

NEW KNOXVILLE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Historian



Annual Meeting Set for April 23

*Program to cover historic businesses of
New Knoxville, Part II*

Last year's banquet meeting covered historic businesses of New Knoxville along Main Street.

This year's program will cover the businesses that existed on the side streets, principally Spring, Bremen, German, South and Walnut streets.

Research reveals that village residents rarely had to leave Washington Township for anything except on special occasions for entertainment, vacations, or hospital stays.

MEAL

The event is scheduled for April 23 at the First Church Ministry Center, beginning at 6 p.m., with a meal catered by Main Street Station. The menu will include beef, chicken, mashed potatoes, vegetables, dinner rolls and cookies. Coffee, lemonade and water will be available.

COST AND TICKETS

The ticket price remains the same as last year, \$20, and they may be purchased at The First

National Bank or Johnna's in New Knoxville **by April 20.**

If you are out of town and would like to attend the event, email Todd Spieles at toddspieles@gmail.com or Doug Hoelscher at dhoelscher@nktelco.net. Those who do not wish to join us for the meal are welcome to attend the program at 7 p.m. free of charge.

BUSINESSES

Research indicates that there were multiple blacksmith businesses in and around the village from about 1845 to the early 1900s.

The first was J.W. Kattmann who operated just east of the village. Other blacksmiths included H.H. Aufderhaar, J.H. Kattmann, Henry Koepke, Ernst Sunderman, W.E. Sunderman, Henry Bielefeld, O.S. Harshbarger, and finally Harvey W. Shuster who established the

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Annual Meeting Details at a Glance:

Date:

Thursday,
April 23, at First
Church of NK

Time:

Dinner at 6 p.m.
Program
at 7 p.m.

Ticket Cost:

\$20

Ticket Info:

First National
Bank & Johnna's
in New Knoxville
or email Todd
Spieles at
[toddspieles@
gmail.com](mailto:toddspieles@gmail.com) or
Doug Hoelscher
at [dhoelscher@
nktelco.net](mailto:dhoelscher@nktelco.net).

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last of the many blacksmith shops in 1921, about 75 years after the first shop in the village started. At this point, automobiles were traversing the streets of New Knoxville, and the smithing business was quietly fading away.

In 1901, local mechanical genius, Louis H. Meckstroth, hand-built an automobile making all the parts himself except the motor. Word was when "Meck" would drive by people would stop what they were doing and hurry outside just to see such a performance. The following year, James Slack, another local entrepreneur, purchased and assembled a three-wheel machine from the Knox Automobile Company in Springfield, Massachusetts. He called it the "Knox," and many residents through the years thought that he built it himself

and named it after our village. It featured an air cooled, single cylinder engine that produced from five to eight horsepower. In 1909, Mr. Meckstroth bought the first Model T Ford in New Knoxville for his own use and as a demonstrator. Two years later, Fred Grewe became his first customer, and Herman H. Hoge purchased the demonstrator. In 1915, Meckstroth built his 50' x 90' garage which still stands today at 200 E. Bremen St. Over the years he sold hundreds of Ford cars. After his passing in 1933, his widow, Mrs. Amanda Meckstroth continued to operate it as a Ford dealership until the mid-1950s.

The same year that Meckstroth built his new garage, 1915, Noah and Elmer Katterheinrich started an automobile agency and repair

shop at 202 S. Main St. In 1927 this business became Katterheinrich Chevrolet which is still in operation. This is the second oldest Chevy dealership that is continuously in operation by the same family in the state of Ohio.

These businesses and many others will be covered in our banquet program.

Did You Know?

Our pioneer ancestors' first marketable goods were furs and soap. To learn about the soap-making process and its distribution, see E.R. Kuck's account in the "Articles" section at nkhistory.org,

Please consider a membership to the historical society

The New Knoxville Historical Society is looking for new members. This newsletter is mailed to all members, but maybe you know someone who would be interested in becoming a member or you are receiving a complimentary copy.

A membership helps to support an organization that strives to preserve our community's heritage. Your membership also allows you to have a say in how this organization spends its money and how we celebrate our heritage.

Because we have an aging membership, we have raised our prices to \$100 for a single lifetime membership. Couples can join for \$150. Yearly memberships are \$25. One of the best ways to promote interest in our heritage is with a student membership—just \$25 for a child of any age. That membership is good until the child graduates from high school.

Joining is simple - cut out the form below and mail it and a check to The New Knoxville Historical Society, P.O. Box 372, New Knoxville, OH 45871 or visit the website at nkhistory.org.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____

Lifetime Couple Membership (\$150)

Yearly Membership (\$25)

Lifetime Single Membership (\$100)

Student Membership (\$25)

(Valid while you are in High School or College)

Annual meeting celebrates Main Street businesses

The 2025 annual meeting of the New Knoxville Historical Society included a presentation on businesses of Main Street.

The evening began with a self-serve dinner, courtesy of Main Street Station at First Church Ministry

Center.

President Todd Spieles conducted a short business meeting and recognized local third-grade teacher Janet Eshelman.

Spieles, who has served as president since 2020, gave the presentation on the historical businesses.



At right, New Knoxville Historical Society Todd Spieles presents a program highlighting historic businesses of Main Street. Far right, Spieles and third-grade teacher Janet Eshelman.

Historical Society celebrates holidays with community

The New Knoxville Historical Society complex was again a popular spot on the village's Christmas in the Village program, featuring Trustee Kirk Stienecker and Secretary Angie Klosterman as Dickens' characters. We also participated in the July 4th parade.



Christmas cards available for purchase

Did you know you can purchase a collection of Christmas cards of six historic buildings in New Knoxville, painted by local artist Pat Wietholter?

The collection includes: Adolph's Restaurant (circa 1903), the United Methodist Church of New Knoxville (circa 1917), Dr. H.E. Fledderhohann's House (circa 1879), the Summer Kitchen (circa 1879), the Doctor's Office (circa 1890), and

the First Church of New Knoxville (circa 1893).

Single cards are available in each of these as a separate purchase. Simply visit nkhhistory.org to order yours.



Recommended Slate of Officers

- President** Todd Spieles
- Vice President** Allen Schroer
- Secretary** Angie Klosterman
- Treasurer** Barb Henschen
- Trustees** Ron Weaver
- 2026-2029** Kirk Stienecker

Other Trustees & Board Members not up for re-election

- Paul Bambauer
- Doug Hoelscher
- Mike Neuman
- Craig Fledderjohann

Student Trustees

- Jude Holland
- Jett Roettger

Historians:

- Diane Fledderjohann
- Janean Oberlander

Curator & Cataloging:

- Rusty Elsass

Photography & Artwork:

- Larry Niemeyer

A Successful 2025 September Open House

Unlike our 2024 40th anniversary fall open house when our celebration was interrupted by rain, we had a beautiful sunny day for 2025. Again, we featured vintage tractors and farm machinery and vintage cars, and we had some activities for the youngsters. Our thanks goes to everyone who participated and to those who attended. We opened with the National Anthem and the color guard from our local American Legion Post 444.



Attendees were entertained with a few selections by the NK High School band under the direction of Cassandra McGue.



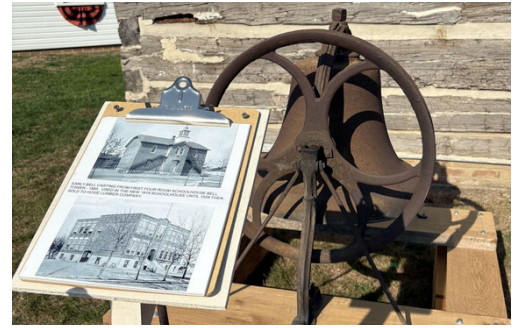
The corn box in the alley was a popular activity for the youngsters along with several pedal tractors (below).



Brands of tractors represented were Oliver, Massey Harris, Ferguson, Ford, John Deere, International, Farmall and Allis Chalmers. The only brand represented that has never been "orphaned" was John Deere. All of the other brands represented at our show have either merged with other companies or are no longer in business



Above, the New Knoxville Fire Department had its oldest and its latest state-of-the-art equipment on display. At left, our petting zoo featured two alpacas along with a variety of other animals, including a chicken and some goats.



Above, the old bell from the former school buildings on South Street was on display. At left, Paul McCullough's 1937 Farmall F-12 on steel wheels was the oldest tractor on display.

New additions to explore on the Historical Society website

We have been busy through the winter months adding new information to our website at www.nkhistory.org. Many thanks go to our volunteer typist, Marian Abbate, who has been turning out excellent work for us since November. We have obtained a list of the names of the people in the group pictures in the 100th and 125th anniversary books published by First Church in 1938 and 1963. Anyone who has those books can follow the lists page by page and see the names of the people in the group pictures. This information can be found at www.nkhistory.org > **History > Our Churches.**

We have also added several more Andrew Kay interviews, bringing the total number of those to 28. The interviews were a feature in the St. Marys Evening Leader entitled "Living Biographies," published in 1949 and 1950. They are interviews with elderly and retired NK area residents, mostly of the second generation born in this country, in which they discussed any and all aspects of their lives from childhood on. Andrew Kay was the pen name of Rev. Edwin Andrew Katterhenry, a native of the New Knoxville area.

We have added two rather lengthy articles concerning the immigration of our ancestors from Germany. One article entitled "A New Ladbergen In America" was written by a Mr. Schoppenhorst from Ladbergen in 1910. His article is especially interesting because it mentions some of the news from NK that had found its way back to Germany by 1910. He discussed some people in NK who "had become very rich," and how some NK people were living more luxuriously than the Ladbergen people.

The other article was written in 1995 by Anne Aengenvoort of Bonn, Germany, who studied immigration extensively. She discussed how differences in culture and religious beliefs

separated the immigrants of New Knoxville, New Bremen, and Minster.

An extensive bibliography follows the article naming her sources of information. NK's sesquicentennial publication "Our Times" is mentioned as well as the 1938 100th anniversary book of First Church. The names of Myron Fledderjohann and Annett Kuck also appear in the bibliography. The locations of these articles are indexed as the first two entries at www.nkhistory.org > **History > Our Community.**

We have added a list by year of almost three thousand New Knoxville High School graduates from the first class in 1910 to the last class in 2025. Thanks to Annett Kuck we have also listed administrators and teachers in the NK Village Schools from 1840 through 1999. We are looking for a volunteer to work up a continuation of the list from 2000 to the present time, and we will add that information to our website if it becomes available. The links to these lists can be found at www.nkhistory.org > **History > Our Schools.**

Our most recent addition is a piece about the New Knoxville Community Singers. This was a popular group of our NK citizens who performed benefit concerts and plays around the area under the direction and accompaniment of Ferd and Zella Eversman. This piece can be found at www.nkhistory.org > **History > Our Community > New Knoxville Community Singers.**

We have much material available in our library at the Heritage Center, and we will continue to add more of this to our website. We also welcome contributions from others, such as family stories and old family pictures including two or more generations, preferably with the identifications of the people in the pictures. We can scan pictures to obtain a digital copy for our use and return the original pictures to the owner.

Your Valuable Donations Make Our Historical Society an Active Museum

2025-2026 Partial List of Acquisitions

- Pair of old eyeglasses
- 1937 school bus driver license & photo ID
- 1935 school program / 1947 Windjammer
- Kids old clothing & story books
- 1980s Peoples Bank calendar cards & medal bank
- 1940 yearbook / old play books
- 1970s photos of NK businesses
- 1931 basketball photo / 1937 class panel photo
- Henkener family tree / Caroline HoltKamp Family Tree
- Many school photos / sports letter / sports trophy
- Old Royal Typewriter
- Old gun club trophy & patches
- Old children's shoes / mens hats / ladies hat
- Many advertising tins / screwdrivers / ashtray / scoops
- Henkener & Feldwisch farm photos
- Small wall mount crank telephone
- Large wall mount crank telephone
- Old barber shop razors / cuticle remover kit / shaver sets
- 1970s band uniforms / 1912 school class frame photo
- Schoenling Beer & Candy box price cards advertising / RC Cola
- Hair pins / hat pins / purse
- Old beer bottles / Moxie drink cards & bottle rings
- Old Vienna Beer Scraper / collar stays
- Malt glass / soda glass / straw holder
- Old cigar boxes / Union Leader Tobacco Tins
- B.E. Cook match holder / oil can
- Roller skates / sheet music
- Oktoberfest Poster German
- Old tourist sea shell boxes
- Hoge brush signs
- Very early / 1910 time clock with card holder

Pictured at right are various items acquired by the New Knoxville Historical Society throughout the last year.



Pictured at left are the two magneto phones acquired by the New Knoxville Historical Society. These phones were used in the early days of the New Knoxville Telephone Company.

Historical Society Acquires 2 Magneto Phones

We have recently acquired the two magneto phones pictured above.

These were used in the early days of the New Knoxville Telephone Company until they were replaced in 1959 with common battery phones, which also worked through a human-operated switchboard.

The two phones pictured above function identically. The longer type had two dry cell batteries inside to supply power for voice, and the shorter type had the batteries wired

to the phone from a remote location.

The hand crank on the side operated a magneto, which rang the bells of all the phones on the same party line.

To call another phone on the same line, a ring code was assigned to each party on the line, for example, three short rings and one long ring or three longs, or three longs and a short, etc. These same codes were used by the operator to call a given party on the line.



New Lifetime Members

Fred and Diane (Doseck) Piehl, New Knoxville, OH
Gene and Jane Kuck, New Knoxville, OH
Thomas and Margo Murphy, AuTrain, MI
Barb Henkener Malsom, Kalamazoo, MI
Jay and Dee Fledderjohann, St. Marys, OH
Jill Hoge McClure, Royal Oak, MI

Memorial Plaque honors members who died during the past year

The following names will appear on our Memorial Plaque in our Heritage Museum.

Dale Grimes, Jr.	Nov. 27, 2022
Ruby Lutterbeck Kreher	April 8, 2024
Paul Fledderjohann	Oct. 23, 2024
Rev. Dr. Alan Hale Schroer	Feb. 16, 2025
Karen Meckstroth Niemeyer	April 30, 2025
Lisa Katterheinrich Thobe	June 24, 2025
Eunice Lutterbeck Ireton	July 7, 2025
Dorothy Schrolucke Prueter	Aug. 23, 2025
Lea Wolters Elshoff	Aug. 24, 2025
John Schroer	Sept. 19, 2025
Clark Froning	Oct. 7, 2025
Roger Settlage	Oct. 7, 2025
Annette Hinze Schrolucke	Jan. 11, 2026
Irene Hulsmeyer Howe	Feb. 27, 2026

VISIT US DURING OUR OPEN HOUSES IN 2025

From 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the fourth Sunday of the month, May through October.

Sunday, May 24
Sunday June 28
Sunday, July 26
Sunday, Aug. 23
Sunday, Sept. 27
Sunday, Oct. 25

Third-grade students visit historical society

Third-grade students observed a plethora of historical artifacts during their annual tour of the buildings at the New Knoxville Historical Society. Historian Diane Fledderjohann, Trustee Ron Weaver, Curator Rusty Elsass and President Todd Spieles took the time to share their knowledge about the history of New Knoxville.



NEW KNOXVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

107 E. German Street
P.O. Box 372
New Knoxville, OH 45871

Available from the New Knoxville Historical Society

COMMEMORATIVE & MEMORIAL BRICKS

Bricks are available for \$50 each and provide financial and visual support from families and friends who desire to preserve our heritage.

Contact Barb Henschen at 419-305-1508 or P.O. Box 372, New Knoxville, OH 45871.

BOOKS & GIFTS

Books and gift items are available from our society.

Stop by the museum or visit our website at nkhhistory.org for all available items.

Event News

Join us for our annual meeting where we look back at the businesses of New Knoxville (part 2):

- Date: Thursday, April 23, 2026
- Time: Dinner at 6 p.m., business meeting & program at 7 p.m.
- Location: First Church Ministry Center
- Tickets are \$20 each

ADDRESS CHANGE

Notify The New Knoxville Historical Society of a change of address in one of the following ways:

- By mail at P.O. Box 372, New Knoxville, OH 45871
- By phone at 419-305-1508
- By e-mail at bjniemeyer@nktelco.net