



## BICENTENNIAL BULLETIN No. 12 —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](http://www.sheffieldbicentennial.org) or [sheffieldvillage.com](http://sheffieldvillage.com)***

### TENNYSON SCHOOL

(built 1948—on the grounds of the old Cleveland Beach Dance Hall)  
555 Kenilworth Avenue, Sheffield Lake, Ohio

Tennyson Elementary School in 2013



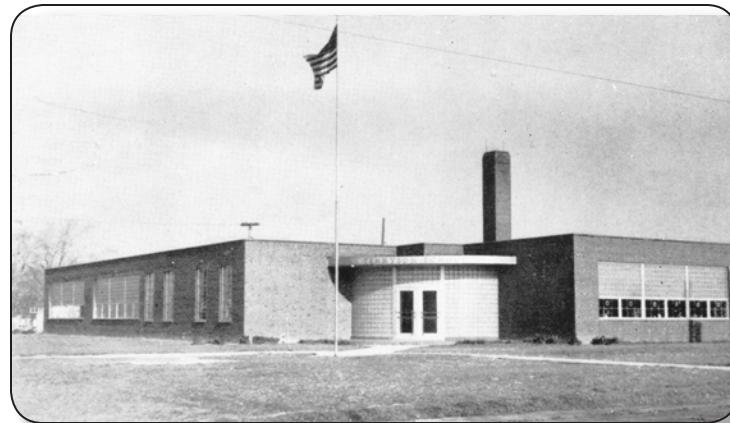
From 1923 to 1948, all public school students in the Villages of Sheffield Lake and Sheffield attended Brookside School. Soon after the end of World War II, Brookside became overcrowded with most classrooms hosting two grades at one time. The Sheffield-Sheffield Lake School Board decided to construct a new elementary school on the northeast corner of Kenilworth and Richelieu Avenues in Sheffield Lake. The site for the new school was once the location for the Cleveland Beach Dance Hall. The new school was named Tennyson Elementary School and opened its doors to students in 1949.

The old Cleveland Beach Dance Hall, located a short distance south of the Lake Erie shore, was part of the community known as Lake Breeze, a popular summer resort in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Great Depression of the 1920s and 1930s took its toll on the resort and the dance hall was closed. Many of the resort cottages were remodeled and converted to year-round homes. Nick

Kelling, a farmer from Sheffield Village purchased the old dance hall, dismantled it, and rebuilt it as a barn at his farm on the northeast corner of Abbe and French Creek Roads. His son, Cyril Kelling, took over operation of the farm in the 1950s. On May 5, 1955 the barn caught on fire. The fire was small and the barn could have been saved by the Sheffield Village Fire Department if it hadn't been for a spectator that threw a rock through a window. Brisk westerly winds whisked in the hole and fanned the embers inside causing a roaring blaze that quickly consumed the building.

Some say Tennyson Elementary School still harbors ghosts of Cleveland Beach Dance Hall. Perhaps the "Glory Days" of the old dance hall live on in Tennyson School. Demolished over 80 years ago to make way for the new school, tales of dance hall ghosts are told by several of the former teachers and custodians. Recently retired second grade teacher Jackie [Schwartz] Dembek vividly recalls hearing the shuffling of dancer's feet above her classroom in the late afternoon once the students had gone home. On another occasion, an old penny fell from somewhere

Tennyson Elementary School in 1950



Tennyson School Students in 1950



Cyril Kelling farm in 1952; barn at far right was once the Cleveland Beach Dance Hall



Cyril Kelling barn on fire, May 5, 1955



above and rolled across the floor with no apparent place of origin. Then the school clock unexpectedly fell from its prominent place on the school wall, crashed to the floor, and disintegrated. Repeated attempts to restart the clock failed—they just wouldn't work when hung in the old spot, as if time was trying to stand still so the dancers could return. However, the weirdest story comes from a former custodian who actually saw an apparition in the gym—a filmy figure cloaked in black passed mysteriously through a closed door, danced across the floor, then disappeared.

With the completion of the new Brookside High School/Sheffield Middle School complex this year, and the old Brookside High School available for elementary students, the 67-year-old Tennyson School will not longer be needed. Tennyson will likely be demolished—with the school gone, where will the ghostly Cleveland Beach dancers go?