



BICENTENNIAL BULLETIN No. 46 **—Sheffield Celebrates 200th Birthday**

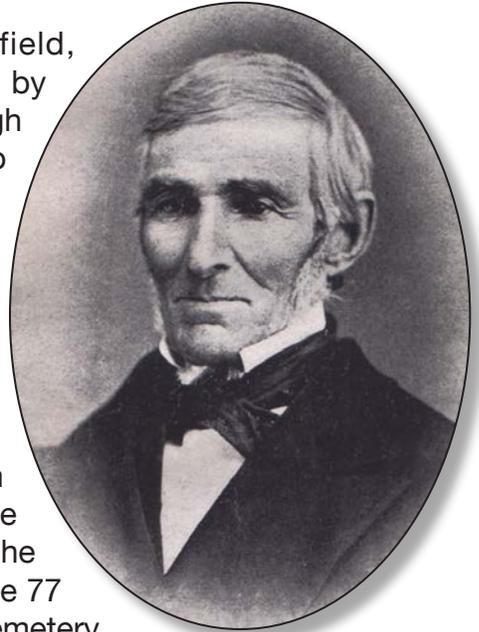
The Sheffield Bicentennial Commission will issue a *Bicentennial Bulletin* each Monday throughout 2015 that illustrates the rich heritage of our communities. **View them at — www.sheffieldbicentennial.org or sheffieldvillage.com**

NORMAN DAY (1803-1880)

—one of the first settlers on Sheffield's Lake Erie shore

Norman Day was born on August 27, 1803 in Sheffield, Massachusetts and was one of the 9 children brought to Ohio by his parents, Captain John Day and Lydia [Austin] Day. Although only a lad of 13 when the family made their wilderness journey to Sheffield, he kept a detailed journal of their trek and early days in Ohio. He and his cousin William Root, were the first to chronicle events in the early settlement.

In 1830, Norman married Julia Ann Root (1826-1889), a daughter of pioneer Henry Root (1767-1829) and Mary [Day] Root (1772-1859). Norman and Julia lived on their 117-acre farm on the lakeshore at the foot of Lake Breeze Road. Here they raised seven children. Norman's farm on Lot 42 stretched from the lakeshore to just north of the present-day railroad tracks. He built a Greek Revival-style farmhouse in the 1830s and farmed the land for five decades. Norman died on October 12, 1880, at age 77 and Julia died on January 14, 1889. They are buried in Garfield Cemetery (Block C, Lot 12, Graves 11 & 12). An impressive marble obelisk monument marks the family's resting place.



Norman Day house, built in the 1840 on the lakeshore at the foot of Lake Breeze Road



Norman Day farm on Lake Breeze Road (1870s)



Norman and Julia Day Memorial in Garfield Cemetery



Norman prepared an eyewitness account of the beginnings of Sheffield for the community's 50th Anniversary, celebrated in 1865. One of his most enduring accounts deals with a boy from the lakeshore. In the summer of 1821, Peter Miller a lad of 17 from Avon's shore, encountered a black

bear and her two cubs in the swampy wilderness while returning home to the lakeshore after laboring at Sheffield Center. On a Saturday afternoon Peter had started toward his father's house, a trek of five miles through the wilderness, and much of the way his path was near a large swamp, infested with bears. When about a third of the way through he saw the bears. Peter shouted to scare them away, but fearing for the safety of her cubs, the bear chose to attack.

Peter attempted to escape by climbing an elm tree, but the bear followed. By kicking, he repulsed the bear twice, but lost his boots in the process. On the bear's third attempt, Peter frightened and exhausted, lost his grip and he and the bear tumbled to the ground together. The bear, startled by the fall jumped a few paces away then turned toward her intended victim. Peter looked her in the eye a moment then wisely concluded his only chance was flight. Barefoot, he ran for his life back to safety in Sheffield.

Norman Day and several other settlers rallied with guns and dogs to seek revenge on the aggressor, but the bear and her cubs escaped by the time they found the elm tree. When night came and Peter did not return home, an anxious father and friends, fearing some evil must have befallen him, set out through the wilderness with lighted torches. They found him in Sheffield, well cared for and snugly in bed, having narrowly escaped a horrible death. The tale of Peter Miller's escape found its way into *McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader*, bringing some fame to Sheffield.

McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader (1836), which contains a version of the Peter Miller story

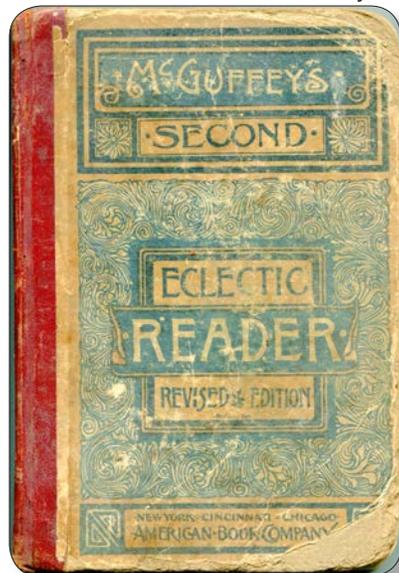


Illustration of the bear and Peter Miller from McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader



Restored Peter Miller House in Avon Lake, built circa 1830

