



BICENTENNIAL BULLETIN No. 49 **—Sheffield Celebrates 200th Birthday**

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

BEDORTHA-TRAXLER HOUSE

(built circa 1930—oldest wood-frame house in Sheffield)
3464 Colorado Avenue, Sheffield Village, Ohio

Douglass Smith built this Greek Revival-style farmhouse with a two-story front gable and one-story side wing for the Luther Bedortha Family in about 1830. It originally fronted on Old Colorado Road, which has since been vacated. The house is now setback from Colorado Avenue.

Luther Bedortha (1765-1825) and his wife Terza (1776-1824) settled in Sheffield Township in 1824. The Bedortha family purchased farmland at the southern end of Lake Breeze Road that extended westward halfway to Root Road, encompassing all or portions of Lots 60, 62, and 64. The 1851 Tax Map for Sheffield Township shows that the Bedortha property totaled 220 acres. Luther and Terza had four sons that journeyed with their parents from Sheffield, Massachusetts—Luther Hiram, Thomas, and Theodore. Terza passed away in 1824 and the elder Luther died in 1825. Their sons continued to farm the land until the early 1860s.

About 1830 the Bedortha sons contracted with Douglass Smith to build a farmhouse on their land. The building, which still stands, is most likely the oldest wood-frame house in Sheffield and less than a decade younger than the Jabez Burrell House, the oldest brick house in Lorain County.

Front of Bedortha-Traxler House that originally faced Old Colorado Road



Bedortha-Traxler House, built circa 1830



February 17, 1853 while en route back to Lorain County. Luther acquired a farm in Russia Township and married Eliza A. Brown of nearby Oberlin. Luther died in Oberlin on December 29, 1864.

Hiram Bedortha married Lydia Ann Kellogg. They owned and farmed portions of Lots 62 and 64 in Sheffield Township on the east side of Lake Breeze Road near the Black River. Their son, Hiram Kellogg Bedortha was born on April 29, 1844. The Hiram Bedortha family lived in Sheffield until 1860 when they bought a farm near Oberlin. On the new homestead, 17-year-old Hiram Kellogg worked on his father's farm, then followed the footsteps of his older sister, Abby, by entering the Oberlin Preparatory School.

With the Civil War raging and young Hiram reaching the age to be a soldier, he enlisted in Company E of the 60th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He fought at the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864 and in the trenches at Petersburg, Virginia in the summer of the same year. By October he was stricken with "camp disease" dysentery and sent to an Army hospital in Beverly, New Jersey. Hiram passed away at the hospital while his mother was on her way to see him. His body was brought back to Oberlin where a funeral service was held at the home of his parents. On October 29, 1864 he was buried in the family plot in Garfield Cemetery.

Edward H. Capp, a champion prizefighter from England, bought the Sheffield house from the Bedortha family in 1861. Edward and his wife lived in the house from 1861 to 1883 and farmed the surrounding land. Since 1884, three generations of Traxler family have owned the property which is now called Stormy Acres. That year, Henry Traxler married Rose Urig and they entered the house as bride and groom.

The Traxler family has farmed the land for over 100 years, often finding evidence of the Native Americans that lived on the land centuries earlier. An October 24, 1976 article in the *Lorain Journal* illustrates the numerous Indian artifacts found on the homestead's "Bluebell Hill," a jutting point of sloping land along the Black River.

Painting of 1864 Civil War Battle of Wilderness by Kutz & Allison; young Hiram Kellogg Bedortha fought at battle



Hiram Kellogg Bedortha's grave marker in Garfield Cemetery



Native American artifacts discovered on the Traxler farm (Lorain Journal 1976); they include projectile points, a stone drill, clay and stone pipes; celts, scrapers, and a gorget (circa 1920)

