



BICENTENNIAL BULLETIN No. 19 ***—Sheffield Celebrates 200th Birthday***

The Sheffield Bicentennial Commission will issue a *Bicentennial Bulletin* each Monday throughout 2015 that illustrates the rich heritage of our communities. ***View them at — www.sheffieldbicentennial.org or sheffieldvillage.com***

COTTON HOUSE—A Sheffield Township century home ***with a remarkable transformation*** ***712 North Ridge Road, Sheffield Township***

COTTON HOUSE. Elmer Fremont Cotton (born 1856) built this 1890s wood-frame farmhouse for his elderly parents Newton Lycurgus Cotton and Caroline Matilda [Hecock] Cotton. After his parents died, Elmer gave the house to his son Leon as a wedding gift. When the house was damaged in the Lorain tornado of June 1924, the wood siding was replaced with asbestos cladding. In 1962 the house was purchased by Frank Martin who sealed the asbestos and covered the façade with 190 tons of sandstone from the Amherst quarries.

Cotton House, built in 1890s, with asbestos cladding



Cotton House with sandstone façade



Newton Cotton's father was George Washington Cotton, born September 18, 1798 in Wentworth, New Hampshire. As a young boy, George worked on the Erie Canal locks at Lockport, New York. When he was 18 years old he started on foot to Ohio. Along the way he met the Parks family and they offered to carry his baggage if he would help with driving their cattle. He was glad to do so, thus securing company for the lonely journey. They arrived in March 1816 and George located in Sheffield Center, then a dense forest. He remained in Sheffield for four years before returning to New England with a horse and sleigh. In January 1821 he married Rachel Smith in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, the daughter of Captain Joshua Smith, Sheffield's original settler. Rachel had lived with her parents in Sheffield, where she met George, but had returned to Massachusetts after her father's death. The new couple returned to Sheffield where they lived for 12 years. They produced five children: Martha, Jerome, Newton, Charles, and George.

Newton Cotton's homestead was in southwestern Sheffield Township on the land shaded blue on the accompanying map prepared by his great great grandson, Gary Lee Cotton. Newton's son Elmer inherited the farm, which he called Penfield, and later donated the land where he pastured cows (outlined in red) to the school district for the construction of Durling School. When Elmer Cotton owned Penfield Farm in the 1890s, the road now known as Broadway was Penfield Road and it stopped where it meets North Ridge Road. The accompanying map shows the house Elmer gave to his son Leon. Elmer's daughter Effie and her husband were given a portion of the adjacent land on which they built their home. Elmer's home is shown in red at the southern end of his homestead.

The intersection of Broadway and North Ridge Road was originally known as Cotton's Corners and later as Penfield Junction. The junction name came about because the streetcar lines (shown in magenta color on the map) from Lorain, Elyria, and Amherst all met at the intersection. The Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway, know as the "Green Line," provided interurban trolley service to these communities from 1895 to 1931. Because the cars blended into the fields and forest through which they sped, in 1927 the entire fleet was painted orange to reduce accidents.

Map of Cotton Homestead
in southwestern Sheffield Township

