



BICENTENNIAL BULLETIN No. 47 **—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**

JOHNSON'S GROCERY STORE — *Sheffield Village's first business* *4802 Detroit Road, Sheffield Village, Ohio*

Earle and Florence Johnson operated a grocery store and filling station on North Ridge for nearly 30 years starting in the mid-1930s. At the time Johnson's was the only grocery store in Sheffield Village. In the 1950s an ice cream parlor was added as well as a drive-up window for sandwiches and ice cream cones. In the 1960s the store was torn down to accommodate several new homes built on the property.

Johnson's store had its birth at about the same time the Village of Sheffield came into existence— the last major subdivision of the original 1815 Sheffield Township. In 1920 Sheffield Township residents living east of the Black River voted to withdraw from the Township and form the incorporated Village of Sheffield Lake.

By the early 1930s the new Village was experiencing internal problems. The south end of the Village had a sparse population with large farms, while the north end had a dense population living on small lots. As a result this circumstance, the residents of these two segments found their interests to be incompatible. In 1933, the farmers in the south end voted almost unanimously to separate from Sheffield Lake Village. The north end remained as the Village of Sheffield Lake, while the south formed a new entity known as Brookside Township, which in 1934 was incorporated to form the Village of Sheffield. Clyde B. McAllister, a farmer from North Ridge, was elected as the new Village's first mayor.

Because the new Village of Sheffield had no public buildings when it was formed in January 1934, Mayor McAllister convened the first meeting of the Village Council in his home. In December 1934 the Village purchased the old North Ridge District No. 2 Schoolhouse from the Sheffield Township School District for \$500. This elegant Queen Anne-style red-brick schoolhouse, built in 1883 adjacent to

Johnson's Store on North Ridge (circa 1950)



Johnson's Store was a popular gathering place for local residents



Garfield Cemetery, was no longer needed with the opening of Brookside School several years earlier. In 1935 the building was converted to the Sheffield Village Hall and continues to serve that purpose (see *Bicentennial Bulletin No. 4*).

The Earle and Florence Johnson family home was located immediately to the west of the Village Hall. On the next lot immediately to the west of their home, the Johnson family built their store and soon added pumps for the sale of gasoline. Although a small building, the store was a remarkably complete grocery with meat, produce, dairy products, canned goods, personal & health articles, and some hardware items. As time went on a small neighborhood grew up around the Village Hall and the grocery store. In the 1940s a diner-style restaurant wing was opened on the west side of the store that connected to a storage shed. This feature proved to be very popular with the nearby residents and offered employment to some of the local school students. Next, at the front of the storage shed a drive-up or walk-up window has added that offered ice cream and snacks.

In the early 1960s modern shopping centers and grocery stores were opened in Sheffield Township and Sheffield Lake which attracted many of the customers that at one time frequented Johnson's store. Earle, who also served as a Brookside school bus driver, was getting on in years, so he and Florence decided to retire and sell the property. Soon after, the old store buildings were torn down and several Cape Cod- and Ranch-style homes replaced the old store.

In the 1930s the Johnsons sold Sunoco gasoline; later they handled the Fleet Wing brand



In the summer ice cream cones were sold at a drive-up window



Earle Johnson (right) with Brookside High School principal Mr. Verbanic (left)



Earle Johnson (right) with his Brookside school bus; custodian Mr. Smith (center) and industrial arts teacher & assistant coach Robert Carver (left) in 1948

