



BICENTENNIAL BULLETIN No. 52 ***—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***

NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS RAILROAD (Nickel Plate Road) ***—Sheffield's lakeshore railroad***

Construction of the first railroad along the lakeshore in Lorain County started in the fall of 1881—the New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad (NYC&StL). The project included a turn bridge over the Black River between 11th and 12th Streets in Lorain. East of the river, the line headed east northeast to Root Road, then due east across Sheffield and Avon Townships. Just east of Root Road a short spur was constructed north to the car barns and power plant for the East Lorain Street Railway. The spur was used to deliver coal to the power plant, which generated the electricity to run the trolleys.

Nickel Plate Road's Berkshire-type locomotive, 1968

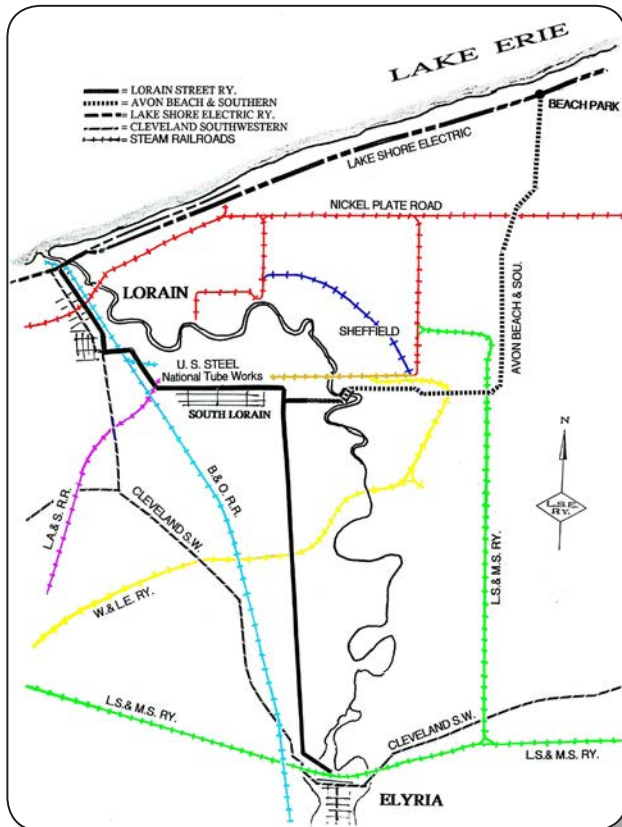


The NYC&StL was better known as the *Nickel Plate Road*—a name coined by the *Norwalk Chronicle* (March 10, 1881) in a failed attempt to encourage engineers to build their “bright” railroad through Norwalk rather than their competitor town of Bellevue.

Nickel Plate Road's double tracks passing through Sheffield, circa 1950



Map of the steam railroads (color) and electric interurban trolleys (black) operating in the vicinity of Sheffield from 1853 to 1925



The primary objective in constructing the line was to connect Buffalo and Chicago in competition with the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway that ran through Elyria.

When the Nickel Plate Road (NPK) opened in 1882 there were two trains, each way, daily through Sheffield. One ran between Buffalo, New York and Bellevue, Ohio and the other between Cleveland and Chicago. They traveled at a speed of 25 to 30 miles per hour. Passengers rode in open platform coaches. By the 1930s NPK operated four trains daily in each direction. The average speed was 50 to 60 miles per hour and passengers enjoyed comfortable coaches, as well as air-conditioned sleeping, lounge, and dining cars.

In 1964 the Nickel Plate Road and several other mid-western carriers were merged into the larger Norfolk and Western Railway (N&W). The goal of the N&W expansion was to form a more competitive and successful system serving 14 states and the Canadian province of Ontario on more than 7,000 miles of rails. The profitable N&W was itself combined with the Southern Railway, another profitable carrier, to the form Norfolk Southern Railway in 1982.

Sheffield line shack on the Nickel Plate Road at Harris Road, circa 1970 (painting by Tim O'Connor)

