

THE VILLAGE PIONEER

Journal of the Sheffield Village Historical Society
& Cultural Center



SEASON'S GREETINGS



Coming in 2015—Sheffield Lake, Sheffield Village, and Sheffield Township have joined together to Celebrate the 200th Anniversary of their founding. Sheffield Artist Tim O'Connor has prepared this attractive Emblem depicting the journey of our pioneer founders.

Sheffield Bicentennial—Coming in 2015

A month before the Ghent Peace Treaty ending the War of 1812 was ratified (February 1815), Captain Jabez Burrell and Captain John Day of the Massachusetts Militia purchased Township No. 7 in the 17th Range of Townships in the Connecticut Western Reserve from Revolutionary War General William Hart of Saybrook, Connecticut. Selling their farms nestled in the Berkshire Mountains at Sheffield, Massachusetts, they journeyed to the new State of Ohio with a group of friends to found the settlement they named in honor of their former home.

Now, nearly 200 years later, their original Sheffield settlement survives as three communities—the City of Sheffield Lake, the Village of Sheffield, and the Township of Sheffield. Recognizing their common heritage, these communities have come together forming the Sheffield Bicentennial Commission to plan and carry out a year of celebrations commemorating the rich heritage given to us by stalwart pioneers.

In the spring and summer of 2013, each of the three communities passed ordinances or a resolution establishing the Sheffield Bicentennial Commission and appointing a representative commissioner. The Commission's mission is to recognize and celebrate the 200th Anniversary of our 1815 founding. Throughout the year of 2015, the Sheffield Bicentennial Commission is charged with commemorating, celebrating, and memorializing the founding of our three communities and the accomplishments of those individuals who have resided here and endeavored to make our communities prosper. The goals of the Bicentennial Celebration are to promote and preserve our shared cultural heritage and enhance mutual benefits to all of our citizens.



Representing their respective community, Sheffield Lake appointed City Councilman-at-Large, Steve Kovach; Sheffield Village appointed Sheffield Village Historical Society President, Eddie Herdendorf; and Sheffield Township appointed Township Trustee, Chad Parsons to the Bicentennial Commission. These three commissioners constitute the planning/steering committee.

One of the first tasks of the Commission is to establish a set of committees to undertake the planning and execution of the celebrations. To this end the following committees and their roles have been proposed:

Steering Committee—Bicentennial Commissioners—Role: (1) to provide planning, direction, and harmony for the Bicentennial Celebrations, (2) appoint and oversee committees, and (3) report progress to the governments of Sheffield.

Chair—Eddie Herdendorf (440) 934-1514 herdendorf@aol.com

Steve Kovach (440) 949-8346, (440) 724-9042 [cell] 1skcouncilatlarge@gmail.com

Chad Parsons (440) 225-6002 chadparsons2@aol.com

or chad.parsons@sheffieldtownship.com

Finance Committee—Role: (1) to maintain fiscal management of the Bicentennial Celebrations, (2) receive, account for, and disperse funds as directed, and (3) prepare and file required tax filings.

Chair—Karen Davis (440) 934-2266 karen_l_davis@keybank.com

Celebrations Committee—Role: (1) to inventory traditional events in each community and propose new special events to take part in the celebration year, (2) to develop a calendar of Bicentennial events in conjunction with the Planning/Steering Committee, (3) formulate specific goals and activities for each event, and (4) establish subcommittees to undertake the management and conduct of each event.

Chair—Steve Kovach (440) 949-8346, (440) 724-9042 [cell]

1skcouncilatlarge@gmail.com

Promotion Committee—Role: (1) to advertise and publicize the objectives and events of the Bicentennial Celebrations, (2) design and distribute informational materials on the various celebrations, and (3) establish traditional media contacts and develop social media messages to inform citizens of Bicentennial celebrations and opportunities.

Chair—John Edwards (440) 949-2491 edwardsonthelake@gmail.com

Sponsorship Committee—Role: (1) to seek sponsorship and grant funds necessary to support events and publications, (2) develop “in-kind” support from businesses and organizations, and (3) create incentives for sponsorship of Bicentennial activities.

Chair—Chad Parsons (440) 225-6002 chadparsons2@aol.com

or chad.parsons@sheffieldtownship.com

Heritage Committee—Role: (1) to conduct research on the historical and archaeological foundation of Sheffield, (2) prepare illustrated historical accounts for the media (in conjunction with the Promotions Committee), schools, and public, and (3) establish a lecture series on the history of Sheffield.

Chair—Eddie Herdendorf (440) 934-1514 herdendorf@aol.com

Schools Committee—Role: (1) to promote Bicentennial educational opportunities in the schools, (2) provide educational materials and teacher workshops related to the Bicentennial, and (3) establish student projects designed to enhance “Sheffield Heritage.”

Chair—Sandy Jensen (440) 949-5819 sjensen@sheffield.k12.oh.us

or sawbear.JENS@centurytel.net

Metro Parks Committee—Role: (1) to coordinate Bicentennial activities within the Metro Parks facilities, (2) establish Bicentennial-related programs in the Metro Parks, and (3) research Metro Parks resources for the history of Sheffield.

Chair—Aimee Potonic (440) 949-5200 ext. 225

apotonic@metroparks.cc

These committees are now in the process of being formed and beginning the assigned tasks. **All of the committees are looking for enthusiastic members who would like to participate in the planning and execution of this exciting year of events.**

Bicentennial Planning

Please contact any of the committee chairs listed above if you would like to serve on a committee or contact Eddie Herdendorf if you have suggestions for additional committees or ideas for celebration events or other activities.

Some of the things that have been accomplished so far or are being planned include:

- Creation of a Sheffield Bicentennial Emblem by Sheffield Artist, Tim O'Connor (displayed as the cover illustration of this issue).
- Bicentennial Celebration headquarters established at the Sheffield History Center, 4944 Detroit Road, Sheffield Village (open Tuesdays 11:00 am to 2:00 pm & Thursdays 6:00 to 8:00 pm or by appointment with resident researcher, Kathy Yancer at 216-543-3651).
- Establish a Heritage Scholarship Endowment in the Sheffield high schools.
- Plan for a major opening ceremony (spring) and a closing celebration (fall).
- Preparation of a comprehensive and well illustrated history of Sheffield.
- Dedication of a durable monument at an appropriate location in Sheffield commemorating our 200 year history.

The Bicentennial Commission is developing plans for a series of events to take place throughout the year. These will incorporate traditional events from each community plus, special celebrations to commemorate the Bicentennial. Tentative plans:

Anchor Events (2015)

Bicentennial Prelude Celebration—New Brookside High/Middle School—April

Recognition of Sheffield Heritage and Aspirations for the Future

Community Days—Sheffield Lake—July

Parade on Lake Road and Fireworks over Lake Erie

National Night Out—Sheffield Township—August

Picnic and Public Safety Demonstrations at St. Lads

Bicentennial Finale Celebration—French Creek Nature & Arts Center—September

Dedication of Monument to “Sheffield Heritage”

Special Events (2015)

Road to Freedom Program—Lorain County Metro Parks—April

Sheffield Dramatic Performance—TrueNorth at French Creek—spring

Sheffield Civil War Veteran’s Commemoration (Civil War ended 150 years ago)—April

Historical Society Yard Sale—Bicentennial Fundraiser—Mother’s Day Weekend

Historic Cemetery Tours—Garfield, St. Teresa, Township—Memorial Day

Nature Walks & Talks—Lorain County Metro Parks—spring, summer, & autumn

Search for 1850s Historic Homes Sites—All Three Communities—Spring & Summer

Archaeological Dig—Burrell Homestead—Cleveland Museum of Natural History—June

Historic Preservation/Landmark Tour—Notable historic buildings—June

Pet Parade w/costumes and prizes—Community Days, Sheffield Lake—July

“Sheffields” Community Night—Crusher Stadium, Avon—summer

Sheffield Homecoming Picnic—Burrell Homestead—August

Sheffield Heritage Project Displays—Clearview High School/Elementary Schools—fall

Lorain County Historic Preservation Exhibit—Brookside High/Middle School—October

Lecture on Pioneer Architecture—Cleveland Preservation Society—October

Harvest Festival on the Lakeshore—Sheffield Lake—October

Veterans Day Commemoration (Sheffield Veterans)—November

Time will pass very quickly, so it is important that we proceed expeditiously with plans for the celebration, promotions of the events, and generation of the funds/sponsorship needed for our 200th Anniversary. In looking back at the history of Sheffield, we can all be extremely proud of our heritage and thrilled by the opportunity to celebrate it and rededicate our efforts to a prosperous future.



Patsy Hoag & Ricki Herdendorf, Historical Society Secretary and Treasurer, respectively, announce the Sheffield Bicentennial Celebration coming in 2015 during the Sheffield Lake Community Days Parade on July 11, 2013.



Original Survey of Sheffield Township

Once known simply as Township No. 7 of the 17th Range of Townships in the Connecticut Western Reserve, the first settlers of European stock named it Sheffield in honor of the town they left behind in Massachusetts. That was 1815 and Lorain County had not yet been formed. The new settlement straddled the Black River junction of Cuyahoga County on the east and Huron County on the west. When Lorain County was organized in 1824, Sheffield Township was the first to be accepted for incorporation by the commissioners of the new county.

In the original surveys of the Connecticut Western Reserve each township was five miles square, except along the coast of Lake Erie where the northern boundary was the lakeshore. The ranges, or south to north tiers of townships were numbered from the Pennsylvania Line westward and the townships in east to west rows were numbered from the bottom (south) up to the lakeshore. Thus, utilizing this matrix, Sheffield is designated as Township No. 7 of the 17th Range.

The original Sheffield Township consisted of 113 lots, encompassing a land area of approximately 23.69 square miles (15,161 acres). The lots, which are still referenced in all parcel deeds, are generally arranged in 10 south to north tiers, with Lot 1 at the southeast corner and Lot 113 in the southwest corner. These lots average about 134 acres each, but vary from as little as 44 acres (Lot 92) to as large as 233.5 acres (Lot 51). Seth Pease directed the surveying of the Western Reserve west of the Cuyahoga River for the Connecticut Land Company. Abraham Tappan ran the township lines between the Cuyahoga River and the Firelands in 1806 and Almon Ruggles finished laying the tracts in the Firelands [now Erie and Huron Counties] in 1807.

Changes in the Township Boundary

In 1875, Lots 51 and 52 (292.5 acres) at the northwestern edge of Sheffield Township were transferred from the township to the Village of Lorain in Black River Township. Again in 1894, large

portions of the western area of Sheffield Township were annexed by the growing City of Lorain to accommodate the Johnson Company steel plant being built on the west side of the river near the center of the township (Lots 81-98). At the same time, Lots 46-50 and 53-57 at the northwest corner of Sheffield Township were also annexed by Lorain.

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

The Village of Sheffield Lake, the community east of the Black River, decided to further divide in 1933. The south end had a sparse population and large farms, while the north end along Lake Erie had a greater population living on small parcels. The interests of these two segments of the village were found to be incompatible and the residents of the southern lots voted to withdraw, forming the Township of Brookside and a year later the Village of Sheffield. Over the years, the City of Lorain has annexed addition portions of Sheffield Township, including Lots 99 and 100, as well as portions of Lots 77-80, 101-106, and 109-111.

In 2013, of the original 113 lots first surveyed in 1806, the following 81 lots remain totally or partially located within the three communities:

<u>Village of Sheffield</u>	<u>City of Sheffield Lake</u>	<u>Sheffield Township</u>
Lots 1-31, 58-74	Lots 32-45	Lots 75-80, 101-113

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

Journeys of the Founding Pioneers to Sheffield

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

Captain Joshua Smith

Captain Smith accompanied Captain Jabez Burrell, Isaac Burrell, and Captain John Day in their exploratory journey to Township No. 7 of the 17th Range of the Connecticut Western Reserve [later Sheffield Township] in June 1815 to select lots for themselves and friends. The township had been surveyed in 1806 by

agents of the Connecticut Land Company, establishing 113 lots of various sizes ranging from 44 to 233.5 acres.

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

Captain Smith and Douglas fitted out a yoke of oxen and wagon packed with tools necessary for clearing and cultivating a new farm. Captain Smith also took along his favorite horse. They followed the Mohawk

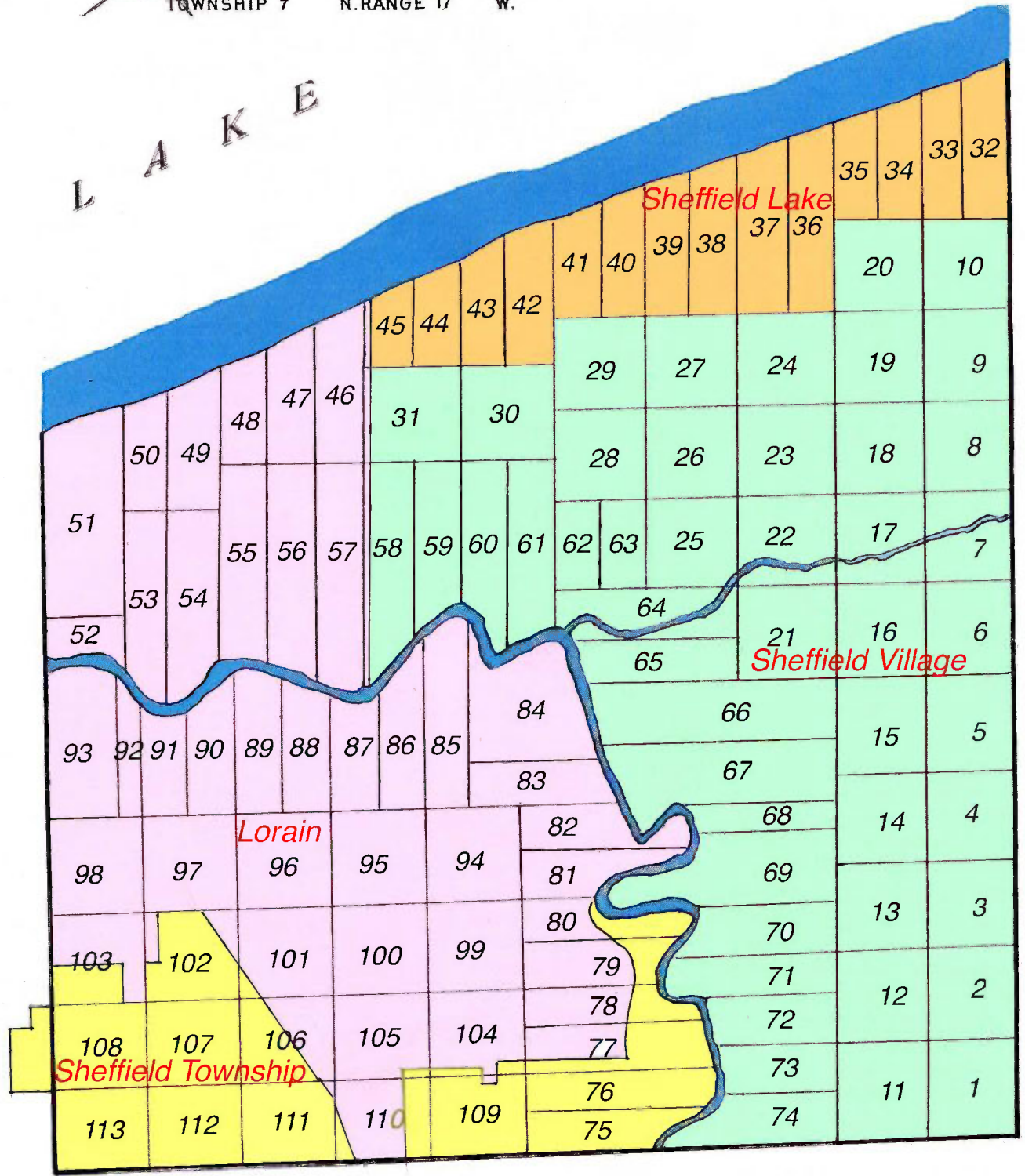


Joshua Smith (1771-1817) gravestone in Garfield Cemetery with War of 1812 historic marker; Sheffield's first permanent settler.

MAP OF
SHEFFIELD
 TOWNSHIP 7 N. RANGE 17 W.

E R I E

L A K E



Sheffield Township as originally surveyed into 113 lots when Captains Jabez Burrell and John Day became proprietors in 1815. Color-coding indicates the City of Lorain and the three Sheffields as they exist today.

Valley to Oneida Lake, at which point Captain Smith left Douglas to pursue the tedious journey alone, while he rode north to visit friends at Sackets Harbor on the Lake Ontario shore, assuring Douglas that he would rejoin him before he reached Ohio. Captain Smith was a veteran of the War of 1812 and saw action defending Sackets Harbor and repelling a British invasion of that strategic lake port.

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

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

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

In the fall of 1816, Captain Smith traveled back to Massachusetts for his wife Martha and the rest of his family of seven other children—Isaac, Rachel, Eleazer, Harvey, Warren, Caleb, and Reuel. They returned to Sheffield in March 1817. Ariel Moore, also of New Marlborough, joined Captain Smith for the journey to Sheffield and settled on Lot 56 with his wife and three children—Lorinda, Lovina, and Abigail.

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

Henry Root Family

Henry and May Day Root with their six children—Aaron J. (14), William Henry (12), Julia Ann (10), Jane (8), Frances (6), and Mary (4)—departed Sheffield, Massachusetts on February 15, 1816 to start their journey to—the *land of promise to all New Englanders, the Connecticut Western Reserve*. Inside their canvas-covered wagons were the parents (Henry, age 49 and Mary, age 44) and the children aged between 4 and 14. William writes years later—*It was sad parting from a pleasant home and from kindred and friends, to enter upon a difficult journey and the privations and hardships of pioneer life*.

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

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

Mary fed her family from the *provision chest* carried in the wagon and made beds at night with bedding brought with them. After over five weeks they reached a small village called Cleveland—*six miles north of the village of Newburg*.

William marked down some observations about the towns along the way—Albany was a bustling city with a population of 7,000;

Buffalo was a town of 200 or 300 people; and other communities such as Erie, Pennsylvania and Cleveland were even smaller.

When they reached the Rocky River, it had to be crossed without the benefit of a ferry. The river was four or five feet deep and had a strong current. Without mishap the Roots crossed the river, but then encountered another problem—the almost vertical wall of shale on the west bank had to be surmounted. With exhausting effort the family fought their way to the top of the bluff, wagons still in tact.



Mary Day Root (1772-1856), one of the first women to settle in Sheffield; buried in Sheffield's Pioneer Cemetery, East River Road.

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

The journey of the Henry Root Family, made by wagons drawn by horses and oxen, covered approximately 600 miles in 42 days. As devout Congregationalists, it is likely they did no Sunday traveling. This means they probably averaged a little better than 15 miles a day. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that Henry Root was a masterful hand with an ox goad [spiked stick used for driving stock].



Former Burrell Homestead in Sheffield, Massachusetts (September 23, 2013).

Henry and his family shared the shanty of Captain Joshua Smith for three weeks, while they built a log house for themselves on Lot 17 along French Creek near the southwest corner of present day Abbe Road and Colorado Avenue, not far from where St. Teresa Catholic Church now stands. On July 27, 1816, Mary Day Root welcomed her brother, Captain John Day, his wife Lydia (Austin) Day, and their nine children—William, Rhoda Marie, John, Norman, Fanny, James, Lydia, Kellogg, and Frederick—to her rude home. In all, 19 people crowded into the limited quarters until Captain Day could prepare lodging for his family.

To the boys, Aaron and William, the broad blue lake, the majestic forests, and the wild, strange scenes were like a story of romance. They helped their father clear the forest and build a home. Eventually, Aaron would ply the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean as captain of sailing vessels and steamships and even carry runaway slaves to freedom in British Canada, while William would become the auditor of Lorain County and build an elegant Greek Revival home for himself and family along the lakeshore in Sheffield Lake at the foot of the road that now bears his name.

Captains Jabez Burrell and John Day Families

Captains Jabez Burrell and John Day purchased Township No. 7 of the 17th Range from General William Hart of the Connecticut Land Company in January 1815. In June of that year they journeyed to Ohio on horseback to select lots for themselves and friends. The arduous trip was enough to persuade the two that they would not enjoy traveling the length of New York and half the length of Lake Erie by oxcart.

On their return to Massachusetts, they engaged seaman Anon Harmon of New Marlborough to build a boat at Schenectady, New York in which they might ship their belongs to the *promised land* of Ohio. In the spring of 1816 the schooner *Fire Fly* was launched in the Mohawk River at Schenectady. She was a small, half-decked schooner of about 15 tons burden.

When word reached Captains Burrell and Day in Sheffield, Massachusetts that the *Fire Fly* was almost ready, they sold their Berkshire farms, loaded household goods, farm implements, and large families into horse- and ox-drawn wagons and freighted them over the Berkshire Mountains and across the Hudson River to Albany, New York. They continued up the Mohawk Valley and over the “big hill” to Schenectady. There, the heavy household and farm items were stowed aboard the *Fire Fly*. Burrell and Day were captains in the Massachusetts Militia, not maritime captains. Not wanting to risk their families on the little schooner, they opted for heading west with their wives and children by wagon using just horses instead of the slow moving oxen while the *Fire Fly* took the water route.

Meanwhile, Captain Harmon and his small crew half sailed and half rowed up the Mohawk River. There were locks at Little Falls, built in the 1790s, to raise the schooner above the falls to the upper river. From there she was rowed and pulled to Rome, New York where the Rome Canal led into Wood Creek, which flowed to Oneida Lake. The crew spread the *Fire Fly*'s sails in earnest for the first time and cruised across 22-mile-long lake. At the lower end they navigated down the lake's outlet, the Oneida River, to the



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



Mohawk River at Schenectady, New York showing the type of boat, Fire Fly, built by Captain Anon Harmon to transport Burrell and Day goods (courtesy of Schenectady Historical Society).

Oswego River at Three Rivers, and then the craft floated some 20 miles downstream to the port town of Oswego on Lake Ontario, the oldest freshwater port in the United States.

Lake Ontario looked immense and daunting to the crew of the *Fire Fly*. The little craft hugged the south shore all the way to the mouth of the Niagara River, a voyage of 150 miles. Again using her sweeps [long, heavy oars], the crew rowed the seven miles up the river at Queenston, Ontario. Although the War of 1812 had only ended a year and a half earlier, Canadian workers were on the docks and eager to sell services to their former enemy. The portage past the lower rapids, the Falls, and the upper rapids was easier on the west (Ontario) bank of the Niagara River, where a crude path

passed as a wagon road. Captain Harmon unloaded his cargo into wagons and drew the schooner out onto cart wheels. The *Fire Fly* was dragged laboriously up the escarpment and around Niagara Falls. At Chippewa, above the Falls and rapids where the Welland River meets the Niagara, the *Fire Fly* was launched again.

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



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



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

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

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



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

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

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

Milton Garfield

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

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



Milton Garfield (1792-1862) monument in Garfield Cemetery; Sheffield's first settler on North Ridge and a colonel in the Ohio Militia.

Log of Early Settlement

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

1812

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

1815

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

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

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

1816

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

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

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

April—Milton Garfield of Tyringham, Massachusetts—Lot 73

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

April—A. R. Dimmick—Lots 75 & 76

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

April—Willis Potter—Lot 1

July 27—Captain John Day & wife Lydia Austin Day & 9 children: William, Rhoda Marie, John, Norman, Fanny, James, Lydia, Kellogg, & Frederick [2 more children born after arrival: Edmond A. & Eleanor] from Sheffield, Massachusetts—Lot 66

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

Log of Early Settlement (continued) 1817

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

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

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

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

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

Spring—Daniel Perry, Esq. & wife & 9 children: Polly, Harvey, Sophia, Alexander Hamilton,

Royal, Julius, Lester, Bushrod, & William from Vermont to the mouth of the Black River in 1810 [sold farm there and moved to Sheffield]—Lot 22.

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

June—Samuel Munson—Lot 72

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

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

1827

The first census in Lorain County was taken twelve years after the first permanent settlers arrived in Sheffield Township. In 1827 the adult male population of Sheffield consisted of 45 individuals:

Theodore Bedortha (Lots 60, 62, and 64), Alva Burrell, Isaac Burrell (Lot 67), Jabez Burrell, James Burrell (Lot 75), Lyman Burrell, Robbins Burrell (Lots 21, 62, 63, and 65), George Cotton, William Cummins, Edward Day, John Day (Lots 66 and 80), John Day,

Jr., Norman Day (Lot 42), William Day (Lots 22, 25, and 64), A. R. Dimmick, Samuel Fitch (Lots 41 and 61), Abraham Flemming (Lots 75, 76, 105 and 110) James Flemming, James Flemming, Jr., John Garfield (Lots 73 and 74), Milton Garfield (Lots 72, 73, and 74), William Gead, Bela Gilbert, Wilks Gillet, Joab Goodenough, Moses Greenslit, Davis Hecock (Lots 108, 112, and 113), Erastus Hecock (Lot 85), Harry Hecock (Lot 86), Jacob Houseworth, Arden Kent, Oliver Moon, Eber Nuton, David Potter, Luther Owen, Aaron Root (Lots 17 and 31), Henry Root, William Root (Lots 31, 40, and 45), Ebenezer Sage, Douglas Smith (Lots 72 and 73), Isaac Smith, Nathan Stephens (Lot 48), Deola Wells, Simon Wicks, and Chester Wright.

The lots owned by these pioneers are not known with certainty, as the first tax map that has survived is dated 1851. For the above individuals who owned lots in 1851, those lots are given after their name. The locations of the lots are shown on the Sheffield Township map accompanying the previous article (page 5).

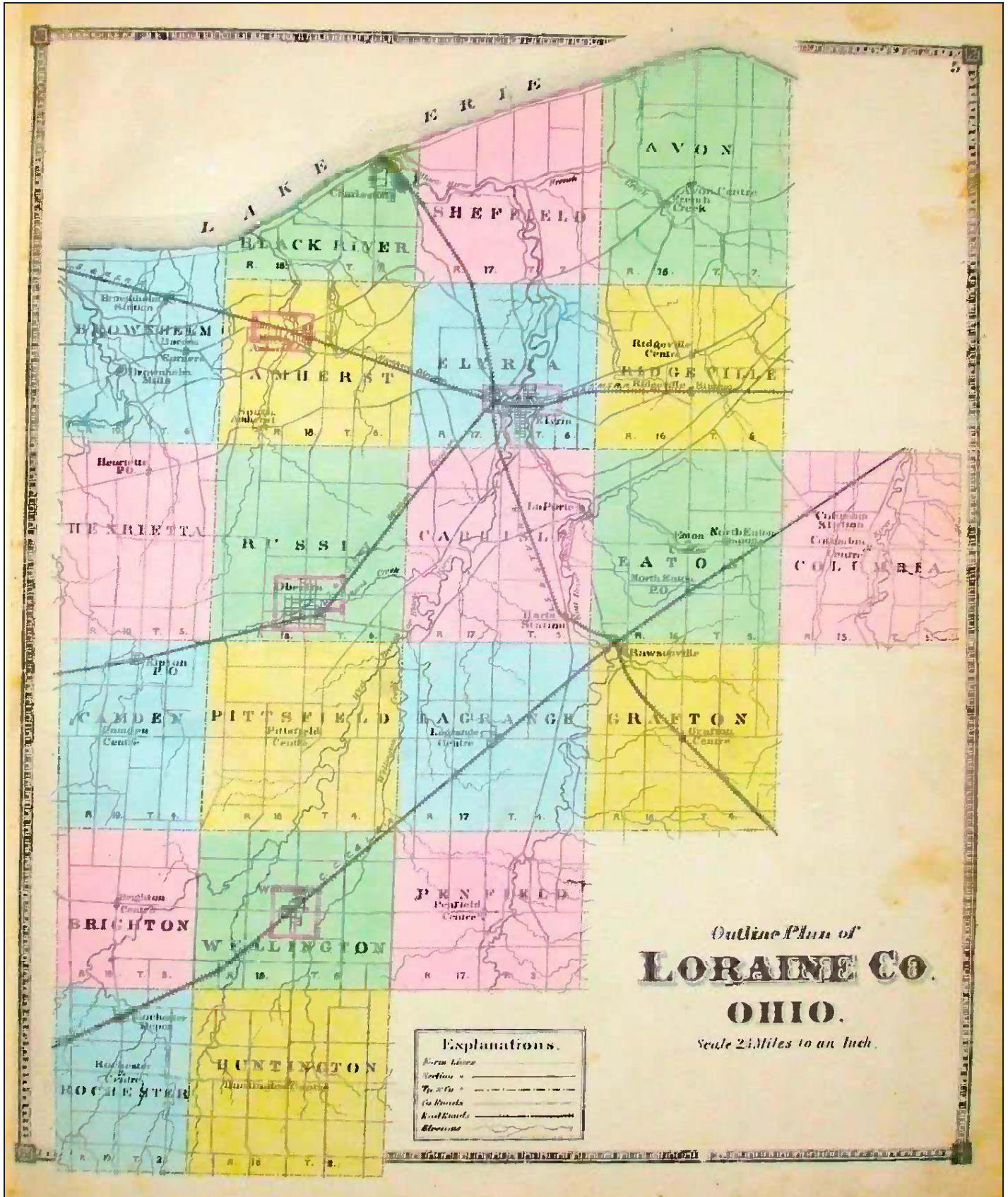
Pioneer Settlement of Lorain County

Lorain County was first organized by the Ohio Legislature on December 26, 1822 and officially went into operation on January 21, 1824. The county, as originally formed, consisted of 17½ townships. In January 1827 eight additional townships were detached from Medina County and annexed to Lorain, while half a township was lost to Cuyahoga County. Then in 1840, when Summit County was created, two townships were returned to Medina County and in 1846 two southern townships were lost to Ashland County when that county was formed. Thus, by February 1846, Lorain County consisted of 21 townships in the same configuration that exists today. Although the shape and area of Lorain County has remained the same since that time, three township names have been lost (Avon, Black River, and Ridgeville) through the incorporation of cities.

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

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

Lorain County in Its Final Configuration—1846



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

Heroism at the 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. 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.

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. The 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 that 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 of Red Hill and Harry King (Superintendent of the Ontario Power Company) Iggy was half carried,



Isaac Burrell Hecock (1895-1912),
the hero of our story.



Burrell Hecock on the Niagara River ice bridge (center), with his friend Iggy Roth (left) on the boulder (drawing courtesy of Leda Miller).

half dragged to safety on the Canadian shore. 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 tied 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 flow. 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



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

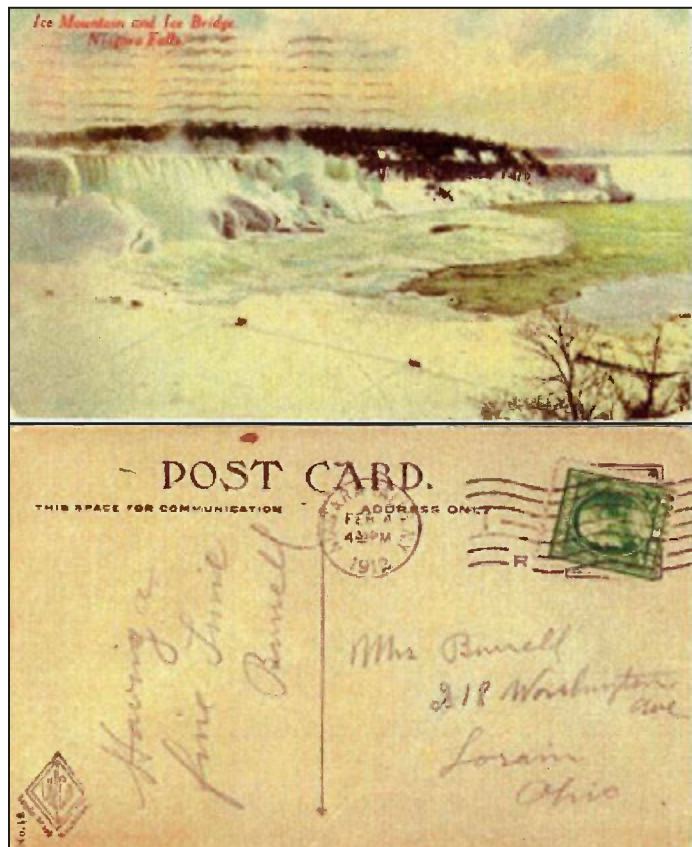
mile above the whirlpool rapids, the ice floe on which the three were borne once again broke into two sections, each about 200 square feet, the Stantons on one and Burrell on the other. As they neared the first of the lower bridges, Eldridge was seen to place his arm around Clara’s waist. Burrell waved 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 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.

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



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

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 the 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 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. 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.

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 Hanna 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!

A family party had gathered by chance at young Burrell's home Saturday evening. His grandmother, Hannah Elizabeth Burrell of Sheffield was among those in the house. As Burrell 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. When the two got to the Falls, Burrell purchased a post card of the ice-coved 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.

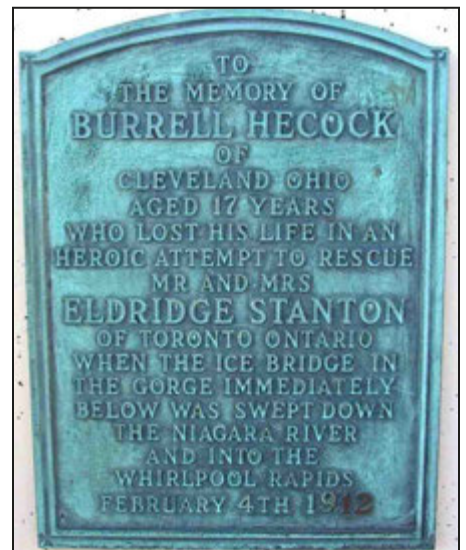
The family party, which sent Burrell off Saturday night, was still at the house when the news came. It was one of the life savers who had rescued Iggy who called the Hecock home on Sunday afternoon from Buffalo with the news that the boy had drowned. It was Burrell's father Harry who answered the telephone.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

Burrell's companion and his friend, Iggy Roth, 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."

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, Eddie and Ricki Herdendorf were visiting Niagara Falls and had taken a room for the night on the Canadian side. Eddie mentioned he had never had the chance 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. Eddie's birthday was drawing near, so Ricki decided to treat him to a cruise the next morning. While they waiting at the landing for the cruise to begin, they decided to climb a several-story observation tower at the ticket booth. Once at the top they noticed a prominent Bronze Tablet (shown below) that brought back a distant memory to Eddie—one of his grandfather Root's famous stories.



Observation tower above the Maid-of-the Mist landing, where a bronze tablet for Burrell Hecock's bravery has been placed.

The Editor is pleased to acknowledge the assistance of Society members, Marty Miller-Leveillee and Kathy Yancer, and Leda Miller in the preparation of this article. Marty and Leda are descendants of Isaac Burrell, one of the original settlers of Sheffield Village in 1817. Leda has prepared a fascinating graphic novel of Burrell Hecock at the Falls, which can be viewed at www.HecockGraphicNovel.com.

Resource information also came from Stephen P. Cain, who was a boy of 10 when the tragedy happened. The hero, Burrell, made such a deep impression on him, that 46 years later he published an account of the event in the May 1958 issue of *Reader's Digest*. Cain met reporter William R. Meldrum, who covered the story for the Associated Press—Meldrum's eyes "would become misty with sentiment as he

told of the matchless courage of young Burrell." Contemporary accounts of the tragedy were published in February 1912 by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Cleveland Press*, *Buffalo Times*, and Toronto's *Canadian Churchman*, as well as an August 1912 article by T. J. Thomas in *The World Wide Magazine*, titled "A Death-Voyage at Niagara."

Uncle Red—Tribute to a World War II Veteran

Uncle Red really wasn't my uncle at all. The closest he came was being the high school beau of Aunt LaBerta, my dad's younger sister. He was dad's best man and LaBerta was mom's maid-of-honor in 1938. Yet, in spirit, he was all the great things an uncle should be. His real name was Clyde Cumberland, but his wavy red hair took precedence.

He lived with his parents in Sheffield Lake through high school at Brookside and moved with them to West 31st Street in Lorain soon after graduation. I remember seeing a photograph of their grave with the same date of death carved on the headstone, but I don't recall being told how they died. Anyway Uncle Red, being their only child, inherited the Lorain house.

World War II was approaching and Uncle Red was drafted into the Army, leaving the house vacant. At the time I was about 18 months old and my parents were renting a house from Mr. Cotton, near the railroad tracks on Lake Breeze Road. Red offered the use of his house to my folks if they would take care of it while he was in the service. Dad was earning only about \$20 a week, so the offer was very attractive.

Uncle Red was a tall, good-looking, affable man who did well in the military. After war was declared he was stationed in the European theater where he rapidly rose through the ranks to Master Sergeant. During the "Battle of the Bulge" officers were being lost at such an alarming rate that Uncle Red was given a Battlefield commission to 2nd Lieutenant. He wrapped his hard-won sergeant stripes in a small packet and mailed them home to me. With great pride mom sewed them on my little soldier uniform for my fifth birthday photograph. Growing up during wartime is obvious from my birthday photographs. Each year I sported a different branch of the armed services.

Letters from Uncle Red were always a great treat when they arrived, although there were many black spaces where the censors had cut out some details that may have been helpful to the enemy if they were intercepted. One particular letter even had a map drawn with colored pencils that showed where a battle had taken place.

At home we all tried our best to help with the war effort. Mom took a job at the Lorain Brass Company operating a lathe to make parts for B-29 bombers. Dad continued to work at Grandpa Herdendorf's Standard Welding Company where much of their

work involved repairs and maintenance of vehicles for the National Tube Company, which was engaged in defense manufacturing. Dad even planted a Victory Garden in our backyard and rode a bicycle to work to save gas. We collected used grease and lard, and flattened tin cans to deliver to the local grocery store. Many commodities such as gasoline and sugar were rationed and could only be purchased with special stamps. In school, a quarter a week was collected by the teacher toward the \$18.75 needed to buy a \$25 Defense Bond. Dad too was eventually drafted and was bussed to the Cleveland Induction Center for his physical. At the military commissary there, he was able to buy us a whole box of Hershey candy bars, something I had not seen before. Fortunately the war ended before he was called up and dad did not have to leave us.



Clyde Cumberland in his U.S. Army uniform during World War II (1942).

Uncle Red escaped serious injury and returned home in late 1945. He moved into an upstairs bedroom and converted the small garage into a warehouse food distribution business he planned to operate. He bought a wood panel truck and sold spices and other specialty items to local grocery stores in the Lorain County area. It was great fun to ride along with him as we visited small ethnic stores with strange meats and odd-looking produce hanging from the ceilings. They were certainly different than the corner store and local area where mom shopped.

A few years after Uncle Red's return, Grandpa Root gave mom and dad an acre of land in Sheffield Village on which to build a house. We moved into my grandparent's house for a year while dad built the house—so ended my daily contact with Uncle Red.

We continued to visit when he would stop by to see the progress on the house, but slowly we drifted apart. His business eventually failed as large, chain grocery stores moved into the area. Red sold the house, moved to a small apartment, and took a job as a used car salesman. I would purchase a somewhat-worse-for-wear-1957 Ford station wagon from him in 1963, but I don't think I saw him much after that. Red never married and died alone when he was in his 50s. Somehow he was never able to recapture the glory he earned in the army. As a little boy I never understood this, all I could see in him was a war hero—and he was my uncle.

Burrell Christmas Tour

You are invited to join in a Holiday Celebration at Lorain County Metro Parks' French Creek Nature Center and the Burrell Homestead on Saturday, December 21, 2013 from noon until 3:15 pm. Visitors will have a chance to engage in Christmas arts & crafts at the Nature Center then take a short shuttle-bus trip to the Burrell Homestead to view how Christmas was celebrated by Sheffield's pioneers. Pre-registration for the 1 hour and 15 minute tour is recommended by calling (440) 458-5121.



Jabez Burrell Homestead (above), built circa 1820, is the oldest brick home in Lorain County. The brick for this elegant Federal-style house was fired from clay quarried on the property. At left, Eddie Herdendorf leads a tour for Metro Park's Victorian Christmas Celebration held at the Burrell House in December 2012.



Society Organization

The Sheffield Village Historical Society is a charitable nonprofit 501(c)(3) and educational organization dedicated to discovering, collecting, preserving, interpreting, and presenting Sheffield's rich heritage. Membership is open to anyone who wishes to support the Society's mission.

For more information contact Eddie Herdendorf, President (440-934-1514 herdendorf@aol.com), Andy Minda, Vice President (440-537-0547 anmin36@aol.com), or Patsy Hoag, Secretary (440-934-4624 phoag@me.com).

Society journals can be found on the Village of Sheffield, Ohio official website: www.sheffieldvillage.com (click on the Sheffield Village Historical Society decal , then Pioneer newsletters, and then download). Page Layout is by Ricki C. Herdendorf, EcoSphere Associates, Put-in-Bay, Ohio.

 Look for Sheffield Village Historical Society on Facebook

The collections of the Sheffield Village Historical Society are housed in the Sheffield History Center at 4944 Detroit Road. The History Center is open to members and guests most Tuesdays 11:00 am-2:00 pm and Thursdays 6:00 pm-8:00 pm or by appointment—please call Kathy Yancer (216) 543-3651. The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is **April 10, 2014, 6:30 pm at the History Center. All members are welcome to attend this meeting.**

Society members are encouraged to submit items for future issues. Please send your stories or ideas to the Editor.

Charles E. Herdendorf, Ph.D., Journal Editor,
Sheffield Village Historical Society
Garfield Farms, 4921 Detroit Road
Sheffield Village, Ohio 44054

The Historical Society is now accepting donations for our Annual Mother's Day Weekend Yard Sale.

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

SHEFFIELD VILLAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Garfield Farms—4921 Detroit Road, Sheffield Village, Ohio 44054—(440)-934-1514

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____ Email _____

- Individual (\$10.00/year)
- Family (\$15.00/year)—2 Adults & children under 18 years old
- Business/Corporate & Organization (\$25.00/year)



Tax Deductible Donation to support activities of the Historical Society: _____

Family Members (for Membership Cards) _____

Special Interests in Sheffield History? _____