

THE VILLAGE PIONEER

Newsletter of the Sheffield Village Historical Society & Cultural Center



ODOT Designates Route 254 as North Ridge Scenic Byway

The summer issue of *The Village Pioneer* has been delayed awaiting some very exciting news from Columbus. Thus, we have decided to combine Summer and Fall into a single, expanded issue. The news is certainly worth the wait!

On August 21, 2007 James G. Beasley, Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation, signed an Executive Order proclaiming Ohio Route 254 within Lorain County as the *North Ridge Scenic Byway*. From west to east, this nine-mile Scenic Byway corridor passes through the communities of Sheffield Township, the Village of Sheffield, and the City of Avon.

The 175-page, full-color proposal to establish the North Ridge Scenic Byway was prepared by the Sheffield Village Historical Society & Cultural Center and the Avon Historical Society and was submitted to the Ohio Department of Transportation in December 2005. The proposal was endorsed by the mayor's of Sheffield Village and Avon and by the trustees of Sheffield Township. The Lorain County Board of Commissioners, Lorain County Engineer's Office, Lorain County Historical Society, Lorain County Metro Parks, Lorain County Visitors Bureau, and several area citizens contributed materials and letters of support.



North Ridge Scenic Byway shown in yellow (map courtesy of Ken Carney, Lorain County Engineer).

The Historical Societies appreciate the outstanding support of the Board of Commissioners, as well as the assistance of many organizations and citizens that have made the designation of the *North Ridge Scenic Byway* possible. In the coming months the communities look forward to placing signs along the Scenic Byway. The Societies plan to produce brochures and guidebooks to assist travelers in their enjoyment of the features along the Scenic Byway.

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On July 19, 2007, County Commissioners Betty Blair, Ted Kalo, and Lori Kokoski issued the following Resolution No. 07-518 on behalf of the North Ridge Scenic Byway:

In the matter of Supporting the proposal to establish a North Ridge Scenic Byway along SR254 for Lorain, County, Ohio submitted by Sheffield Village Historical Society & Cultural Center and Avon Historical Society—

WHEREAS, Charles E. Herdendorf, Ph.D., Sheffield Village Historical Society & Cultural Center; Ralph D. White, Avon Historical Society; and Thomas Hoerrle, Lorain County Historical Society prepared a proposal submitted to Ohio Scenic Byways Program—Ohio Department of Transportation to establish a North Ridge Scenic Byway along SR254 for Lorain County, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, this North Ridge Scenic Byway known as North Ridge and Detroit Roads passes through a diverse assemblage of agricultural, residential, commercial, and natural settings as it traverses the northernmost beach ridge of Lake Erie's glacial predecessor; and

WHEREAS, the communities of Avon and Sheffield are rich in human history that begins several thousand years ago with Native American Indian settlements on North Ridge and later the Burrell Fort on French Creek which flows through both communities; and

WHEREAS, the proposed North Ridge Scenic Byway seeks to engender public awareness of the cultural and natural attributes associated with the Ohio Route 254 corridor through our communities; and

WHEREAS, this proposal encompasses the entire 9-mile segment of Ohio Route 254 located in northern Lorain County from west to east Route 254 begins at the intersection with Ohio Route 57 in Sheffield Township (midway between the cities of Elyria and Lorain, Ohio) and runs in a east-northeasterly direction to the Cuyahoga County line. This highway traverses the following political subdivisions: Sheffield Township – 1.25 miles, the Village of Sheffield – 1.75 miles, and the City of Avon – 6.0 miles.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Lorain County Board of Commissioners that we hereby Support the proposal to establish a North Ridge Scenic Byway along SR254 for Lorain County submitted by Sheffield Village Historical Society & Cultural Center and Avon Historical Society.

Motion by Kalo, seconded by Blair to adopt Resolution. Ayes: All. Motion Carried.

I, Theresa L. Upton, Clerk to the Lorain County Board of Commissioners do hereby certify that the above Resolution No. 07-518 is a true copy as it appears in Journal No. 07 on date of July 19, 2007.

North Ridge Historic District Proposed

The Sheffield Village Historical Society & Cultural Center, working with the Village Administration and members of the Village Council, is developing a plan to insure that the historic character of Detroit Road (SR254) within the Village is preserved. Detroit Road represents one of the few districts in our Village that retains some of the architectural examples of the Village's early settlement period. Although Detroit Road is zoned commercial from Garfield Bridge over the Black River eastward to the City of Avon Line at the Norfolk & Southern Railroad track, this stretch of highway contains a pleasant mixture of private dwellings and commercial establishments. The intent of the proposed historic district is to establish architectural guidelines that enhance the historic fabric of the corridor, not to stifle or inhibit the construction of new homes or businesses along Detroit Road. Examples of historic structures from west to east include:

Structure	Address	Style	Year Built
Minard House	4747 Detroit Road	Folk Victorian	c1870
Douglas Smith House	4759 Detroit Road	Greek Revival	1833
Halsey Garfield House	4789 Detroit Road	Greek Revival/Italianate	1854
Sheffield Village Hall	4820 Detroit Road	Queen Anne	1883
Garfield Cemetery	4820 Detroit Road	Historic Grave Markers	1851
Milton Garfield House	4921 Detroit Road	Greek Revival	1839
Clyde McAllister House	4926 Detroit Road	Craftsman	c1925
George Root House	4944 Detroit Road	Colonial Revival	c1910
Joseph Townshend House	5574 Detroit Road	Greek Revival/Italianate	c1855

Detroit Road within the Village currently has a total of 72 major structures—32 dwellings, 38 commercial buildings, and 2 public buildings. Most of the business establishments have been built with contemporary commercial design, but a few have used an exterior design that reflects the historic context of North Ridge. Examples of recent commercial construction that incorporate traditional styles are Village Reserve Phases I and II starting at 5455 Detroit Road, as well as renovation work such as Ye Olde Village Kountry Store at 4747 Detroit Road and the George Root House at 4944 Detroit Road. The Sheffield Village Historical Society applauds those owners and developers who have taken the effort to incorporate historic style elements into their exterior designs.

By early fall the Historical Society plans to have completed work on a draft ordinance to submit to the Village Council for consideration. The ordinance will contain guidelines for developers to assist them in selecting appropriate exterior designs to compliment and enhance the visual character of North Ridge. The guidelines will draw on the existing historic styles of the corridor. As the planning process proceeds, the Historical Society and the Village welcomes suggestions and comments to keep our Village an attractive place to live, work, shop, and do business.



Halsey Garfield House (1854).



Joseph Townshend House (c1855).



Milton Garfield House (1839).



Clyde McAllister House (c1925).



Ye Olde Village Kountry Store [Minard House (c1870)].



Village Reserve, Phase I (2001).

Sheffield Village Officials—History of Elections

This coming November, elections will be held for Village Mayor, Clerk/Treasurer, and two Members of Council. With this in mind, the Sheffield Village Historical Society thought it would be of interest to explore the history of elections held within the Village for the past three quarters of a century. In the first election, which created the Village in 1933, only 159 voters participated. Whereas, for the last mayoral election in 2003 over 1,300 voters cast ballots.

However, the election of local officials for Sheffield predates the formation of the Village and goes back some 183 years. In June 1824 the first session of the County Commissioners was held for the newly formed Lorain County, Ohio. Their first action was to establish Sheffield Township. On July 10, 1824, Sheffield held its first town meeting and elected its first officers—Nathan Stevens, Clerk/Magistrate; John Day, Isaac Burrell and A. R. Dimmick, Trustees; Milton Garfield, Treasurer; and Jabez Burrell and Henry Root, Poor-masters.

In April 1920 the residents of Sheffield Township living east of the Black River voted to withdraw from the Township and form the incorporated Village of Sheffield Lake, while the Sheffield residents west of the Black River continued to be administered by Township Trustees. In 1933 the new community east of the Black River divided once again—the south end of Sheffield Lake Village had a sparse population with large farms, while the north end had a greater population living on small lots, thus the residents found their interests to be incompatible. The farmers in the south end voted to separate from Sheffield Lake Village by an almost unanimous vote on October 18, 1933. The north end remained as the Village of Sheffield Lake, while the south end formed a new entity known as Brookside Township.

The newly appointed Board of Trustees of Brookside Township (Edward G. Burrell [Chairman], John L. Moats, & Lawrence B. Traxler) held their initial meeting at the residence of Clyde B. McAllister in the absence of any Township meeting place. They appointed Alex M. Schmidt as Clerk and Clyde B. McAllister as Justice of the Peace. The Board received a petition for the incorporation of the Township as Sheffield Village, signed by 48 residents of the Township [30 freeholders required by Statute], and directed the clerk to file the petition with the Lorain County Board of Elections to hold a special election on December 8, 1933 at Brookside School to “determine the sense of the electors of the Township as requested in the petition.” On December 11, 1933 the Trustees announced results: 144 votes cast for incorporation, 14 against, and one blank. They ordered the clerk to deliver a certified transcript of the results and a legal description of territory to the Lorain County Recorder with a decree that a Village to be known as *The Village of Sheffield* shall henceforth be deemed incorporated as of January 1, 1934.



Sheffield Village's first mayor, Clyde B. McAllister, working his farm fields on North Ridge Road in the early 1930s (courtesy of Patricia Riegelsberger).

The *Elyria Chronicle-Telegram* reported that the first election of Sheffield Village officials took place in December 1933 with 205 voters turning out. For mayor, Clyde McAllister received 137 votes, Edward G. Burrell got 57, and there were a few scattered votes for other popular residents of the Village. Alex Schmidt was elected Clerk, Andrew N. Schmitz as Treasurer, and Fred Winter as Marshal. John A. Conrad, Raymond G. Dunfee, John Laven, John L. Moats, Theodore Schmitz, and Lawrence B. Traxler were elected to the Village Council. The first annual meeting of the Council of the Village of Sheffield was held on January 3, 1934. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Clyde B. McAllister. All council members were present and Lawrence B. Traxler was elected President Pro-tem. Also present were the newly elected Clerk, Treasurer, Marshal, and a large number of citizens of the new Village.

With the assistance of Allyson Hurst of the Legal Department, Lorain County Board of Elections, results of General Elections for the Village of Sheffield officials for the period 1937 to 2005 were retrieved from the Lorain County Records Depository (election records earlier than 1937 were unavailable from the Depository). The following list of successful candidates and the total votes garnered by each of them were compiled from these records. As the Village prepares for the 2007 election, the Historical Society would like to honor the following members of our community who have been elected to serve as our Village officials.

Election Results— Successful Candidates

November 2, 1937

Mayor	Votes
Clyde B. McAllister	125
Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	132
Treasurer	
Josephine Dechant	121
Marshal	
Fred Winter	130
Members of Council	
Michael Bruder	105
Arthur J. Dechant	106
John L. Moats	95
Robert E. Rue	91
Theodore Schmitz	108
Lawrence B. Traxler	107

November 7, 1939

Mayor	
Clyde B. McAllister	156
Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	147
Treasurer	
Josephine Dechant	139
Marshal	
Fred Winter	197
Members of Council	
Michael Bruder	177
John A. Conrad	198
Arthur J. Dechant	193
Peter Eiden	181
John L. Moats	179
Lawrence B. Traxler	175

November 4, 1941

Mayor	
Clyde B. McAllister	125
Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	133
Treasurer	
Josephine Dechant	97
Members of Council	
Michael Bruder	105
John A. Conrad	104
Arthur J. Dechant	109
Peter Eiden	99
John Laven	97
Lawrence B. Traxler	89

November 3, 1943

Mayor	
Clyde B. McAllister	52

Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	53
Treasurer	
Josephine Dechant	48
Members of Council	
Michael Bruder	47
Arthur J. Dechant	46
Raymond G. Dunfee	43
Peter Eiden	41
John Laven	44
Lawrence B. Traxler	43

November 6, 1945

Mayor	
Clyde B. McAllister	118
Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	131
Treasurer	
Angela Winter	115
Members of Council	
Michael Bruder	95
Arthur J. Dechant	97
Raymond G. Dunfee	93
Steve Gasper	65
John Laven	83
Lawrence B. Traxler	95

November 4, 1947

Mayor	
Arthur J. Dechant	240
Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	238
Treasurer	
Leona Brown	207
Members of Council	
Michael Bruder	133
Raymond G. Dunfee	124
Harry E. Garber	124
Walter B. McAllister	124
Lawrence B. Traxler	145
John Wharton	129

November 8, 1949

Mayor	
Arthur J. Dechant	201
Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	190
Treasurer	
Leona Brown	161
Members of Council	
John Belu	121
Michael Bruder	133
Harry E. Garber	130
Michael R. Hanco	143
Ruth C. Potter	126
John Wharton	126

November 6, 1951

Mayor	
Paul W. Poor	209
Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	250
Treasurer	
Leona Brown	211
Members of Council	
Harry E. Garber	175
Michael R. Hanco	220
Edward A. Lietwiler	144
Walter B. McAllister	214
Ruth C. Potter	153
John M. Traxler	209

November 3, 1953

Mayor	
Paul W. Poor	149
Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	143
Treasurer	
Leona Brown	137
Members of Council	
Michael Bruder	133
Harry E. Garber	128
Michael R. Hanco	122
Walter B. McAllister	123
Ruth C. Potter	121
John M. Traxler	120

November 8, 1955

Mayor	
Paul W. Poor	179
Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	275
Treasurer	
Leona Brown	238
Members of Council	
John Belu	187
Frank P. Hudak	203
Lester J. Mackert	256
Walter B. McAllister	212
Ruth C. Potter	185
John M. Traxler	207

Board of Public Affairs

Edward B. Brown	183
Edward A. Mackert	259
Raymond I. Potter	154

November 5, 1957

Mayor	
Walter B. McAllister	394
Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	402
Treasurer	
Leona Brown	381

November 5, 1957 (continued)

Members of Council	
John Belu	349
Philip Dechant	25
Frank P. Hudak	334
Lester J. Mackert	382
Ruth C. Potter	333
John M. Traxler	353

Board of Public Affairs	
Ellis D. Hoag	341
Clee R. M. Ridenour	34
Andrew White	15

November 3, 1959

Mayor	
Arthur J. Dechant	216

Clerk	
Andrew N. Schmitz	332

Treasurer	
Leona Brown	384

Members of Council	
Howard K. Bliss	267
Philip Dechant	360
Lester J. Mackert	359
Ruth C. Potter	234
George E. Rieth	248
John J. Schmidt	334

Board of Public Affairs	
Walter R. Carlin	603
George J. Fedor, Jr.	311
Clee R. M. Ridenour	17

November 7, 1961

Mayor	
Arthur J. Dechant	256

Clerk	
Michael Krall	294

Treasurer	
Leona Brown	417

Members of Council	
William D. Bodnar	335
Thomas F. Dunnigan	285
Ruth C. Potter	300
George E. Rieth	297
John J. Schmidt	366
Paul C. Smith	285

Board of Public Affairs	
James P. Ellis	281
George J. Fedor, Jr.	360
John J. Horn	268

November 5, 1963

Mayor	
Howard K. Bliss	263

Clerk/Treasurer	
Michael Krall	88

Members of Council	
Carl W. Cunningham	287
Thomas F. Dunnigan	299

Board of Public Affairs	
Doris Burrell	335
James P. Ellis	317
George J. Fedor, Jr.	85

November 2, 1965

Mayor	
Howard K. Bliss	401

Clerk/Treasurer	
Martha Monagon	323

Members of Council	
Joseph Bialko	229
Donald J. Dobis	238
Ruth C. Potter	232
Rosemary K. Schwartz	270

Board of Public Affairs	
Doris Burrell	334
James P. Ellis	309
George J. Fedor, Jr.	341

November 7, 1967

Mayor	
Lewis T. Kalo	296

Clerk/Treasurer	
Martha Monagon	385

Members of Council	
William D. Bodnar	336
Norman E. Urig	341

November 4, 1969

Members of Council	
Doris Burrell	315
Lenin Pando	323
Ruth C. Potter	278
Rosemary K. Schwartz	340

November 2, 1971

Mayor	
Lenin Pando	223

Clerk/Treasurer	
Martha Monagon	420
Members of Council	
Clee R. M. Ridenour	304
John M. Romoser	331

November 6, 1973

Members of Council	
B. L. Canterbury	262
Donald J. Dobis	291
Michael Krall	236
Rosemary K. Schwartz	285

November 4, 1975

Mayor	
John M. Romoser	350



John J. O'Doherty, who sold the new \$15,000 Howe fire truck to the Village, handing keys to Sheffield Mayor Walter McAllister on April 6, 1957. Keychain holds a St. Florian medal (patron saint of firemen). Looking on (left to right) are Council President John Traxler, Fire Chief Edward Herdendorf, and Assistant Fire Chief Herbert Langthorp. (courtesy of the Elyria Chronicle-Telegram).

Clerk/Treasurer	
Martha Monagon	406
Members of Council	
Catherine A. Csubak	272
Clee R. M. Ridenour	321

November 8, 1977

Members of Council	
Howard K. Bliss	343
Steve Chozinski	363
George J. Fascko	305
Rosemary K. Schwartz	391

November 6, 1979

Mayor	
Lenin Pando	356
Clerk/Treasurer	
Martha Monagon	449
Members of Council	
Jerrod C. Bialko	343
Clee R. M. Ridenour	239

November 3, 1981

Members of Council	
Howard K. Bliss	409
Michael J. Griffith	373
Elmer E. Scott	316
Louis J. Varos	375

November 8, 1983

Mayor	
Lenin Pando	381
Clerk/Treasurer	
Martha Monagon	523
Members of Council	
Jerrod C. Bialko	483
Kenneth W. Rusiska	240

November 5, 1985

Members of Council	
Michael J. Griffith	280
Charles D. Martin	301
Clee R. M. Ridenour	347
Ronald C. Rosso	286

November 3, 1987

Mayor	
Jerrod C. Bialko	346
Clerk/Treasurer	
Martha Monagon	433
Members of Council	
Dorothy M. Crawford	358
Carol Romoser	361

November 7, 1989

Members of Council	
Catherine A. Csubak	343
Michael J. Griffith	457
Ronald C. Rosso	350
Elmer E. Scott	374

November 5, 1991

Mayor	
Jerrod C. Bialko	488
Clerk/Treasurer	
Martha Monagon	453
Members of Council	
Carol A. Carroll	376
Dorothy M. Crawford	303

November 2, 1993

Members of Council	
Marsha L. Labanow	413
Darlene R. Ondercin	426
Catherine A. Price	384
Brad E. Rauscher	395
John Hoag (appointed 1994)	

November 7, 1995

Mayor	
Darlene R. Ondercin	482
Clerk/Treasurer	
Barbara M. Petro	590
Members of Council	
Dorothy M. Crawford	384
Ronald C. Rosso	387

November 4, 1997

Members of Council	
Judy M. Canterbury	410
Edward J. Dugan	376
Ronald P. Forster	495
Elmer E. Scott	402

November 2, 1999

Mayor	
Darlene R. Ondercin	414
Clerk/Treasurer	
Timothy J. Pelcic	638
Members of Council	
Dorothy M. Crawford	463
Donald A. Miller	529

November 6, 2001

Members of Council	
Bonnie L. Canterbury	367
Edward J. Dugan	361
Ronald P. Forster	364
Elmer E. Scott	325

November 4, 2003

Mayor	
Darlene R. Ondercin	792
Clerk/Treasurer	
Timothy J. Pelcic	991
Members of Council	
Cynthia S. Conrad	805
Kevin S. Watkinson	608

November 8, 2005

Members of Council	
Jean F. Ackerman	701
Edward J. Dugan	561
Ronald P. Forster	660
Leo W. Sheets	644



Home of Clyde B. McAllister on North Ridge Road where the first meeting of the Brookside Township Board of Trustees was held on November 23, 1933 (courtesy of Patricia Riegelsberger).

Historic Homes Profile

Andrew Gubeno–Simon Kriebel–Leroy Conrad House (c1860)

This house is located in Sheffield Village at 2976 Abbe Road. A classical Greek Revival-style farmhouse, it is believed to have been built by Andrew Gubeno between 1860 and 1865 on the west side of Bennett Road (renamed Abbe Road in 1934). Andrew was born in France in March 1821 and died in Sheffield in 1891. He married Mary Mueller about 1847. They had five children, one of which was John Gubeno. Andrew's great granddaughter, Ruth Veronica Guggenbiller (née Kriebel) now of Medina, Ohio, recalls her mother (Katherine Gubeno Kriebel) telling her children how their grandfather (John Gubeno) carried slate singles up to the roof when he was 14, which was considered quite a task for a boy so young.

Andrew and Mary Gubeno are buried in St. Teresa Cemetery in Sheffield Village. The 1874 Sheffield Township map gives the owner's name as H. Gubernough for this property and shows a dwelling on the 25-acre parcel in Lot 15. On the 1896 map of Sheffield Township the same parcel is owned by John Gubeno.

Katherine M. Gubeno was born on January 10, 1879 in the farmhouse. Her mother was Eva Forster and her father was John Gubeno. In May 1901 she married Simon Kriebel and the couple took up residence in the farmhouse. Simon was also born in Sheffield—his parents immigrated to Ohio from Bavaria. The house was situated on the 25-acre farm with a barn located on the south side. To supplement the family income from the farm, Simon served as Street Commissioner for the Village (1938-1939). His daughter, Ruth Guggenbiller, still remembers him operating a grader to keep the cinder roads of the Village smooth.

The original road grader owned by the Village was a McCormick-Deering Warco One-Man Grader (Model H-P) fabricated by the W.A. Riddell Company in Bucyrus, Ohio in August 1928. After many years of service in the Village the grader was deemed obsolete and was auctioned by Jim Wagner as scrap to Gerald Eschtruth of Amherst Township. For \$80 he got the grader and a large trailer. Eschtruth got the grader running again and in about 1958 he sold it to Fred (Fritz) Caley of 3559 East River Road in Sheffield Village. Here, the grader languished in a field for several decades. In 2003 Fred's son-in-law, Frank Root, Jr. of Avon, Ohio, had the grader restored to its original condition by Lou DeLong who operates a restoration company in Medina County. The grader has four steering wheels—one to operate a scarifier used to break up the surface of the road, two for controlling the depth and position of the scraper blade, and a fourth in the center for steering the grader itself.



The Andrew Gubeno-Simon Kriebel-Leroy Conrad House 2007.



Sheffield Village's first road grader (fabricated 1928) in disrepair at Caley Farm before restoration (courtesy of Frank Root, Jr.).



Frank Root, Jr. operating restored McCormick-Deering Warco One-Man Grader (photograph by Lou DeLong).

When asked if she had any other particular recollections of life in the farmhouse, Ruth Guggenbiller mentioned the poplar trees on either side of the walk. The leaves would rustle and scared her like it was going to rain when she walked to “Grandpa” Anton Jungbluth’s house next door to deliver half-gallon tins of milk. She later wrote the Editor an interesting letter describing an astounding incident: *In the 1930s—I was in high school—a small airplane crashed in our yard about 20 feet from the barn. The pilot was a young man from East Cleveland on his first solo flight. The plane had motor problems. He circled around for a long time. My dad tried to flag him down in the field but that didn’t happen. All of Sheffield was out watching and waiting for the crash. He was taken to St. Joseph Hospital in Lorain where he died the next morning. I don’t have any pictures of the plane—however it was in the newspaper.*



View from the south of the Andrew Gubeno-Simon Kriebel House in the late 1930s or early 1940s (courtesy of Ruth Kriebel Guggenbiller).

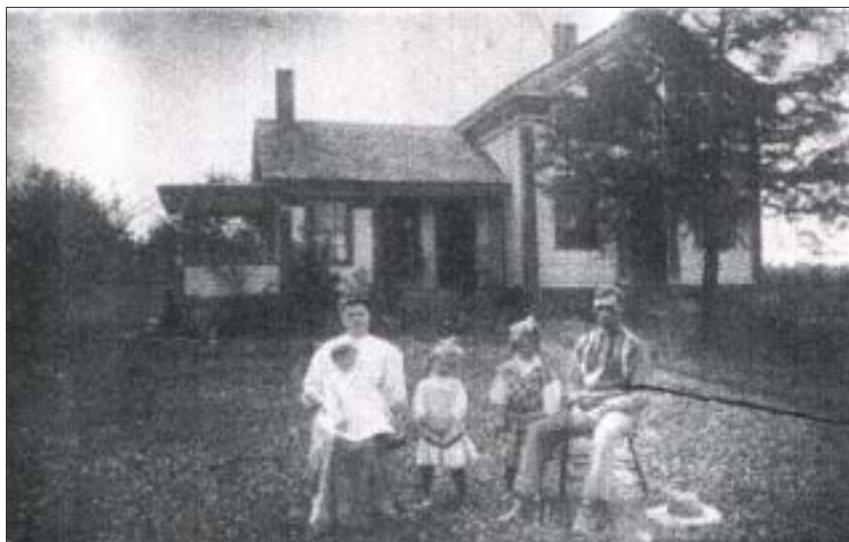
Simon and Katherine Kriebel raised their family of nine children in the farmhouse:

Albert Kriebel (born 1902)
 Hilda R. Kriebel (born August 3, 1903)
 Alma K. Kriebel (born May 6, 1905)
 Lucille R. Kriebel (born June 10, 1906)
 Leon John Kriebel (born May 18, 1911)
 Dorothy Rose Kriebel (born 1915)
 Josephine C. Kriebel (born 1916)
 Ruth Veronica Kriebel (born April 13 1920)
 Bernetta Marie Kriebel (born February 11, 1923)

Simon died at the age of 64 on October 21, 1939 in Lorain’s St. Joseph Hospital and was buried in St. Teresa Cemetery. Katherine continued living in the house until 1944 when she moved to Elyria and died there on February 10, 1955 in Memorial Hospital at the age of 76. She was also buried in St. Teresa Cemetery.

In 1944 Harold C. Freshwater, a Lorain schoolteacher, and his wife Leah Jane purchased the house. Harold was born on May 14, 1908 and died in Fort Myers, Florida on October 1, 1987. Leah Jane was born July 28, 1908 and also died in Fort Myers, Florida fourteen years later on October 15, 2001. The Lorain telephone directory for 1945 lists Harold Freshwater as the resident of the house, but the ownership may have been in his wife’s name. On December 10, 1948, Jane (as she was known) sold the house to Leroy Jungbluth as reported in the December 20, 1948 issue of the Elyria *Chronicle-Telegram*.

Leroy Jungbluth rented the house to George and Rose Holbury and George’s



View from the east of the Andrew Gubeno-Simon Kriebel House in 1907 showing Katherine and Simon Kriebel with their children (left to right) Lucille, Alma, and Hilda (courtesy of Ruth Kriebel Guggenbiller).

mother Mary Holbury (née Filmer). In September 1949 Leroy Conrad and his wife Winifred (née Holbury) and their daughters, Sandra and Linda, moved in with the Holbury family. Leroy was born in 1918 and Winifred born in 1921. The Conrads’ son, James, was born to the couple in January 1952. Mary Holbury, died in February of the same year. In March 1953, Leroy Jungbluth sold the house to Leroy Conrad on a 1-acre plot of land, retaining the other 24 acres of the original Gubeno-Kriebel plot as farmland. In late 1953 George and Rose Holbury moved to Lorain.

The Conrads remained in the house and raised their family of seven children. Winifred died in 1997. Leroy died in 2003, willing the house to his youngest daughter, Kathleen, who currently makes her residence there. James Conrad—whose family lived in this house when he was born—conducted much of the initial research for this profile and his sister, Sandy, assisted by providing contact information for Ruth Guggenbiller. The Editor appreciates their important contributions. Special thanks goes to Ruth Guggenbiller for sharing her experiences and photographs.

Daniel Garfield Barn Reborn

Ronald Krystowski, recipient of the Civil War period barn built by Daniel Garfield that once stood at 5013 Detroit Road, has made good progress in reconstructing this historic structure on his property on French Creek Road in Avon. The frame of the building now proudly stands near the intersection of French Creek and Moon Roads. As reported in the December 2006 issue of *The Village Pioneer*, the Daniel Garfield Barn was scheduled for demolition to make way for the Arch Abraham Nissan dealership. In an arrangement orchestrated by the Sheffield Village Historical Society, Abraham donated the barn to the Lorain County Historical

Society, who in turn transferred it to Ron Krystowski with the understanding that the barn would be expeditiously removed from its Sheffield location and would be rebuilt in Avon. The agreement also stipulated that the restored barn would be used to house historic vehicles and would periodically be opened to the public. The Sheffield Village Historical Society applauds Ron Krystowski for coming forward to save this important building and for his hard work to systematically disassemble the barn and faithfully reconstruct it. We look forward to reporting the successful completion of the project in a future issue.



Daniel Garfield Barn at 5013 Detroit Road before it was taken down in 2005.



Reconstruction progress (May 2007) on the Daniel Garfield Barn by Ron Krystowski on French Creek Road in Avon, Ohio.

Station 100 Dedication

On June 16, 2007, the Sheffield Village Historical Society participated in the dedication of *The Promised Land* statue at the Reflective Garden of Station 100 of the Ohio Underground Railroad at Black River Landings, Lorain, Ohio. At the *Voices from the Past* part of the program, Dr. Charles E. Herdendorf, Society President and a descendent of Captain Aaron Root, spoke of the heroic determination of Captain Root to carry enslaved people on his ships to freedom in Canada.

In the two decades prior to the Civil War, Ohio was a critical state for enslaved Africans traveling north via the Underground Railroad. For many of these fugitives, their final stop in the United States was the harbor at the mouth of the Black River, which came to be known as Station 100. Often they arrived at the harbor in a wagon driven by Robbins Burrell who had hidden them on his farm in Sheffield near the mouth of French Creek. Concealed by vegetables, grains, or hay the slaves were smuggled aboard schooners and early steamboats, some of which were owned by Robbins' friend and fellow abolitionist Captain Aaron Root. Once the ships were 20 miles out of port, the now former slaves were free by virtue of being in British Canadian waters where slavery was illegal.



The Promised Land statue.

Dedication Ceremony at Black River Landings on June 16, 2007



Capt. Aaron Root (1801-1865) and his first vessel, the side-wheel steamer Bunker Hill, built at the mouth of the Black River in 1837 and used by him to carry runaway slaves to freedom in Canada.



The Ecumenical Disciplines of Cleveland singers and the Lorain International Festival Princesses.



Historical Society Hosts Open House

On June 23, 2007, the Sheffield Village Historical Society hosted an Open House at the Sheffield Village Hall/Garfield Cemetery on Detroit Road and the Burrell Homestead on East River Road. Kathy Keefer and Ricki Herdendorf served as greeters at the Village Hall, while Jean Ackerman and Donnie Hammer performed these duties at the Burrell Homestead. Archaeology Society of Ohio members Lola Smith and Dave Boetticher displayed their impressive collections of Native American artifacts, many of which were excavated in the Black River Valley. Society President, Eddie Herdendorf, gave hourly, guided tours of historic Garfield Cemetery, highlighting the fascinating lives of many of the Village's founding pioneers. Matt Kocsis and Tom Hoerrle conducted guided tours of the historic Burrell House, which was built in 1825 of brick fired on the farm. The Village Service Department made a special effort to have the grounds of the Village Hall and Garfield Cemetery in outstanding condition. Likewise, Lorain County Metro Parks did a fine job on preparing the spacious yard of the Burrell House for visitors. Society members Bobbie and Leo Sheets, David Keefer, and Doug Ondercin placed flags on the all of the graves in the Cemetery, set up display tables, or served as docents in the Village Hall. The Society and the many visitors to the Open House appreciate all of these efforts.



Archaeological artifacts from Sheffield Village exhibited by Dave Boetticher and Lola Smith.

Tours of Garfield Cemetery, above, and Burrell Homestead, below (courtesy of Ricki Herdendorf and Kathy Keefer).



New Home for the Historical Society

The Sheffield Village Historical Society will have a new home this fall, the former George Root House at 4944 Detroit Road. The house was originally built by George Root and his cousins Paul and Roy Taylor about 1910. Root, a grandson of Milton Garfield, inherited a portion of the original Garfield Farm on the north side of the then North Ridge Road. In 1937 this portion of the farm was sold to Walter McAllister who enlarged the house and constructed a number of greenhouses on the property. Since that time the house has had a number of owners, most recently Mary Ann Berthold operated *Beads to Weeds Studio* there, a school for aspiring artists and art supply shop.

In January 2007, the house and half-acre lot was purchased by Eddie and Ricki Herdendorf and the lower floors will be assigned to the Historical Society as an office, a meeting hall, and an artifacts/records storage and exhibit facility. This spring and summer the house was given a new roof, the basement windows and floor were replaced, the main floor was re-carpeted, and the electrical system is being upgraded. Lapat Signs of 4151 East River Road painted an attractive new sign, which will be unveiled later this year when the Historical Society opens the building. Dedication of the Society's new home will take place at the next members meeting on October 11, 2007.



Wedding photograph of George and Belle Root (July 28, 1902) builders of the house which is now home to the Sheffield Village Historical Society & Cultural Center.

Historical Society Membership Continues to Climb

The membership in the Sheffield Village Historical Society and Cultural Center stands at 128 as of July 31, 2007. This number is very gratifying to our relatively new Society. Membership is composed of three categories: Individual, Family, and Business/Organization. Currently we have 21 Individual Memberships, 38 Family Memberships (with a total of 101 family members), and 6 Business/Organization Memberships. Leo Sheets serves as Chair of the Membership Committee and is actively soliciting new members. He would like to see more of the Village's over 200 businesses participate in and support the Society. Information on how to become a member is contained on the back page of this newsletter.



History of Sheffield Schools

The first schoolhouse in Sheffield Township was a small log building at the crest of the south bluff of French Creek valley. Built 1817, it served as both a church and school. Dr. Preston Pond who came from Keene, New Hampshire taught the first classes held there in 1817-1818. The log schoolhouse was replaced in the 1880s with a red brick schoolhouse—the sandstone foundation and basement walls of which can still be seen on East River Road across from the Burrell Homestead. Upstairs were grades 1 through 8 and the basement served as headquarters for the Board of Education.



District No. 1 Schoolhouse on East River Road (courtesy of Doug Ondercin).



Foundation of District No. 1 Schoolhouse (2007).

Another one-room school building was located on North Ridge in the 1870s according to an 1874 map of Sheffield Township. This presumably wood frame structure was replaced in 1883 with the red brick building that now serves as the Sheffield Village Hall, housing the Village Treasurer's

office and the office for Garfield Cemetery at 4820 Detroit Road. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, eight red brick schoolhouses were located in Sheffield Township—the two mentioned above plus another on Abbe Road in the Village, two along the lakeshore in Sheffield Lake, two west of the Black River in the Township, and one at Randall's Grove in present day Lorain. In 1878, when the population of the Township was nearing 1,000, the eight schoolhouses were attended by 286 students and were collectively valued at \$7,000.

In 1920, while the residents east of the Black River withdrew from Sheffield Township government forming Sheffield Lake Village, the schools remained under the jurisdiction of a single school board. In 1921 the voters supported a bond issue for \$180,000 to centralize education by building three new schools to replace the old ones. By 1924, Brookside, Vincent, and Highland (later Clearview) Schools were opened for the lower grades (1 through 8) and students were transported by buses.

Brookside High School was designed to serve the people of the incorporated Village of Sheffield Lake. The building itself was a one-story school located on a five-acre plot on the north bank of French Creek—thus the name Brookside. It was originally constructed with six classrooms and a combination auditorium/gymnasium. On June 28, 1924 a disastrous tornado struck northern Ohio causing widespread damage in both Erie and Lorain Counties, killing 65 persons, and resulting in property damage amounting to more than \$20,000,000. In the City of Lorain it destroyed 200 homes and

damaged an additional 600—the entire business district of Broadway was wrecked. The tornado passed through Sheffield at 5:30 p.m., severely damaging the newly constructed Brookside School. The roof was torn off and school board members had to drill holes into the new gymnasium floor to allow the rainwater to escape. The wooden plugs used to fill the holes could still be seen in the floor until 1955 when a new gymnasium wing was constructed.

In repairing the tornado damage, two more classrooms and a manual training room were added. New equipment included a radio with a loud speaker in each classroom, an orthophonic, and electric tools for manual training. The repairs were completed in time to welcome grades 1 through 8 to the new school in September. Three buses, installed with heaters and ventilators, were used to transport students living more than a mile from the school. High school aged students from the Village continued to attend classes in Elyria or Lorain until 1929 when a Senior High School was organized. On December 16 of that year the State Department of Education issued a Class "A" high school charter to Brookside and the first senior class graduated in May 1930. Brookside had 220 students that year, 60 of which were in high school. The eight graduating seniors included: Carl Bacher, Walter Day, Alicebelle Drompp, Charles Gubeno, Philip Hladik, Wayne Inslee, Kenneth McAllister, and Ruth Root. James A. McConihe was principal and members of the school board were Mrs. H. Burrell, Mrs. F. Field, H. Gang, Henry G. Root, and J. Townsend. *The Leader* yearbook was also initiated in 1930 and has been published by the Senior Classes each year



Tornado damage to new Brookside School on June 28, 1924 (photograph by Maribelle Root).



Brookside School constructed in 1923 (courtesy of The Leader).



Brookside School's first school buses c1925 (courtesy of The Leader).



Brookside High School's gymnasium wing constructed in 1955 (courtesy of The Leader).

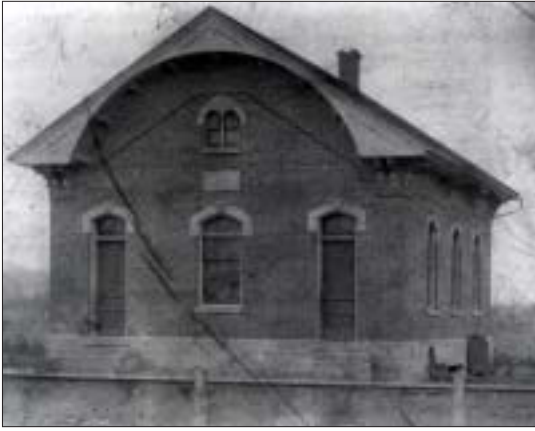
since then except 1935 when the Great Depression caused it to be cancelled.

The Senior Class of 1935 was also important in the history of Brookside for another reason. Students who entered Brookside School as first graders the year that it opened, were the first class to complete all 12 grades in the school and graduate as seniors. Of the seven graduates in 1935, only two attended all 12 years at Brookside: Kathryn Root and Edwin Miller. During the three years that Kathryn Root starred on the woman's basketball team, Brookside won the Lorain County Championship. She personally netted 23 points in one and averaged 17 points per game. In 1991



Kathryne Root (Mrs. Charles E. Herdendorf, Jr.) was inducted into the Brookside High School Hall of Fame.

Although a small log school served the German population of the Village for a few years around 1845 with Peter Laux as teacher, St. Teresa School came into existence at the time the public schools were centralized in the Township. The public school at the crossing of Abbe Road and Colorado Avenue—built in 1880 to mainly serve the Catholic community—was decommissioned when Brookside opened in 1924 and was purchased by St. Teresa Church for \$100. The building was enlarged to accommodate two classrooms and was opened in 1927 with an enrollment of 64 pupils. A new wing containing two additional classrooms was added in 1952. By 1955 the student population reached 220, nearly double the normal capacity of the building. Because about 60% of the school children were from Sheffield Lake, a site for a new parochial school was selected there in 1956—St. Thomas School on Harris Road. When St. Teresa School's attendance declined as children began attending St. Thomas School, the decision to close the school came in 1967.



District No. 7 Schoolhouse on Abbe Road (c1895).



District No. 7 Schoolhouse converted to St. Teresa School (c1927).

In August 1987 St. Teresa School was finally razed to make way for a parking lot, despite the hopes of many former students that the building be retained.

Meanwhile, in 1927 the public school district also divided along the same pattern that had separated the communities, forming the Sheffield-Sheffield Lake School District east of the Black River and the Clearview School District west of the river, each with its own board of education. In the later part of the twentieth century both districts expanded continuously to meet the needs of the growing “baby boom” population by adding several new buildings. Thereafter, school enrollments declined—current Sheffield student numbers are only about two thirds of those in 1970. The following table lists the various schools and their enrollments in 1970 and 2007:

Sheffield-Sheffield Lake School District	1970	2007
Brookside High School (built 1967)	786	604
Sheffield Middle School (Brookside, 1923-66)	694	481
Tennyson Elementary School (built 1949)	514	259
Knowlwood Elementary School (built 1957)	470	268
Forestlawn Elementary School (built 1959)	375	140
William Barr Elementary School (built 1961)	231	126
Joint Vocational School (south of Oberlin)	—	65
TOTAL	3,070	1,943
Clearview School District	1970	2007
Clearview High & Middle School (built 1924)	919	—
Clearview High School	—	575
Vincent Elementary School (built 1924)	479	572
Durling Elementary School (built 1953)	519	—
Durling Middle School	—	496
TOTAL	1,917	1,643



Faculty and students at St. Teresa School in 1947 (courtesy of Patricia Ferguson Little).

Pioneer Women of Sheffield

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

On April 3, 1816, Henry Root, his wife Mary (Day) Root, and their six children arrived here from Sheffield, Massachusetts. A few men had arrived the year before, but the Roots were the first family to make the journey to their new home in Ohio. They lived for three weeks with Captain Joshua Smith, while they built a log house for themselves. On July 27 Mrs. Root had the pleasure of welcoming to her rude home, her brother, Captain John Day, his wife, and their nine children to her limited quarters. Mary was a woman of strong character with marked ability as a teacher. She possessed a rare fund of incidents and anecdotes of travel, being the daughter of a sea captain of worldwide experiences. She lived to be 87. Young and old alike always enjoyed her company.

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

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



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

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

Wolves could also be a problem. *It was sometime during the year 1815 that a sturdy New England youth named Milton Garfield shouldered his rifle and started on foot for a remote spot in the Northwest Territory. Three years later Tempe Williams of Avon became his wife. Their home was a log cabin just east of where the Milton Garfield House now stands. Outside the Garfield cabin, hungry wolves howled during the winter months. Often Tempe would throw firebrands from the door to frighten them away. In 1839 the Garfield's built a new home of hand-hewn oak beams and hand-sawed lumber. A large fireplace with its Dutch oven, a roomy woodshed, and a handy gun cabinet—all were an important part of this "modern" pioneer home when it was first occupied 168 years ago.*

Henry and Mary Root and their son, Captain Aaron Root, eventually built a wood frame, Greek Revival-style house on their farm at the southwest corner of what is now the intersection of Abbe Road and Colorado Avenue. Mary Root spent her later years in this house. Mary died at the age of 87 on

February 14, 1859 and is buried in Sheffield's Pioneer Cemetery on East River Road. Aaron inherited the farm and in 1840 he sold 50 acres of land to John Forster, a German immigrant. By 1842 there were 20 German Catholics in the area and in 1845 Captain Root sold an acre of land to these settlers on the northwest corner of the intersection to build a log church. By 1852 the parish had out grown the log church and a new frame church was built on the same site. At about this time Captain Root sold an additional acre of land to the parish for St. Teresa Cemetery. Over years the Root house has become dilapidated and has not been lived in for many years. A recent inspection of the site indicated that the structure was unsafe and had deteriorated to the point that restoration was not practical. Thus, on June 28, 2007, the Village Administration was obliged to issue a demolition order to the current owner, Michael L. Miller, Trustee.



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

Sheffield Bi-Centennial Calendar Revisited

In 1976 the Sheffield Village Community Events Committee, appointed by Mayor Jack (John M.) Romoser and chaired by Rosemary K. Schwartz, produced a handsome 1977 calendar depicting 12 historic buildings in the Village. Doris Burrell wrote the text for the calendar and Steve Toth took the photographs. After 30 years the Historical Society thought it would be of interest to revisit these sites and compare the 1976 photographs with recent ones. Unfortunately, several of the homes included in the original calendar no longer exist, which emphasizes the importance of preserving the remaining historic structures in our Village.

Here are the buildings as featured in the 1977 calendar:



January—The Village Hall
(built 1883) at 4820 Detroit Road



May—The Fitch House (built ~1830s)
at 4014 Old Colorado Avenue



September—Saint Teresa Church (built
1907) Colorado Avenue at Abbe Road



February—The Jabez Burrell House
(built 1825) at 2792 East River Road



June—The William Day House
(built 1879) at 2837 East River Road



October—The Traxler House (built
~1830s) at 3864 Colorado Avenue



March—The Douglas Smith House
(built 1833) at 4759 Detroit Road



July—The Milton Garfield House
(built 1839) at 4921 Detroit Road



November—The James Day House
(built 1850) at 4530 Colorado Avenue



April—The Gubeno-Gornall House
(built 1855) at 5220 Detroit Road



August—The Schueller House
(built ~1870s) at 1148 Abbe Road



December—The Crandal Post Office
(built ~1850s) at 5120 Colorado Avenue

Sheffield Bi-Centennial Calendar Updated to 2007



The Village Hall
Status: Extant (owned by
Village of Sheffield)



The Fitch House
Status: Demolished in 1989
by Lorain County Metro Parks



Saint Teresa Church
Status: Extant (owned by Catholic
Diocese of Cleveland)



The Jabez Burrell House
Status: Extant (owned by
Lorain County Metro Parks)



The William Day House in 1870s
Status: Extant (private ownership,
descendants of Day Family)



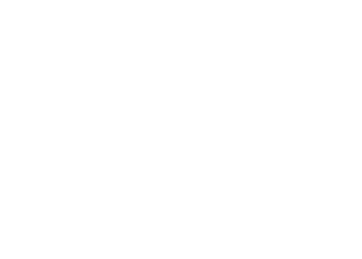
The Traxler House
Status: Extant (private ownership,
descendants of Traxler Family)



The Douglas Smith House
Status: Extant (private ownership)



The Milton Garfield House Status:
Extant (restored 2000; private ownership,
descendants of Garfield Family)



The James Day House
Status: Destroyed in 1986
by Lorain County Metro Parks fire

The Gubeno–Gornall House
Status: Demolished in 1990
to make way for commercial buildings



The Schueller House Status:
Extant (private ownership,
Mackert Family)



The Crandal Post Office
Status: Demolished in March 2007
by owner

Commercial Properties Thrive in Sheffield Village

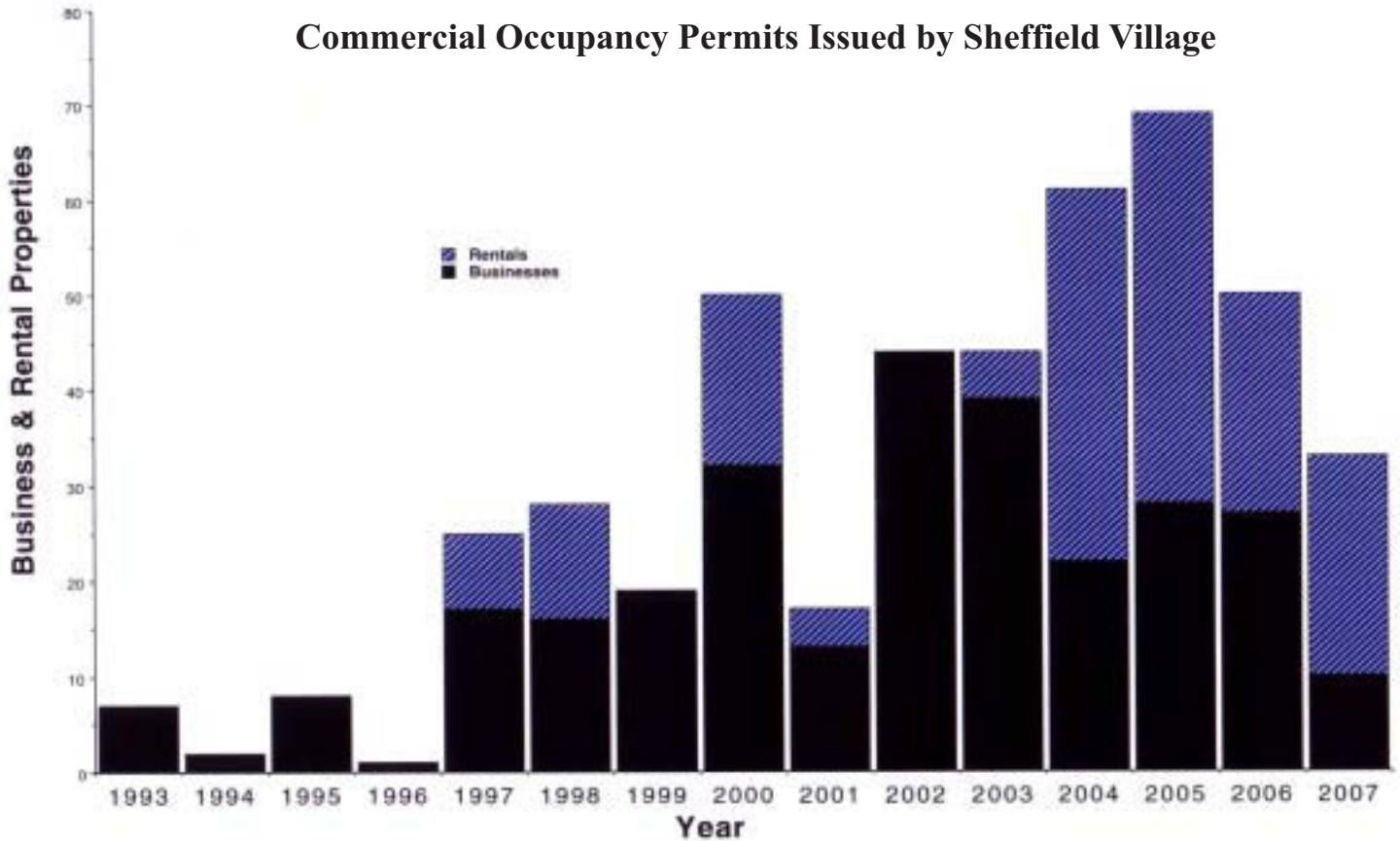
Currently over 400 commercial businesses and rental properties (apartments) hold licenses to operate in Sheffield Village. The Village began issuing Commercial Occupancy Permits in 1993. The following table shows the increase in the number of permits that have been issued in the past 15 years. At the direction of Mayor Darlene Ondercin and Village Administrator Ken Kaczay, Leslie Hellinger of the Village Building Department graciously assisted in compiling the list of new permits issued each year. The Sheffield Village Historical Society salutes these businesses for having confidence in our Village.

Occupancy Permits Issued

Year	Businesses	Rental Properties
1993	7	—
1994	2	—
1995	8	—
1996	1	—
1997	17	8
1998	16	12
1999	19	—
2000	32	18
2001	13	4
2002	44	—
2003	39	5
2004	22	39
2005	28	41
2006	27	23
2007 (1/2 year)	<u>10</u>	<u>23</u>
TOTAL	285	173



Commercial Occupancy Permits Issued by Sheffield Village



Sheffield and the California Gold Rush of 1849

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. John Sutter, of Swiss origin, settled in California in 1839 and received a grant of land from the Mexican Governor of California. He built Sutter's fort in 1841 and in the summer of 1847 he engaged John Marshall to select a suitable location and construct a mill. This was done on the South Fork of the American River at the small community of Coloma. Once the tailrace for the mill was completed—a channel that led the water away from the mill wheel—Marshall discovered a gold nugget in the bottom of the tailrace stream. Word soon got out and in March 1848 the first newspaper article about the discovery appeared in the San Francisco *Californian*.

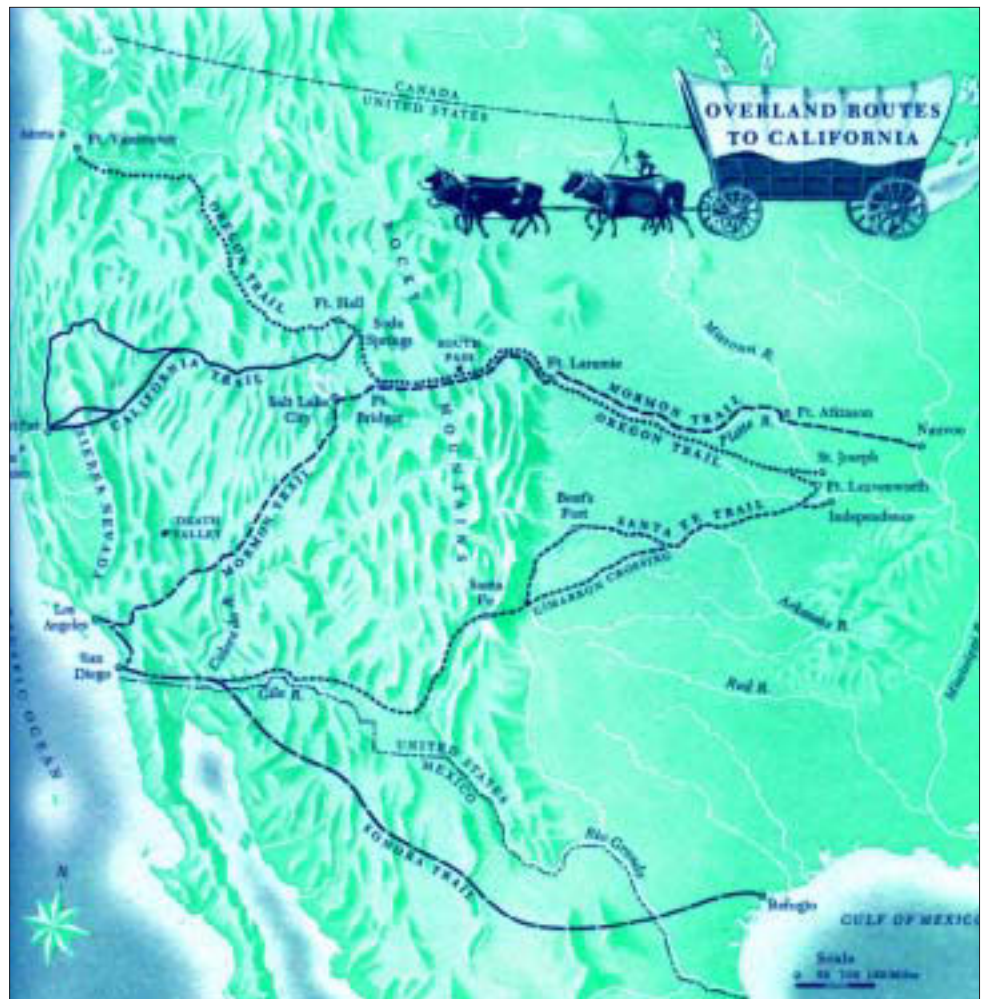
By this time the Mexican War had ended and California was now United States territory. In the early summer of 1848, Col. Richard B. Mason, U.S. Military Governor of California, and Lt. William Tecumseh Sherman toured the gold fields northeast of San Francisco. They estimated that 4,000 men were already working the gold district, daily extracting \$30,000 or more in gold. Col. Mason obtained about 20 pounds of samples—worth about \$3,900 at \$16 a troy ounce according to a subsequent assay by the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia—and sent his samples and a report to Washington. The report was the highlight of President James Polk's message to the 30th Congress on December 5, 1848. In his address, President 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 capital and the President's statements made headlines throughout America and around the world. Gold fever became an epidemic—*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.

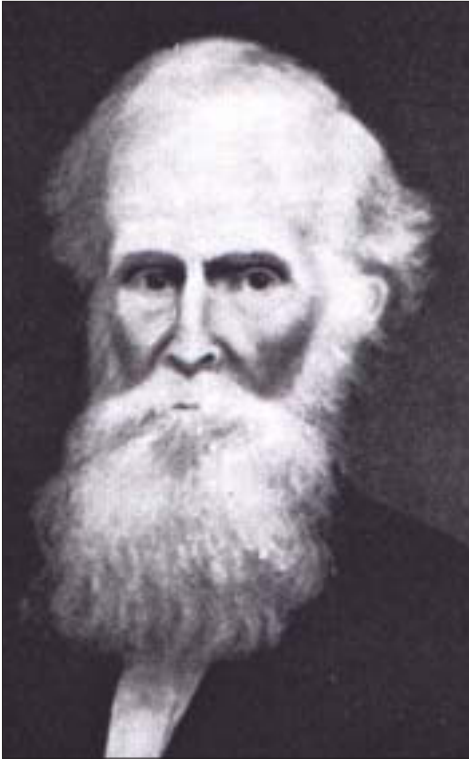
Gold Fever soon reached the Village of Sheffield and the sons of Sheffield's founding pioneers Jabez Burrell and Milton Garfield began to make plans for the 6-month overland journey to the California Gold Fields. Lyman J. Burrell and Henry W. Garfield constructed wagons that could easily be disassembled 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. Edmund W. Brooks of Elyria kept a day-by-day journal of the adventure and Henry Garfield wrote several letters to his father and brother describing the journey.

Using Brook's journal and Garfield's letters as guides, in May and June of this year Eddie and Ricki Herdendorf traced the Buckeye Company's route from Sheffield Village, Ohio to the Feather River gold fields in northern California. The photographs accompanying this article were made along the way to illustrate how some of the places mentioned by the Ohio Forty-niners appear today.

At Wellsville the company boarded the stern-wheel steamer *Schuylkill* (271 tons, built 1846) 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. Brooks mentioned passing "*celebrated Blennerhasset Island*" where, in 1805, Aaron Burr plotted to invade the Southwest with a private army, but that "*its glory has however now departed.*" In St. Louis they secured passage on the river-steamer *Alice* for the voyage up the Missouri



Historic overland trails to California (courtesy of the National Park Service).



Lyman John Burrell (1801-1884) in his later years.

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*. On April 24 the wagon train headed north along the east bank into Iowa Territory, the crossing the river by ferry into Indian Territory at Old Fort Kearney—present day Nebraska City, Nebraska.

Averaging somewhat less than 20 miles per day, the company traveled overland across the Nebraska Territory, arriving at the Platte River on May 15. After one of the company's cows was apparently stolen and about 40 Pawnee Indians visited the camp, the group decided to join with another company of 16 men for better security and for guarding the stock at night. However, on May 19 the combined company met a "war party of Sioux Indians all painted and equipped for war with the Pawnees. Their chief men formed a line directly across the wagon road and of course we had to stop. Our captain [Richmond from Adrian, Michigan] met them and they showed him papers to prove that they were good Indians and then they said 'Howdy' to us and went their way. They were fine healthy looking fellows and were armed with guns, lances and bows and arrows. They had large shields made of buffalo hide stretched over a hoop. They were on horseback and had extra horses running loose. The extra horses had

each a long rope one end around the neck of the horse and the other end dragged on the ground for convenience of catching them quickly. 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. I think my partner Alick [Forbes of Elyria] was tired when he saw the Indians and crawled into the wagon till all danger was over."

The company experienced several severe thunderstorms crossing the prairie. On May 24, in the midst of a storm "*the cattle stampeded and made for the hills. There was no stopping them and a party of our men had to go in pursuit. They at last got around the cattle and got them into camp after miles of hard tramping in the rain and wind. Three of the boys came in about midnight. They got lost and it was so pitch dark that they could not even see each other though they were close together. They had to take hold of each other's hands in order to keep together. One of them let go to blow his nose or something and was sometime in finding his companions. The storm howled so that they could hardly hear each other speak. We fired guns at short intervals till they got in. My partner Alick was one of the lost boys. When he came in drenched with the rain and cold I was snug in bed in our wagon and he made me get up*



Henry W. Garfield (1821-1892).

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-board for the remainder of the journey.

At St. Joseph they purchased oxen for their wagons, but soon discovered that the prairie



Forty-niners disembarking a river steamer at St. Joseph, Missouri (courtesy of the National Park Service).

and tear up my bed and dig down into the wagon and open a trunk and get out a bottle of 'Number Six' which had a couple of stockings drawn over it to keep it from breaking. Alick took a good swig of the contents and then crawled into the wagon and went to sleep in his wet clothes. The winds are so severe on the Platte River that one day a wagon was blown over on its side."

Toward the end of May the company entered Buffalo Country. As a drove of buffalo crossed the Platte River some of the men gave chase and one buffalo was killed, affording meat for all. Wolves kept up a lively howling most of the night, and finally Brooks 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.

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 of the name of Hezekiah Crandall. He 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.*" Another man died the next day and was buried in the same manner.

In addition to the two above landmarks, the company noted several other geological features along the valleys of the Platte and Sweetwater Rivers. Courthouse and Jail Rocks are detached columns of sandstone that rise nearly 400 feet above the surrounding prairie. Some of the men from the company climbed to the top by putting their hands and feet into cracks in the rock, but it was a such a ticklish job backing down that Brooks noted that he "*wouldn't do again for money.*"

On June 8 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. Three days later the company crossed the Laramie Fork of the Platte River near the Fort by blocking up the wagon boxes. All made it across safely except Burrell's wagon, which went into deep water and was carried



Chimney Rock, Nebraska (May 2007).



Climbing Courthouse & Jail Rock, Nebraska (May 2007).

downstream until some of the men jumped into neck-deep water and held the wagon from overturning until the team could drag it ashore. Everything in the wagon was thoroughly soaked except the flour, which was in painted bags. The loaf sugar was melted and the men had a good sweet meal of bread dipped in a pan of the melted sugar.

On June 20, 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 while 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. On the day before, anxious to cross the river, one of the company's wagon boxes was caulked to use as a boat to ferry belongings across. As soon as it was

launched, with two men aboard, the current struck and away they went downstream. The men were glad enough to get ashore on the same side again. They knew that many Forty-niners had drowned trying to cross these mighty western rivers on their own.

On June 24, the company passed through rugged Devil's Gate, southwest of present day Casper, Wyoming. This is a spectacular, narrow gorge where the Sweetwater River, a headwater stream of the Platte River, rushes past rocky walls several hundred feet high. For the next several days the company passed through terrain dotted with alkali lakes, some of which had dried up leaving a white crust of saleratus (sodium bicarbonate) on the ground. Brooks noted that *"This alkaline water has killed a few cattle for other companies but we have not lost any. When an ox has been drinking saleratus water there*



Wagon ruts on the California Trail still visible near Fort Laramie, Wyoming (May 2007).

are two remedies. Pour a quart of vinegar down his throat and it will act like a Seidlitz powder on him or pour a quart of melted lard down his throat and it will unite with the alkali and run off as soft soap." Garfield wrote *"one cow had the fowls so bad that we left her."*

On June 29 the company crossed the continental divide at South Pass and encountered a snow bank 16 feet deep. The rocks here looked like pieces of broken glass [volcanic obsidian]. Brooks surmised it was *"made in nature's laboratory and thrown out here ages ago."* He described the terrain here as *"Tablelands—about 6000 feet above sea level and bounded by snow-capped mountains."* South Pass has an actual elevation of 7,550 feet. At the Green River the company crossed on another ferry operated by the Mormons, paying \$5 for each wagon. Garfield commented *"at 50 to 75 wagons a day, the Mormons are fast making up for what they lost in Missouri and Illinois,"* referring to murder and expulsion of Mormons from these states in the 1830s and 1840s.



Replica of a Mormon Ferry on the Green River, Wyoming (May 2007).

On July 5 the company passed Fort Bridger in southwest Wyoming and arrived at Salt Lake City on the evening of July 14, tired and footsore after repairing an axletree on one



Devil's Gate, Wyoming (May 2007).



Forty-niners entering the Great Salt Lake Basin (courtesy of the National Park Service).

of the wagons and crossing 48 creeks of different sizes in the afternoon. Garfield prepared the following description of the city and its Mormon population:

“I suppose you would like to know something about this great City. It is situated on the eastern side of the valley and nearly at the southern extremity of the Lake. Twenty-five miles from it the Lake, it is in sight from the hills above the City. The City is laid out with great care and was intended for something grand by its founders, and its present inhabitants intend to make it all it was intended to be. At present it is a poor apology for a city, consisting of small houses one story high some of them built of log round, some of them hewed. Many of them are built of adobes or unburnt brick. The brick are twelve inches long, six inches wide and four thick of blue color, and laid in a wall they look very well. There is but one house of burnt brick in the City. They are now building a Council house of red sandstone, which will be a respectable sized house and the only one in the City. The streets are eight rods in width [132 feet] at right angles with each other or crossing each other at right angle. They run north and south and east and west.

The whole country is so dry it is necessary to irrigate the soil to produce anything but grass. This is easily done as the mountains

furnish abundance of water, large streams running into the valley in every direction and short distances from each other. The water is of the purest and cleanest kind. The valley is surrounded by high mountains, some of them covered with perpetual snow. Southeast of the City is a very high mountain which looks as though a man might go to the summit in two hours but is said to be twenty-five miles distant. This is taken altogether rather strange scenery to see, the harvest going forward almost in the snow. I have seen no wheat that was sowed, all that I have seen is the product of what was scattered last harvest. The wheat is the same kind here as in the State. What I have seen is short straw but the farm wheat is said to be very heavy. Corn is now about fifteen inches high and looks well.

The Mormons intend soon to commence the building of a temple that shall outshine Solomon's in all its glory. There is an abundance of white marble [gray granite] in the mountains near the City and gold in California (if not nearer) for the adorning of it, it is to exceed the Jewish in size and splendor and will no doubt be one of the seven wonders. I have been to a Mormon meeting and it is as well done as any other I have seen. [In Temple Square, the great Mormon Temple was begun in 1853 and completed in 1893 of gray granite.]

The people here, many of them dress in skins. Yesterday was a general muster and one of the officers wore epaulettes on each shoulder upon a buckskin coat. The ladies trip about town in moccasins but I have seen no other ladies gear made of this primitive kind of covering. But I was speaking of the City and its inhabitants. Well then the City is well watered and every garden needs irrigation. Every few rods, a stream of bright clear water crosses the road. At the north side of town a stream of warm and almost hot water gushes from the side of the mountain. The stream is large and the Mormons have made a pool for the purpose bathing where all repair. The women on Tuesdays and Fridays when it is highly penal for any male to visit the pool. The rest of the week belongs to the men but whether the ladies are subject to a fine for visiting it other than the appointed day or not...they doeth saith not. A little farther north, along the base of the mountain, hot springs occur, even to boiling heat. The population of the valley is not known. The lowest estimate is ten thousand and the highest about twenty.

The Mormons were obliged to keep within a fort until last fall on account of Indians so that all their buildings are nearly new. There is no danger now from savages except to cattle and little to them as the Mormons have chastised them severely for like offenses having killed one considerable party of marauders entirely. The Indians in the vicinity now wish to be instructed in farming and are very desirous to procure cattle for purpose of raising stock. The Utah Indians of the north part of the valley have manifested strong desire to be educated in the arts of civilized life.

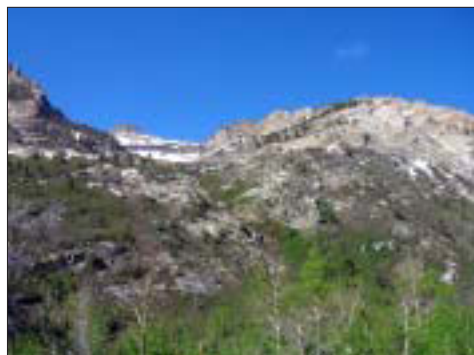
The Mormon Prophet (Brigham Young) still lives in wagons. This is the case with great numbers. They set off the box with the cover upon it. I have seen many such as I have been passing along the street with a bed made up in one end and other necessaries occupying the other end. In such cases there is generally two or three wagons together. Most of the emigrants brought three or four when they came out and now buy them for almost nothing of Californians.

But my sheet is almost full and I have not told you anything of my hopes & their foundation. There are hundreds of men here who have been to the mines and returned with thousands. The circulating medium here is

much of it gold dust in papers marked with their value. They are also coining gold here. The pieces are plain with the words ten dollars stamped on them. The gold which we see here is in lumps from the size of a kernel of wheat or smaller up to the size of acorns of four or five dollars. Those that have returned from the mines say the average yield in the dry diggings is not less than fifty dollars a day and from that to one and two hundred and a Mormon that I saw at Green River got even hundred and fifty a day."



City of Rocks, Idaho (May 2007).



Ruby Mountains in the Basin and Range Region of Nevada (May 2007).

On July 17 the company left the City and traveled north between the east shore of Great Salt Lake and the Rocky Mountains, then westward across southern Idaho near the City of Rocks. On July 24 Brooks witnessed a scene *"I pray the Lord I may never witness again—a man [Ben Briggs] shot by accident with a revolver in the hands of his own brother [John Briggs]. The wound must be mortal as the ball went directly into his body just below the heart. He appeared to be dying this evening but may live several days. The brother is nearly crazy with grief."* The company stayed in camp the next day taking care of the wounded man who was in great pain. They had the advantage of plenty of medical advice as several physicians passed their camp each day. The next day the wounded man seemed a little better. Brooks

noted *"If he continues to improve we shall tomorrow leave his mess with him and the rest of the party move on. About 300 wagons per day are passing by us while we are in camp."* On July 27 the wounded man was still improving so the rest of the company stated the journey again.

During the later part of July and early August the company traveled through the Basin and Range Region of Nevada, at times coming down slopes so steep that the front and rear wheels of the wagons had to be chained together and then the wagons were let down by ropes tied to the hind axle. The company moved down the Humboldt River to present day Winnemucca, Nevada where on August 20 the Buckeye Company parted with the other group and stuck out alone across 60 miles of the Black Rock Desert. They traveled across the ancient dry lake bed all through the night, finding only a mud hole at midnight. The men cut a little grass and bulrushes to bait the cattle. Brook's cattle began to lag and finally laid down in their yokes. He released the cattle and sent them on with the others while he stayed with his wagon. Three agonizing days later, after reaching a water hole at Mud Springs, one of the men returned with refreshed cattle. Although very weak, Brooks was able to continue the journey.



Alkali lakes in the Black Rock Desert, Nevada (May 2007).



Black Rock Desert, Nevada (May 2007).

The company reached the Sierra Nevada Mountains on August 31, zigzagged up to the summit of Fandango Pass, and then down the west slope to Goose Lake on the California/Oregon border. At times two or three teams were put together to pull the wagons up the steep slopes by moonlight. On the down slopes the wheels were chained, but some broke away and the cattle were forced to trot for one and a half miles as the wagons pushed them forward. From here the company followed the Lassen Trail down the Pitt River, noting many beaver dams along this stream.



Forty-niners crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains (courtesy of the National Park Service).



Sierra Nevada Mountains near Fandango Pass, California (May 2007).

On September 13 the company camped at Silver Lake, believed to be the headwaters of the Feather River, noting that the stream was full of trout. On September 22, 1849, six months after they boarded the steamer on the Ohio River, Buckeye Company reached Peter Lassen's Ranch in the Sacramento River valley. Their long journey had ended and the company dispersed.

On September 25, 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 for gold this would be equivalent to approximately \$2,200. A year later he was able to send about 50 ounces of gold back to Sheffield with Benjamin Briggs, who had recovered from the gunshot wound and was returning to Ohio by way of a clipper ship around the horn of South America. In sending the gold Garfield wrote, "*The bearer of this letter, Mr. B. B. Briggs, is one of my best friends and as such I trust will be received, welcomed, and entertained by you all. He will be able to give you much information concerning California and California manners. I send by him a small amount of gold not because I suppose you*



Forty-niner's gold camp on the Feather River, California (courtesy of the National Park Service).

particularly need it, but to insure your seeing him and having an opportunity of asking questions and having them properly and truly answered. The amount of gold is 500 dollars or the whereabouts. A purse sewed up and marked M. Garfield contains it. Inside of this purse you will find another. This contains gold of my own digging particularly, every piece was taken out by my own hand. If you have use for any or all of the gold use it, but use it in the outer purse first and after that, if you can conveniently keep some of the specimens of my own digging, some five or six ounces, do, as I do not expect to work any more in the mines and I shall value it more highly for having dug it myself.”



Mt. Shasta from the Sacramento River Valley, California (June 2007).



Panning for gold on the Feather River, California (June 2007).

Brooks and Burrell also returned to Ohio after a year in the gold fields, Brooks to stay, but Burrell to collect his family and return to California to establish a ranch and vineyard in Santa Cruz County, south of San Francisco. His descendents still live on the West Coast. Henry Garfield remained in California for 20 years. He cherished northern California and once wrote. *“At this time [early May 1850], California is indeed a most gorgeous and glorious land. Mountain, valley, and plain are in their holiday attire. Flowers in endless variety and of every shade and color here*

spring up as if by magic, merely to waste their sweetness on the desert air. Yellow seems to be nature’s favorite color here, although she puts on all the hues of the rainbow, and more too. I mean, of course, in the way of flowers, for no country can be greener, as almost all trees and shrubs are evergreens. Flowers began to bloom here about the first of February. I expect to see some rare displays of flowery beauty while traveling up the valley of the Sacramento, which will be my road to Trinity.”



Coloma on the South Fork of the American River, California where gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill in 1848 (courtesy of the National Park Service).



Panning for gold at Coloma on the American River, California (June 2007).



Transcontinental Railroad meeting place at Promontory Point, Utah (May 2007).

When the first transcontinental railroad was completed at Promontory Point, Utah in May 1869, Garfield was one of its early travelers as he returned to Ohio. He later commented that the overland journey that took him six months to accomplish was now possible in six days by locomotive. After three years back in Sheffield, the lure of the West called him to Leadville, Colorado where he established a silver mine in Gleason's Gulch. In his later years Garfield again returned to the family homestead on North Ridge and became engaged in diverse activities—farming, carpentry, and partner in the operation of the Great Lakes schooner *H. G. Cleveland*. Henry Garfield died on May 13, 1892 and was buried in the family plot at Garfield Cemetery.



Henry Garfield's silver mine in Gleason Gulch near Leadville, Colorado (June 2007).



Henry Garfield's grave at Garfield Cemetery.



Henry Garfield's schooner (c1875) H. G. Cleveland loading limestone at Kelleys Island, Ohio (courtesy of Georgann Wachter).

Organization and Contact Information

The Sheffield Village Historical Society and Cultural Center is a nonprofit organization, which aims to promote an appreciation of Sheffield's rich heritage by discovering, collecting, preserving, interpreting, and presenting the history of our community. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in the history and cultural attributes of Sheffield and who wishes to support the Society's mission.

Next Members Meeting: Thursday, October 11, 2007 at 7 p.m., in the new home of the Society, 4944 Detroit Road. The Program will be on the Old and New Indian Ridge Museum by Ron Sauer and Matt Nahorn.

For more information you can contact Kathy Keefer, Secretary (934-6015 evenings), or Eddie Herdendorf, President (934-1514 herdendorf@aol.com), or Ron Forster, Vice President (949-7638). Offices for the Society are located at:

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Historical Society newsletters for December 2006 and March 2007 can be found on the Village of Sheffield, Ohio official website: www.sheffieldvillage.com (click on Documents, then Historical Society, then Newsletters, then download).

Page Layout by Ricki C. Herdendorf, EcoSphere Associates.

Society members are encouraged to submit articles for future issues of *The Village Pioneer*. Please send your stories or ideas to the Editor, Sheffield Village Historical Society.

Charles E. Herdendorf, Ph.D.
Newsletter Editor



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