



## ***BICENTENNIAL BULLETIN No. 7*** ***—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)**

### ***SAINT TERESA of AVILA CATHOLIC CHURCH*** ***Founded in 1846***



*G*erman migration into Sheffield began in 1840. John Forster of Bayern [Bavaria], Germany arrived and purchased 50 acres of land from Captain Aaron Root, on which he built a log cabin. Other German immigrants soon arrived and settled in Sheffield. In 1842 German Catholic settlers in Sheffield petitioned the Diocese of Cincinnati for the services of a priest. In response to this request, a mission was established in Sheffield with services in the home of Johan Müller. Father McLaughlin from Holy Trinity Church in Avon provided the services, but unfortunately he did not speak the German language. In 1844, Father Francis de Sales Brunner established a seminary in Peru, Ohio for German-speaking young men from northwestern Europe [*Order of the Precious Blood*]. Father Brunner agreed to hold church services in Sheffield and French Creek every 6 to 8 weeks.

By 1845 the number of German families in who had settled in Sheffield numbered 22. They decided to build a church and received help and encouragement from Father Brunner, who organized a religious mission. Each member of the church paid \$1 toward the purchase of an acre of land from Captain Aaron Root with the understanding that he would donate another acre for a cemetery if the church succeeded, which he did in 1849. The elders of eleven of the original families are buried in Saint Teresa Cemetery—Johann Foster, Nikolas Burkard, Johann Diederich, Wilhelm Eiden, Katharina [Schuster] Kelling (widow of Johann Kelling), Johan Müller, Nichlaus Rothgery, Peter Rothgery, Peter Schneider, Mathias Schueller, and Heinrich Schwarz.

*Saint Teresa Cemetery*

On the original 1-acre plot, corner of present day Colorado Avenue and Abbe Road, the parishioners built a 24 x 30-foot log church. The church was named in honor of Saint Teresa of Avila. On June 2, 1846, the first mass in Saint Teresa of Avila Catholic Church was performed by Father McLaughlin in conjunction with the dedication of the church.



In 1852 Saint Teresa parish built a new wood frame church (40 x 60 feet) at a cost of \$1,500, which was located on the site of the old log structure. In December of 1880, Saint Teresa parish purchased an additional one-half acre of land from John Ferner for a Priest House. The next year, Father Amadeus Dambach, born in Baden, Germany, was appointed as the first permanent pastor of Saint Teresa Church. In 1883 Saint Teresa parish completed construction of a red brick Priest House at a cost of \$2,700. In August of that year, Father Dominic Zinsmayer, also of Baden, Germany, replaced Father Dambach as pastor of Saint Teresa Church. In 1885 Father Zinsmayer purchased two bells for Saint Teresa Church from Hy Stuckstede Bell & Foundry Company in St. Louis for \$282. The small bell weighed 184 lbs., while the larger one was 800 lbs.

On Sunday March 3, 1907, a sweeping fire destroyed the Saint Teresa frame church during High Mass. Parishioners carried furniture, vestments, pews, and the organ out of the burning structure, but watched in horror as the two bells crashed to the ground from the belfry. Undaunted, and receiving the Bishop's approval, the parish began excavations for a new church at the same site on March 30. The cornerstone for a Gothic-style brick church with sandstone trim was set on May 19. Red brick for the church was fired in a nearby kiln, which facilitated the rapid construction of a 250-

*Saint Teresa Parish House*



person capacity structure. The new Saint Teresa Church celebrated the first mass on Christmas Day 1907. Externally the new church measures 40 x 74 feet, and between the two towers the structure rises to a gabled roof surmounted by a Latin cross. A large square tower at the southeast corner of the church houses two new bells. The smaller bell (600 lbs.) was cast with the name *Saint Anne* on it, while the larger one (900 lbs.) was cast with *Saint Joseph* on it. Like the early bells, these were also cast at Hy Stuckstede Bell & Foundry Company.