

# THE VILLAGE PIONEER



*Journal of the Sheffield Village Historical Society  
& Cultural Center*



*Queen Anne-style gazebo on North Ridge in Sheffield, constructed in 2002 by Amish craftsmen from Berlin, Holmes County, Ohio.*

## *Amish Presence in Sheffield Village*

If you have visited Jeanette Scott's *Ye Olde Village Kountry Store* on Detroit Road, you have certainly felt the Amish presence in our Village. Delicious pies and jars of canned fruit straight from Amish Country fill her shop, and in the barn behind the store, on Saturdays, Raymond Schlabach displays his fine Amish furniture, handmade in Apple Creek. The Editor was pleased to have an enjoyable conversation with Raymond on a Saturday afternoon in late March.



*Ye Olde Village Kountry Store, 4747 Detroit Road, specializes in Amish food, furniture, and handicrafts.*



*Horse and buggies are a common sight along byways in Ohio's Amish Country (courtesy of the Ohio Historical Society).*

One doesn't have to travel far to be in Amish Country. Just south of Wellington on Ohio Route 58, you are almost certain to see the quaint horses and buggies of the Amish farmers as they make their way along the highway [please be courteous when you encounter one]. Their tidy farms are also easy to spot by the lack of electric power lines leading to their homesteads and plain blue or green cloth curtains at the windows. Driving through Amish Country, one often wonders, "Just who are these interesting folks?"



An Amish person is a member of a conservative, Protestant Christian group that originated in Switzerland as followers of Jakob Ammann, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Mennonite elder. Ammann taught that church members should dress in a uniform manner, beards should not be trimmed, and members should not attend services in a State church. He also introduced washing of the feet into the worship service, which is still practiced.

The Amish began migrating to North America in 1720, first settling in the Lancaster area of eastern Pennsylvania and later Somerset County in the western part of that state. From here in 1809, Amish farmer Jonas Stutzman (1788-1871) moved westward, settling in the fertile Walnut Creek valley of Holmes County, Ohio. This was the start of what has become the largest concentration of Amish in North America. Raymond Schlabach is honored to be a direct descendant of Jonas Stutzman, the founder of his community. Of the total population of 249,000 Amish, approximately 55,000 live in Holmes and the surrounding Ohio counties. Other large settlements are located in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and several other mid-western states, as well as Ontario, Canada.

In 1819, a group of six families embarked directly from Switzerland and settled in

Monroe County on the Ohio River, selecting hilly topography that was reminiscent of their former home. Here they established small dairy farms and engaged in the cheese industry, founding Switzerland Township in 1827. Today this region is referred to as Ohio's Little Switzerland.

The Amish are known for their characteristic clothing and nonconformist way of life. The women wear bonnets, long full dresses with capes over their shoulders, black shawls, and black shoes. Women do not cut their hair and their long

braids are put under their caps. They do not adorn themselves with jewelry. The men wear homemade plain clothes, often fastened with hooks and eyes instead of buttons, and loose fitting trousers held up with suspenders, white shirts, and broad brimmed black felt or straw hats. Nearly all the clothing is sewn at home on foot-powered treadle sewing machines. Although seemingly austere in obedience to biblical teaching, their clothing is in reality a continuance of 17<sup>th</sup> century European rural costume.

Horse-drawn buggies and wagons, as well as foot power and bicycles, are their most common modes of transportation. Old Order Amish are forbidden from owning and driving automobiles. However, they are permitted to hire a car and driver for shopping, appointments, and distant business ventures.

Those who continue the characteristic life style of the Amish are primarily members of the Old Order Amish Mennonites. Their settlements are typically divided into church districts that are autonomous congregations of less than 75 baptized members. If the population of a church district increases beyond this number, as a practical matter it must again be divided because members meet in each other's homes, as there are no church buildings. Bi-weekly services rotate from house to house, worship lasting about three hours. Some districts have special wagons that carry benches from one family home to the next for the service. Each district has a bishop, several preachers, and an elder. Holy Communion is celebrated twice each year. Adults are baptized when they are admitted to formal membership in the church, at age 17 to 20. This is generally the age at which men marry and begin to grow a beard, but no moustaches.

Each Amish district adopts *Ordnung*—a set of rules and regulations based on a literal interpretation of the *Bible* for living their distinctive lifestyle. If a baptized member strays and commits serious transgressions against the *Ordnung*, and if repeated attempts to bring about a change in behavior fail, *Meidung* or shunning can be invoked by the church leaders as a last resort. This means that the offender is told to leave the Amish faith and is cut off from further fellowship. Fortunately, if the person sincerely repents, fellowship will again be restored.

The Amish have earned esteem as excellent farmers, carpenters, and furniture makers, but they refuse to use modern farm machinery and power tools. For the Amish, farming is the occupation of choice, but in our changing world, many of the adult men have found work in local businesses and factories. With limited farmland for new generations to start farms, nearby jobs outside the homestead mean that Amish groups can maintain fellowship and face-to-face communication. Also, many local businesses are eager to hire the Amish



Jeanette Scott, proprietor of Ye Olde Village Kountry Store, dressed in traditional Amish clothing welcoming customers to her establishment.



*Amish buggy on display at Jeanette's store, Ye Olde Village Kountry Store..*

because of their reputation as honest hard workers.

Amish beliefs prohibit the use of electricity and telephones in homes and on the farm. This ban was imposed in the early 1900s over concern that adoption of these new technologies would diminish the ability of Amish to maintain themselves as a distinctive people. However, the “telephone shanty” is permitted along the highways in Amish Country for use in conducting business and to receive news from distant friends and relatives. As a compromise to using electricity from public power lines, Amish may use batteries for starting stationary engines and for running calculators, clocks, flashlights, and other workshop and household items. Amish businesses also use diesel engines for lighting and to run hydraulic and pneumatic power tools and machinery. Tradition demands that when an Amish man buys a modern farm, he removes electrical wiring and central heating/air conditioning, however, running water is often retained.

The interior of the Amish home is very clean, but simple, uncluttered

with knickknacks. Raymond Schlabach mentioned that he has made several of the furniture pieces in his home, but other items were handed down from earlier generations or acquired from other cabinetmakers in his community. The furniture in his home is often much simpler than the pieces he makes for his customers. Iron bedsteads in rather sparsely furnished bedrooms, the absence of pictures or other wall decorations, no wallpaper, carpets or chandeliers, plain curtains, and quilts without floral designs—all suggest frugality and restrained modesty. Not being used to low-hanging light fixtures, Raymond continually bumps his head on them when delivering new tables and he worries about placing freshly stained bedsteads on white carpet. Although their chinaware is plain, each new family hopes to receive dishes that once belonged to their grandparents or great grandparents.

The Amish refer to the non-Amish as “English” because it is the language used by everyone else around them. Amish church services are conducted in Palatine (High) German with a mixture of English, commonly known as “Pennsylvania Dutch.” This is also what the family speaks in the

home, while at Amish parochial schools all classes are conducted in English. Thus, Amish children essentially learn English as a second language. This insures that students completing the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, which is the highest level of education in Amish schools, can easily converse with the outside society surrounding them. In a landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1972 (*Wisconsin v. Yoder*), the Court voted unanimously to exempt the Amish from state compulsory attendance laws beyond the elementary grades. Each district independently operates a school, generally a one-room building within walking distance of the member’s farms. The typical Amish school curriculum includes reading and writing (English spelling, vocabulary, and composition), arithmetic, geography, and German. German is taught so that children don’t forget their heritage and so that they can read and understand it.

Upon graduation, generally at age 14, the boys seek work, often on their father’s farm or learning a craftsman trade. The girls may find work as teachers or clerks in local businesses, but always honing their homemaking skills.

The Amish refuse to accept any Social Security benefits because they themselves provide for the care of their elderly and infirm members. In 1961 the IRS recognized this practice and therefore Amish are not required to pay into the Social Security System. The Amish do pay all other taxes, including support of public schools, even though they fund their own schools without tax support.

Amish Country is only an hour’s drive to the south. Motoring along the scenic highways in this part of Ohio can be a rewarding experience. By understanding a little more about the lifestyle of these devoted people, it is hoped that your experience will be enhanced. If you would like to learn more about Ohio’s Amish, the Editor recommends a charming little book by George Kreps, Joseph Donnermeyer, and Marty Kreps, titled, *A Quiet Moment in Time: A Contemporary View of Amish Society*, published in 1997 by Carlisle Press, Sugarcreek, Ohio. The Avon Branch of the Lorain Public Library has a circulating copy.



Furniture barn at Ye Olde Village Kountry Store where Raymond Schlabach markets his fine, hand-crafted Amish furniture.



Examples of a Raymond Schlabach bedroom suite and a floral quilt on display in the furniture barn.



Inviting rocking chair made by Raymond Schlabach in his shop at Apple Creek, Ohio.

## The Corner of Abbe & Detroit Roads

The intersection of Abbe and Detroit Roads has undergone a dramatic transition in the past 50 years. Farmhouses and farm fields once occupied the four corners at the intersection. The farmhouses disappeared in the 1960s because they were obstructions to the widening of Detroit Road (SR 254) required for its approach to Interstate-90. Today, clockwise from the northeast corner, Sheetz convenience store/fuel station, Sears hardware store, KeyBank, and Ultimate Car Wash have replaced them. Society members, Eileen [née Brown] Craven and her brother Edward “Bud” Brown, Jr., who grew up in the farmhouse on the northeast corner, donated several of the accompanying photographs that trace the changes that have taken place at this crossroads over the past century.

Farmhouses were built on North Ridge in the mid-1800s when the Greek Revival tradition provided a design which suited both the resources of the owner and skills of the Western Reserve carpenters. They featured a central chimney around which fireplaces were built in three surrounding rooms. They also had one-story wings,

which normally contained the kitchen and a shallow porch under the roofline. The formal entrance was centered in the two-story section. The house on the northeast corner took advantage of the ridge contour with a foundation that rose to the top of the ridge in the back with a terrace at the lower level. In October 1922, ten generations after William



*Detroit Road (SR 254) about 500 feet west of the Abbe Road intersection in February 2011.*



*Intersection of Abbe and Detroit Roads in February 2011—clockwise from the northeast corner: (a) Sheetz convenience store/fuel station, (b) Sears appliance & hardware store, (c) KeyBank, and (d) Ultimate car wash.*

Brewster arrived onboard the *Mayflower*, descendant Edward Brewster Brown, Sr. (1904-1990) settled in Sheffield with his mother, Minnie May [née Brainerd] Brown (1861-1947). This took place soon after Edward's father, Wilfred Brown (1861-

1922) who had settled on Murray Ridge (Elyria Township) in 1877, was dragged to death by a team of young horses on his farm. Edward, assuming the position of male head of the family, wanted to try gardening. With his mother, he bought a

small farm of 23.5 acres on Detroit Road at the Abbe Road crossing. The farm, which included side-gable Greek Revival-style farmhouse, was purchased from the Edward Fox family.

The 1895 tax map for Sheffield Township indicates James Fox the as the owner of the property. James (1844-1919) and his wife Martha (1835-1911) are buried in Block E of Garfield Cemetery. By 1922, when the house was sold to the Brown family, James' son Edward (1877-1949) and wife Clara (1878-1954) were the head of the Fox family. Going back in time, the Fox family is known to have lived in the house in 1882, but the 1874 tax map shows that eight years earlier both the northeast and southeast corners of the present day Abbe-Detroit Roads intersection had dwellings belonging to the John Townshend family. Unfortunately, the earliest tax map for Sheffield Township (1851) does not include dwelling symbols, but at that time John Warden owned the property at the northeast corner of Abbe and Detroit Roads and he is believed to have been the original owner and builder of the house. John Warden came to this country in 1831. Sheffield Historian, Doris Burrell, reported in 1966, "It is a Sheffield legend, not yet disproved, that



*Detroit Road about 500 feet west of the Abbe Road intersection in 1966. A cabbage field is shown to the right (south) and a hay field to the left (north) on the slope of North Ridge.*



*Aerial photograph of the intersection of Abbe and Detroit Roads in 1966 showing the locations of the Edward Brown and John Townshend homes (courtesy of Lorain County Engineer).*



*Intersection of Abbe and Detroit Roads toward the east in 1966; Edward Brown house (left) and John Townshend house (right).*



*John Townshend house on the southeast corner of Abbe & Detroit Roads in December 1964.*



*Greek Revival-style house at the northeast corner of Abbe & Detroit Roads in 1882 when owned by the James Fox family. Mrs. James (Martha) Fox and her son Edward are standing near the main entrance door.*

Warden won the heavyweight boxing title in England before he emigrated to America.”

In any event, in the early 1830s John Warden purchased 35 acres of land in Lot No. 2 of Sheffield Township from General Hart’s heirs. Warden’s deed indicates that the land was surveyed by William Day, son of Captain John Day—one of the original proprietors of Sheffield, who died in 1827. John Warden and his wife Mary had at least two children: Elizabeth (born 1836) and William Henry (born 1849), who served as Lorain County sheriff from 1899-1903. William Henry is known to have been born in the house that once stood on the northeast corner, but it is not known whether Elizabeth was born there, so conservatively speaking, the house was built at least 162 years ago.



*Fox family house in 1913. From left to right, Arthur (son of Edward and Clara), Edward, James, and Clara. Martha had died in 1911. Note the main entrance door is sided over.*



*House at northeast corner of Abbe & Detroit Roads in 1946 when owned by the Edward Brown, Sr. family.*



*Brown family barn to the north of the house in 1962, located along Abbe Road.*



Edward and Leona Brown's children at their home, 5327 Detroit Road—clockwise from top left: (a) Bud, Joann, Sally, Nancy, and Marilyn (left to right) packed into Bud's toy wagon (1941). (b) Brown family daughters: Eileen, Sally, Marilyn, Joann, and Nancy (back to front) at north side of house in 1943. (c) Bud, Eileen, Sally, and Marilyn (left to right) in 1946.

In 1928 Edward Brown, Sr. married Leona Meyers (1905-1976) and here they raised their family of six children: Eileen May (b. 1929), Edward Brewster, Jr. "Bud" (b. 1931), Sara Ann "Sally" (1933-2010), Marilyn Jean (b. 1934), Joann Zittella (1936-2009), and Nancy Lee (b. 1939). Today, Bud lives in Sheffield Village not far from the original homestead, Eileen in Elyria, Marilyn in Lorain, and Nancy in St. Louis. All of the Edward Brown, Sr. family children living in Ohio are members of the Sheffield Village Historical Society.

Bud Brown recalls with fondness growing up in the house on the northeast corner of the intersection. On several occasions he has mentioned, "It was a great place

to be raised." A particularly memorable person for Bud was "Grandpa Townshend" as all the kids in the neighborhood called John Townshend, who lived on the southeast corner of Abbe and Detroit Roads. In 1930s and early 1940s when Bud was a boy, Townshend farmed the land surrounding the intersection. He didn't have a tractor, using horses to till the field and harvest the crops. He raised grass for winter feed for his livestock on the north slope of the ridge and cut it with a horse-drawn sickle-bar. Bud would delight in riding in the hay wagon with Grandpa Townshend as an attached loader thrust the hay onto the bed of the wagon by the motion of the turning wheels. The hay was taken to the Townshend barn [near where Sears Hardware is now located] where a huge set of tongs would grasp the load as horses pulled on an attached rope. This



Anton Jungbluth's hay wagon and loader of similar design to the one used by John Townshend to harvest hay fields on North Ridge in the 1930s (courtesy of Gladys Wisnieski).

would lift the hay to the top of the barn where it could then be directed to lofts on the either side of the barn. Eileen, Bud's older sister, likes to tell a story about him and his infatuation with fire. It seems that as a young boy Bud liked to play with matches and nearly caught the house afire on a couple of occasions. Bud claims it was the girls playing with candles that first caught a baby mattress on fire and later window curtains. With the mattress burning, they called the fire chief, Walter McAllister, who lived a short distance to the west on Detroit Road. Walter dashed to the house, grabbed the little mattress, and threw it out the window—ending the crisis. In later years, Bud joined the Sheffield Village Volunteer Fire Department where he eventually served as Chief from 1966 to 1990. Ironically, Bud finally got his chance to burn the old house down in 1966 when the Ohio Department of Transportation bought the house to widen Detroit Road and asked the Fire Department to set it on fire as a practice drill for the Village firefighters.

Of the historic dwelling that once stood on the corner, Doris Burrell wrote in the March 13, 1966 issue of the *Lorain Journal*, "The white house that clings to the north ridge on the northeast corner of the Abbe Road–Detroit Road intersection aged gracefully for nearly a century and a half. But progress doesn't respect age



*Chuck Gubeno's house at southwest corner of intersection being moved farther south on Abbe Road when Detroit Road was widened. This house was later torn down to make way for the Cobblestone shopping area.*



*Edward Brown, Sr.'s home at the northeast corner of Abbe & Detroit Roads in 1964, two years before the widening of Detroit Road.*

or history, and the house will soon become a victim of progress. The site soon will be teeming with activity of giant earthmovers, as preparations for a super highway begin. Residents of Sheffield hate to see it go, the Browns more than others. Its removal will destroy one more landmark of the county, one more example of early Greek Revival architecture always to be associated with the settlement of the Western Reserve." Looking at these old photographs and comparing them with today, one has to wonder if indeed progress has been made.



*Edward Brown house being burned in 1966 to accommodate widening of Detroit Road.*



*Construction of I-90 interchange at SR 254 in 1966 (view to the north), which required the widening of Detroit Road.*

## *The DeChant Farm on North Ridge*

The DeChant Farm once encompassed 75 acres on the south side of North Ridge about a quarter of a mile east of Abbe Road and an additional 24 acres to the north of Detroit Road. The sandy soils of North Ridge proved ideal for hay and row crops and later for growing tomatoes in heated greenhouses. Early records show that this part of North Ridge was surveyed as Lot 2 of Sheffield Township and was first settled by Freeman Richmond and his wife in February 1816. Mrs. Richmond has the distinction of being the first female settler in Sheffield, but she died in 1819. In April of 1816 Freeman's bother, William, also settled on Lot 2.

The 1851 Tax Map for Sheffield Township shows that Luther Owen owned 99 acres of land in Lot 2, located on both the north and south sides of North Ridge. A census of Lorain County in 1827 lists the Sheffield Township adult white male population at 44; Luther Owen is among those listed, but the Richmond brothers are absent. In 1865 Sheffield Historian, Norman Day, reported the owner of Lot 2 was Joseph Townshend (1811-1883). In 1858 Joseph married Sarah A. Hackett (1823-1902). Sarah is believed to have been the widow of Joseph Hackett (1808-1857). The 1874 Tax Map for Sheffield Township shows that Joseph owned 90 acres in Lot 2 and that he had a residence on the south side of the ridge. This house still stands at 5474 Detroit Road and is the home of 93-year-old Alice (née Mackert) DeChant. Alice was born in this house on November 11, 1917.

This wood-frame house was built circa 1855 by Joseph Townshend in typical Greek Revival-style with Italianate decoration, especially on the front porch. The basic proportions

of this house, its bold simple cornice on the front gable, and its main doorway with sidelights and transom windows are typical Greek Revival features. The elaborate bracketed entrance porch is Italianate, and may have been a later addition. A similarly decorated porch once existed along the east side of the one-story wing, with an entrance door to the kitchen area. The plan of the house is a "T" design with a high, two-story front gable that faces north, toward Detroit Road. The house has 6 rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 5 rooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, and a basement. The foundation is constructed of locally quarried sandstone. The interior has two white marble fireplaces and a brightly painted ceiling rosette in the front parlor, which features an outer ring of grapes on a vine and an inner ring of roses [now used as a master bedroom]. The original interior frames for the doors and windows have been retained and exhibit elaborate geometric designs at their corners. This house was listed on the Ohio Historic Inventory in 1976.

The 1896 Tax Map for Sheffield Township shows that Sarah A. Townshend owned the property and house after her husband Joseph died in 1883. When Sarah died in 1902 the farm is believed to have been purchased by the Jungbluth family.

Next, Andrew and Clara Mackert (Alice's parents) acquired the house and 72-acre farm about 1910—possibly in a trade with the Jungbluth family for two farms on Abbe Road at the French Creek Road crossing. In any case, the 1915 Sheffield Township Tax Map shows Andrew Mackert (1870-1948) as the owner. In addition to growing crops, the family raised cattle for St. Mary Seminary in Cleveland. Whenever the Seminary needed meat, the

Mackerts would butcher a steer and send it to Cleveland. The Mackerts had three children: Raymond (born 1913), Gilbert (born 1914), and Alice (born 1917). When Alice was 14, her mother Clara (1863-1931) was picking strawberries with several farm works when a rainstorm hit. They all ran under a nearby tree for shelter from the thundering storm. A nail in the tree may have attracted a lightning bolt and Clara was killed instantly. Decades later the family invited a "water witcher" to help them find a place to dig a well for irrigation. Using a dowsing rod, he paused at the place where the lightning had struck in 1929, and to the astonishment of the DeChants, the dowser gave a warning, "Beware, this is a place where lightning will strike."

In 1935, Alice married Charles P. DeChant (1914-1997), son of Edward W. DeChant (1888-1972) and Florence M. DeChant (1894-1968). Charles and Alice had 4 children: Charles (Chuck, born 1937), William (Bill, born 1939), Clara (1941-1989) and Sharon (born 1946). Charles and Alice, and later their children, operated the farm for some 70 years—first as a truck farm supplying the Cleveland market,



*Joseph Townshend House (built circa 1855), 5574 Detroit Road, the home of Alice DeChant since 1917.*



*Andrew Mackert (Alice DeChant's father), cultivating the family farm on North Ridge, Sheffield Village in 1946. Andrew was 76 years old when this photograph was taken (courtesy of Chuck DeChant). Andrew (1870-1948) and his wife Clara (1863-1931) are buried in St. Mary Cemetery in Avon.*

then in 1953 they constructed greenhouses on 3.2 acres of the farm. This was the second largest of the 10 greenhouses that once stood on Sheffield's North Ridge. Chuck DeChant is proud of their greenhouse production record—they were the top tomato grower for 7 years with the best yield/acre in the region. Chuck and Bill were able to keep the greenhouses in operation until 2003, when environmental constraints, rising fuel costs (up to \$20,000/month for natural gas), and imported tomatoes forced them to close and to demolish the greenhouses.

When Bill was a senior at Brookside High School (Class of 1957), he had decided to continue the family farming tradition. The Fisher family owned the land north of his father's farm. They offered to sell him 24 acres of farmland for \$10,000 with 10 years to pay it off with a low interest rate and a 5-year grace period. Bill farmed this land for a number of years and operated the greenhouse. When a sewer line came down Abbe Road in 1975, Bill was eventually able to gain access to this essential utility for development, which in turn made



*Young Chuck DeChant trying his hand driving the farm's Celtrac circa 1940 (courtesy of Chuck DeChant).*



*Charles DeChant driving his Ford tractor and hauls a load of cauliflower boxes and farm workers in the 1940s (courtesy of Chuck DeChant).*

possible the Village Reserve housing and business complex on his former farm.

More recently the DeChant family sold much of the old farm on the south side of Detroit Road to the Methodist Wesleyan Meadows development. The purchase agreement gives Alice life estate privileges to dwell in the old house for as long as she wishes. A few years ago Alice mentioned to the Editor that she hopes that the Wesleyan organization will continue to preserve this fine example of a mid-19th century farmhouse. The Sheffield Village Historical Society certainly echoes Alice's sentiments and encourages future developments on the farm to incorporate the DeChant homestead as a historic centerpiece. Chuck DeChant and his wife Germaine built a brick house at the east side of the property where they make their home; Bill now resides this wife Gretta in their retirement home alongside a golf course in La Quinta, California.



*Charles DeChant with his sons, Chuck (left) and Bill (right), circa 1955 (courtesy of Chuck DeChant).*



*Aerial view of DeChant Greenhouse. This view shows the final phase of construction in the late 1950s. Note the expansion of greenhouse by several units as compared to the color aerial photograph below (courtesy of Chuck DeChant).*



*Aerial view of DeChant Greenhouse circa 1952. This color view toward the southeast shows the façade of the 1855 farmhouse, several barns and other outbuildings, the initial four units of the greenhouse, and the irrigation pond that was expanded when gravel was extracted to construct the Ohio Turnpike. The pond is spring fed and can yield 16,000 gallon/minute with no more that a 4-foot drawdown (courtesy of Chuck DeChant).*

## Sheffield Cemeteries—Historical Society Publishes New Reports

The Sheffield Village Historical Society announces the completion of revised and updated cemetery inventories for Garfield Cemetery and St. Teresa Cemetery. Several years ago the Historical Society prepared reports for these cemeteries, but since then, some 30 new burials have taken place and additional decedent information has been obtained. The updated reports contain new color maps of the various blocks in each of the cemeteries as well as spreadsheet-type databases containing pertinent information on decedents.

The new and previous inventory reports are available for viewing at the Garfield Cemetery Office in the Sheffield Village Hall (4820 Detroit Road) and at the Parish Office of St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church (1878 Abbe Road), as well as at the Society's Sheffield History Center (4944 Detroit Road). The Sheffield History Center is open by appointment—please call (440) 934-1514 to schedule visits.

Four cemeteries are located in Sheffield Village. These burial grounds hold the remains of many of the individuals who founded our community and shaped its progress over the past two centuries. They are the repositories of our Village's history. The following is a brief description of these hallowed grounds.

### Garfield Cemetery

Garfield Cemetery was formally established in 1851, but the first interment in the graveyard was Joshua Smith in 1817. The present cemetery contains approximately 1,800 gravesites, of which 934 are known to be occupied. This cemetery is divided north and south into old and new sections, respectively. The old section contains 6 blocks (A through F) comprising 1,122 grave sites, while the new section has 9 blocks and a Potter's Field that totals 678 grave sites. The old section contains 101 family plots, each of up to 20 gravesites that were paid for by a tax in the 1800s. Of these 219 are unspoken for and still available to documented family members. Primarily in the new section, 438 gravesites are available for purchase from Cemetery Superintendent, Kathy



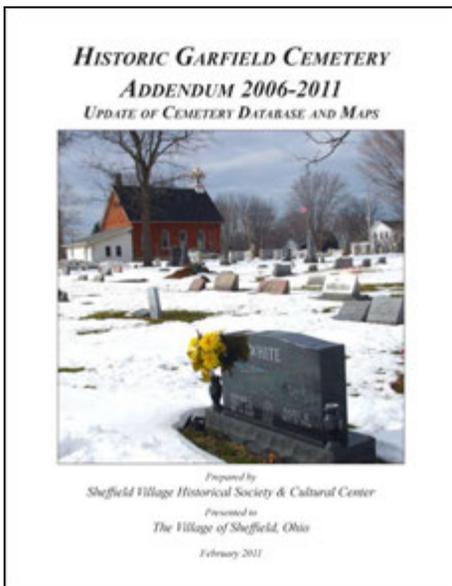
*Shirley A. Walker, Garfield Cemetery Superintendent in the 1940s and early 1950s, shown here digging a grave in 1952.*

Keefe. There are 86 additional gravesites set-aside in the Potter's Field plot for indigent residents of the Village

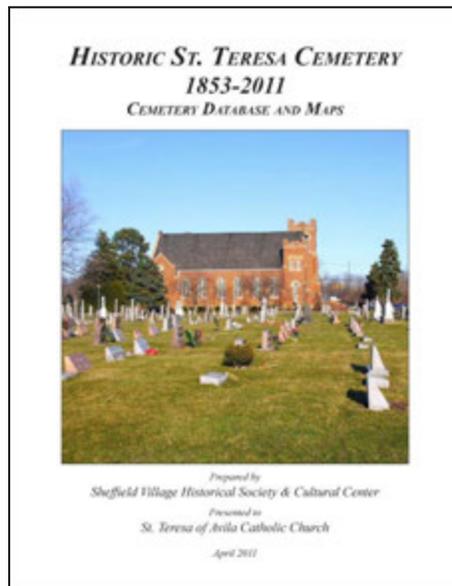
### St. Teresa Cemetery

St. Teresa Cemetery, established in 1853, contains approximately 1,350 gravesites. This cemetery is divided east and west into old

and new sections, respectively. Many of the older grave markers are either missing or the inscriptions are illegible. Thus, of the 946-recorded burials, the locations of only 806 are known with some degree of certainty. Some 530 monuments have been placed in the cemetery to honor those buried there. A digital image of each of these grave markers is on file at the Sheffield Village Historical Society. Burials are currently taking place in the new section of the cemetery. Of the approximately 650 gravesites in this section, 350 are occupied with burials and about 200 held by reservation, leaving approximately 100 available for other parishioners. Information on reserving burial sites can be obtained from Debbie Wehler in the Parish Office.



*Cover of Garfield Cemetery 2006-2011 Updated Database & Maps Report.*



*Cover of St. Teresa Cemetery 1853-2011 Database & Maps Report.*

## St. Mark Cemetery

St. Mark Cemetery, located on Lake Breeze Road adjacent to the St. Mark Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church, was established in 1984. This cemetery is designed to accommodate up to 1,000 burials. As of April 2011, a total of 31 burials have taken place in the cemetery. One of these, Vukomir Alavanja (1927-2008), was a Serbian resistance fighter during World War II and opposed Communist rule after the war. His nephew, Fr. Leontije Alavanja now serves as pastor of St. Mark Monastery Church. A statue of Serbian General Draza Mihailovic (1893-1946) stands in the churchyard near the cemetery. President Harry S. Truman honored General Mihailovic posthumously in 1948 for his bravery in supporting Allied forces during World War II.

## Sheffield Pioneer Cemetery

This early cemetery was established in 1825 on East River Road. No new burials have taken place in the Sheffield Pioneer Cemetery since 1856. The June 2009 issue of *The Village Pioneer* (Vol. 4, No. 2, pages 14 & 15) contains an article “Who’s Who in Sheffield’s Pioneer Cemetery” that profiles the 13 early settlers buried in this cemetery.



St. Mark Cemetery, 1434 Lake Breeze Road, Sheffield Village.



Sheffield Pioneer Cemetery, 3000 East River Road, Sheffield Village.

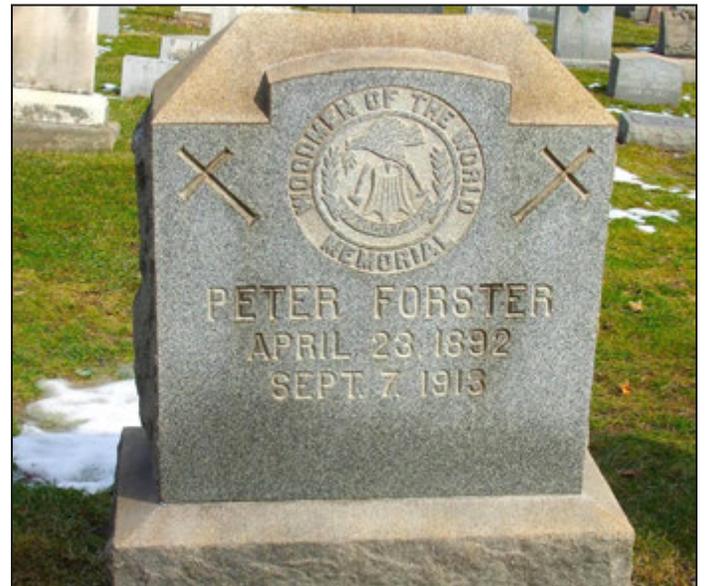
## Woodmen of the World Revisited

The March 2011 issue of *The Village Pioneer* (Vol. 6, No. 1) featured an article on an organization, Woodmen of the World, whose members were once entitled to have gravestones carved in the fashion of a tree stump or with the organization seal etched into a granite marker. The article featured young William Quayle who died at the age of 25 in 1914 and was buried in Garfield Cemetery. Recently, while the Historical Society was conducting a survey of gravestones in St. Teresa Cemetery a nearly identical stone was noted for young Peter Forster, who died at the age of 21 in 1913.

Peter Frances Forster (1892-1913) was the grandson of Johann Forster (1810-1876), the founder of the Bavarian Catholic community in Sheffield. In 1840, Johann, and his wife Anna Maria (Burkart) Forster (1810-1885), immigrated to Ohio and purchased 50 acres of land from Capt. Aaron Root near the intersection of present day Abbe Road and Colorado Avenue. Other Bavarian settlers, including the Burkart and Ferner families, soon arrived and purchased nearby land. Here, Johann and Anna Maria built a log house, established a farm, and raised their family. Their son Conrad Forster (1842-1910) was born in the spring of their second year in Sheffield. Unfortunately, a horse killed Johann in 1876. Conrad assumed leadership of the family. He married Barbara Josephine Kriebel (1840-1880) and they had a son, Johann that only survived for two months (1863), and a second son, Andrew (1874-1917).

After Barbara’s death in 1880, Conrad married Mary Otto (1851-1920) and their son was Woodmen of the World Peter Francis Forster. Conrad and Maria also had an elder son, Joseph (1884-1959) and daughter, Veronica (1887-1971). Joseph was the grandfather of retired Village Councilman and Historical Society member Ronald Forster. All of the deceased Forster family members mentioned above are buried in St. Teresa Cemetery.

Peter Foster’s involvement with the Woodmen of the World is unknown, as well as the circumstances of his death at such a young age, other than he tragically died by drowning in Lake Erie.



Gravestone for Peter Forster in the Old Section of St. Teresa Cemetery. The Woodmen of the World Memorial is carved at the top of the gray granite stone.

## Society Organization

The Sheffield Village Historical Society is a charitable nonprofit 501(c)(3) and educational organization dedicated to discovering, collecting, preserving, interpreting, and presenting Sheffield's rich heritage.

Membership is open to anyone who wishes to support the Society's mission. For more information contact Eddie Herdendorf, President (440-934-1514 [herdendorf@aol.com](mailto:herdendorf@aol.com)), Andy Minda, Vice President (440-537-0547 [anmin36@aol.com](mailto:anmin36@aol.com)), or Patsy Hoag, Secretary (440-934-4624 [phoag@me.com](mailto:phoag@me.com)).

Society journals can be found on the Village of Sheffield, Ohio official website: [www.sheffieldvillage.com](http://www.sheffieldvillage.com) (click on the Sheffield Village Historical Society decal , then Pioneer newsletters, then download).

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The collections of the Sheffield Village Historical Society are housed in the Sheffield History Center at 4944 Detroit Road. The Center is open to members and guests by appointment—please call (440-934-1514). The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is July 7, 2011, 7:00 pm at the History Center. **All members are welcome to attend this meeting.**

The Sheffield Village Historical Society Board of Trustees:

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Society members are encouraged to submit items for future issues. Please send your stories or ideas to the Editor.

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## In Memoriam

### Carl Wilkerson (1939-2011)

With deep sorrow we report the death of one of our Historical Society members, Carl E. Wilkerson, on April 12, 2011 at age 72. Carl was born in Waco, Georgia on September 27, 1938. His parents, Hugh and Jewell Wilkerson, moved to Lorain County two years later. Hugh worked as a carman for the B&O Railroad. During World War II he was worried that the "Nazis" would bomb the East Coast and the "Japs" would bomb the West Coast and both converge in Ohio, so he sent the family back to Georgia on the train where he thought they would be safe. After the war the Wilkerson family settled in the last house (west) in Sheffield on Colorado Avenue. Here Carl grew up and attended all 12 grades in Brookside School, graduating in the Class of 1957. Carl was a superb student of geography and always got the highest marks in this subject. He later got the opportunity to visit far off lands, sailing around the world several times as a Merchant Seaman. One of his sea adventures was aboard the research ship *Anton Brun* in the 1960s conducting geological studies in the Indian Ocean for the Alpine Geophysical Company.

Carl proudly served his Country in the U.S. Army. After basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky and artillery training at Fort Monroe, Louisiana and Fort Sill, Oklahoma, he was stationed in Nuremburg, Germany. He later worked as an assembler at Invacare in Elyria, and at Ames and Hills Department Stores. Carl was particular and precise in everything he did. His brother Don recalls that Carl even determined that a pair of socks consisted of a specific right and left sock and insisted on getting the right sock on his right foot. In his later years Carl lived in an apartment on Lake Breeze Road and enjoyed walking to Domanakas Library in Sheffield Lake to use the Internet and read books on his favorite topics, history and geography. In 2007 Carl and his Brookside classmates celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their graduation. Carl participated with the reunion planning committee and it was a joy for the members to see him again. He was a long-time member of the Church of God. Carl enjoyed spending time with his family. He had a large family, 4 brothers (Don, Dennis, Bill, and Al) and 5 sisters (Joyce, Shirley, Sharon, Charlotte, and Brenda). Don, Bill, Al, Shirley and Brenda survive him. Don Wilkerson and his wife Norma of Massillon and Shirley (Wilkerson) Rueter of Sheffield Lake are also members of the Sheffield Village Historical Society. Many friends and family members gathered at his funeral; he was interred on April 15, 2011 at Ridge Hill Memorial Park in Amherst Township.



Carl E. Wilkerson at Garfield Farms in January 2007, participating in a planning session for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Brookside High School Class of 1957 (courtesy of Den Davis).