



## **BICENTENNIAL BULLETIN No. 24** **—Sheffield Celebrates 200th Birthday**

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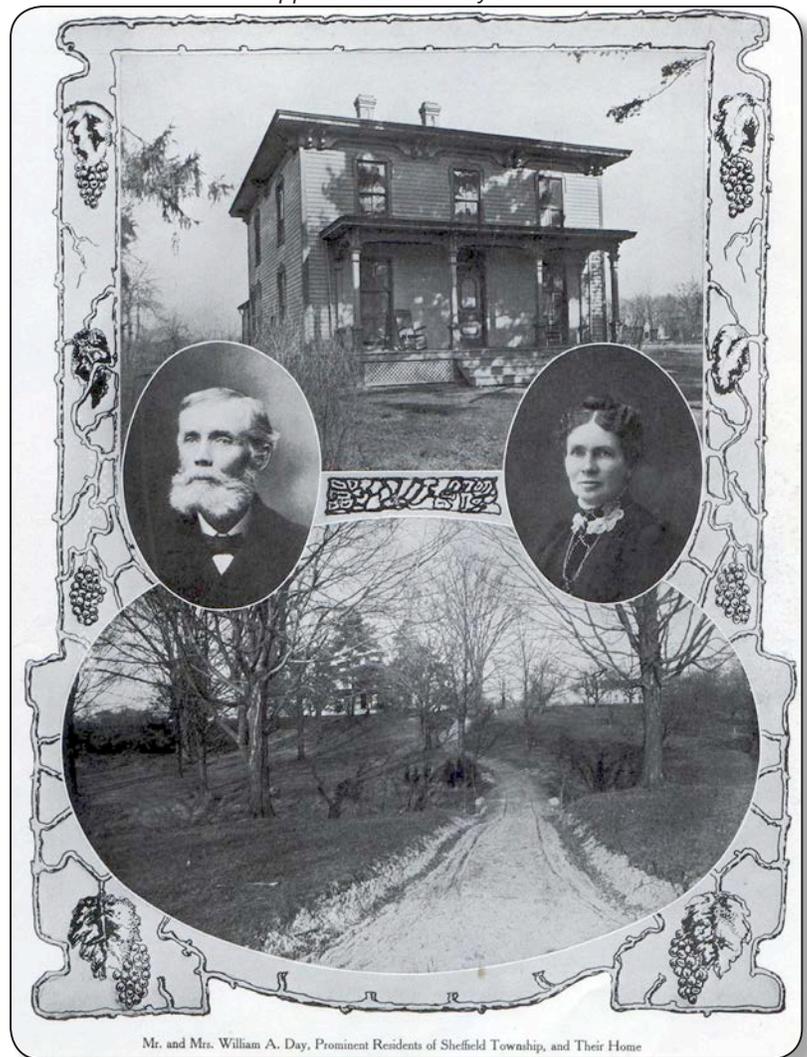
### **WILLIAM AUGUSTUS DAY HOUSE** (built 1879—elegant Italianate-style home) 2837 East River Road, Sheffield Village, Ohio

The William Augustus Day House is the only remaining house in Sheffield Village constructed by the Day Family—a founding family of Sheffield Village. Built in 1879, the house is an elegant example of Italianate-style architecture, rare for Sheffield. Its façade is virtually unchanged from the original construction. The home is still occupied by a descendant of Sheffield’s founder, Captain John Day.

After inspecting the township that he and Captain Jabez Burrell purchased in 1815, the next year Captain Day and his wife Lydia [Austin] Day built a log house for their family of 12 children, which included their eldest son William. After Captain Day died in 1827, William became the head of the family and continued to farm the land and operate a sawmill and gristmill on the Black River. William married Augusta Burrell in 1832 and their eldest son, William Augustus Day, was born in 1835. When William died in 1887, William Augustus became head of the family and continued to work the land originally settled by his grandfather.

William Augustus married Mary Steele of Oberlin in 1861. He became a prosperous farmer and real estate entrepreneur, and he and his wife were considered to be prominent residents of Sheffield Township. In 1879 they commissioned noted architect Elah Terrell to design and construct an Italianate-style home on the original family plot. Once the house was built, William Augustus and Mary traveled to Europe to purchase musical instruments and other furnishings for their new home. The house has a formality and dignity not usual in farm homes. In 2011, the William Augustus Day House was selected for Lorain County Historic Landmark designation.

Home of William Augustus and Mary [Steele] Day as it appeared in the early 1900s



Mr. and Mrs. William A. Day, Prominent Residents of Sheffield Township, and Their Home

The main part of the William Augustus Day house is two stories, of nearly square design, 32 x 34 feet, facing toward the west. A low-pitched hip roof covers the main section of the house with a flat 9-foot square platform at the center. Originally the platform was surrounded by an elaborate railing and housed twin chimneys. At the rear of the house, a two-story, gable-roofed wing, 24 x 22 feet, projects to the east at a somewhat lower elevation. Balloon-frame construction was used throughout the house, in which the studs are continuous from the foundation to the roof and the floors are hung upon the studs.

Typical of Italianate design, the windows are long and narrow and sturdy decorative brackets support widely overhanging eaves. The brackets are grouped in pairs. Particularly impressive is the wide, ornamented cornice from which the brackets extend upward. Also common in Italianate-style homes of the period (1840-1885), the façade openings are three-ranked. In this case, two windows flank a central main door on the first level and three windows on the second level.

*Architectural drawing of William Augustus Day House (1879)*



*William Augustus Day House in 1975*



The interior of the main section contains a large parlor separated from the dining room by an arched double pocket door on the south side of the house, two bedrooms and a pantry on the first floor. The ceilings are 10 feet high. In the late 1800s, the parlor served as the Sheffield Center Post Office. A 14-step staircase leads from near the main entrance to the second floor where four bedrooms are located in the main section. The kitchen and a woodshed are located on the lower level of the rear wing.

*Drive leading to the William Augustus Day House*



Another feature of the William Augustus Day House is the attractive wooded setting of the property. A long driveway leads from East River Road and crosses Day Brook via a stone bridge. The house currently sits on a five-acre parcel that adjoins the Lorain County Metro Parks' French Creek Reservation.