

CHAPTER 3. ORIGINAL LAND SURVEYS AND PIONEERS —CARVING OUT NEW SETTLEMENT LANDS FROM THE WILDERNESS

CONNECTICUT WESTERN RESERVE

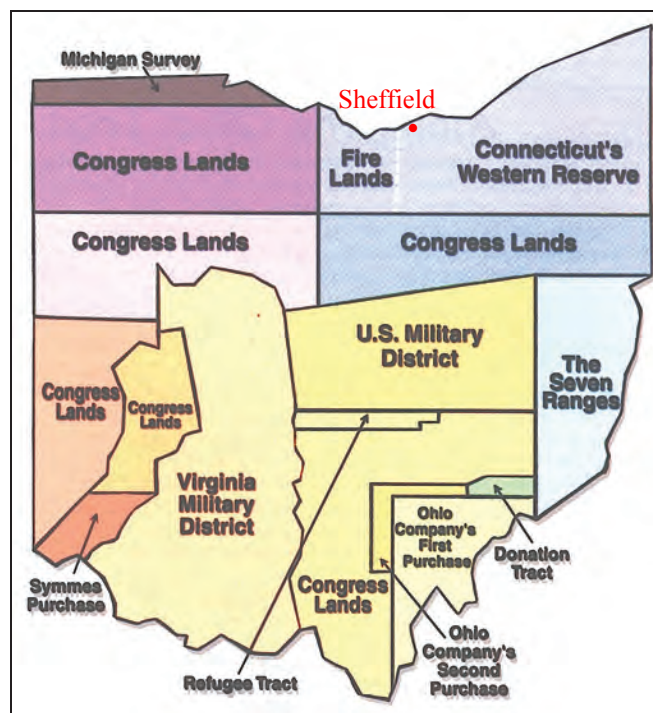
From the days of the first explorers, all newly discovered lands in the Americas belonged to the crowns of Spain, France, Holland, or England. As a gesture to their “favorites,” for the next two centuries monarchs granted them charters to American land, which often had not been fully explored or surveyed. As the American colonists soon discovered, one charter frequently overlapped another. When Congress assembled after the War for Independence, it asked the 13 original states to yield all territorial claims based on early grants from the British crown. The states responded by giving up their rights to land beyond state borders with one exception. Connecticut reserved a strip of western land, between the latitudes in which that state lies (approximately 41°N to 42°N), from the western Pennsylvania border westward for 120 miles—known as the Connecticut Western Reserve. The land area of the Reserve, bordered by Lake Erie on the north, had an average north–south distance of about 50 miles. This is the origin of the Western Reserve in which the Sheffield communities are now located.

Connecticut’s claim was based on a three charters: (1) a grant by King James I in November 1630 to the Plymouth Council, (2) a grant from the Plymouth Council to the Earl of Warwick in the same year, and (3) a grant from the Earl of Warwick to Viscount Say and others on March 19, 1631. The third grant was confirmed by King Charles II on April 25 1662—upon this confirmation chiefly rested Connecticut’s title to the Western Reserve.

The original Connecticut claim included all the land contained between 41°N and 42°N latitude, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Charles II shared the belief held then by men everywhere that the Pacific was to be found in America just over the next hill. This illusion was not fully destroyed until the Lewis & Clark Expedition in 1803-1806.

Politically, the Reserve was first a Connecticut colony, then part of the Northwest Territory after the American Revolution, and finally Trumbull County when Ohio was organized as a state in 1803. The General Assembly of Connecticut, having persuaded Congress to allow them to retain ownership of this wide swath across the top of Ohio, eventually formulated a plan for selling it. They first appointed a committee of 8 citizens to arrange the sale of approximately 3,367,000 acres (5,260 square miles) to produce no less than \$1 million. This led to the creation of the Connecticut Land Company, which, while it was never formally incorporated, is the authority for all original deeds to land in the Reserve.

Connecticut retained jurisdictional control of the Reserve until surrendering it to the United States by Deed of Cession on May 30, 1800. Prior to this cession the State of Connecticut had sold all of the Reserve (except the western portion known as the “Firelands”) to the Connecticut Land Company by quitclaim deed to 35 investors. This sale was completed on September 2, 1795 with the Connecticut Land Company paying \$1.2 million to the State of Connecticut, which invested the money to benefit public schools in that state. One of the investors was General William Hart, who contributed \$30,462 for land that eventually included Sheffield Township.



Ohio’s original land tracts (Ohio State Auditor). Sheffield is situated in the Connecticut Western Reserve at the northeast region of the state, one of the 200 townships in the Western Reserve.

Surveys East of the Cuyahoga River

The Connecticut Land Company ordered the first survey of the Western Reserve and arranged for General Moses Cleaveland to lead the expedition. Cleaveland, born in Connecticut and a graduate from Yale University, served as a Captain of Engineers in the Continental Army. He assembled a team of 40 men including five surveyors, a physician, and the rest chainmen and axemen to accomplish the task. At that time, distance measurements were made with a standard chain, which was 66 feet long and divided into 100 links, each link 7.92 inches long.

In May 1796 the team gathered at Schenectady, New York, where they ascended the Mohawk River in four flat-bottomed boats, proceeded on to Lake Ontario via Oswego, New York and sailed to the mouth of the Niagara River. At Queenston, Ontario they portaged around Niagara Falls to Buffalo.

Gen. Cleaveland also served as the agent for the Connecticut Land Company to negotiate with the Western Indians who were resident in the Reserve. At Buffalo in June 1796 he gained their permission to settle Reserve territory as far west as the Cuyahoga River, although Indian title to this land had been extinguished by the Treaty of Fort McIntosh on January 21, 1785. As part of the negotiations, Cleaveland presented gifts to the resident tribes and paid them a sum of \$1,500.

The survey team reached the soil of the Reserve on July 4, 1796, camping on the banks of Conneaut Creek. The surveyors then preceded south and determined where 41°N latitude intersects the western border Pennsylvania, which was the southern limit of the Reserve. From this line of latitude as a base, meridian lines five miles apart were run north to Lake Erie. Lines of latitude were then run five miles apart, thus dividing the Reserve's eastern portion into a series of townships five miles square.

They progressed westward and on July 22, 1796 Gen. Cleaveland selected the site of the city that would bear his name on the shore of Lake Erie at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River. By virtue of Cleaveland's negotiations, the land lying west of the Cuyahoga remained in the possession of the Indians. Cleaveland obeyed the terms of the agreement so strictly that he did not allow his surveyors to build even a shack on the west bank of the Cuyahoga. However, the Connecticut Land Company had to have information on how much was Reserve was land and how much of it was water—thus Cleaveland sent one man, Augustus Porter, by boat along the Lake Erie shore to the 120 mile limit of the Reserve in order to have an accurate contour of the coast. This survey was the first to define the shoreline of what would later become Sheffield Township.

Surveys West of the Cuyahoga River

The next survey, the land west of the Cuyahoga River, was not made until ten years later. It was initiated due to the urgency of the "Connecticut Sufferers"—former citizens of New Haven, Greenwich, New London, Norwalk, Groton, Fairfield, Danbury, and Ridgefield in Connecticut whose homes had been burned and property destroyed by the British during the American Revolution. The State of Connecticut

settled claims amounting to a little over one half million dollars by releasing to the heirs and assigns of harmed citizens one half million acres in the Reserve. The area thus disposed of includes Huron, Erie, and eastern Ottawa Counties, Ohio, since known as the "Firelands."

But first, the resident Indians had to be consulted. Finally, in the summer of 1805, they were induced to give up their land west of the Cuyahoga River. On July 4, 1805 the Fort Industry Treaty was signed on the banks of the Maumee River by the Indians and by representatives of the United States Government, the Connecticut Land Company, and the Sufferers (who had incorporated themselves). The Indians ceded their claims to all of the Reserve west of the Cuyahoga, 2,750,000 acres, for \$18,916.67 from the land companies, plus monetary gifts from the Government.



General Moses Cleaveland, the original surveyor of the Connecticut Western Reserve (Gregory and Guitteau).

Seth Pease directed the survey west of the Cuyahoga starting in 1806. Abraham Tappan and Anson Sessions ran the township lines between the Cuyahoga River and the Firelands and Almon Ruggles finished laying the tracts in the Firelands in 1807. Each township was five miles square (except those along the Lake Erie coast where the boundary was the irregular lakeshore). The ranges, or north to south columns of townships, were numbered from the Pennsylvania line and the townships in the east to west rows were numbered from the bottom, or south range, up. Thus, Sheffield was designated as Township 7 in Range 17.

Ownerships of the townships were then determined by a series of drafts, the first two being held in 1798 and 1802 for lands in the eastern portion of the Reserve. The third draft was held in 1807 for the land west of the Cuyahoga River. This draft, held on April 4, 1807, included 46 townships. The draft required a contribution of \$26,087 in the original investment scheme to entitle the owner to an entire township. The draft proceeded as follows—the townships were numbered and the numbers written on separate pieces of paper were put into a box. The names of the perspective proprietors with sufficient investments to entitle them to township, or group of investors with the required amount, were arranged in alphabetic order. The township corresponding to the first number drawn from the box then went to the first name on the list and so on. In this way, General William Hart received ownership of Township 7 of Range 17—Sheffield Township.

General William Hart

General William Hart was a prosperous shipbuilder and merchant engaged in the West Indies trade. He resided in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, where in 1767 he built a home for his bride, Esther Buckingham. It was one of the earliest houses in the community—the first settlement on the southern shore of Connecticut. During the Revolution, William Hart and his brothers armed their merchant ships and engaged in numerous privateering forays against the British. In 1779, William led the First Regiment of Connecticut Light Horse Militia to defend Connecticut towns during General Tryon's Raid.

Tryon's Raid took place in July 1779. British Major General William Tryon and 2,600 men embarked on a Royal Navy fleet from New York and raided the Connecticut ports of New Haven, Fairfield, and Norwalk. Military and public stores, supply houses, and ships were destroyed, as were private homes, churches, and other public buildings. The raids were resisted by Connecticut militia forces, but overpowered by a superior number of invaders. The raid was part of a larger strategy designed by the British to draw Major General George Washington's



General William Hart, the original proprietor of Sheffield Township (Old Saybrook Historical Society).

Continental Army onto terrain where it might be more effectively engaged. The strategy failed in this goal, and General Tryon was criticized for the severity of the action by both sides, being ridiculed by Patriots and Loyalists alike for the raid. Washington accused him of making

war against women and children, and others called the raids acts of "barbarity." The residents of these communities and others in Connecticut that suffered losses at the hands of the British were later compensated with land in the Western Reserve—the area now known as the "Firelands."

General Hart's home was typical of the residences of the well-to-do New England settlers. From a second floor chamber in his house he could view the Hart fleet of ships when in port, off the Hart dock at the entrance to the North Cove. The Harts were noted for entertaining frequently and quite lavishly. The U.S. Department of the Interior has listed the house on the National Register of Historic Places. Now owned by the Old Saybrook Historical Society, it is one of only three houses in community to merit this distinction and the only one open to the public.

Township 7 of Range 17

When Ohio attained statehood in 1803, the land of the Western Reserve was designated as Trumbull County. The state legislature established Huron County in 1809 and Cuyahoga County in 1810, however the two acts created a conflict of boundaries in the vicinity of Elyria. In 1811 the legislature resolved the conflict by giving all of Elyria Township to Huron County and establishing the Black River as boundary between the counties north of Elyria to Lake Erie. As a result, Township 7 of Range 17, which straddled the Black River north of Elyria, found itself in two different counties—Cuyahoga County on the east and Huron County on the west sides of the river.

Once known simply as Township No. 7 of the 17th Range of Townships in the Connecticut Western Reserve, the first settlers of European stock named it Sheffield in honor of the town they left behind in Massachusetts. That was 1815 and Lorain County had not yet been formed. Thus, because the new settlement straddled the Black River, it was under the jurisdiction of county seats in Cleveland and Norwalk. When Lorain County was organized in 1824 the situation was resolved and Sheffield Township was the first to be accepted for incorporation by the commissioners of the new county.



General William Hart's home in Old Saybrook, Connecticut (Old Saybrook Historical Society).

The original township consisted of 113 Lots, encompassing a land area of approximately 23.69 square miles (15,161 acres). The lots, which are still referenced in all parcel deeds, are generally arranged in 10 south to north tiers, with Lot 1 at the southeast corner and Lot 113 in the southwest corner. The lots averaged about 134 acres each, but varying from as little as 59 acres (Lot 52) to as large as 233.5 acres (Lot 51).

Changes in the Township Boundary

In 1875, Lots 51 and 52 (292.5 acres) at the northwestern edge of the township were transferred to the Village of Lorain in Black River Township. Again in 1894, large portions of the western area of Sheffield Township were annexed by the growing City of Lorain to accommodate the Johnson Company steel plant being built on the west side of the river near the center of the township (Lots 81-98). At the same time, Lots 46-50 and 53-57 at the northwest corner of the township were also annexed by Lorain.

In 1920, residents living on the east side of the Black River voted to withdraw from the township, forming the Village of Sheffield Lake. In another action the same year, the Lorain-Sheffield Lake line was further withdrawn to 330 feet east of Root Road (portions of Lots 31, 45, and 58).

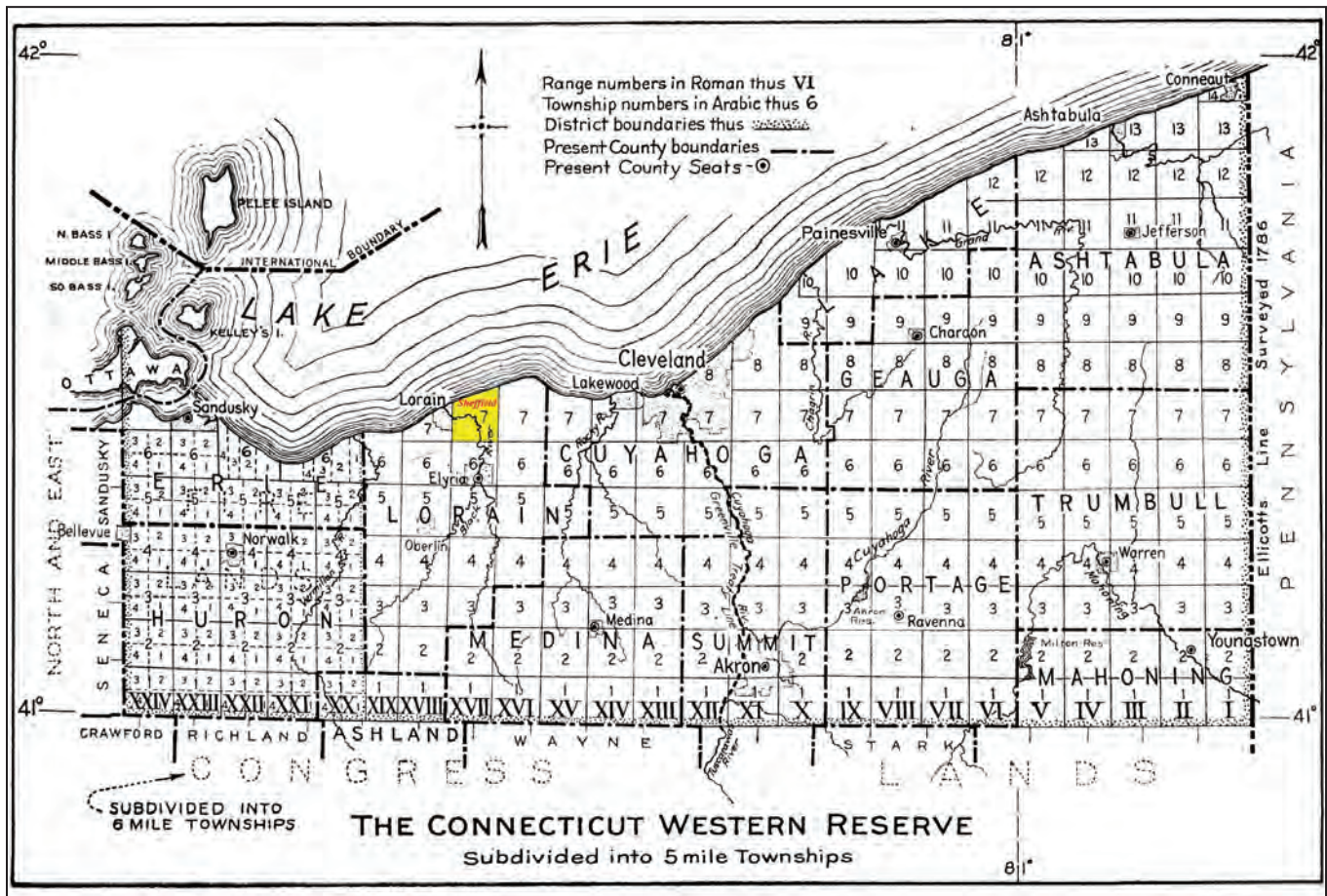
The Village of Sheffield Lake, the community east of the Black River, decided to further divide in 1933. The south end

had a sparse population and large farms, while the north end along Lake Erie had a greater population living on small parcels. The interests of these two segments of the village were found to be incompatible and the residents of the southern lots voted to withdraw, forming the Township of Brookside and a year later the Village of Sheffield. Over the years, the City of Lorain has annexed addition portions of Sheffield Township, including Lots 99, 100, 105, and 110, as well as portions of Lots 77-80, 101-103, 106, and 111.

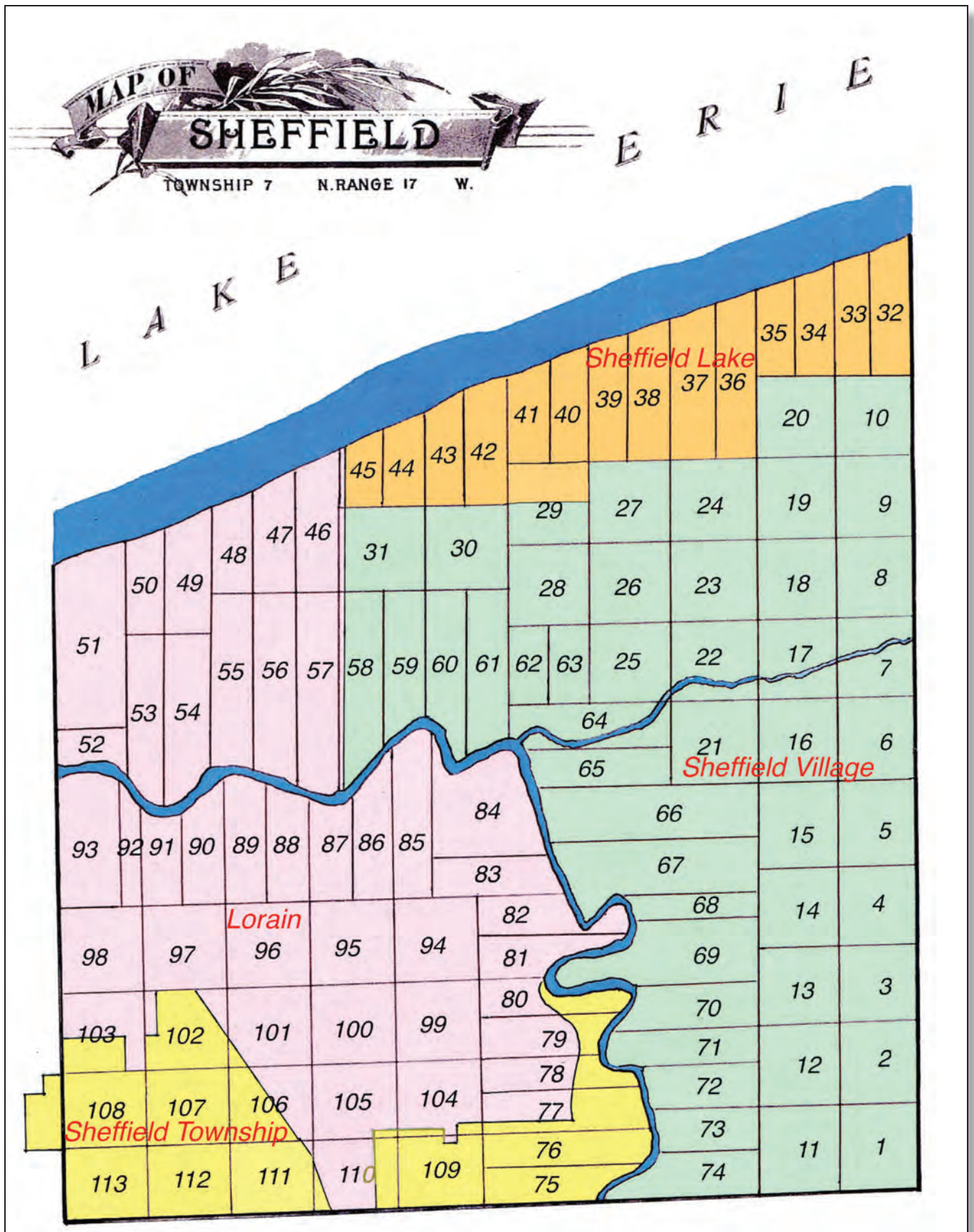
In 2015, of the original 113 lots first surveyed in 1806, the following 79 lots remain totally or partially located within the three communities:

- City of Sheffield Lake [Lots 10, 20, 32-45]
- Village of Sheffield [Lots 1-31, 58-74]
- Township of Sheffield [Lots 75-80, 101-104, 106-109, 111-113]

Thus, 200 years after the first settlement of Sheffield, three Sheffields exist within the original township—City of Sheffield Lake, Village of Sheffield, and Township of Sheffield. The differences that resulted in the separations are less important today, and it is gratifying that the three communities have joined together for a Bicentennial Celebration of their common beginning.



Map of the Connecticut Western Reserve showing the location of Sheffield Township (Sherman 1925).



Map of the original 113 lots surveyed in Sheffield Township in 1815. Color-coding indicates the City of Lorain and the three Sheffields as they exist in 2015.

PIONEER SETTLEMENT OF LORAIN COUNTY

Lorain County was first organized by the Ohio Legislature on December 26, 1822 and officially went into operation on January 21, 1824. The county, as originally formed, consisted of 17½ townships. In January 1827 eight additional townships were detached from Medina County and annexed to Lorain, while half a township was lost to Cuyahoga County. Then in 1840, when Summit County was created, two townships were returned to Medina County and in 1846 two southern townships were lost to Ashland County when that county was formed. Thus, by February 1846, Lorain County consisted of 21 townships in the same configuration that exists today. Although the shape and

area of Lorain County has remained the same since that time, three township names have been lost (Avon, Black River, and Ridgeville) through the incorporation of cities.

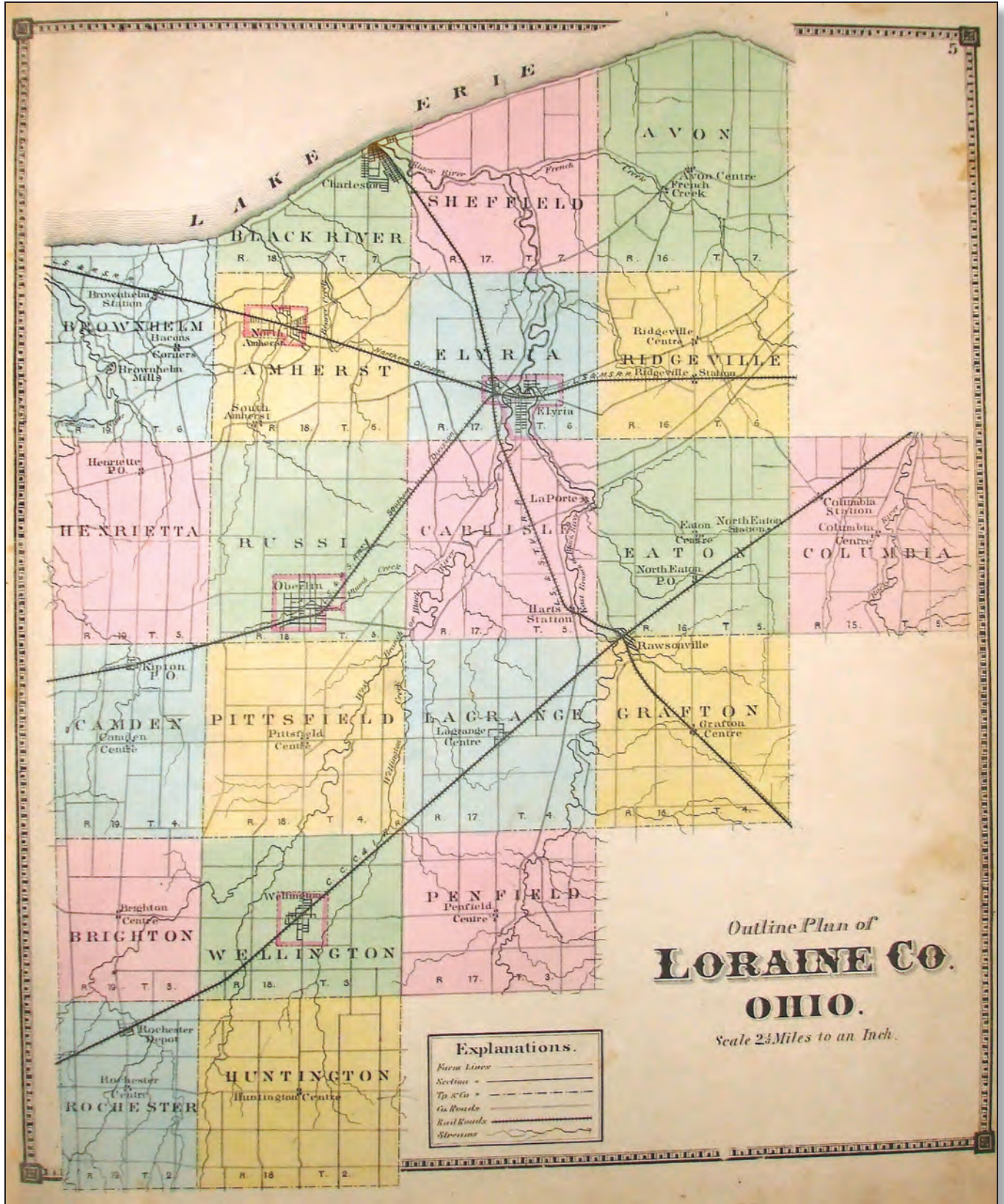
The accompanying table lists these 21 townships, the year in which each was originally settled, the first permanent settlers, and the year in which each township was formally organized. The first two original settlements were at the mouth of the Black River and in the valley of Rocky River in Columbia in 1807. Camden, at the western edge of the county was the last township to be settled, in 1829.

LORAIN COUNTY TOWNSHIPS			
Township	First Settlement	First Permanent Settler(s)	Township Organized
Amherst	1811	Jacob Shupe	1830
Avon	1814	Wilbur Cahoon, Lewis Austin, Nicolas Young	1824
Black River	1807	Azariah Beebe, Nathan Perry, John S. Reid	1817
Brighton	1820	Abner Loveman	1823
Brownhelm	1817	Col. Henry Brown, Peter Pease, Charles Whittlesey, William Lincoln	1818
Camden	1829	Leonard Clark, Moses Pike, William Scott, John Johnson	1835
Carlisle	1819	Samuel Brooks	1822
Columbia	1807	Bela & Levi Bronson, John Williams, Walter Strong	1809
Eaton	1810	Asa Morgan, Silas Wilmot, Ira Morgan, Ebenezer Wilmot	1822
Elyria	1817	Heman Ely & Beach Family	1819
Grafton	1816	Jonathan Rawson, John & George Sibley, Seth & Thomas Ingersoll	1818
Henrietta	1817	Calvin Leonard, Simeon Durand, Ruloff Andress, Joseph Swift	1827
Huntington	1818	Joseph Sage, John Laborie	1822
LaGrange	1825	Nathan Clark	1827
Penfield	1819	Peter & Alanson Penfield	1825
Pittsfield	1821	Thomas & Jeffrey Waite	1831
Ridgeville	1810	David Beebe, Joel Terrell, Lyman Root	1813
Rochester	1831	Elijah Banning	1835
Russia	1818	Thomas Waite	1825
Sheffield	1815	Capt. Joshua & Douglas Smith, Samuel Fitch, Asher Chapman, Capt. Jabez Burrell, Capt. John Day, Henry Root, Milton Garfield	1824
Wellington	1818	Ephraim Wilcox, Charles Sweet, Joseph Wilson, William Welling	1821



Artemas Beebe's tavern and stage house, Elyria, circa 1820 (Lorain County Historical Society).

Lorain County in Its Final Configuration—1846



Map of Lorain County showing all of the townships as they were defined in 1846 when the county was finally established in its present configuration. Map prepared by Surveyor and Civil Engineer D. J. Lake and published in the Atlas of Lorain County, Ohio by Titus, Simmons & Titus, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1874.

To Mr. Harry Woods.

FAREWELL OLD COTTAGE.



Based according to Act of Congress in the year 1834 by Fish, Pond & Co., in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New York.

"FAREWELL OLD COTTAGE,
YOU AND I MUST PART;
I LEAVE YOUR FAITHFUL SHELTER,
WITH A POOR BREAKING HEART."

WRITTEN AND COMPOSED
BY
STEPHEN C. FOSTER.

Price 25 Cts. - Vell.

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Sheet music cover for Stephen C. Foster's Farewell Old Cottage. As a young man Foster moved from Pennsylvania to Cincinnati, Ohio where he reminisced about leaving his old home as did many of the new settlers of Sheffield in the 1840s.

PIONEERS—THE SETTLEMENT OF SHEFFIELD TAKES HOLD

FIRST ATTEMPT

In 1812, General William Hart, the original proprietor of Township 7 of Range 17, sent an agent to commence the settlement of the township. His name was Timothy Wallace (1793-1876), a 21-year-old young man from Pittstown, Rensselaer County, New York. The arrangement was that if the settlement was successful, Wallace would have his choice of a lot. Wallace arrived in the spring, built a small log house, and began improving a few acres. He selected Lot 65 on the Black River where French Creek debouched.

The War of 1812 was declared in June of that year. For over a decade the British had been inciting the Native American populations of northwest Ohio to retaliate for attempts by Americans to settle on Indian land. This instigation, whether actual or rumored, reached the fledgling settlement at the mouth of the Black River, causing the residents to form a militia unit. Wallace, some five miles upstream, felt isolated and defenseless. He informed General Hart that he was abandoning the township “for fear of the Indians.”

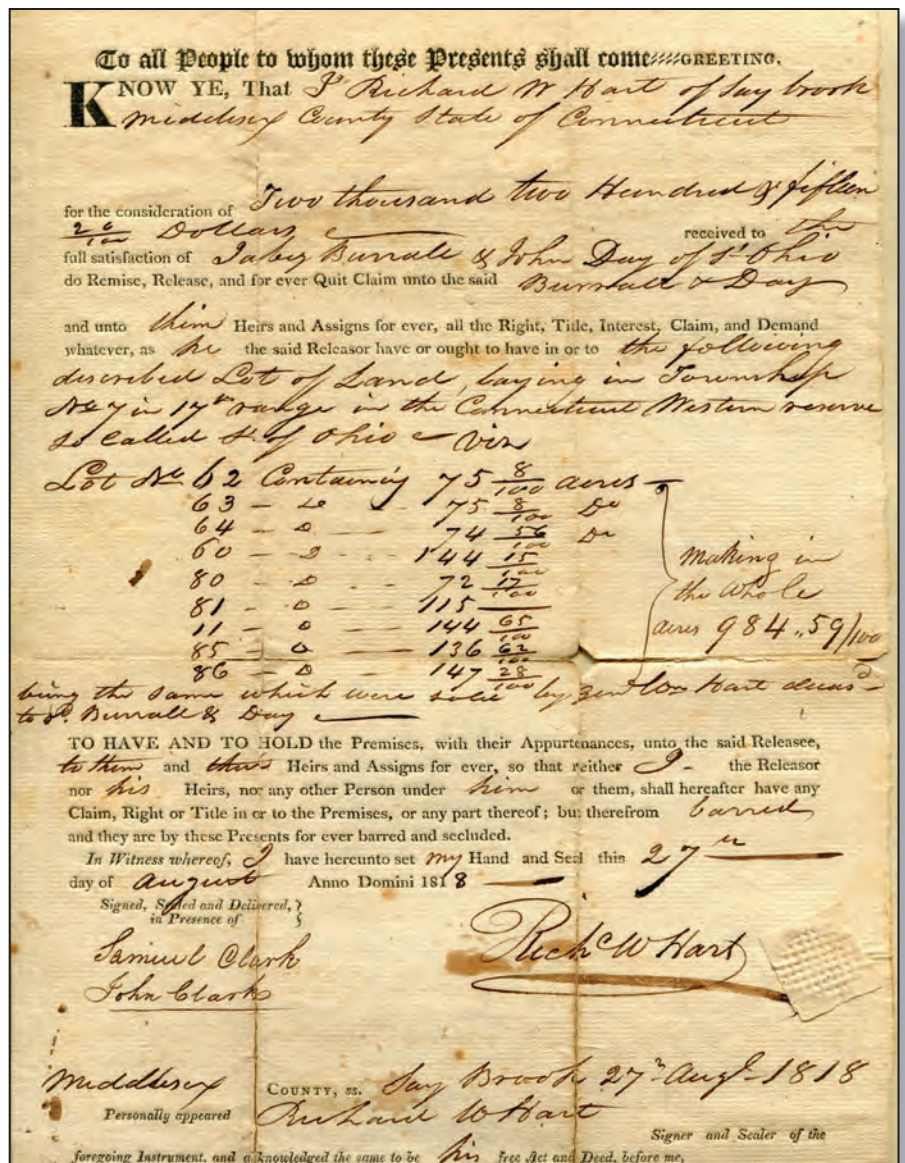
Wallace stayed in Ohio, settling farther east in Portage County. He married Elizabeth Blanchard there and by 1820 they had four children. The number increased to nine by 1840. By 1850, Timothy and Elizabeth Wallace, and their son David, had moved to Dansville, Steubens County, New York to join other members of the Wallace family that had settled there after leaving Pittstown. The Wallace families farmed side-by-side until Timothy’s death in 1876.

SHEFFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS TAKES UP THE CHALLENGE

The town of Sheffield, Berkshire County, Massachusetts is nestled in the valley of the Housatonic River just east of the Berkshire Mountains and only a few miles from the Connecticut’s northern border. The residents of Sheffield and the surrounding communities had followed with interest the sale of Western Reserve land by the Connecticut Land Company and the exodus of Timothy Wallace.

Once peace negotiations to end the War of 1812 were taking place, hearty pioneers from New England began to recognize the natural attributes of northern Ohio.

On January 29, 1815, Captains Jabez Burrell and John Day of Sheffield purchased General Hart’s large tract of land designated as Township 7 of Range 17 in the Western Reserve. The purchase price was \$34,159.50. They paid General Hart \$2,000 in hand and obtained from him a mortgage for \$32,159.50 to secure the balance of the purchase price. Their plan was to select lots for themselves and to sell the remaining lots to pay off the mortgage. They formed a partnership with several other Massachusetts families. Later that year and the following spring settlers began to arrive in the valley of the Black River where they built log houses and founded a community they called Sheffield in honor of town they left behind.



When William Hart died in 1817, his son Richard became the sole heir to his estate including the mortgage on the Ohio property. The Burrells and the Days continued to sell off lots, periodically make payments to Richard Hart. Evidence of this arrangement can be found in a deed still mounted on the entrance hall of the Jabez Burrell Homestead. The deed, dated August 27, 1818, conveys 984.59 acres of land in Lots 11, 60, 62, 63, 64, 80, 81, 85, and 86 from Richard Hart to Jabez Burrell and John Day for payment of \$2,215.20 (see page 75).

JOURNEYS OF THE PIONEERS TO FOUND SHEFFIELD

The original pioneers of Sheffield arrived in a variety of manners—on foot, on horseback, in oxen carts, and even by lake schooners. The young sons of two of the pioneer families, Norman Day and William Root, kept records of these arrivals for the early years of the settlement. These accounts give some insight as to the determination of our founders.

Captain Joshua Smith

Captain Smith accompanied Captain Jabez Burrell, Isaac Burrell, and Captain John Day on an exploratory journey to Township No. 7 of the 17th Range of the Connecticut Western Reserve in June 1815 to select lots for themselves and friends. The township had been surveyed in 1806 by agents of the Connecticut Land Company, establishing 113 lots of various sizes ranging from 59 to 233.5 acres.

The journey was an arduous trip on horseback, so much so that Jabez Burrell decided that when he returned with his family it would be on a Great Lakes schooner. Captain Smith was not as concerned with the overland travel. Thus, he and his eldest son, 17-year-old son Douglas, left their home in New Marlborough, Berkshire County, Massachusetts for Ohio on October 1, 1815.

Captain Smith and Douglas fitted out a yoke of oxen and wagon packed with tools necessary for clearing and cultivating a new farm. Captain Smith also took along his favorite horse. They following the Mohawk Valley to Oneida Lake, at which point Captain Smith left Douglas to pursue the tedious journey alone, while he rode north to visit friends at Sackets Harbor on the Lake Ontario shore, assuring Douglas that he would rejoin him before he reached Ohio. Captain Smith was a veteran of the War of 1812 and saw action defending Sackets Harbor and repelling a British invasion of that strategic lake port.

True to his word, he overtook Douglas near Erie, Pennsylvania and they proceeded together to Avon, Ohio. On November 11, 1815 they arrived at Wilber Cahoon's farm on French Creek in Avon. Wilber Cahoon, also a former resident of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, had come to Ohio in 1814 after living for a time in Herkimer County, New York. The next day being a Sunday, they rested at the Cahoon farm. On November 13, 1815, they followed French Creek downstream without a trail and commenced the first permanent settlement in Sheffield Township on Lot 64.

A few days after their arrival, the Smiths were joined by two young men from their native town of New Marlborough—Samuel B. Fitch and Asher Chapman. These four men soon built a rude shanty where they spent the winter of 1815-1816, dependent on their own resourcefulness for subsistence and amusement. Captain Smith was known for his humorous and jovial nature. He enjoyed a joke and was fond of telling a good story, well calculated to amuse himself and his companions in their seclusion.

The small settlement's nearest neighbors were John S. Reid and Daniel Perry at the mouth of the Black River some four miles downstream; Wilber Cahoon at five miles upstream on French Creek; and Moses Eldred of Ridgeville seven miles distance. For more comfortable lodging, they spent some of their nights at the mouth of the river and some at Cahoon's place.

In the fall of 1816, Captain Smith traveled back to Massachusetts for his wife Martha and the rest of his family of seven other children—Isaac, Rachel, Eleazer, Harvey,

Warren, Caleb, and Reuel. They returned to Sheffield in March 1817. Ariel Moore, also of New Marlborough, joined Captain Smith for the journey to Sheffield and settled on Lot 56 with his wife and three children—Lorinda, Lovina, and Abigail.

The infant settlement was shocked on September 17, 1817 by the sudden death of Captain Smith. He fell victim to ague and bilious fever [a malaria-like illness involving fever, shivering, nausea and vomiting]. Deacon James of Brownhelm officiated at the funeral and led the community in the singing of funeral hymns. It was a solemn day and the death of Captain Smith was much lamented—the first person to die in the new township. A burying ground was selected on a bluff near the French Creek bridge [likely in what is now James Day Park]. In 1848, his bones were disinterred and deposited in the Ridge Cemetery [later Garfield Cemetery] on North Ridge. A bronze, War of 1812 veteran's marker is placed adjacent to his marble gravestone.



Gravestone of Joshua Smith (1771-1817) in Garfield Cemetery with War of 1812 historic marker. He was Sheffield's first permanent settler and the first to die.

Henry Root Family

Henry and Mary [Day] Root with their six children—Aaron J. (14), William Henry (12), Julia Ann (10), Jane (8), Frances (6), and Mary (4)—departed Sheffield, Massachusetts on February 15, 1816 to start their journey to—the *land of promise to all New Englanders*,

the Connecticut Western Reserve. Inside their canvas-covered wagons were the parents (Henry, age 49 and Mary, age 44) and the children aged between 4 and 14. William writes years later—*It was sad parting from a pleasant home and from kindred and friends, to enter upon a difficult journey and the privations and hardships of pioneer life.*

The travelers reached Albany, New York on the third day of their journey, then traced the beautiful Mohawk Valley to Utica, then on rude roads to Buffalo. West of Buffalo they found no bridges and forded the streams swollen by spring *freshets* [rivers and creeks flooded by heavy rains and snow melts] or were ferried over in scows. Twice their wagons had to be driven through floodwaters, where horses, family possessions, and even lives were at great risk.

The family had two wagons, one

Mary [Day] Root (1772-1859), one of the first women to settle in Sheffield. She is buried in Sheffield's Pioneer Cemetery, East River Road.

drawn by a yoke of oxen with a horse ahead—*known as an English spike team.* The other wagon was pulled by *bay* horses [brown with black points—extremities, such as face, feet, and tail]. Soon, Aaron and William were not content to ride in the wagons, and walked alongside their father most of the way.

Mary fed her family from the *provision chest* carried in the wagon and made beds at night with bedding brought with them. After over five weeks on the road they reached a small village called Cleveland—*six miles north of the village of Newburg.* William marked down some observations about the towns along the way—Albany was a bustling city with a population of 7,000; Buffalo was a town of 200 or 300 people; and other communities such as Erie, Pennsylvania and Cleveland were even smaller.

When they reached the Rocky River, they had to cross without the benefit of a ferry. The river was four or five feet deep and had a strong current. Without mishap the Roots crossed the river, but then encountered another problem—the almost vertical wall of shale on the west

bank had to be surmounted. With exhausting effort the family fought their way to the top of the bluff, wagons still in tact.

At Dover [later to become Bay Village and Westlake] they found a few families, among whom was the first settler of that town, Joseph Cahoon, who came there on October 10, 1810. From here, the last nine miles were the hardest of all—a *journey of peril and hardship.* William described the land east of the Black River as—*wild country with bottomless roads of mud that took a whole day to travel a distance of only four miles.* On April 1, 1816, after six weeks of travel, they reached the Black River mouth.



The journey of the Henry Root Family, made by wagons drawn by horses and oxen, covered approximately 550 miles in 42 days. As devout Congregationalists, it is likely they did no Sunday traveling. This means they probably averaged a little better than 15 miles a day. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that Henry Root was a masterful hand with an ox goad [spiked stick used for driving stock].

Henry and his family shared the shanty of Captain Joshua Smith for three weeks, while they built a log house for themselves on Lot 17 along French Creek near the southwest corner of present day Abbe Road and Colorado Avenue, not far from where St. Teresa Catholic Church now stands. On July 27, 1816, Mary [Day] Root welcomed her brother, Captain John Day, his wife Lydia [Austin] Day, and their nine children—

William, Rhoda Marie, John, Norman, Fanny, James, Lydia, Kellogg, and Frederick—to her rude home. In all, 19 people crowded into the limited quarters until Captain Day could prepare lodging for his family.

To the Root boys, Aaron and William, the broad blue lake, the majestic forests, and the wild, strange scenes were like a story of romance. They helped their father clear the forest and build the home. Eventually, Aaron would ply the Great Lakes and the



Woodcut print of Captain John Day and Lydia [Austin] Day, made in Sheffield, Massachusetts to celebrate their 15th Anniversary (1809).

Atlantic Ocean as captain of sailing vessels and steamships and even carry runaway slaves to freedom in British Canada, while William would become the auditor of Lorain County and build an elegant home of Greek Revival style for himself and family along the lakeshore in Sheffield Lake at the foot of the road that now bears his name.

Captains Jabez Burrell and John Day Families

As noted above, in June 1815 Captains Burrell and Day journeyed to Ohio on horseback to select lots for themselves and friends. The arduous trip was enough to persuade the two that they would not enjoy traveling the length of New York and half the length of Lake Erie by oxcart.

On their return to Massachusetts, they engaged Captain Anon Harmon of New Marlborough to build a boat at Schenectady, New York in which they might ship their belongs to Ohio. Schenectady was selected because it was above the Cohoes Falls at the mouth of the Mohawk River and permitted relatively easy passage upstream as far as Little Falls. By 1815, a lock had been constructed around the rapids at Little Falls. The lock was 70 feet long, 12 feet wide and 3.5 feet deep.

In the spring of 1816 Captain Harmon launched the schooner *Fire Fly* in the Mohawk River at Schenectady. She was a small, half-decked schooner of about 18 tons burden. With a capacity of this tonnage, she was most likely in the 40-foot length and 10-foot beam category. According to the U.S. Department of Treasury regulations adopted in 1790, a vessel's "tonnage" does not mean weight, rather registered tons refers to a measurement of enclosed space—one ton equated to 100 cubic feet of enclosed space within the ship's hull. Also because of the shallowness of the locks, she was probably a flat-bottomed boat. A schooner of this type was commonly referred to as a "scow schooner." Such vessels usually had one or two masts with gaff-rigged, fore-and-aft sails.

Scow schooners were probably introduced to the New World by Dutch and English colonists. These shallow-draft, flat-bottomed sailing vessels were ideal for large estuaries like the Chesapeake, Delaware, and Hudson or innumerable small tributaries reaching inland from the Atlantic Ocean. In the 18th century the upper Hudson and lower Mohawk Rivers were not easy to navigate. Both rivers had stretches of deep placid water, but they also had sand and gravel bars, rock ledges, shallows, and



Mohawk River at Schenectady, New York showing the type of boat operating there before Captain Anon Harmon built his two-masted schooner, Fire Fly, to transport Burrell and Day goods to Sheffield (Schenectady Historical Society).



Cohoes Falls on the Mohawk River (Mark Wade).

rapids. Scow schooners and “Schenectady Boats” (a bateau-like, single-masted boat about 35 feet long and 6 feet wide) were the preferred vessels to navigate the Mohawk River.

Commercial navigation on the Great Lakes ostensibly followed the War of 1812 when the British relinquished their control of the region and American entrepreneurs began building ships for competitive trade. The vessel of choice for the next two decades was the two-masted schooner. By 1820, there were several dozen of them operating on Lakes Ontario and Erie, and ten years later their number had multiplied several fold. The *Black Snake*, which was also involved in transporting the Burrell and Day families from Buffalo to the mouth of the Black River on the Ohio shore of Lake Erie, was a vessel of this type. At the height of the sailing ship era in 1870, there were nearly 2,000 schooners on the Great Lakes, including several varieties of sailing scows. U.S. Customs Department enrollment records indicate scow schooners were operating on Lake Ontario and the Finger Lakes as early as the 1820s. Twenty years later they were in use all over the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. Several hundred scow schooners were eventually built on the Great Lakes with at least 600 documented on enrollment records for the period 1857-1886.

When word reached Captains Burrell and Day in Sheffield, Massachusetts that the *Fire Fly* was almost ready, they sold their Berkshire farms, loaded household goods, farm implements, and large families into horse- and ox-drawn wagons and freighted them over the Berkshire Mountains and across the Hudson River



Former Burrell Homestead in Sheffield, Massachusetts (2013).

to Albany, New York. They continued up the Mohawk Valley and over the “big hill” to Schenectady. There, the heavy household and farm items were stowed aboard the *Fire Fly*. Burrell and Day were captains in the Massachusetts Militia, not maritime captains. Not wanting to risk their families on the little schooner, they opted for heading west with their wives and children by wagon using horses instead of the slow moving oxen while the *Fire Fly* took the water route.

Captain Harmon and his small crew half sailed and half rowed up the Mohawk River. There were locks at Little Falls, built in the 1790s, to raise the schooner above the falls to the upper river. From there she was rowed and pulled to Rome, New York where the Rome Canal led into Wood Creek, which flowed to Oneida Lake. The crew spread the *Fire Fly*’s sails in earnest for the first time and cruised across the 22-mile-long lake. At the lower end they navigated down lake’s outlet, the Oneida River, to the Oswego River at Three Rivers, and then the craft floated some 20 miles downstream to the port town of Oswego on Lake Ontario, the oldest freshwater port in the United States.



Rapids on the Mohawk River at Little Falls, New York, which required a canal with locks for boats to bypass in the early 1800s.



Remains of the canal and locks at Little Falls, New York, which were used by boats to bypass the rapids on the Mohawk River in the early 1800s.

Lake Ontario looked immense and daunting to the crew of the *Fire Fly*. The little craft hugged the south shore all the way to the mouth of the Niagara River, a voyage of 150 miles. Again using her sweeps, the crew rowed the seven miles up the river at Queenston, Ontario. Although the War of 1812 had only ended a year and a half earlier, Canadian workers were on the docks and eager to sell services to their former enemy. The portage past the lower rapids, the Falls, and the upper rapids was easier on the west (Ontario) bank of the Niagara River, where a crude path passed as a wagon road. Captain Harmon unloaded his cargo into wagons and drew the schooner out onto cart wheels. The *Fire Fly* was dragged laboriously up the escarpment and around Niagara Falls. At Chippawa, above the falls and rapids where the Welland River meets the Niagara, the *Fire Fly* was launched again.

While the *Fire Fly* was negotiating the numerous waterways on her voyage, the Burrell and Day Families had made their way by wagon to Buffalo, New York. At nearby Black Rock, Captain John Day engaged the schooner *Black Snake* to carry this family up Lake Erie to the mouth of the Black River. They arrived there on July 26, 1816. The next day they ascended the river on John S. Reid's ferry scow, rather than hack a road through the wilderness, and were welcomed to the home of John's sister, Mary [Day] Root. Located on French Creek, two miles upstream from the mouth, the Root log house had been constructed only three months earlier. After unloading her cargo, the *Black Snake* returned to Black Rock, New York for the Burrell Family.



The schooner *Black Snake* carried the Burrell and Day Families on Lake Erie from Buffalo to the Black River. The fore-and-aft rigged schooner shown above is of a similar design (Great Lakes Historical Society).

Meanwhile, the Burrell-Day cargo arrived by wagon and was reloaded aboard the *Fire Fly* at Chippawa, Ontario. Fighting the 4-6 miles per hour current, the sweeps were employed. Fortunately, a north wind helped push the vessel to the river's head at Lake Erie. All that was left was to sail the nearly 200-mile reach of Lake Erie to the mouth of the Black River.

While the Day family undertook the voyage on Lake Erie, Captain Jabez Burrell and his family had stayed behind in the Buffalo area for two weeks to oversee see the portage of the *Fire Fly* around Niagara Falls. When the schooner *Black Snake* returned, the Burrells boarded her and the two vessels proceeded

up Lake Erie in tandem. On August 11, 1816, Jabez, his wife Mary "Polly" [Robbins] Burrell, with their eight children—Julia, Sarah Marie, Robbins, Lyman John, Salome, Jabez Lyman, Eliza, and Mary Ann—arrived at the mouth of the Black River. Accompanying them was Solomon Weeks, a young man who had been an apprentice to Captain Burrell. They disembarked the larger *Black Snake* and prepared to board the shallower draft *Fire Fly* for the trip up the Black River to Sheffield.

Soon, the *Fire Fly* docked at Reid's landing on the Black River and unloaded several hundred pounds of salt, a commodity much in demand on the frontier, to make room for the Burrell children. The family boarded the *Fire Fly* and the little schooner navigated the estuarine waters of the lower 5-miles of the river to the mouth of French Creek. Here, the Burrell-Day goods were unloaded on the fertile floodplain known as the Big Bottom. With the two proprietors, Burrell and Day, finally on site, the little settlement of Sheffield, Ohio was ready to grow.

The question of what happened to the *Black Snake* and *Fire Fly* after they made their voyages from Buffalo to Sheffield was recently answered by research conducted by Great Lakes maritime historian Jerry Metzler of Avon, Ohio. He also uncovered details on these early Lake Erie vessels. The *Black Snake* was enrolled by United States Customs Department in Cleveland, Ohio as a new vessel on April 30, 1815. Her enrollment record indicates she was a wood schooner with one deck, two masts, and a plain bowhead. Her length was 44 feet, width 12 feet 6 inches, depth 4 feet 6 inches, and tonnage 216. She was owned by Jacob M. Wilkinson from 1816 to 1818, who also served as her master. In 1817, James Wilkinson also served as her master. She was the first vessel to trade on the Maumee River [then known as Miami] at Toledo. She was engaged in Lake Erie trade until 1821 when she passed out of existence for unspecified reasons.

As mentioned earlier, the wood schooner *Fire Fly* was built by Anon Harmon of New Marlborough, Massachusetts at Schenectady, New York in 1816. At that time she had one deck, two masts, and a plain bowhead. Her tonnage was 18 and her length was approximately 40 feet. She was sold to Joseph Hammond in October 1816 and rebuilt in Detroit where she was enrolled in August 1817. Her new tonnage was 24 and new length was 59 feet 4 inches, width 11 feet 8 inches, and depth 3 feet 9 inches. She was owned by Henry I. Hunt and several partners from 1818 until 1825. Her masters were Joseph Hammond (1816), David D. Norton (1817-1819), John Robinson (1819), John F. Rupley (1820), Harvey Luther (1820-1827), Benjamin S. Winch (1822), Henry I. Hunt (1825), and Pratt (1828). The *Fire Fly* was engaged in the Cleveland to Miami [Toledo] trade in 1827. Her enrollment was surrendered to the United States Customs Department at Buffalo on August 1, 1828. Through the years she was at times enrolled and at other times registered with the United States government. The distinction being that an enrolled vessel was only permitted to operate between American ports, while a registered vessel was permitted to operate between American and foreign ports, presumably Canada in the case of the *Fire Fly*.

Milton Garfield

Milton Garfield of Tyringham, Massachusetts, accompanied by his younger brother, James, walked through the wilderness to Township No. 7 in 1815. Milton carried with him few provisions, other than an axe and a gun. He selected Lot 73 on North Ridge, where the brothers constructed a small log cabin during that summer. They had a few encounters with the local Indian population, but no serious problems. On one occasion they were called upon to help two warriors secure a bear the Indians had subdued in the Black River valley about a mile and a half south of their cabin. The brothers were rewarded with a slab of fresh meat for their help. In the fall the brothers returned to Massachusetts, but only Milton returned the next spring to begin clearing the land. In April, Milton's cousin John Bird Garfield, also from Tyringham, walked to Ohio and settled on adjacent Lot 74. Unaware of John's presence, Milton heard chopping in the nearby woods, only to discover it was his cousin.

Their grandfather, Lt. Isaac Garfield (1717-1792) served with the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and was among the first settlers in Tyringham, Massachusetts in 1739. Milton's father, Lt. Solomon Garfield (1753-1821), also served in the Revolutionary War.



Milton Garfield (1792-1862) monument in Garfield Cemetery. He was the first settler on North Ridge and a colonel in the Ohio Militia.

LOG OF EARLY SETTLEMENT (1812-1817)

Norman Day, son of pioneer John Day, came with his father to Sheffield in 1816 at the age of 13. Likewise, William Henry Root came with his father, Henry Root, the same year at the age of 12. They were first cousins. Independently, each kept a log of new arrivals to the settlement. Years later, both of them published eyewitness accounts of the early days of Sheffield. These accounts have been used to reconstruct the settlement history of Sheffield.

~1812

Timothy Wallace—Lot 65 [agent for then Proprietor General William Hart, built small log house; soon abandoned for “fear of Indians”]

1815

November 13—Captain Joshua Smith & son Douglas from New Marlborough, Massachusetts—Lot 64

~November 16—Samuel B. Fitch from New Marlborough, Massachusetts—Lot 61

~November 16—Asher Chapman from New Marlborough, Massachusetts—Lots 31 & 46

1816

February—Freeman Richmond & wife [first female settler]—Lot 2

April 3—Henry Root & wife Mary [Day] Root & 6 children: Aaron J., William Henry, Julia Ann, Jane, Frances, & Mary from Sheffield, Massachusetts—Lot 17

~April—Oliver Moon from Avon, New York—Lot 11

~April—Milton Garfield of Tyringham, Massachusetts—Lot 73

~April—John Bird Garfield of Tyringham, Massachusetts—Lot 74

~April—A. R. Dimmick—Lots 75 & 76

~April—William Richmond [brother of Freeman Richmond]—Lot 2

~April—Willis Potter—Lot 1

July 27—Captain John Day & wife Lydia [Austin] Day & 10 children: William, Rhoda Maria, John, Norman, Fanny, James, Lydia, Kellogg, & Frederick [2 additional children born after arrival: Edmond A. & Eleanor] from Sheffield, Massachusetts—Lot 66

August 11—Captain Jabez Burrell & wife Mary “Polly” [Robbins] Burrell & 8 children: Julia, Sarah Marie, Robbins, Lyman John, Salome, Jabez Lyman, Eliza, & Mary Ann from Sheffield, Massachusetts [Solomon Weeks, a young apprentice to Captain Burrell, accompanied the Burrells]—Lots 65 & 21

1817

February—Harry Austin & wife from Owasco, Cayuga County, New York—Lot 81

February—Nathan Stevens & wife from New Marlborough, Massachusetts—Lot 84

February 28—Isaac Burrell & wife & 6 children: Eunice, Hiram, Jane, August, Mary, & Charlotte from Salisbury, New York—Lot 67(?)

March—Captain Joshua Smith & wife Martha Smith & 8 children: Douglas, Isaac, Rachel, Eleazer, Harvey, Warren, Caleb, & Reuel from New Marlborough, Massachusetts [Joshua and Douglas had returned to Massachusetts in the fall of 1816 to escort the rest of his family to Ohio]—Lot 64

March—Ariel Moore & wife & 3 children: Lorinda, Lovina, & Abigail from New Marlborough, Massachusetts [Moore Family accompanied the Smith Family on the journey]—Lot 56

Spring—Daniel Perry, Esq. & wife & 9 children: Polly, Harvey, Sophia, Alexander Hamilton, Royal, Julius, Lester, Bushrod, & William from Vermont to the mouth of the Black River in 1810 [sold farm there and moved to Sheffield]—Lot 22.

June—Davis Hecock & Erastus Hecock—Lots 85 & 86

June—Samuel Munson—Lot 72

July 5—James Burrell & wife & 4 children: Harriet, Cyla, Almorán, & Alva J. from Bloomfield, New York—Lot 69

~July—Arnold Burrell & wife from Binghamton, New York—Lot 68

1827

The first census in Lorain County was taken twelve years after the first permanent settlers arrived in Sheffield Township. In 1827 the adult male population consisted of 45 individuals: Theodore Bedortha (Lots 60, 62 and 64), Alva Burrell, Isaac Burrell (Lot 67), Jabez Burrell (Lot 65), James Burrell (Lot 75), Lyman Burrell, Robbins Burrell (Lots 21, 62, 63, and 65), George Cotton (Lot 113), William Cummins, Edward Day, John Day (Lots 66 and 80), John Day, Jr., Norman Day (Lot 42), William Day (Lots 22, 25, and 64), A. R. Dimmick, Samuel Fitch (Lots 41 and 61), Abraham Flemming (Lots 75, 76, 105, and 110), James Flemming, James Flemming, Jr., John Garfield (Lots 73 and 74), Milton Garfield (Lots 72, 73 and 74), William Gead, Bela Gilbert, Wilks Gillet, Joab Goodenough, Moses Greenslit, Davis Hecock (Lots 108, 112, and 113), Erastus Hecock (Lot 85), Harry Hecock (Lot 86), Jacob Houseworth, Arden Kent, Oliver Moon (Lot 11), Eber Nuton, David Potter, Luther Owen, Aaron Root (Lots 17 and 31), Henry Root, William Root (Lots 31, 40, and 45), Ebenezer Sage, Douglas Smith (Lots 72 and 73), Isaac Smith, Nathan Stephens (Lot 48), Deola Wells, Simon Wicks, and Chester Wright.

The lots owned by all of these pioneers are not known with certainty, as the first tax map that has survived is dated 1851. For the above individuals, those lots owned by them in 1851 are given after their name. The locations of the lots within Sheffield Township are shown on the map accompanying this chapter (see page 71).

THE YEAR WITHOUT A SUMMER—1816

The Sheffield pioneers who arrived in 1816 had to endure an unforeseen hardship—weather so cold that it snowed every month. If it hadn't been for the abundant game in the forests and river valleys they would have surely perished. It is a wonder that they stayed and did not return to New England. Perhaps it is because new settlers arrived with word that the weather was just as severe throughout the Northeast.

William Henry Alexander, in his 1923 bulletin, *A Climatological History of Ohio*, describes it this way: "The year 1816 is known both in the United States and New England as *The Year Without a Summer*. In this country and especially New England, it is sometimes referred to as *Poverty Year*, because of ruined crops; also called *Mackerel Year*, because mackerel were used instead of pork, it being impossible to fatten pigs on account of the scarcity of corn; also it is called 1800- and-Froze-to-Death, a case of grim Yankee humor."

Here in Ohio, it snowed every month in the year. All summer long the wind is said to have blown steadily from the north in blasts, laden with snow and ice. On the 100th Anniversary of the of the storm, an Urbana, Ohio newspaper carried an account of a young farmer and his girlfriend who had started for a Fourth-of-July celebration in horse and buggy but, were compelled to turn back on account of a terrific snowstorm. Corn crops that had struggled through May and June froze and died in July. The price of wheat seed for planting rose to \$5.00 per bushel (equivalent to more that \$100 at today's prices). Surprisingly,

August proved to be the worst month of all with almost every green thing being killed by frost. On August 20, 1816, a severe hailstorm hit Cincinnati, during which hailstones from 3 to 12 inches in circumference fell to the ground. Interviews with Ohio survivors of the 1816 storms indicate that it was the coldest year ever experienced by any person then living. Early settlers in Sheffield survived on the abundant fish and woodland game of the Black River valley.



Jan van Schley's etching of an erupting volcano in the Indonesian Archipelago.



Joseph Mallord William Turner's *The Slave Ship*. Note the brilliant red sky that is believed to have been inspired by the Mount Tambora eruption on April 5, 1815 (Boston Museum of Fine Arts).

One important result of this anomalous weather year was the increased emigration of farmers from New England to Ohio and other parts of the Midwest. William Henry Alexander gives little explanation for the frigid weather other than a quote from Newark, Ohio's *American Tribune*, "the sun's rays seemed to be destitute of heat through the summer; nature seemed to be clad in sable hue and men felt anxiety about the future of this life." Indeed, the rays of the sun were less intense in 1816, being blocked by volcanic ash and dust. Mount Tambora, a volcano on the island of Sumbawa in Indonesia, erupted on April 5, 1815, sending some 30 cubic miles of ash into the atmosphere. The resulting reduction in sunlight reaching the surface of the Earth is now believed to be the cause of The Year Without a Summer—the year following the eruption. The Tambora volcano, now only 9,300 feet high, was over 13,000 feet before the eruption that claimed the lives of 50,000 islanders and destroyed the homes of 35,000 more. Tambora is considered to be the world's most destructive volcanic eruption, in terms of human suffering. Geological evidence of the eruption has also been found as layers of ash in ice cores from as far away as Greenland. The brilliant red skies painted in that period by the noted English artist Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) are often cited as evidence of the aftermath of the 1815 eruption.

PIONEER WOMEN OF SHEFFIELD

In 1896, Gertrude Van Rensselaer Wickham edited a collection of articles on Sheffield's pioneer women for the Cleveland Centennial Commission. These accounts were prepared by the Sheffield Committee that was chaired by Eleanor D. Austin and whose members included Rosa Burrell, Sarah Root, Fannie Austin, Estella Taylor, and Julia [Garfield] Root. The experiences of two of these pioneer women, Mrs. Henry Root (Mary Day) and Mrs. Milton Garfield (Tempe Williams), serve to illustrate the frontier life that existed in Sheffield nearly 200 years ago.

On April 3, 1816, Henry Root, his wife Mary [Day] Root, and their six children arrived here from Sheffield, Massachusetts. A few men had arrived the year before, but the Roots were the first family to make the journey to their new home in Ohio. They lived for three weeks with Captain Joshua Smith, while they built a log

house for themselves. On July 27 Mrs. Root had the pleasure of welcoming to her rude home, her brother, Captain John Day, his wife, and their nine children to her limited quarters. Mary was a woman of strong character with marked ability as a teacher and she was a rare fund of incidents and anecdotes of travel, being the daughter of a sea captain of worldwide experiences. She lived to be 83. Young and old alike always enjoyed her company.

This following account is an example of a woman's life on the frontier. Mrs. Henry Root, one day, while busily engaged in household duties, heard a great outcry from the pig yard. A pig was squealing most pitifully. She dropped everything, and, seizing the broom, the woman's weapon, she rushed out to find a bear carrying off a pig. He had got to the fence and was trying to get it over, when lo! A woman appeared on the scene furiously brandishing her broom and shouting at the top of her voice. Such surprising attention from a woman so disconcerted Bruin that he left at once, and Mrs. Root saved her pig.

She was not so fortunate when a pack of wolves went for a calf; for although she made noise enough to raise the "Seven Sleepers," she could not get her broom to work, as it was at night and the poor calf had to go.

The Sheffield pioneer women also had to deal with another deadly foe—rattlesnakes. If one of these crossed their pathway the pioneer women did not scream and run away, but killed it. One woman on her way visiting, killed one, then took her scissors and cut off its head and buried it to prevent some barefooted boy from stepping on it and getting poisoned.

Wolves could also be a problem. It was sometime during the year 1815 that a sturdy New England youth named Milton Garfield shouldered his rifle and started on foot for a remote spot in the Northwest Territory. Five years later Tempe Williams of Avon became his wife. Their home was a log cabin just east of where the Milton Garfield House now stands on North Ridge. Outside the Garfield cabin, hungry wolves howled during the winter months. Often Tempe would throw firebrands from the door to frighten them away. In 1839 the Garfields built a new home of hand-hewn oak beams and hand-sawed lumber. A large fireplace with its Dutch oven, a roomy woodshed, and a handy



Henry and Mary Root homestead at Colorado Avenue and Abbe Road (2005).



Pioneer Cemetery on East River Road. Henry and Mary Root's graves at far right (2006).

gun cabinet—all were an important part of this “modern” pioneer home when it was first occupied nearly 18 decades ago.

Henry and Mary Root and their son, Captain Aaron Root, eventually built a wood frame, Greek Revival-style house on their farm at the southwest corner of what is now the intersection of Abbe Road and Colorado Avenue. Mary Root spent her later years in this house. Mary died at the age of 87 on February 11, 1859 and is buried in Sheffield’s Pioneer Cemetery on East River Road. Aaron inherited the farm and in 1840 he sold 50 acres of land to John Forster, a German immigrant. By 1842 there were 20 German Catholics in the area and in 1845 Captain Root sold an acre of land to these settlers on the northwest corner of the intersection to build a log church. By 1852 the parish had out grown the log church and a new frame church was built on the same site. At about this time Captain Root sold an additional acre of land to the parish for St. Teresa Cemetery. Over the years the Root house has become dilapidated and has not been lived in for many years. A recent inspection of the site indicated that the structure was unsafe and had deteriorated to the point that restoration was not practical. Thus in 2007 Sheffield Village was obliged to issue a demolition order. The house was torn down in 2014 to make way for a Dollar General store.

SHEFFIELD’S EARLY MILLS

Living up to a provision in the purchase agreement, in 1817 Captains Burrell and Day erected the township’s first sawmill and gristmill along the Black River about one-half-mile upstream from the mouth of French Creek. The project consisted of a dam across the river and a water tunnel to carry the water to “undershot” waterwheels, turned by water flowing under them, for a gristmill and a sawmill. The mills were located adjacent to one another, the gristmill on the west side of the raceway and the sawmill on the east side (see adjacent map). Settlers brought their logs to be sawed and their grain to be ground—seldom was the pay in cash, the miller took a portion of the lumber or corn for his services.

The 1874 map (see page iv) also indicates a second sawmill located on



Day’s mills on the Black River (Lorain County Historical Society).

the Black River about a mile down stream from the Burrell/Day mills. The mill, designated “S.S. Mill” on the map, is located on the north bluff of the river adjacent to what has come to be known as Bungart Island, the only island in the lower portion of the river. The “S.S. Mill” designation is thought to signify steam sawmill. This seems likely because the location appears to be on the bluff, rather than on the river. Also, the location is on the estuarine portion of the lower Black River. As such, the water level there was largely controlled by the level of Lake Erie, thus a constant downstream flow to power the mill could not be assured. By the 1870s steam power would have been the most practical way to power a mill.

William H. Root (1803-1889), son of Henry Root and Mary [Day] Root, ran the mill on the Black River near the mouth of French Creek in his early years. He married Fanny [Day] Root in 1834 and they later built a fine Greek Revival-style house (circa 1845) that still stands on the Lake Erie bluff near the foot of Root Road.

Edward Pigeon Burrell, born in Sheffield, Ohio in 1835, made daily entries in his diary (probably for practical reasons rather than for self expression) for the years 1869 to 1891. He farmed the approximately 400-acre homestead where



Portion of an 1874 map of Sheffield Township showing the locations of the grist and saw mills, with raceway between them, in the Black River valley upstream of French Creek mouth (atlas by D. J. Lake).

his grandfather Jabez Burrell settled. He consistently made entries on the weather, seasonal plantings, harvesting, marketing, care of livestock, maintenance of fences and farm buildings, and home, church, family, and social matters. A sample of the diary entries for November and December 1869 shows the dominant activity to be husking corn on the Black River flats (known as the Big Bottom) and taking the harvest to the mill to be ground.

In 1874, D. J. Lake, a civil engineer and surveyor, published an atlas of Lorain County. The map of Sheffield Township [Range 17, Township 7] shows the ownership of all township parcels of land and the locations of dwellings [~170], schools [7], sawmills [5], gristmill [1], cemeteries [2], churches [2], hotel [1], railroad [1], and store [1]. The red dots on the map (page 84) indicate the location of Day's gristmill and sawmill, just upstream of the 31st Street Bridge.



South approach to Day's Dam bridge over the Black River (~1910), once located just downstream of Day's mills (Black River Historical Society).



Tunnel cut in the shale bank of the Black River to form a raceway to conduct river water from behind the dam to the waterwheels at the mills (Lorain County Historical Society).

Sumner Burrell Day (born in 1842), grandson of Sheffield co-founder Captain John Day, operated the grist and saw mills in the later part of the 19th century. The sawmill supplied timber to the early shipyards along the river and to the U.S. Government during and after the Civil War. Later, he founded the Lorain County Bank and the Elyria Lumber & Coal Company. His nephew, H. Kellogg Day in his 1980 memoir, *About Ninety-seven Years and a Day*, writes that in 1880 S. B. Day, having gone to his barn on the Big Bottom near the mills to feed his stock, was trapped overnight by the rapidly rising water of a Black River flood and was forced to pile up hay to keep dry. In the morning a boat was launched from above to rescue him, but the current prevented its landing. Finally a long rope was used, one end held by several neighbors far upstream and the other end carried to the barn by two men in a boat. Finally the very hungry man was rescued.



Rapids in the Black River near the location of Day's Dam (March 2008).



Shale bluff of the Black River near the 31st Street Bridge— believed to be location of the former water tunnel to the mills (May 2008).



Day's Dam on the Black River, once located upstream of Day's mills to provide a constant head of water for operating the waterwheels (Lorain County Historical Society).

This was not the only daring rescue made near Day's Dam. The March 1913 flood trapped John Gerber (32), his sister Emma (30), and Peter Ashleman (65), an invalid living with the Gerbers, in their home on the river flats near the dam. After a Coast Guard rescue boat capsized in an attempt to reach the Gerber house—the boatmen (Marin Rasmussen and J. A. Johnson) narrowly escaped drowning—Capt. William Griesser sent for a breeches buoy and a small cannon. A line was shot to the house and Rasmussen and Johnson again risked their lives, climbing hand-over-hand on the line to make it fast to the house. Miss Gerber was seen in the upstairs window and she kept pointing to the barn that was 100 yards from the house. When the rescuers climbed through the window they found the woman and Ashleman in an upstairs room with the water already several inches above the floor. Miss Gerber told the Coast Guardsmen that her brother had gone to the barn the night before and had been trapped there by the rising water.

Ashleman was placed in the breeches buoy and slid safely to shore. Despite her desire to stay there until they found her brother, she was sent ashore before the Guardsmen left the house. With the water rising and rushing with greater and greater force as each hour passed, it was decided to bring a large surfboat with a crew of nine from the Lorain life-saving station. They were able to pull along side the haymow window from where Gerber was taken and brought safely to shore. As a side note, later in Coast Guardsman Rasmussen's career he was placed in charge of the Prohibition Era alcohol interdiction program on Lake Erie, headquartered at Buffalo, New York.

The early mills have long since fallen into disrepair and no sign of them remains. The Black River has changed course over the years and the site of the mills may now be under the riverbed. The dam experienced a peculiar demise. H. Kellogg Day writes that in the late 1880s "Elyria fisherman, thinking the old dam kept fish from coming up to the falls, brought dynamite and a keg of beer and were prepared to blast the old structure." Being let out of school to watch the proceedings, he stood on a high bank where a boulder the size of one's head flew up to land about twenty feet from where he was standing. Considering the incident, Day commented, "Elyria fishing was not much improved."

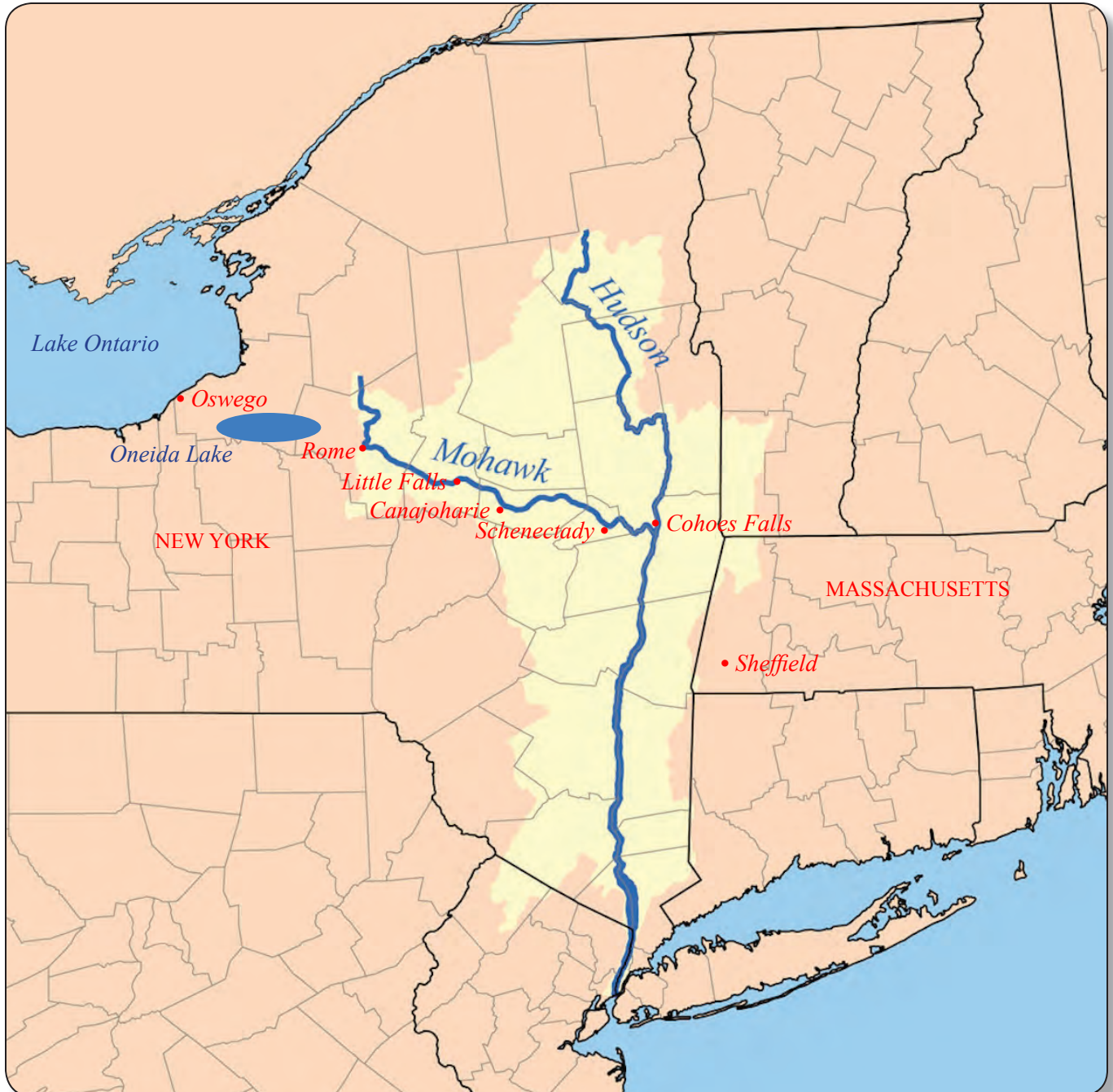


Young H. Kellogg Day, with his father Hubert, at about the age when he witnessed Day's Dam being dynamited (About Ninety-Seven Years and a Day by H. Kellogg Day, 1980).

MOHAWK VALLEY HERITAGE

The Mohawk River occupies an ancient east-west depression in central New York between the Adirondack Mountains to the north and the Catskill Mountains to the south. After arising in the uplands north of Rome, New York, the Mohawk River flows eastward through a broad valley and empties into the Hudson River about 10 miles north of Albany. The southerly flowing Hudson River likewise occupies an even broader depression between the Adirondack and Catskill Mountains to the west and the Taconic Range on the east. The foothills of hills of this latter range of the Appalachian Mountains in Massachusetts are known as the Berkshire Mountains—home to Sheffield, Massachusetts and the founders of the Ohio namesake. Many of the first settlers to Ohio came from the Mohawk Valley and as noted earlier, virtually every New Englander traveling to Ohio used this natural passage.

About 12,500 years ago, during the latter stages of the last glacial episode in North America (Wisconsinan), ice covered present-day Lake Ontario and blocked the Niagara River and St. Lawrence River outlets for the ice-free predecessors of Lake Erie and the Upper Great Lakes. Thus, a drainage channel was established along the depression south of Lake Ontario that would eventually become the Mohawk Valley. As the glacial ice retreated from the Niagara Escarpment



Mohawk and Hudson Rivers drainage basins (U.S. Geological Survey).



Mohawk Valley near Canajoharie, New York.

a new lake was formed in the Lake Ontario basin, known as Lake Iroquois, but initially the St. Lawrence River outlet was still ice covered. Until the ice front further melted to the north, the Mohawk Valley served as the drainage outlet of the Great Lakes region, flowing into glacial Lake Albany in the Hudson River valley. This enormous flow carved and shaped the lowlands south of Lake Ontario and the Mohawk Valley, creating an ideal path for the migration of Native American peoples and later for the construction of the Erie Canal.

Particularly impressive erosional features are found in the Mohawk Valley near Little Falls, New York, about 50 miles upstream from Schenectady. At a preglacial divide located here, faulting has brought to the surface Precambrian crystalline rocks similar to those exposed in the Adirondack Mountains. These resistant formations have caused a series of falls and rapids in the stream's course. But even more dramatic, the torrent of water discharge from the newly-forming Great Lakes cut a deep slot through the Precambrian gneiss, forming a gorge with walls rising between 500 to 700 feet above the present streambed. On Moss Island, located between the Mohawk River and Lock No. 17 of the Erie Canal, an incredible profusion of huge potholes

were formed as a product of the torrential flow from Lake Iroquois and deep erosion of the upfaulted rock barrier. These potholes, round vertical shafts several feet across with a depth often greater than their diameter, were likely excavated by rapidly moving boulders, cobbles and large pebbles swirling around in eddies for an extended period of time. As the first boulders were worn away in the process of grinding, others took their place generally leaving well-rounded stones at the base of many potholes.

This geography has not only shaped the history of New York, but much of the Great Lakes region. As the only watercourse through the Appalachian Mountains, the Mohawk Valley, as well as the lowlands extending westward to Buffalo, formed a natural transportation corridor for centuries. Starting as simple Indian trails and canoe passages, the corridor then progressed to rude pioneer roads, the Erie Canal, railway routes, early paved highways, and eventually the New York State Thruway.

Native American People

The inhabitants and events in the Mohawk Valley have had a profound influence on the history of America. This region is the homeland of the Mohawk and Oneida nations of the Iroquois

Confederacy of the sixteenth and seventh centuries. They were the first to control this strategic gateway to the west, putting them in the center of European battles to control the North American continent. In 1656 this Confederacy effectively annihilated the Erie Indians of northern Pennsylvania and Ohio, but never resettled these areas, thus influencing and somewhat facilitating the later settlement aspirations of New England-based pioneers.

For thousands of years the ancient trail that connects the Mohawk River and Wood Creek [inlet stream to Oneida Lake, which connects to Lake Ontario] served as a vital link for American Indians traveling between the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Lakes. This six-mile trail, known as the Oneida Carrying Place, continued to serve European travelers and settlers from the early 1700s until the Erie Canal was opened a century later.

Prior to European settlement, the Mahican Indians [an Algonquian language people] occupied the upper Hudson River valley. In the late 1600s they were driven out of their traditional homelands by Dutch and England settlers. The natives crossed the Taconic and Berkshire Mountains to find refuge along the banks of the Housatonic River in what was then the westernmost frontier of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The river's name is derived from the Mahican word meaning "beyond-the-mountain place."



Etienne Brule in native dress (Rinella).

French Exploration

In 1534 explorer Jacques Cartier (1491-1557) sailed across the Atlantic Ocean and up the St. Lawrence River to claim the Great Lakes region for France. Much of this region remained French for over 200 years until it was ceded to England following the French and Indian War in the 1760s. As he explored the St. Lawrence Valley, Cartier noted the abundance of fur-producing animals that were then in great demand in European markets. To capitalize on this prospect, Cartier established a trading post in 1541 to begin fur trading with the native Indians, who did the actual trapping in exchange for such items as cloth, metal pots, knives, guns, and colorful beads.

As the fur trade began to flourish, King Henry IV of France dispatched his royal geographer, Samuel de Champlain (1567-1635), to North America in 1603 to further explore the St. Lawrence Valley. Champlain established a settlement at Quebec City in 1608 as the capital of New France—all of France's territory in North America. The French objective in America was primarily trade, quite different than the English approach which was to found colonies by religious dissenters, which included businessmen, scholars, craftsmen, and farmers, not merely adventurers.

To facilitate the collection of furs from the Indians and to explore the hinterland, over the years Champlain recruited some 100 young men from Normandy. Known variously as a *Coers de Bois* or *Voyageurs*, these men were selected for specific characteristics. Normans were chosen because of their experience at sea in small fishing boats and their reputation of personal courage and bravery, whatever the odds against them. For daring and enthusiasm, Champlain picked youths in their late teens. All had to have similar physical statistics—about five and a half feet tall so their legs would not consume too much room in a canoe and thus limit the volume of trading goods and furs; not more than 150 pounds in weight so the canoe could carry a large pay load; barrel-chested physique for lung and upper body power and endurance so as to paddle a canoe for long distances and hours without a rest; a forceful voice to radiate strength and confidence, and impress reluctant Indian fur traders; and a good singer to maintain high morale and rhythmic paddle strokes while canoeing long distances.

Champlain also realized that adolescent canoe men had a particular facility both for learning the native languages and for surviving the winters. His plan was to introduce French youths to allied Algonquin tribes of the St. Lawrence region and thereby have them serve as valuable assets to the fur trade. Among those selected to journey to New France, were Etienne Brule (1593-1933) in 1608 and Jacques Hertel (1603-1651) in 1615, two young men destined to leave their mark on the new world. These adventurous young men and their colleagues, while serving as Indian interpreters, explored and mapped much of the continental interior of America long before colonists of the East Coast ventured west of the Appalachian Mountains.

Brule quickly learned the language and in 1610 he was sent into the wilderness with Chief Iroquet of the Algonquins to his

village on the upper Ottawa River, a place no white man had seen before. This was the first of several missions to cultivate Indian alliances. The next year he left Quebec with the Huron Indians on a journey that would last four years, not returning to Quebec until 1615. Brule learned that the Algonquins and Hurons were bitter enemies of the Iroquois Confederacy.

Brule had learned the Algonquins and Hurons were involved in a protracted war with the Iroquois living south of the St. Lawrence River. This intelligence turned out to be an advantage to Champlain because he was planning a foray against the Iroquois living south of Oneida Lake in the Mohawk River Valley; and he needed allies. Primarily farmers (corn, beans, and squash), the Iroquois frequently raided Algonquin and Huron villages in the St. Lawrence Valley for fur and captives—making them a bitter enemy. Champlain knew that every pelt seized by the Iroquois was bound for the Dutch merchants to the south, not the French.

The plan for the 1615 campaign was for Champlain to march south from Quebec while Brule headed west to Lake Simcoe in southern Ontario to gather Indian allies then move south to join up with Champlain in central New York. As Brule advanced south with 500 warriors he became the first white man to see Lakes Ontario and Erie as he crossed the Niagara Frontier. Delayed by the terrain and the several days needed for the Indians to work themselves into a fighting frenzy, when Brule finally arrived, Champlain had been defeated and wounded by the Iroquois and had retreated to the north.

Although Louis Jolliet (1645-1700) is often credited as the first European to record the sighting of Lake Erie in 1669, most likely Etienne Brule was the first to see this magnificent body of water. After attempting to reinforce Champlain, Brule, is thought to have headed west along the south shore of Lake Erie to the mouth of Toussaint Creek in northwestern Ohio, which he named for the date of his encampment, November 1, 1615, on which All Saints Day [Toussaint] is celebrated. From here he continued up the Great Lakes to where he was the first European to ascend the rapids at what is now Sault Ste. Marie and view Lake Superior. Somewhere along the way in Lake Superior, perhaps the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan or Isle Royal, he collected an ingot of copper, which he brought back to Quebec when he returned after several years in the wilderness. For feats such as these, the *Voyageurs* earned the reputation recorded by early chroniclers as being “flamboyant, arrogant, audacious, tough, wiry, bold, boastful, swaggering, daring, and proud.”

Rene-Robert Cavalier La Salle (1643-1687), is another French explorer and fur merchant worthy of mention in the history of New France. La Salle and his Jesuit companion, Father Louis Hennepin, constructed the first large vessel to ply Lake Erie. The *Griffin* was built on the banks of the Niagara River at Black Rock [Buffalo] during the winter of 1678-1679. The 60-ton sailing ship was designed with the intention of cruising the lakes above Niagara Falls to obtain fur by bartering with the Indians along the shores. On August 7, 1679 the *Griffin* was towed up the river and began its voyage across Lake Erie bound for the upper lakes with 34 men onboard. They crossed Lake Erie in

three days, discovering the Bass Islands. The *Griffin* dropped anchor at Middle Bass Island where Father Hennepin celebrated the first Catholic Mass in the region. Impressed with the riot of native flowers, *Isle des Fleur* was the named he gave to the island.

The *Griffin*, its prow adorned with the mythical half lion-half eagle creature, tacked up the Detroit and St. Clair Rivers against the strong outflow currents from the upper Great Lakes, along the shore of Lake Huron, through the Strait of Mackinaw, and on into Lake Michigan where an anchorage was found in sheltered Green Bay. La Salle found an abundance of valuable furs, which were loaded on the *Griffin* for the return trip. La Salle, Hennepin, and several other members of the party remained on the shore to explore the wilderness and await the ship's return. On September 28, 1679 the *Griffin* weighted anchor and set sail for Lake Erie. The following week the lakes were swept by gales and the *Griffin* was never seen again—she presumably perished with all hands in the storm.

When his ship didn't return, La Salle realized her fate and continued his exploration of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, reaching the Gulf Coast in 1682. He named the Mississippi watershed Louisiana in honor of King Louis XIV. In 1684 he led an expedition to establish a French colony on the Gulf of Mexico, with New Orleans as its capital. By 1700 a string of French settlements and a trail existed from the Gulf of Mexico to Quebec, serviced by the voyageurs.

Dutch Colonization

The Netherlands claim to the Hudson and Mohawk River Valleys dates back to Henry Hudson's explorations on behalf of the Dutch East India Company. In his vessel, *Half Moon*, he ventured up what is now known as the Hudson River to the mouth of the Mohawk River in search of a Northwest Passage to the Orient. The year was 1609. Realizing his quest was fruitless, he did note that the fertile valleys offered attractive possibilities for settlement and that the fur trade with the Iroquois Indians in the northern extremities of the Mohawk Valley could be profitable. Although the Dutch East

India Company quickly lost interest in the freshly explored region; other Dutchman soon began a series of trading voyages that lead to permanent settlements. In 1621 the Dutch government chartered the Dutch West India Company to trade and colonize the area and by 1624 a settlement was founded at the present site of Albany, New York, then known as Fort Orange.

Historians have observed that although the Dutch were shrewd businessmen, they failed to capitalize on the greatest impulse to colonize America—the desire of underprivileged people of Europe to secure a piece of land they could call their own. Rather, the government established New Netherlands by granting huge estates to “patroons” with feudal rights. Thus, people did not flock to New Netherlands to work in servitude to others. To lure the landless peasantry to the colony, a new charter was issued in 1640 that granted a modest 200 acres of land to those transporting at least five persons. This inducement resulted in the numerous Dutch settlements along the Mohawk Valley. However, another roadblock to successful colonization was the personality and character of the directors-general sent to America to govern the colony, such as the brilliant but unscrupulous Peter Minuit. The arrogant, quarrelsome, and self-interested nature of these officials is immortalized in Washington Irving's *Knickerbocker History of New York*.

Eventually the Dutch colony along the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys began to falter because of the authorities hostility toward democracy and failure to recognize the positive values of self-government. Meanwhile the English had come to regard the Dutch beachhead as blocking their westward expansion and interfering with the enforcement of British trade laws. A series of Anglo-Dutch Wars ensured in the 1650s to 1670s in which control of territory in the valleys went back and forth until Dutch authority in New York ceased in 1674 by the Treaty of Breda ending the conflict. However, the basic principle of free land to settlers—a principle upon which New England was founded and never adopted by Dutch New Netherlands—was not adopted by the successor colony of English New York.

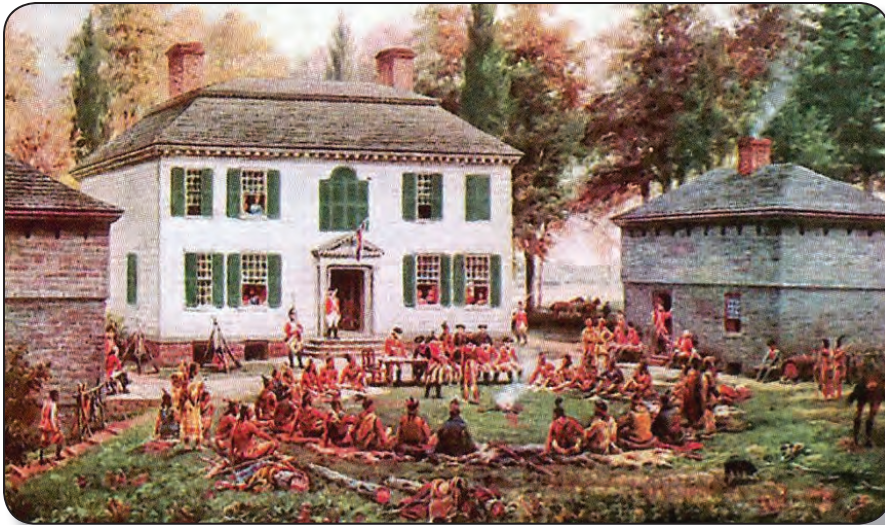
This may explain why so many of the original Dutch families in the Mohawk Valley sided with the American patriots during the Revolutionary War a hundred years later.

During succeeding colonial-era wars and the formative years of the United States, naval and land engagements throughout the Lower Great Lakes determined the ultimate ownership of the region and particularly the Old Northwest Territory. In the French and Indian War (1754-1763), the American Revolution (1775-1783), and the War of 1812 (1812-1814) naval fleets were built alternatively by the French and British, or the British and Americans, to gain control of the Great Lakes.

French and Indian War

The first struggle began in the summer of 1754, when French and Virginia colonial troops clashed in southwestern Pennsylvania and set off the prelude phase the worldwide Seven Years' War between France and Great Britain, known in America as the French and Indian War. By 1756 fighting had spread to Europe and the same year the French and their Indian allies invaded the Mohawk Valley destroying British forts along the Oneida Carrying Place and German Place [present-day Herkimer, New York]. In response, British Brigadier General John Stanwix ordered a fort to be built at the Oneida Carrying Place in 1758. Named Fort Stanwix, this fortification ended French army invasions and provided a staging area for British campaigns.

The Treaty of 1768 resolved the dispute; France ceded all its claims east of the Mississippi River, with exception of two small islands off the coast of Newfoundland, to Great Britain. American Indians, who had been allied with the French during the war, became dissatisfied with British rule and began a war of independence—Pontiac's Rebellion—which resulted in a Royal Proclamation barring English settlement west of the Appalachians. In the 1760s and 1770s at the then-abandoned Fort Stanwix, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Sir William Johnson, negotiated treaties with the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy to settle conflicts between Indians and British



Johnson Hall, Sir William Johnson's home at old Fort Stanwix, where treaties with the Iroquois Confederation were negotiated in the 1760s and 1770s (U.S. National Park Service).

Settlers. The Six Nations agreed to cede lands east and south of the Ohio River. These treaties angered other tribes who lived in these lands, setting the stage for future conflicts.

American Revolution

The War for Independence encompassed an eight-year span from the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord in 1775 to the Treaty of Paris in 1783. As the Continental Congress debated national independence, General Washington was instructed to have Fort Stanwix rebuilt to protect the emerging nation's northwestern frontier and to secure an outpost for future westward expansion. The fort was renamed Fort Schuyler in honor of Major General Philip Schuyler, commander of the Northern Continental Army.

Pivotal battles of the War for Independence were fought at both ends of the Mohawk Valley—at the west end of the valley the defense of the American Fort Schuyler at Rome, New York and the bloody battle at nearby Oriskany and at the east end the Battle of Saratoga. By August of 1777 the war had brought a series of disasters to the armies of the rebellious colonists. The British had formulated a plan to split the colonies by gaining control of New York, thus dividing the northern colonies from those of the south. To accomplish this a three-pronged invasion, known as the Campaign of 1777, was initiated. Brigadier General Barry St. Leger, leading an expedition

consisting of 800 British, German, and Canadian soldiers/loyalists and 800 American Indian warriors led by Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant [Mohawk, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca warriors of the Six Nation Confederacy allied themselves with the British, while the other two nations, Oneida and Tuscarora, supported the Americans] was to land at the Lake Ontario port of Oswego and proceed down the Mohawk Valley to Albany, clearing out the any American resistance along the way. At Albany he was to unite with the main British force led by Major General John Burgoyne, coming south from Canada along Lake Champlain and the Hudson River. A third force, commanded by General Sir William Howe, was to

advance north along the Hudson River Valley from New York City.

General St. Leger met unexpected resistance at Fort Schuyler, then commanded by Colonel Peter Gansevoort and strongly garrisoned by nearly 800 Continental soldiers. On August 3rd the British forces laid siege to the fort, which did not fall as easily as St. Leger had anticipated. Gansevoort vowed to hold the fort "to the last extremity."

Upon hearing of the British approach, New York Militia Brigadier General Nicholas Herkimer marshaled 800 local Palatine volunteers and 60 allied Oneida warriors from what is now Herkimer County and began the 40-mile march to Fort Schuyler on August 4th. Advised of the advancing reinforcements, St. Leger sent Tory [American colonist who supported the British] leaders Sir John Johnson and Colonel John Butler, as well as Chief Brant and his Indian warriors, to ambush Herkimer and his troops. They chose a boggy ravine two miles west of Oriskany Creek as their point of ambush. Only five miles from the fort, unsuspecting, the inexperienced militiamen marched blindly into the trap on August 6th. As they crossed the swampy bottom, the enemy's muskets blazed from behind trees.

Known as the Battle of Oriskany, in the first murderous volley General Herkimer's horse was shot from beneath him and his leg was shattered by a



General Nicholas Herkimer at the Battle of Oriskany (U.S. National Park Service).

musketball. Propped against his saddle under a beech tree, Herkimer continued to direct the battle. The patriots fought bravely in hand-to-hand combat, in spite of heavy losses and slashing tomahawks. Their stubborn resistance dismayed Colonel Johnson's trained troops. The battle became so brutal that Chief Brant's warriors abandoned the fight, forcing the British forces and Tories to withdraw as well. After the Battle of Oriskany, severely wounded General Herkimer was brought home to the Georgian-style mansion he had built in 1764 near Little Falls on the Mohawk River. He was gently placed in a room to the right of front doorway where he lay until a physician was summoned to tend to his wounds. Sadly, General Nicholas Herkimer died on August 17th, soon after his leg was amputated, but not before the British advance was halted.

The Revolution in the Mohawk Valley was also a civil war that devastated the valley as families and communities divided over political loyalties. The Battle of Oriskany was fought between family members, friends, and neighbors. The people of the Six Nations Confederacy also fought against one another, upending a peace that had bound them together for centuries.

Meanwhile, the retreating British returned to Fort Schuyler to find their nearby camp raided. During the Battle of Oriskany, Lt. Colonel Marinus Willett, Gansevoort's second in command, led a sortie from the fort and captured a number of enemy soldiers, destroyed their camp, and brought 21 wagonloads of supplies into the fort. The British attacks on fort continued for another two and a half weeks, but abruptly ended on August 23rd when General St. Leger abandoned the siege as Major General Benedict Arnold approached with Continental troops to reinforce the fort's garrison. After being entangled in the protracted futile siege, the British were forced to return to Canada.

The other two prongs of the British Campaign of 1777 also encountered difficulties. General Howe became engaged in a campaign to capture Philadelphia and never reached Albany. General Burgoyne planned to advance up Lake Champlain, capture Fort Ticonderoga, and then march south along the Hudson River to Albany. The fort was captured with relative ease, shaking patriot morale. Burgoyne continued his march south, defeating American troops at Hubbardton, Vermont and forcing the evacuation of Forts Anne and Edward. The turning point for Burgoyne started when he sent a column Hessians [German mercenaries] to raid Bennington, Vermont. They were defeated by troops under Brigadier General John Stark and Lt. Colonel Seth Warner. Continuing southward, Burgoyne crossed the Hudson River near Stillwater New York, about 10 miles southeast of Saratoga Springs, and halted his troops there. A short distance to the north, at Bemis Heights, American forces under General Horatio Gates [replacement for General Philip Schuyler as commander of the Northern Continental Army] had taken positions on the high ground. Burgoyne tried to break the American lines twice. Both attempts failed. Finding his command surrounded and outnumbered and unable to retreat, Burgoyne surrendered on October 17, 1777. The victory at Fort Schuyler, coupled with Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, led directly to alliances between the U.S., France, and the Netherlands.

Indian Wars of 1780s and 1790s

The American Revolutionary War ended in 1783, but the United States and American Indians continued fighting. In an attempt to end the war in New York, the United States negotiated the 1784 Treaty of Fort Schuyler with the Six Nations Confederacy. The United States dictated the terms of the treaty, held Indian hostages until all prisoners of war were returned, and coerced representatives of the Six Nations into signing the treaty. The Indians were also forced to cede land claims to Ohio and western Pennsylvania. The treaty recognized American Indian people as belonging to sovereign nations within the boundaries of the United States. Ohio's Indian War of the latter decades of the eighteenth century can be traced directly to the harsh stipulations of the 1784 treaty.

After the American Revolution, the State of New York used Fort Schuyler for its dealings with the American Indians. Many of the Six Nations tribes protested the legality of the 1784 treaty as being signed under duress by native people not authorized to sign treaties with the United States Government. Thus, New York negotiated four land deals at the fort with the Oneida, Onondaga, and Cayuga without the approval of the federal government. These land deals were later acknowledged in the federal Treaty of Canandaigua of 1794 [about 25 miles southeast of Rochester]. Every June 1st for years afterward, Indian representatives came to the fort to receive their annual payment for the land. The land opened by these deals allowed canals to be dug, ultimately leading to the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825.

No longer needed to defend the Mohawk Valley after the War of 1812, Fort Schuyler was abandoned and eventually fell in ruin. In 1976 the City of Rome, New York and the National Park Service worked as partners to build a faithful replica of the original fort using surviving documents and plans. It was decided to revert to the original name of the fort. Today, it is open to the public as Fort Stanwix National Monument. The Willett Center at the National Monument, named for Lt. Col. Marinus Willett who conducted a heroic raid of the enemy camp during the siege, has interactive displays and collections artifacts from the history of the fort, including a Wampum Treaty Belt from the 1700s.

War of 1812

Emotional feelings against British impressment of American seaman and interference with American neutrality rights were important factors, but more personal to inhabitants of the Mohawk Valley, the Niagara Frontier, and the south shore of the Great Lakes in 1812 was the British influence behind Indian hostilities. In fact, once war broke out, more battles were fought on the northern border and the Niagara Frontier with British and Canadian forces and their Indian allies than in any other part of the United States.

On July 19, 1812, a month after war was declared, a British Provincial Marine squadron attacked shipbuilding facilities at Sackets Harbor, at the eastern end of Lake Ontario, and attempted to capture the American brig *Oneida*. Lt. Malancthon Woolsey eluded the British and unloaded some of the *Oneida*'s heavy deck guns on shore. Armed with shorter-range guns, the British

ships were unable to close the distance to the shore and were forced to retreat.

In January 1813 Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry was selected to command the Lake Erie fleet being built by Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins in Presque Isle Bay at Erie, Pennsylvania. Perry was also assigned the task of transferring several small gunboats stationed at the Black Rock shipyard to Presque Isle. This second mission proved to be difficult because the British cannons at Fort Erie (at the head of the Niagara River) prevented American ships at Black Rock from moving out into Lake Erie. Also, the British fleet under Captain Barclay was patrolling Lake Erie and monitoring American progress at Presque Isle. Unable to cross the shallow sand bar at the entrance to Presque Isle Bay, Barclay had to wait for the American fleet to emerge and for his flagship, the brig *Detroit*, to be completed at Amherstburg, Ontario at the mouth of the Detroit River. A full account of the War of 1812 on the Great Lakes is presented in Chapter 8.

At Presque Isle, Perry had managed to get his major vessels, the brigs *Lawrence* and *Niagara*, over the sand bar at the entrance to the bay while the British were obtaining provisions across the lake at Port Dover. Discovering the American fleet was out in Lake Erie, the British fleet returned Amherstburg to await the completion of the brig *Detroit*. On September 10, 1813, perhaps the most famous naval engagement of the War of 1812 took place near West Sister Island—The Battle of Lake Erie.

Perry sent his famous note the General Harrison, “We have met the enemy and they are ours: Two Ships, two Brigs, one schooner & one Sloop.” By defeating the British fleet, the United States secured control of Lake Erie and the Upper Great Lakes. Perry’s victory on Lake Erie and American control of Fort George on the Niagara River made the transport of supplies and reinforcements impossible for the British and forced them to abandon Detroit and Fort Malden.

With the British fleet captured, General William Henry Harrison, with the assistance of Perry, mounted an amphibious invasion of Canada near Amherstburg and defeated General Henry Procter at the Battle of the Thames. During the battle, Col. Richard Johnson of the Kentucky Militia led a charge of 1,000 mounted horsemen against the British and Indian forces. As the cavalry descended on the Indians they shouted “Remember the Raisin”—a battle cry in reference to an Indian massacre of 60 American prisoners at the Raisin River, Michigan in January 1813, where then Col. Henry Procter had promised protection. In the battle, Col. Johnson himself killed the Shawnee Indian leader, Chief Tecumseh, in retribution.

On December 24, 1814 the Treaty of Ghent [Belgium] was signed by British and American negotiators ending the War of 1812. The Peace Treaty was ratified by the U.S. Congress on February 16, 1815. Within a few years thereafter, the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1818 was signed, establishing a demilitarized



BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE on September 10, 1813. The American fleet, led by Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's flagship Lawrence, sails from Put-in-Bay Harbor to engage the British fleet. Commodore Perry's victory in this battle gave the United States control of Lake Erie and the Upper Great Lakes (Peter Rindlisbacher).

border between the United States and the United Kingdom [present-day Canada] on the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain.

Erie Canal

The Erie Canal was one of America's most successful and influential public works projects by opening a transportation route to the interior of the young nation. Built between 1817 and 1825, this was the first all-water link between the Atlantic seaboard and the Great Lakes, stretching 363 miles from the Hudson River at Albany to Lake Erie at Buffalo. Lake Erie is 570 feet higher than the Hudson River at Albany. The original canal required 83 stone-walled locks to lift and lower boats in an irregular staircase. It was 4 feet deep and 40 feet wide, cutting through fields, forests, rocky



Map of the Erie Canal (Schenectady Historical Society).

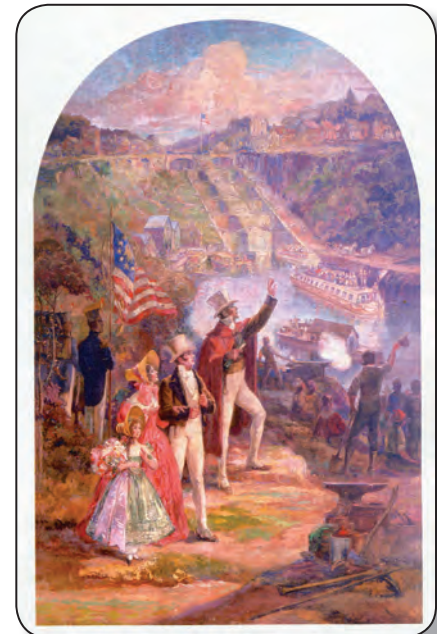
cliffs, and swamps. The canal incorporated 32 navigable aqueducts to cross over streams encountered along the route. The canal advanced Euro-American settlement of Ohio and beyond, making New York the "Empire State" and New York City the nation's prime seaport.

Canal passengers could travel via packet boats in relative comfort from Albany to Buffalo in five days, rather than two weeks in crowded stagecoaches. Freight rates fell some 90% compared to shipping by ox-drawn wagon. Within a few decades steamers carried Ohio products to Buffalo, which were then loaded on canal freight boats bound for Albany and then on down the Hudson River to New York City in fleets of barges towed by steam tugboats. In this way Ohio and Midwest farmers, loggers, miners, and manufacturers found easy access to lucrative and often distant markets.

The history of the Erie Canal dates back to the 1790s when certain Mohawk River canals and locks were built by the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, particularly around the rapids at Little Falls, New York and a connection between the headwaters of the Mohawk River and Oneida Lake. The locks were 70 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 3.5 feet deep. This waterway system allowed freight boats to travel from Schenectady to Lake Ontario at the Port of Oswego. This town has the distinction of being the oldest a freshwater port in the United States. With the impediment presented by Niagara Falls for access to Lake Erie, the company eventually failed.

At the urging of New York governor DeWitt Clinton, in June 1812 the New York Legislature passed an act creating the Canal Commission, authorizing it to purchase the holdings of the defunct Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, and to plan a canal that connect the Hudson River with Lake Erie. Interrupted by the War of 1812, detailed surveys were begun in May 1817 and the first ground was broken near Rome, New York on July 4, 1817. The canal engineers chose the path of least resistance across the complex topography of the state, but the route was not always easy. Sixteen locks were

required to climb out of the deep Hudson Valley past the 90-foot high Cohoes Falls near the mouth of the Mohawk River. The canal climbed steadily along the Mohawk from Schenectady to another steep rise at Little Falls. From there a 58-mile stretch of flat water required no locks to carry boats over the drainage divide at Rome and on to relatively flat terrain south of Oneida Lake and north of the Finger Lakes. The final barrier westward was at Lockport, New York where twin, five-lock staircases, known as the "Lockport Flight," climbed 49 feet up the steep Niagara Escarpment. From here a 20-foot deep rock cut in the Lockport Limestone was required to open the waterway to Lake Erie. The rock cut and stone towpath was blasted out of the



Opening of the Erie Canal—October 26, 1825, painting by Raphael Beck, 1928. Note the passenger boats descending the twin, five-lock staircases, known as the "Lockport Flight," down the steep Niagara Escarpment. The cannon being fired at the center of the painting was taken from one of the ships involved in the Battle of Lake Erie on September 10, 1813. Cannons from this battle were placed every 10 to 15 miles along the canal from Buffalo to New York City. The first being fired when the first boat left Buffalo and others being fired successively as the cannon crew heard the blast from the next cannon upstream. Once the last cannon at the Battery in New York fired, then the process was repeated in a reverse fashion all the way back to Lake Erie. The entire process was completed in just under three hours.

solid stone with powder left over from the War of 1812. When the completed canal was opened on October 26, 1825, it was 4 feet deep, with locks 90 feet long and 15 feet wide, and could carry boats with a capacity of 30 tons.

Canajoharie

Long before European settlers entered the Mohawk Valley, people of the Mohawk tribe established a village where Canajoharie Creek flows northward into the Mohawk River, in present-day Montgomery County, New York. The Mohawks were fascinated with the peculiar geologic features found in the rock that forms the bed of the creek. Alternating layers of massive dolomite and less resistant shaley dolomite resulted in a series of stair step waterfalls. In some of the massive layers, deep circular holes in the streambed have been formed by the erosion of the rock through the rotation of stones in an eddy. Geologists call these simply “potholes.” The origin of the swirling stones that facilitated the erosion is most likely granitic boulders and cobbles carried southward from the Adirondacks by the glaciers that covered the region some 12,000 years ago. At the base of one particular waterfall about a mile upstream from the confluence with the river, an unusually large pothole has been formed, about 15 feet in diameter and over five feet deep. With its position nearly under the falls, during periods of high stream flow it appears to boil and flush itself. The Mohawk Indians named this feature, as well as the village they founded there, *Canajoharie*. Translated, this word means “a boiling pot that washes itself.”

Canajoharie was a focal point for the interaction between the native Mohawk peoples, French traders, Dutch colonialists, Palatine German immigrants, British/American settlers, and Irish Famine immigrants who made their way up the Mohawk Valley during the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. These diverse peoples at times fought each other, at times intermarried, and eventually flourished to populate the valley as time went on. By tracing one family, starting with a Mohawk Indian Chief at Canajoharie, New York, through some 11 generations to Sheffield

Lake, Ohio we can glimpse of how these interactions unfolded.

Generation 1. Sometime in the late 1500s, a Mohawk boy was born that was destined to lead his people. Only known now as Mohawk Chief Sachem of the Turtle Clan, he lived in the Great Mohawk Castle at Canajoharie. The term “Sachem” was bestowed on a leader of a tribe, chosen from each clan to represent the Mohawk nation in the League of Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederation. The League is believed to have been formed in the latter half of the sixteenth century, thus the Canajoharie Sachem was likely one of the founding leaders. The title Sachem means “Counselor of the People.” Three Mohawk Sachems were chosen, one each from three matriarchal clans: Bear, Turtle, and Wolf. These leaders formed the Council of the League, which had legislative, executive, and judicial responsibilities for the combined tribes. The Council leaders were expected to reflect their constituency and not act on their own personal feelings. The original Five Nations included Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca peoples.



Canajoharie Pothole on the Canajoharie Creek—Mohawk for “a boiling pot that washes itself.”

In 1772 the Tuscarora people joined the Confederation, thus the name was changed to the Six Nations.

One of the Canajoharie Sachem's duties was to negotiate payment for fur pelts with French traders. One of these traders was Jacques Hertel from Montreal. Hertel was born about 1603 in Fecamps, Normandy, France. He was an unlicensed trader, engaged in the fur trade without permission from French authorities. Such individuals were known as *Coers de Bois*, literally "runners of the woods." Later, about 1681, a limited number of permits were issued to such traders who became known as *voyageurs*.

France began the settlement of Canada in 1603, under a patent granted to Pierre De Gast by King Henry IV. Samuel de Champlain established a settlement at Quebec City in 1608 and soon developed alliances with indigenous peoples. Champlain was appointed Lieutenant Governor in 1612. He solicited Franciscan priest La Canon to serve as missionary in what became known as New France. As early as 1616 La Canon had penetrated the wilderness as far as the Mohawk River valley.

Generation 2. About the year 1600, Mohawk Chief Sachem had a daughter in the Great Mohawk Castle at Canajoharie. Known now only as "Mohawk Woman," she eventually held the position of "Keeper of the Laws" for all the Iroquois. The "Laws" were inscribed as patterns in wampum belts, which codified such things as treaties, rules of conduct, etc. In token of this office, she had use of a "personal" island in the Mohawk River, then referred to as Corn Island. An example of wampum belt is in historic collections at the Willett Center, Fort Stanwix National Monument. Known as the *Gaswenta*, it is a two-row wampum belt, which represents an early agreement between the Five Nations and Dutch colonists in the Mohawk Valley. Two parallel rows of dark beads represents two vessels traveling through life side by side, neither interfering with the other. Wampum is generally described as a quantity of small cylindrical beads made by North American Indians, typically from quahog clamshells, strung together, and worn as a decorative belt.

In 1617, Mohawk Woman married French trader Jacques Hertel at Canajoharie. Historians speculate that Hertel cemented a valuable alliance by marrying the Mohawk maiden. This union produced two daughters, Kuutje Hertel about 1620 and Ots Toch Hertel about 1622, both born at Great Mohawk Castle, Canajoharie. The date of Mohawk Woman's death is unknown, but certainly sometime after 1622. Given her responsibilities, it is likely she was a rather mature woman when she was selected as Keeper of the Laws. She was buried on the downstream point of Varkens Island [Dutch for swine] in the Mohawk River at Schenectady, New York, about 35 miles downstream from Canajoharie. Jacques Hertel died on August 10, 1651 at Trois Rivieres, St. Maurice, Quebec.

Generation 3. Ots Toch Hertel married Dutch colonialist Cornelius Antonissen Van Slyke in the late 1630s in Canajoharie. Cornelius was born 1604 in Breuckelen, Utrecht Province of Holland and died 1676 in Canajoharie. They had three children, Jacques Cornelius Van Slyke ~1640, Hilletie Van Slyke ~1644, and Leah Van Slyke ~1646, all in Canajoharie.

Generation 4. Their youngest child, Leah Van Slyke, married Claes [Dutch for Nicolas] Willemse Van Coppernoll in the late 1670s. Claes was born ~1654 in Schenectady and died 1692 in the North Port Jackson district of Schenectady. The Van Coppernoll family leased a bowery [Dutch for farm] from Jan Conell in 1678 and an other from William Teller in 1679. In 1685, Governor Dongan granted Van Coppernoll and Peter Van Olinda a tract of land known as Willow Flat on the south shore of the Mohawk River. Claes and Leah had one son, Willem Coppernoll, who was born in March 1688 at Schenectady and died at the age of 99 years and nine months on December 24, 1787 in Stone Arabia, New York, across the Mohawk River and three miles north of Canajoharie.

Claes Van Coppernoll was killed in the Indian massacre at Schenectady in 1690. Leah was left a widow with a two year old son. She married a second time to Jonathan S. Stevens, on July 24, 1693. Jonathan had come from New England

in 1690. They had four children, two daughters and two sons. Their youngest son, Arent Sevens, born July 26, 1702, married Mary Griffiths, widow of Lieut. Thomas Bourroughs of the British Army in 1749 after his first wife, Maritie Hall, died in 1739. Arent was an Indian interpreter for 20 years, serving Sir William Johnson as a "masterhand with the Indians." In October 1752 he negotiated the purchase of 20,000 acres of land from the Mohawks in the vicinity of Johnstown, New York conveyed to the King for "three pieces Showde [inferior woolen cloth], 6 pieces of gailing linen, 3 barrels of beer, 6 gallons of rum and a fat beast."

Generation 5. Willem "William" Coppernoll married Engeltien "Angelica" Lantgraeff ~1712. She was the daughter of George Lantgraeff who came to America in 1709 with Rev. Joshua Kocherthal and



Sketch of Jacques Hertel (Schenectady Historical Society).

other refuges from the German Palatinate. The Lantgraeff Family originally located at West Camp (now Newburgh, New York) on the Hudson River and later settled at Schoharie, New York. Engeltien died ~1716 at Schenectady. Willem and Engeltien had two sons, Claas Willemes on December 18, 1714 and Georg (Jurrien) on April 14, 1716 [Baptism dates from records of First Reformed Church of Schenectady].

Palatine Germans. The Lantgraeff Family was among the Palatine German immigrants who came to America in large numbers in the early 1700s. About 4,000 men, women, and children left England in ten ships in January 1710 for the colony of New York. After a long and terrible voyage, the last ship arrived in New York Harbor in June—20% of the immigrants perished at sea.

The Palatinate is a region along the Rhine River in southwestern Germany. The Palatines were Reformed and Lutheran Protestant who had emigrated from Germany to Holland to avoid religious persecution and seek social and economic freedom. At the invitation of Queen Anne they embarked for England. In 1709 some 30,000 Palatines were in London as guests of the Queen. The British Board of Trade saw an opportunity to settle them on the colonial frontier as a buffer against the Indians and the French.

The Palatines were to be engaged in manufacturing pitch, tar, and other naval stores for the British Navy. They were obliged to repay the British Crown expenses incurred in transporting them to America and for food and personal utensils, as well as implements for carrying out the project in the pine forests. For successfully fulfilling a quota, each person was to receive 40 acres of land.

But adequate provisions were not at hand and the trees were not of the proper kind for making naval stores. The party in England that had conceived the plan lost power and the “distressed Palatines” [as they were referred to in colonial records] were left quite on their own. Colonial leadership failed them and dissension arose in the ranks. Many left the camps along the Hudson Valley and journeyed westward up the Mohawk Valley. In 1749 they founded a Lutheran Society in the Valley and built the Old Palatine Church in 1770 on the Mohawk River five miles upstream from Canajoharie. From these pioneers descended those who gave their lives at the Battle of Oriskany (August 6, 1777) and who make possible the capture of Burgoyne’s army at Saratoga (October 17, 1777).

Generation 6. Georg Coppernoll married Anna Elisabeth Laucks on January 28, 1740. Their daughter Catharina, born 1741 in Palatine, New York, across the Mohawk River from Canajoharie, adopted the spelling Coppernolden for her last name. Georg and Anna Coppernall died sometime after 1791.

Generation 7. Catharina Coppernolden married Dieterich Sutz [son of Johann Peter Sutz and Anna Margaretha Burckhard] on July 14, 1761 in Stone Arabia, New York. Their youngest son, Petrus Sutz, was born on August 22, 1771 in Palatine, New York. Dieterich Sutz died on December 8, 1794 in Palatine and Catharina died sometime after 1771.

Generation 8. Petrus Sutz married Magdalena Froelich [daughter of Jacob Froelich and Christina Dillenbach] ~1800 in Palatine, New York. Magdalena was born on February 24, 1780 in Stone Arabia, New York. They had a daughter, Margaret Sutz, born August 14, 1809 in Palatine. Petrus died 1828 and Magdalena died sometime after 1809.

Generation 9. Margaret Sutz married Elisha E. Herdendorf on December 1, 1836 in the Dutch Reformed Church at Fonda, New York. She died May 23, 1876 at York, Livingston County, New York. Elisha Herdendorf was born May 25, 1810 in Fonda, New York, some 10 miles downstream from Canajoharie on the Mohawk River, and died June 1, 1898. Elisha’s father was Abraham Herdendorf, born September 4, 1775 in Fonda, New York and died December 23, 1851 at Newark Valley, New York. Abraham married Elizabeth Richtmeyer ~1788; she was born ~1774. Abraham was likely engaged in the digging of the Erie Canal (1817-1825), and its predecessors in the 1790s for the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company. The New York State Census for 1810 shows Abraham as living in Montgomery County, whereas the Censuses for 1820 and 1830 indicate he dwelled at Danube in Herkimer County, about 12 miles northwest of Canajoharie, New York [census records show the spelling of his surname as Hardendorf].

Elisha and Margaret had 10 children [Jerome (May 8, 1838), Joseph Richard (December 24, 1839), Betsy Catharine (born November 4, 1841), Elisha Frederick (born October 1, 1844), Martha Margaret (born August 29, 1846), Alpheus (born January 8, 1848), John Henry (November 28, 1850), Nancy Margaret (born April 30, 1852), David Baker (July 3, 1855), and Juel Warford (July 26, 1857)] while living at Mohawk, Herkimer County, New York and later in Rensselaer County, New York and at Mt. Morris, Livingston County, New York. Church records show that John Henry Herdendorf was admitted to the Reformed Dutch Church at Stone Arabia, Montgomery County, New York on June 12, 1875.

Generation 10. Their second son, Joseph Herdendorf, enlisted in the Union Army, 136th New York Infantry in August 1862 at age 23 and served in Company F under Captain John H. Burgess. He was wounded in action at Gettysburg July 2, 1863, receiving a gun shot wounds to the right shoulder and lung. He eventually (July 1866) was awarded a pension of \$4.00/month. He was mustered out of the service in May 1865 at Satterlee Hospital in West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He married Nellie E. Falke at Rochester, New York; she died September 3, 1871 at Nunda, Livingston County, New York. He then married Lucy Marie Wright on September 10, 1872 at Nunda, New York. Joseph and Lucy had two children [Charles Field (born December 6, 1875) and Mattie Lucette (born June 17, 1878)]. Joseph died June 1, 1904, age 73, at Buffalo, New York. He was buried in Ridgelawn Cemetery, Cheektowaga, Erie County, New York. Lucy died January 10, 1919 at Buffalo, New York.

Joseph’s brother, Elisha Frederick Herdendorf, also enlisted in the 136th New York Infantry in August 1862, at age 19, and served in Company F. He too was wounded in action July 2, 1863 at the Battle of Gettysburg. Captain Burgess reported that Elisha

was “mortally wounded” being “shot through the breast by a musket ball.” However, Elisha recovered and fought in the Battle of Lookout Mountain in September 1863. His regiment was then assigned to take part in General Sherman’s Atlanta Campaign, which started on May 1, 1864. At the Battle of Cassville on May 19, 1864 he was again shot and died of his wounds on July 28, 1864 at Cassville, Georgia. Elisha was buried in Chattanooga National Cemetery.

Alpheus Herdendorf, too young to serve in the Civil War, was only 14 years old when his brothers enlisted. He married Rosella “Rose” Barheite on February 21, 1874 at Medina, Orleans County, New York. Medina is located on the Erie Canal about 15 miles east of Lockport and some 200 miles west of Canajoharie.

Rosella was born on February 2, 1857 in Locke, Cayuga County, New York. She was the daughter of Tunis Barheite, born July 3, 1787 in Locke, New York and died after 1857 in Moravia, New York, and Chloe “Cleo” Ann Havens, born about 1814 in Locke, New York. Chloe was a schoolteacher in the mountains near in Orleans, New York. Tunis and Chloe were married ~1832 and had twelve children, of which Rosella was the youngest.

Alpheus and Rosella had nine children [Harry W. (born June 1, 1875; died May 19, 1930 at Lorain, Ohio), Joseph E. (born 1877), Albert (born June 1879; died 1901), Dora (born 1879; died June 24, 1955), Wellington B. (born 1881; died 1883), LeRoy (born August 5, 1883; died October 25, 1945 at Albion, New York), Nellie Louise (born June 7, 1886; died at Billings, Montana), Florence (born December 1887), Maybelle A. (born 1889; died at Lorain, Ohio), Charles Edward (born August 4, 1895; died August 14, 1972 at Sheffield Lake, Ohio)] raised in Medina and Buffalo, New York. Alpheus was a lumberman, engaged as a contractor in New York and Ohio.

In the early 1920s, Alpheus and Rosella followed their daughter, Maybelle to Lorain County, Ohio and remained there until Alpheus died on June 14, 1924 and Rosella died on January 8, 1939. Alpheus and Rosella were buried in Boxwood Cemetery, Ridgeway (Medina), New York.



Members of the Herdendorf family working on enlargements of the Erie Canal, circa 1860.

Generation II. Their youngest son, Charles Edward “Ed” Herdendorf, married Leah Gertrude “Gertie” Pierce on September 26, 1913 in Buffalo, New York. Gertie was born in Buffalo on April 14, 1894, the daughter of Walter E. Pierce and Julia Rochford. Her grandfather, John J. Rochford, was an innkeeper in County Cork, Ireland who had emigrated from Erin to New York during the Irish Famine of the mid-1800s.

As a teenager, Ed Herdendorf stated his career as a welder. He went into business with his brother LeRoy and another man from Buffalo in the late 1910s. They successfully operated a welding shop in the Buffalo suburb of Cheektowaga, New York for several years. Around 1920 the older partners overextended themselves and the welding shop was lost to creditors. Although Ed was not responsible for the over expenditures, his attorney advised him that it would be best if he left New York. The experienced soured him on partnerships, and he never again entered into one, not even with his son and daughters. He decided to move his family to Montana, where his sister Nellie (Herdendorf) Carlin lived in Billings, and start a new life. He also hoped the western climate would be better for his 5-year old daughter, MaBelle, who suffered from a severe asthma condition.

En route to Montana, Ed Herdendorf and his family stopped at Elyria, Ohio to visit his parents and sister who had moved there a few years earlier and opened a restaurant. During the visit, young MaBelle slept with her grandmother Rose and in the morning told her father “Grandma cried all night because we were going so far away.” Ed decided to stay in Ohio.

He first got a welding job at the Lorain shipyards, but the outside work was cold and not like his own shop. Soon he opened a small welding shop on 11th Street in Lorain, across from the New York Central Railway Station. The family lived in a small apartment above the shop. In July 1924, when the famed Lorain Tornado destroyed much of the city and killed 65 people, the family watched church steeples tumble in the neighborhood, but the shop was spared. After building



Ed Herdendorf's Standard Welding Company shop on Broadway at 13th Street in Lorain (circa 1930).

the business for a few years, Ed moved his "Standard Welding Company" to a prime location on Broadway at 13th Street. In 1928 he had a fine Sears "Hathaway" home built at 846 Lake Breeze Road in Sheffield Lake, Ohio. Here, all of his children (MaBelle, LaBerta, and Charles E. Herdendorf, Jr.) attended Brookside High School as did their offspring.

By tracing the westward migration of descendants of a sixteenth century Mohawk Chief from their original home at Canajoharie in the Mohawk Valley to the shores of Lake Erie at Sheffield—a period of some 400 years—we can gain insight on how one thread in the fabric of our community developed. Of course, a multitude of threads need to be sown together to understand the marvelous diversity exhibited within the boundaries of Greater Sheffield—the original Sheffield Township settled by our pioneer founders 200 years ago.

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The home of Milton Garfield, the first pioneer on Sheffield's North Ridge.