through. In my happy school days, felt boots were worn during a part of the winter. I only remember one pair of rubber boots and the cold feet that I had every time I wore them. Nothing like felt boots to keep your feet warm while playing in the snow.

Koeper's Shoe Store still survives. The room to the south has had many usages or occupants. It was, as I have said, the Post Office where I so often hung out waiting for the windows to be put up. We never had a lock-box but I could always look through the glass to see if I had any mail, which was interesting enough. Then, to come back to this store room, it was a millinery store, and, later, I believe even a part time funeral parlor. This is about as far as my memory goes. And surely, that is enough. Someone else can take up from here on.

FROM MUD TO BRICKS



Washington Street At Turn Of The Century

In this day of paved streets and macadamized highways, one has to go back to the Turn of the Century to see what the town's streets were like about this time of the year after the first spring thaws. These photographs, all taken at that time, clearly show the deplorable condition of what our main thoroughfares in the downtown area presented to the public who had to use them with their horse and buggies or wagons, and even how difficult it was to cross over from one side of the street to the other side even though stones were laid at the intersections.

Those dirt ruts, shown in the picture, served one good purpose, however; for in the winter the snow caught in these crevices and could not get out, it provided a good base for the sleighing which was so common in the long winter days and the cold which seemed more intense than what we appear to have nowadays. I know we had to dress far more warmly then, than we do now; and it may be that it was because our houses were not so well heated. Everybody wore long underwear, and boys and girls wool stockings with the snow and ice clinging to them in such an uncomfortable way.

In the top photo, the two butsmen are Darr Thompson and Emil Laut. August Gobrecht is standing beside the door. I do not know the other party in the winter cap. The rooms up above the vacant store room were occupied, - maybe later, - by the Tip Top Club.

The Schulenberg-Laut block has a large group of bystanders too indistinct to identify and no one would be living now

www.andyniekamp.com

who was amongst that group, I am sure. All these photos are from the collection of negatives that I got from the late Ferd Rabe, when I bought his old 4 x 5 plate camera.

Henry Schwaberow is out in front, standing at the middle of the building. Lina Taylor (Mrs. Joe Brucken), is one of the two women out in front. Henry kept one of the neatest stores in town, although I am sure he did not have a great deal of turnover of his merchandise, particularly that in the china and crockery division of his store. None of the stores had cash registers at that time. A drawer under the counter was manipulated in opening it by pulling on four wires underneath. You had to know the combination in order to use the drawer.

I had no thought in going into so much detail in showing these pictures as my main purpose was to show the younger generations what our main streets were like about this time of the year, when I, as a boy, knew them so well.

(Schulenberg-Laut Block picture on page 43 - Schwaberow Store picture on page 37 .)

Old Pictures Have Charm

How charming an old picture can be. And how it brings back old times, old faces and old scenes.

The Schulenberg-Laut Block (picture on page 43) and the unpaved street has a group of old-timers hanging around the hotel entrance and the saloon next door. Hitching posts are quite prevalent; and there is a horse and buggy tied up to one of them. Looking towards the canal, the small building on the corner was another saloon; and next to it is one of the old warehouses that were built when the canal was an active artery of traffic. The old Dierker building, later destroyed in an explosion, can be seen.



Old Time New Bremen - Washington Street in 1900

www.andyniekamp.com

I have some of the fondest recollections of the old K of P and Odd Fellow and Rebecca Hall next to the hotel. The fall and winter season saw many gatherings here of the town's folk. Oyster suppers, amateur theatricals, and the regular Friday evening drill practice of the K of P's. I can still hear the thud of their feet on the floor as I was in Schulenberg's store underneath. About the only time I ventured inside the hotel lobby was when some important personage came to lecture on our Lecture Course at Boesel's Opera House.

The old picture of Washington street was taken some time after the Western Ohio car tracks had been laid. It's a summer time picture with the store awnings down and the trees in leaf. As yet, the street was unpaved, and the poles supporting the trolley wire present a gaunt picture. Roy Hoverman took the photo, succeeding F.W. Greber as the town photographer. My bare feet trod these sidewalks many a time, especially on my many trips to the Mill on errands for my grandmother.

It was quite an event when these two streets were paved. The contractor employed a gang of Macedonians who lived in the old Finke House on North Main st. I belonged to a Literary Society that met weekly next door; and I tell you the beer those men consumed was tremendous. The empty cases were stacked ten feet high next to the building. Except for gypsies who came through town occasionally, they were probably the first foreigners with whom we came in contact. And how interesting to know they came from Macedonia, reminding us of St. Paul and his preaching in the early days of Christianity.

Old-time New Bremen was an interesting place in which to live--not meaning, of course, it is not the same today. In a town the size of New Bremen, the boys did not miss a thing. From the coming of the Western Ohio to street paving and all such things, we were eager participants in whatever was taking place.

Sea of Mud

Among my old photographs of the town, here is one depicting the conditions of some of the downtown streets as they



Washington Street

looked in mid-winter or early spring when there was no snow on the ground. Unbelievable as it may seem to one who was not living in 1900, yet, as a boy back in the old town, I can easily remember when some of our streets looked like the one in the picture.

The Fire Department was putting on its best display, with the buttsmen standing by the hose-cart. This cart was pulled through the streets by whoever arrived there first after the fire bell rang. And as boys, if we could get there in time we were always glad to lend a helping hand. How well do I remember those wonderful Saturday evenings when they took out the pumper for a practice drill at the Plum St. canal bridge!

Two barber shops are conspicuous from the barber poles outside. The one to the right was owned by E.F. Tomhafe, who not only was a tonsorial artist but very adept in drawing and wood-carving, samples of which were hung about his shop. Here I read the Police Gazette and looked at the pictures, some of which were not always of the most elevating type. Mr. Tomhafe sold canaries on the side. The whole back room was filled with them, and what a song-fest they made. In the one front window, he had a potted lemon tree which in season bore real fruit. I used to have a shaving mug, with my name in gilt lettering, in the huge rack which can be seen from the window.

www.andyniekamp.com

The barber shop in the old building to the left was owned by Joe Lanferseick. This old building was at one time a warehouse, where canal boats came up alongside to load and unload their cargoes, long before my time and recollection. I sold the Pennsylvania Grit, a weekly newspaper, and frequented all the barber shops in town in trying to dispose of my papers.

On each side of the barber shops there was a saloon, sometimes with an indoor entrance to make it more convenient for the customers who had to wait. And some of our boys had a Saturday job 'lathering up' in these shops, getting one customer ready while the barber was shaving in the other chair. There were no hair cuts on Saturday; shaves were ten cents, with five cents extra for a neck shave. A boy making fifty cents working all day Saturday was doing pretty well.

The Tip-Top Club had rooms upstairs in the center building with the large bay windows. It was the day and age when club rooms were uppermost in the minds of the younger set. The one I belonged to had no rent to pay; we met in an abandoned corn-crib in a nearby alley, where we had some old rag carpet on the floor and quite an assortment of dime novels to read. And here we discussed the issues of the day and made our plans for any new enterprises we might be interested in. But our club rooms continued only during the warm weather, for we had no way of providing heat for our comfort during the winter.

One still sees a hitching post nowadays, or a stepping stone where one could alight from a buggy at a safe distance from the ground. There are three hitching posts in the picture. Some of the iron posts were connected with heavy chains so as to accommodate the heavy traffic on Saturdays. And a block from the Fire Department was the Mill Stable, where free stalls were available for the horses where they could stand unhitched from their wagons.

Washington St. was a busy thorough-fare back in 1900; and from the condition of the street in the picture, it was a good thing that the hose-cart (and the pumper) did not have to make a run that particular day.

(Fire Department picture on page 50 .)

Kuenzel Mills

It may be of interest to see these two old buildings since they have been taken down and the street altered considerably since that time. It was even before the street had been paved, along with the old drying rack beside the Woolen Mill where blankets were hung out in the open, held by sharp pins all along the rack.

North of the Flour Mill, in a wooden building setting out over the canal, the Woolen Mill had a store where their blankets were sold and other wearing apparel, mostly made out of wool. I remember quite well the woolen stockings which we all wore during the winter months. And back of the store was the office for the Mill where I sometimes collected stamps out of their waste-basket.

I made many trips to the old Flour Mill as a boy when we kept chickens and fed them screenings for the most part and corn in the winter. Errands at the Mill were most interesting to a boy who could climb the stairs to the top floor and see the machinery that turned wheat into flour. Then, one almost always had to get weighed, although we knew our weight pretty well; and there were trips to the engine room to see the steam engine in its almost silent operation furnishing the power for the mill, with the help of water power from the old canal.

When these buildings were taken down in connection with the operation of the two mills, I had the opportunity of going over many of their bookkeeping records which were stored in one of the buildings across the street of the Crown Controls. These records date back to 1867 when the Woolen Mill was under the ownership of Finke, Meyer & Co.

Here are the names of some of the employees at the Woolen Mill back around 1900: B. Pohlman, R. Schlesselman, A. Schlesselman, Clara Laut, Freda Gool, Jessie Suelter, A. Schroeder, Clara Kasten, and Minnie Nolte.

www.andyniekamp.com



For Bed and Bread

J. M Hulett
Granville, N.Y.
Dec. 9, 1912

Backhaus & Kuenzel Co.
New Bremen, Ohio
Gentlemen:

Send me two pair of blankets, seconds, color one pair, blue & white; another pair, pink & white. I will leave to you as to what size you might have in seconds in this color. Mark them as cheap as possible. It is "Wilson" times now (referring to election of Woodrow Wilson), or will be by Christmas, and by four years from now no one will be able to buy blankets. I expect we will have to sleep in tents and live in soup houses as we did here in 1893-4 (referring to Grover Cleveland's administration.) Horse market is quiet. Hard to get the money back in this country that we pay you fellows in the west. Send along the blankets. I leave it up to your honor. Will return you check as soon as I get the bill of them.

Wish you and all the people of New Bremen a "Merry Christmas: and "Happy New Year."

Very truly yours,
J.M. Hulett

New Intersection

In the razing of the Dierker building and the widening of the highway at the above location on highway 274 and 66, the view of which I saw on my last visit up north, I thought it might be of interest to show what this old building looked like and the devastating effects of the explosion which occurred in that bitter cold winter of 1905, on the morning of January 26th. The size of the building was made somewhat smaller, with a porch added on the south side where the Dierker family resided, when it was rebuilt.

Washington St., looking north from Front St., has now undergone drastic change from what it was like in the old days. My thoughts go back when it was a mud road in the winter and spring and, later, when the Western Ohio Interurban tracks were laid and the trolley wire suspended from poles on either side of the street. Then, later, the whole area was paved with brick on a bed of concrete.

When the Arcade Department Store was established, we were really becoming a metropolis, the forerunner of what we today designate as a "Mall," and the electric signs out in front coming on alternately gave this part of the town a decidedly new look. In walking downtown from the south end, where I lived, I most generally walked through the Arcade rather than on the outside of the block. One entered the Grocery, passed through the arch to the Bazaar, then to the Dry Goods, Furniture, Mens' Clothing, and one came outside from the Shoe Store.

With all the width at the intersection, the Highway Department might have left an open ground space in the center where the Garden Club could have planted some petunias to offset all the drabness of so much asphalt. That would have compensated some-what for the erection of another filling station and the razing of the Dierker building.

The old town has changed quite a bit since horse-drawn vehicles and sleighs moved up and down on Washington St., and when the country people on a Saturday or a weekday stabled their horses in the mill stable while they shopped in town. In

www.andyniekamp.com



Dierker's Explosion

the days of the Interurban, railroad freight cars moved on the side of the Mill and on to Canal St., to the elevator. As a boy back in 1900, I never dreamed of such a thing; and I like to remember when I had my picture taken at the REX studio in what today is one of the Crown Control buildings and just on the other side of where Dr. Everest had his dental parlor.

Such thoughts I had in mind on my last visit in New Bremen.

New Bremen - Yesteryear

Here are three more views of old New Bremen, all within the area from Washington street to Main and Monroe, that were in the collection found by the late Prof. Elmer Ende at the Hotel bldg. All are of historical interest, with only one of the buildings having been razed--the old residence of Chas. Boesel.

The name "Boesel" and "Kunning" figured prominently in the early history of the town. In these views, "Boesel" appears five times. I wish it were possible to show the front view of the Boesel & Kunning Dry Goods & Hardware with a reading glass as I look at it while I am typing these few comments of mine. The group out in front, half of them children, are as interesting as they can be. It was a summer day; the one girl is wearing a sunbonnet; men are in their shirt sleeves, and a tree across the street is in full leaf.

Boesel Bros. & Co.'s Bank, and the residence of Jacob Boesel (now the W.O.W. Home), along with the building on the corner, are the same today as when this picture was taken. One can note, however, how the pine tree has grown since that far-off day.

In the yard of the residence of Chas. Boesel, on the opposite corner, I can make out distinctly, from where I sit, the statue of the 'Indian Hunter' which is now in front of the schoolyard at Ft. Loramie. Too bad that such an art trea-

www.andyniekamp.com



Boesel Bros. Bank - Jacob Boesel Residence

G. Boesel's Millinery Store and the "Enterprise" Groc., may not be immediately recognized; but the building is still there. A girl friend of mine, when I was still in grade school, lived upstairs--Barbara Spiegel by name--and I recall how bashful I was in going upstairs to invite her to go out with me on a sleigh-ride party. I have overcome some of that since then.

sure, along with the apple orchard, are no longer seen as we used to walk from the old Post Office bldg. That part of the street has undergone a drastic change--and not for the better, I would say.



Charles Boesel Residence



G. Boesel's Millinery Store

"Often I think of that old
hometown...
Often in thought go up and
down
The pleasant streets of that
dear old town,
And my youth comes back to
me."
--Apology to "My Lost Youth"
by H.W. Longfellow

(Picture of Boesel & Kunning Store on page 39..)

www.andyniekamp.com

NEW BREMEN CELEBRATES



New Bremen Picnic Grounds

Back in May 9, 1890, the New Bremen Sun carried the following news item: "The town is spreading out along Franklin & Herman streets. Ten or fifteen years ago that section was an empty space. At the southern terminal of these streets is an elegant grove which in time may prove a convenient site for a city park. We are coming slow but sure." This was two years before I was born.

In my love for the outdoors, I always have had a special fondness in my heart for the old picnic grounds which this site later became in my boyhood in New Bremen. Located at the south end of Franklin St., it was sometimes known as Kruel & Hartwig's Grove. Here, on Saturday nights, during the summer season the town folks and youngsters gathered for real enjoyment.

The boys in my neighborhood were always on hand a few minutes after the supper dishes were cleared from the table. The short-cut was to take the lane that went out from Main St. at Vogelsang, which then led over to Franklin St. Rail fences, with thick patches of grass and lots of clover bordered this delightful path.

The dancing platform, although exposed to the weather from year to year, was conditioned in good shape and by waxing was made suitable for dancing and for the many long slides that we boys took before the orchestra began to play. There were seats all round the platform where one could sit while the dancing was going on. The orchestra was up on a special platform away from the dance floor.

West of the dancing platform, which faced the street, were all the concession stands. The old beer mugs were rinsed out in a tub of cold water, and there was pop in three flavors: white, red and sarsaparilla. There was a fruit stand, a confectionery and peanut stand and the one where ice cream was sold. A fortune wheel concluded the list. At the most, I doubted whether my expenditure exceeded ten cents; but the music was ours and as a spectator at the dance platform it cost us nothing.

The big picnic of the year was the one on Fourth of July. That, of course, was an all-day affair while the others in between were generally called "moonlight picnics." Roman candles and skyrockets closed the program. Sometimes, however, the weather proved a problem. I can remember when distant peels of thunder rolled out of the west with streaks of lightning and what a hurry it was to get home before the storm struck. Long after going to bed, as a small boy, I could hear the people passing my window on the sidewalk. Leo Tolstoy, in his book "Childhood, Boyhood & Youth" said "a thunderstorm always communicated to me an inexpressibly oppressive feeling of fear and gloom."

Our last days in school while in the lower grades was usually celebrated with a picnic along with our teacher and these were sometimes held out at the old picnic grounds. On one of these occasions, Miss Plow was the host, and Irene and Maude Ekermeyer have a photo taken out at one of these picnics showing the old sailor straws with a long hat pin through the center. That was the kind worn in those days by young ladies.

As a Fourth of July feature I am pleased to show a photo of the Sons of Rest Band

www.andyniekamp.com



Sons of Rest Band

on July 4, 1912, taken in front of the Hotel Laut. I can identify only a few in the picture: Herman Laut with beard, Ben Laut, ? Buckloh, Felix Jung, Mr. Hollingsworth (who later took over the hotel), Max Behrend, Orie Cron, Harry Nussmeyer, Charley Gast and one of the Weinbergs.

Fourth Of July Celebration

Following Decoration Day and our annual Sunday School Picnic, we all looked forward to the next great holiday. The Fourth. Summertime was one round of pleasure after another, as I look back; and with three months vacation ahead of us, it could not be otherwise.

There was a lovely Picnic Grounds at the south end of Franklin St., where the road turns west, running clear back to the railroad tracks. It was a grove with many fine trees, hickory, buckeye and redhaws, lots of grass with penny-royal growing here and there. In the corner of the two highways there was a dance platform and a place at the far end for the orchestra players. All round this platform were seats where we could sit and watch the dancing and listen to the music.

Beyond the dancing platform and over towards the woods were the various concessions where we could satisfy our hunger or quench our thirst, Millett's Bakery had the ice cream stand, always home-made in those days. And there was another stand where we could get watermelon and bananas. If we had ten or fifteen cents to spend, we considered ourselves fortunate, indeed.

A package of small fire-crackers with a piece of lighted punk afforded many of us youngsters with a great deal of delight. But when the Roman candles and sky rockets went off late in the evening, our excitement and enthusiasm knew no bounds. But by that time most of us were getting a little on the sleepy side; and we still had the long walk home from the Picnic Grounds.

I recall once when a severe electrical storm came up and how the people hurried

www.andyniekamp.com



Old New Bremen Picnic Grounds

home with great streaks of lightning coming out of the west and the thunder rumbling in the distance. By that time, I was in my bed in the little brick room bordering on the side-walk, where I could hear the women and children hurriedly going by.

After the Fourth, the season dragged on a little heavily, for it was a long wait until the Tri-County Fair opened up. But in between there were always interesting ball games out at the Fair Grounds, when our local boys played the Nebraska Indians or the Bloomer Girls. And many times during the summer we walked out to the Fair Grounds just to saunter around, look at the race track and climb up into the Judges' Stand through a trap-door.

I suppose it can be said that New Bremen was a Boy's Town. William D. Howells, in Hamilton, Ohio,--a much larger place-could never have had a better time than the boys in Bremen. Like Howells, if I can be excused for quoting, I am glad to have had a boyhood fully rounded out with all a boy's interests and pleasures, and I am glad that my lines fell in my hometown New Bremen.

Another Fourth of July. . .

"We are the freest government on the face of the earth. Our strength rests in our patriotism. Peace and order and security and liberty are safe so long as love of country burns in the hearts of the people. It should not be forgotten, however, that liberty does not mean lawlessness. Liberty to make our own laws does not give us license to break them. Liberty to make our own laws commands a duty to observe them ourselves and enforce within their jurisdiction. Liberty my fellow citizens, is responsibility, and responsibility is duty, and that duty is to preserve the exceptional liberty we enjoy within the law and for the law and by the law."

William McKinley
July 4, 1894

The first Fourth of July celebrations that I can remember were out at the old Picnic Grounds at the south end of Franklin St., in New Bremen. There was a wooden dancing platform with seats all round where we could sit, and, over to

www.andyniekamp.com

one side a place for the orchestra. The picnic grounds extended far back in a grove to where the railroad passes on its way to Minster. There were concessions of all kinds and a fireworks display in the evening, mostly with Roman candles, and a few sky rockets. The late Theodore Rabe, who had the Cheap Store in town, and where we could also buy our fireworks, was in charge of the night-time display which we, as children, so looked forward to. If a storm threatened the picnic, as I remember happened at one time, we had to hurry home as best we could before the downpour. It was quite a long walk for some of us; and I can still hear the people passing my bedroom window with the lightning and the thunder as the storm was approaching. As children, we enjoyed watching the dancers, in between running and sliding on the smooth surface of the wooden platform. A dish of homemade ice cream was a real treat, along with a slice of watermelon or a bottle of pop. I am sure there are still many who remember the old Picnic Grounds and the Fourth of July celebrations that were held out there in the late '90's and the early 1900's.

Decorating Graves

Since being a resident of Piqua, where we started housekeeping in 1922, I have, with few exceptions, never missed coming to New Bremen on Decoration Day. It was a pleasant drive over in the afternoon, the day overcast and the countryside all so fresh and green from the heavy rains that we have been having. The first cutting of hay had been made in several fields, and we saw a clover field all in bloom. John Burroughs used to say: "Well I have lived again to see the clover in bloom."

We had two buckets filled with peonies to take out to our family lot at Willow Grove Cemetery. So sorry to relate that we have to take our water along with us - as we have discovered over the years - the pump being of no use no matter how long you try to draw the water. I hope by next year this situation may be corrected. It was interesting to see our lot with two flags adorning the graves; and walking over the cemetery I was reminded of so many family names that I knew so well in my youth. And many of the old headstones have their inscriptions in German: "Hier Ruhet." Decoration Day and the end of our school term was uppermost in our minds when we were boys. How good to look forward to the holiday and our vacation period ahead. It was a "golden time" in our youth, and how fortunate we were to be brought up in a small town with interesting localities all round us to be explored in our leisure moments. A "Boy's Town," was New Bremen.

Old-Time Thanksgiving

Of all school holidays, Thanksgiving was one of the most pleasant to look forward to. This, for one reason was because it was the first school holiday since school had begun. Then, it was the season of the year when we had our first touch of winter, and, after the long summer holiday, a change in the season was very welcome, for even fall was a continuation of summer, much as it has been this year.

At school, stencils were used on the blackboards showing huge-sized turkeys, sometimes in color. In some of the class rooms there would be a picture on the wall showing Pilgrims Going to Church. This picture by Boughton of one of the earliest American scene, and others of the Pilgrim Fathers, are still favorites of mine. I recall an Art Exhibit in our high school room by the Horace K. Turner Co., of Boston, and what a wonderful display of prints we had at that time, the first in New Bremen that I recall. I still have the Catalogue (25¢), and what an education in art it provides in leafing through its pages.

There were exercises in the various class rooms, the first of the school year. Never good at memorizing, I always had the nightmare of "getting stuck" and I was glad when this part of the holiday was all over.

No part of the week-end holiday was more enjoyed than the long tramp in the open fields and the woods at this time of the year. With a trace of snow on the ground, we would track rabbits, routing them out of culverts or brush piles, using broom handles as our weapons. It was great

www.andyniekamp.com



Ducks and Geese at the Old Poultry House

sport; and if we happened on a covey of quails, how interesting to see them take flight. Rabe's lumber yard was a good place for rabbits, and this was only a block from where I lived.

I recall that we usually had a duck for Thanksgiving. There was not much meat but plenty of stuffing, as we called it in those days. And there were oysters that we bought in a paper bucket, dipped from a container set in a wooden bucket of ice and which was shipped by express from Heyser in Baltimore, Md. My uncle used to eat them raw spread over with cracker crumbs and catsup. And oyster soup was seldom made with milk, water being used instead. And have you ever come down on a piece of shell with your teeth?

The boys in our neighborhood always met at the Poultry House over the week-end. The old wooden ramshackle building was along the canal at the Plum street bridge. From October, on after the holidays, this was one of the busiest places in New Bremen. It gave employment in picking chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys—mostly chickens. Not the most desirable of employment, but how rewarding to gather at the office and receive an accounting for our work during the week.

I do not recall on how many occasions I attended church for the holiday, for I am writing from the very early period of my remembrances. But one thing I am sure of; we were truly thankful for all the blessings this season of the year brought to our youthful hearts. As a boy I am ever grateful having been brought up in New Bremen. William Dean Howells, who was brought up in Hamilton, O., has this to say in his book "A Boy's Town" (so applicable to New Bremen.)

"The town was small and the boys there were hemmed in by their inexperience and ignorance; but the simple home was large with vistas that stretched to the ends of the earth, and it was serenely bright and warm with a grandmother's love who brought me up as one of her own. (The last is not a part of the quotation but I add it on my own.)

Christmas In New Bremen

Christmas was always a happy time in old-time New Bremen. Certainly we never got much compared to what children get today; but with what we got we made our lives supremely happy.

For one thing, the winters were very much like the one we are having right now. And there was always a lot of snow on the ground so that we could spend much of our Saturday afternoons hopping sleighs either on foot or using a rope and your own sled, sometimes homemade. We would ride far out into the country before letting our rope go and trudge back into town.

Rabe's Cheap Store was the big attraction in our part of the town. We did not get over to Schulenberg's so often; and the Arcade had not yet come into existence. To walk up and down the aisles of the store, just to look at the toys, was happiness though we knew in our heart of hearts that very little of it would be ours on Christmas Day.

One of my happiest Christmases was in 1903. I had been collecting stamps for some time but never had an album in which to put them. That Christmas I got

www.andyniekamp.com

an Imperial Stamp Album, bound in green cloth, with the following inscription on the inside cover:

"To Ralph May from his
Grandmother Schroeder,
Dec. 25, 1903."

What a delight it was to properly arrange my stamps and I am sure I spent weeks at the task. If I remember correctly, the album cost 25¢.

Then there were the Alger books. A boy always got a couple of these for Christmas. And after Christmas we would exchange our copies with other boys so as to get in with as many of the stories possible. Do boys read them anymore; and G. A. Henty, who wrote that wonderful tale of South America, "Out on the Pampas."?

Best of all, however, to look back upon was good old Zion's Church and the Christmas Eve Service. Here we always had a huge Christmas Tree (not as big as St. Paul's) and along with it a new painting by Henry Hoffman. And at the end of the program the distribution of the bag of candy and an orange. That was something to look forward to, and was always taken care of by our Sunday School teacher.

As a boy, I often looked forward to receiving a pair of boots for Christmas. And on several occasions I got a pair of felt boots from my uncle, which made the hard winters of years ago far more comfortable. For one thing, your feet never got cold or wet with felt boots. And you could romp in the snow with the greatest delight. In one of my school pictures, 5th Grade, I am wearing a pair of felt boots.

The Christmas Holiday, continuing over the New Year were Highdays in our lives, never to be forgotten. In William Dean Howells' "A Boy's Town," writing about New Years, he says 'the boys began to celebrate it with guns and pistols.' In my day it had not changed any, for we went out in the morning of New Year, from house to house, in our neighborhood, singing "Kling, Klang, Ring Merry Bells, etc." until we were pretty well filled up with cookies and something to drink for all that we could hold. What a happy time it was, with the town's whistles blowing and the church bells ringing! But the greatest day of all, as Howells says in his book, was Christmas.

Decoration Day

During my life-time, I have missed very few observances of Decoration Day in my home-town, New Bremen. My grandfather, Richard Schroeder, having served in the Civil War and wounded at the Battle of Missionary Ridge, the Day had added significance to my family. And of course there were many veterans of the Civil War living when I was a boy in New Bremen. And one veteran of the Mexican War was still living.

As boys, however, the parade was the thing. We were up bright and early that day, making several trips downtown even before the parade started. Our flowers had been taken care of the day before, having been brought to the basement of Schulenberg's store, from where they were taken out to the graves of those members of the Grand Army of the Republic who had passed away. A new flag, with the bouquet, was placed on the grave, as is even the custom to this day.

It was the day before the automobile, and to us it was a rather solemn occasion. No thought was ever given to spending the day out of town; even if we would have had such thoughts, there was no way we could implement them. But I do remember that on most occasions there would be a ball game out at the old Fair Grounds. So we had that to look forward to after our noon-day meal.

Having the two cemeteries in New Bremen, it was a little inconvenient, especially for my family, for our graves were out at Willow Grove, a good two miles from town. But we walked it, sometimes following the canal towpath for most of the way. And we never made the roundtrip on foot without packing a small lunch to take along and to eat on the grass after taking care of our lot. Tall cedars, or pine trees, lined the highway out at Willow Grove, and to hear the wind as it passed through these trees was in itself a mournful note. These trees have since been replaced by maples which are today almost as high as the old trees.

www.andyniekamp.com

Arbor vitae grew on many of the lots and it was always interesting to look for birds' nests in these trees or to read the inscriptions on the many stones, many of which were in the German language. To this day, if I pass an old burial ground, I want to stop and saunter among the graves. Longfellow has a rather touching poem on "God's Acre," as he called it. In London during World War I I came back in the evening, the boys would say to me: "Well, May, what graveyard did you visit today?"

But, not wishing to stray from the subject too long, I find the observance of Decoration Day in New Bremen always a very fitting occasion. That is the way it is observed in most places, with two world wars having occurred in the meantime. May it always be so for "these honored dead."

Another Decoration Day. . .

"Is it so small a thing
To have enjoyed the sun,
To have lived light in spring?"

What a most enjoyable month we have had in May. And with its unusual warmth, it is at least a week ahead in all the growth and blossoms. I think it was last year when some of our peonies held over until almost the Fourth of July, and there were very few for Decoration Day. My syringia bush has been in full bloom for over a week, and I doubt whether I will have any sprays left for the cemetery. They are nice to cut and lay over the grave, with their creamy white blossoms and ever fragrant odor.

I have missed very few Decoration Days in New Bremen, even though I have lived in Piqua since 1922. And as a boy back in the old home-town, I remember well my many trips to the Willow Grove Cemetery with my Grandmother. Most of all the time we walked all the way, taking a little lunch with us to eat beside the graves. My grandfather, a Civil War soldier, always got a new flag on his grave on Decoration Day. The tradition still holds; but they pick up the flag on the next day now. With the Civil War, World War I and II, there are now too many graves to be taken care of. One New Bremen soldier that I know of fought in the Mexican War.

It is always a pleasant drive to New Bremen on Decoration Day. I cannot remember the day ever being disagreeable. Very seldom we have had any rain; but I remember quite often it has been rather chilly and we were always glad to stand in the sun. Locust trees are always in bloom by Decoration Day and there are quite a few along Route 66. The blossom may not smell too good close up, but wafted in the breeze as you go by on the highway it has a fragrance all its own. And one little reference to all the blossoms along the New Knoxville Road on the way to Lock Two Cemetery. What a wonderful display--and they are always in bloom by the end of May. One does not like to forget them!

Even though this year's Memorial Day comes on a week-end, the anticipation of the holiday is very fine along with the remembrance of all the past. John Burroughs calls it 'the smell of the past.' Continuing, he says, 'Not until one has reached the meridian of life or gone beyond it, does the smell of the past begin to creep over him.' Last fall, in company with an old friend who had been in New Bremen for almost fifty years, we spent the better part of an afternoon tramping over the two New Bremen cemeteries and recalling the names and thoughts of many old-time friends and school companions. As Charles Lamb would say: "Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?"

"Assuredly this is one of the royal moments of the year—fine, cool sparkling spring weather." David Grayson

Memorial Services For McKinley

Going back in memory, I well recall when Pres. William McKinley was shot on the 6th day of September, 1901, at the Buffalo-Panama Exposition in Buffalo, N.Y. McKinley died on Sept. 14th from the bullet which penetrated his abdomen. The assassin, Leon Czolgosz, claimed to be an anarchist. After the world had been assured that the patient was doing well and would recover, he collapsed and died on the 14th. If he had had the improved surgery of today, McKinley probably would have recovered.

www.andyniekamp.com

The occasion of his death was remarkable for the public manifestations of mourning, with services held in almost every community at the home of his burial at Canton, Ohio.

Political campaigns, in my boyhood in New Bremen, were times of great excitement, with almost every household posting a large photograph of the two candidates, of their choice, in the front room window. During the night of the election I had a job of carrying telegrams from the railroad station to the headquarters of one of the party's meetings in the Town Hall. We would run all the way with the latest telegram and deposit it at the rostrum amidst great shouting if the message was at all favorable. I got fifty cents for all my running back and forth.

After the election, in New Bremen, we had a great torch-light parade, with the winning party giving wieners and a bun at one of the dance halls. With William Jennings Bryan, William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, I got my first introduction into politics. And on my first opportunity to vote I am glad to announce that I cast it for Woodrow Wilson.

In New Bremen the service was held at St. Paul's United Church of Christ with an orchestra, organ and the Mannerchor (men's choir) participating in the service. The addresses were made by the Rev. C. Fischer and the Rev. F.W. Bertram. The Bible lesson was read by the Rev. Benj. S. Stern.

The song "My Country 'Tis of Thee" was sung by the schools, and the whole audience joined in singing "Nearer My God to Thee."

THE WINTER YEARS



Skating On Rabe's Pond

I learned to skate quite young on the old Miami & Erie canal. A beginner most always used a pair of girl's skates, for these gave added support at the heel and toe with leather straps to securely hold them on your shoe. It was easy to stand up with them; and it was not long until one acquired the ease and grace of moving across the ice. Later, I had a pair of Barney and Berry boy skates, but always had trouble with them coming off when engaged in a hot game of polo.

Since learning to skate, I think I have only missed one or two winters that I did not get out on the ice. Not a fancy skater by any means; but I like to take long, even strokes, where there is a nice stretch of ice, with the wind to my back. And I hardly ever venture out without a stick that I sway back and forth as I move along and sometimes use to keep from falling. But falls occur, and I had one several years ago that left me with a black and blue eye that took a long time to clear up. I fell forward with my arms outstretched, and when I got up blood was running down my face from a deep cut above my eye. I had gotten a pair of shoe skates for Christmas and the notches in front tripped me. I had them filed off; but I still feel safer with my old skates that I use with an old pair of high shoes with leather heels.

This year skating has not been too good and very little of it on account of the snow. But there are times when the ice is as smooth as glass, with a long stretch

www.andyniekamp.com

between the bridges on the hydraulic where the high bank shelters one from the west wind.

Back in New Bremen, skating was a real sport. We boys would leave the bridge at Plum street and skate as far as the St. John's bridge, hardly ever venturing any farther because of the Minster boys. There was a great deal of rivalry between the young people, even as there is today in some localities.

Our first stop for a long rest was underneath the Amsterdam bridge. Here there were large sections of limestone on which we could sit and rest our tired legs - or bones as we would say. From the Amsterdam bridge south, the towpath protected us well from the cold westerly winds. There was a sandbar not too far from the bridge, where a creek entered the canal and here we had to be very careful hugging close to the bank on the west side. But we covered the miles; and if we got thirsty all we had to do was to punch a hole in the ice with our sticks and lay down and lap up the water, with no ill effects that I can recall.

Rempe's owned the farm at the Amsterdam bridge and I think we stopped there sometimes to warm our shins if it was a very cold day. Mrs. Rempe was a very friendly sort of person and one of the boys in our group knew the family well. But trips like these, to the outskirts of Minster, were not often made. It was more enjoyable to turn around at the Amsterdam bridge and head for home. With a smooth stretch of ice for most of the way, these excursions into the countryside, on skates, are a nice thing to remember at this season of the year.

Our favorite sport on the ice was polo. It might have been "hockey," but we never called it by that name. And the place was Rabe's Pond. Here we set up our goals, and all we needed was a good stick and a battered-up tin can. If the can hit you on the shin, it was not so good, for sometimes it would go up in the air for some distance. Ice cutting interfered with our games on the ice; but to see the ice-houses filled, with seven or eight cakes going up at one time, was an interesting operation.

"Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew
up
Much favored in my birthplace and no
less
In that beloved town to which erelong
We were transplanted - there were we
let loose
For sports of wider range."
Adopted from "The Prelude" by
Wm. Wordsworth

Winter Sports

I go back to the little town up north to write on this subject, for it was in New Bremen where I spent my boyhood and where I touched the canal at so many points. And in the old days, as most people will remember, the canal was a lovely body of water, and as much so in winter when it was frozen, as in early spring or summer. It would freeze over for skating about the middle of December—sometimes earlier, perhaps-and when winter once set in, I am quite sure the canal remained frozen week after week; and that it was one long highway of ice on which we could skate for miles and miles.

I learned to skate about the same year that I learned to swim. In a town the size of New Bremen, this came early. Most all the boys learned to skate on girls' skates, which gave extra support at the heels, around the ankles, and even at the toes. The skates carried the initials "B & B" on the thump part of the clamp, meaning "Barney & Berry," the company that made the skates in Detroit, Mich. Boys' skates were always coming off; and how exasperating it was to have your skates come off when you were all set for a good time on the ice. Our skates were sometimes new, but generally second-hand, passed on from brother or sister, uncle or aunt. We sharpened them at the local blacksmith shop, free of any charge.

Ice polo, as we called it, was a great game, and for this we wanted the broad surface of the ice on Rabe's Pond. These games would begin immediately after school and continue until dark. On Saturdays, the game would last for the better part of the day. All our clubs were the kind that we could pick up in Rabe's lumber yard; and for the game we used a battered-up tin can. It was a long sweep from the north end to the south end; and it

www.andyniekamp.com

took many a long stride to cover the distance. But what an exerciser for our small limbs. If the can hit you on your shin, it was just too bad; for there were times when it would go sailing through the air after having had a good wallop. Other games played on the ice were "Fox and Geese," and "What are You doing in my Vineyard?"

The greatest of all sports, however, was to skate south on the canal, sometimes going as far as Ft. Loramie (Berlin, as it was known), the distance, twelve miles for the roundtrip. For such a trip we would want at least a dozen boys (the more the merrier), for it was the feeling of the crowd that made it such a wonderful trip. Keeping rather close together and resting underneath the bridges, we would cover mile after mile until we reached Minster. Here we were always met by another crowd, sometimes not too friendly, for there was a great deal of rivalry between the two towns in those days, and we proceded cautiously. By keeping in mass formation, however, we were almost invincible; but not until we were well on the other side of the town did we feel carefree and happy, and even then we never knew what might happen on our way back.

There were quite a few canal bends, as we called them; and rounding each bend there was usually a bridge ahead in the distance. Amsterdam bridge, high up above the towpath, was the site of an old swimming hole, and here we rested on the rocks from which we dived in the summer. Tightening our skates, putting in our chest protector, and drinking from a hole in the ice, we would begin the second mile of our journey. The high bank of the towpath, on the west side south of the Amsterdam bridge, protected us from the cold wind, and we would hug the bank for a mile or more. Sometimes, keeping too close together, there would be a resounding crack and a boom, going out from underneath us and shooting forward for some distance, like a clap of thunder in the summertime. At one place, we had to be very careful; and at other times, catching your skate on a twig or the leaf of a cat-tail, one could take a good spill or lose a skate. There were places on the canal where, for long distances, the ice would be as smooth as glass, and how delightful to go over such a stretch. Then, again, there were places as rough as a washboard over which we hobbled as best we could. Passing Goeke's Pond and going underneath the St. John bridge, it was not long until we could see the two spires of St. Augustine Church.

Minster, in that time of long ago, was even more German than New Bremen. Most all the boys and girls in Minster spoke German in all their daily contacts-as a matter of course-while in New Bremen all the boys and girls spoke English, leaving the German language for our parents. We were all, more or less, familiar with the Low German, but some of the words used by the Minster boys and girls were sometimes unintelligible to us, for in Minster, as in some other communities, words were coined and used in a provincial sort of way. German never came easy for me. My grandmother would speak to me in Low German, but I would always answer her in English. And when I had to translate Goethe and Schiller in high school, I stumbled over word after word, so disheartening to Mr. Schrage, our teacher. (To this day I do not know how I ever made a passing grade.)

As I look back-in memory-over these days, I find that the journey home gave us the most pleasure. If the wind was at our back, how swiftly we would glide over the ice, sometimes opening our coats and spreading it out as a sail. Each turn in the canal brought us closer home; and if we did not have to hurry for fear of darkness, how pleasant the path that lay before us. The sound of the light, even strokes, the laughter and talk of the crowd and the fellowship of boys who had known each other from the time they had started in First Grade under 'Miss Maud'-all this was delightful! As we made the last bend that leads into town, we soon passed the old swimming hole, known as "The Old Boat," the skeleton of which still protruded out of the ice of the canal. Removing our skates at one of the old boat-houses, we walked on the ice and over the ground with the feeling as though we were on stilts, and it was sometimes before we gained our usual composure.

To come home just in time for supper, to put your stocking feet under the oven of the kitchen stove, stretching out from the seat of the rocker, I hardly know how

www.andyniekamp.com

I will ever be able to get up. After the supper dishes are put away, the table oil-cloth cleaned off, I bring out my copy of the January issue of "The American Boy," magazine. A new serial, "That Dillingham Boy," by Oliver Optic, has just started and I read the first few chapters. It is such a good story that I want to read on and on, but I must wait for the February issue. I look over the page on 'Stamp Collecting' and 'The Boy Photographer'. . .One cannot easily forget such days or the home that provided the shelter and all the comforts of life, making the days what they were.

One or two other thoughts; I built an ice-boat one winter, which, when the wind was right gave me a great deal of enjoyment. But it was of little use on the canal, and The Pond was too small. Up to that time, however, it was a great undertaking for a boy of my age and it caused others to be built that were more successful. One day, however, when the wind was too strong, I crashed into the towpath. I never built another one.

Skating in the moonlight, on a crisp, cold night, hand in hand with a girl friend, or inside her muff-ah, that was the best of all life's joys! Up and down we would go, and what a crowd there would be on the ice on such an evening. Then, there was the walk home, in the bright moonlight, sometimes only a few blocks. Arriving home, I might look over a page or two of Arithmetic, but I got little from such studies thinking all the while of the pleasures of the evening. And so to bed!

Old-Time Winter

There were heavy snows back in the old town years ago. The milk man must have had a difficult time making his rounds in the morning getting out of the wagon at his different stops to make his deliveries. On cold mornings he would have a lantern burning in his wagon.

My uncle would make a path with a V shaped cutter made of three pieces of wood on top of which was placed a heavy log. Pulling this over the sandstone walks was not too difficult; and I still have the contraption in my garage here in Piqua. We had no such thing as the aluminum snow shovel of today.

There would be coasting down the hillside over near the ice house along the canal. Here one could go far down the hill to the creek bottom below. There were not many places to coast in New Bremen. I always sort of envied the kids living over near Sidney, where the hills were so plentiful and so well adapted for a long ride.

There were times during a heavy snowfall when the Western Ohio cars had difficulty getting through. The work car would try and get through first; but sometimes it would be hours before regular passenger cars could make the trip. In a recent Twenty-five Year Ago column in The Leader, I noticed where they were having bob-sleigh rides during that winter long ago. How interesting to read such items. And, to quote from Whittier again: "We heard once more the sleigh-bells sound."

Thirty Below

Jan. 12, 1968: Exactly fifty years ago, Jan. 12, 1918, this part of Ohio suffered with the lowest temperature in its history, and at the same time one of the heaviest snowfalls. "The mercury is reported to have registered 30 below, and the snowdrifts were so deep at places that traversing with horse and wagon had become an impossibility. That was the night when the New Bremen basketball players and some of the accompanying fans were spending time at Coldwater and wondering whether they would ever get home again." From the New Bremen Sun, Jan. 18, 1940.

Friends of Howard Hoffman, formerly of New Bremen, may be interested in reading this message from a Christmas card which I have received: "I have been down here in Florida working like a Trojan doing my own radio show five days a week. It is more than I had bargained for--find I am not as young as I once was so am absolutely depleted, both physically and mentally. Am going back to Hollywood for about six weeks, beginning the 19th (Dec.) and will see my doctor about getting me in shape again. Will be at

www.andyniekamp.com

the old address: 1825 N. Whitley Ave. Here's wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

Howard

Our Christmas cactus is full of buds and about to bloom, just a few days late, where it sets on a cedar chest in my upstairs's south window. The color and the shape of these pendant flowers is very beautiful; and this plant we have had for years. A friend of ours, on Forrest Ave. has five or six of these plants in her south window to make a veritable conservatory our of her dining room. Downstairs, my wife has a large number of African violets which give a continuous array of varied-color flowers almost all the year around. We also have an Amaryllis lily which has given us blossoms in two successive seasons; but at the present time it is not looking too well and we may have to discard it. At one time it had four huge blossoms. We have gotten away from poinsettias, leaving our enjoyment of them for the Christmas service at the church where several large branching plants adorn the rostrum in our newly-decorated sanctury.

"When the days begin to lengthen,
The cold begins to strengthen."
The Revolving Year, Eugene Wood,
Back Home

Winter Lectures At Boesel's Opera House

Now that the series of travelogues in most cities of any size are coming to an end, my thoughts are directed to the old Lyceum Bureaus that used to provide so many small towns with a program of lectures and diversified entertainment during the late fall, winter and early spring season.

In my high school days, when we always had a lecture course at Boesel's Opera House, it was one of the few occasions when we could meet someone from distant places and who brought the world nearer to us. And we sometimes met these persons in the hotel lobby before the lecture was given the following evening.

The one meeting which I remember so well was when that famous lecturer, Ralph Parlette, appeared on our program, October 4, 1909. He gave me his autograph, which I solicited, and it reads as follows:

"Let's stay acquainted
Ralph Parlette
Oct. 4/09 Chicago"

Parlette was a humorous lecturer and the title was "The University of Hard Knocks." Parlette was Ohio born, lived in Paulding, Ohio, for some time, and edited the old Lyceum Magazine.

One lecturer, who appeared on our program more than once, was a friend of the late, Mrs. Cornelius Koop. He was EDWARD AMHERST OTT, and his most famous lecture was titled, "Sour Grapes." After World War I he lectured on "Victory." He was also Ohio born, and a graduate of Hiram College.

Then we had Strickland W. Gillilan, America's Foremost Humorist, and Roland A. Nichols, also Ohio born, who discovered Harold Bell Wright, the famous author of "That Printer of Udell's" and "The Shepherd of the Hills," books which almost everyone read back when I was in high school.

Some of our winter courses included a men quartet, and I recall that one was from the Ohio State University with our own Albert Boesel, a member of the group. I hope Albert gets to read this, for, as far as I know, he is still sojourning in Orlando, Florida.

The lecture course season usually wound up with two well-known musical organizations of the town—Hengen's Orchestra and the Citizen's Band. Both these organizations under the able direction of Prof. C. M. Hengen. Here is a list of the band members which I have preserved over all these years: August Mueller, solo clarinet; Paul Hengen, 1st clarinet; Roy Hoverman, 2nd clarinet; Jas. Taylor, 3rd clarinet; John Laut, solo cornet; Adolph Boesel, 1st cornet;Melville Laut, 2nd cornet; Chas. Fark, 1st alto; Benj. Klute, 2nd alto; Adolph Pape, 1st trombone; Otto Boesel, 2nd trombone; C. M. Hengen, baritone; Clarence Laut, bass; Louis Smith, bass drum; Fred Hengen, snare drum.

Orchestra members were August Mueller, 1st clarinet; Paul Hengen, 2nd clarinet; John Laut, 1st cornet; Melville Laut,

www.andyniekamp.com

2nd cornet; Benj. Klute, 2nd violin; C. M. Hengen, 1st violin; Adolph Pape, trombone; Clarence Laut, basso; Fred Hengen, traps; Miss Mary Helmstetter, piano.

It is so nice to know that one can still go up into Boesel's Opera House and see the place very much like it was when we sat in the old seats and listened so attentively to what these lecturers had to say, or to the musical notes that emanated from the stage so long before radio or TV brought the same thing into our living room. Who will ever forget listening to St. Parkes Cadman in his Sunday afternoon lectures, or to the fine musical programs of the Firestone Hour or that of the Bell Telephone? And in my book of memories, I often go back to the programs at Boesel's Opera House which seemed to bring the world nearer to us in our isolation during the winter months.

Business Of Cutting Ice

An interesting episode of the old-time winters was the filling of the two large ice-houses located in our New Bremen neighborhood. Some times this came before Christmas, if the winter set in early; but, for the most part it came after the holidays; and once I remember not until early March. This was a great time for the boys. If we could manage it some way or other, or if the work continued till a Saturday, we might have a job pushing the ice with a pike-pole at $1.00 for the day, a large sum back then. This seldom happened, however, except for the boy whose father managed the ice-houses. But as spectators we often gave a willing hand in order to assist with the work.

Some mornings, on our way to school, crossing the swinging bridge and looking over towards the Pond, we might see a horse walking back and forth over the ice, followed by an ice plow and a man, by which the ice was perforated before cutting into blocks. The two ice-houses along the canal and some distance from the pond were being put in condition for the long storage, with the erection of the ice-way and the platform running alongside leading from the canal high up into the first house. The laborers having been called, and everything placed in readiness for the next day, the actual cutting would begin and a passage-way made leading from the pond to the platform going up into the ice-house.

The large cakes, six inches or more in thickness, with sometimes three or four of them together, were pushed on their way to the storage. Here they were picked up, ten, twelve or fifteen at a time and pulled up the chute by a horse, block and tackle until they reached the pivotal point, from where they went sailing down into the ice-house and landing on beds of straw all in a heap. There was an occasional slip as the man bore down on the contrivance holding back the weight of the cakes, and if this happened more than half way up there was a grand splash when the ice slid back into the canal. How we would laugh to see some of the helpers or possible spectators get soaked!

The job of handling the huge cakes of ice inside the houses was a strenuous task, for these men had to work fast to keep up with the man on the outside. Setting cakes on end, with straw between, underneath and on top, in the damp atmosphere and darkness of these ice mows, was difficult work; but the man who we took our hats off to, and who we some day hoped to be, was the fellow whose skill and strength kept the cakes in line for the long pull up before gravity did the rest. We all knew that his wage was the highest of all the laborers.

It was not often that we ventured inside the ice-houses while the ice was being put up; but in the summertime it was a fine experience. My mind is still baffaled when I think of all this ice withstanding the terrific heat of summer, and how it was taken out when needed, the supply lasting for the entire season and up until the next cutting. Besides the two ice-houses near the canal, another small one was located near the depot, and Schulenberg's store had their own ice house to supply the need for the soda fountain during the summer months.

Underneath the two large ice-houses, on the side to the north, were steps and a cellar door leading to the cooler, where pop, orange soda, soda water and beer was stored—mostly beer—and where water

www.andyniekamp.com

was constantly dripping down from the floor above, the whole place very much like the Ohio Caverns. This cooler was known far and wide by the boys in our end of town, for on certain occasions during the summer months we would pool our resources and with the 65¢ collected purchase a case of pop, taking it over into a nearby field under a tree where each of us would have four or six bottles all to ourselves. And what a treat this would be on a hot summer afternoon, with a choice of white, strawberry, and sarsaparilla flavor, for we always purchased the case in mixed lots to satisfy the taste, whims and fancies of each boy making a contribution.

After the ice had been cut all over the Pond and both of the houses filled, the open space of the pond would freeze over again in a sheet of ice known especially for its crystal-like appearance and extra smoothness. To skate over this newly-frozen section was very fine, indeed, but one had to be sure of its safety before starting out on such a daring adventure. I recall one Sunday afternoon, when this open space was unsafe and when everyone had been warned to keep off. One young man, however, who was a good skater, kept going over it again and again, the ice moving up and down like a piece of ribbon and sending out sharp cracks at almost every stroke. The rubber-ice--as we called it--was beautiful in its undultions, but it could not stand for long the weight and the speed of the skater. At last it gave way; and the rescue of this young man from the icy water, under great difficulty, made the rest of the afternoon a nightmare to most of us. I shall never forget it, for I was a mere lad at the time. The story, however, better than I can tell it, is all in McGuffey's Third Reader, under the title "Harry and Annie." Here, however, we saw with our own eyes, and the lesson will long be remembered.

The old ice-houses were still standing up to a few years ago; but the fresh and clean water in the old canal has passed away. Here and there throughout this part of the country we can still see a pond, or an ice-house nearby in a state of ruin, where ice was harvested every year. The old buildings with the sign "Ice For Sale" are reminders of other days and other methods. The old canal, for the communities up north, served many purposes in its day, and one of the most interesting, as I look back, was the week of the ice harvest in winter.

In my writing for The Leader, I receive a letter, now and then, but not too often considering all that I have written over the past few years. Now I want to quote from several which I think quite interesting:

Readers will recall that a few years ago, I wrote an article titled "A winter Harvest." It had to do with the ice-cutting on Rabe's Pond, in New Bremen. Harry Ludeka, R.R. 1, New Bremen, remembers the event with some humorous recollections. He writes as follows: "One event that happened that I want to relate because I know I will never forget it. A bunch of us were skating there and watching so we sure would not miss anything. They were taking the ice off the old pond and Molly Wehrman ran the Johnny hook that took the ice up and was very good at it. On this particular day he was not there, and Ed Heil, who was the owner or operator of this ice and beer business, hired a young fellow named 'Kellermeyer,' (I can't recall his given name) to run the hook; 15 or 20 cakes of ice would make a load. If the hook was not held right, and the 'pull' got over center, there would be trouble. He started out with a load and things went haywire and he flew head-over-heels into the chute, disappearing completely—then he came up between the ice-cakes and what a sight. Ed told him to go home and change and he would run the hook that long. In just a little while he was back and, believe me, we were sure watching. He started out again with a load and it was a repeat performance. In he went again — out of sight as before — and when he came out he sure used some foul language, and went home faster than before. We waited around, hoping for a third performance; but he never did come back."

"If I want to live in the past I have only to think of the canal and the many hours we spent in it in summer and on it in winter. It was all we had to spend our leisure hours and I am glad I had that privilege. Tod Taylor was sure a powerful and graceful skater." Note: All of the Taylor family were good skaters, not forgetting their father.

www.andyniekamp.com

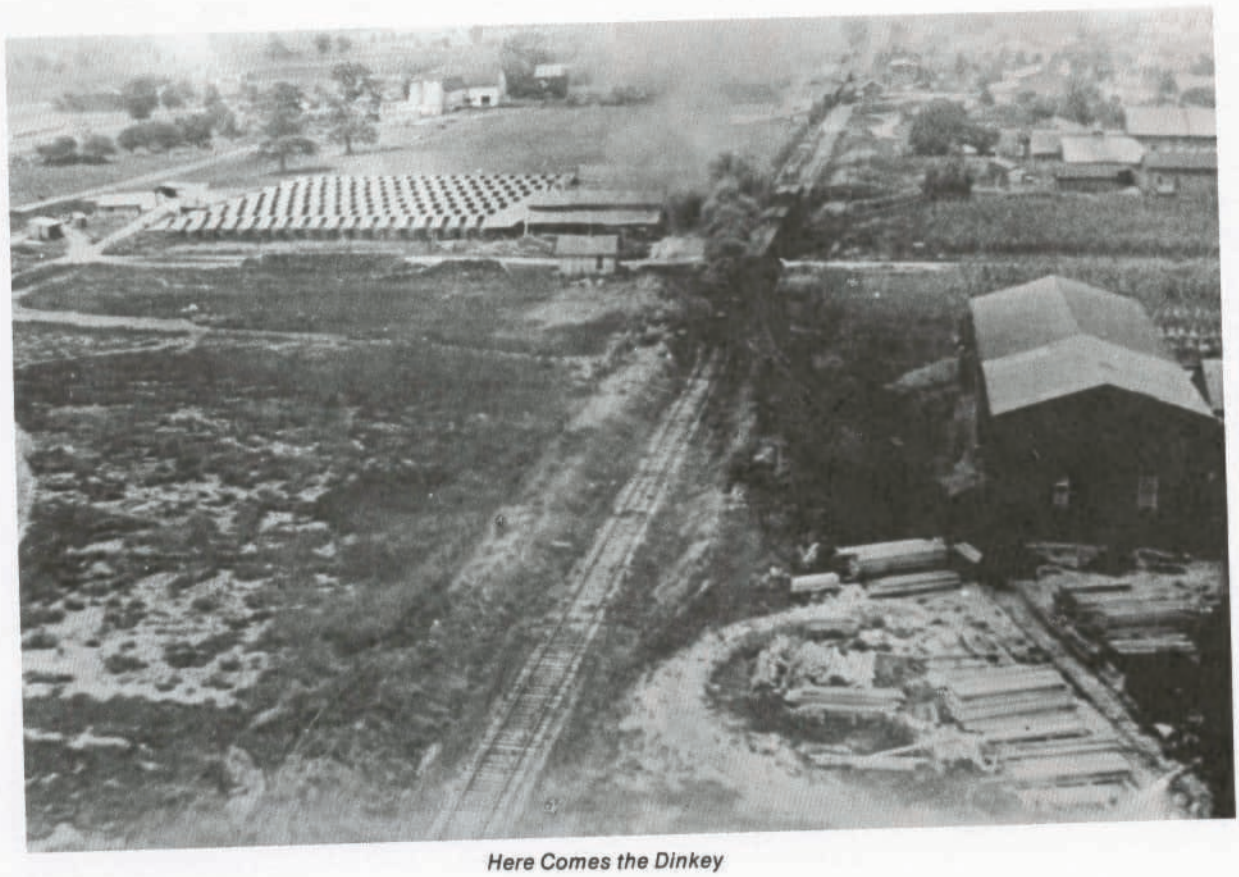
OUT-OF-TOWN CONNECTIONS



"Dinkey"

The "Dinkey" is on its way south to Minster with men from the brick-yard standing out to see it go by. I always wanted to ride the train to Minster, but somehow or other let the opportunity pass by. This old branch line from St. Marys has served this area for many years, and I wonder whether the steel rails have ever been replaced? As the train moved on, the old box cars would sway back and forth, but I do not recall of any derailment.

Now that the old station has been removed, there can be little excitement as the Diesel-powered train pulls up at the former site. And so many years have passed since I so anxiously awaited at the station for the arrival of a Christmas box from my grandparents in Piqua. Fourth of July picnics were always held out at the old picnic grounds at the edge of town, where there was a dance platform beside the road just across from an old log cabin where a town character lived by the name of Doc Faust. Quite often, on the last day of school, our teachers would take us out to the picnic grounds with some light refreshments that we would be sure to have.



Here Comes the Dinkey

www.andymekamp.com

Lake Erie And Western

When I was a boy, the Dinkey, as we called it, came into New Bremen shortly after the noon hour from St. Marys. It was always interesting to watch the progress of this train as it switched in the old home town and then proceeded on its way to Minster, the end of the line. And some of the best bumble-bee nests that I ever helped to rob were located along the line just south of the old Picnic Grounds.

The Depot was a great gathering place for the boys. The greatest attraction was when the race horses and the merry-go-round came in for the old Tri-County Fair. I am sure almost all the boys from the town were there several days before the Fair was to open. And there were so many that the station agent (C.P. Gress) would sometimes have to scatter us with a black-snake that he kept on hand. Climbing up on the cars, working the coupling handles and the air brake levers, we were no doubt much in the way and there was always the possiblity of an accident. But we never got to climb up in the cabin of the locomotive, the most interesting area to a boy.

The tracks of this branch line were never kept in too good a shape. I doubt very much if they ever had a section crew to go over the line. When the train was going lippity-cut, the cars would sway back and forth and it is a wonder that some of them did not derail. But I don't remember any wrecks on this line.

One of the oldest cemeteries in New Bremen was directly back of St. Paul's church. I think these graves were removed some years back. But in a dry summer, I remember there were many grass fires in this cemetery that were started from sparks from the old "Dinkey." The railroad passed directly to the west.

At Christmas Time, I don't remember how many trips I made from our house to the depot to see if a box might have come in by express from some of my relatives in Piqua. If I was disappointed, I don't recall any grief that affected me so much as walking home empty handed. After all, I was an orphan. But when a box arrived how wonderful to see the shipping tag with the address "Master Ralph May."

I cannot recall ever riding the "Dinkey" from New Bremen to St. Marys. But I once took the L.E.& W. from St. Marys to Portland, Ind., to hear a lecture by Elbert Hubbard. I had to stay overnight at the Hotel Adair and come back the next day. This was a wonderful experience in my life, for I had been reading the writings of Hubbard from my early days in high school; and to see and hear him in person, and getting his autograph and all, I will never forget. Heroes, and hero worship was quite a thing in my life. I took several interesting photos of the "Dinkey" with that old 4x5 camera I was writing about last week. One has such a smoke screen that you can hardly see the train. That one was taken as a bird's-eye view from the water works tower, where I had no business to climb. And when Jack Perry found out that a group of us boys had gone up there, we caught all kinds of h---!

Depot Finds New Home

I have any number of projects in mind for things to write about in The Evening Leader. Some of these come to mind in reading the daily paper; and when I saw the picture of the old depot being moved to the James Dicke Farm I could not help but reminisce back to the days when I was a boy in New Bremen and quite frequently visited the old depot, especially shortly after the noon hour when the train came in from St. Marys and on its way to Minster.

Many years prior to 1902, the Lake Erie & Western was the only rail connection that New Bremen had with the outside world in the hauling of freight, mail and express shipments. I doubt if it was ever used at all by passengers except if you wanted to go to St. Marys. The most convenient way to leave town was to go to Chickasaw, or to Botkins (by hack), where you had reasonably good connections for points north and south. When the interurban line came into use we were sitting on top of the world in the way of transportation. It is interesting to note that New Bremen had

www.andyniekamp.com

transportation on the canal (except during the winter); a hack route to Botkins and to Piqua, and horse and buggy to Chickasaw.

In my boyhood days and association with the old depot, C.P. Gress was the agent for the Lake Erie & Western Railroad. Mr. Gress gave the boys a hard time during the arrival of all the concessions and race horses for the Tri-County Fair. It was always so interesting to hang around the railroad when the Fair arrivals came in on the siding and unloaded. As the train was switching, it was a wonder some of us did not get run over. Mr. Gress had a black snake that he used to clear the boys from near the tracks. This was only to frighten us and never give us any bodily harm.

How I looked forward to receiving a box from my relatives in Piqua at Christmas, and for several days before the holiday I would go to the depot in anticipation of seeing a shipping tag with my name on it as the freight and parcels were unloaded from the baggage car. In my disappointment, at times, the long walk home sometimes brought tears in my eyes.

No doubt, the depot building goes back many years. I wonder if there is a date showing when the building was built? The boys found it quite interesting inside, with the posters on the wall, the pot-belly stove, the click-click of the telegraph, and the hand-writing on the telegraph form--straight up and down with all the words connected together, as in most cases. Getting a telegram could be a sad event or a happy one, as when landing at New York after World War I.

P.S. One after-thought: During the oldtime presidential elections, the news of the balloting came in over the telegraph at the depot. As a boy I ran with these telegrams from the depot to the Town Hall. The boys were paid fifty cents, being out of breath most of the time in running the distance up until the midnight hours.

Interurban

I mentioned the old interurbans in one of my last "Random Thoughts" column and shortly thereafter it was my good fortune to receive these two views from Mrs. Elmer Ende, who discovered them in some photographic collection of hers. Knowing that they would interest me, and that I might be able to present them in an attractive way in THE LEADER, she sent them to me; and I shall try to bring out a chain of thoughts that these two picture postcards bring to mind.

First—the old Western Ohio Interurban car and the station in the Schulenberg-Laut block. It is one of the best pictures of an interurban car in New Bremen where these cars came in every hour or so from St. Marys to New Bremen and Minster, and, later, to as far as Ft. Loramie, where the tracks were extended some years after the original line was built.

It was a summer day when the Taylor studio photographer took this picture; and, with a magnifying glass I can identify several of the spectators. The gentleman to the right, in shirt sleeves and a straw hat with a white beard is the late Herman Laut, Sr., who operated the Hotel Laut in front of which he is standing. He is talking to another gentleman I can not identify. In front of the station, with his hand up to his ear, is none other than the late Gottlieb Laut, oldtime barber of the village. No one could mistake his corpulent figure. The little girl is Ione (Schulenberg) Shafer who lives in Cincinnati, daughter of the late Herbert and Lulu Schulenberg. The other men and the young boy is anybody's guess.

Having worked during my high school days in Schulenberg's store, where the Ticket, Freight & Express office was located for the interurban line, every Saturday and Sunday was a busy day for me meeting these cars and handling all the shipments and baggage; selling tickets; making out ticket reports for the day; clerking in the store (the best part of which was the soda fountain); and doing a man's job in loading and unloading the freight cars which came in twice during the Saturdays that I worked there. Those busy weekends kept me out of a lot of

www.andyniekamp.com



Interurban - Ready To Go

mischief; and I got a liberal education in the business world as it was in those days. School homework was sorely neglected; and I never graduated cum laude.

The Public Park view was taken from Franklin st. looking towards Main St. The town fathers in those days seemed to think that maple trees were only set out to be pruned back. These trees could have become very ornamental if they had only been left to grow, as nature intended them to do. The old Civil War cannon, the band stand, and the rear of the old Town Hall, — Fire Department, and Jail, — where the bank and postoffice are now located, are all plainly in view. It was outside the old Town Hall that the late Elmer Ende, retrieved the original town records that had been thrown out when the building was being demolished.

In 1920, the first interurban car came into New Bremen at 6:13 in the morning and the last car left at 10:01. In the very early days the cars ran about every hour and the last one left around midnight. You could go to Dayton on the first car in the morning, arrive there at 9 o'clock; and be in Dayton till 9 in the evening and get home on the last car, changing cars at St. Marys and Wapakoneta and then going through on the Limited cars. A trolley ride was an exciting thing; and "on going a journey." as Wm. Hazlitt has said, "was one of the pleasantest things in the world."

P.S. I might add that Miss K.C. Geiger, editor of The Leader, told me sometime ago that Mrs. Andreoni told her that she came to St. Marys as a bride the day the Western Ohio had its first run there.

Served Community Well

The period over which these cars operated were some of the happiest of my life. I recall so well when the track was first laid in New Bremen and when the overhead trolley wire was suspended from the poles all along the right-of-way. When the first car came around Schmidt's Corner with some difficulty and reached Monroe st., a vast throng of spectators got inside and tried out the seats. Except for the L.E. & W. (one train a day), and a hack route to Botkins to connect with the C.H.& D. the town had no outlet of transportation except by horse and buggy.

www.andynekamp.com



Public Park

With the Power House at St. Marys, and the Car Barns and Dispatcher Office at Wapakoneta, the cars began to operate in 1902. The last car went out of Piqua on Saturday, January 13, 1932. With my twin boys, age 7, we took our last ride to Sidney that Saturday afternoon. I can still hear the whistle as the last car left Piqua for Wapakoneta that Saturday night. There were some St. Marians too who rode the last car out of St. Marys that day.

Ohio and Indiana were the great inter-urban centers of the Nation. With a change of cars, you could go almost anywhere within the boundaries of these two states. Transportation was cheap those days. You could purchase a round-trip ticket from New Bremen to St. Marys for 25¢; Wapakoneta was 60¢; Piqua, $1.75. There were any number of Country Stops where country people could get on and off the cars. A whole car could be chartered for a Sunday school Picnic, or for an excursion to some distant point. Seldom was traffic interrupted, except when there was a heavy snowstorm, or icy conditions. During the 1913 Flood, the bridge over the Loramie River at Lockington was washed out. When the waters subsided the railway company constructed a foot-bridge across the stream. Passengers stepped off the car one-side of the foot-bridge, walked across the bridge to a car waiting on the opposite side of the stream and continued on their way. I don't ever recall of a power outage.

There were two freight cars a day out of New Bremen. As a boy, I knew the motorman and conductor so well that I often rode in the vestibule with them early in the evening on their trips to Minster. I helped with the loading and unloading, so worked my passage. As a boy interested in electricity, I can hardly tell you how much these rides meant to me. My uncle, at home, always had a box of cigars on hand I occasionally gave a few of these to my pals on the freight.

It must have taken a lot of capital to build the Western Ohio, with most of it coming from Cleveland sources. F. D. Carpenter, with headquarters in Lima, was the guiding genius of the Company for many years. Employees were some of the best paid in this area. I recall seeing some of the checks of the motormen and conductors, paid twice a month on an hourly basis, with the many extra hours their runs sometimes entailed.

When the Power Plant was dismantled at St. Marys, in 1940, after it had been taken over by the Central Ohio Power Co. here is a description of what the men had to handle in the process of removing the giant fly-wheels of the steam engines that operated the generators which produced the current. The shortest bolt holding the fly-wheels together weighed 52 lbs each; and the longer ones weighed 75 lbs. There were 16 short bolts and 8 long ones on each wheel. And I think there were four or five of these steam engines, with separate boilers for each one. It was a most interesting place to visit especially to see the switch-board.

I always liked to listen in to a motorman receiving an order from the Dispatcher at Wapakoneta, and how he used to repeat it, word by word, after he had taken it down. And I always felt what an important job it must be to be

www.andynekamp.com

a train dispatcher. How could he help but make an error at some time and how fatal it could be, I sometimes thought.

In conclusion, let me quote from The Piqua Daily Call, Saturday, January 13, 1932: "Tonight at 11:35 o'clock the last Western Ohio passenger car will arrive at the local station on the final schedule run for the road. The car will then be taken back to the barns at Wapakoneta and power will be turned off. The Western Ohio will be no more."

Lest We Forget

On a Saturday afternoon, January 16, 1932 accompanied by my two boys, we took our last ride on the Western Ohio, the round-trip, from Piqua to Sidney. Weatherwise, it was a most gloomy winter day, but all the more so because from that day the cars would no longer be running. That Saturday night, the boys and I stayed up later than usual to listen to the long, drawn out whistle of the last car as it left the Piqua station and went north for the last time. Like Charles Lamb in his comment on the sound of bells at New Year's Eve, I never hear it without a gathering-up of my mind to a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the period when the cars were in operation.

During my boyhood in New Bremen I was intimately connected with the old Western Ohio. I saw the tracks laid, the trolley wire suspended, and the first car come through. It had some difficulty getting around Schmidt's Corner, but finally made it to Main and Monroe Streets. Here the townspeople gathered inside to try out the seats and get the first thrill of riding in an interurban car. When the cars began operating on a regular schedule, the highlight of a Sunday afternoon was a roundtrip to Minster. The cars were as crowded as the cable cars in San Francisco.

For years and years, the citizens of New Bremen had agitated for some kind of transportation that would give us the means of easy access to the outside world. We had the L.E.& W. "Dinkey," but that was mostly for freight service. A hack line operated to Piqua in the early days and continued on even much later to Kettlersville and Botkins. And, of course, up to mid-90s, the canal furnished much needed transportation. But the interurban was a vast improvement on all these old means of conveyance.

One of the first interurban lines was started in 1887 between Piqua and Troy. The Western Ohio was built in the very early 1900s. Wapakoneta got the car-barns and the Dispatcher's office, St. Marys the power house, and the General Office was located in Lima. F.D. Carpenter was most instrumental in building this line, with most of the financial aid coming from Cleveland. A Mr. Riddle was the General Superintendent. A close acquaintance with many of the motormen and conductors was greatly desired, and I used to ride, FREE, in the evening freight between New Bremen and Minster, helping the crew as much as I could, at my tender age.

While going to high school, I worked on weekends at Schulenberg's store, the ticket, freight and express office for the line. For a boy my age, I do not know of any work that could have been



Interurban Accident

www.andyniekamp.com

more instructive or more interesting.

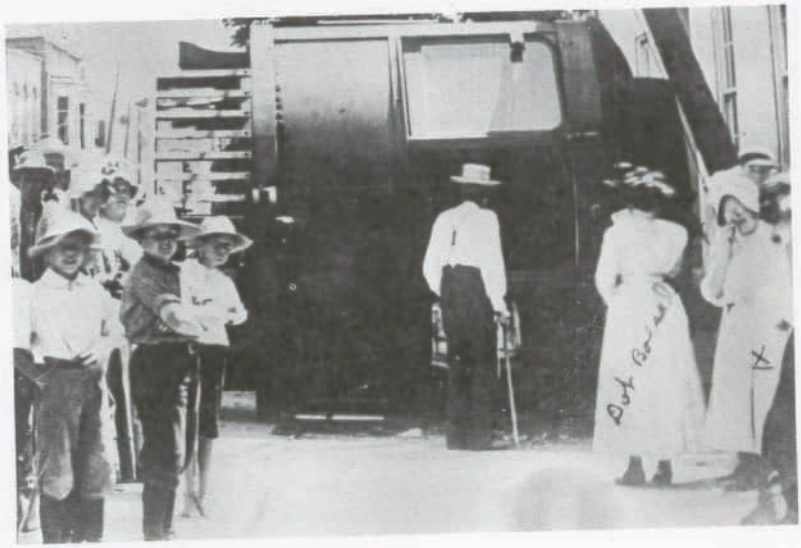
Selling tickets, — a little involved where coupons were used for connecting lines,— making out ticket reports, checking baggage, handling express and meeting all the cars, and contact with the general public and many well known personages from a wide area of Western and Central Ohio. I once rode in a car with the Governor from Kansas after he had appeared on our Lecture Course at Boesel's Opera House.

You could leave on the first car from New Bremen and get to Ft. Wayne by eleven in the morning; leaving there about six o'clock in the afternoon and still get home on the last car at night. Or you could go to Dayton and spend a day at the Soldier's Home, all on a Sunday, with interesting country enroute. The Limited Cars were painted a bright yellow and were very fast in their day; Wapakoneta to Cleveland, via Findlay, Fostoria and Fremont. There were two routes to Toledo from Lima; you could go by way of Findlay, Bowling Green and North Baltimore, or through Ottawa and Leipsic.

There were many famous stops on the old Western Ohio. One I can never forget was Metz Stop between Botkins and Anna. Coming from Piqua, my wife and I used to get off here and walk the ten miles to New Bremen, stopping at Kettlersville for a bite to eat and a long rest. And then there were times when I would check my bicycle to Anna and ride over to New Bremen by way of McCartyville, with a pleasant stop-over at the Loramie creek. These are times "to remember."

And so one could go on and on with many delightful reminiscences of the old Western Ohio. It was said that most of the lines paid very few dividends to their stockholders. And, by 1937, most of the roads had folded up. The Cincinnati & Lake Erie, between Dayton and Cincinnati, was one of the last ones to go. But only a few years ago, interurbans were still operating out of Los Angeles. These were the old-style big red cars, and one could go from downtown Los Angeles to Long Beach, a distance of approximately 40 miles.

Bernard J. Losh, a feature writer for the Dayton Daily News, had this to say in 1950: "It seems that the best the historian can say of them is that they were a part of the American scene in the first half of this century, that they were a sort of neighborly affair, the motorman and conductor being known to most of their passengers by their first names and that once you got aboard, it was a rather comfortable reasonably fast and pleasant ride.



A Major Upset

www.andyniekamp.com

FUN AND GAMES



Oyster Suppers

The recent item in The Leader announcing the purchase by John Gilberg of the old Woodmen Hall, in the above building, brings back some old memories, a few of which I would like to recall.

My recollection does not recall the Woodmen Hall since in my boyhood in New Bremen it was the Hall of the K of P's, the Odd Fellows, and the Rebeccas. On certain occasions the public was invited for an oyster supper in late fall or for an amateur theatrical production. The huge hall was carpeted, and, as children we could run the length of the hall, raising a cloud of dust as we went by.

The K of P's had a drill team and they would practice up in the hall on week-ends. I can still hear the thud of their feet, as they marched up and down the hall as I was working in the store underneath. It was a rather pleasant sound to hear. The dressing room in which they kept their uniforms reminded you of a period in Roman history.

In an old yellow page of the Dayton Daily News I have a photograph of this old drill team: Rathbone Lodge, No. 543, taken in the early 1890's. Just to recall these names is a bit of nostalgia to gladden the heart as one recalls old-time New Bremen: F.W. Greber, George W. Tooil--Captain of the squad,--E.W. Laut Dr. F.W. Everest, John Thiesing, August Faehl, H.C. Meyer, Gottlieb Laut, W.F. Boesche, Ferd Rabe, Edward Millette, James Feather, A.C. Buss, Martin Knost, L.W. Kunning, Charles Block, F.A. Ende, Herb Schulenberg, Frank Huenke, Gregore Gast, Dr. M.S. Eckermeyer, O.W. Taylor, and August Dierker.

My aunt belonged to the Rebeccas, so, in a way I was drawn rather close to the many activities and social events in this famous hall, now to be converted into a display room for the sale of furniture and home appliances. How things do change in the old hometown! I wrote to Howard Hoffman the other day and told him he would hardly recognize the place with all the buildings that have been taken down. I did not like to tell him about the Dierker building across the street from his father's place as he might think that building would go next.

The late Ernest Tomhafe was very adept at wood carving and he carved a link of chain with the letters F.B.C. and the number of the lodge, all in one piece, which hung up on the wall for many years. Then there was a picture of a theatrical group which was over near one of the ante-rooms. And I always enjoyed the view out of the window over toward the lock and the canal.

Coming back to this building, there were two steps leading down to the basement, where Gottlieb Laut had his barber shop and where there was a bowling alley at one time and, of course, the basement under Schulenberg's store. I worked at the store during my high school days and when the Western Ohio interurban cars were still running. 'Those were the Days,'to use an old expression. How New Bremen has changed over the years!

The Schulenberg-Laut complex was probably the most impressive building in New Bremen, with the false facade of the upper hotel lodge. It almost reached up to the sky in our boyhood days. The hotel lobby and the sitting-room up above were much like any metropolitan hotel, so I thought. Later, when I slept in one of the rooms of the Palm Hotel, in St. Marys, I really though I was going to town. It cost 50¢ at that time. I tried to eat in the dining room in my

www.andyniekamp.com

shirt sleeves and the waitress kindly told me that I would have to put my coat on.

This photograph of downtown New Bremen with its unpaved street, horse and buggy hitching posts and loungers leaning up against the building is one of the best pictures that I have in my vast collection of old-time photographs. To the left is that part of the old Dierker building, the ramshackle, frame building with a huge platform alongside it and which in the old days was a saloon where fish-fries were made in the kitchen down below beside the canal, and next to it a part of the old Boesche warehouse. Parting scenes at the Turn of the Century.

(Monroe Street photograph on page 43 .)

Visit To The Reservoirs

I have always enjoyed trips out to the reservoir - not so much for the fishing but for the outing and the contact with a large body of water. My first trip to the Loramie reservoir was made by canal boat from New Bremen, a distance of twelve miles for the roundtrip. The occasion was the Volunteer Firemen's Association annual picnic, when they engaged the State boat from Dayton. It was a family affair and the boat went right up to the Bulkhead through the canal feeder.

But most of my trips to the reservoir, as a boy, were made on foot; and that is why I remember them so well. We hardly ever ventured out in the spring until Good Friday. Making our preparations the day before, and retiring early, we would get up around midnight and leave the town when only the night watchman was making his rounds. It was three miles to Minster and another two miles to Meyer's Landing. Arriving an hour or so before sunrise, with some difficulty we would gather dry sticks to burn, for, quite often, when Easter came early, the morning hours were anything but comfortable.

When the first streaks of the dawn appeared, we would put out our poles from some advantageous spot along the bank and fish for catfish. Before the morning was well over, most of us would have a fairly good stringer of fish, having enjoyed a hearty breakfast round our blazing fire, which would also take some of the chill off our bones. Most of the afternoon was spent in making explorations along the bank, or in penetrating the deep woods which extended all along the shore. About four o'clock in the afternoon, gathering all our paraphernalia together including our stringer of fish we would begin the homeward journey. By the time we reached the Amsterdam rd., our legs and the palms of our hands would be quite weary. But the adventure of it all - even the walk back home in the late afternoon - the fried fish for supper or for breakfast the next morning, with no school on Saturday and Sunday following, well- there were few holidays to compare with it, unless it was Ascension Day, when we made our second trip to the reservoir under a much warmer sun.



Fishing Club of 1908

As we grew a little older and had some pocket money, a trip would be planned to visit the St. Marys reservoir. Leaving on the last Western Ohio interurban car out of New Bremen, with our fish poles extending out of the rear platform window, we would get off at the feeder, walk the towpath in the darkness with only a gas jet burning here and there, and arrive at the bulkhead long before dawn. The wind and the spray kept us from

www.andymekamp.com

fishing in the reservoir, and in the early morning hours we would stay down below in the shelter of the bank and fish in the feeder. But I can't recall ever catching very many fish on these trips. I think the excitement of being so far away from home, with the trolley ride kept us from being too enthusiastic about catching any fish. . .

To hear the Loramie church bells from across the water; to listen to the weird sound of the herons in the early hours of the morning - even to the flapping of their wings; to see the mist gathering over the water or the first streaks of the dawn or a full moon rising in the east - all this is very fine indeed!

Most of us I know have spent many happy days - and some gorgeous evenings - out at the reservoir. The anticipation of such a trip - even when no fishing is involved - is a pleasant thing. My boyhood in New Bremen with the old Miami & Erie Canal and the nearness of the reservoirs, afforded many pleasant hours of delightful recreation and enjoyment.

Vogelsang's Field

The first thought that came to mind, in reading about the purchase of the land by the Lion's Club from Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Harris was how unfortunate it was that the Thompson House was no longer there to be a part of the proposed park and community grounds. This old hotel and locktender's house could have been a Miami and Erie Canal Boat museum, with all its associations with the past and the lock and canal nearby. Maybe a building of some type could be erected on its site in the future when the park plans have come to completion. Let us hope so.

Coming back to the purchase of the land. I am reminded of an article that I had published in the New Bremen Sun as far back as June 24, 1938, when I wrote about Vogelsang's Field, as this whole area was known when I was a boy. I cannot help but reprint a part of what I wrote at that time as I am sure many will remember this large, open field in the way that I knew it in the early 1900's.

Vogelsang's Field was a lovely stretch of meadow and pasture land, with the culvert to the south, the meandering creek (its beauty was marred when it was dredged out into a straight course) and the sloping hillside to the east. An old rail fence enclosed the field on the south and west boundary; there were a few tall trees on the west side of the creek,—one a very tall cottonwood, or poplar; and in early spring or during a wet summer some water always flowed through the creek. Here we would try out our water wheels, made from Rabe's shingles, or float our homemade boats. We tried our feats of jumping, beginning where the creek was narrow and then selecting a wider place until some boy got wet feet.

The field in summer was a battle-ground for our Indian fights and massacres and from which heights we sent our corn-cob arrows tipped with chicken feathers to make them go straight to the target. Many "dead" have strewn these grounds, only to rise again and go home for supper.

One time I remember "Uncle Tom's Cabin" played on the grounds. I was one of the boys who gathered twigs which were placed between the stage floor and tufted with cotton to represent one of the Scenes. Once or twice I recall a balloon ascension was made from the field, the man going up on the trapeze in colored tights and then coming down in a parachute over near Lock Two.

In the fall, as of now, it was the practice field for our football games, situated so close to the Central School building where we undressed in that basement room that many old-timers will recall. And there used to be a sort of public stable near the Main street side where the boys from New Knoxville who attended our high school kept their horses in going back and forth from their homes when school houses were not available.

The late Emil Vogelsang, writing from California, told me that it was known in his day as "Vogelsang's Pasture." Now that it will become a community park, I am looking forward to its restoration somewhat like it was when I knew it in my youth.

www.andyniekamp.com



Skinning the Diamond

Skinning The Diamond

Now that the county fairs are about to begin, I would like to present two of my most famous photographs taken out at the New Bremen Fair. I have presented these once before but not in such an enlarged fashion and before The Leader introduced their new process in reproducing photographs for the paper.

The first scene is a fine view of the grandstand and the ball diamond in early spring when a group was out there "skinning the diamond"--as the old expression described it. I could begin to tell you who some of the bystanders are but I am leaving this for old-time New Bremener's to figure out.

The photo on the opposite page is a most familiar group enjoying some light refreshments near the old dining hall and near where a pump was located. Only one of this group is still living, in the name of Grover Wissman. A most nostalgic photo, and one that I highly prize. The picture was taken by the late Ferd Rabe, who only passed away a short time ago, and who sold me his old 4x5 plate camera along with so many old plate negatives, all of which I still possess and which are in good condition.

Tri-County Fair

From the New Bremen Sun, August 16, 1907. "By the time this issue of the Sun reaches its readers the twentieth annual Tri-County Fair will be a matter of history and the event this year will have gone down as one of the most successful ones the company has ever held.

"C.M. Turner, whose horse, Mr. Peeler, won the 2:35 pace at the fair grounds Wednesday, sold it the same evening for $360. The horse was bought by the late owner but a short time ago for $65."

I don't think the Fair could have been too successful, for, only a few years

www.andyniekamp.com

after that it was held for the last time. But, while it lasted, and for those who looked forward to it and attended its various attractions, how wonderful it is to remember!

The Fair started at Hoffman's Corner. Here the hacks—always two of them—leaving whenever they were loaded up, only one or two more and we're going right out, began the trip, a half-mile east, was where they discharged their passengers. A short distance out of town the road became a two-lane highway, the one very much grown over with grass, so the hacks and buggies could pass each other. Dust was no problem; you simply took it for granted; and when two vehicles passed each other, you were enveloped in a cloud of it.

The Fair Grounds was a lovely wooded area—many of the trees still standing—with seats built around some of the noble trees and where you could rest your tired feet and partake of a shoe-box lunch. There was an Art & Horticultural Hall, a Dining Hall, stands where the fortune wheels were operated, and a huge Grandstand. When the Fair closed up, this Grandstand was removed to the County Fairgrounds, piece by piece.

There were all sorts of attractions along the midway between the Art Hall and the Grandstand. We moved from the one to the other wherever the free show was the best. When one started up another was soon to follow, to attract the crowd. Two diving horses, and a woman rolling a-top a huge ball up and down a spiral shaft, free features, I remember best of all.

But the races is what we looked forward to. To see the horses lined up for the start, turning round and coming up slowly to the Judges' Stand, the sound of the bell or the word "Go," how wonderful it all comes back. And there were jockey races at the old Fairgrounds where the horses and riders moved up to a rubber cord which was left go for the start. You don't see that anymore.

The Merry-go-round was operated by steam. Two barrels had to be kept filled with water and if you could get a job carrying this water in a bucket from a pump near the Art Hall, you could have all



Light Refreshments Enjoyed

www.andymekamp.com

the free rides you wanted in between keeping the barrels filled with water.

Treasured item to be brought home from the Fair was a come-back ball, a five cent item which gave a great deal of pleasure. And then, two or three sticks of ice cream candy could last for a week or more after the Fair was over, if you took a bite or two occasionally and kept it hidden on a top shelf in the cupboard.

The boys in my neighborhood went all over the Fairground a day or two after the Fair was over. In the heavy sawdust in front of the bar under the Grandstand, we looked for any small change that might have fallen to the ground. And I can tell you, it was mighty small. Around the stands of the fortune wheels was another good place to look; but our pickings hardly compensated for the time we took going over the ground and the long walk over and back. But it was one of the things a boy never missed.

Oh, to be a boy again, and take the short cut through Wellman's Field to the Old Fair Ground.

Old Ball Field

When I was a boy in New Bremen, it seemed like a long way out to the old Fair Ground east of town on the Kettlersville rd. Sometimes to take a short cut, we would go through the lane back of Speckman's and then on out over Wellman's farm, approaching the Fair Ground from the south. All the Sunday afternoon baseball games were played out at the Fair Ground diamond, located just across the race track from the grandstand, as you can see from the picture.

One of our first trips out to the baseball field in the spring was when the gang turned out to 'skin the diamond.' Over the late fall months much of the ground would be taken over with weeds and in the spring it became a tangled mass of growth. Here, again, the picture shows how the work progressed, and I wish I could name each one in the group. There are a few who can easily be identified from the photographic print with the aid of a reading glass. Well grown-up boys are in knee pants, and another in the rear has the old-time shirt waist.

There were some very famous games played out on this field. For one, we will never forget when the Nebraska Indians came to Bremen and played an exhibition game. Then, again, a more famous outfit, when the Bloomer Girls, assisted with a few male players, gave a high exciting game when such dress was quite a novelty.

I like to look back to these baseball games played on a Sunday afternoon and how we enjoyed walking out to the old Fair Grounds. Sometimes, if you were fortunate to have a bicycle, it was a pleasure to ride out, even on a very dusty road. One could take several spins around the race track before or after the game. And it was always a pleasure to penetrate the deep woods back of the Fair Ground buildings, many of these trees are still standing today.

A famous pitcher of that day that I recall was Anthony from Berlin (Ft. Loramie). He was about the only paid player of that day. His regular occupation was that of a barber. I don't know when he found time to practice. But he was an outstanding pitcher. Most of all the other players were New Bremen boys: Kisser, Schuloff, Huenke, Long, Rabe, Schroeder, Goll, Thompson--to name a few.

As a boy out at these games, it was a pleasure to pick up one of the bats and fondly handle it, with a swing or two. Then, again, to put your palms around a $1.25 ball was heaven, indeed. It was a long time before any of us ever got to play with such an expensive item. Spaulding and Reach were the famous baseball trade names in that day. I was the proud owner of a 25¢ pud, purchased at Hoffman's Drug Store, which served me for many seasons of the sport. And I even had a uniform made of grey flannel which I donned on special occasions when the BB's and the Buckeyes played out on the old School Grounds off of Cherry St.

Listening to the game last Wednesday between the Cincinnati Reds and Los Angeles, the old-time enthusiasm for baseball seemed to revive again. That was a real World Series game, and I sat glued to my radio in the kitchen for

www.andyniekamp.com

several hours. I used to read about these games, inning for inning, in the Cincinnati Enquirer. One cannot forget the names of the old-time players in the National League, such as Bob Ewing and Miller Huggins, of the Cincinnati Reds, and Matheson, McGinity and Ames with the New York Giants. Bob Ewing was an Auglaize co. boy—one of the great pitchers of all time. I can't recall that he ever played out at the old Fair Ground; but having seen the Nebraska Indians and the Bloomer Girls, what more could we youngsters in New Bremen wish for? They were gala days long to be remembered.

Memories Of Bob Ewing

With the opening of the River Front stadium, and the Reds leading in the National League, I dug into my files and brought up an old newspaper clipping as far back as 1906, when our own, Bob Ewing, was the star pitcher for the Reds and the National League.

Back in New Bremen, where baseball was a favorite sport, we walked out to the old Fair grounds, on a Sunday afternoon, to see some well-played baseball. A Mr. Anthony, who was a barber in Ft. Loramie, was often called on to play on the New Bremen team. Most all the other players were from the home-town. The ball park was in the enclosure provided by the race-track with the home-plate near the Judge's Stand just opposite the track. There was no limit to where the ball could go on a home-run.

New Bremen at one time had a semi-pro fessional team and they went out on the road for a schedule of games. I believe however, that they went broke and had to return back home without completing the full list of games.

Back at the Fairgrounds, the most notable games ever played were with the Nebraska Indians and the Bloomer Girls. I am quite sure the Nebraska group were not all Indians; and the Bloomer Girls might have had several of the opposite sex on the team.

The late Joe Brucken managed a very good team in New Bremen, and I think it was on this team that Al Huenke got his start. He later pitched for the Rochester, N.Y. team and the most famous player to come from the old hometown, even though he was raised in the country.

PLACES OF WORSHIP



Candy, Nuts And An Orange

A book that I like to read from at Christmas and the night before is Washington Irving's "Sketch Book." Irving was in England at the time when he wrote on "Christmas," "Christmas Day," "The Christmas Dinner," "Christmas Eve," and "The Country Church." All have the real enjoyment of Christmas. One of the most beloved of American authors, I find his book as fresh and delightful, at this season of the year, as when I first read the author in high school. "Books, like friends, should be few and well chosen. Like friends, too, we should return to them again for, like true friends they will never fail us, never cease to instruct, never cloy." Elbert Hubbard.

When our boys were small, I took them back to New Bremen for a Christmas Eve

www.andyniekamp.com

service in Zion's Reformed church where I spent so many happy Christmas Eve services in my youth. They were wearing knee pants at the time, the same as I wore as a boy in New Bremen. In the old days, the late Henry Hoffman painted a religious scene which was high up on the rostrum, and Henry was an artist of some note. Then, there was the beautiful tree, not as large, sometimes, as in St. Paul's, but which added to the charm of the Sanctuary. And what a delight it was when our Sunday School teacher passed out the netted-bag of candy and nuts, and always an orange that went along with it. So little in those days brought so much happiness. I wanted our boys to know what it was like at the church when I was their age. I can still hear the bells of the churches as they pealed forth the beginning of the Christmas Eve service, and walking in the crisp snow as we hurried on to the church.

"Thou day of happy sound and mirth,
That long with childish memory stays,
How blest around the cottage hearth
I met thee in my younger days!
Harping, with rapture's dreaming joys,
On presents which thy coming found,
The welcome sight of little toys,
The Christmas gift of cousins round."
John Clare

"Dies ist der Tag, den der HERR macht, lasst uns freuen und frohlich darinnen sein."
Ps. 118, 24

Painting In Zion Church

Here are two photographs to bring back what the Season of Christmas was like as some of us might remember New Bremen and recall what it was like many years ago.

The scene on Monroe street, looking west over a blanket of snow down the Interurban car tracks with not a single vehicle in sight and only a few pedestrians walking near Schwaberow's Store, is a picture of a quiet village as it was in those days and as it might have looked just before the holiday season on a Sunday morning.

There were toys on display in Schulenberg's store, where the boys would meet to look over the shelves and have visions of what they might find under the tree on Christmas morning. A steam engine, a game or two, and an Alger book was about the most that any of us could expect. Besides, there was the usual bag of candy and nuts and an orange that was handed out on Christmas Eve at the church, always a most acceptable gift and one we always looked forward to.

The sanctuary of Zion's Church had a new painting, "On the Way to Egypt, by Henry Hoffman, with the inscription on one side in German reading as follows: "Und Joseph nahm das Kind und seine Mutter zu sich bei Nacht entrich in Egypten-Land." On the other side, in English, we have "On the Way to Egypt." For the older members of the congregation, German was still a regular part of the morning service while English was used in the evening service. A minister in those days had to be proficient in both languages.

My Sunday school class of boys was taught by Edmund Grothaus and A.C. Settlage. The seven or eight of us read the lesson in turn and then repeated the Golden Text, followed by a general discussion by the group; but I doubt very much if what was said stayed with us very long at that early age. But getting together on a Sunday morning, with a chalk talk by Rev. Stern on the lesson, held our interest while we were



Painting by Henry Hoffman

www.andyniekamp.com



Snow Scene on Monroe Street

there. And with the annual Sunday school picnic, Mission Feast, and the Christmas service to look forward to, I am sure we were all the better for what the church gave us as we were growing up.

I like the winter scene on Monroe street and the church photo is most unusual from that time long ago. The pedestrians on the sidewalk were evidently on their way to church with some of the younger folk ahead on their way to Sunday school. From the looks of the snow, the picture was taken after the street had been paved.

Christmas Eve

I well remember my first drum, my first wagon-load of blocks, my first Daisy air rifle, my first catcher's glove, and my first play harness with bells attached and my first sled. Christmas did not come as early as it does now; and the toys in Rabe's Cheap Store were not put out until about the middle of December. I think we got as much enjoyment looking at the toys from day to day as on Christmas Day when we got our gifts.

We looked forward to the Christmas Eve service at the church, when we met together as a Sunday School class, along with our teacher, and all set for the program prepared for the wonderful evening and the distribution of the usual bag of mixed candy, a few nuts and an orange. To hear the church bells on Christmas Eve—how delightful that was in anticipation of all the joys to come on the next day.

I seldom recall having a Christmas tree; the huge one at the church seemed to suffice in our enjoyment of this spectacle; but I recall that the family of John Schowe had a tree that came from German and revolved from the heat of the candles, if I am not mistaken. The family lived on Walnut St. directly back of Rabe's Store.

What splendid weather we have been having! In taking a walk last Saturday, I left the house late in the afternoon to see the full moon rise over the horizon, and what a beautiful sight it was to see with the sun setting in the west and on such a nice clear day. We have not been having too many of them. And then, Sunday morning, the sunrise was most unusual, in the deep red reflecting through the clouds. It was one that foretold of rain; and, sure enough, the rain came in the evening.

Flagstaff, Arizona--far to the southwest on Highway 66--has five feet of snow; here we are basking in a continuance of Indian Summer with the grass almost as green as in midsummer. The weather certainly plays havoc in certain parts of the country- where one least expects it. As a boy back in New Bremen, I could not think of Christmas without snow. But maybe there were times when it was otherwise. So, Let it snow, Let it snow.

Kite Flying And Easter Fires

I walked around quite a bit on my last visit in New Bremen which was the Saturday of the football game when the new field was dedicated just north of the school buildings. The area where the high school building is located was well known as the Catholic Church grounds, with the old church to the south, today taken over by Christ Church.

The old Catholic Church building was built in 1872 at a cost of $3000. which

www.andymiekamp.com

seems rather high for that time long ago. There were four lots comprising this property and all that area north of the church was a playground for us youngsters who lived in that part of the town.

Directly to the east, separated by an old wooden fence, was what was known as "Speckman's Field". All this area is taken up by the present school buildings. There was a cow shed along the fence, from where we stood as we flew our kites in the early spring. Our string winders were made from old cigar boxes, and we would send up messages on a piece of paper slit over the string that held the kite. It was a very fine open field for the flying of kites.

I have mentioned before that we had our Easter fires on the Catholic church grounds. They were huge conflagrations, the evening before Easter dawn, celebrated with the boiling of eggs on the Church grounds. If I remember correctly, there was a small creek that at one time ran across these lots, and we made our fires for the boiling of the eggs in the creek bottom.



First Catholic Church

Across the street from the high school, and situated along the alley running between Walnut St., and Washington, was a barn known as Faehl's barn. A hearse was kept in the place which made it quite frightening to the boys, but, nevertheless, it served as "home-base" for many of our games. After the Tri-County Fair, we had our own "horse" races around the block from Faehl's barn as a starting point. Our carts were made from old boxes and baby carriage wheels that we resurrected from the dumps at Rabe's Pond. We had colored patches on our arms to distinguish the racers. And I like to recall the running of hoops which was so interesting in my day. The kids today hardly would known what the expression means. Most of our play-equipment was home-made; very little bought from a store.

The old church was abandoned for many years; in fact, it was closed in 1894 with a membership of only three families. I can recall when the boys would gain entrance from the back and how we would look at the empty pews, the rostrum, and with the crucifix still hanging on the wall, it was almost as frightening as the old hearse in Faehl's barn. There was a cupboard in the back room with drawers in which there still were candles. At that time, as most of the boys were all Protestants, we had little familiarity with the Catholic Church.

Except for the front vestibule, this old photo of the Catholic Church shows what it was like when we played on the church grounds. It has been altered quite a bit as of today, from the time when it began with twenty families and when Mass was served on Sunday, once a month by the Assistant of St. Augustine's Church in Minster.

Sunday School Picnic

One always looked forward to the annual Sunday School Picnic, which usually came early in the season, and, later, Mission Feast in the fall. The two, lumped together, were hey-days in our lives back in the old hometown.

www.andymekamp.com



Girls at Sunday School Picnic

Up to some years ago, when our boys were still small, I tried my best to occasionally get out to Koenig's Woods for the New Bremen Zion Church Sunday School picnic. It was always a pleasure, and meeting so many people one had not seen for ever so long. But those days are past and Sunday School Picnics seem to have had their day.

And along with Mission Feast, there were so many good things FREE, that, as a boy, we could not help but think how fortunate we were to be there and enjoy these two holidays. If not on the calendar—they were extra days thrown in for good measure.

I recall when St. Paul's Church would charter a special car on the Western Ohio to take their group out to the grove north of town. Koenig's Woods was as far away but it was not conveniently located along the traction line. We had to use our own conveyances.

There were baseball games, a hike along the creek, or looking for wild flowers and pennyroyal, the latter always having such a pleasant odor. After the noon hour, there would be a little songfest when we would gather together on the grass, with a little sermon—if you want to call it that—thrown in for our edification.

Mission Feast was held on the home grounds. The sermons were long and tedious, and the collection always amounted to several hundred dollars, a large sum in those days. I was not a heavy contributor. At the noon meal and at supper time, the boys would pick out the table where the cake or dessert looked the most delicious. It was truly a FEAST DAY,—for the boys, at least.

We look back with many pleasant memories to Old Zion's Church, now entering upon its second hundred years in New Bremen. Not many are left of that group of boys that hung around the basement door before Sunday School took up and then hurried on in to take our places for our Bible instruction and to repeat the Golden Text. I am afraid not many of us remained for church service,—at least in our earlier years.

75th Anniversary of Zion's Church

Each visit that I make to New Bremen brings its own reward but few excursions ever bring more happiness than such a visit as of last Sunday in attendance of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church. We were right on time for the ten o'clock morning service, the last bell pealing forth as we walked up the steps and into the church. I had made the twenty-three miles in half an hour, faster than I usually drive, but I wanted to be right on time. There is something about being right on the dot that gives comfort and I walked into the church foursquare knowing that the service was prepared with no one else in mind except myself. At least that is a fine way of thinking, for the most that we laymen can give is an attitude of mind. Mine was in perfect harmony with all that followed.

Walking across the auditorium to the old Sunday School room, I found a place near to where I sat under the tutelage of Edmund Grothaus, A.C. Settlage, and Charles E. Steinebrey, on Sunday mornings of many years ago, throughout the four seasons of each year. Eight or nine boys made up this class, the names of some which I have forgotten. I still see the blackboard, however, on which Rev. Stern would elucidate the morning's lesson, the

www.andyniekamp.com

secretary standing up before the Sunday School and reading in German and English the attendance and collection, and then the final distribution of Leaves of Light for Boys and Girls at the close of our morning lesson. I like to remember these things out of a past which comes back so clearly when inside the old church. If for nothing else my trip to New Bremen, Sunday, was of inestimable value, but of course there were also many other fine things.

After that bit of reflection, recorded above, with the Sunday School room to my back, I looked over the many heads of the people in front of me, only about one-half of which I could call out by name. Then, on the rostrum, I saw Rev. Grether seated in the middle. I looked at him a long time (while his head was bowed), to bring back to mind his former pastorate when he served our local church. He has changed but little, in appearance, and I marvel sometimes how near alike we are to our early manhood, even after we have reached fifty or thereabouts. I liked his German introduction to his sermon, more for the pronunciation of the words than anything else, for in translation I am worse now than in high school days, and goodness knows I was awful bad at that time. But all that he said I followed gladly, difficult as it was not to lose myself in sub-conscious thinking, or contemplation on things of long ago. And the prayer of Rev. Settlage was an utterance for all of us to remember. I am sure, in its preparation, that it must have taken a long time and some very serious thinking. Then, with the quartet and the congregational singing of two fine old hymns, the morning service came to a close that filled our hearts with loving kindness and added to our appreciation of the Brotherhood.

The noonday meal, served from the dining hall (where as a boy I attended preacher-school) and then carried out to tables set under the apple trees on a carpet of grass, contained so much of goodness that I shall not dwell on all that I had to eat. One of the finest things in life is good food, and an appetite to enjoy it. I never felt better, or enjoyed so much a Sunday in June, as at that moment. It was an Adventure in Contentment, and few things in life could equal it in enjoyment. Our best moments are just that simple, little as we may realize it, for a day in New Bremen, on such an occasion as this is the epitome of happiness. So I thought, as others with me.

At the afternoon service, besides an enjoyable program, I met many old friends, enjoying this fellowship under the apple trees. I wanted to be there again at five o'clock, and also for the evening service, but this part of the day was spent in a fellowship out in the country. After watching the approach of the Great Storm, with its fast-moving clouds, followed by torrents of rain and great gusts of wind, and having had our supper, we drove on to Piqua and home. Day was dying in the west, but there was not much of the sunset we could see on account of the heavy storm clouds still banked in the far northwest. Occasionally, however, there was a streak of red, but the day was now over after another soaking rain.

Zion's Church Celebrates One Hundred Years

It is not often that I get to spend a day in New Bremen. But when a special occasion arises I make every effort to be there. Such was Sunday, September 26, for the One Hundredth Anniversary of Zion's Church. I can look back to 1915, 1940 and to this day in 1965. 1890 was just a few years before I was born, so I was not even here.

In 1897, when that group picture was taken of the congregation, I was pretty well established in the home of my grandmother, Schroeder, on Plum st., Village of New Bremen. I could not have found a better home, bereft of my parents, as I was.

Augusta Grothaus (the late Mrs. Edward Conradi), conducted the first Sunday School in our neighborhood in the old Grothaus homestead on Washington St. She had a scroll of Bible pictures and I remember so well the one of Jesus walking on the Sea of Galilee. That would interest a boy, of course. Not long after this I started to go to Zion's Church when Rev. Stern was our pastor.

This is the greenest September that I can remember. Coming into New Bremen Sunday morning was a delight after such

www.andyniekamp.com

a pleasant drive through the countryside early in the morning. I could not begin to tell you how many times I have covered these twenty-three miles between New Bremen and Piqua. I have made the trip my horse and buggy; I have walked it once; I have made it any number of times with a bicycle; and now with the automobile it is only a thirty-minute drive. I wish I could have made the trip by canal boat, or have walked the distance on the towpath, for then, little more could be desired. I still have a letter, written in German by my grandfather to my mother here in Piqua, stating that when the next stone boat went through, they would send her a box. This was shortly after she was married.

I had not been inside the church for several years. How pleasant to walk up the steps and enter the sanctuary and see the stained-glass window to the east, with the pews on either side and very comfortable seats. The new church, inside, is all in good taste and we were more than glad to attend all three services and make several calls in between.

How nice to see old friends again, to walk around my old neighborhood when evening shadows were falling and the lights were coming on, at a time of the year when the comfort of home means so much. The nights are getting cool and we bundled up a bit on our way home, driving in the darkness between towns with few cars passing us on the highway. The revolving year—how interesting it can be! We would like to be in New Bremen in 1990—but that is expecting too much.

P.S. One of the highlights of this Anniversary was to take out the Golden Anniversary booklet and go over the group pictures. They are all so sharp and clear and I do not know when I have spent a happier hour perusing this old book.

St. Paul's And St. Peter's

"Selig, Selig, ist dat Gottes wort,
horen and bewaren."

I remember, as a little boy, being taken to St. Paul's Church and looking up above at the dome and seeing these words and the



St. Paul's Church

cluster of stars depicting the heavens. I no doubt could not read the words at that time; but, later, they have come back to me again and again. I am not sure whether they are still there or not.

And at another time, when still quite small, I remember being taken to see the ruins of the church after the Great Fire in 1897. I was five years old at the time. It is one of the few things I can remember at that age. All that remained of the great church was the tower. An old photograph that I have shows the ruins in the basement, with the firemen still throwing water on the smouldering timbers, and the balcony hanging precariously up above with boys and spectators sitting in the seats that were still available.

Preacher School and Confirmation were very important days in the early history of the church. Memorizing the answers given in Der Kleine Catechismus des seligen D. Martin Luthers, consumed hours and hours of time. And what excitement on Palm Sunday when you were confronted with a question and groped for the answer! At that time every thing was in the German language. I was more fortunate, later, to have my instruction in English.

www.andymekamp.com



St. Peter's Church

From an old catechism used at St. Paul's, here is a list of boys that got confirmed in the year 1890: L. Buerkle, F. Boesche, R. Laut, F. Rabe, F. Langhorst, A. Laut, J. Kuest, E. Meyer, A. Knost, P. Tomhafe, H. Vossler, H. Shars, F. Otte, H. Poeppenhagen, A. Schroeder, W. Koester, H. Koeper, H. Dickman, H. Tomhafe, A. Havemann, B. Hirschfeldt, H. Heinfeldt, G. Blase, W. Gieseke, L. Donnerberg, F. Warner, C. Westerbeck, W. Kettler, J. Vornholt, T. Koeper, G. Sollman, F. Kohlhorst, A. Heil. G. Bertke, B. Howeischer, E. Howeischer, W. Hirschfeldt, W. Waterman.

So much for Old St. Paul's, except that there were many funny things that happened in Preacher School, as related to me by an old friend who lives out West.

St. Peter's was too far away from where I lived for me to know very much about this church. The Rev. Fischer, who served the congregation for many years, was a very beloved pastor. Strange as it may seem, I remember his beard too well. And one of his daughters taught in the lower grades as I was entering school.

These old photos, accompanying this sketch, were taken at the turn of the century. They have a nostalgic charm that should quicken the heart of any old communicant of either of these two churches. And all these thoughts are most appropriate for this season of the year, when we approach another Palm Sunday and another Eastertide.

P.S. A Gift Book that I have from one of my aunts or uncles, has this inscription on the inside cover; "Geschenkt von der Sonntag's Schule der St. Paulus Gemeinde, Weihnachten, 1896."

Just A Rubble

On the night of January 1, 1897, after a New Year's Service, the church building was destroyed by fire. The building, together with the interior was ruined. Only the tower and parts of the walls remained. With little hesitation and with a determination that could not be denied the congregation undertook to rebuild the destroyed church. Architect Ph. Jeckel, Anderson, Indiana, was selected to draw plans and supervise construction. The contract for rebuilding the church (not including furnishings) was awarded to William Brinkmeyer, local contractor, for his bid of $10,554.55.

Corner stone laying took place on May 30th and the dedication of the rebuilt church was held December 5, 1897.

P.S. One of the first things that I clearly remember as a little boy in New Bremen was being taken to see the ruins of the church, looking down into the basement as this picture so well shows. I can identify my uncle, August Schroeder at the left with the plug hat, and William Schulenberg at the far right standing underneath where the floor gave way. It would be interesting to have others identified in this picture.

www.andymekamp.com



St. Paul's Church Fire

www.andyniekamp.com

MOSTLY ABOUT PEOPLE

Boesel-Mesloh Reunion

"I was ever of opinion, that the honest man who married and brought up a large family did more service than he who continued single, and only talked of population."
Oliver Goldsmith in The Vicar of Wakefield.

With the time at hand when family groups are meeting in their annual reunions, this photograph of 1901, Boesel-Mesloh gathering is such an interesting group that it is a delight on my part to exhibit it through the courtesy of Grace Ende.

The old-time photographer did a wonderful job and every head is clearly shown, considering how many there were in the group. Except for most of the children and some of the older adults, I can, from memory,—without the help of Grace—identify them by name. Considering how long I have been away from New Bremen, my recollection of its many inhabitants I feel pretty good. So, to the best of my knowledge, here are the names:

Top Row: Marie Boesel & brother, Frieda Boesel & sister; Irwin Boesel

Second row from top: Otto Boesel, ?, Rev. Paul Kluge, ?, Walter Boesel, Adolph Boesel, Mrs. Boesel, Mrs. Chas. Boesel, Freeland Purpus & daughter, Eleanor, Mrs. Purpus, Mrs. Ed Conradi & Mr. Conradi, ?, Gustave Boesel & Mrs. Boesel, Otto Mesloh, Emma, Louise & Dora, ?, for the three to the left.

Third row: ?, ?, ?, ?, Julius Boesel &



Boesel-Mesloh Reunion in 1901

www.andyniekamp.com

Mrs. Boesel, Oliver Boesel's father & mother who lived in Columbus, ?, ?, ?, ?.

Bottom row: ?, ?, ?, Grace & her two sisters, ?, Allen Boesel & sister, Meta, Gertrude Boesel; of the other children, I can only identify Carl Purpus.

The photograph was taken in front of the Mesloh home out on the New Knoxville Rd., and next to the former Julius Boesel home. Rev. Kluge was the pastor of Zion's Reformed church at that time and that was the occasion of his appearance in the photo. Otto Mesloh was a member of Sousa's Band in New York, a famous cornetist. Others in the group had distinguished careers.

Fine Old Brick Residence

The old Boesel residence on Monroe Street, New Bremen, a fine old brick residence, is now the home of the Woodmen of the World. It was a spacious home in its day when such huge houses were built, and I wonder how they kept warm in the winter with no central heating system?

The iron picket fence enclosed a large yard to the east, all of this in what today is the downtown area. The late Ed Conradi and Mrs. Conradi occupied the home before it was taken over by the Woodmen. The photograph is from the collection of Mrs. Elmer Ende whose grandfather Boesel built the home.

They built well in those days, and there are more than one of this type of architecture throughout our area. I recall the old Garmhausen residence in Lock Two; but that house was without a porch but had an arch out in front with his name in large letters at the front steps, long since removed.

The back of the photograph has no date, but I am sure it must have been taken in the late 1880's or early 1890's. What an interesting group sitting on the front steps and the porch but with no information on the back of the photograph as to who they are.

Boyhood In New Bremen

Although I was born in Piqua, I lost my parents at an early age, and I was brought up in New Bremen by my grandmother in the old home where my mother lived before her marriage in Piqua in 1891. The old home, with unpainted weatherboards, was on Plum St., within a half block from the canal.

My earliest recollection pertaining to the town was being taken to view the remains of the disastrous fire of St. Paul Church, the morning of January 2, 1897. And on February 15, 1898, I distinctly recall the ringing of the fire bell when the news first came in of the sinking of the battleship, Maine.

My first teacher in grade school was Miss Maud (Stone) who taught the first grade in the old Central School building. My other teachers, as I went through the lower grades were: Miss Clara (Theising) Bessie Stone (Boesel), Letitia Feather (Havemann), and Miss Annabelle Brown (Isern), all on the first floor of the



Fine Old Brick Residence

www.andyniekamp.com

old building. I will not name all my teachers in the upper floor, through high school, except to say that at that time all the children in New Bremen went from the first grade through high school in this same building.

I don't know what we, as boys, would have done without having the canal at our beck and call. It was a lovely body of flowing water, with Rabe's Pond nearby and so many open places where we could roam and explore, and be out in the woods in such a short notice from where we lived.

In the first days of spring, we would walk the towpath a short distance from the Plum St. bridge, south, and fish what we called, "tight-line", for catfish, using no cork but keeping our hands on the pole for the "feel" of a running fish. Sometimes we would continue our fishing into the night, building a fire on the towpath with the reflection of the light on our line in the water.

Shortly after school was out we would be looking forward to our first swim in the canal, at a place along the towpath south of the bridge called "The Old Boat", since, at that time there was still the hulk of an old canal boat protruding out of the water near this place. Other places to swim were under the Amsterdam bridge, a mile or so from the town where we could follow the beaten path of the towpath where the mules had so recently trod.

I might add that up to about 1905 or 1906 canal boats were still coming through New Bremen. I remember the boats very well, how we stood on the Plum St. swing bridge waiting for the bow of the boat to "bump" the bridge open in order to pass through. We would sometimes get on the boat and ride as far as the lock where we would get off before the boat was lowered to the lower level.

Just before school took up in September the great event in New Bremen was the Tri-County Fair, the fairgrounds being a mile or so out of town on the Kettlersville Rd., at the first road crossing. Along with the races and the huge grandstand, and all the concessions that went along with the fair and the free attractions, the boys from my old neighborhood will never forget the days of the fair. It folded up about the same time when the last canal boats were coming through New Bremen, with the old wooden grandstand moved, piece by piece, to the Auglaize Co. fair grounds at Wapakoneta, where I am sure some of it can still be seen.

Along with the skating on the canal in the winter, I must not forget to mention the ice-cutting on Rabe's Pond when the large ice-house of the Star Brewery Co., was filled to last until the next cutting in the winter following. It continued for a week or more and the boys followed the operation from the very beginning to the end, particularly on a Saturday when some of them might secure a job using a pikepole pushing the large cakes of ice to where the man took them up the gangway to slide down into the ice mows.

Another thing I like to recall is when the interurban line was built and the tracks laid through town and the trolley wire suspended above for the operation, with the first car coming through the town. This was in 1902, and the interurban cars continued running up to 1932 when the Depression and motor transit caused most of the lines to cease operation. Up to that time New Bremen was rather isolated from other localities except for the branch line of the old Lake Erie & Western railroad from St. Marys to Minster.

My first visits to Piqua as a lad was by horse and buggy along the St. Marys Pike (now 66), or by hack from New Bremen to Botkins, where we got on board the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton train for our journey to Piqua. The hack left from Hoffman or Dierker's corner, about 9 o' clock in the morning, and along with our valise and a shoe-box lunch, we passed through Kettlersville to pick up the mail and arrived in Botkins around the noon hour, the train coming in from Wapakoneta about 1:30. That way the greater part of the day was taken up to go to Piqua, which, on the highway, was only a distance of 23 miles. Before my time, hacks operated from New Bremen to Piqua about three times a week, and also over to Chickasaw where they could connect with trains to Dayton and beyond.

I was a fortunate lad to be brought up in New Bremen. I could go on and on, relating the many happy experiences of my boyhood and the care and love showered

www.andymekamp.com

on me by my grandmother and in the home where I lived those many years. Heaven lives about us in our infancy, but we hardly realize it until long after we have grown up.

P.S. John Burroughs said he always went back to the old home place on his birthday to renew the scenes of his youth; and so I like to come back to New Bremen where I lived as a boy and where so many of the old things come back to me so vividly.

Cluck's Nest

Outings at the reservoirs have changed quite a bit since I was a boy. Years ago the problem of transportation was a difficult one to solve, at times. The boys in my neighborhood walked out to Loramie, carrying all our fishing tackle and our lunch for the day. We left in the early hours of the morning, walking to Minster, the three miles, and then several miles east, cutting through fields to Meyer's Landing. And if we went to the Bulkhead, it was still a longer way out and back.

At one time, I remember, we got the loan of a horse from Dr. Schmidt's Veterinary barn, and with the use of a dray from the Poultry House we made the trip over and back to Loramie at Koverman's Landing. But we almost lost the horse when we tied it to a tree with a loose rope and the animal almost choked to death before we could come to the rescue.

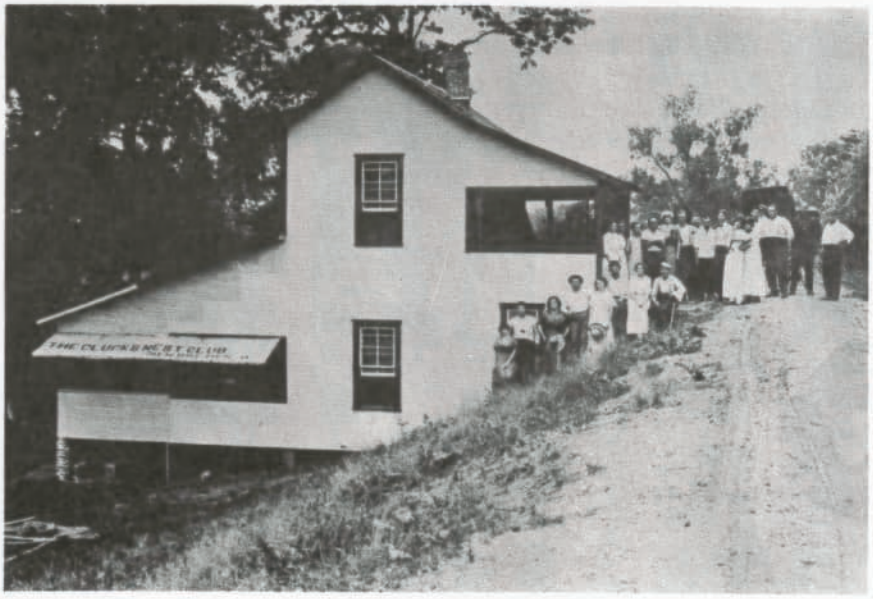
As a boy, I never got out to the Lewistown reservoir. Adult groups would take the old T. & O.C. railroad from St. Marys and get off at Lakeview, which was a very convenient way to get this far from home and see a strange body of water. These outings would sometimes last for a week.

But the old horse and buggy, or surrey, was standard equipment in the old days for older people. In the background of group pictures taken at these outings, you could always see a horse and buggy. If a group of boys and girls got together in New Bremen, we would sometimes charter a hack from the late Morris Bessel and go all the way out to Lehmkuhl's Landing. I wish I could remember what we paid Mr. Bessel for the use of his conveyance.

But the old horse and buggy, or surrey, was standard equipment in the old days for older people. In the background of group pictures taken at these outings, you could always see a horse and buggy. If a group of boys and girls got together in New Bremen, we would sometimes charter a hack from the late Morris Bessel and go all the way out to Lehmkuhl's Landing. I wish I could remember what we paid Mr. Bessel for the use of his conveyance.

The Western Ohio interurban helped matters somewhat; but you always had to walk part of the way. Getting off at the St. Marys feeder, after taking the last car out of New Bremen, you had several miles to walk along the towpath to the bulkhead. Idlewild and Sandy Beach were too far away; besides, you would have to change cars at St. Marys and the fare was too much. And the water was so shallow that you had to wade out quite a distance before you could even swim.

With the coming of the automobile, our trips out to the reservoirs were more



Cluck's Nest, Lake Loramie

www.andyniekamp.com

frequent. Even then you sometimes had a long lane to traverse as some of the-out-of-way places were not too easy to reach. I never rode my bicycle out to any of the reservoirs. But a tour of Grand Lake St. Marys, from the bulkhead round the south shore as far as Montezuma would be quite interesting in mid-October. From Minster or Ft. Loramie the west bank of Lake Loramie is an easy one to follow from the seat of a bicycle with a fine view over the water. The two spires of Minster church, with the sun setting in the northwest, and the landscape in the foreground, remind one of a painting by the French painter, Millet. It might easily be "The Gleaners," or "The Angelus."

The Cluck's Nest cottage out at Loramie was one of the first cottages on the west bank of the reservoir. Built on a hillside, it was more a residence than a cottage. The location, with the reservoir out in front and the creek in the rear and an extensive grass area made it an ideal camping site. Up until a few years ago, when it burned down, it was the scene of many outings by the older men of the town. A house wren built a nest on one of the foundation supports where the building was open on the creek side, and strange to think of it, this comes to mind as I write this piece.

Only a few of the two outing groups shown herewith are still among the living. It is a scene from out of the past when so many hearts were young and gay. Such an outing was a time to remember, and it seems as though you did not have to get very far from home to have a good time.

A Cluck's Nest Party out at Loramie: Left to right standing--Frank Huenke, Henry Goll, Bob Wentzel (Dayton); Left to right, seated include Emil Wissman, E.R. Haines, Fred Kamman, George Gast, Fernando Bruns, Emil Nussmeyer, Grover Wissman, Otto Boesel, and Charles Weinberg.

Early Scene In New Bremen

My first home in New Bremen with my grandmother was in a small one-story frame house with unpainted weatherboards situated on Plum St. just off Washington where on the present site it was later constructed into a story and half, along with other improvements including a front porch.

I was a lad going on four years at the time with two uncles and an aunt along with my grandmother comprising the family. A few years later I started in school in the first grade with Miss Maud (Stone) my teacher in the old Central School building.

In an old issue of the Ohioana quarterly, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale tells of his boyhood Christmases in Cincinnati where his father was a Methodist minister with an income of around $1,500 a year, far beyond what we had back in New Bremen.

But Christmas was, indeed, a very happy time, especially with the bag of candy, nuts and an orange that we got at the Christmas Eve service in good old Zion's Reformed church and where there was always a huge Christmas tree and sometimes a new painting by Henry Hoffman.



Mixed Group from New Bremen

www.andyniekamp.com



Early Home

I always looked forward to receiving a box from my relatives in Piqua, and prior to the actual day I made several calls at the railroad station anxiously looking forward to seeing a wooden box with a shipping tag addressed to Master Ralph May, New Bremen, Ohio, coming by freight on the noon-hour train.

We had candles and strings of popcorn on our little tree, the candles in little tin holders that were pinched on the several outward extending branches so that they would not be near where the tree could catch on fire. Even at that, one had to be continually on the watch to avert a tragedy and setting the house on fire.

As I grew up I can recall some of the wonderful gifts that I received on Christmas: a Daisy air rifle, a red painted sled, a drum that always had to be tightened up, a pair of rubber boots, but most often a pair of felt boots in which your feet were kept snug and warm while romping in the snow.

The joy of Christmas morning when we visited in our neighbor houses to see what gifts were received by those with whom we were most intimate, and the afternoon in playing outdoors, then coming in for a hearty supper and early to bed after looking through one or more story books (some second-handed) that came in the box from Piqua along with some much-needed wearing apparel such as a pair of shoes, mittens and stockings.

In those winters of long ago, with unpaved streets where the snow would stay in the wagon ruts, we had sleighing for weeks upon weeks, using our sleds to hook on to some moving sleigh, as we made the rounds in the town and sometimes far out in the country. Coasting down the hillside near the ice houses was a favorite sport, with skating on the canal and watching the men put up the ice from Rabe's Pond and filling the two ice houses which continued for a week or two if the weather held out.

After Christmas we looked forward to the New Year when we went from house to house in our neighborhood singing, "Kling, Klang, Ring Merry Bells, and Hail the Glad New Year," until the door opened and we were given some wine and a few cookies. Along with our cap pistols, well bundled up for the cold weather, our chest protectors well tucked in, we made the rounds of our neighborhood in the early hours of the New Year. But winter was the best time for indoor enjoyment. The town was small and the boys there were hemmed in by their inexperience and ignorance; but the simple home was large with vistas that stretched to the ends of the earth, and it was serenely bright with a grandmother's love for one deprived of his parents at an early age.

An Old Home

When Theodore Roosevelt was president of the United States, he had much to say about race suicide. Having a family of seven children himself, he was thinking of the dwindling population in the country, where other families had but two or three children. But this photograph would have been a delight to him with all the group assembled before the front of the house and the fence on the side. No doubt two or three families are represented, - from the looks of things; and I find the photograph one of the most delightful that I have ever seen.

This house is still a part of New Bremen. In my day it was the home of the Solms family, and, later, that of Alfred Steinebrey. The house has been moved back from the sidewalk with a porch added to the front.

www.andymekamp.com



An Old Home in New Bremen

When the picture was taken the Adolph Boesel family occupied the house. Adolph is standing before the shuttered window and Mrs. Boesel nearby, I believe. I should have consulted Mrs. Elmer (Grace) Ende before attempting to present the photographs to my readers. I'll leave Grace comment about it after it is presented in the paper.

Let me comment a little on what I see in the picture: The two three-wheel velocipedes were the thing in that day for youngsters; and it is interesting to note that our first Oldsmobiles had the same type of steering handle. Then, at the door-step, you see the old foot scraper one of which I still have in my basement and which I have put off so many times installing on my own front steps. We had one at the old house on Plum Street and it is interesting to note the spire of St. Paul's Church in the distance.

The spouting coming down at the middle of the house is most unusual. No doubt two families lived in this house as there is another elderly man sitting on the steps at the back of the house. The charm in such a photograph lies in our ability to recapture a part of the past, when there were not the many problems that we face today; when life was easy-going and the family a closer unit than it is today, I believe. Large two-story houses were built directly to the front sidewalk and the idea of a front porch seldom thought of. The sidewalks were of brick, and how well we remember them as they had to be weeded in the long summer days. Sometimes people would put salt in the crevices, but the best way was to get down on your hand and knees and root out the weeds with a small knife.

Anyone wishing to view this house today can see it on the northwest corner of Ash and North Main Street, in New Bremen. I am looking forward to some interesting sidelights to this photograph and I wish to thank Grace Ende for the loan of the picture.

Miss Maud's First Graders Move On

I am sure this photo will evince more interest than the First Grade picture of 1899-1900 that was shown in The Leader on March 7, along with the winter scene of the old Central School building. The boys and girls have grown up and they are all the more easily identified. With few exceptions—not even being a member of either of the classes—I can name almost everyone. Quite a few of these two groups have passed away; those living are in their mid-seventies.

Here are the names, not in any particular order; but with their grown-up faces I am sure those interested can easily pick them out: From the left moving over to the right, going down each row of seats:

Richard Boesel, Hunter Kuenzel, Lawrence Heitkamp, ..Garmhausen, Elmer Roettger, Alfred Rabe, Howard Hoffman, Amber Neuman, ..Schroeder.

Moving over to the right: ..Grothaus, Milton Boesel, Leo Sunderman, Irene Eckermeyer, Ora Gilberg, Vernon Neuman, Goldie Schmidt, Honey Gobrecht,..Garmhausen

Next row: Court Ihle, ..Gieseke, Pearly Heinfeldt, ..Fischer, Lola Patterson.

Second row from end: Harry Flack, .. Gress, Clara Vogelsang, Naomi Grothaus.

End Row: Irwin Koeper, Pinney Kellermeyer, Al Huenke, Homer Buss, Meta Boesel, Alma Heil

www.andyniekamp.com



Miss Maud's First Graders Move to High School

Standing beside blackboard: Chas. Garman, Superintendent Lady Teacher (not identified by name), H.A Schrage, John Halsema, Principal.

The large picture on the wall is "The Roman Chariot Race." The buzzer for the change of classes is on the ledge of the transom, with the piano at one end and the old Globe-Wernicke bookcase in the corner. All the classes of the New Bremen High School graduated from this room where at one time the Freshman, Junior, Sophomore and Senior classes were held.

P.S. Julitta (Elbert) Wehmeyer, of Dayton, in a recent letter, gives these additional names of pupils in Miss Maud's class of 1899-1900: Milton Boesel, Carl Purpus, Marie Dicke, Clara Wehmeyer, Ora Gilberg, Amber Neuman, Irma Elbert, Aurelia Wissman.

Look-back To The Gay '90's

Among some old photographs taken from a plush-covered album, this one taken at Wapakoneta by the old Hubbard Studio, will recall, in a way, a pilgrimage to that County Seat where no doubt the group had previously engaged in a poker game, as the chips on their headgear well shows.

They were young men at the time,-all from New Bremen-and I wonder how they made the trip to Wapakoneta, for no interurbans were running at that time? Besides, my uncle August, with whom I made my home in New Bremen, I knew all the others quite well from my residence in the old hometown.

Early days in portraiture took on many group scenes that are most uncommon at this time when picture-taking no longer has the allurements that it had back in the 1890's. The derby hats worn by the men bring back thoughts when I wore my first stiff-cady. There was a hat store in the Dayton Arcade where no hat was sold over $2.00, and it was there that I purchased my first Derby.

Right out from the gay 90's are these young blades of New Bremen in yesteryears. Left to right, they are William Nieter, August Schroeder, William Knipple (seated), August Rabe and Emil Vogelsang.



Young Blades of Yesteryears

www.andyniekamp.com



White Mountain Picnic in 1926

White Mountain Picnic

When the churning of butter was the chief business of the White Mountain Creamery in New Bremen, now taken over by the Beatrice Company, route men gathered the cream from the farmers over a large area surrounding New Bremen, and when much of it was also delivered to the creamery by the old interurban line of the Western Ohio.

In the 1920's and later these route men, together with their families would come to New Bremen for an all-day picnic and a tour of the creamery. Altogether, it made a huge group. This picture was taken at the Louis Huenke barnsite. The picture is dated 1926 and I am pleased to show it through the courtesy of Leo "Pete" Broerman, of Newport.

Manufacturing facilities at the New Bremen plant have changed considerably since those days when this picture was taken. At that time, even the butter tubs in which the butter was shipped on the old Lake Erie & Western were even made in New Bremen at Rabe's factory. They were of wood construction and it was interesting to see them made, reminding one of the old days of the many cooper shops in our area.

The White Mountain Creamery was an outgrowth of a very small operation east of town on the old Fairground road. As a boy I made many trips to this creamery, along with other boys from my neighborhood. We drank the rich buttermilk from a dipper and always took home a bucket full. There was a pond at the creamery which supplied water for the steam boiler and where we would sometimes go out on a raft or catch tadpoles to take home in a Mason jar. And along the creek nearby there was a redhaw tree from which we gathered fruit when they were ripe. All this has passed away and we no longer think of the old Fairground road, as its only significance today is a number.

I hope someone living today may identify themselves in this picture.

www.andyniekamp.com

OVER THE YEARS AND LONG AGO

Picking Chickens

The very unusual photograph which appears on Page was taken at Plum St. near the canal bridge where the old poultry house building was located. It burned down some years ago and was replaced by the present brick building standing there now.

It was the season of the year when business was very brisk at the J.A. Long poultry business, for from early fall till long after the holidays the killing and processing of poultry was carried on for weeks and weeks. It was a lucrative source of employment for the neighbors and younger folk in our part of the town, and even with some persons from St. Marys and nearby villages.

J.A. Long & Co. had plants in Portland, Ind., Coldwater, Celina and New Bremen. Besides the handling of poultry in the fall and winter season, all kinds of iron, bones, zinc, copper, tinfoil, rubber, hides, rags, paper and sundry items were purchased. In fact, the whole upper story was a huge rag pile where during the summer months rags were compressed in huge bales and shipped to the paper mills.

These ducks and geese were kept overnight in the junk yard. They were let out during the day on the canal where they had complete liberty, always returning in the evening with some assistance from the men at the plant. In no other way could they handle such a large flock of fowls in the way of ducks and geese. Chickens and turkeys, however, were kept in the crates which can be seen beside the building.

As a boy I picked chickens after school and on Saturdays during the season when the poultry was handled. I worked along with other boys and girls in our neighborhood. Each one of us had a card and it was punched for every fowl that we picked clean. Sometimes we had to pick one over again when our work was not up to par. On Saturday afternoon we gathered at the office and received an accounting for the work done the past week.

The old Poultry House played an important part in our lives during those years when I was a boy in New Bremen. Where I lived was just across the street from the plant. Looking back, I recall how we hastened home from school during those fall and winter months, sometimes going back in the evening for several more hours. There were so few opportunities making money and with the holiday season coming on we were more than glad to even pick chickens, undesirable as the work may seem. It was a means of giving us additional money to spend, with no set allowances from home as is now the general practice with so many of our younger folks.

I am sure this old picture, and with what I have written above, will recall to many of the older folks in the town what it was like not too many years ago.

Speaking Of Books

How many remember it? Back in the grocery department there were a series of plain, open wooden shelves on which recline three or four hundred very cheaply bound books. The covers, paper and typography were anything but attractive, but they were readable and how we did devour them! You did not even have to buy your groceries from the Arcade at New Bremen. All you did was to select your volume and sign your name in an

www.andyniekamp.com

old day book with the title and number of the book taken out. At that time, John Speckman and Charlie Gilberg clerked in the store.

Here in the collection of books, G. A. Henty reigned supreme; he was not found in our school library. I shall never forget the great joy that I had in reading his "Out in the Pampas," a story of an English family with two boys in South America. Then, there were other Henty books as, "With Lee in Virginia," "With Clive in India," "By England's Aid," and "By Pike and Dyke." In all, he wrote some 80 volumes, tales of adventure for boys.

Hugh Miller's "Schools and Schoolmasters", and his "Old Red Sandstone," were also very popular, but Thackeray's "Vanity Fair" was a little too mature for most of us readers. And, of course, there were some volumes by Horatio Alger; but, for the most part every boy had one or more of the Alger books so often given to us as Christmas presents. I recall how we exchanged them amongst the neighborhood in our reading those days.

I do not recall how this vast collection of books disappeared during the time when the Arcade was still a great mercantile business in our community. With its four or five separate stores all in one where you could pass through from the grocery department to that of shoes. The coin carrier from one department to the other was interesting to watch as it made its way to the cashier in the middle of the building.

With the dedication of the new library this coming Sunday afternoon, New Bremen and the surrounding area have access to a most complete selection of volumes compared to what the town afforded when I was a boy back in the old hometown. Our school library in the Central School building was our first library, and I remember quite well the many books that I read from those shelves, such as Coffin's "Boys of '76," "Black Beauty," "Little Lord Fauntleroy," and the Carpenter books in the study of geography. H. A. Schrage was our librarian.

More About Books. . . .

On a recent visit to the library, temporarily housed in the high school building, I could not help but think back to my school days and the little school library that we had in the old Central school on Franklin St. The room was on south side, half way down the stairway where, after school hours, we could make a selection of a book or two to take home for reading. Mr. Schrage, our German teacher, had his office in this little room and he was at the same time our librarian.

And I must not forget to recall the library, or collection of books, at the Arcade Dept. Store where, on some shelves at the rear of the grocery a large assortment of some good reading material could be obtained by merely entering your name in an old ledger book with the number of the book taken out. They were cheaply-bound books and of a very poor type.

My first books at home were old McGuffey readers that my aunt and my uncles had used in school at a time when you had to purchase your school books. Later, they were supplied by the Board of Education, passing from one pupil to another as they went through the grades. But these old McGuffeys, including the old Eclectic School Geography, highly illustrated, were indispensable means to a higher education. After the supper dishes were cleared from the oil-cloth-covered kitchen table, and the coal-oil lamp adjusted to its proper position, one looked forward to several hours of delightful reading, pouring over some of these old books.

But there also was "Our War with Spain," a book that we got as a premium by taking the Cincinnati Times-Star for a number of weeks, and a reference book, "The Century Book of Facts," that my grandmother purchased for me through a book agent that contacts the schools at that time. It was the next best thing to an encyclopedia, and all in one volume.

I like to recall some of the old books that I read from the school library, such as Coffin's "Boys of '76," Frances Hodgson's "Little Lord Fauntleroy," Anna Sewell's "Black Beauty," a story of a

www.andyniekamp.com

horse. Then there were the volumes by Sarah K. Bolton - "Poor Boys who became Famous," American and English Authors and Men of Science. There was very little fiction in the school library.

I'll never forget the enjoyment I had in reading certain books from the Arcade library. Horatio Alger's "Erie Train Boy," one of the very best boy books by that author who must have written some eighty other similar volumes. Then, G. A. Henty must not be overlooked. One I recall so distinctly was "Out on the Pampas," an English boy's experience in Argentina. Of more educational value I must not forget to name Hugh Miller's "My Schools and Schoolmasters," and "The Old Red Sandstone."

My introduction to Mark Twain came rather late. "Huckleberry Finn" went through our neighborhood but it did not come from either of the two libraries. The same might be said of William Dean Howell's "The Flight of Pony Banker," a gift by one of our teachers to a neighbor boy. I was a long-time subscriber to the American Boy, a magazine published in Detroit for a dollar a year, and it was eagerly read from cover to cover, and I still have most of the issues up in my attic.

What a rich harvest of books in the New Bremen Public library! We had nothing at all like it in my school days at old Central. I read in the paper that the new library building will be built on the northwest corner of Washington and Front Sts., where the surrounding area will no doubt be developed into a park making the site most attractive. I could not help but think, in a rather funny way, that the old Mill Stable was located near this point. Who ever would have thought, when I was a boy in New Bremen, that one day a Public Library would be built at this site?

These were just a few of the thoughts that I had while spending an afternoon in the Public Library at New Bremen. It is always so interesting to get back to the town and note the progress that has been made since I was a boy back there at the turn of the century.

The Bloody Barn Battle

Nearly one hundred years have passed--ninety-five to be exact this coming Thanksgiving--since the Speckman & Nieter grocery store was burglarized and the robbers hideout discovered in the Henry Mueller barn east of town just opposite the site of the old fairgrounds.

The robbery had taken place during the evening prior to Thanksgiving, but not until the afternoon of that day were there any clues to the robbery until Mr. Mueller came to the home of Town Marshall, Frank Lindenberg, with a satchel containing burglarly tools which had been found near a straw stack outside the barn. Mr. Mueller at that time not knowing of the burglary.

It was decided to form a posse, as from all indications the robbers were no doubt hiding in the barn prior to making any attempt to get away. Not wishing to encounter the robbers during the daylight, Marshall Lindenberg, Constable August Wehrman, J. H. Boesche, and Dr. W. H. Woods, all heavily armed proceeded to the Mueller farm. There they were joined by Mueller and his eldest son, Henry, Jr. Mueller's two youngest sons, John F. and August W. (later operators of Muellers Brothers clothing store) took up positions on the outside to warn of any attempt of the robbers trying to escape.

Marshall Lindenberg, with a lantern entered the barn and a shot was soon fired extinguishing the light. A few moments later bullets were directed at the posse. Grabbing pitchforks, two of the men sprang to the mow and began plunging them into the straw. A cry from Lindenberg announced that he had been hit, and he staggered to the open, making his way to the house with a bullet in his abdomen. Two of the revolvers failed to operate and were discarded by their owners for pitchforks.

Three men were seen making their way from the barn in the moonlight, each firing as they went. One of the men, while climbing a rail fence, was brought down by a shot from Dr. Wood. The other two made good their escape in a nearby woods. Con-

www.andyniekamp.com

stable Wehrman had been forced to follow Lindenberg to the farm house for medical attention, a bullet having pierced his arm. The elder Mueller and his two sons and Boesche and Wood escaped unscathed.

Investigation showed that the burglar who had been brought down had been instantly killed. A search of his body failed to reveal anything that would make identification possible. Marshall Lindenberg, found to be in dangerous condition, was removed to his home on Vine St. where he died within a few days after the shooting.

In my day the best account of the robbery was written by the noted feature writer, Howard Burba, of the Dayton Daily News in 1935, along with three illustrations, one showing a picture of the old barn, another taken out at the German Protestant Cemetery with an "X" mark on the grass near an old pine tree where the dead robber was reportedly buried, and below this picture two stone markers where Marshall Frank Lindenberg was buried. It would be interesting, even at this late day, to try and locate the grave of the unidentified robber.

My heading of this article is the one Mr. Burba used in writing his piece which took up practically a whole page of the newspaper. He gave a very lurid account from which I would like to quote several paragraphs: "Fifty-six years have come and gone since the little settlement of New Bremen crashed the front pages of newspapers all over the country and set police of Ohio and adjoining states on one of the greatest man-hunts the criminal history of this section records."

"Today it is almost a forgotten chapter in the annals of this peaceful little city of sturdy souls, ancestors largely of law-abiding German immigrants who settled it when Ohio was young...Seldom is there a discordant note in the daily routine of New Bremen. Its clean and inviting business places, its well-kept and comfortable homes and its atmosphere of hospitality gives no hint that once upon a time grim tragedy stalked its midst and the blood of a brace public servant stained its fertile suburban soil. Time has erased practically every vestige of the famous gun battle staged in the outskirts of New Bremen some 56 years ago. "

Photo of the old barn is from the collection of Harold Meyer, S. Washington St., New Bremen. The barn burned down some years ago after it was struck by lightning.



The Bloody Barn

Gypsies, Pedlars, And Umbrella Menders

Gypsies, pedlars, and umbrella menders--seems strange to be writing on this subject during this bitter, cold weather. But I remember them well and for many years have been interested in the writings of George Borrow. And gypsy life has always seemed fascinating to me, a real lover of the outdoors. Not too long ago, towards the end of October, I rode my bicycle from Piqua to Evergreen Lake one Saturday afternoon and slept out on a park bench, in the open but under a persimmon tree. It was quite an adventure, coming back home on Sunday morning, the roundtrip twenty miles or more. I even wrote a little piece on my "Camping-out" and had

www.andyniekamp.com

it published in the Dayton Daily News, together with illustrations which were taken some days later on my return.

Boys and girls today know nothing at all about gypsies, umbrella menders, or pedlars as we knew them in my day. I recall one time, after we had enjoyed a good swim in the canal under the Amsterdam bridge, that we saw a gypsy caravan coming into town from Minster, made up of six or seven wagons. We would not have missed anything like that if we could help it.

The women were gaily attired, covering both sides of the street as they made the rounds of the town telling fortunes and lifting pocket books wherever they could. They were dark-skinned, wore long ear rings, and kept your attention watching their face as their hands moved elsewhere. The men folks usually stayed in their wagons and sometimes they were kept on the move to hasten leaving town.

One time, coming home from St. Marys on the interurban, I saw a band of them preparing camp on a lovely stretch of grass near the Koop school house. They had a fire going and the picture from the car window is one I shall always remember.

Pedlars came to your house with several suitcases filled with all sorts of odds and ends. They most usually made a sale, for a housewife seldom turned them down. After the sale, if there were any children around, they were always rewarded with a trinket or two. Glass-covered metal disks with a clown's face and open spaces where his teeth could be filled in by rolling little colored pellets in the proper spaces.

We had a little room off to one side of our barn in which we kept all sorts of rags and a day bed. And one time a gypsy woman slept in there one night. The next morning, however, she was in a tantrum, for something frightened her in the early hours of the morning.

Umbrella menders were most common. Occasionally a scissor-grinder would come around with his mechanical contrivance on his back. Umbrella menders also had huge packs to carry and they were most generally men up in years. Besides their usual fee, they always got a good handout in food, eating it on the doorstep, like the tramps that made their rounds, for we would never think of bringing them inside. I recall that my grandmother had a special cup that she used when these men came around.

Gypsies could make themselves rather comfortable in their wagons, but the general run of pedlars, travelling singly, had no habitation except what they could find on the road. One often wondered where and how they slept at night, and how they fared from day to day, whereas we were secure in our homes and led a sheltered life.

Gypsies in England and on the Continent of Europe are still quite common. In a calendar folder on Beautiful Britain, I have a most attractive picture of "Gypsies at Epsom Downs," showing gypsy life at the door of a caravan which is still carved and painted in the traditional manner.

In an old copy of The Independent magazine, I have an account of a school teacher who, in ill health and accompanied by her husband, went by horse and wagon all the way from Cleveland to Tennesee during the late summer and fall months, seeking health on the way and a warmer climate for the winter. Such a journey, at that time, years ago, when there was little automobile traffic, how wonderful! I can still see the picture of their horse and wagon, with the covered top and the smokestack coming out at the side. And then to write about it and have it published in a magazine gives much of the enjoyment of the trip to whoever may happen to read it. With one's imagination one can travel all the way, encountering all the many interesting stopping places as one journeys along.

I think I might have made a good gypsy.

New Bremen From The Air

As a fitting conclusion to my aerial photographs of the old town, I am now

www.andyniekamp.com



Monroe Street

submitting the one which I think is the best of the lot - the village in almost its entirety, showing its largest industry at that time and the old Central School Building and school-yard, with the rest of the town looming up in the distance. And I am re-submitting the one looking north over the brick-yard since the first one was too dark a print that could not be clearly shown on newsprint.

Collecting photographs and picture post-cards has been a hobby of mine for many years. Sometimes, when I take a trip, I leave my Kodak at home, for the picture post-cards are so fine these days that one can easily forego much picture-taking. But my son has just come home from a trip out West and he has some photos of the Grand Canyon that are very sharp and clear. Those that I took some years ago turned out badly.

The era of picture post-cards (mostly comic), was coming in when I was a lad in New Bremen. Some of the stores had huge revolving racks filled with cards of all kinds but seldom a good print of a local scene.

Our part of Auglaize Co. was always called the "Dutch" country. But we were mostly of German descent, and not from The Netherlands. One of the most unique souvenirs that you could buy at Schulenberg's Store was a tiny pair of wooden shoes tied together with a mailing card. These shoes were hand carved in Minster and sold for the small sum of 25¢. Custom-made leather shoes and wooden shoes were made in Minster when I was a boy. But the only place that I remember where wooden shoes were worn was at the creamery.



Aerial View of New Bremen

www.andyniekamp.com



Monroe Street, Looking North

When a dull moment arrives, and I want to go back to the years of my youth, I get out one of my many picture albums and pore over some of the old street scenes, buildings, etc., of the time when I was a boy. But writing an article to accompany one of these pictures requires a little effort and some reflection on the past. And at this I am not always too successful.

There were many exciting moments in old-time New Bremen. The Dierker Explosion; paving of the downtown streets; Kinsey Komedy Kompany playing for a week or more in a tent with a street parade every night; balloon ascension from Vogelsang's field; Lock Two Fires; Medicine Shows at Boesel's Opera House, a canal boat coming through gathering up old bottles, or a raft of logs that had difficulty getting through the lock; entertainment and home-talent shows at the K of P Odd Fellow & Rebecca Hall; hopping sleighs all day long when sleighing was the usual thing in winter; Santa Claus and the toys in Rabe's Cheap Store just before the holidays; and, later, going through the Arcade Department Store or racing with the lights out in front - to name but a few.

More About New Bremen
From The Air.

I could not begin to tell you of all the many trips that I have made over the twenty-three miles from Piqua to New Bremen. With the detour now at Houston, it is a little bit more than the 23 miles. The shortest way to go, however, is to use old Highway 66 to the road that turns off as you get into Houston on the way to Russia, to Highway 48 which passes under the Big Four Railroad and then comes out on 66. In coming from New Bremen, turn off on 48 at the Houston sign which will bring you back to 66 where the tavern juts out on the highway.

It was interesting to see how the north end of what used to be Vogelsang's Field has been cleaned up and is now ready to be sown in grass. As an open place downtown, over the years it will no doubt be a beautiful park area. I recall when there were balloon ascensions that took off from this part of the field, and how the man on the trapeze and in colored tights ascended aloft and drifted far to the northeast where he came down in a parachute while the huge bag with smoke emitting from it drifted still farther away in a collapsible fashion.

I walked the towpath for some distance, looking over to the house where I used to live, and the site of the old Poultry house from the rear of which I used to fish in the canal and caught some good-sized carp that fed on the cracked corn which fell into the canal from the floor boards. August Wehrman used to fish from the Plum St. bridge with a home-made net that was raised by a long pole over the bridge railing. These nets were an interesting contraption and what an assortment of fish came up when the net was raised! Another way of fishing was with a trout-line stretched across the canal with a series of hooks suspended from the line. Taken up at certain intervals, it always had a pretty good catch. My uncle had a three-section, wire net with cone-shaped openings that was dropped in the middle

www.andyniekamp.com

of the pond and brought up about once a week. It was fastened to a stake and you had to row out in a boat to bring up the haul of fish.

I wanted to see where the old depot was removed at the railroad tracks; and I found the whole area a rather barren sight to see. The next time I am in New Bremen I want to be there when the train comes in from St. Marys and see just how things are handled without a station agent or a station depot. I tried to recall some of the agents after Mr. Gress relinquished the job; and the one who was best in my memory was the Ebs' family where Mrs. Ebs was as much a part of the agency as her husband. Those were the days when the railroad still handled quite a bit of shipments, particularly from the creamery in the way of butter. At that time even the butter tubs were made in New Bremen as a division of the Rabe Manufacturing Co.

While in the downtown area, Paul Gilberg gave me a conducted tour through the Senior Citizens building and across the street to the old K of P and Odd Fellows Hall which has gone through such a transformation from what it was like when I enjoyed the entertainments and the happy get-togethers in this vast assembly hall. My aunt was a Rebekah, when all these lodges were quite active in the town.

It was a pleasant drive out along the old canal road and through Lock Two on our way to the Willow Grove Cemetery where we still had some bright marigolds to decorate a few of our graves. I may not get out there again until the snow covers the area like a sheet. One misses the old chapels that used to be on both of the cemeteries. Longfellow spoke of the cemetery as "God's Acre."

Late in the afternoon we drove out to the Schowe Farm, out along the Amsterdam Rd. to pass the beautiful woods on either side of the highway. I love to see the beech trees; and there are some beautiful trees where I roamed as a boy from out of Backhaus' lane. One time, with an old piece of rag carpet, we pitched a tent and slept out one night where the woods was a little open and where you could find the fragrant penny-royal. Like bittersweet, it is getting difficult to find any of it growing nowadays. When it was dry we hung it in front of our tent to keep the mosquitoes away.

Some hours after dark I walked to the backyard of the Schowe farm to see the harvest moon rising over the horizon in the direction of Kettlersville. And to think, not too far north, a boy lived in Wapakoneta who was later to walk on its surface. Almost unbelievable, so I thought! When we were out West last summer and someone would ask us where we were from, I would tell them that we lived in PIQUA (pronounced "PE-QWA") an Indian name; and that only a few miles north, WAPAKONETA, another Indian name, was the hometown of Neil Armstrong. That, somehow or other, put us in a good light.

It was Saturday night, driving home in the dark except for a silver moon high up above. I had stopped in Minster on our way to New Bremen to pick up several loaves of pumpernickel at Kuehner's Bakery. It is the nearest thing to a delicious brown bread that my grandmother used to bake.

I never have enough time to do all the things that I want to do while on a visit in New Bremen. But, it is so nice not to be too far away from your old hometown.

Where Are They Gone?

Coming from the Far West and traveling on the Great Northern R.R., Luther Schroeder and his wife, Ehtel, from Seattle, Wash., have been visiting with us here in Piqua and with old-time friends in New Bremen. This was the first time since 1915 that Luther has been in New Bremen; and it was the first time that his wife has ever been East. What a visit we did have, talking about old times and, for him, seeing faces that he had not seen for almost fifty years.

We made three trips from Piqua to New Bremen, spending an afternoon and evening of each day in the old hometown. One could not help but think of Charles Lamb's poem, The Old Famialiar Faces." Let me paraphrase a bit of it:

www.andyniekamp.com



Alvin Grothaus, Luther Schroeder,

Walter Grothaus, Ralph May

"Where are they gone, the old familiar
faces?
...Ghost like, we paced round the haunts
of our childhood.
Seeking to find the old familiar faces."

A funny thing: many of the old residents that we were looking for we met on the street as we were walking about. And there were very few streets in New Bremen that we did not see or drive over during our jaunts to the old home-town. And the countryside was not neglected, for a boy in a small town knows the country thereabouts almost as well as the inner sanctums of the town.

The Schroeder family lived in New Bremen sixteen years--1894 to 1910. Their first home, a stone's throw from where I lived, was in the Reuben Thiesing property on Canal st. Their second home was not too far away--at the corner of Washington & Plum sts., next to one of the oldest houses in New Bremen. A brick residence that had four steeples one at each corner.

What memories there are to an old house! We spent some time at each place, taking a few pictures and pondering over many incidents of long ago. The open lots along the canal were known in our day as The Commons, extending far back to The Dumps and Rabe's Pond. This was our nearest playground. The Poultry House across the street,--next to passing papers,--gave us employment in the fall picking chickens, and all the year long we made tidy sums from selling rags, bones, iron, zinc, brass, rubber, etc. Money was hard to get in those days, and there was not much remunerative employment for boys. The affluent society was a long way off. And a weekly allowance was entirely unheard of. So much for the economy of the early 1900's.

We walked up the steps leading to the schoolyard where we played at recess time. If the building had been there we would have gone into each room from first grade through high school. Luther was in the Class of 1912, and since the family moved to Seattle in 1910, he had to finish his studies out there. We also went to the Opera House, where our Class Contests were held, and so many other events of the past. A Mr. Melter was our escort, taking us back stage where we envisioned the old place as it used to be a long time ago.

I brought out my copy of the Senior Annual for 1909,--"The Mirage,"--and put it on the living room table. We referred to it again and again, especially the pictures from our last years in high school. It was the first annual gotten out by a graduating class in the N.B.H.S.

Almost every boy and girl in New Bremen had their photo taken by "Rex", a photographer who opened a studio on Washington st. about 1900 or a little earlier. They were miniature sized photos and prized possessions whoever had one. And they were reproduced on buttons similar to those that we wore during the Presidential Campaigns. Luther brought one of these along with him from Seattle. Unfortunately, I lost my "Rex" photo some years ago; but to see this one kindled anew some very fond memories.

Up in my room one afternoon, we spent some time reading poems by James Whitcomb Riley. He has one called "The Old Times were the Best."
"Friends, my heart is half weary

www.andyniekamp.com

Of its happiness to-night:
Though your songs are gay and cheery,
And your spirits feather-light,
There's a ghostly music haunting
Still the heart of every guest
And a voiceless chorus chanting
That the Old Times were the best."

All about is bright and pleasant,
With the sound of song and jest,
Yet a feeling's ever present
That the Old Times were the best.

Adam Helwig Letters

Lima, Ohio
May 5, 1932

If I think back some 80 years ago, there was more work in New Bremen than there is now. There were some ten cooperages and each shop worked ten men, each man being a cooper. There were six shoe-making shops with three or four men working in each shop. Everyone wore boots. Fine calf skins were bought for wedding boots.

There were six or more blacksmith shops. Now you hardly can get a horse shod. The carriage shops worked ten men or more. There were several pork pack houses, each working some ten men in the winter. Six men worked on each of the six canal boats most of the year.

Everyone who had a horse had a sleigh. Two livery barns hired out buggies and sleighs. Automobiles knocked out all the buggies and sleighs, as well as most of the harness shops. Automobiles don't need harness. There was an auction the other day. They tried to sell a rubber-tired buggy. One man offered 10 cents, so he got the buggy but did not know what to do with it.

Everyone was happy 80 years ago and had plenty to eat. You could buy the best chicken for 25 cents; spring chickens for 15 cents. Plenty of meat could be had from the pork-packing houses without hardly paying anything.

Lima, Ohio
1951

Some 80 years ago New Bremen had the Lemkuhl Hotel, Meyer Hotel at the French House corner, Wilhelmy Hotel opposite the mill, Minkner Hotel and the Lanfersieck House. The hotels were crowded when the farmers came in from as far west as Portland, Ind., with their hogs and wheat. New Bremen was the only shipping point in a radius of 40 miles as it had the canal, and every farmer who came here usually bought a load of supplies and materials to take back home.

There was a dance every holiday at Lehmkuhl's Hall, Laut's Hall, Meyer's Hall, Wilhelmy Hall, Speckman & Nieter's Hall, and Good Hall at the Lock. Everyone was happy. There were no hard times; wages were not high but there was plenty to eat.

New Bremen had three brewers - Vosler Brewery, Ottenjohann Brewery, and Kuhlhorst Brewery - and another brewery was at Chickasaw. They made beer one day and sold it the next. There were some ten saloons. You could get two glasses of beer for five cents and whiskey at 15 cents a gallon.

At the Fourth of July picnic all the saloons had bars on the picnic grounds. I remember a boy named Hans. He was 18 years old but could not tell a five-cent piece from a 50-cent piece. His father gave him a half dollar and he walked up to my brother, who was tending bar at the picnic, and said he wanted ginger cakes for his money. He took his large red handkerchief and got 50 cakes, each about as large as a stove lid. He ate cakes all day long and thought he had a real bargain.

Adam Helwig

P.S. Adam Helwig was one of the earlier residents of New Bremen; a salesman for the New Bremen Broom Company, where he resided in Lima, and often came to New Bremen, visiting with the Schulenberg family. I can still see him as he stepped off the interurban car at the station, short in stature, and with a flowing white beard. A man who you could not help but like.

Gas-fired Furnaces

I keep some of my old friends informed of news from the New Bremen and St.

www.andyniekamp.com

Marys area. In writing to Luther Schroeder; Seattle, Wash., about the death of Dr. Fledderjohann, he comments as follows in a recent letter from him: "Was sorry to hear of the death of Dr. Fledderjohann. It was I (not Edgar) who worked for him. I was obligated to mow his lawn during summer vacation--clean out his horse stall--wash medicine bottles in his office--did some baby sitting for his infant son, Orlando, and ran many errands for him. He was a wonderful man. Edgar at that time worked for Uetrecht's grocery.

Friday, Oct. 27: Up in my room this blustery, windy day, how good to feel the warmth of the furnace as it comes up from the blower down in the basement. The man was here yesterday to change the gas meter, as they do from time to time. I wonder what we would do if the gas supply ever gave out? There was a time in New Bremen, some years ago, when such a thing happened and we had to resort to other fuels. At that time our gas came from around Chickasaw. It had an awful lot of sulphur and the stove lids, if I remember correctly, always had a thick coating of soot. We had a long pipe burner in the kitchen stove with a mixer on the outside where it entered the stove. The meter was in a bedroom off the kitchen; and people in those days would keep a record of the meter reading to make sure they were not overcharged.

At the Huenke farm, north of New Bremen, along the interurban line, gas burned continuously in the front yard; and one always took note of it when going by on the cars. And then there were the old gas engines, of which there were quite a few in New Bremen. Our first electricity was generated by a gas engine in the old light plant off Monroe St. Frank Plaice was the engineer; and there were many times when there was a break-down, and, like the fuel situation at home, other means of lighting came into use. The merchants could always depend on their coal-oil lights which were suspended from the ceiling.

Goose Feathers

Looking for some clean goose feathers? They were obtainable 65 years ago at the New Bremen Woolen Mills store, according to a clipping from the New Bremen Sun preserved by Ralph May, of Piqua, formerly of New Bremen.

Those were the days when boys hitched their sleds to sleds and wagons, horse-drawn, for a ride about town or country roads.

A few of the items Mr. May found in his collection of New Bremen Sun items follow:

Dec. 15, 1899--"The familiar jingle of the sleigh bells is heard since yesterday. This section has had an abundant snow fall. Wedneday night, and all day yesterday."

"You can obtain some nice clean goose feathers at the Woolen Mills store."

Dec. 24, 1896 -"A crowd of young ladies took time by the forelock to exercise one of the privileges which leap year, by common consent bestows upon them. They hired a rig, laid in a supply of candies, refreshments and what not, and invited their best friends to accompany them to a party at the pleasant home of Dr. and Mrs. H.E. Fledderjohann at New Knoxville. The following comprised the crowd of merrymakers: Lillie Dierker, Dora Griewe, Maud Stone, Ida Pape, Ida Griewe, Clara Boesel, Doll Taylor, Dora Schmidt, Thos. Stone, Ben Wiedeman, Al Steinebrey, Otto Schmidt, John Halsema, Alex Boesel, Henry Poppenhagen and Clarence Backhus."

Feb. 7, 1902 - "Last Saturday was a holiday for the small boys. Everything available that could be utilized as a sled was brought into play with which to hitch to sleds and wagons."

Dec. 6, 1907 - "An exceedingly interesting event took place at the corner of Main and First street Wednesday morning when the entire bunch of Macedonians, who had been employed on the street paving job for several weeks, boarded the 8:12 car, each one with a heavy bundle containing all of this world's belongings, destined for their temporary home in Indianapolis. The men proved themselves quite orderly and well-behaved during their stay here, and as diligent workers gained quite an enviable reputation. They wound up their stay here Tuesday evening by a regular hoe-down. They had music, dancing and liquor."

www.andyniekamp.com

Leisurely Walk To Lock Two

"What is there that one can write about Lock Two? Well, to a fellow like me, in his late forties, who knew LOCK TWO in the early days of the present century, there is much that I can reflect upon and call to mind. Then, if I take a leisurely walk and visit the village, I can pick up, in my thoughts on the way over and back much that might appear interesting in print.

I went out on the old canal road-or the Lock Two road as we used to call it-out on past the site of Allen's Handle factory. From the First st. bridge, I followed the towpath as far as the Second St. bridge. As I went along the canal I had many pleasant thoughts on skating, visits to the Plow Shop and to Dierker's Warehouse. And, somehow or other, I even thought of the old flat boat that used to be tied up near the Second St. bridge, which boat was used by the workmen when they rebuilt or repaired the town's bridges. You see, I am no more than started on my way to Lock Two - at least I am still within the corporation - and I have had a number of things to think of. That is one of the real joys of a reminiscent mind. Of course, it can be carried too far; and so I must be on my way.

...It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when I arrived in the village. As I made the turn from the south, I could not help but walk over to the site of the old wooden lock, where I stood on the bridge and tried to reconstruct the scene when the lock was still functioning. I also tried to bring back the old frame flour mill as it was before the fire. But the fire kept coming back to my mind, for this fire was one of the big fires in all my early life-history. I think I ran all the way from New Bremen to Lock Two that morning, as I am sure hundreds of others did likewise. (It was at that time that Romey or Clifford Gast was run over by the wheel of one of the hosecarts, or was it in the evening when the stable burned and so many of the horses perished.)

There never was so much excitement in the old town as there was during the period of these fires. When the Mill burned, the heat was so intense that I could not even stand near the old Piehl house. And the rats - how they ran out on the beams seeking safety, only to fall into the flames. For weeks and weeks, I remember seeing the pile of grain smolder; and for a long time I could not help but think of the poor horses that were burned to death.

On the brighter side of the picture, I remember riding out to Lock Two with a horse and surrey and rolling Easter eggs on the floor of the dance hall back of the Garmhausen store. This was a very long time ago and it was a happy event, although there is not much about it that I can remember. And since I am on the dance hall my aunt used to tell me how they would walk home in the late evening, singing almost all the way, in the light of the moon and arm in arm with their companions.

Whenever I pass the old Garmhausen homestead, I always look up at the entrance to the front door and read the letters and the date carved on the wood which adorns the porch: "J. Garmhausen-1874." (This has long since disappeared.) It would be interesting to see a picture of the canal and lock with a boat on its way north or south.

As I came into the village I heard the sound of a blacksmith shop, and this made me think, that, after all, Lock Two had not changed too much. And the two fine frame houses of Charles and Ben Garmhausen stand today very much like when they were first built. At that time I thought no finer houses existed anywhere and I thought how interesting it would be to again go inside. But I went on by and followed the road to the north. An old building, setting some distance back was at one time the old fire department building. I was wishing that the old frame house which at one time stood near the fire department building might still be standing where it was removed some years ago and later demolished. That frame building was one of the old houses of Lock two. It was not as old as the little house with the shutters where the Piehl family lived, and where my grandmother and I used to visit whenever we walked out to the Lock Three Cemetery. My first home was in an unpainted, clapboard house similar to the old Piehl house.

www.andyniekamp.com

I passed the old Lock Two school house on my way home. The building remains the same in its dilapidated condition, boxed and closed up when it might be made into a pleasant country home sitting at the intersection of the two highways. (Its hall of learning has also disappeared from the scene.)

As I passed Schmidt's Corner and came into New Bremen, I could not help but think how best this part of the town represents old-time New Bremen. There is a quaintness and a charm here - some of the houses are very old, both brick and frame; and I like to see the red-brick paving that still survives between the new sidewalk and the old dwellings. These pavements are like the ones I had to weed in the summer, many years ago, which work broke in so miserably on what otherwise might have been a perfect day.

The old Town Hall and Fire Department building on North Main st., with its belfry and weathercock housed the town calaboose; and when the news went round amongst the boys that someone was in the jail, we would make it our business to visit the place to see who it was that was inside. A man in jail was a most unusual sight.

Of such thoughts, and of what I have said in the preceding paragraphs about Lock Two, were in my thoughts this afternoon. It was a pleasant afternoon walk and I enjoyed myself thoroughly, for it is not often, nowadays, that I walk to Lock Two and on beyond to the cemetery. If these thoughts and impressions are worth anything to you, kind reader, my exercise that afternoon will serve a two-fold purpose." (NOTE: Keep in mind that I wrote this back in 1941.)

Recollections Of A Boy Hunter

Since the hunting season will soon be over, I am reminded of several pictures taken when I was a boy in New Bremen and used to accompany my uncle on hunting trips in the nearby woods. Never having shot a shot gun in my life, and no hunter except as a tramper in the woods, this photo has always endeared me to the hunting scene as I remember it from my boyhood in the little town up north.

It was such an easy matter to get into a wooded area from where I lived in the old hometown. One could walk along the canal towpath, south of the Plum St. bridge, and be in the woods in no time. All these trees and lovely wooded ground are gone from where they sloped away to the west from the canal bank. And a little farther to the west was the old picnic grounds, with a wooden dancing platform underneath where rabbits found refuge, and from where we used to chase them with our broomsticks. Our Daisy air rifles were of little use, and we employed them, for the most in the summer time.

A wooded area which has changed little from the time in the early 1900's, when I knew it so well, is off the Amsterdam Rd. and southeast of the town. We knew it as Backhaus' and Ziegenbusch's woods, reached from a lane at the south end of Walnut St. There were huge brush piles and rail fences galore, in all directions. And it was here where the dog pictures were taken, the most interesting I have ever seen. It is not often one thinks of taking pictures on a hunting trip.

When I was a boy one could purchase a single-barreled shot gun from Sears Roebuck, for a sum of $7; or a Flobert rifle at the local hardware store for less. A Daisy air-rifle was an ideal Christmas gift, for as little as a $1.25. One could put up a target on one of the doors in the house and shoot darts with colored tufts at the end, a pleasant indoor sport during the holiday season.

I still find a great deal of pleasure in tramping through the woods on fine winter days, bundled up well and with a scarf around my neck. And whenever I go up north, to the old hometown, I seldom fail to turn off highway 66 at the Amsterdam Rd., to pass through one of the most beloved wooded areas near New Bremen, and one I knew as well in my boyhood. I hope these woods may be preserved for a long time to come, with the few beeches at the far end.

Henry David Thoreau said, "an absolutely new prospect is a great happiness, and I can still get this any afternoon." A walk through the woods at this time of the year may give you this opportunity.

www.andyniekamp.com

An Old House In New Bremen

There is something about an old house, with its unpainted weatherboards, a slanting roof, small window panes, and an old chimney which is very attractive, especially when we think of its first inhabitants and at the time when it was built. And such a house I knew so well as a boy in the old town. The house is still there, modernized to the point where you would hardly recognize it from old photographs shown herewith. It is on that short section of Canal St., off Plum--Reuben Thiesing having made it into a modern dwelling.

There were two Schroeder families in this neighborhood--the one a stone's throw away, where I was brought up; and the other one in the house I am writing about--the Emma Schroeder family.

I could hardly begin to tell you all the trips that I made back and forth from my house to this house. Never having to knock at the door. I opened it as though I lived there myself. And it was the kitchen door that we used, for I doubt very much if the front room door was ever opened.

There was a cellar that you could enter by a trap door from inside the kitchen, so convenient when many of the other old cellar doors had to be opened from the outside. The kitchen floor was very uneven, sloping to the east, where our marbles would sometimes roll out of sight. There was an old gas light that came up from the floor and burned in a yellow flame, used occasionally along with the old coal-oil light on the kitchen table. Two open doorways were provided for the sitting room, where two double beds were also located. Off the sitting room was the front room, closed for the winter and seldom used even in summer. A hanging lamp, with glass ornamentation, and a wooden mantel piece adorned this sanctified place.

A small room, above the cellar, was called a 'plinther' room where all sorts of odds and ends were kept, and where we would trap mice with a little box supported on end with a small peg, on which we could pull away when a mouse was eating the cheese placed underneath the box.

I like to dwell on the grounds surrouning this old house, and the vast area of 'The Commons' to the west bordering on the canal, now a City Park, but where we neighborhood boys played almost every day. There were two maiden blush apple trees beside the old summer kitchen, and another large apple tree, still standing when this old picture was taken; and a pear tree in the garden towards the alley. A lilac bush and several maple trees grew out in front near the wagon tracks which you can plainly see.

I never knew of a slanting roof so well adapted for tossing up a ball and catching it on the rebound. We could spend hours at this sport. An old dug well and a cistern were near the house separated by the walk leading to the garden and the outhouse near the alley.

A funny thing happened in connection with the dug well, which had apparently been filled up years ago before William Suelter and his wife occupied the premises. Mrs. Suelter (who visited with my grandmother quite often) had a bed of geraniums one summer planted over the site where the well was located. One morning, as she stepped out of the kitchen door, she noticed to her dismay, that the flower bed had disappeared. A large hole was where it once stood. Over the years, the top soil had given way where the earth had not completely filled the well.

Mr. Suelter had his carpet-weaving loom in the old summer kitchen. For many years he wove rag carpets--the Suelter family at that time living on South Washington St. When the business, as it later fell off from carpets, then to rugs, almost ceased to exist, he sawed up the loom and used it for fire wood. What an antique it would be to this day!

Only Luther Schroeder, Seattle, Wash. of a family of five children that occupied this house when I was a boy in New Bremen, still survives. Lily died in New Bremen when she was a young girl, one of the first funerals I can remember distinctly; Fred, Will and Edgar passed away in Seattle, where the family moved in 1910. Fred married Daisy Jack, from Wapakoneta; and I recall how he used to take the interurban car after

www.andyniekamp.com



The Schroeder House

dinner, on Sunday, when he was courting Daisy at Wapak.

I never got the history of this old house and I wonder who built it and who were the first to live there. In my time, it was owned by Edmund Grothaus, brother to Emma Schroeder; and how interesting it would be to have the history of this one dwelling at the time it was built so close to the canal.

Forty-five Minutes To New Bremen

Nowadays, I seldom get to New Bremen. When I was a boy back in the old hometown, the distance of twenty-three miles between Bremen and Piqua was quite an obstacle to overcome. We used to go by hack to Botkins, leaving around nine o' clock in the morning. After picking up the mail at Kettlersville, the hack would arrive in Botkins around noon. Then we had a long wait for the C.H. & D. train from Wapakoneta that came into Botkins about 1:30, if I remember correctly. We would get to Piqua around 3 o'clock, an all day journey, - so to speak, - and we always carried a shoe-box lunch before leaving New Bremen. Now I drive out on 66 and I am back in the old hometown in 45 minutes - a leisurely drive on a Sunday afternoon.

But getting back to my visit. Turning of 66 onto the Amsterdam Road, I love with all my heart to stop along the highway between Ziegenbusch's and Backhaus' woods. It is one of the most delightful places in Auglaize County. I remember it so well when the road was a graveled highway and when the woods were bordered on either side by rail fences. The rail fences have gone their way; but the place has lost little of its charm. Even at this time of the year (and it is still early spring), what is more lovely to look at than a grove of beech trees?

Blood-root was in bloom and I picked a little bouquet. The cold was so intense as to keep the blossoms from opening; but on bringing them into the house and putting them in water, they soon opened up in a lovely sort of way. These were our first spring flowers. Dog tooth violets are also in bloom, so I was told - but I did not find any where the blood-root was in bloom.

I never saw better looking wheat than the two fields that border the Amsterdam road. Such a vivid green and how beautiful from afar off. The newly ploughed fields were as dry as they could be; and I could not help but think what a difficult time a team of horses would have had to make these furrows.

At the William Schowe farm, it was my luck to be there just at feeding time. That is an interesting chore on any farm. These young pigs were feeding on pellets of food in a barricaded enclosure so as to have all the food to themselves. Lambs in fleecy soft coats of the cleanest wool, were feasting on oats in a manger where they had to jump some distance in order to get inside from their pen enclosure. From the way they were eating, I am sure these lambs enjoyed their oats as much as the young pigs relished their pellets of food. And on such a cold, blustery day, it was good to know that these animals had the shelter of a barn where the bedding was most inviting. If there was any grunting, it was not because they were not properly housed or fed.

www.andyniekamp.com

Coming into town this Sunday afternoon, I did not see one person walking on the sidewalk. I never thought New Bremen could be such a deserted village - at least in the downtown area. One relative that we called on did remark that he walked downtown every day and bought five cigars. If I had been there on a weekday, the scene might have been altogether different. No day passed in my youth unless we made several trips to the post-office or to meet the boys at some corner or in some store. And with the interurbans going back and forth, what a wonderful metropolitan air the old town could boast as having. A round trip ticket to St. Marys cost 25¢. A seat at the Grand Opera House for Brewster's Millions or The Man on a Box cost a little bit more; but how wonderful to sit through a stage play of three or four acts! And then the trip home on the interurban on the last car!

In the evening we were out in the country again. The new street lighting in New Bremen, viewed from the country to the east and a mile away, is most impressive. It made me think of my first trip out west and coming into Las Vegas on the Union Pacific railroad. I was quite a novel reader in my high school days, and I went through many books by coal oil light. My grandmother was always afraid I would fall asleep and knock the lamp off the table.

Some of the guests at the dinner table were from Geneva, Indiana. Nearby, in the Limberlost, Gene Stratton Porter wrote her books and studied the moths, butterflies and birds of this whole area. While overseas during World War I, I often found her novels and Jack London's in the bookstores. They seemed to be the most popular American authors abroad.

In David Grayson's "Adventures in Friendship," he has the Scotch Preacher make the following remark, after spending such an evening as we spent in the country, - 'this has been a day of pleasant bread.' So we thought as we drove away in the darkness along the Amsterdam road, between Ziegenbusch's and Backhaus' woods on our way back to Piqua.

Summer Attire in 1900's

The young men in New Bremen were nattily dressed during the hot summers of years ago. White duck trousers, with the accompanying white shirt and high starched cuffs, dark ties to offset the white, in four-in-hand, small bow, and the flowing kind in good Roycrost style. Collars were attached with studs and, like the cuffs, were highly starched, made of linen. Although not as comfortable as the soft attached collar worn today, a person would have seemed very untidy to have worn such a shirt at that time. If I remember correctly, the attached collar went with flannel shirts only.

Hats were sailor straws as worn by Bing Crosby, and nothing could have looked better at that time--even today, when we see them on TV, they have a very natty appearance. In song and dance, we welcome them back again.

Roy Hoverman and Dr. Phelps were two of the dandies. Hoverman was the town photographer and his head and stature were usually back of the camera. Dr. Phelps was kept busy making house calls or in his office on Walnut Street. I well remember them and looked forward to the day when I, too, might be able to dress in their fashion.

As one always interested in photography, I must be excused for hankering after old photographs. There are many such in the George Eastman Museum, in Rochester, N.Y., and in the Lincoln Museum at Ft. Wayne, Ind. Photography did not come into its own until about the time of the Civil War; and these early photographs, especially of Lincoln at Ft. Wayne, are highly interesting.

But I am getting off the subject--so help me! The usual summer attire in New Bremen, in the early 1900's was very uncomfortable,--for women especially. If we had a suit, it was generally worn the whole year through. Dress material seemed to be of the same weight, year round--for men at least. The exception was the white duck trousers, or the flannel trousers which few could afford.

Thanks to the light summer suit of the

www.andyniekamp.com

present day and the shirt with collar attached and soft cuffs. As to hats, they are seldom worn, and it seems foolish to make the expenditure for a straw in these days.

One More Canoe Trip

It was the first summer of my married life--1921--and at a time when I was unemployed. I wanted to acquaint my wife with the romance and the joy that this old waterway had held for me in my youth, and to show her how delightful "An Inland Voyage" could be without the benefit of Robert Louis Stevenson. (A classic volume of required reading some years ago.)

Leaving the outskirts of town, the shoreline was always interesting as we passed by. I had walked the towpath many times but I had not often viewed the bank from midstream. It was midsummer, with a luxuriant growth of grass, sweet clover, with here and there a clump of wild roses and an occasional blue flag, a flower so lovely, that now in the distant past, is hard to describe.

Soon we passed the First Bend and we were well on our way to the Amsterdam Bridge, our first mile. Back of Corn-Pike Bill's place, there used to be a fine row of willow trees whose branches stretched far out above the canal. How delightful to cruise under these swaying branches and get in the shade and away from the hot sun.

But as Wm. Cowper wrote on The Poplar Field, so, too, these noble trees were fell 'd- "farewell to the shade and the whispering sound of the cool colonade."

Elderberry bushes still grew beside the abutment of the Amsterdam bridge-they had been there in my youth. And here I took many a dip in the old canal, and I well remember when I could wade across to the opposite bank with the water coming up to my chin. Passing out from underneath the bridge, it was only a short distance to the Sand Bar, a place which was well known as a danger spot in our skating forays to Minster. If you wanted to pass the place safely, you hugged the west bank, for the bar came more than half way out over the canal.

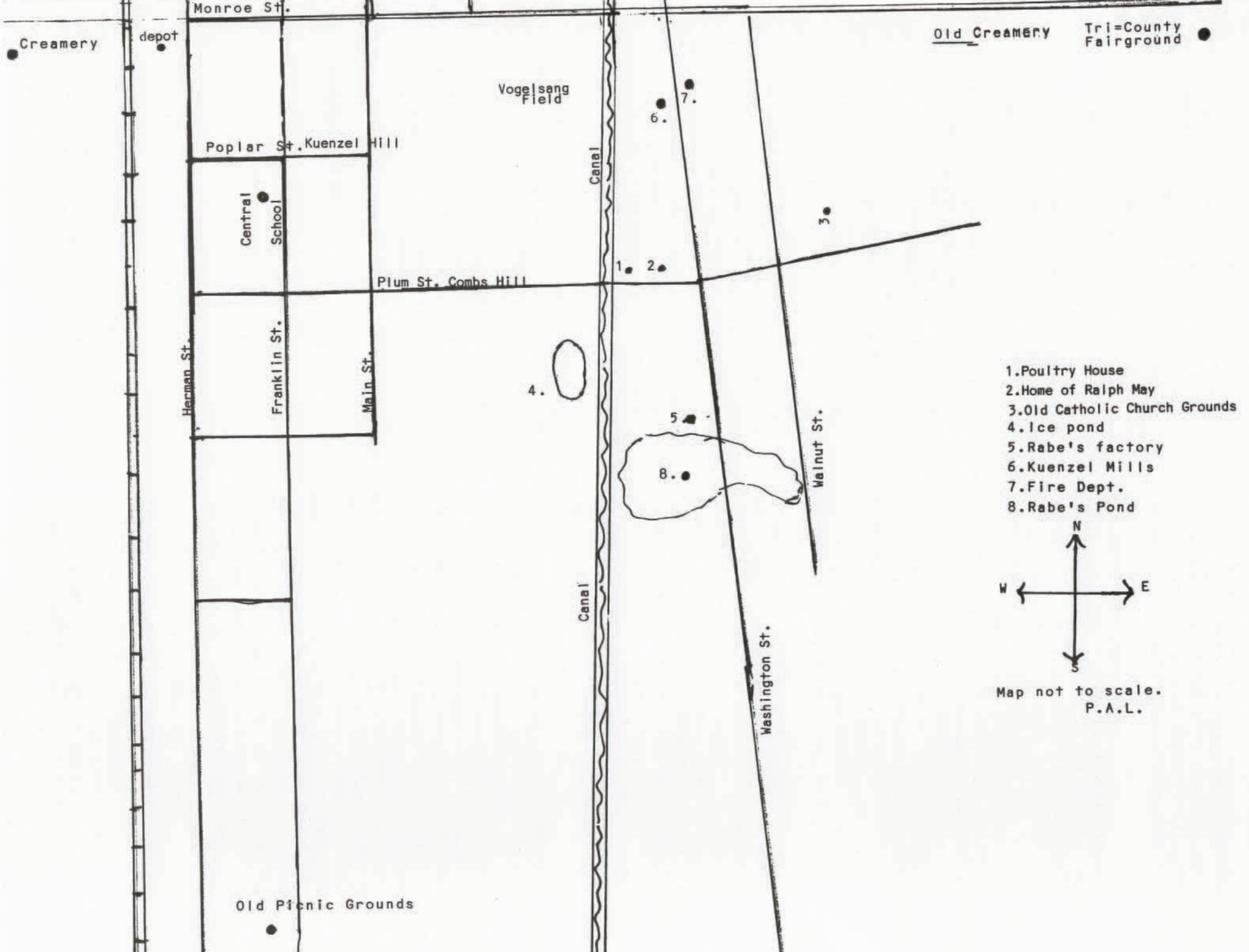
Goeke's Pond was midway between the Amsterdam bridge and the environs of Minster, or a little bit on this side of the St. John bridge. Both these bridges were high up overhead, and not until we got into Minster did we have to push the canoe under the bridge or carry it around. We were glad to get beyond Minster and into open territory of surrounding fields. After paddling several miles, we entered the Canal Feeder where the trees along the canal were most beautiful. A group of boys from Ft. Loramie were swimming in the feeder, and as we glided by they took several dives showing as much of their rear ends as possible with a continuous roar of laughter all the while.

Where the feeder touches the west bank of the reservoir, we pulled up our canoe and walked up the hill to get a good view of this expanse of water, with the many stumps protruding here and there and which have now been mostly removed or rotted away. This was the first time my wife had ever seen the reservoir. It was getting late in the afternoon - so without much ado, we readied ourselves for the home stretch back to New Bremen.

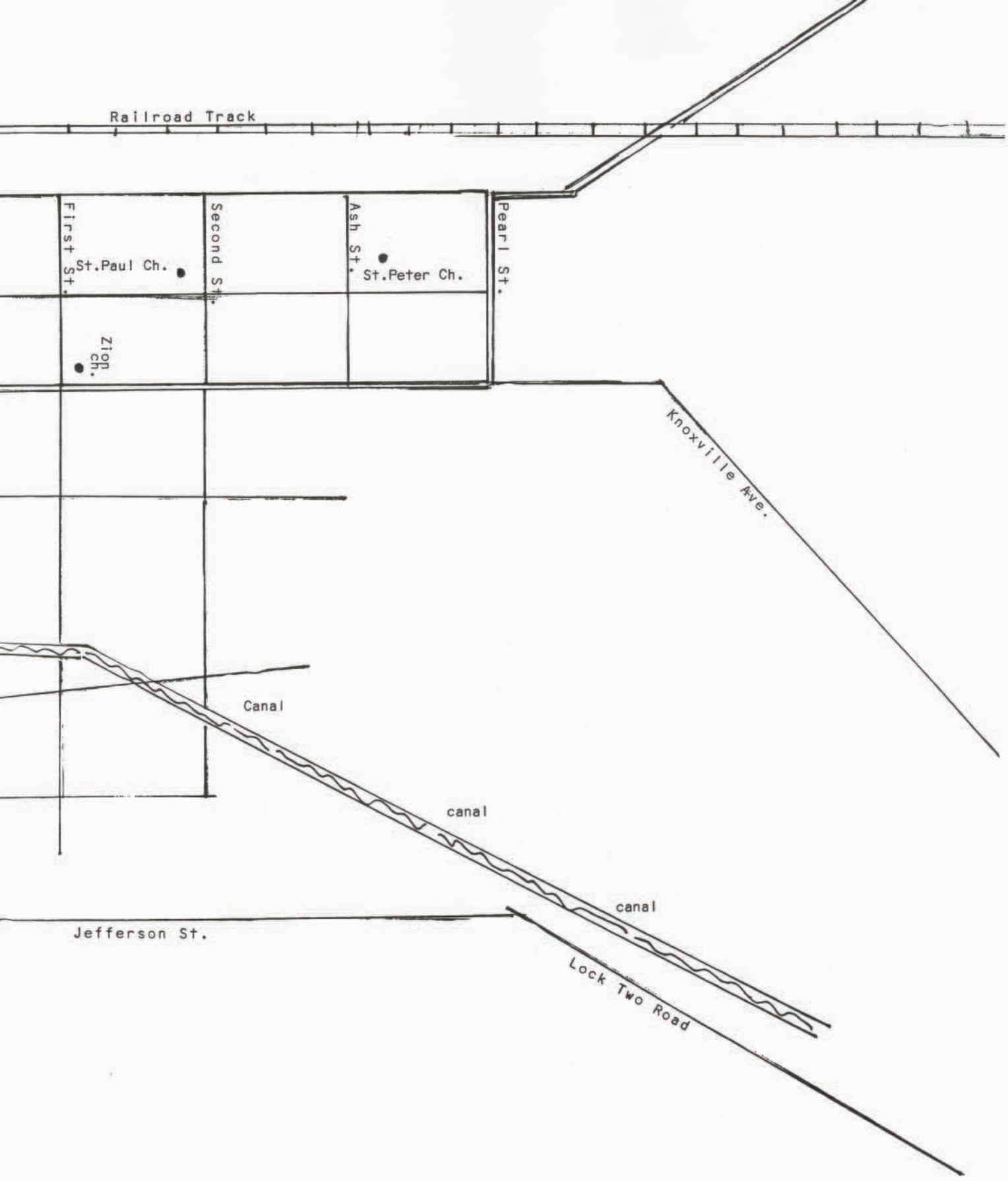
On our way back we ran into our first snag. The Mill at New Bremen still used their water wheel for power, and, after drawing on the water for the greater part of the day, the level of the canal soon got below the point of successful navigation. When we reached the St. John bridge, I was forced to take off my shoes and socks and wade through the mud to pull the canoe up the bank so my wife could disembark. Making sure the canoe would not float away when the water rose again, we walked the highway to the Minster road and then on to New Bremen. All in all, it was a most interesting trip, waterwise and landwise.

Early the next morning I walked back to where I had pulled the canoe up the bank, and brought it safely back to town; for, during the night, the water had come back to its normal level.

www.andyniekamp.com



www.andyniekamp.com



www.andyniekamp.com