

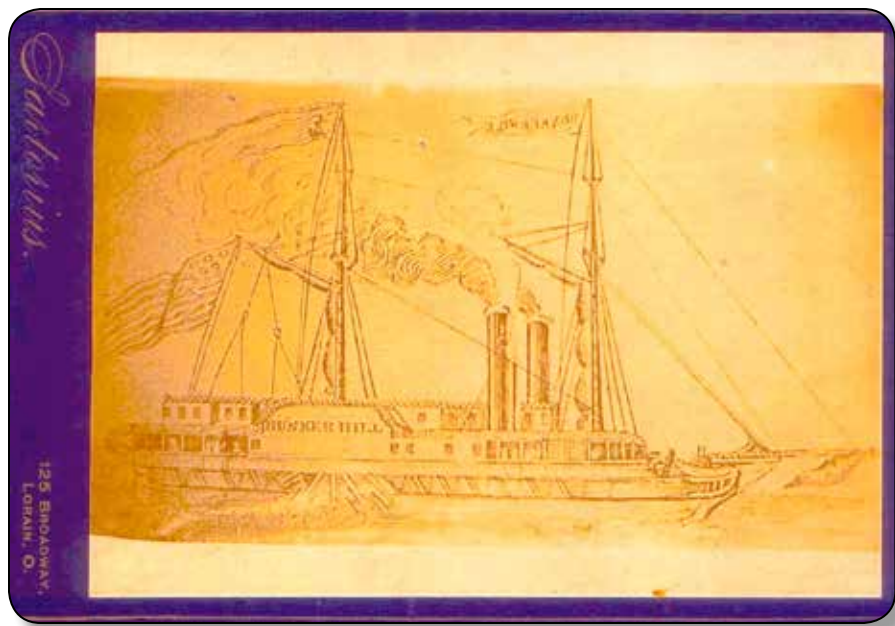
CHAPTER 9. SHEFFIELD HEROES AND ADVENTURERS

Over the past 200 years, Sheffield has produced many heroes and adventurers. Some of these brave men and women have been portrayed in earlier chapters on the pioneers and the military history of our communities. In this chapter some new heroes and adventurers are introduced and the deeds of those already mentioned are elaborated.

Captain Aaron Root (1801-1865) Great Lakes Pioneer Mariner

Captain Aaron Root was perhaps the most adventurous of the early pioneers to settle in Sheffield. Grandson and namesake of Revolutionary War Colonel Aaron Root, he was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts. As a boy of 14, he journeyed to Ohio with his pioneer parents, Henry Root (1767-1829) and Mary [Day] Root (1772-1859) and five younger siblings. The Roots were the first family with children to settle in what would become Sheffield, Ohio.

The Root homestead was located on the southwest corner of Colorado Avenue and Abbe Road. Aaron became a noted master of sailing ships and early steamships on the Great Lakes. At an early age he became enraptured with life on Lake Erie. Learning the seaman's trade, he eventually operated and/or owned several Great Lakes ships between 1825 and 1860, including the steamers *Bunker Hill*, *Henry Clay*, *Lexington*, and *Sheldon Thompson* and the sailing vessels *Beaver*, *Florida*, *Nehemiah Hubbard*, *North Carolina*, *Palestine*, *Wm. S. Pierson*, and *Young Amaranth*.



Side-wheel steamer Bunker Hill, Captain Aaron Root's first steamship.

One of Capt. Root's early boats was the steamer *Bunker Hill* (1837-1851). Built by F. N. Jones in Charleston, Ohio [later Lorain]. She had a wood hull 154 feet in length, 24-foot diameter side-wheels, a cross-head steam engine, and a displacement of 457 tons. On December 28, 1837 the following notice appeared in the *Cleveland Herald & Gazette*: "The new steamboat *Bunker Hill* arrived yesterday from Charleston where she was built. This craft is of the largest class of lake boats and intended for the carrying of freight. The commander, Capt. Aaron Root, is well-known as an experienced navigator, who in every respect is qualified for the post."

Capt. Root is known to have transported escaped slaves from Lorain and Huron to Canada on the steamboat *Bunker Hill*—the last leg of the "Underground Railroad." His daring efforts in this regard are commemorated on the Ohio Bicentennial Historic Marker located at the Burrell Homestead on East River Road in Sheffield Village and on the Historic Marker for Underground Railroad Station 100 at the mouth of the Black River, where Capt. Root's warehouses once stood.

In 1859, Capt. Root and his associates had a sea-going barquentine, the *Wm. S. Pierson*, built in Sandusky, Ohio at the shipyard of Merry, Fordham, & Gay. This was a grand experiment to sail cargo from the Great Lakes to England through an early Welland Canal. The vessel was built of white oak, 143 feet in length, 24 feet in breadth, and 12 feet in depth with a displacement of 392 tons. Capt. Root was master of the ship on its maiden voyage from Lorain to Liverpool with a cargo of gunstocks and barrel staves. The trip over was prosperous and successful, but the return trip was a stormy one. In mid-ocean the ship sprung a leak and the crew, which included Aaron's nephew, Frederic O. Day, had much difficulty in mending it and bringing the vessel safely to the American shore. Meanwhile the provisions ran low, so hunger and thirst were added to the hardships. To sustain the crew Capt. Root was forced to break open the cargo of British cheese.

Aaron Root married Esther Buck (1811-1872) of Huron in 1828 and they lived on the family homestead in Sheffield. They had 9 children: Henry, 1830-1908 (married Fanny Jones, 1852); Walter, 1832-1837; Edward, 1834-1897 (married Julia Garfield, 1866); Eliza, 1836-1838; Alice, 1838-1842; Charles, 1840-1925;

William, 1842-1908 (married Emma Crane); Emma, 1844-1928 (married Charles Edwin Reeve, 1873); and Julia, 1846-1928 (married William Warden, 1872). In 1840, a German immigrant named John Forster purchased 50 acres of land from Capt. Aaron Root and thus became the first of many German immigrants to settle in Sheffield. Then in 1845, Capt. Root sold an acre of land to the German Catholic community and the first St. Teresa Church was built near the Root homestead the following year. Aaron died of dysentery on September 13, 1865 at the age of 64; he and Esther are buried in Garfield Cemetery.



Aaron Root homestead built circa 1830s.



Ohio Historic Marker at Lorain Underground Railroad Station 100 commemorating the heroic deeds of Captain Aaron Root.



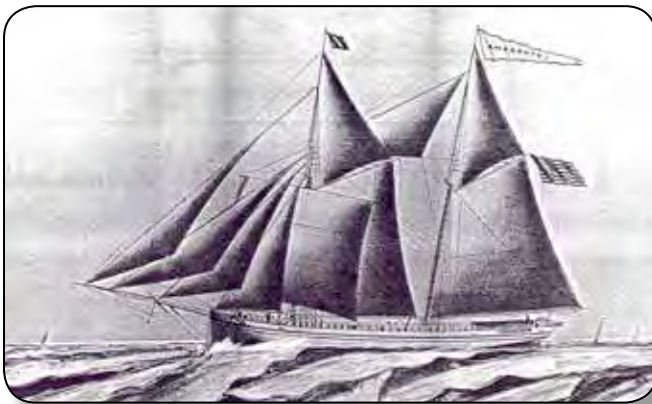
Half-model of barquentine Wm. S. Pierson, Captain Aaron Root's ocean-going vessel.



Milan ship basin in 1847 depicting grain being transported to Great Lakes schooners (Milan Historical Society). Captain Root served as shipwright here in the late 1840s, building the steamer Erie.



An early version of the Welland Canal in the mid-1800s. The Wm. S. Pierson passed these locks en route from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario and the Atlantic Ocean (Great Lakes Historical Society).



Lake Erie schooner Amaranth, typical of the type of vessels built at Black River in the 1820s and 1830s. Schooners such as this one were the first vessels on which Captain Aaron Root served as master (Great Lakes Historical Society).



Douglas Smith (1799-1862) built this house in 1833 on North Ridge in Sheffield Village. Captain Aaron Root spent his final years here, dying on September 13, 1865 at age 64.



Aaron Root monument in Garfield Cemetery.

Robbins Burrell (1799-1877)—abolitionist leader and agricultural educator

Robbins Burrell was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts on September 21, 1799, receiving his given name from his mother’s maiden name. In 1815 his father, Captain Jabez Burrell, purchased a tract of land in the Connecticut Western Reserve that would become Sheffield Township. In August 1816, Jabez, his wife Mary [Robbins] Burrell, and 8 children [Julia, Sarah, Robbins, Lyman, Solome, Jabez, Eliza, & Mary Ann] arrived in Sheffield by way of Lake Erie on the schooner *Black Snake* and came up the Black River to its mouth.

The family proceeded to clear the land, establish a farm, and build a red-brick home that still survives on East River Road. In the winter of 1823-1824 Robbins served as a teacher in the only public school then existing in the City of Cleveland. Robbins married Eliza Brigham (1801-1870) in 1825 and carried on the management of the Burrell Homestead after his father’s death in 1833.

Robbins and his brother, Jabez Lyman, were founders and original trustees of Oberlin College demonstrating the family commitment to both work/study programs and to the abolition of slavery. The gender and racially integrated Sheffield Manual Labor Institute, a branch of Oberlin College, was established at the Burrell Homestead in Sheffield under the leadership of Robbins Burrell, who was appointed to the position of Practical Farmer for Oberlin College in March 1836. By June the school was ready to open and the first students attended classes in the Burrell house front parlor and received practical agricultural training in the farm fields. The Burrell farm served as a classroom, a place to work, and a dormitory. Educational appurtenances such as books, charts, papers, and other necessities needed to teach Greek, mathematics, and natural philosophy were obtained from Oberlin.

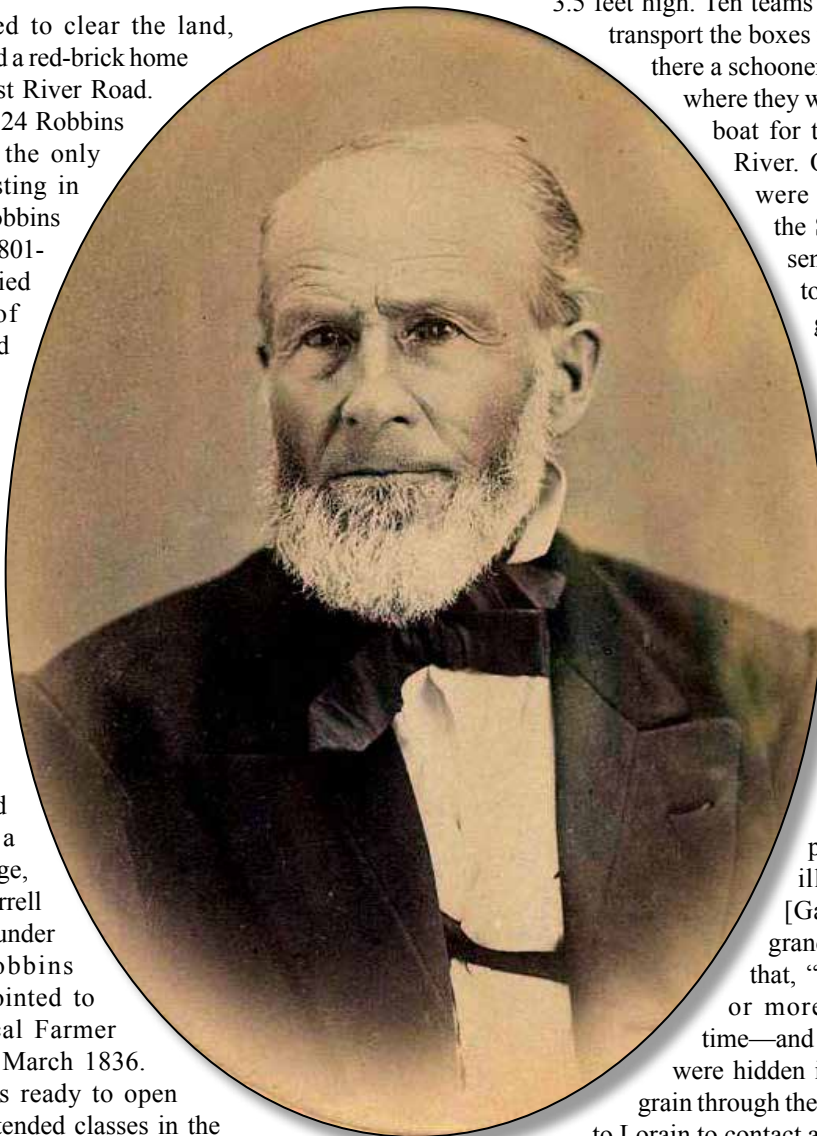
Oberlin College was a leader in agricultural experimentation. In 1836 the Trustees of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute embarked on a grand project to raise money for both Oberlin and Sheffield

campuses—the manufacturing of silk. Since silk is obtained from silkworms (*Bombyx mori*), and silkworms eat mulberry leaves, vast groves of mulberry trees were envisioned for both Oberlin and Sheffield. Caterpillars of this moth species produce a 1-inch cocoon that contains about 1,000 of feet silk. Steaming and soaking in hot water softens the gum that binds the threads, permitting unrolling of the silk and its spinning into threads. This labor-intensive process yields about 1,000 miles of silk per pound of raw material. Early in the spring of 1836 some 39,000 mulberry trees were purchased from a grower in New York and shipped in 20 boxes, each 6 feet long, 3 feet wide, and

3.5 feet high. Ten teams of horses were required to transport the boxes to the port at Buffalo; from there a schooner carried them to Cleveland where they were transferred to a smaller boat for the short trip to the Black River. On June 3, 1836 the trees were landed only a mile from the Sheffield Institute. Oberlin sent a plow and yoke of oxen to Sheffield to help break the ground so the trees could be planted immediately. Some 17,000 mulberry trees were soon planted on the Burrell farm (see page 147).

Robbins was active in the Abolition Movement by operating a station on the “Underground Railroad” and helping many runaway slaves obtain passage on boats that would carry them to freedom in Canada. No records were kept to protect the family from their illegal activity, but Tempe [Garfield] Burrell, Robbins’ granddaughter-in-law, recorded that, “...there were usually two or more slaves brought in at a time—and always at night—and they were hidden in the grain bins under the grain through the day while Mr. Burrell went to Lorain to contact a captain sailing for Canada who would risk taking them across. The granary foundation is still standing on the Burrell farm in

Sheffield. When a boat was ready, Mr. Burrell would take the slaves to Lorain in the bottom of a wagon with farm produce covering them. Then he would drive to the dock and unload the provisions ordered by the captain and the slaves would take the opportunity of concealing themselves on the boat.” Robbins was a close friend and confidant of Captain Aaron Root. Prior to the Civil War they shared a strong distaste for the notion of



Robbins Burrell (1799-1877).

slavery. Working together they managed to smuggle many a runaway slave to freedom in British Canada.

The following excerpt from Robbins obituary, written by his son Edward for the August 25, 1877 edition of the *Elyria Republican*, documents their collaboration:

From the first he was a red-hot anti-slavery man. His house was for years a station on the underground railroad, and many a fugitive slave from Kentucky who had reached Oberlin, was smuggled to him, concealed until Capt. Root reached the nearest port, and then set across the lake. He believed in "the higher law" heresy, and would have gone to prison or the stake before he would have aided in the return of a slave. Many a time lordly Kentuckians, with spurs, pistols, whips and hounds, visited his place in search of fugitives, and to "help them hunt" put them on the wrong trails, let them ransack improbable places, peek into holes, and devil and laugh at them, was delightful to him. It was just the mischief and adventure he craved.



Robbins and Eliza Burrell's gravestone in Garfield Cemetery.



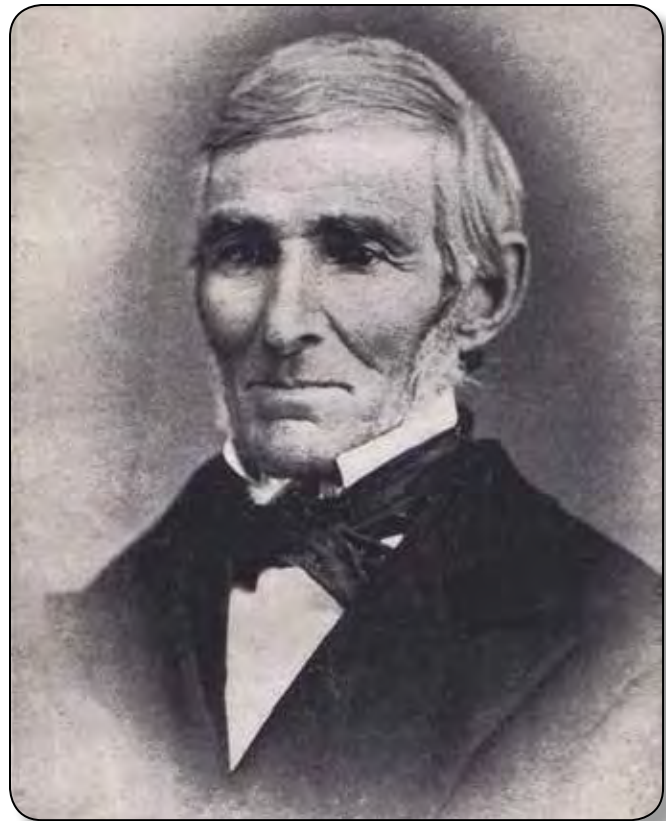
Ohio Historic Marker at the Burrell Homestead.

Norman Day (1803-1880)—chronicler of Sheffield's early settlement

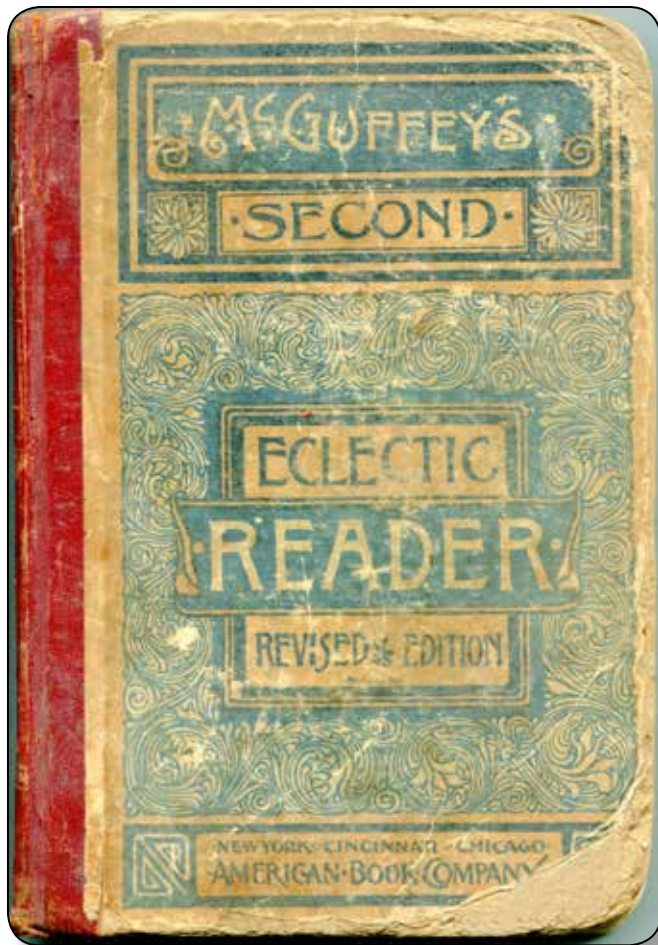
Norman Day was born on August 27, 1803 in Sheffield, Massachusetts and was one of the 9 children brought to Ohio by his parents, Captain John Day and Lydia [Austin] Day. Although only a lad of 13 when the family made their wilderness journey to Sheffield, he kept a detailed journal of their trek and early days in Ohio. He and his cousin William Root, were the first to chronicle events in the early settlement.

In 1830, Norman married Julia Ann Root (1826-1889), a daughter of pioneer Henry Root (1767-1829) and Mary [Day] Root (1772-1856). Norman and Julia lived on their 117-acre farm on the lakeshore at the foot of Lake Breeze Road. Here they raised seven children. Norman's farm on Lot 42 stretched from the lakeshore to just north of the present-day railroad tracks. He built a Greek Revival-style farmhouse in the 1830s and farmed the land for five decades. Norman died on October 12, 1880, at age 77 and Julia died on January 14, 1889. They are buried in Garfield Cemetery (Block C, Lot 12, Graves 11 & 12). An impressive marble obelisk monument marks the family's resting place.

Norman prepared an eyewitness account of the beginnings of Sheffield for the community's 50th Anniversary, celebrated in



Norman Day (1803-1880).



McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader (1836), which contains a version of the Peter Miller story.

1865. One of his most enduring accounts deals with a boy from the lakeshore. In the summer of 1821, Peter Miller a lad of 17 from Avon's shore, encountered a black bear and her two cubs in the swampy wilderness while returning home to the lakeshore after laboring at Sheffield Center. On a Saturday afternoon Peter had started toward his father's house, a trek of five miles the wilderness, and much of the way his path was near a large swamp, infested with bears. When about a third of the way through he saw the bears. Peter shouted to scare them away, but fearing for the safety of her cubs, the bear chose to attack.

Peter attempted to escape by climbing an elm tree, but the bear followed. By kicking, he repulsed the bear twice, but lost his boots in the process. On the bear's third attempt, Peter frightened and exhausted, lost his grip and he and the bear tumbled to the ground together. The bear, startled by the fall jumped a few paces away then turned toward her intended victim. Peter looked her in the eye a moment then wisely concluded his only chance was flight. Barefoot, he ran for his life back to safety in Sheffield.

Norman Day and several other settlers rallied with guns and dogs to seek revenge on the aggressor, but the bear and her cubs escaped by the time they found the elm tree. When night came and Peter did not return home, an anxious father and friends, fearing some evil must have befallen him, set out through the wilderness with lighted torches. They found him in Sheffield, well cared for and snugly in bed, having narrowly escaped a horrible death. The tale of Peter Miller's escape found its way into *McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader*, bringing some fame to Sheffield.



Illustration of the bear and Peter Miller from McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader.

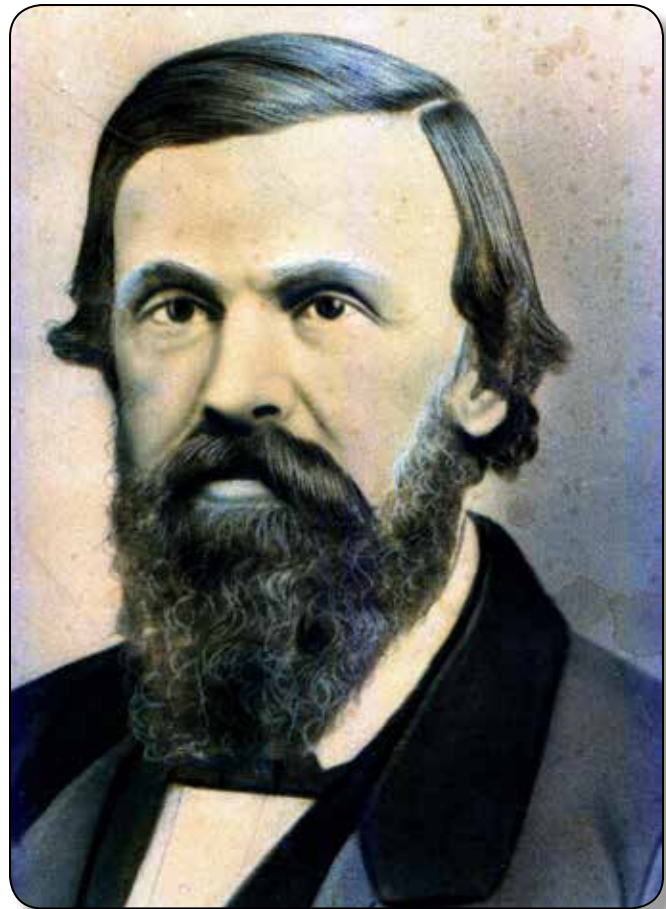


Restored Peter Miller House in Avon Lake, built circa 1830.

Henry Williams Garfield (1821-1892)—California Gold Rush Forty-niner

In January 1848, James Marshall discovered gold at a sawmill he was constructing for John Sutter, about 40 miles northeast of Sutter’s Fort near present day Sacramento, California. In the early summer of 1848, Col. Richard B. Mason, U.S. Military Governor of California, and Lt. William Tecumseh Sherman toured the gold fields northeast of San Francisco. They estimated that 4,000 men were already working the gold district, daily extracting \$30,000 or more in gold. Col. Mason obtained samples and sent them to the Philadelphia Mint. The Mint’s report was the highlight of President James Polk’s message to the 30th Congress on December 5, 1848. Polk pointed out that at the time of California’s acquisition it was known that precious metals existed there, but “The accounts of the abundance of gold in that territory are of such extraordinary character as would scarcely command belief were they not corroborated by authentic reports.” The presence of California gold in the national capitol and the President’s statements made headlines throughout America and around the world. Gold fever became an epidemic and Argonauts or Forty-niners, as they were called, swarmed west by the thousands. In California, it was said, a miner could take a fortune from the hills and streams with little more than a shovel and a tin pan. Thus began the saga of the Forty-niners; strike it rich or not—and most did not—the adventure alone was often treasure enough for a lifetime.

Gold Fever soon reached Sheffield and the sons of Sheffield’s founding pioneers Jabez Burrell and Milton Garfield began to make plans for the 6-month overland journey to the California Gold Fields. Lyman J. Burrell and Henry W. Garfield constructed wagons that could easily be disassembled and loaded aboard river paddle-wheel boats and headed for Wellsville, Ohio on the Ohio River in mid-March 1849. They joined eight other men from Lorain and Medina Counties, and adopted the name *Buckeye Company* for their group.



Henry Williams Garfield (1821-1892).

At Wellsville the Company boarded the stern-wheel steamer *Schuylkill* bound from Pittsburgh to St. Louis, with stops at Cincinnati and Louisville before entering the Mississippi River and steaming upstream to the mouth of the Missouri River. In St. Louis they secured passage on the river-steamer *Alice* for the voyage up the Missouri River to St. Joseph. About 30 miles downstream from their destination one of the boilers exploded, and the passengers had to wait on shore at a Kickapoo Indian village until the steamer, “a miserable boat” named *Mary*, was able to cram them on onboard for the remainder of the journey.

At St. Joseph they purchased oxen for their wagons, but soon discovered that the prairie grasses had not yet grown high enough to support their teams on the move. They decided to remain three weeks on the east bank of the Missouri River at a place they named *Buckeye Camp*. Averaging somewhat less than 20 miles per day, the Company traveled overland across the Nebraska Territory, arriving at the Platte River on May 15th. The Company’s journal reported, “When we first saw the Indians we did not know what to expect and our captain ordered us to get our guns in order and be all ready in case of trouble. The trouble would have been short if they had proved unfriendly, as there were about 400 of them.”

Toward the end of May the Company entered Buffalo Country. As a drove of buffalo crossed the Platte River some of the men

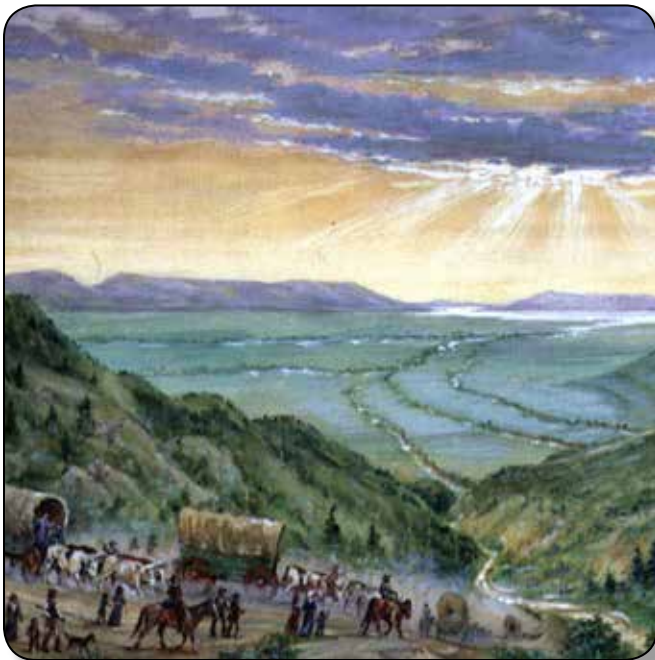


Forty-niner’s gold camp on the Feather River, California (U.S. National Park Service).

gave chase and one buffalo was killed affording meat for all. Wolves kept up a lively howling most nights and finally one of the team crawled in a cave, shot one, and dragged it out by its legs. On another occasion Burrell shot off the forefinger of his left hand attempting to shoot a wolf. Rattlesnakes were also plentiful in the prairie and one night a big fat one was fried for dinner.



Forty-niners disembarking a river steamer at St. Joseph, Missouri (U.S. National Park Service).



Forty-niners entering the Great Salt Lake Basin (U.S. National Park Service).

Between Ash Hollow and Chimney Rock the men had a very sad duty to perform, that of burying one of their Company, “A young man by the name of Hezekiah Crandall died with dysentery last night. It is a sad funeral when a young fellow has to be buried without any coffin, without any religious service and without mourners except his sad faced comrades. We dug a grave in the sand and laid him tenderly down in his traveling clothes and strewed cedar bushes over him and covered him up and drove on.”

On June 8th the Company passed Scotts Bluff and from here for the first time the men could see in the far distance the peaks belonging to the Rocky Mountains. On June 20th, after waiting three days for their turn, the Company crossed the North Platte River on a ferry operated by the Mormons. They charged \$3 to ferry one wagon at a time across the swollen river and the cattle had to swim alongside. The animals did not take kindly to the water and had to be induced by men on horseback yelling and prodding them.



Chimney Rock, Nebraska—this 325-foot natural column was an important landmark for the forty-niners finding their way to the gold fields (2007).

On July 5th the Company passed Fort Bridger in southwest Wyoming and arrived at Salt Lake City on the evening of July 14th, tired and footsore after repairing an axletree on one of the wagons and crossing 48 creeks of different sizes in the afternoon. Henry Garfield prepared a detailed description of the city and its Mormon population.

On September 25th, Garfield and Burrell reached the Feather River gold fields and established claims. They did reasonably well as gold prospectors. At \$16 per ounce for gold in 1859, Garfield was able to make up to \$50 per day. At today’s value this would be equivalent to approximately \$5,000. A year later he was able to send about 50 ounces of gold back to Sheffield.

Maria Root (1829-1888)—angel of the Civil War

Maria Root was born on November 27, 1829 in Sheffield, Ohio, the daughter of William H. Root and Sara Case. Her parents lived along the lakeshore at the foot of what is now Root Road. When she was a young woman, her father built a grand Greek Revival-style house there that was home to Maria for the rest of here life. Maria died in 1888 at age 59.

At the close of the Civil War, Maria Root and Delia Day left Sheffield and traveled to Georgia to care for freed Union prisoners of war at Andersonville Prison that were too weak to travel home. During the 15 months that the prison was in operation, 45,000 Union soldiers were imprisoned there, behind a wooden stockade with no shelter and little food and water. In that span of time, 13,000 Union soldiers died, several being shot by the commander himself.

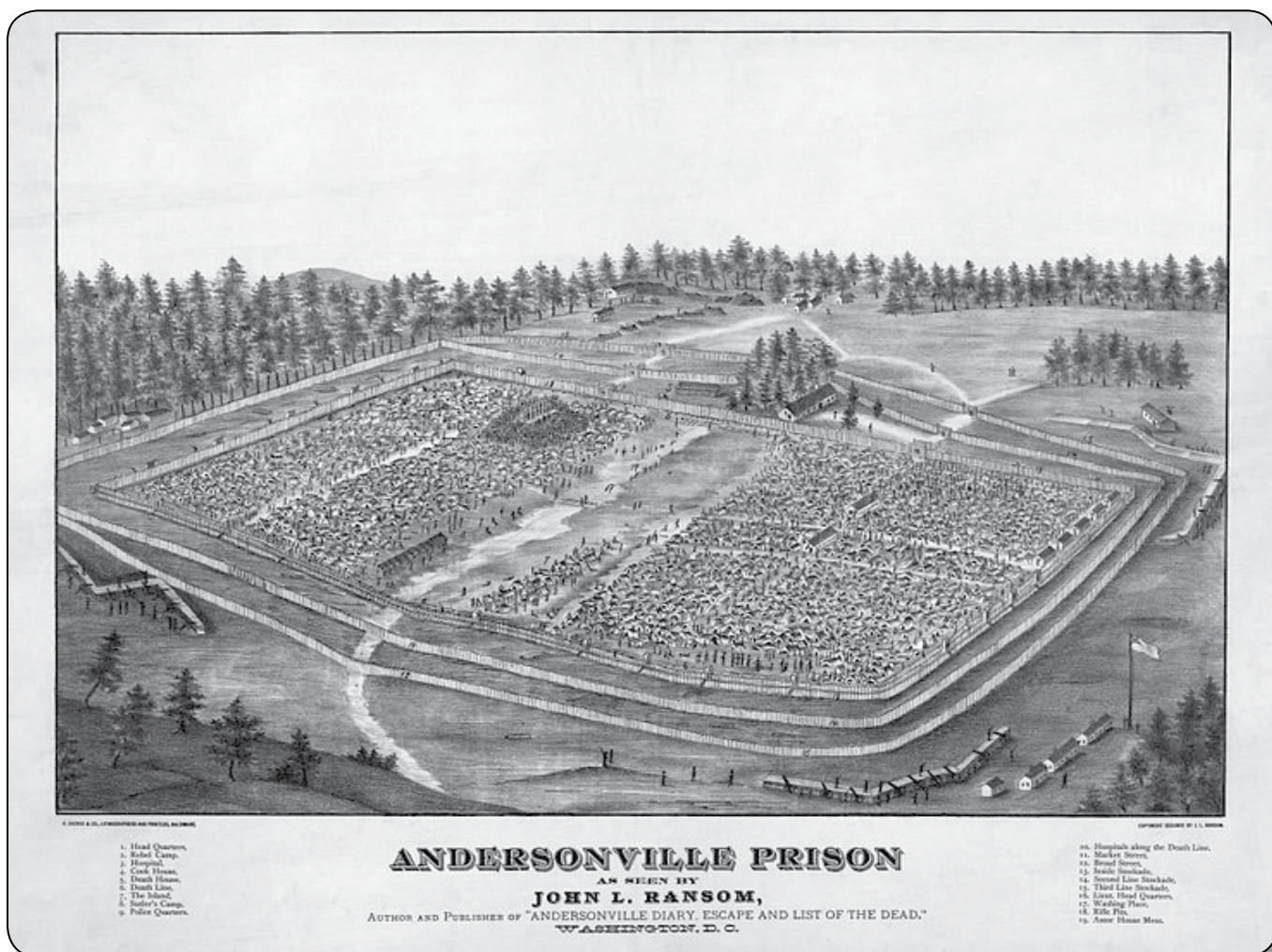
In May 1865, Federal forces under General William Tecumseh Sherman captured Andersonville during his famous March to the Sea. The condition of the prisoners still alive there was appalling.

General Lewis “Lew” Wallace, who was instrumental in the defense of Washington, D.C. during the Civil War, was given a memorable assignment at the end of the War—he was appointed presiding officer at the war crimes trial of Confederate Major Henry Wirz, the commander of the prison at Andersonville. Major Wirz was found guilty and hung in Washington, D.C. on November 10, 1865 in sight of the Capitol Building—the only Confederate officer to be hung for war crimes.

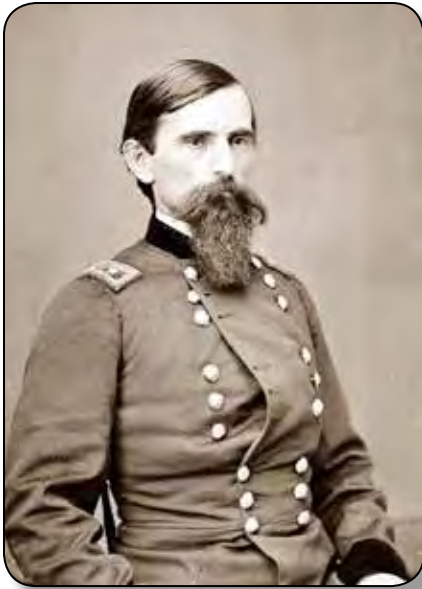


Maria Root (1829-1888).

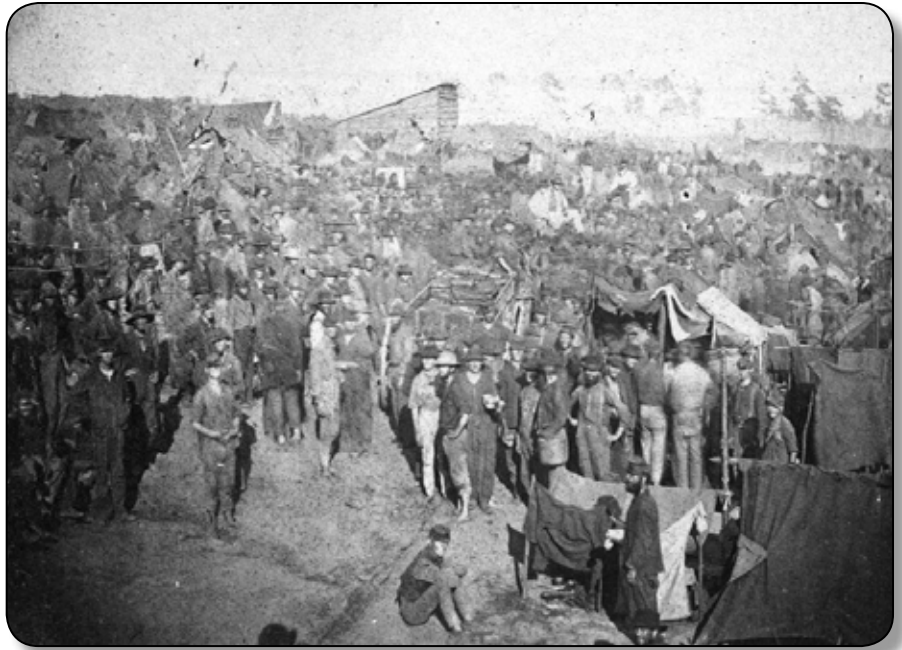
After the war, General Wallace served as Governor of the New Mexico Territory,



Andersonville Prison (February 1864-May 1865).



General Lewis Wallace, presiding officer at the war crimes trial of Confederate Major Henry Wirz (U.S. National Archives).



Federal prisoners at Andersonville (U.S. National Archives).



Execution of Major Wirz by hanging on November 10, 1865 (U.S. National Archives).

where he confronted Billy the Kid in 1879 and advised him to give up his “perilous career.” The Kid’s actual name was Henry McCarty. He was born November 23, 1858 in New York City and shot to death by Marshal Pat Garrett in July 1881. Lew Wallace went on to write perhaps the most influential religious story of the nineteenth and twentieth century, *Ben Hur—A Tale of The Christ*.

When their work at the prison was done, Maria and Delia stayed on to serve as teachers for the Freedmen’s Bureau at Macon, Milledgeville, and Andersonville—they were pioneers in this missionary work of the South that grew into a factor of untold influence. During the Reconstruction Period (1865-1872), the U.S. Congress established

the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands to provide practical aid to the 4,000,000 newly freed black Americans in their transition from slavery to freedom.

Major General Oliver O. Howard headed the Freedmen’s Bureau, considered the first federal welfare agency. Despite handicaps of inadequate funds and poorly trained personnel, the Bureau built hospitals for, and gave direct medical assistance to more than 1,000,000 freedmen and distributed more than 21,000,000 rations to impoverished blacks and whites in the South. The Bureau’s greatest accomplishments were in education—more than 1,000 black schools were built and it granted over \$400,000 to establish teacher-training institutions. All major black colleges received funds or other aid from the Bureau.

Delia Maria Day, daughter of Norman Day and Julia Ann Root, was born on July 3, 1831 in Sheffield. She was a cousin of Maria Root. When she returned from the South, she married Judge George Steele of San Luis Obispo, California on May 19, 1868. Judge Steele was a member of the California State Convention in 1877-1878. He served one term as a member of the State Legislature and two terms in the State Senate. He died in October 1901 and Delia died on February 20, 1912.

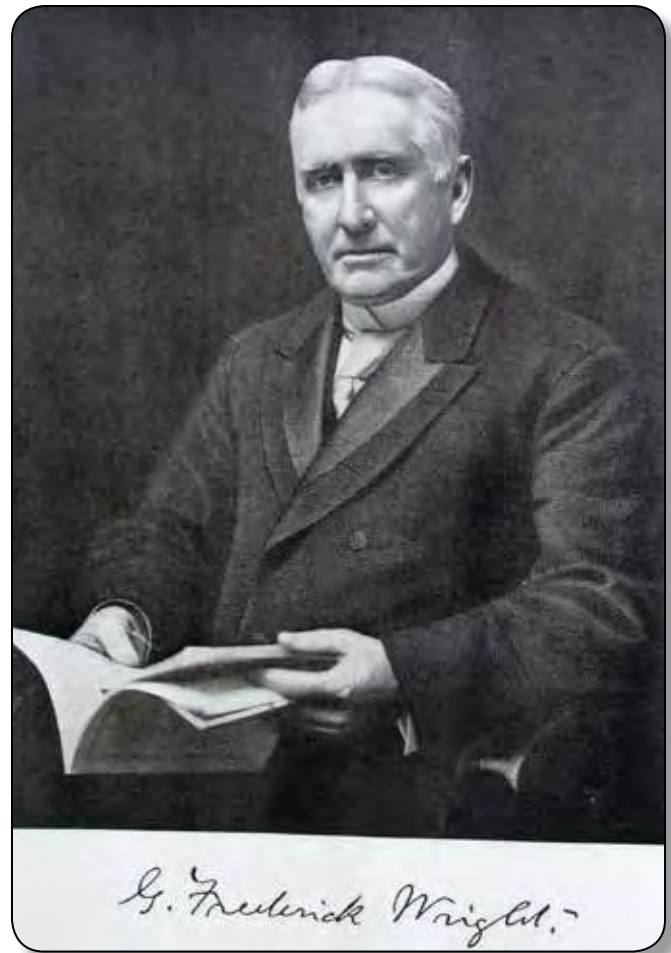
Professor G. Frederick Wright (1838-1921)—geologist, theologian, and Sheffield historian

Professor Wright is well known to historians for his authoritative, two-volume work, *A Standard History of Lorain County, Ohio*, published in 1916 by the Lewis Publishing Company of Chicago and New York. This work contains several fascinating accounts of the first century of pioneer settlement in Sheffield. But Professor Wright was much more than a chronicler of our history—he was an eminent geologist, theologian, and classical scholar who married Huldah Marie Day, the granddaughter of Sheffield founder, John Day. Wright's fascinating life is well worth exploring as an example of one of those rare Renaissance men—a man for all seasons.

George Frederick Wright, son of Walter and Mary [Peabody] Wright, was born January 22, 1838 in Whitehall, New York not far from the Vermont border. His boyhood was spent on the family farm near the head of Lake Champlain. His preparation for college was at a seminary at Castleton, Vermont and at age 16 he taught classes at the district school in nearby Hampton, New York. In the fall of 1855, Wright entered the freshman class at Oberlin College in Lorain County, Ohio, where he received an AB (Bachelor of Arts) degree in 1859. Several of his classmates are noteworthy—Major John Wesley Powell, Emory Upton, and Elisha Gray. He, like many students at the time, supported his education by teaching school during winter vacations. Wright's three brothers and two sisters, as well as several of his cousins, all attended Oberlin College. Oberlin's founders, John J. Shipherd and Philo P. Stewart were from towns near Whitehall and their influence led Wright's father and his uncle William to join the early supporters of Oberlin College.

Immediately after graduating from college, Wright entered the Oberlin Theological Seminary to study with Reverend Charles G. Finney. His studies were interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War. In April 1861, he was among the first one hundred Oberlin students to volunteer; these students formed Company C of the 7th Regiment of Ohio Volunteers. Early in his service a

severe attack of pneumonia left him with such debility that he was discharged at the end of five months. Professor Wright's brief military service during the Civil War is documented in his writings and addresses. In May 1902, four decades after the War, he gave a noteworthy memorial oration in Wellington, Ohio. In addition to considering the lasting effects of the Civil War on the United States, Wright recounted his experiences as a witness to the infamous Oberlin-Wellington Rescue in September 1858 and as a volunteer in the Union Army in 1861. He recalled correspondence from former classmates serving in the army that provided accounts of their Civil War experiences, particularly the diary of William W. Parmenter (AB 1861) who died in a Confederate prison camp in New Orleans, Louisiana on November 3, 1861.



Portrait of Professor G. Frederick Wright.



Peters Hall, built in 1885, on the Campus of Oberlin College where Professor Wright taught classes in glacial geology.

After being discharged Wright returned to Oberlin and completed his theological course, graduating in 1862 with an AM (Master of Arts) degree. Later that year, August 28th, he married Huldah Day, daughter of Judge William and Augusta [Burrell] Day of Sheffield. The Wrights had four children, all graduated from Oberlin: Mary Augusta Wright Berle (1867-1940, AB 1889), Etta Maria Wright (1870-1943, AB 1893), Frederick Bennett Wright (1873-1922, SB 1897), and Helen Marcia Wright (1879-1983, AB 1902). Huldah was born in Sheffield on March 5, 1833 and died on July 21, 1899 at age 66.

From 1862 to 1872 Wright served as pastor of the Congregational Church in Bakersfield, Vermont at the foot of the Green Mountains. In addition to his pastoral duties, he pursued a comprehensive course of private study, translating biblical and classical works from Greek, Hebrew, and German. He took an active part in the agricultural pursuits of his parish and spent much of his spare time studying the geology of the Champlain and St. Lawrence valleys. He published the results of his findings in local newspapers, which attracted the attention of geologists from outside the state of Vermont. In 1870 Wright published *The Ground of Confidence in Inductive Reasoning*, his first important article in the periodical literature, in Yale College's *New Englander*.

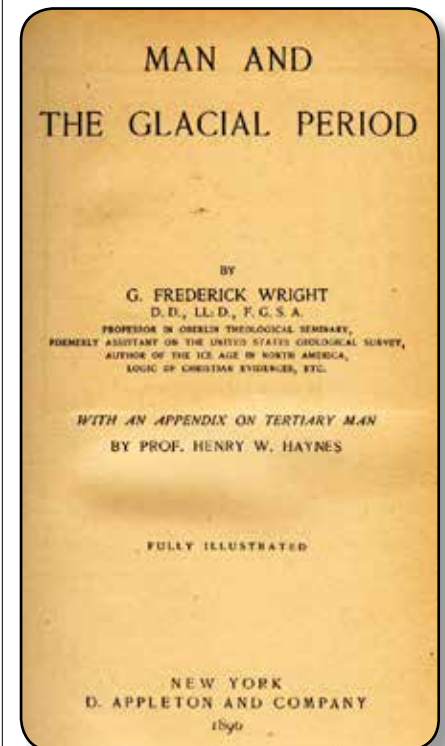
In June 1872, Wright accepted an offer to serve as pastor of the Congregational Church in Andover, Massachusetts. Here, he developed a relationship with professors at the Andover Theological Seminary. They invited him to write a series of contributions to *Bibliotheca Sacra*, the oldest and one of the most learned of the theological quarterlies in America. Wright's articles brought him to the attention of Harvard University botanist and Christian Darwinist, Asa Gray (1810-1888). Gray and Wright became friends and began harmonizing their common evangelical Calvinist faith with the new biology and geology. Wright even helped edit Gray's collection of essays, *Darwiniana*. With Gray's encouragement, Wright took on the task of reconciling the theory of evolution with Christian beliefs and thus joined the ranks of the Christian Darwinists. Wright apparently believed that humanity might still be an act of special creation, but he otherwise taught that the biblical creation stories were meant to teach theological truths, and thus should not be expected to reveal scientific knowledge.

Wright returned to the Oberlin Theological Seminary in 1881 as Professor of New Testament Language and Literature, replacing his former professor John Morgan who had retired one year earlier. In 1892 he was named Professor of Harmony of Science and Revelation. The title demonstrates his interest in the relationship between biblical accounts of creation and some of the major scientific discoveries of his day. Wright realized that human artifacts and the geological deposits that host them reveal a long and complex origin for the human race. This professorship, also known as the Cleveland

Professorship, was specially endowed for Wright by alumni living in the Cleveland area. This position permitted him to teach courses in glacial and historical geology at the College, in addition to his courses in the Theological Seminary, and also allowed him to devote part of each year to research. In 1907 he became Professor Emeritus and retired on a Carnegie Pension. During his retirement he gained a reputation as a local historian.

Wright was also a member of the Pennsylvania Geological Survey in 1881 and 1882, U.S. Geological Survey 1884 to 1892, president of the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society from 1907 to 1919, and a fellow of the Geological Society of America, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Boston Society of Natural History. In 1887 he was awarded two honorary degrees: DD (Doctor of Divinity) from Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island and an LLD (Doctor of Law) from Drury College in Springfield, Missouri.

While teaching at the Oberlin Theological Seminary, Professor Wright devoted vacation periods to continuing his geological studies. In addition to examining geological formations across



Glacial map of the United States and title page from a book authored by Professor G. Frederick Wright in 1896.

the United States, he traveled to Alaska in 1886 and Greenland in 1894 to study their glaciers. During his 1886 trip, Wright became the first person to study the Muir Glacier in Alaska. He also visited Europe several times between 1892 and 1908 to see archaeological sites and glacial phenomena. His geological interests expanded to include archaeology. He and his son, Frederick Bennett Wright, edited the archaeology journal *Records of the Past*, from its creation in 1901 until its 1914 merger with *Art and Archaeology*. During his retirement, as president of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, he was active in efforts to preserve prehistoric earthworks.

Wright was a prolific writer and a popular lecturer. He published several books and nearly six hundred articles. During the last years of his life he averaged one article a month. Wright was invited to present a lecture series at the Lowell Institute in Boston on several occasions: “The Ice Age in North America” (1887), “The Antiquity and Origin of the Human Race” (1892), and “The Scientific Aspects of Christian Evidences” (1896). His books include:

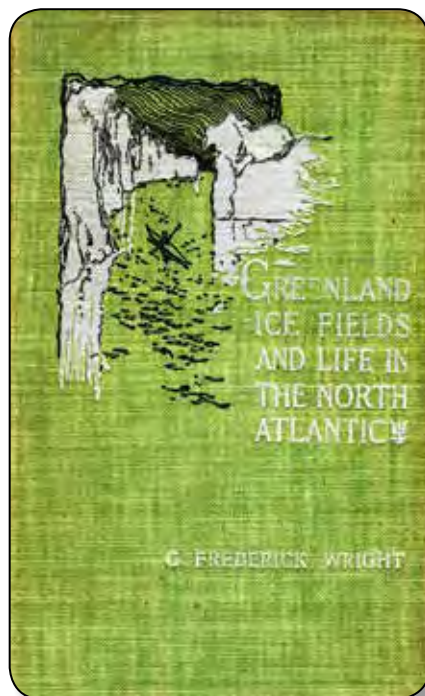
- Logic of Christian Evidences* (1880)
- An Inquiry Concerning the Relation of Death to Probation* (1882)
- Studies in Science and Religion* (1882)
- The Divine Authority of the Bible* (1884)
- The Glacial Boundary in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky* (1884)
- The Ice Age in North America and Its Bearing upon the Antiquity of Man* (1890)
- Charles Grandison Finney* (1891)
- Man and the Glacial Period* (1892)
- Greenland Ice Fields and Life in the North Atlantic* (1896)
- Scientific Aspects of Christian Evidence* (1898)
- Asiatic Russia* (1902)
- Scientific Confirmations of Old Testament History* (1907)
- Origin and Antiquity of Man* (1912)

Although Wright’s formal scientific training was limited to his undergraduate courses at Oberlin, he continued to study geology throughout his life. During his years as

an active minister, Wright’s geological interests became focused on the study of glacial deposits. His theory that numerous gravel ridges in New England were the result of glacial deposits brought him to the attention of professional geologists. He soon became a respected member of scientific circles, and in 1881 he was asked to survey the glacial drift border in Pennsylvania as part of the Second Geological Survey of Pennsylvania. Later, he continued this survey work as part of the U.S. Geological Survey to include Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois. Wright’s best-known geological work, *The Ice Age in North America and Its Bearings Upon the Antiquity of Man*, was published in 1890 by D. Appleton and Company. This well-received book, which was largely based upon his 1887 Lowell Institute lecture series, went through six editions. The positive reception led Wright to publish a new book in 1892, *Man and the Glacial Period*, also published by Appleton. His geology interests took him all over the world—Alaska, Greenland, China, Mongolia, Manchuria, Siberia, Turkmenistan, and the Middle East—gathering original information for the books and scientific papers he published. During his explorations along the coast of Greenland in 1894, he survived the shipwreck of the *Miranda*, which ended the expedition.

In 1900, the year following the death of his wife Huldah, Professor Wright at the age of 62 and his son Frederick crossed the continent of Asia for the purpose of investigating glacial phenomena suspected to be present there. On the way, six weeks were spent in giving scientific lectures in Japan, for which Professor Wright was made one of only three foreign members of the Japanese Imperial Education Society. Sailing to China, they traveled from Beijing to Mongolia in search of Ice Age deposits. The search produced results of profound significance—from the lack of glacial deposits in northern and central Asia, Wright determined that continent-sized glaciers were absent from this region during the last Ice Age, despite its high latitude and altitude.

Returning to Beijing, they were able to leave the city on the last train before the



Two of Professor Wright’s books on glacial geology and glaciology.



Dr. Wright's expedition across Asia and Europe 1900 and 1901.

outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion. By rail, ox car, and river steamer they arrived in Russian territory at Vladivostok and started up the Amur River, but were detained at Blagoveshchensk while the Chinese Army bombarded the city. Eventually they made it to the Siberian Railroad and traveled 2,000 miles across the steppes to Omsk before taking a steamer up the Irtysh River to Kazakhstan where they bought a tarantass [4-wheeled Russian cart] and drove 1,400 miles along the Tian Shan Mountains to Turkmenistan. Finally reaching the Caspian Sea, the world's largest lake, they crossed by steamer to Baku, the great oil center of Russia.

They continued on to the Black Sea, where they discovered a recently abandoned shoreline 750 feet above the present level of the sea. From Baku they went northward, crossing the Caucasus Mountains to Moscow and St. Petersburg, then south again to Odessa, Kiev, Constantinople [Istanbul], Beirut, and Damascus. On horseback they journeyed for 10 days to Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. In Egypt they steamed up the Nile to Aswan, then crossed the Mediterranean Sea to visit Naples, Rome and Florence, and on to Paris and London. After 14 months they reached home in Oberlin, Ohio, without accident, having traveled by every possible mode of conveyance, a distance of 44,000 miles. The results of this expedition appeared in papers published in the *Journal of the London Geological Society* and the *Bulletin of The Geological Society of America*.

Of special interest to Sheffield residents, Professor G. Frederick Wright prepared a treatise on the *Notable Things in the Genealogical Register of the Springfield Branch of the Day Family* for inclusion in the 1913 Edition of *Genealogical Register of the Family of Robert Day (1604-1648)*.

This Edition contains a supplement for the *Descendants of Captain John Day, who Moved to Sheffield, Ohio in 1816*. Professor Wright notes that, "At one time or another nearly all those who were born in Sheffield [Ohio] have pursued their higher education in Oberlin College"

In regard to May Eliza Day, of Sheffield, he states, "Not satisfied with knowledge attended in school, May, daughter of James Day, became a recognized authority in the botany of Lorain County so that she was constantly consulted by professors of Oberlin. The herbarium, which she presented to the College contains some specimens that had not before been discovered in the County." May Day's contribution to our knowledge of the flora of Sheffield Village is highlighted on page 28.

In 1904, five years after the death of Huldah, he married Florence Eleanor Bedford (1854-1943). At the age of 83, George Frederick Wright died in Oberlin of cardiac asthma on April 20, 1921, and is buried in Westwood Cemetery in Oberlin, along with his wives and two of his daughters.

The family gravestone, a large rough-hewn jasper conglomerate [called 'puddingstone' because of the pebbles of red jasper, white quartz, and gray chert in a buff quartzite matrix] is one of the most distinctive markers in Westwood Cemetery. The 3-ton stone is most likely from the Lorraine Formation which crops out along the north shore of Lake Huron, about 10 miles west of Sault Ste. Marie. These Precambrian rocks of the Proterozoic Era were deposited as coarse-grained sediments in a shallow sea some 2.5 billion years ago. These sediments have since been metamorphosed into hardened sandstone that breaks across, rather than around, the quartz grains.

The jasper pebble bands of this formation are one of Canada's noted ornamental stones—the best material for polishing obtained from boulders in the glacial drift. Professor Bruce Simonson of Oberlin College's Geology Department suggests that the Wright family gravestones are "erratics"—large boulders that have been carried long distances by glaciers. The presence of these stones in Ohio's drift provides unusually clear evidence of glaciation because the only known source for them is north of Lake Huron, hence, they were transported hundreds of miles by a mile-high Pleistocene ice sheet.



Wright family gravestones in Westwood Cemetery, Oberlin, Ohio.

The Rider Family in Sheffield—inventors, industrial leaders, and war heroes

The Rider family came to Sheffield as a consequence of Tom Johnson’s 1894 steel mill on the Black River. On the west side of the river, Johnson purchased tracts of land totaling 8,400 acres in Sheffield Township, later annexed to Lorain, to build the mill and create a neighborhood for the steelworkers and their families. On the southern portion of the tract, his Sheffield Land and Improvement Company laid out orderly, rectangular city blocks, unlike the “hodge-podge growth” that typified the old town to the north. The new section soon came to be known as South Lorain. As plans for the mill were being formulated, Johnson advertised for experienced steelmen to oversee the mill’s construction.

Harry Nichol Rider of McKeesport, Pennsylvania answered the call. He had worked for a decade in the steel mills along the Monongahela River just south of Pittsburgh.

In 1894 he journeyed to Lorain leaving his family in back in McKeesport. Harry was assigned to the team with the important task of overseeing the construction, and later the operation, of the Bessemer furnace. After traveling back and forth between the Ohio and Pennsylvania mills for over a decade, in about 1906 he moved his wife Maude Myrtle [Dillon] of 18 years and children into a new home on 12th Avenue (later renamed 30th Street), just two blocks south of the mill and one block north of Oakwood Park. At that time their family included three girls and five sons: Ada Isabel (17), Edith Elizabeth (16), Clarence Alexander (13), Frank Andrew (10), Harry Nichol, Jr. (7), Walter Kirk (5), Sara Edna (2), and Philip Ruric Nevil (1). Three more children were born to the family in Lorain, Leon Archie Paul (1909), Margaret (1914), and Connie (1915).

Harry Rider came to work in Lorain with very respectable credentials. Harry’s father, Alexander Kirk Rider (~1820-1893), was a prominent inventor and industrialist who had emigrated from Ireland in 1841. Alexander’s father, Job Rider (1757-1833), was born at Broomhill, England and died at Belfast, Ireland.

In Belfast, Alexander had worked as an iron founder and he soon found work in the United States at DeLamater Iron Works in New York. In the early 1860s, while at DeLamater Iron Works,



Alexander Rider’s model of his steam engine valve system used to obtain U.S. Patent No. 35,176 in 1861. Rider’s system was used in Capt. John Ericsson’s design of the USS Monitor.

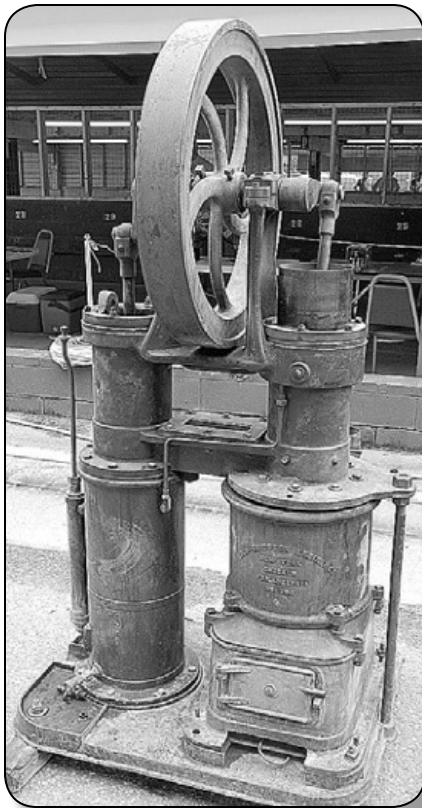
Alexander became associated with Capt. John Ericsson, designer of the Civil War ironclad, USS *Monitor*. Alexander obtained over 35 patents during his lifetime; one was for an improved cut-off valve system for steam engines that found utility in Ericsson’s *Monitor*. In the early 1870s, Alexander formed his own company, the Rider Engine Company in Walden, New York, where he improved on a 1816 concept by Scotsman Robert Sterling and patented the *Rider Hot-Air Pumping Engine*, a revolutionary design that became very popular for pumping water to the upper floors of multistory homes and buildings, and for filling railroad water tanks and watering cattle on western ranches. Rider engines, energized by heat from a slow burning wood or coal fire, utilized expanding and contracting air to produce power, rather than steam that was considerably more dangerous. These imposing machines operated quietly, had few moving parts, and were simple to use (in fact Jay Leno has one in *Jay’s Garage* that he demonstrates in a video on his website). By the early 1890s more



Alexander Kirk Rider (~1820-1893), American founder of Sheffield’s Rider family.

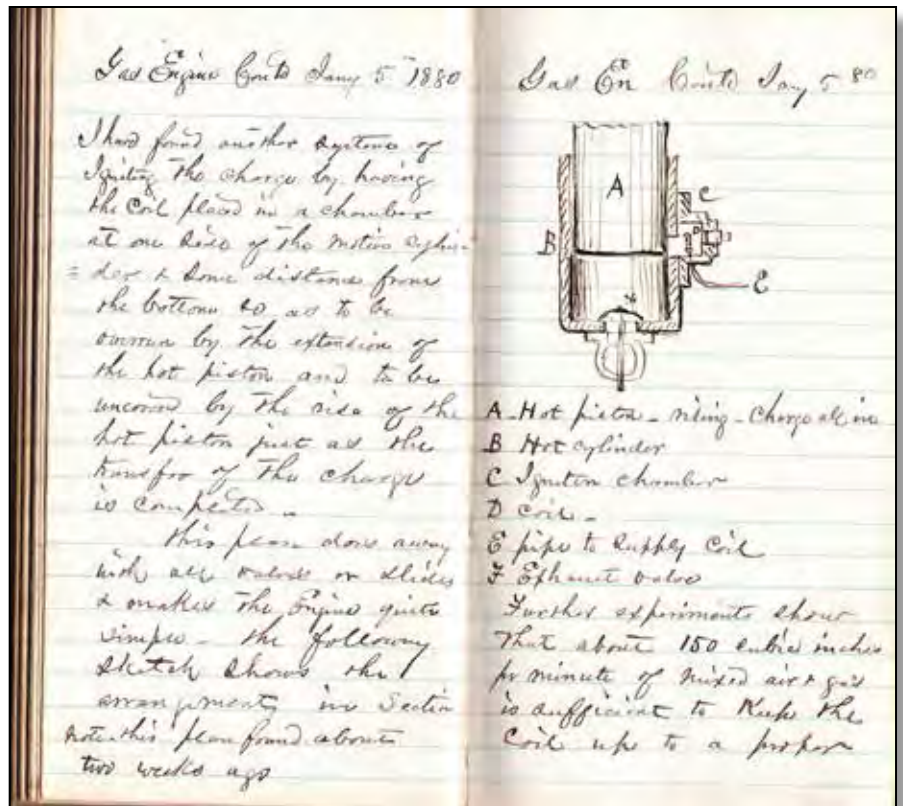


Battle between the Union Monitor and the Confederate Merrimac in Hampton Roads, Virginia on March 9, 1862 (Library of Congress).



Rider Hot-Air Pumping Engine at a vintage engine show (Brent Rowell).

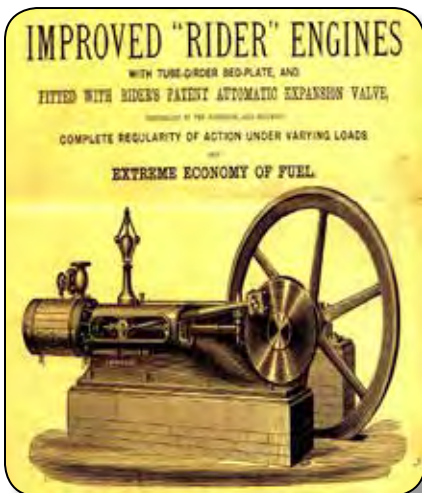
than 10,000 *Rider Compression Engines*, as they were called, were in use and the Walden factory had 70 employees. After Alexander's death, the principals of the Rider Engine Company joined forces with the DeLamater Iron Works to form the Rider-Ericsson Engine Company. The new company produced hot air engines



Pages from Alexander Rider's journal showing an experiment to improve the design of a gas-powered engine (January 5, 1880).

until 1939 when lighter-weight electric motors and internal combustion engines put an end to Alexander Rider's innovations.

On April 1, 1895, Johnson Steel Company in Lorain made its first "blow" of steel from a Bessemer furnace. In steelmaking, the term "blow" refers to the act of sending a blast of air through molten metal in a Bessemer converter—a process in which carbon, silicon, and other impurities are removed from molten pig-iron by oxidation in a specially designed tilting retort. At this time the mill employed about 1,200 men. Harry Rider continued his association with the mill, which eventually became National Tube



Advertisement (1876) for Rider Engines manufactured by Hayward Tyler & Co. in London, England, fitted with Alexander Rider's patented automatic expansion valve.



Rider-Ericsson Engine Company building, Walden, New York, in 1908 (Marcus Millsbaugh).



Harry Nichol Rider & Maude [Dillon] Rider of McKeesport, Pennsylvania. Harry transferred from the National Tube Works in McKeesport to the National Tube Company when it was being established in Lorain. Harry and Maude lived on 12th Avenue (now 30th Street) in South Lorain where they raised a family of eleven children.

Company of the U.S. Steel Corporation, until he died on June 25, 1917. A steelworker's life was hard in the late 19th century, which certainly contributed to Harry's early death at age 54. By that time his family had grown to four daughters and seven sons, the youngest of which was born less than two years before his death.

On April 11, 1912, Harry Rider's eldest daughter, Ada Isabel (1889-1977) married Henry Garfield Root (1885-1971), grandson of Milton Garfield, the first settler on Sheffield's North Ridge. They made their residence in Milton's 1839 homestead, where they cared for Henry's mother Julia (1841-1923) and tended the old Garfield farm. Here they raised their three children: Ruth Tempe (b. 1913), Frank (b. 1915), and Esther Kathryn (b. 1917).

When Harry Rider died in 1917, his widow Maude (1871-1941) and her unmarried children moved from South Lorain to Sheffield to live with her eldest daughter, Ada. World War I was raging at the time and four of her sons volunteered for service: Clarence Alexander (b. 1893) served in the Army, Frank Andrew (b. 1886) as a Marine, Harry Nichol, Jr. (b. 1899) in the Army, and Walter Kirk (b. 1901) as a Marine. Walter, who "overstated" his age to get in the Marines, was exposed to mustard gas and wounded while crossing a pontoon bridge over the Meuse River in northeastern France, but recovered to live a productive life in Lima, Ohio. Photographs on page 338 show the Rider sons in uniform with their mother at the front door to the Milton Garfield House.

Frank Rider's son, Alan (born 1930), became a prominent architect for the Washington, D.C. firm of John Carl Warnecke & Associates. In 1963, Alan was honored to be selected as the designer of the President John F. Kennedy grave memorial at Arlington National Cemetery. The central symbolic feature of the grave is the Eternal Flame lighted by Mrs. Kennedy on November 25, 1963. The flame was sited on the hillside directly along the great axis of Washington extending from the Capital to the Lincoln Memorial and on across the Potomac River. The approaches to the grave accommodate 50,000 visitors a day, while striving to preserve for each visitor a sense of intimacy and privacy. After a long, distinguished career, Alan Rider passed away in 2010.

Harry Rider, Jr. (1899-1995) was the last of Harry and Maude Rider's children to die. Harry was a star football player at Lorain High School and later played professional football against such greats as Jim Thorpe. He had an extraordinary career as an inventor and vice president of the Automatic Sprinkler Corporation in Youngstown, Ohio. He is credited with over 100 patents, and with saving thousands of lives with the fire alarm and sprinkler systems he created. He was proud to be the designer of the fire protection/sprinkler system that safeguards the *U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Declaration of Independence* at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.



National Tube Works in McKeesport, Pennsylvania where Harry Rider once worked. This plant was a forerunner of the 1894 Lorain steel mill.



Rider children on the steps of their McKeesport, Pennsylvania home in 1898; (left to right) Ada, Frank, Edith "Bess" and Clarence Rider.



The Rider Home on 12th Avenue (later 30th Street) in South Lorain, midway between the National Tube Company and Oakwood Park.

Minnie May Brown (1861-1947)—poet and song writer

Wayside Thoughts is the name of a little book of poems written by Minnie May Brown between the years 1911 and 1943. Minnie assembled the booklet at Christmas time in 1946 as a little holiday cheer to her family and friends with this greeting:

*I'm sending a thought of the Christmas time
To add to your holiday cheer;*

*With a wish that the light of the Bethlehem star
May shine on your way through the year.*

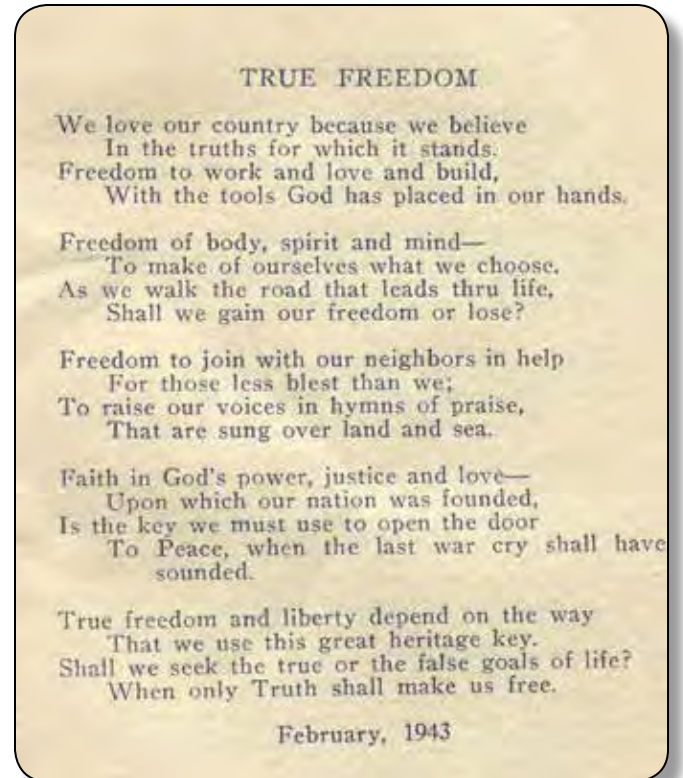
*With the hope that the angel's song of Peace
May give to your life of its treasure;*

*And a prayer that the blessings of Christmas time
May be yours in greatest measure.*

*Minnie M. Brown
Christmas 1946, Elyria, Ohio*

Minnie May Brainerd was born on May 19, 1861, the daughter of Sherman L. Brainerd (1813-1887) and Louisa Calkins (1816-1882) in Brooklyn Village, Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Minnie married Wilfred W. Brown (1861-1922) of Parma, Ohio on December 30, 1886. They went to Fort Collins, Colorado, making their home on a ranch for four years before returning to Ohio. In 1900 they settled on a farm near Elyria on Murray Ridge Road. The Browns had five children: Irene Ellen (b. 1888), Ora James (b. 1891), Louisa (b. 1893), Corinne (b. 1887), and Edward Brewster (b. 1904). When Wilfred was tragically dragged to death by a team of young horses in 1922, Minnie purchased a small farm (23.5 acres) on North Ridge in Sheffield at the northeast corner of Detroit and Abbe Roads. Here she lived for a quarter of a century as her youngest son, Edward, managed the farm and raised his family of one son, Edward Brewster Brown, Jr., and five daughters, Eileen, Sara Ann, Marilyn, Joann, and Nancy.

Minnie died in 1947, less than a year after she published *Wayside Thoughts*. One of the poems in the book, *Ohio Hymn*, was set to music and became the official hymn of the Elyria Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. Several of Minnie's poems are reproduced here with the permission of the Brown family: *Ohio Hymn* (1919), *True Freedom* (1943), *A September Day* (1911), *A Song of Autumn* (1912), and *Making Apple Butter* (1915).



True Freedom by Minnie May Brown (February 1943).



Minnie May Brown (1861-1947) from a hand-colored print by her daughter Corinne Brown in 1968 (Edward "Bud" Brown, Jr.).

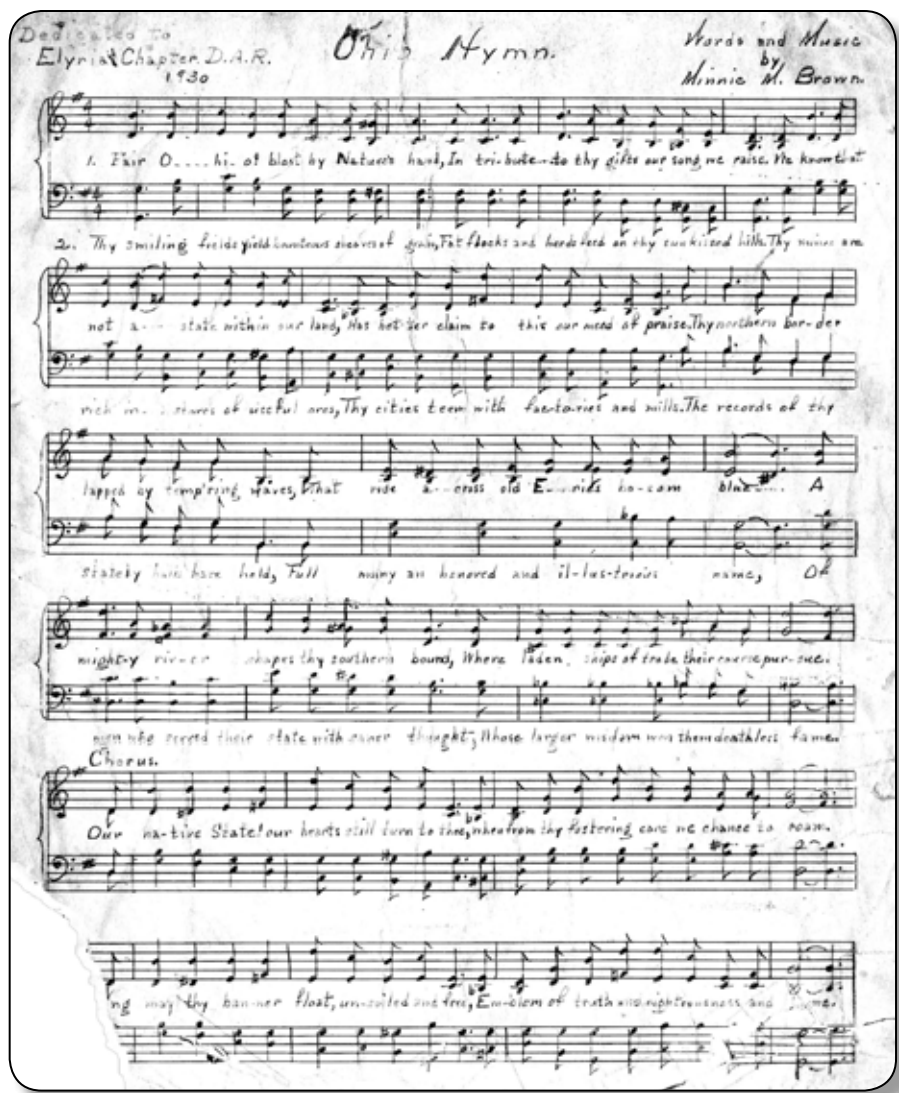


Hand-painted Christmas greeting crafted by Minnie for her family and friends (Eileen [Brown] Craven).

At the Sheffield History Center's Summer Open House on July 7, 2011, Eileen Craven [Minnie's granddaughter] was kind enough to present a piano recital that featured the *Ohio Hymn*. The lyrics to the hymn were passed out to Historical Society members and guests so we could sign along. Eileen served as pianist at the Philadelphia Church of God in Canton, Ohio.



Making Apple Butter by Minnie May Brown, 1915.

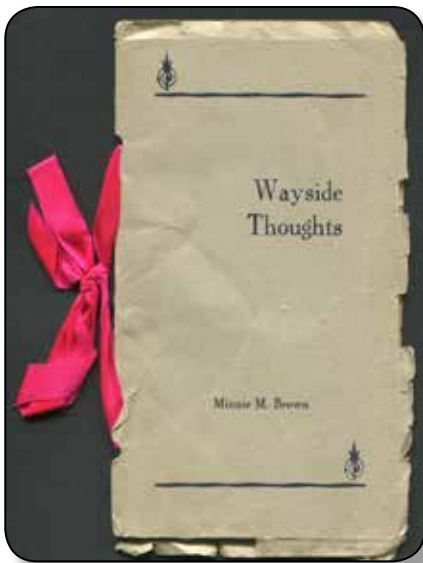


Handwritten sheet music for the Ohio Hymn, dedicated by Minnie Brown to the Elyria Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution in 1930.



Eileen [Brown] Craven plays the Ohio Hymn on the Clavinova at the Sheffield History Center on July 7, 2011. Photograph of Minnie Brown, composer of the Ohio Hymn, rests on the music stand at Eileen's left.





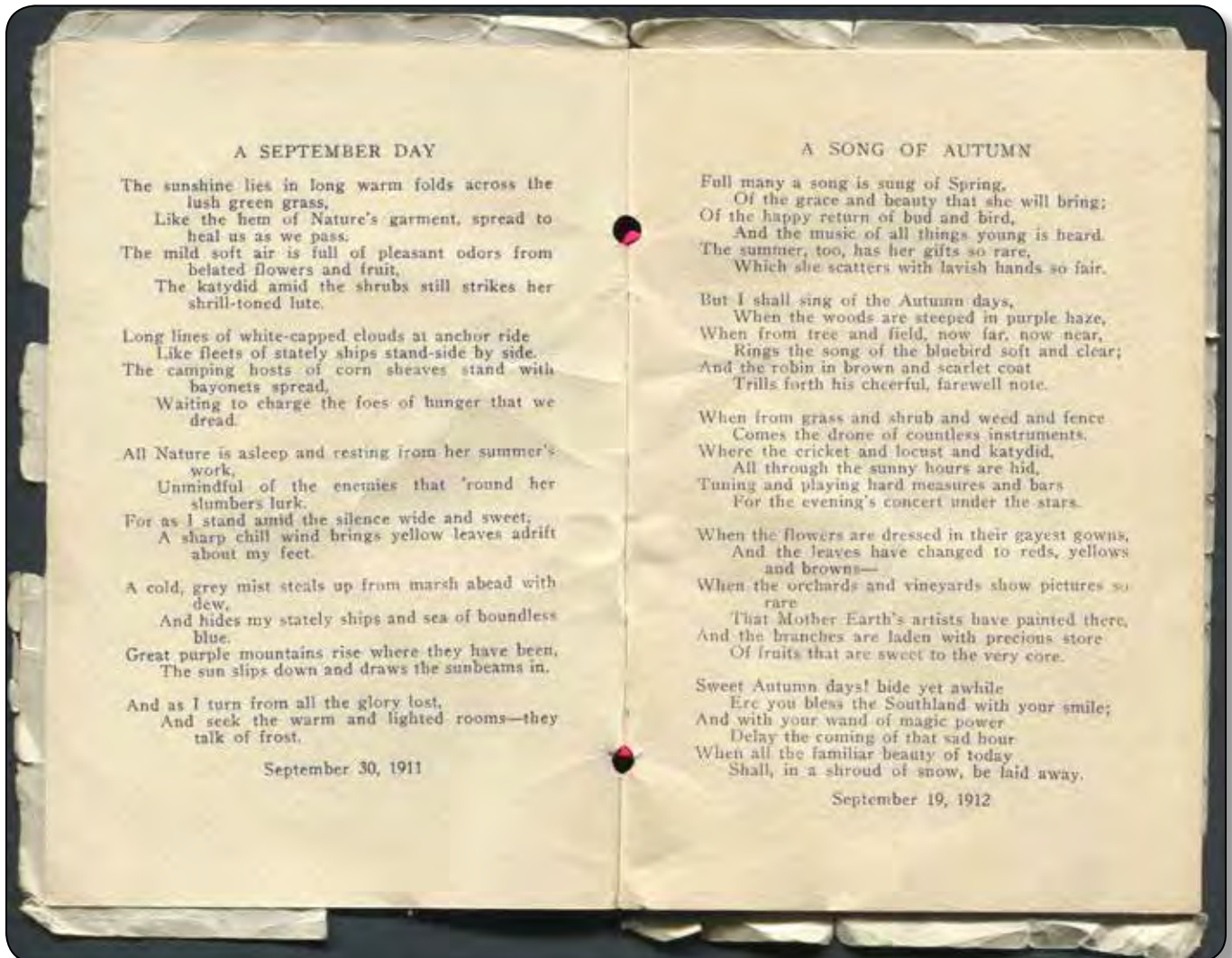
Wayside Thoughts, a book of Ohio poems published by Sheffield author Minnie May Brown (1946).



Minnie May Brown at her home on Murray Ridge, Elyria in 1907 (Eileen [Brown] Craven).



Two of Minnie Brown's children, Corinne Brown and Edward Brewster Brown, Sr. on Murray Ridge in 1908 (Eileen [Brown] Craven).



A September Day (September 1911) and *A Song of Autumn* (September 1912) by Minnie May Brown.

Peter A. Bungart (1876–1949)—renowned paleontologist and archaeologist

Peter Bungart was born and raised at the family farm on the banks of the Black River near the southern end of Root Road. The farm included a sizable island in the river where his father, Nicholas, grazed livestock and raised crops. Nicholas had a flat-bottomed scow with a cable arrangement that he used to ferry cows, pigs, horses, and farm implements from the river flats to the island. Although somewhat inconvenient to farm, the island had good pastureland and rich soil for crops. Sweet corn grew particularly well there. The stone foundation of a barn that once stood on the island can still be seen. Raymond Vietzen, a noted avocational archaeologist from Lorain County, tells of Peter's observation of a pig on the island. The pig constantly fished for fat mussels along the shore, typically with only its back showing out of the water. One could hear the pig crushing the shells and gulping down the soft parts. The pig eventually went blind and Peter attributed this to its long hours under water.

Peter Bungart was born in an eventful year—1876. The nation celebrated its Centennial in Philadelphia and Archibald Willard of Wellington, Ohio painted his famous Spirit of '76 (see illustration on page 299). It was also the year that Civil War General George Armstrong Custer and his U.S. Cavalry were annihilated by the Sioux Indians at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in Montana.

As a boy of eight years old, Peter tagged along with his father who was helping a paleontologist excavate some fossils along the riverbank. That man was Jay Terrell, legendary Ohio fossil collector searching for the remains of “giant placoderms” in the Devonian shale banks of the Black River on the Bungart farm.

This experience so impressed Peter that he knew geology was his calling. For the next 25 years he made a hobby of collecting fossils and familiarizing himself with the rocks and structure of the Earth, as well as hunting Indian relics, which prepared him for becoming a professional paleontologist. He was destined to become one of America's foremost paleontologists and win the respect and admiration of scientists throughout the world.

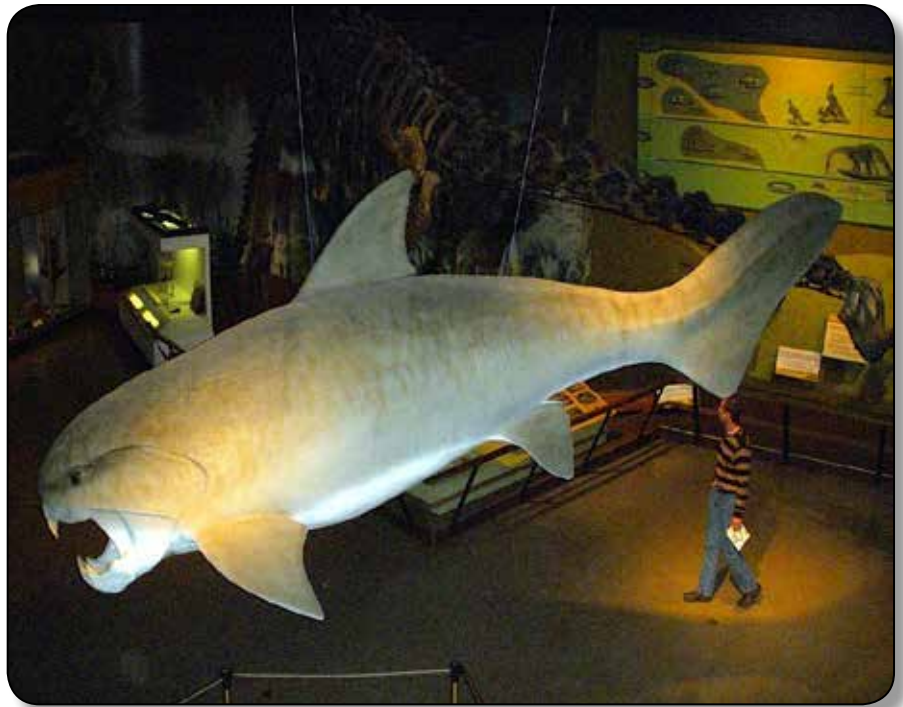
In his early years, in addition to his farm duties, Peter went to work at the Lorain shipyards where he excelled as a ship's carpenter. It was then that he courted and wooed a young schoolteacher, Margie Brown, who taught in the Sheffield Township District No. 1 School near the Burrell homestead. They wed and settled in Lorain. The devastating tornado of 1924 destroyed their home, but they were unharmed. Every hour Peter could find away from farm work and the carpentry trade, was spent in prospecting and



Peter Bungart collecting Devonian fish fossils from the Ohio Shale, deposited 365 million years ago (Case Western Reserve University).

collecting. The earlier collections were sometimes sold which made him known to the scientific community. In 1915, he was commissioned by the Canadian government to investigate the fossil assemblage of Alberta. Peter's big break came in 1923 when the newly organized Cleveland Museum of Natural History offered him full-time employment in paleontology.

He entered this profession with a breath of experience and perfection of technique in reassembling fossil animals never before attained by any collector of Devonian fossils in Ohio. During the succeeding 25 years, until his retirement in 1947, Peter Bungart amassed a collection of Devonian fossil fish, which is nowhere exceeded in number or quality of preparation. Giant armored fish and primitive sharks that swam in the waters of the great Devonian inland sea, which covered northern Ohio 365 million years ago, were familiar creatures to him.



*A life-sized, 20-foot-long model of *Dunkleosteus terrelli* at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.*



Fieldstone column built by Peter Bungart at 38960 Detroit Road in Avon.

Because of Peter's enthusiasm and skill in finding obscure fossils in the rock in which they were embedded, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History owns the finest collection of these forms in the world. His most outstanding discoveries were made on the banks of the Black River in Lorain and Sheffield, and on the Rocky River in the Cleveland Metropolitan Park.

In his honor, and in recognition of his contributions toward the advancement of knowledge of the fossil fish fauna of Ohio, one of the rarest of these ancient armored fish, which he discovered, was named in his honor—*Bungartius perissus*. It represents not only a new species, but a new genus as well. The only two known specimens in the world are in the collections of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Peter Bungart died on July 29, 1949 in Lorain's St. Joseph Hospital and was buried at Ridgehill Cemetery in Amherst.



Bungart Island in the Black River near the Lorain-Sheffield Village border was part of the Bungart farm in the late 1800s.

Harriet Root (1885-1975)—a life of humanitarian service in war and peace

Harriet Root was a remarkable woman. Born in Sheffield on August 27, 1885, her life and career accomplishments can serve as an inspiration to all. For 68 years she dedicated her life to unselfish service to her community and to her country. On her 80th birthday, Rich Bloom of the *Lorain Journal* interviewed Harriet. When asked how she decided to undertake a career of service, she reflected, *I guess I became interested in community work while I was a senior at Wellesley College and taking a course on immigration. We would go down to the port of Boston to talk with the many immigrants coming to the United States.* From these conversations, she found within her the desire to help others whenever and wherever it was needed.

Harriet traced her family history back to the early 17th century: *In the 1630s my ancestors got in trouble in England and it was a case of either getting their heads chopped off or leaving the country. They chose the latter. The Roots, along with other families, left their home in Sheffield, England and began the tedious journey which ended with the founding of Sheffield Village near French Creek.* Her branch of the Root family had one more step to go before the journey was finally completed. They moved closer to the lake. At the foot of Root Road, her grandfather, William Henry Root (1803-1889), built a grand Greek Revival-style home in 1850. Her father, Orville Root (1837-1919), was raised in this house as was Harriet, who lived there all of her life except when she was on missions of mercy throughout the world.

When Harriet was 9 years old, Tom Johnson constructed the first steel mill on the Black River on land annexed by Lorain from Sheffield Township. At the same time Lorain also annexed a portion of Sheffield along the Lake Erie shore, extending from about Kansas Avenue eastward to Root Road, leaving the Root homestead just inside Sheffield. Then in 1920 Lorain acquired an additional 330 feet east of Root Road—thus, Harriet's home was no longer in Sheffield and she became a resident of the City of Lorain.

Harriet's charity work began in 1907 after she graduated from Wellesley College. Returning home, she started a sewing class for daughters of steel mill workers in South Lorain, teaching over 100 girls how to sew. Soon after she started a settlement house—an institution in Lorain's inner-city providing educational, recreational, and other social services to underprivileged residents of the community. In 1910 she joined Associated Charities, Lorain's first formal welfare organization, which was founded that year. When the first rumblings of war in Europe were heard, Harriet lost no time in starting a class in surgical dressings. During this time Harriet was also busy managing the 120-acre family grain and stock farm on the lakeshore.



Portrait of Harriet Root in the 1920s (David Hibbard).

When World War I came, Harriet went to France with the Wellesley unit of the Red Cross. She served 18 months in Bordeaux caring for displaced refugees and wounded service men. She recalled, *In France we worked with refugees in trying to keep the families together and finding a place for them to live. Later we were transferred to an American Army evacuation point just outside Bordeaux to aid injured soldiers in adjusting to their return to the United States.*

After the war, she returned home and was named secretary of the Lorain Chapter of the American Red Cross. In 1924 she played an outstanding role in the rehabilitation of Lorain following the devastating tornado of June 28th. This work gained her a national reputation, resulting in her appointment on the National Disaster Staff of the Red Cross. She served in several major disasters, including Mississippi River floods, Florida hurricanes, the California dam tragedy, Midwest tornados, and the Kentucky drought.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, Harriet helped distribute food to the needy and organized women of the community in canning and preserving thousands of jars of fruits and vegetables. As times improved, Harriet spearheaded a beautification program in Lorain by chairing the Lilac Tree Committee and she was instrumental in the original Rose Garden at Lakeview Park. Modesty was one of Harriet's outstanding characteristics. When given the *Lorain Journal* "Best Citizen Award" in 1931 for her work during the Depression, she didn't think she deserved it.

Washington, D.C. recognized Harriet's abilities. Representatives of President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked her to direct the newly founded U.S. Government



Lorain High School graduation photograph of Harriet Maria Root (June, 1903).

Information Service in 1934. The office started as a few upstairs rooms, but under Harriet's leadership it grew so rapidly that a whole building was constructed to house the agency. As World War II raged in the Pacific, she traveled to Australia and New Zealand to set up U.S. Information Libraries to help their citizens better understand America. One of the interesting aspects of the job was advising foreign war brides what life is like in the United States and preparing them for the transition. She remained in Australia for three years, where she also helped Jewish refugee families find new homes when the war ended.

Returning home in 1946, Harriet jumped back into civic activities without taking a breather. She was an active member of the Community Chest, United Appeal, YWCA, and Salvation Army, to which she was named a life board member in 1963. In 1967 Lorain's Quota Club as its "Woman of the Year" honored her. Although her seemingly perpetual reservoir of energy was somewhat curtailed when she entered her eighties, Harriet continued to spend much of her time reading, entertaining guests, and keeping abreast of current issues. Harriet Root died on February 28, 1975 in St. Joseph Hospital at age 89. She is buried in the Root Family Plot in Garfield Cemetery in Sheffield Village.



Harriet Root, director of the U.S. Library of Information in Australia during World War II, advises Australian women, recently married to U.S. servicemen, about their new homes in America.

Isaac “Burrell” Hecock (1895-1912)—hero of Niagara Falls

The Burrell family has long had an affinity for Niagara Falls. In June 1815, when Captain Jabez Burrell and Captain John Day made their initial journey to Ohio to select lots for themselves and friends, they stopped to admire the torrent of water issuing from Lake Erie. A year later when Jabez escorted his family from Massachusetts to their new home in Sheffield, he again made his way up the Niagara Escarpment to oversee the portage of the little schooner *Fire Fly* with his household goods and farm equipment around the Falls. He was delighted to show his wife Polly and their eight children—Julia, Sarah Marie, Robbins, Lyman John, Solome, Jabez Lyman, Eliza, and Mary Ann—this natural wonder before they boarded the schooner *Black Snake* at Buffalo for the voyage up Lake Erie, in tandem with the *Fire Fly*, to the mouth of the Black River.

Nearly a century later, a young lad by the name of Isaac Burrell Hecock (he went by his middle name), a great, great grandnephew of Jabez, exhibited a great heroism at the Falls in February 1912. The previous year Niagara Falls had frozen over completely. Most winters an ice bridge formed across the Niagara River below the Falls. Visitors, as well as local residents, thought it safe to venture out onto the ice. That year the ice bridge was huge, thick, and solid permitting people to cross the entire width of the river from New York to Ontario on its surface rather than using the international bridges located downstream. However, under the ice the Niagara River still raged carrying an astounding 200,000 cubic feet of water per second toward the whirlpool and on to Lake Ontario.

*Isaac Burrell Hecock (1895-1912),
the hero of Niagara Falls.*



By noon on Sunday, February 4, 1912, about 35 people were standing on the ice bridge, which choked the river between the cataract of the Falls and the steel arches of the highway bridge. Suddenly a segment of the ice bridge that had been in place for the last three weeks broke from its shoring along the shore and shot down the river. On that piece of the ice bridge when it tore free from the American shore were eight individuals—Eldridge and Clara Stanton, a young couple from Toronto; Ignatius “Iggy” Roth and Burrell Hecock, both 17 from Cleveland; and William “Red” Hill, Monroe Gilbert, William LaBlond, and an Italian fellow, all from Niagara Falls, New York. Not all of them would survive!

Eldridge Stanton, a stationer, was 32 years old and his wife Clara was 28. The couple had been married for six years and lived at 247 Huron Street in Toronto. They had come to Niagara Falls twice each year—once in the summer and once in the winter since being married. They had arrived at the Falls on Friday for a winter weekend visit. They strolled hand in hand as they crossed the ice field.

Just before the break, Red Hill was in the process of setting up a little refreshment stand that he built every year near the American shore as soon as the ice was thick enough. Burrell and Iggy were throwing snowballs and playing leapfrog. Hill unexpectedly felt a small tremor under his feet and at the same time a loud groaning sound could be heard over the roar of the distant cascade—it came from the base of the Falls. When Hill heard the grinding and crashing of the ice, he ran at top speed

toward the Canadian shore, shouting at the others to follow him. LaBlond yelled that safety lay in that direction. Gilbert and the Italian followed their lead, with Burrell and Iggy right behind; but the Stantons became confused. By the time they regained their composure the ice floe was moving fast down the river toward the treacherous whirlpool.

Eldridge and Clara turned back and ran toward the American shore. The ice bridge began heaving up and down as the grinding sound became louder—the bridge was scraping along the shore. When the Stantons neared the American shore, they suddenly stopped a stone’s throw away as the ice separated from the shore and icy water appeared where solid ice had been a moment earlier. The gap widened. The Stantons stood frozen in shock before turning and racing for the Canadian shore. As they ran, Clara slowed and stumbled to the ice from exhaustion within 50 yards of the Canadian shoreline. Eldridge tried unsuccessfully to lift his wife as the ice field around him began to move. He took hold of Clara’s coat and attempted to drag her, shouting for help to the men ahead. The rocky shore appeared to be moving—they were adrift. Clara, her face on the ice and utterly spent, uttered, *I can’t go on, I can’t go, then Let us die here.*

At the same time, driven by a southwest gale and the power of roaring water, the ice jam at the base of the Horseshoe Falls also broke free from its anchorage sending a mighty torrent down the river. As Eldridge strove to get his wife to her feet, he again called for help. Burrell and Iggy were the closest. Burrell stopped, while Iggy scrambled over the hummocks of ice, getting close to an open stretch of water at the Canadian end of the ice jam. He could see men on the shore ready to give him assistance. William LaBlond was waist deep in the icy water holding on to a rope. With help from Red Hill and Harry King (Superintendent of the Ontario Power Company) Iggy was half carried, half dragged to safety on the Canadian shore.



Frozen Niagara Falls and ice bridge over the Niagara River in 1912. Burrell Hecock (center) and his friend Iggy Roth (right) enjoy the excitement of crossing the river on the ice just before the ice bridge collapsed (drawing by Leda Miller 2012).

The men on the shore shouted for Burrell to jump to safety. He heard their cries, but turned and rushed toward the Stantons in a desperate attempt to save them.

Burrell reached the Stantons and helped Eldridge lift Clara to her feet. Together they tried to get Clara to the Canadian shore, but the watery gap was quickly widening. “Can’t you make it?” Iggy called from the shore. “It’s too wide,” Burrell shouted back, then added, “Don’t tell my mother.” The three were now stranded as the ice raft flowed rapidly downstream. The ice sheet was swinging wildly as the three unwilling voyagers paced back and forth, not knowing what action to take.

Observers on the shore could see Clara holding Eldridge’s hand while the men appeared to be conversing. As they passed beneath the first of three bridges spanning the Niagara Gorge, the ice sheet seem to edge toward the American shore. However, immediately downstream the pressure from the discharge of the American hydroelectric station crumbled the edge of the ice forcing the three to run to the opposite side of the floe. Next the giant ice sheet broke into two pieces—one drifted toward the American shore and the other on which Burrell and the Stantons stood remained mid-stream. Luck was not on their side—the first half grounded against the American shore.

Being alerted to the crisis, on each of the lower bridges (Cantilever and Lower Steel Arch Bridges, located almost 1,000 feet apart), fireman, policemen, and railway workers from both sides of the border had stationed themselves in order to lower ropes to those stranded as they passed underneath. A quarter of a mile above the whirlpool rapids, the ice floe on which the three were borne once again broke into two sections, each about 200 square feet, the Stantons on one and Burrell on the other. As they neared the first of the lower bridges, Eldridge was seen to place his arm around Clara’s waist.

Burrell waved and shouted something. Eldridge returned the salute, but Clara simply crouched down beside her husband. Burrell waved his hand to his companions in distress as his floe moved clear of theirs, caught in the current, and raced down the river. The Stanton’s floe then shot toward the American

shore, and was caught in an eddy and whirled there for some five minutes. This was within sight of the tumbling waters that marked the beginning of the rapids—and death!

Burrell saw the ropes dangling from the Cantilever Bridge and made ready to catch one. On the tossing floe, very coolly he took off his overcoat and positioned himself to grasp a lifeline. In his course dangled one rope and a second was moving toward him. Burrell reached for the rope being held by Officer Pat Kelly of the Ontario Police Force, backed up by a company of some 20 railway men—he caught it and jumped free of the ice.

The sag in the rope lowered 200 feet from the bridge let Burrell fall into the icy water up to his waist where he was frightfully battered by three successive floes of jagged ice. Not content with the efforts of the men above to draw him up, he tried to assist himself by climbing hand over hand up the rope. The time was now 1 o’clock, and the boy had been on the ice for more than an hour—the exertion and the effects of the icy dunking had sapped his strength. He stopped trying to pull himself up and hung limp on the rope, which spun him around like a top. Kelly and his men pulled steadily, 10 feet, 20 feet, 30 feet—up he came.

The great crowd on the bridge cheered—those that were not weeping. Grimly Burrell hung on, trying always to get himself or his leg wound around the rope. Then his hands began to slip. He sought to get hold of the rope with his teeth, but could not. Finally, just as he was about 60 feet clear of the water his head fell back. Utterly spent, he lost his grip and plunged far down into the torrent. When Burrell surfaced, his face was turned toward the great wave of the rapids ahead. He feebly moved his arm in a breaststroke, but the mighty rush of the water was too much for him. For a moment, Burrell’s body bobbed like a cork as he was sent racing into the midst of the seething waters. He was in view for perhaps half a minute, and then disappeared in the spume.



View of the Whirlpool Rapids (September 2013). Here, Burrell Hecock and the Stantons were swept to their death in February 1912.

The Stantons had watched Burrell's valiant attempts. Eldridge witnessed his failure, but Clara dared not look. Eldridge appeared calm as he, in turn, prepared to make a play against death. As their floe swirled under the Cantilever Bridge, Eldridge quickly grabbed the nearest rope and looped it around Clara's waist. As the floe continued the rope became taut, but the force of the current was too much for the rope and it broke apart. Eldridge waved the ragged torn end toward the crowd.

There was still another chance. Eldridge grabbed another rope as they swept underneath the Lower Steel Arch Bridge. He was given slack from the Niagara Avenue firemen above. Again, he valiantly tied the rope around his wife's waist. With hands numbed by the cold, he fumbled in his agonizing effort. The rush of the ice in the torrent was overpowering and the rope slipped through his hands. Eldridge raised Clara to her feet, kissed her, and clasped her in his arms. Clara gave the impression of crossing herself and then sank to her knees. Eldridge knelt beside her, his arms clasped close about her. Together they went to their death. The floe remained intact until it reached a giant wave in the rapids and spilled over throwing both into the raging water. They immediately disappeared from view.

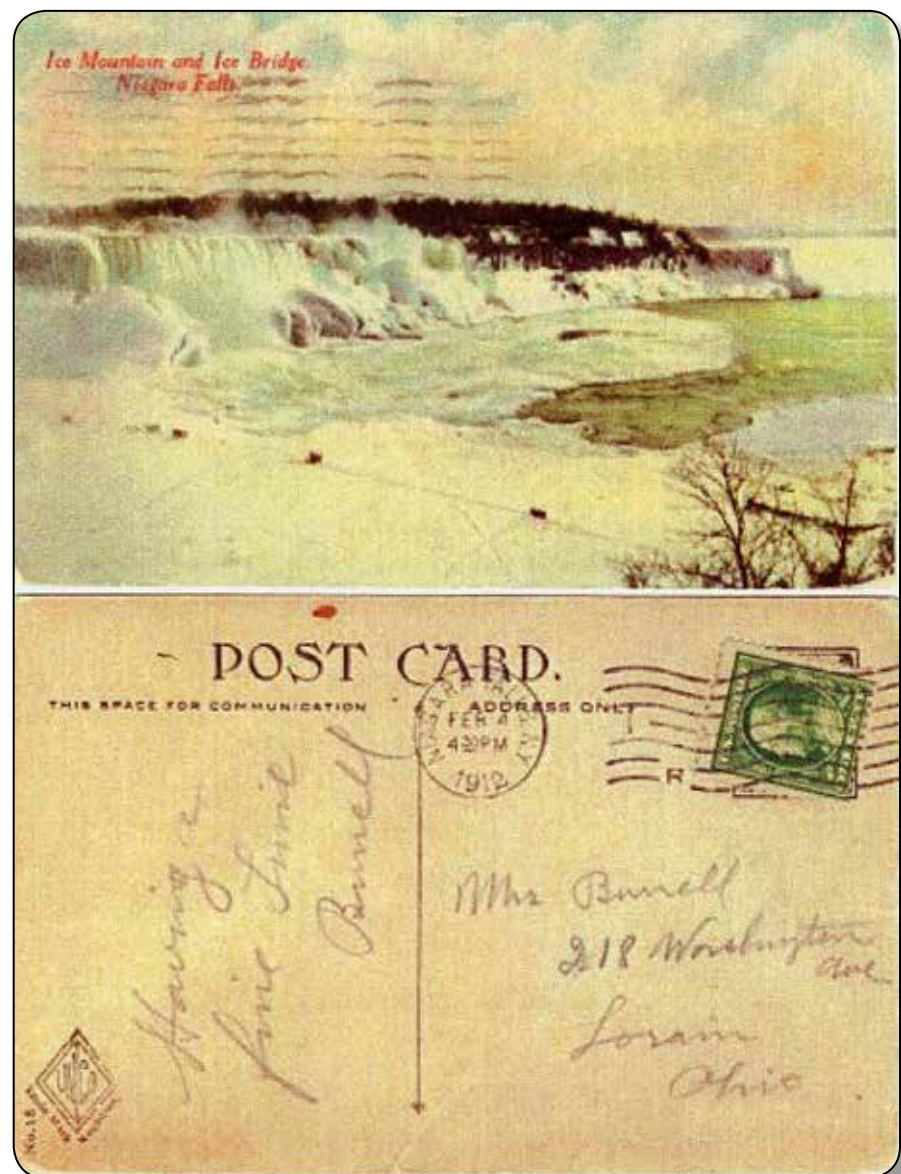
The direct cause of the breaking of the ice bridge was concluded to have been the impact of a free floe of ice from above Horseshoe Falls. The ice field at the base of the Falls disappeared along with the bridge. Eyewitnesses stated that it broke first, piling down on the upstream edge of the bridge with a terrific force producing a tremendous din—like the firing of a battery of artillery. That the ice bridge gave away on a severely cold day was a surprise, but it was the third bridge of that winter and only a week old—perhaps not enough time or quality of ice to form a substantial bridge. Years earlier, on January 22, 1899, an ice bridge went out in the very same manner—36 persons were caught out on the floe, but all safely escaped to the shore.

A family party had gathered by chance at young Burrell's home Saturday evening, the night before the tragedy.

His grandmother, Hannah Elizabeth Burrell of Sheffield was among those in the house. As Burrell had hurried down the steps of his home on East 177th Street, "Be careful," were the last words his mother called to him. A young friend, Harold Wilder, went to the station with the boys and waved his hand as Burrell and Iggy jumped aboard the car. Sunday morning, when the two got to the Falls, Burrell purchased a post card of the ice-covered Falls and dashed on it a quick note to his grandmother, Hannah Burrell—*Having a fine time*, and dropped it in a mail slot before venturing out onto the ice.

The family party, which sent Burrell off Saturday night, was still at the house when the news came. It was one of the rescuers that had saved Iggy who called the Hecock home on Sunday afternoon from Buffalo with the news that the boy had drowned. It was Burrell's father Harry who answered the telephone. He left on the afternoon train for Buffalo, but none of the bodies were ever recovered.

Burrell's companion and his friend, Iggy, who barely escaped death himself, returned to Cleveland by train the night of the tragedy. His mother had worried all day about her son. She later said she had a premonition that—*something would happen*.



Post Card from Niagara Falls mailed by Burrell Hecock to his grandmother, Hannah Burrell of Lorain, hours before the tragedy (Leda Miller).

BURRELL HECOCK'S SHEFFIELD LINEAGE

Generation 1. Isaac Burrell Hecock, the “Burrell” and hero of our story, was the great, great grandson of Sheffield pioneer Isaac Burrell (1779-1860) and Huldah [Callender] Burrell (1781-1864). Isaac, the youngest brother of Jabez Burrell (1767-1833), was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts and settled along the Black River at Sheffield, Ohio in February 1817.

Generation 2. In 1827, Isaac Burrell’s daughter Eunice (1805-1899) married Erastus Hecock (1793-1866), who had also settled at Sheffield, Ohio in June 1817. At first the Hecock family farmed along the Black River, where the steel plant now stands, and later moved their farm to the southwestern corner of Sheffield Township.

Generations 3 and 4. Their son, Isaac Burrell Hecock (1830-1908), was born there as was his son Harry L. Hecock (1869-1959). In 1893, Harry married Annabelle Burrell (1871-1944), granddaughter of Eunice Burrell’s brother, Hiram P. Burrell, and daughter of Isaac Hiram Burrell (1846-1910) and Hannah Elizabeth [Hall] Burrell (1849-1915).

Harry and Annabelle Hecock moved to Cleveland after their son and the subject of our story, Isaac Burrell Hecock (1895-1912), was born. Harry worked for the Cuyahoga Abstract Company. Their home was at 647 East 177th Street when the tragedy occurred. After Annabelle died in Cleveland on May 23, 1944, Harry moved back to Sheffield where he died on September 7, 1959.

Generation 5. Young Burrell Hecock, was a 17-year-old clerk in the Lake Shore Electric Railway offices in Cleveland. He had planned to go to Chicago that weekend, but when his pass to another division of the railroad did not arrive in time, he and his friend Ignatius “Iggy” Roth decided to go to Niagara Falls. Though no one could know it, that delay in receiving the pass sealed his fate!

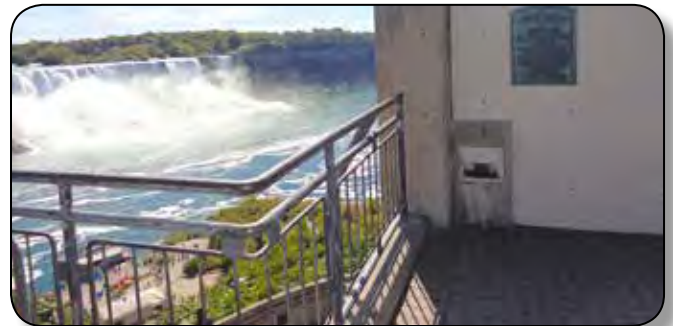


View of Niagara Falls (September 2013). The ice bridge of February 1912 was located a short distance upstream from this vantage point.

To recognize the bravery and selflessness of Burrell, at his church—Glenville Congregational Church at Eddy Road NW and St. Clair Avenue NE—a Bronze Tablet was erected that reads—

In Memory of Burrell Hecock—Born March 3, 1895—His chivalrous spirit arose to the cry of distress and he lost his life while heroically trying to save others at Niagara Falls—Sunday, February 4, 1912.

In September 2012, the author and his wife, Ricki, were visiting Niagara Falls and had taken a room for the night on the Canadian side. I mentioned that I had never had the chance to take the *Maid-of-the-Mist* steamer to the plunge pool under Horseshoe Falls. Ricki recalled that she hadn’t been on the boat since she was a little girl. My birthday was drawing near, so Ricki decided to treat me to a cruise the next morning. While we were waiting at the landing for the cruise to begin, we decided to climb a several-story observation tower at the ticket booth. Once at the top we noticed a prominent Bronze Tablet (shown below) that brought back a distant memory to me—one of my grandfather Root’s famous stories.



Observation tower above the *Maid-of-the-Mist* landing—here this bronze tablet honoring Burrell Hecock’s bravery has been placed.

Sterling Wood (1921-1940)—Brookside poet and Great Lakes seaman

Sterling Wood was only nineteen years old when a gale roared across Lake Michigan reaching its full force on November 11, 1940—*Armistice Day*—the day World War I had come to an end 22 years earlier. Sterling had graduated from Brookside High School in May, one of four students in his 1940 senior class that had attended Brookside since their first day of school. He had been accepted to Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea and had even been awarded a \$200 scholarship. To augment this award, he had taken a job with the Cleveland-based Interlake Steamship Company; all his earnings budgeted toward a college education. On that fateful day in November he was serving as a deckhand onboard the freighter *William B. Davock*.

The *William B. Davock* was built in 1907 at the Great Lakes Engineering Works of St. Clair, Michigan. She was a steam-powered, propeller-driven bulk freighter with a wood hull. Her original dimensions were 420 feet in length, 52 feet in width, 23 feet in depth, and 4,468 gross tonnage. From 1907 to 1915 the Vulcan Steamship Company of Cleveland, Ohio operated her. She was then acquired by Interlake Steamship Company. Over the winter of 1922-1923 she was reconstructed with a steel hull at Fairport, Ohio, reducing her gross tonnage to 4,220, but increasing her seaworthiness. On November 9, 1940 she left Erie, Pennsylvania with a full cargo of coal bound for Chicago, Illinois.

Sterling was born on September 1, 1921 and grew up on Pasadena Avenue in Sheffield Lake, Ohio. His father, Bertrand E. Wood, was born in 1879 and worked as a motorman on the Lake Shore Electric Railway. His mother, Jessie E. [née Flarity] Wood, was born in 1886. Sterling excelled at school, serving as President and Business manager of his class, Editor of the *Brookside Gazette* and *The Leader*, and was a member of the basketball team all four years of high school. He also participated in the Dramatic, Glee, and Latin Clubs. His classmates described him with this quote, *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding*, predicting that he would carry on work that the average person would find seemingly deep, researching the proverb, *The flight of time is caused by the spur of the moment*. Sterling looked forward to a career in journalism following graduation.

Senior classmate Harry Lloyd (1923-2013) formerly of Buckingham Drive in Avon remembered Sterling as being “very smart.” Harry recalled Sterling working on the lakes in the summer after graduation, but Harry was already in the Army Air Corps when the tragedy occurred. Knowing that he would likely soon be drafted, Harry volunteered for the Air Corps where he flew a P-47 Thunderbolt fighter/bomber on 60 missions supporting the British 8th Army in the battle to liberate Italy. Gladys [Jungbluth] Wisnieski, a underclassman when Sterling was a senior, remembers him as a very handsome young man.

What has come to be known as the “Armistice Day Storm,” started on November 8, 1940 as a tremendous low-pressure system off the Pacific coast of Washington. Fierce cyclonic

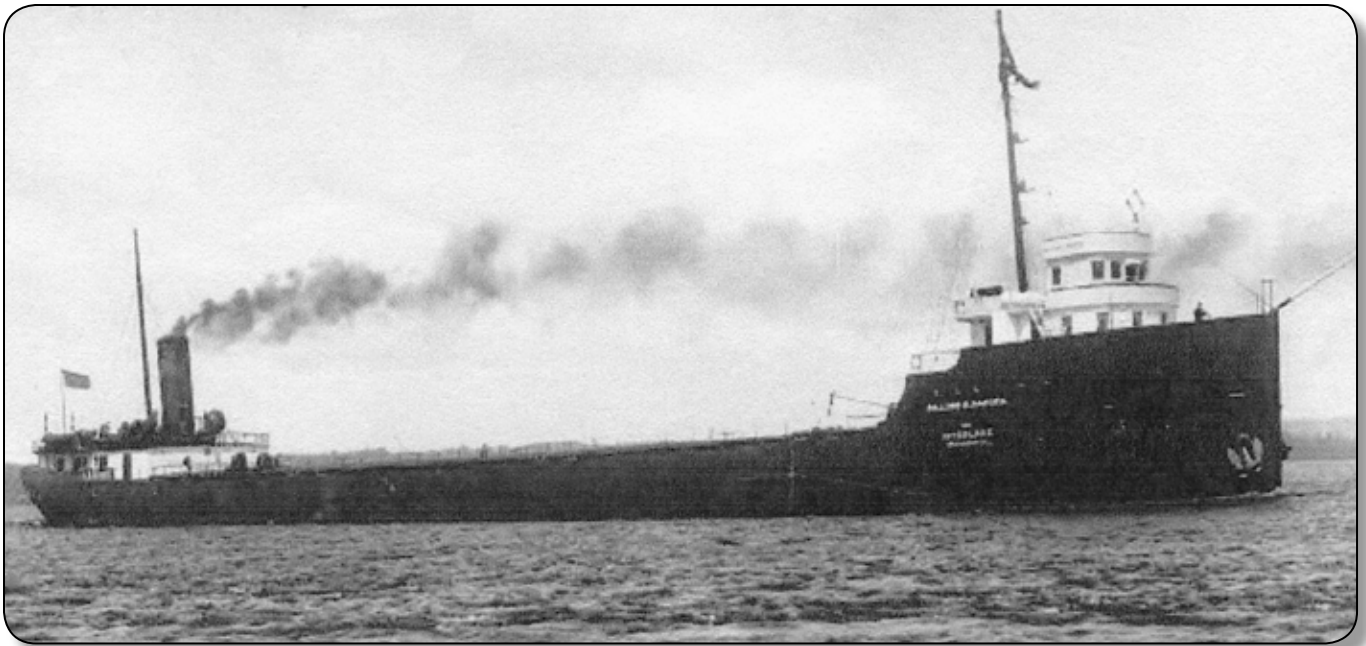
winds from this disturbance collapsed the Tacoma Narrows Bridge—frequently shown on television as an example of a dramatic bridge failure. U.S. Weather Bureau maps of the low pressure (see page 381) predicted the menacing forces of the storm. In Chicago, Armistice Day ceremonies were scuttled at the Loop as power lines and trees fell, chimneys collapsed, and signs were twisted in the wind. The level of Lake Michigan fell five feet as the water was pushed eastward, causing the Calumet River to reverse its flow back into the lake. In Wisconsin, duck hunters were caught unaware along the Fox River—50 of them froze to death in their blinds and boats.



Sterling Wood (1921-1940), The Leader, Brookside High School.

On Sunday November 10, 1940 the *Davock* steamed up Lake Huron. By noon on Monday November 11th she had passed Mackinaw City, in the Straits of Mackinaw and was heading down Lake Michigan with the Canadian freighter *Anna C. Minch* only four hours behind. The early morning was bright and sunny, but a deep cyclonic storm was brewing to the west. The full force of the storm, the most violent in decades, hit the east side of Lake Michigan with winds up to 125 miles per hour. The last reported position for the two steamers was at the Straits of Mackinaw. Neither ship was heard from again—both lost with all on board, 56 men, including young Sterling Wood.

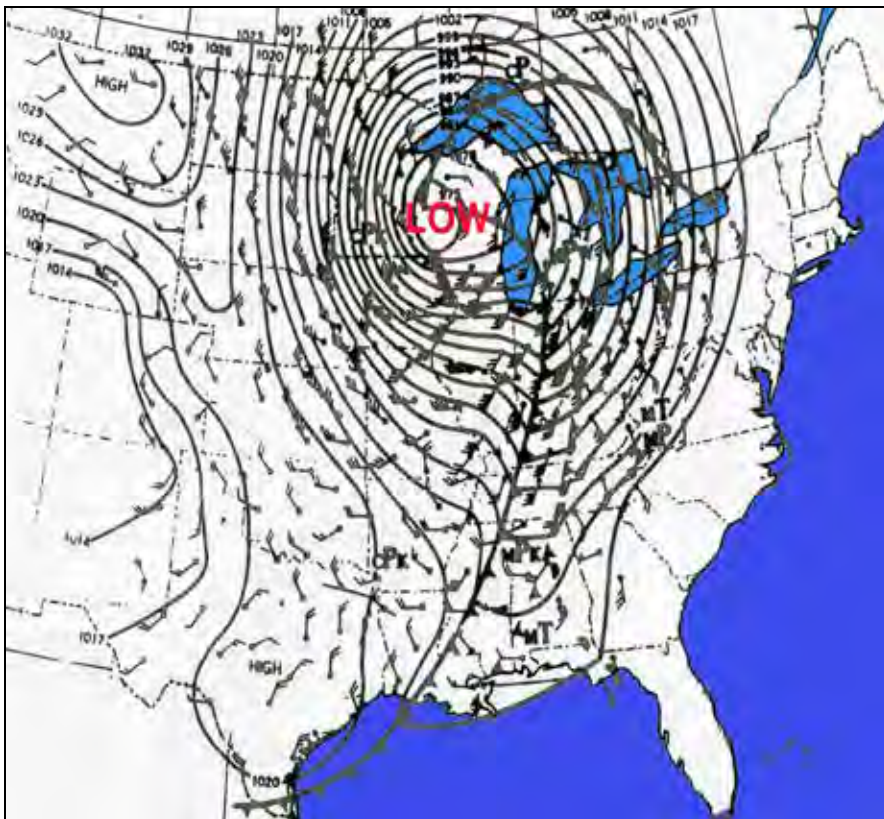
The struggle of these ships in the center of the storm can only be surmised—the ordeal must have been terrifying. They would have been tossed about violently, vision obscured by the falling snow and freezing waves that washed the decks. The pilothouses and cabins were likely demolished and swept away



William B. Davock, 420-foot-long Great Lakes freighter (Bowling Green State University, Historical Collections of the Great Lakes).

in the maelstrom, leaving the vessels unmanageable. Ultimately the ships may have been broken as seams split open, causing the vessels to founder in the mountainous waves. As the storm abated, the owners of the 40 freighters, ferries, and fishing tugs that were known to be plying Lake Michigan during the storm awaited word from their ships. A few had washed ashore and one by one they were accounted for, all but the *William B. Davock* and the *Anna C. Minch*.

Three days after the storm, near Pentwater, Michigan a spar protruding out of the water was sighted and divers confirmed that it was the bow section of the *Anna C. Minch* in 35 feet of water, only 400 feet from the shore. The divers reported a gaping hole, 20 feet in length on her port side near the bow, with plates curved inward. Some surmised that the prow of the *William B. Davock* cut the hole there during the height of the storm. Years later, the stern section was found farther offshore, but maritime historians would have to wait another 32 years to learn the fate of the *Davock*.



U.S. Weather Bureau synoptic map of the extreme low-pressure storm on the afternoon of November 11, 1940 that overwhelmed Lake Michigan.

In the spring of 1941, the U.S. Lake Survey of the Army Corps of Engineers swept the lake bottom between Ludington and Little Sable Point to determine if the wreck of the *William B. Davock* was also a menace to navigation. This was done by submerging a long horizontal wire with heavy weights (supported on the surface with floats), then drawing it through the water at a specific depth. If any portion of the submerged wire struck an obstruction, the float immediately above it would be disturbed and a signal flag on a float would be deployed marking the location. No trace of the wreck was found, despite exhaustive searches along the Lake Michigan shore and nearshore lake bottom.

For years the theory was largely accepted that the *Davock* had collided with the *Minch*, which sank the same day in the same area. In 1972, the wreck of the *William B. Davock* was found some seven miles off Little Sable, Michigan. The wreck, lying upside down was located by sonar in 205 feet of water. Divers exploring the wreck could find no evidence of a collision. Maritime historians, such as David Swayze, now conclude that given the condition of the bow and the separation of the wrecks, the *Davock* did not collide with the steamer *Anna C. Minch* as was long thought to have occurred.

Sadly, the lifeless men of the *Davock* and the *Minch* were not long in finding their way ashore. Among the eleven bodies of *Davock* crewmen found on the beach near Pentwater, Michigan, was Sterling Wood and his friend James Saunders. Another crewman, wheelsman Andy Stiffler, had apparently given his jacket to Sterling, which he was still wearing when discovered on the shore. Sterling's body was brought back to Ohio and he was buried in Sheffield's Garfield Cemetery on November 16, 1940. Within the next eight years, both of Sterling's parents passed away and they are buried next to him in the historic

graveyard on North Ridge. Sterling's younger brother, John Bernard "Woody" Wood (1923-2011) graduated from Brookside High School in 1942 and enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving in Europe during World War II. As a private first class, he was in the second wave of troops who landed on the Normandy beaches. He was awarded three bronze stars for bravery. Woody was laid to rest in January 2011, with full military rites, next to his brother Sterling in Garfield Cemetery



Sterling Wood's gravestone in Garfield Cemetery, Sheffield Village.

The 1941 senior class dedicated *The Leader* to the memory of Sterling Wood with the following passage:

Our cherished and lasting possession is the memory of days spent with Sterling here at Brookside. His eager face and sunny smile will always be an inspiration to us. Our walls will never lose the echo of his voice, nor our hearts the beauty of his noble, willing spirit. He was our friend and classmate and we loved him. He is a portion of the loveliness which he once made lovely, and our lives are fuller and richer for having known him.

The Leader memorial also contained an original poem by Sterling Wood.

Trees;

Tall oaks

Bereft of leaves;

Gray sky overhead.

Streamlets covered with ice

Like the shell of a turtle;

All nature lying sleeping, dormant;

Rabbits and woodchucks hopping through fields

Blanketed with downy cotton, heaven-sent;

Curling ribbons smoke from chimneys tall,

And wind their ways into the sky.

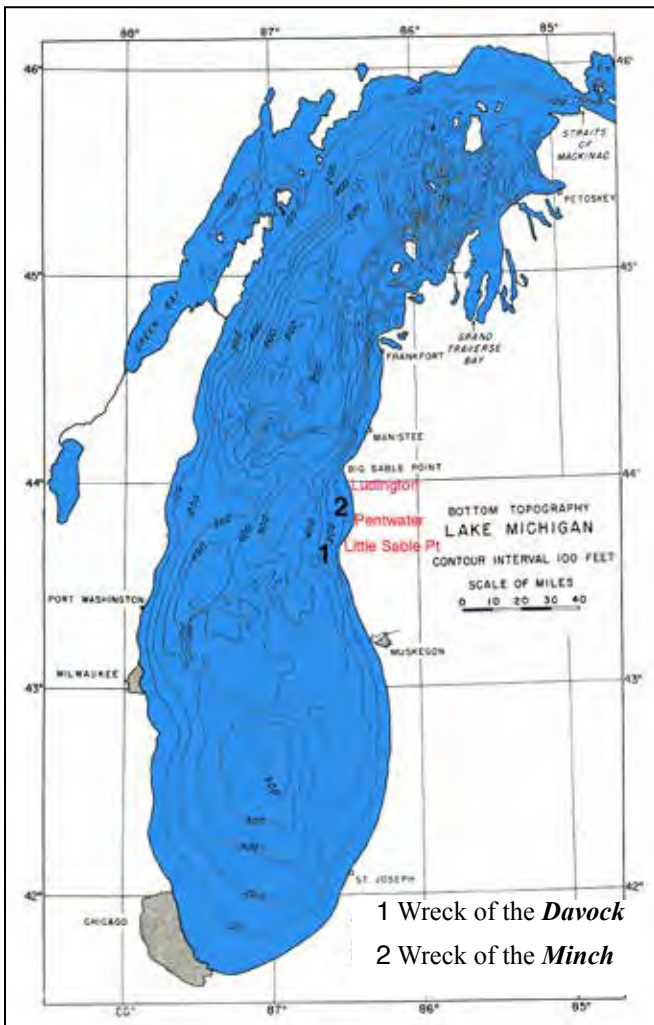
A sparrow flits about

Seeking a crust.

Dusk, with its

Chill winds—

Winter.



U.S. Lake Survey, Army Corps of Engineers bottom topography map of Lake Michigan showing the locations of the wrecks of the William B. Davock and the Anna C. Minch.

Bruce DiVaccaro—master decoy carver and nature photographer

Master decoy carver. Sheffield is fortunate to have a master waterfowl carver living in Sheffield Village. A native of New Jersey, Bruce DiVaccaro carved his first decoy in 1982 while a student at Clemson University in South Carolina. Since that time Bruce has carved dozens of duck decoys and shore birds, becoming very proficient at his craft and winning some 25 major awards at regional and national competitions. Eight of the awards are for Best of Show. Bruce and his wife Sue [Klingshirn] and their daughter Stephany live on Linda Lane where Bruce has a well-equipped workshop off the back of their home.

Bruce still has his first carving, which he claims is a “terrible rendition of a Mallard,” but this author thought it was a remarkable first effort in the incredibly painstaking process of carving and painting a finished product. For competition, the decoys even need to float at just the right depth and not lean to one side or another. To accomplish this, Bruce attaches a wooden keel to the bottom of each decoy that encases lead of the proper weight to make the decoy appear “life-like” in the water.



Bruce DiVaccaro in his workshop on Linda Lane.

After college, Bruce put his carving aspirations aside until 1990—while he and Sue were on their honeymoon at Cape Cod they ventured into shops displaying antique decoys and his interest in carving was renewed. A few years later Bruce learned about the Ohio Decoy Carvers & Collectors Association’s annual March decoy show and competition at the Holiday Inn in Westlake, Ohio. As it turns out, the Westlake show is one of the top competitions in the nation. Bruce attended the show in 1993 and learned much about the art of decoy carving and the suppliers of carving materials. By 1998, Bruce was ready to enter the Association’s competition and in 2000 he won his first Amateur Level Best of Show in San Bernardino, California. After several awards at the Amateur Level, he advanced to the Open Level where his awards continued in several categories, including: (1) Contemporary Hunting Decoys, (2) Traditional



Bruce holds his first decoy, a male Mallard carved in 1982.

Hunting Decoys, (3) Pickleweed Heads, and (4) Shorebirds. Interestingly, decoys of non-sport species are often used with hunting decoys as “confidence decoys” to help attract target species.

To carve a duck decoy, Bruce typically starts with a block of basswood or tupelo about 20 inches long, 8 inches wide, and 4 inches high. For small shorebirds the blocks are proportionally smaller. On the block he sketches a side view and top view of the bird he wishes to carve. The sketches come from his own observations or photographs, supplemented by illustrations from the many waterfowl books and other sources in his library. Bruce approaches carving like an engineer, paying particular attention to proportions and fine details. He cuts out the rough shape on a band saw, and then he uses a variety of power carving tools to round out the features. On some decoys he uses a small comb-like device to texture the basecoat of paint to resemble the feathers on the duck’s back. Bruce admits that for him, the final paint process is the most difficult, but the results are spectacular.

Bruce is employed as a project manager for an area concrete contractor, thus carving decoys is purely an avocational pursuit for him. He gets to spend about an hour each night and more time on weekends with his carving. At this rate he averages about two to three decoys per year. When I arrived to interview Bruce, he was kind enough to have a dozen or so of his prized decoys setting out for display. In addition to local ducks, several



An exquisite pair of Pintail ducks (female left and male right).



A collection of decoys carved by Bruce: (left to right) Pacific Brant, female Pintail, male Black Scoter, male Redhead, female and male Northern Shoveler, male Pintail, male Lesser Scaup, and Eared Grebe (front row).

were West Coast species and shorebirds, demonstrating Bruce’s diversity of interest in water birds. To name a few, they included a Barrow’s Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*), Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*), Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*), Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*), Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), Redhead (*Aythya americana*), and Pacific Brant (a sea goose, *Branta bernicla nigricans*). Bruce has kept most of his carvings, but a few have been sold at prices ranging from \$500 to \$750. Considering the time and skill required to produce these elegant replicas of nature—what a bargain! One of Bruce’s recent carvings, a Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) is a rather rare shorebird in our area. The illustration of the carving also shows a photograph Bruce had taken to use as a model for the carving. In 2009 Bruce entered the carving in the Ward World Championship competition at Ocean City, Maryland. His Plover was awarded “Best of Show” for the Smoothie Shorebird & Wading Birds Division. For the following year, Bruce’s Plover was on display in the Ward Museum of Waterfowl Art in Salisbury, Maryland. This museum has the most comprehensive collection of wildfowl carvings in the world, ranging from art sculptures to working decoys used by hunters.



A Black-bellied Plover in the process of being carved.



This female Northern Shoveler demonstrates the detail needed to produce life-like decoys.



Carved Black-bellied Plover compared with a photograph of a live bird.



Bruce proudly displays his carving of a Black Scoter.

Several years ago Bruce was given a gift of a framed print of the U.S. Department of the Interior's 2002-2003 Migratory



Print of Federal Duck Stamp for 2002-2003—Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) by artist Joseph Hautman.

Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp—a Black Scoter by artist Joseph Hautman of Minnesota. The acrylic painting depicts a drake Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) flanked by three females. This duck, which is a rare migrant and winter visitor to our area, was so admired by Bruce that he made an exquisite carving of this waterfowl. The comparison of the artist's print and Bruce's carving is remarkable.



Black Scoter decoy carved by Bruce DiVaccaro.



Best in Division Certificate awarded to Bruce DiVaccaro at the 39th Annual Ward World Championship competition (April 2009) for his carving of a Black-bellied Plover.

Nature photographer. Taking photos of birds he would like to carve is how Bruce got into nature photography. His captivating photograph of a Black-capped Chickadee won the Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp Photo Contest sponsored by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife. The contest, which is open to Ohio residents only, saw 58 Ohioans enter 144 photos. The judging was done at Geneva State Park during the 5th Annual Wildlife Diversity Partners Conference in August 2012.



Bruce DiVaccaro's award winning photograph of a Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapilla*) taken in Sheffield Village. The Ohio Division of Wildlife selected Bruce's entry as the winning photo in its Fourth Annual Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp Contest.



In critiquing Bruce's entry, the judges noted, *It all came together well—a beautiful bird, pine cone added an interesting element, the lighting was good, and a nice clean background.* Ohio Senator Gayle L. Manning, 13th Senatorial District presented Bruce with a certificate for "Outstanding Achievement" from the State of Ohio Senate in honoring him for his award stating,

You have worked tirelessly to develop your special skills of expression, and you have touched, inspired, and gained the esteem of countless individuals.

On March 1, 2013 the Ohio Division of Wildlife put the 2013 Wildlife Legacy Stamp on sale for \$15. Scott Zody, Chief of the Division, said that \$14 of every stamp sold would be invested in the state's Wildlife Diversity Fund to support habitat restoration, wildlife research, restoration of endangered species, and wildlife education. On a personal note, Chief Zody commented that, *Each year I am in awe of the talented wildlife photographers that enter this contest—it is a great way to inform Ohioans about the need for funding wildlife conservation.* This was the fourth year of the contest, the first three years were won by entries for: 2010—Baltimore Oriole (Russell Reynolds of Lima), 2011—Easter Amberwing Dragonfly (Sharon Cummings of Graytown), and 2012—Spotted Salamander (Nina Harfmann of Pleasant Plain).

Many of Bruce's hundreds of wildlife photographs were taken in the backyard of his home on Linda Lane, where he lives with his wife Sue and daughter Stephany. Bruce says, *To get good images of birds one has to be very patient, often hours waiting in a blind for just the right shot.* He uses a number of different ways to attract birds, but food is the best. *As they come in to feed, sometimes they will land on a branch, pine cone, or other natural object before they feed—that is when I snap their picture,* he noted.

That's how he captured the winning Chickadee photo in his backyard in the winter of 2011-2012 winter with his Cannon 7D camera and camouflaged 600 mm lens. He was hidden in his blind in the afternoon as the Chickadee landed on the pine branch where Bruce had placed it

above a cup of seeds. When the sun is low in the sky, the lighting is perfect. Photographers call this the “golden time” because of the brilliant yellow tones on their subjects. Everything was just right and Bruce snapped the three images he submitted, including the winning one.

Bruce and his family have traveled widely throughout the United States taking nature photographs. He particularly enjoyed a family vacation in Yellowstone National Park where he had an opportunity to photograph birds as well as elk, bears, and mountain sheep. The big mammals were exciting, but here in Sheffield he is just as pleased with a photo he took of a black



Bruce's Canon 7D camera and camouflaged 600 mm lens.

squirrel on a tree in his backyard. Bruce doesn't think he will venture into the realm of human portraits, however. He tried to take the senior high school picture of his daughter Stephany, but it just wasn't the same. He admitted, “It's so different and very frustrating. If she was a bird I'd know exactly what to do!”

Bruce, a long-time family member of the Sheffield Village Historical Society, was kind enough to not only allow the author to include his winning photograph in this book, but he has shared 28 other bird images, all taken in Sheffield Village or near by areas, that I am pleased to present on the following pages. Congratulations to Bruce DiVaccaro for his accomplishments.



Bruce demonstrates the camera set-up for his backyard photographs.



*Black Squirrel, a melanistic phase of the Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), photographed by Bruce DiVaccaro in his backyard.*



*Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) photographed in Wyoming by Bruce DiVaccaro.*

*Selections from Bruce DiVaccaro's Portfolio of
Sheffield & Environs Bird Life*



Wood Duck (Aix sponsa) male.



Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus).



Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) female.



Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) male.



Spotted Sandpiper (Actitis macularia) breeding colors.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Archilochus colubris) male.



Red-bellied Woodpecker (Melanerpes carolinus) female.



Downy Woodpecker (Picoides pubescens) female.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Sphyrapicus varius) female, rare.



Willow Flycatcher (Empidonax traillii).



Blue Jay (Cyanocitta cristata).



Tufted Titmouse (Baeolophus bicolor).



Black-capped Chickadee (Poecile atricapilla).



Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*).



Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) male.



White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*).



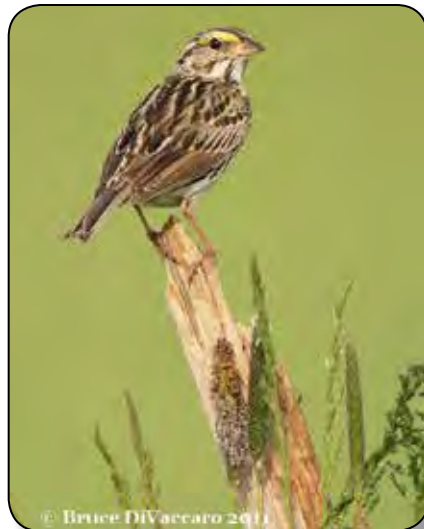
Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) male, summer.



Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) male.



Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) male.



Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) rare.



Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) summer colors.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Pheucticus ludovicianus) female.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Pheucticus ludovicianus) male.



Red-winged Blackbird (Agelaius phoeniceus).



Bobolink (Dolichonyx oryzivorus) male.



Baltimore Oriole (Icterus galbula) male.



American Goldfinch (Carduelis tristis) summer colors.



American Goldfinch (Carduelis tristis) winter colors.

Mike Conrad—woodsman and expert trapper

A feature article in *The Wall Street Journal* (November 3, 2012) highlighted the amazing comeback of wildlife in America. The story pointed out the paradox of this event, “The good news: Wildlife populations in the U.S. have experienced an astonishing resurgence. The bad news: All of those animals are now our neighbors.” If you think back, we now routinely encounter wild birds, mammals, and reptiles that our parents and grandparents rarely saw. As wildlife numbers have expanded, these creatures have spread beyond their historic range into new habitats, including ours. In the eastern United States, biologists estimate that today more people live in closer proximity to more wildlife than anywhere on earth at anytime in history.



Cover illustration for a feature in the November 3, 2012 issue of *The Wall Street Journal*.

As we continually hear of ecological disasters and species extinctions, this should be good news—unless you happen to be one of the more than 4,000 motorists to hit a deer today or your golf course or your kid’s soccer fields are carpeted with goose droppings! The total cost of wildlife damage to U.S. crops, landscaping, and infrastructure now exceeds \$28 billion a year, including \$1.5 billion from deer-vehicle crashes alone.

Here in Sheffield, in just a few decades wildlife has made a miraculous comeback. How did this happen? The simple answer is that by the late 1800s Sheffield had been completely cleared of forests and converted to farmland. As the farms were abandoned in the mid-1900s and woods grew back, so did wildlife habitat. At the same time, subdivisions have sprawled across the newly

wooded landscape. Thus, wildlife and people are attempting to live in the same area. Conflict has naturally ensued.

A solution is also simple to say—*keep the wildlife populations in check*—but not so simple to achieve. Wildlife numbers out of balance with their natural habitat have led to unwanted interaction with humans and their property. The number of deer, raccoons, groundhogs, geese, ducks, and turkeys have grown to the point where healthy populations cannot be sustained on the available habitat, resulting in many sickly and malformed individuals. The reason for this—many of the natural predators that once held these populations in balance and cropped off the unhealthy animals have been eliminated from our woods.

Distemper in northeastern Ohio’s raccoon population is now a common occurrence—several times over the past 15 years this infliction has led to thin hides with little fur. Affected raccoons cannot maintain their body heat and usually die from exposure. Distemper becomes more prevalent during hot, dry summers when raccoons compete for limited food and water resources. This was the case in 2012 when many raccoons died from this disease. While humans do not contract raccoon distemper, cats and dogs are particularly susceptible to this disease if they have not been properly inoculated.

What can be done? Sheffield is fortunate to have Trapper Mike Conrad to help keep wild creatures in check. Mike started trapping wildlife in Sheffield Village at the age of 14 back in the early 1970s and is still an avid avocational trapper today. He has always lived on Abbe Road where he started trapping along the local watercourses: Fish and Sugar Creeks and Walker Ditch.

Mike comes from a long line of Conrad trappers. His great grandfather, Andrew Conrad (1863-1927), grandfather, Albert (1891-1972), and father, Leroy (1918-2003) were all Sheffield trappers. Andrew Conrad, serving as resident farmer of the James Day homestead around the turn of the 20th century, raised his family along French Creek—where the Metro Parks’ Nature & Arts Center now stands. Andrew was considered a real backwoodsman—thus establishing a family tradition of hunting and trapping. Albert Conrad was also a keen hunter and trapper. He would come home with woodchucks, raccoons and possums for the pot, but he had to cook them outside as Mike’s grandmother would not allow “those animals” in her kitchen. Likewise, Mike’s father, Leroy (known to his friends as “Coony”) would hunt for rabbits, clean them, and then hang them on a line on the back porch. When he noticed the supply of rabbits dwindling, he would go hunting again. He told Mike about carrying his shotgun to school, securing it in his locker, and going hunting for rabbits on the way home—leaving his books for his sister to carry home. Can you imagine that happening today?

Mike has been trapping for more than 40 seasons. He points out how important trapping was to the early settlers of Sheffield and to many Village families during the Great Depression of the 1930s. These animals not only provided meat and fur for the pioneers, but they could yield cash—a rare commodity in the days of bartering. In 1816, the first year of a permanent

settlement in Sheffield, it snowed every month and has come to be known as “*the year without a summer*” (see page 82). If it weren’t for the wildlife hunted and trapped by the pioneers, the fledgling settlement would have perished.

In 1973, Mike trapped his first red fox, a feat of which he is still extremely proud. With the money he made from selling the pelt, his father allowed him to purchase a 22-caliber rifle. Over the years Mike estimates that he has trapped thousands of animals, here in northeastern Lorain County and in Arkansas. In 1987 he married Patricia Prokupek of Avon Lake. Pat is his perfect mate in that she enjoys hunting and trapping with Mike.



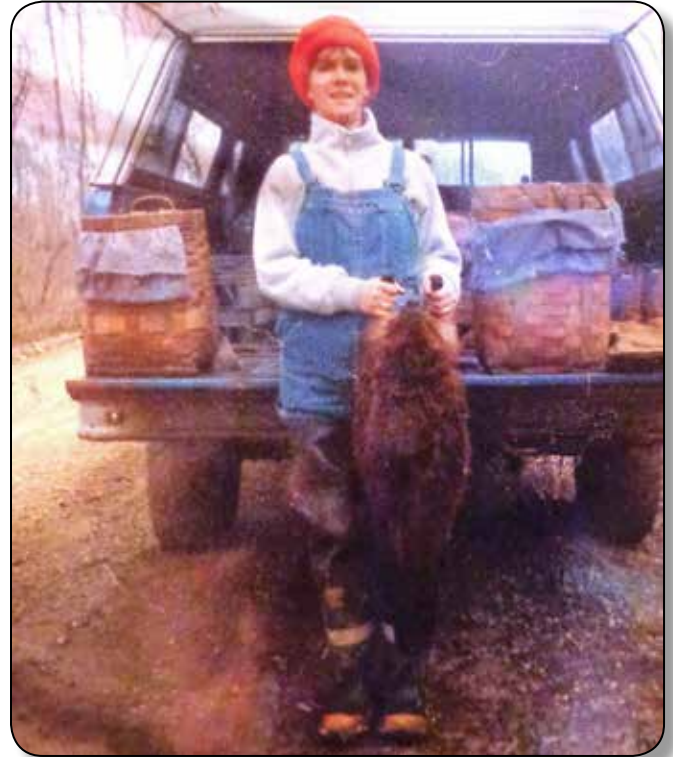
Fourteen-year-old Mike Conrad of Sheffield Village proudly exhibits the first red fox that he trapped near his home on Abbe Road in 1973.



Mike Conrad holds his first coyote, shot in 1997.

With her own hands, and with the help of Adam, her then 10-year-old grandson, Pat trapped enough muskrats for a handsome fur coat and hood, trimmed with red fox fur. They trapped the muskrats on a farm in North Ridgeville and the fox on their property in Sheffield. The coat was made for her by USA Foxx & Fur in Minnesota. Mike does like to kid her about her catches. Once he attached a note to a red fox she had trapped:

You mean I was caught by a Woman? Go ahead shoot me and get it over with—life isn’t worth living any more.



Pat Conrad holds a beaver she trapped in Coshocton County, Ohio.



Pat Conrad’s fur coat made from muskrat and red fox she trapped.



Beaver trapped by Mike and Pat Conrad in an Ohio stream.



Stack of beaver pelts prepared by Mike Conrad for auction.



Coyote caught in a foot trap.

Mike and Pat have hunted and trapped together since they started dating. They have bow hunted for deer in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia and shot black bear in Maine. For two years after retiring, Mike, served as a registered Maine hunting guide, and Pat helped a friend run a bear camp for two months each fall. Mike and Pat's oldest grandchildren, Adam



Mike Conrad combing the fur of a raccoon in preparation for removing the pelt.



Mike Conrad holds a bobcat pelt that has been prepared for auction.

24, Nathan 22, and Sarah 20, all trapped and hunted with their father, Dave, and their grandparents. Sarah, about 5 at the time, insisted on going squirrel hunting with grandpa one day. After fidgeting for over an hour, she announced that squirrel hunting is boring, since you never see anything. She has since become quite a hunter in her own right, taking deer and turkeys in recent

years. Her middle brother Nathan, now a Sergeant in the Marine Corps, has also taken several deer and turkeys. Adam has done some hunting and trapping, but is the fisherman in the family. All in all the Conrads enjoy the outdoors.

Now, Mike and Pat are introducing their younger grandchildren (Delaney, Dominic, and Jereme) to the rewarding experiences of the woods, and especially trapping. The author had the pleasure of accompanying the Conrads and their grandchildren on a trapping expedition in the 10-acre Conrad woods one Thanksgiving eve. It was a treat to see the enthusiasm of the kids and the respectfulness they had for nature and for safety in the woods. Mike and Pat have taught them well. We set traps for raccoon, coyote, fox, and mink. Each trap was set with a specific strategy in mind and baited appropriately. “Little Grizz,” a special type of dog-proof trap was set for raccoons and baited with a peanut butter syrup and miniature marshmallows or a corn/nut mix.

Coyotes and foxes are very wary of traps, so particular care was taken to disguise the trap site. A small pit was dug to hold a foot trap, then earth was packed around the perimeter so that it would not feel different to the approaching animal. A small depression was maintained above the trap pan as a stepping place, then a light covering of dirt was sifted over the trap. Next a boulder or small log was placed adjacent to the trap and fox urine or another lure was applied to the surface. Mike, knowing that fox and coyote mark their territory with urine, hoped this would attract these animals to the traps.

For mink, traps were set below the water surface in Schumaker Ditch and along the water’s edge where these animals prefer to traverse. A thin covering of dry leaves was then placed over the traps. With some 21 traps set, we headed back to Mike’s house to begin the 24-hour wait before checking the traps. Late on Thanksgiving morning we got aboard Mike’s ATV Ranger and headed back to the woods to monitor the traps. The night had been unseasonably warm and still. Mike wondered if the animals would have been out and about on such a warm evening. He also wondered if the distemper he has seen on the rest of

his trapline this year was also taking a toll on raccoon numbers on his own property. So far, the disease had reduced his overall catch this year by one third. His prediction was right on—no coyote, fox, or mink, but we did get one raccoon. Delaney, Dominic, and Jereme were thrilled that they at least caught something. Another trap in the woods did capture a fox squirrel. Mike released the bushy-tailed creature and we watched it scamper off into the woods unharmed. Over the Thanksgiving Day weekend three raccoons were caught, less than half of the usual number, one by each grandchild, protecting their fragile egos and ensuring their bragging rights for yet another year.

Mike and Pat also enjoy trapping in Arkansas, where they get about half of their annual harvest, particularly beaver and bobcat. Mike and Pat belong to the Ohio State Trappers Association, an organization that fosters responsible trapping and stewardship of the outdoors. Mike was a Director and Officer for 14 years, serving two of those years as President, while Pat served as Executive Director and editor of *The Buckeye Trapper*. To help young trappers develop proper skills, Mike offers his expertise in seminars and workshops for fellow members. Occasionally, residents of northeastern Lorain County call upon Mike to trap nuisance animals on their property. He is licensed by the State of Ohio to trap furbearing animals out of season when they are causing damage. Mike performs this service for \$50 to \$75. State law prohibits the release of such animals to the “wild.” Thus, he follows state approved procedure to euthanize captured nuisance animals.

The Ohio Division of Wildlife regulates trapping in Ohio and has set the following rules. Except for river otters, there are no restrictions on bag limits. All traps and snares must be checked and all animals removed every 24 hours. All furbearers shall be killed immediately and taken into the trapper’s possession. Except for cage traps, no traps or snares may be set within 150 feet of another person’s occupied residence



Mike Conrad’s granddaughter, Delaney (age 8), sets a raccoon trap while her cousin Dominic (age 6) and brother Jereme (age 10) look on (2012).



Mike Conrad helps his grandson, Dominic (age 6), set a raccoon trap in the Conrad woods off Abbe Road.



Mike Conrad's grandchildren watch as he sets traps for mink in Schumaker Ditch.



Mike Conrad sets a coyote trap while his grandchildren and wife Pat observe.



Mike Conrad and his grandchildren carefully observe a trapped raccoon.

without advising the resident. No person shall disturb a trap or snare or remove a furbearing animal from a trap or snare of another person without permission. Traps with teeth in the jaws are prohibited. Several other rules relating to the size and type of traps have also been established. The typical trapping season for fox, raccoon, opossum, skunk, and weasel is November 10 to January 31; for mink and muskrat November 10 to February 20; and for beaver and river otter December 26-February 28. A Fur Taker Permit is required except for coyote. All first-time trappers must successfully complete a hunter and a trapper education course, offered through the Division of Wildlife, before obtaining a permit to trap furbearers.

In the last two decades about 20,000 Ohioans annually register with the Ohio Division of Wildlife as licensed fur takers, of

which about 15,000 are hunters and 5,000 are trappers, taking some 85,000 pelts each year for an estimated value of over \$500,000.

Percentage wise, the following species typically make up the bulk of the harvest: raccoon (48%), muskrat (42%), beaver (3%), mink (2%), opossum (1%), coyote (1%), red & gray fox (1%), river otter (1%), and skunk (1%). Dollar wise, based on a 2006 Division of Wildlife report, river otter and beaver (average \$70 and \$15, respectively per pelt) are the most valuable furs, whereas opossum (average \$1 per pelt) is the least valuable. River otter trapping is mainly permitted in eastern and southeastern Ohio, but not in Lorain County.

Mike Conrad recalls that the late 1970s was the period for the best prices for fur. A red fox pelt would bring \$70 and a raccoon

about \$30. Some 18,000 trappers operated in the state at that time. Mike estimates that the current value of pelts taken from his trapping regions (Ohio and Arkansas) are as follows:

Beaver	— \$3–\$30	Fox, red	— \$3–\$30	Opossum	— \$1
Bobcat	— \$20–\$30*	Mink	— \$20–\$25	Skunk	— \$5–\$10
Coyote	— \$5–\$50**	Muskrat	— \$10–\$12	Squirrel	— \$1–\$2
Deer	— \$10	Raccoon	— \$10–\$30	Weasel	— \$5–\$10
Fox, gray	— \$2–\$25				

*Exceptional bobcat pelts from large animals of the West can bring as much as \$1,500.

**Exceptional coyote pelts, again from the West can bring as much as \$75–\$100.

Each spring Mike assembles the pelts for market that he has prepared throughout the trapping season. In the 1970s when he first started trapping, Mike found an advertisement in the *Elyria Chronicle-Telegram* for a furrier named Meyers in Belden, Ohio to market his harvest. The second year Mike dealt with furrier John Barson of Oberlin, Ohio. A couple of years later he engaged Richard Thomas of the Wooster, Ohio area who had an arrangement with a New York auction house. For nearly three decades Mike has marketed his harvest in this fashion. Adam accompanied Mike and Pat one year to sell their furs, as he had caught one raccoon to sell. After looking at the pelt, Richard proclaimed it to be the finest, largest raccoon pelt he had seen in two years,

and gave Adam \$1 more for that pelt than his grandpa received on any of his.

For the last 10 years Mike has sent his furs to Canada for international sale at the North American Fur Auctions held in North Bay and Hudson Bay, Ontario. The way it works, a shipping agent picks up the harvest at designated areas in Ohio (for a charge of \$11/load) and delivers it to the Canadian auction house where most of the pelts are sold to Russian, Greek, Chinese, and Scandinavian markets. Mike only gets a check once a pelt has sold. He guesses he about breaks even with his expenses and what the pelts bring, but he is not in it for the money—more for adventure of keeping up a family tradition, pitting his skills against the prey, enjoying the out-of-doors with his family, and passing along the tradition to younger generations.



A recent annual harvest of pelts Mike Conrad has prepared for shipment to a Canadian auction house. Pelts on the top row (left and right) are raccoon, with coyote, bobcat, and otter in the center. The lower row of pelts are raccoon (far left and right), beaver (left and right), and muskrat and mink in the center.

Tim O'Connor—Brookside's Norman Rockwell

Almost hidden, across Harris Road from the new Brookside High School you may have never noticed, but there's a neat "saltbox" style building on Harris Road, not far north of Brookside High School that serves as Tim O'Connor's artist studio, *Willow Tree Studio*. Tim built the studio some 20 years ago behind his parent's home on land they donated for the project. They also gave Tim's brother, Terry, land nearby to construct a master carpentry shop where he works on fascinating projects, including restoration of historic organs for Holtkamp Organ Company of Cleveland. Tim explained that a saltbox building is one having up to three stories at the front and one fewer at the back with a steeply pitched roof. The advantage of such a design is natural air circulation, in that warm air rises in the high section, cools, then flows downward in the back section of the building completing the cycle. Saltbox houses were popular in New England in the 18th and 19th centuries. An excellent example that still survives, the Colonel John Ashley House of 1735, was the first house built in our namesake town, Sheffield, Massachusetts.



Tim O'Connor stands by a print of his masterpiece—Her Mother's Voice.

Where does an artist get the spark to create? Tim thinks it happened when he was only 4 years old. While accompanying his father to Dorothy and Elmer's, a local tavern in Sheffield Lake, he saw an Anheuser Busch print of *Custer's Last Fight* by artist Otto Becker. The magnificence of the painting convinced Tim that this would be his life's work. On further reflection, Tim remarked, "My father has always said I was destined to be an artist since birth." When Tim was born in Lorain's St. Joseph

Hospital, his mother telephoned his dad with the newborn's statistics. Not being able to reach a pad to write them down, he grabbed a painting off the wall and jotted them down on the back. That sealed Tim's fate.

Tim feels that artistic talents are something you are born with, but they need to be nurtured and practiced if they are to be perfected. His talents were first noticed while he was a student at Brookside High School in the late 1960s. Tim spent much of his free time doodling and sketching which drew the attention of the faculty, particularly art teacher Ray Libengood. He was encouraged to keep on drawing and soon he was known as the school artist.

Tim recalls that the Sheffield schools were overcrowded at the time and the district was attempting to pass a construction levy. Tim was called upon to draw a poster to emphasize the need for new classrooms. His creation was a doghouse bulging at its seams with puppies running out of the openings. Superintendent Don Stockum liked the idea. He ordered the poster mounted on the school buses to promote passage of the levy as they traversed the district. The levy passed and Tim O'Connor was proclaimed, "Brookside's own Norman Rockwell."

After graduating from Brookside in June 1971, Tim continued his artistic pursuits that autumn at the Cooper School of Art in



Willow Tree Studio, Tim O'Connor's saltbox-style studio on Harris Road in Sheffield Village.



Custer's Last Fight by Otto Becker, the painting that inspired Tim at an early age to become an artist.

Cleveland. Completing his training, Tim was ready to begin his career as a professional artist, but it was difficult for a young artist to make a living on art alone. He took a job making electrical cable and in his spare time worked at his craft. Eddie Solomon, owner of McGarvey's Restaurant in Vermilion [now Quaker Steak & Lube] hired Tim to make signs and posters. Tim is particularly proud of one of his creations—a caricature of Mr. Solomon dubbed *Captain Eddie*, that for years was mounted on top of the restaurant.

Next, Tim found work with Pro Arts in Medina designing lithographic posters, mostly comic caricatures that were popular in the 1970s, but might not be politically correct today. He followed this with work for James Lister's Creative Studio in North Olmsted drawing greeting cards. All of this time Tim was building up his portfolio, hoping to land a permanent position.

Tim dreamed of working on television animations like *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. With Lister's help, he contacted the organization of Charles Schultz, creator of Charlie Brown. He was referred to Bill Melendez, head of the production company for shows, who invited Tim to come to Hollywood for an interview in 1979. After looking through



TIMOTHY O'CONNOR
Audio Visual 1
"Brookside's own Norman
Rockwell."

Tim O'Connor's high school graduation photograph and caption from the Brookside High School yearbook, The Leader for 1971.



Catalog of caricature posters produced by Tim O'Connor in the mid-1970s for Pro Arts, Inc. of Medina, Ohio.



Tim O'Connor holds his first clay sculpture, a gorilla head he created in 1969 while a sophomore at Brookside High School. Tim used his entire art class budget on the clay to make the model, which he named Sam Simeon.

Tim's portfolio, Melendez offered to let him stay at the studio for a week to observe the production of a show. Tim learned that it took eight months worth of work to produce a single a 30-minute show. Melendez was nearing retirement and was quite willing to share his "secrets" of the trade to an aspiring young artist. At the end of the week Melendez had some tough, but sound advise. He reminded Tim that 7 out of every 10 animators in Hollywood were out of work at the time. His advise was to "go back to Ohio and build your own market where one doesn't exist." Tim took the advice and by 1989 he had created a market sufficient to allow him to construct his *Willow Tree Studio*.

Tim's philosophy is that a painting stops time, while a book creates the elusion of life. He has created a successful career in both ventures. At his studio Tim has done

the artwork for some 25 children's books, two of which he authored the text and several others he collaborated with noted author V. Gilbert Beers. He has done the artwork for numerous soft covered and hard backed scholastic books. Over the years Tim has discovered his drawings need to catch the eye of parents—they buy books, not the kids. Tim graciously designed the Sheffield Bicentennial Seal that proudly depicts our heritage.



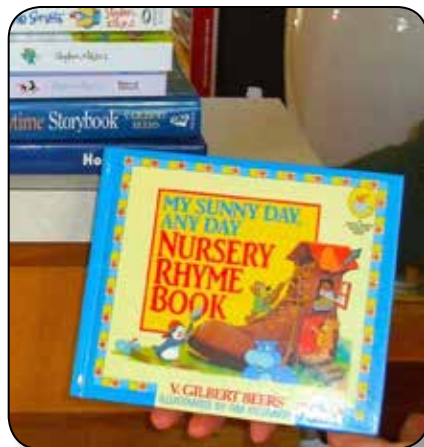
Sheffield Artist Tim O'Connor's painting, *Her Mother's Voice*. The young girl, Tara, is reflecting on her mother's admonishment.



Tim O'Connor at work in his studio on a new concept for *Cracker Barrel Old Country Stores*.



Jonathan and the Fourth Gift—a Christmas book written and illustrated by Tim.



My Sunny Day, a nursery rhyme book written by V. Gilbert Beers and illustrated by Tim O'Connor. On the shelf to the left rests several other books illustrated by Tim O'Connor.



The Christmas Storybook: A Celebration of God's Gift of Love. This work not only contains a book written by Stephen Elkins and illustrated by Tim O'Connor, but a cassette narrated by Larnelle Harris.



Sheffield's Bicentennial Seal designed by Tim O'Connor.



A vine of Morning-glories (Ipomea purpurea) twines its way up a trellis at Harry Root's granary on East River Road (circa 1955). His grandsons, Donald and David Hammer, admire the flowers.