

THE VILLAGE PIONEER



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



***Spring is on the way!** A vine of Morning Glories (*Ipomea purpurea*) twines its way up a trellis at Harry Root's granary on East River Road, circa 1955. His grandsons, Donald and David Hammer, admire the flowers.*

John Emerick's Hill

Sixty years ago John J. Emerick owned a farm on East River Road. John was a farmer of the “Old School” in that he used a team of horses to till the field and didn’t even own a tractor. His farm was diverse, including steers, hogs, poultry, vegetables, row crops, and grain. He and his wife Emma raised their children on their small 16-acre farm, which alone wasn’t large enough to support the family. By leasing pasture land from his neighbor, Harry Root, and cropland on the Black River flats from the National Tube Company, John was able to make a comfortable living.

Directly across from the Emerick house a farm road meandered down the riverbank to the flats below where John planted corn and grass for hay. He maintained the dirt road by periodically smoothing it with a horse-drawn grader. All of the kids in the neighborhood knew the road as “John Emerick’s Hill”— the best sled-riding hill in the area. Young and old alike would spend hours coasting on the hill, endeavoring to negotiate the steep turn at the bottom.



John Emerick (right) and Harry Root installing a drainage tile between their farms, circa 1954.

John Emerick’s Hill was just as fascinating throughout the year. Each season brought a different scene to the hill and offered a pleasant walkway to the river. Unfortunately, all this is gone now.

The property has been acquired by the Lorain County Metro Parks and a heavy iron gate with an ominous “No Trespassing” sign blocks the entrance to the hill. As one of those kids who used to play on the “John Emerick’s Hill” this doesn’t seem right to the Editor. After all, we as citizens of Lorain County are the ultimate owners of our Metro Parks, and **we should be allowed to enjoy the hill again.**



Donnie Hammer (left) and Jack Root on their way to coasting on “John Emerick’s Hill.”



John Emerick’s cornfield on the Black River flats, circa 1956.



John & Emma Emerick’s farmhouse at 4751 East River Road. This house is now the residence of the Broadway Assembly, Camp Blessing youth director.



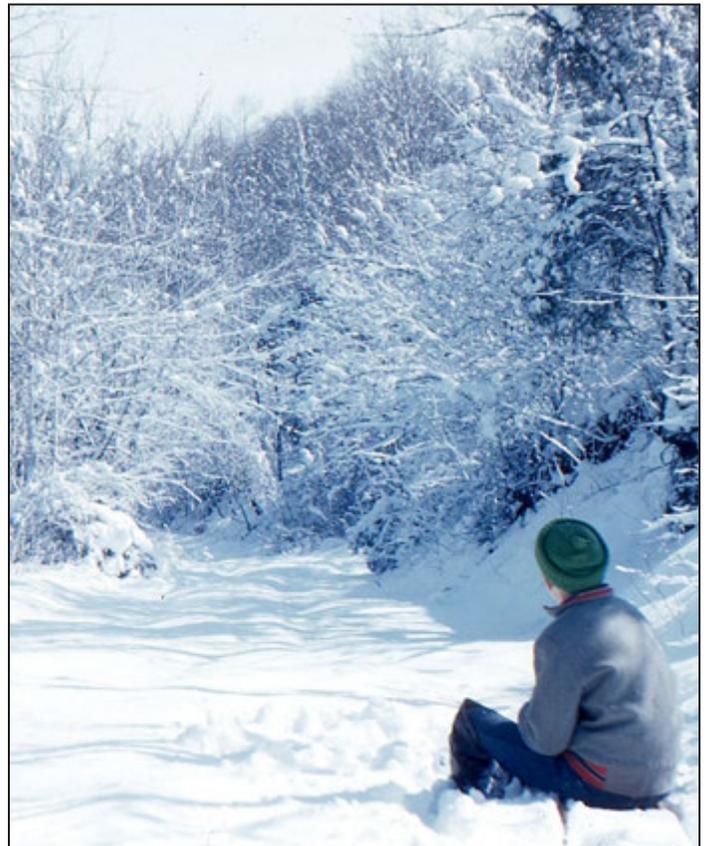
John Emerick's Hill in spring. Snooper the beagle trots down the hill for a walk on the river flats.



John Emerick's Hill in summer. Donnie Hammer heads down the hill, perhaps to swim in the river.



John Emerick's Hill in autumn. Donnie and David Hammer and their cat return up the hill after a day of exploring the river.



John Emerick's Hill in winter. Donnie Hammer is about to take the first run down the hill.

Sheffield Vies for the Lorain County Seat

Today, Mayor John Hunter often calls Sheffield Village *The Heart of Lorain County*. Why not the County Seat? It almost happened in the 1820s. But, here is how “we was robbed!”

Heman Ely, (1775-1852) founded Elyria Township in 1817. He owned 8,000 acres in the township at that time, which was then part of Huron County. Ely envisioned a new county in north central Ohio with his community, Elyria, as its County Seat. During the winter of 1821-1822, he journeyed to the State Capital in Columbus to present his plan.



Heman Ely, founder of Elyria (courtesy of Will Folger).

Judge A. R. Webber in his 1930 book, *Early History of Elyria and Her People*, related the story of how Ely started for Columbus on horseback with only a compass for a guide. He soon lost his way in the woods near present-day LaGrange and was compelled to spend the night there. The next day he found the main trail south and eventually arrived at the Capital. The trip failed to bring the desired result, but he was able to turn the attention of the State legislators to the needs of the growing population in our area. The next winter Ely again made the journey south with more political success. On December 22, 1822, the Ohio Legislature passed an act defining the boundaries of a new county to be called Lorain, as suggested by Ely after a region in France. Heman Ely had visited France in 1809 and was taken with the beauty of the Province of Lorraine, which later reminded him of his new home in Ohio.

The new county, which officially became functional on January 21, 1824, was made up of territory taken from Cuyahoga, Medina, and Huron Counties. It embraced 17 townships: Brownhelm, Henrietta, Amherst, Russia, Elyria, Carlisle, and those parts of Black River and Sheffield that lie west of the Black River from Huron County; Avon, Ridgeville, the west half of Olmsted, Eaton, Columbia, and those parts of Black River and Sheffield that lie east of the Black River from Cuyahoga County; and Camden, Pittsfield, LaGrange, and Wellington from Medina County. Some additional townships or parts of townships in the southern and eastern part of the county were either gained or lost over the next 22 years, but since 1846 Lorain County has been stable with 21 townships. Avon was, in acreage, the largest township in Ohio until it was divided into Avon and Avon Lake in the 1920s.

Between the dates when the Legislature acted to organize Lorain County in December 1822, to the time in 1824 when the organization was complete, the question naturally arose in the minds of the citizens of the new county as to the location of the new County Seat. Contesting townships for this honor were Black River [later known as Charleston and then Lorain], Elyria, and Sheffield. There were no newspapers to promote the contest or paved roads to facilitate meetings, but the pioneers were busy making friends for their particular candidate township. The State Legislature appointed a committee to visit the county, canvas the claims of the contestants, and finally select a location for the courthouse. Artemas Beebe (1793-1875), owner of the first hotel in Elyria and operator of the stage line, was hired to take the committee to visit all three of contesting townships. Heman Ely accompanied the committee on their visits.



Watercolor of Artemas Beebe's hotel and stage office in Elyria by Grant Keys.

Black River was visited first. John S. Reed, a leader of the community and owner of much of the land around the harbor, dined the committee. The citizens there pointed out that Cleveland in Cuyahoga County had been rightfully selected for the County Seat by virtue of being on located on Lake Erie and at the mouth of a major river, hence why not Black River with a better natural harbor.

Next, Beebe drove the committee to the center of Sheffield to look over the Burrell and Day farms at the head of river navigation, where French Creek flows into the Black River. The Sheffield pioneers pointed out the natural beauty of the hardwood groves and their surroundings and the advantageous location on the Black River. They stressed that Sheffield possessed ample upland property on North Ridge that would serve as a convenient location for the County Seat midway between the lake and the cascade falls at Elyria.



Artemas Beebe's stagecoach used to transport the County Seat Selection Committee to the prospective locations for the courthouse in 1824.



Jabez Burrell House, built at Sheffield Center in the 1820s.



Trail through a hardwood grove along the French Creek valley in Sheffield Village.

As the committee made its way to Elyria, the final stop on the tour, Ely made the following proposition, "I will put up a temporary courthouse, one story high on the corner of Main Street [Second Street] and Cheapside [Middle Avenue], large enough to accommodate the business until a new courthouse can be built, when I will donate the site and \$2,000 in money toward building it and erect back of it a jail, which shall be the residence of the sheriff as well." Ely also pointed out the natural waterpower of Elyria and the fact that the location was more centrally located to accommodate the people from all parts of the county. After considering the claims of all three townships, and Ely's proposition, the committee concluded Elyria had the best argument. Before the members departed, in the company of Ely, stakes were set to mark the location of the future courthouse. Both Black River and Sheffield Townships had made persuasive arguments, but in the end they couldn't compete with Ely's grand offer.



Present Lorain County Courthouse, started in 1879 and completed in 1881, was designed by architect E. E. Myers and constructed by contractor W. D. Richardson of Springfield, Illinois at a cost of \$64,125. Originally this Romanesque-style sandstone building—with Classical-style Corinthian capitals at the top of fluted columns—had a dome topped by an eight-foot tall zinc statue of the Goddess of Justice. The dome was removed in 1943 when severe deterioration in its construction was observed. Unfortunately this magnificent building has been allowed to deteriorate and is again endangered. A recent proposal calls for its demolition, to be replaced by a parking structure. As Steven McQuillin, noted preservation consultant, has stated, "Its the grandest building in town" and certainly worthy of preservation.

Practice Fires

In the mid- to late-1900s the typical way to dispose of an unwanted or dilapidated building was to burn it down, but in a controlled way. The volunteer fire departments of Lorain County would provide this service. According to former Sheffield Village Fire Chief Bud Brown (1966-1990), the surrounding fire departments would be invited to participate in a practice fire to hone firefighting skills and to develop coordination protocols for mutual-aid situations. As time went on this practice was all but abandoned because of EPA regulations, concerns over asbestos and other hazardous materials, and insurance/liability issues. Current Fire Chief Jeff Young admits it was a worthwhile exercise, but it rarely takes place in today's world.

These practice fires of yesteryear were often spectacular to observe. The following photographs taken by Bud Brown attest to this. The Historical Society thanks former Chief Brown for making these images available.



Sheffield firefighters train for a grass fire on East River Road, left to right, Elmer Klingshirn, Donnie Hammer, and Ed Herdendorf.



Sheffield firefighters practice on a dilapidated shed.



Barn on Lake Breeze Road being prepared for a practice fire.



Lake Breeze Road barn being burned for practice.



Officers of the Sheffield Village Volunteer Fire Department pose before initiating a practice fire at a house scheduled for demolition on Old Abbe Road. Chief Bud Brown is the officer in white, the other officers (left to right), Lt. Wayne Urig, Capt. Jim Logar, and Asst. Chief Bill Roth, circa 1970s.



Practice house fire in full blaze on Old Abbe Road.

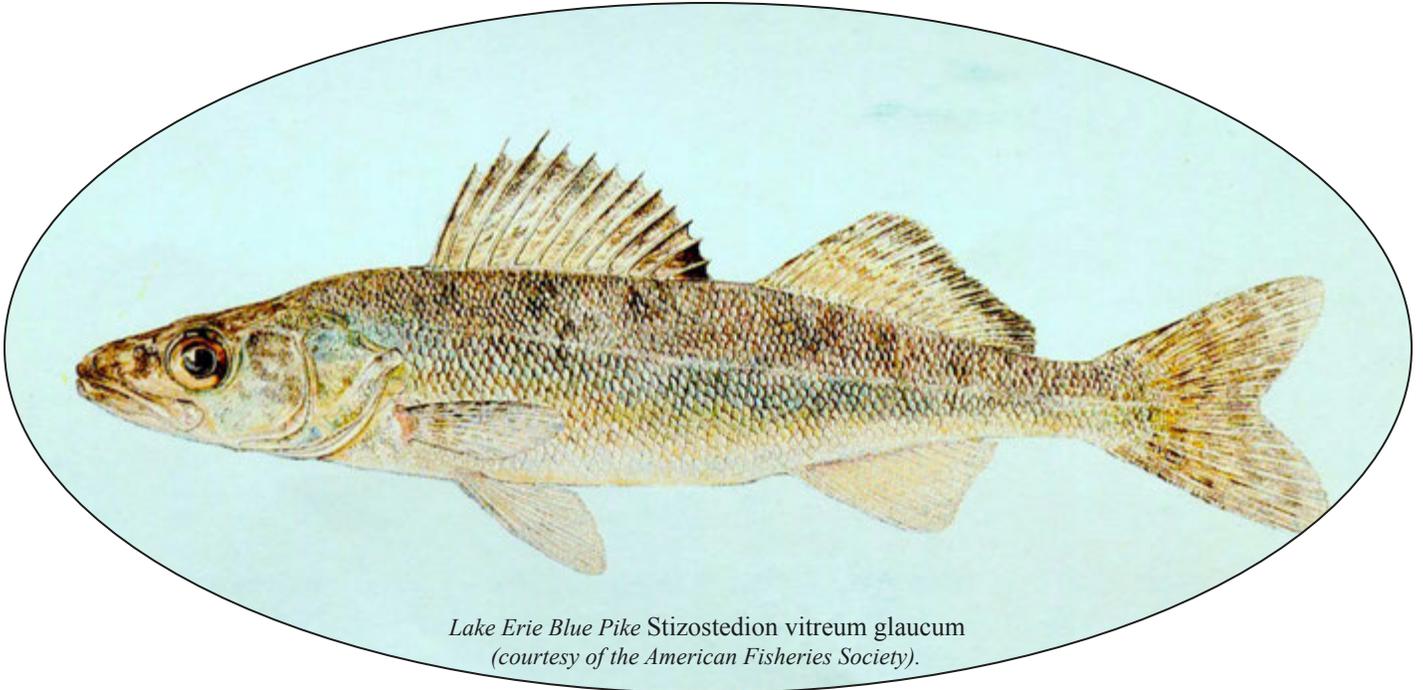


Side view of a church being burned for practice in Belden, Ohio.



Façade view of a practice fire at a decommissioned church in Belden, Ohio.

Lake Erie's Once Famous Blue Pike



*Lake Erie Blue Pike Stizostedion vitreum glaucum
(courtesy of the American Fisheries Society).*

Blue Pike are all gone now, extirpated from the lake and probably extinct in our world. But in boyhood memories, this handsome bluish fish with its extraordinary large eyes lives on. The Editor recently visited the University of Toledo's Lake Erie Center on Maumee Bay and talked with Dr. Carol Stepien, the Center's Director. Dr. Stepien also heads up the Great Lakes Genetic Laboratory at the Center and for years she has been using DNA and other genetic testing on museum specimens of Blue Pike, as compared to suspected Blue Pike recently caught in the lake, to determine if this fish still exists. After two decades of searching, Dr. Stepien is convinced this indigenous Lake Erie fish is completely gone!

Please indulge the Editor with a bit of nostalgic Blue Pike reminiscence that may carry a message about the importance of being good stewards of our waterways. Growing up in Lorain, Ohio during the years immediately following World War II, a favorite sport and source of a fine meal was Blue Pike fishing. Dad [Charles E. Herdendorf, Jr.] kept his 15-foot Wolverine at the city dock alongside the hot-water discharge from the electric plant. On late spring and early summer evenings we would roll the boat from its resting place on the pier, down a series of rollers fashioned from old washing machine ringers to a strap hoist, where we would lower the boat some five feet to the water. The hoisting process proved to be quite tricky when brisk winds from a sudden storm caught the boat and sent it careening against the pilings.

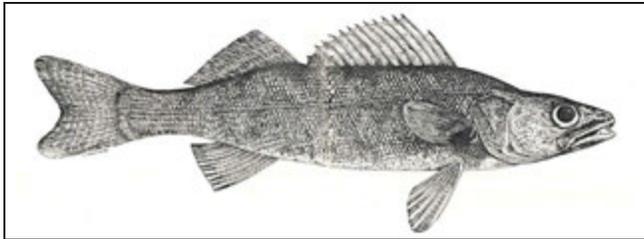
Mom would pack up ground bologna & pickle sandwiches for our venture. With great care we loaded our prize possession, a Philco portable radio with a huge battery pack. Casting rods, gasoline lanterns, tackle boxes, a dip net, bait, and blankets were all taken on board. The ancient 5 hp Johnson was started, and we neatly passed between the lighthouse and the east breakwater and out into the open lake.

We usually anchored about a half-mile to two miles offshore. In front of the harbor, the lake, at times, blossomed with hundreds of bobbing lanterns, taking on the appearance of a gigantic Japanese garden party. As the boat bobbed and dipped in the swells, we dropped our lines into the deeper waters where the Blue Pike were to be found. Blue Pike fishing was a demanding and rather specialized sport because these fish were gentle feeders and it was often difficult to feel them bite, particularly with lots of line out to reach near the bottom. We used short casting rods, a medium-weight line with a heavy sinker, and spreaders with two long-shanked hooks. When the Blue Pike were hitting, catches of well over 100 fish were not uncommon. We were frequently rewarded with "double-headers" on our spreaders at these times. Merrill Gilfillan, an outdoor writer with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in the late 1940s, tells of party boat catches of 500 on a top night.

The gasoline lantern was essential in fishing for Blue Pike. The light was hung over the water to first attract minnows. We used a small-mesh dip net to secure these bait fish and held them in a minnow bucket painted white inside. Because Blue Pike are sight feeders, the light color of the bait bucket was thought to keep the minnows from changing coloration to a darker shade and making them less visible to the predator pike. To make sure we had enough bait, just before we would leave home, Dad and I would also go out with a flashlight to a freshly watered part of the yard to gather "nightcrawlers." We kept the lantern over the water throughout the evening, hoping to continually attract the minnows, and maybe Blue Pike, to the vicinity of the boat. At times large minnows were scarce, but the water surface below the lantern would appear to boil with small "pinheads." Even though Dad would say, "They are so thick you could walk on 'em," he knew even if you baited your hook with several of the small ones, the Blue Pike would refuse to bite.

We usually started off the evening's fishing with a minnow on one hook and a worm on the other to determine what the Blue Pike would bite on that night. We found the best method of Blue Pike fishing was to lower the bait to the bottom, then reel the handle about three times to bring the bait up the desired distance from the sandy bottom off Lorain. Because the Blue Pike would bite lightly and quickly, at first I had trouble detecting a hit and until I developed a sensitive touch, I spent much of my time netting minnows and baiting hooks.

Back at home, I would scale and Dad would fillet the catch. Mom dipped the fillets in an egg batter and then bread crumbs before frying them in a shallow pan. It seemed so commonplace then, but the thoughts of those fresh fish dinners now leads to an uncontrollable urge to get out the old casting rod. But that would do no good—the Blue Pike is nowhere to be found. All I can do now is pay homage to this fine fish and try to understand how and why it disappeared.



Blue Pike drawing by Celia Godkin (courtesy of John Hageman).



Aerial view of the Ohio Edison electric power plant on the shore of Lake Erie in Lorain Harbor. Recreational fishing boats were stored on a wharf to the east of the power plant in the 1940s and 1950s.

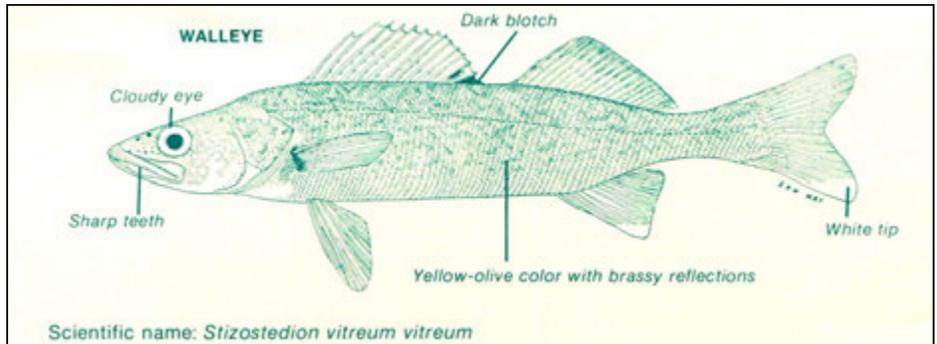
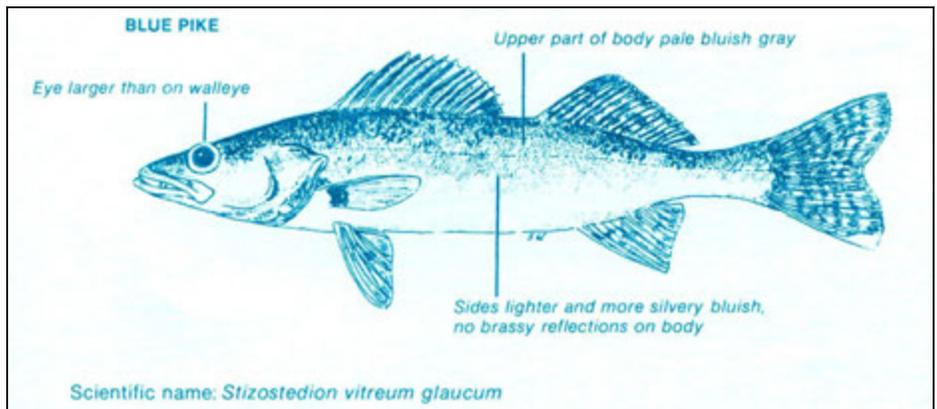


Aerial view of Lorain Harbor in the early 1980s. Forty years earlier the lake just beyond the Lorain Lighthouse (upper center) was a popular place to fish for Blue Pike.

The Blue Pike (*Stizostedion vitreum glaucum*), really a blue variety of Walleye, ran several inches smaller in length than our “yellow” Walleye (*Stizostedion vitreum vitreum*) which in the 1940s we called “Lake Erie Pickerel.” Compared to Walleye, Blue Pike had much larger eyes, lived in deeper, clearer water, and was most common in the central and eastern basins of Lake Erie. The body of the Blue Pike was long and slender with distinctive countershading coloration—the upper part of the body was pale bluish gray, grading to bluish silver on the sides, and whitish on the belly. Dr. Milton Trautman in his marvelous 1957 book, *The Fishes of Ohio*, reported that by October of their first year, this fish reached a length of about 5 inches, nearly 7 inches in their second season, and as adults ranged from 9 to 16 inches with weights from 8 to 24 ounces.

Presumably, Walleyes evolved as a distinct species (*Stizostedion vitreum*) in the Great Lakes during early post-glacial times, some 10,000 years ago. As the ice sheet, nearly a mile thick, melted back from the Niagara Falls region, the water level in an early Lake Erie dropped over 100 feet below its present surface because the immense weight of the ice had depressed the lake’s outlet at the Falls. The land slowly rebounded and the Falls gradually gained their impressive height, but for some 5,000 years the western basin of Lake Erie was dry or marshland, while a much smaller eye-glass shaped lake existed in the central and eastern basins. This long period of geographic separation from other Great Lakes Walleye stock permitted a new subspecies to evolve—the Blue Pike. As waters in the western basin eventually rose some 4,000 years ago, Walleye invaded that basin from the upper Great Lakes, but by then the Blue Pike was firmly established in the eastern two-thirds of Lake Erie.

Until the mid-1950’s the Blue Pike was abundant in Lake Erie. For 100 years earlier it had been of great economic importance to fishermen in the central and eastern basins. For several generations the commercial fishermen on Lake Erie recognized its smaller size, softer flesh, and bluish coloration—thus they considered the Blue Pike to be a distinct species. Lake Erie commercial catch records date back to 1867. For the first 18 years Walleye and Blue Pike harvests were reported



Comparison of Lake Erie Blue Pike and Walleye (courtesy of Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife).

as a combined statistic, but from 1885 on Blue Pike production was recorded individually. Interesting enough, the scientific world did not catch up until 1926 when Dr. Carl Hubbs, of the University of Michigan, realized that the Blue Pike had not been described technically and named it as a new species *Stizostedion glaucum*. His type specimens for this description were collected from Lake Erie, offshore from Ashtabula, Ohio. Later the close relationship to “yellow” Walleye was recognized and Blue Pike was reduced to subspecies rank of *Stizostedion vitreum glaucum*.

Lake Erie fishermen also knew about the intergrades between Blue Pike and Walleye, which produced hybrids called Gray Pike or “jumbos.” At infrequent intervals these intergrades occurred in large numbers in commercial catches from the central basin and occasionally numerous hybrids were taken in the ice-fishery around the Bass Islands.

From 1915 to 1957, Blue Pike contributed about 13 million pounds annually to the commercial production of fish from Lake Erie. During this period Blue Pike production averaged about 26% of the total harvest for all species and in several years it exceeded 50%. No long-term departures

from the average production were observed, although annual yields fluctuated violently, at times, with catches dropping to only a few million pounds, then rebounding quickly. After an unprecedented drop in landings to 1.4 million pounds in 1958, the fishery collapsed completely when only 79,000 pounds were taken in 1959. By 1964, wholesale fish dealers reported less than 200 pounds of Blue Pike sold. It is questionable if all these were, in fact, Blue Pike, some were alleged to be small, dark-colored Walleye and others are known to have been Walleye-Blue Pike hybrids.

As the population of Blue Pike crashed, a peculiar thing occurred. John Parsons of the U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries found that the decline in production was accompanied by a marked increase in the rate of growth. Three-year-old Blue Pike caught in 1959 weighed nearly eight times more and were 7.7 inches longer than comparable age fish taken in 1951. Research has shown that this is a typical phenomenon when a fish population is about to collapse. Essentially, this occurs when older fish are removed from the population (ages 4-7) reducing the competition for food resources for younger individuals and thus their growth rate is artificially enhanced.

However, John Parsons believed that fluctuating biological and environmental conditions in the lake, not overfishing, were responsible for the dramatic fluctuations in the strength of various year-classes of Blue Pike. He based this opinion on the fact that fishing methods, gear (primarily trap nets and to a lesser extent gill nets), and intensity of fishing had differed so little over the years that commercial fishing could not be held directly accountable for the many changes in production and stocks.

However, it must be pointed out that in 1948 nylon mesh gill nets were introduced into Lake Erie. Because such nets were nearly invisible to Blue Pike, their catching efficiency was over three times that of the older cotton nets. Nylon nets had an additional advantage in that since they did



Walleye fishing in the reef area of western Lake Erie, 1986.

not require drying between lifts, they could be fished continuously. By 1950, a considerable shift to nylon gill nets had taken place in the Ontario waters of Lake Erie, and the change from cotton to nylon was essentially complete by 1952.

In 1970, Dr. Vern Applegate and Harry Van Meter of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reanalyzed the disappearance of the Blue Pike. They concluded that blame for the loss of this fish had been cast in many directions with much emotion, but with little factual substantiation. Causes that were put forth included: (1) long-term changes in climate, (2) changes in the environment that affected a particular life history stage, (3) excessive exploitation (overfishing) of cyclically low populations, and (4) interbreeding with Walleye or even Sauger (*Stizostedion canadense*). Perhaps two or more of these circumstances, acting simultaneously or consecutively, may have been responsible for the loss of Blue Pike.

Dr. Henry Regier of the University of Toronto, with several colleagues from Ohio and Ontario, added to the puzzle by noting that recruitment (increase in the fish population as progeny grow) of both Walleye in the western basin and Blue Pike in the central and eastern basins began to fail regularly after Rainbow Smelt (*Osmerus mordax*) became very abundant in the early 1950s, causing fierce competition for food. These researchers also suggested that the summer reduction in dissolved oxygen in large areas of the central basin (commonly referred to as the “dead zone”), also starting in the 1950s, forced Blue Pike to become more and more restricted to the eastern end of the lake.

Dr. Will Hartman of the U.S. Great Lakes Fisheries Research Laboratory, concluded that the real cause of year-by-year population failure (which started about 1954) was the reduction in the number of larger Blue Pike by heavy exploitation to a level where environmental factors began to strongly influence hatching success and survival of young.

The “mopping up” phase of the disintegration of the Blue Pike populations was likely due to interbreeding with the more numerically dominant Walleye, causing genetic dilution. Ultimately the Blue Pike had to disappear!

How ironic it is that today environmental conditions have greatly improved in Lake Erie and commercial fish pressures have been dramatically curtailed. With nutrient reductions to the lake and attendant decline in algal growth, the area of anoxic bottom waters in central Lake Erie was reduced by about 50% in the 1970s and 1980s, and by law no gill nets are used in Ohio waters. Yet, there are no Blue Pike left for us to attempt a restocking program. Perhaps there is a small population in some hidden refuge, but unlikely. Blue Pike is destined only live on in boyhood memories.



Charles E. Herdendorf, Jr., age 69, proudly displaying the Fish Ohio Walleye that he caught in Lake Erie on May 17, 1986.



Fish Ohio Certificate awarded to Charles E. Herdendorf, Jr. (1917-1996) by the Ohio Division of Wildlife for catching a Walleye at least 25 inches long.

Origin of the “Mound” at Avon Mound Cemetery

Avon Center Cemetery (also known as Mound Cemetery) at the intersection of Center Road (Ohio Route 83) and Detroit Road (Ohio Route 254) contains the graves of noteworthy individuals: Revolutionary War soldier John Prentiss Calkins (1752-1836) who served with the New Hampshire Regiment, several veterans of the War of 1812, and agriculturalist Dr. Norton S. Townshend. Many of the first settlers of Avon are interred in the mound, including Avon’s founder Wilbur Cahoon (1772-1825). The oldest gravestone in the cemetery (1818) marks the burial site of Lydia Williams, age 15.

The cemetery is unique in our area, in that it is believed to be a prehistoric burial mound constructed by the Woodland Indians and later used as a cemetery by white settlers. The sexton of the cemetery, Alfred Walker, reported that he had recovered several Indian skulls and some beads and arrowheads from the mound in 1900. Col. Raymond C. Vietzen conveyed this information in his 1941 book, *Ancient Man in Northern Ohio*; however, no formal archaeological investigations have been conducted at this site. Another interpretation is that the mound is the remnant of an ancient sand dune created over 12,000 years ago on the shore of glacial Lake Warren.

In an attempt to resolve the question of the origin of the mound, the Editor performed a microscopic examination of sand samples collected in June 2011 at the crest of the Avon Mound Cemetery. The sample consisted primarily of fine-grained quartz sand.

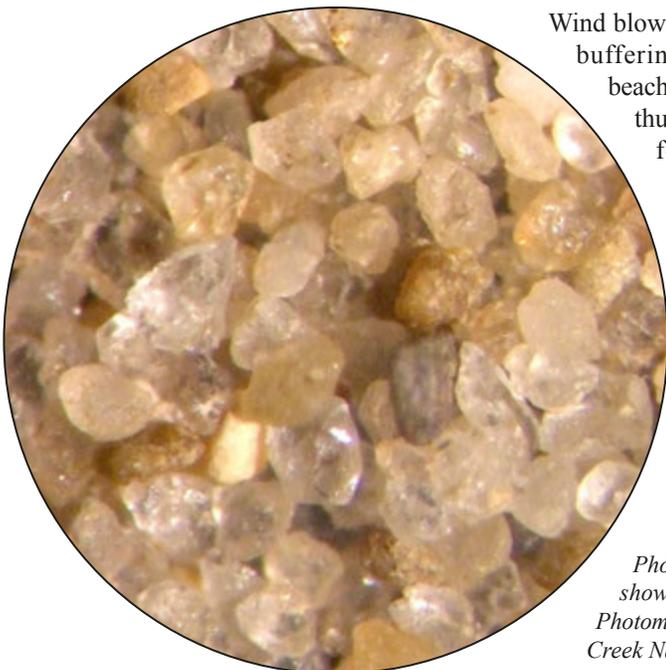
The grains were sub-rounded and definitely had a frosted appearance. The sub-rounding indicates that the sand was probably transported along the shore of glacial Lake Warren (~12,500 years ago). The quartz grains were most likely eroded from lake-cliff outcrops of Berea Sandstone near Avon Center. Wave action in Lake Warren dislodged the individual sand grains from the bedrock and rounded sharp edges. Because the shoreline (now known as North Ridge) sweeps to the north forming an apex at Avon Center, prevailing westerly winds were able to blow fine grains of sand into a dune near the present intersection of SR 83 and SR 254.



Avon Mound Cemetery—Indian mound or glacial lake sand dune?



Gravestone of Wilbur Cahoon (1772-1825), Avon’s founder, near the crest of Avon Mound Cemetery. This stone was carved in Berea Sandstone quarried along French Creek.



Wind blown sand does not have the buffering action of water that beach and nearshore sand does, thus the grains collide with force, causing fractures that appear as frosted surfaces on the grains. The examination of mound samples indicates that the cemetery mound is a natural dune feature and probably predates aboriginal Indians in the area by several thousand years. However, it is quite possible that Indians, as the early settlers did, used this natural feature as a burial site.

Photomicrograph of sand grains from a sample taken at the crest of the mound showing frosted surfaces on most grains—indication of a wind-blown deposit. Photomicrograph made with the assistance of Dr. David Klarer, scientist at Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve, Huron, Ohio.

Brookside Yearbooks

The Senior Classes of Brookside High School have been producing a yearbook, *The Leader*, for over 80 years. These marvelous books are the best record of the students, faculty, and staff that have inhabited the hallowed halls of Brookside over the years.

The Sheffield Village Historical Society, in conjunction with the Domonkas Branch of the Lorain Public Library, the Brookside High School Library, the Brookside Yearbook Office, and the Ohio Business College is attempting to locate copies of the 82 yearbooks that have been produced since the first graduating class in 1930.

Among the five organizations, we have 68 of the graduating classes' yearbooks in the various collections (see table to the right), leaving 14 yet to be located. The books are invaluable resources in planning reunions, keeping track of the accomplishments of former students, and genealogical research. The following list contains the years missing in our collections. If you have a copy of one of these or other years and would be willing to donate it to this cause, it would be most appreciated:

MISSING YEARS

- 1933-1936
- 1958
- 1971-1975, 1977
- 1980, 1983, & 1984

Please contact the Sheffield Village Historical Society at (440) 934-1514 or herdendorf@aol.com if you would like to contribute a missing volume or if you have a copy that you would permit us to photocopy. Thank you.



Brookside High School Yearbooks, *The Leader*.

***If you know the location
of a missing yearbook volume,
please contact the Historical Society***

Year	Yearbook Holdings				
	Sheffield History Center	Domonkas Library	Brookside HS Library	BHS Yearbook Office (MIT)	Ohio Business College
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Census Results for 2010

The Ohio Secretary of State has notified Mayor John D. Hunter that the official population for the Village of Sheffield for the 2010 census is 3,982. The population for the 2000 census was 2,949. This represents an increase of 1,033 inhabitants for the Village in the past decade, a rise of 35% or on average an expansion of 3.5% per year.



Proclamation from the Ohio Secretary of State as to the results of the 2010 Census. Because the population of our community is below the 5,000-inhabitant threshold for a city, we retain the name "Village."

In Memorium

The Historical Society is saddened to report that several members and friends of the Society have passed in recent months. We send our condolences to their families and friends:

Alan H. Rider
(1930-May 25, 2010)
Georgetown, Washington, D.C.

Carl E. Wilkerson
(September 27, 1938-April 12, 2011)
Sheffield Lake, Ohio

Charles W. DeChant
(January 1, 1937-June 19, 2011)
Sheffield Village, Ohio

Elaine B. (Roth) Klingshirn
(March 23, 1934-July 4, 2011)
Sheffield Village, Ohio

David C. DeChant
(August 7, 1960-September 22, 2011)
Scottsdale, Arizona

Joan Marie (Dombrowski) Fletcher
(June 12, 1943-November 18, 2011)
Sheffield Village, Ohio

Donald W. Wilkerson
(July 12, 1940-December 14, 2011)
Massillon, Ohio

Josephine Virginia (Crowl) Berwager
(July 14, 1929-December 20, 2011)
Woodsboro, Maryland

Mary (Revilak) Pivarnik
(March 28, 1918-December 31, 2011)
Avon, Ohio

Alice C. (Mackert) DeChant
(November 11, 1917-January 3, 2012)
Sheffield Village, Ohio



Sheffield History Programs at Metro Parks

Join Matt Kocsis, Metro Parks historian, at the Burrell Homestead on Saturday February 25th at 11 am to learn about life in 19th century Lorain County for African-Americans. Tour the house and explore the changes that took place in numbers and attitudes throughout the century. Parking is at the Burrells, program may be moved to French Creek Nature Center if there is too much snow for parking. Call Matt at 458-5121 x 230 for more details.

The Lorain County Metro Parks and TrueNorth are pleased to announce that *Road to Freedom* is returning for its third year on Friday April 13th and Saturday April 14st. Once again the public is invited to play the role of runaway slaves attempting to escape to the North and Canada for freedom. You will follow a new path and meet new characters along the way making this the most exciting and unique historical program of the year. Leaving from Pine Tree Picnic Area (French Creek Reservation), you will wind your way through the woods dodging bounty hunters and looking for help in your dangerous quest. The program is not recommended for children under eight due to mature themes. Tickets cost only \$5 per person with registration beginning on February 17th. Call 949-5200 or visit www.metroparks.cc for more information.

The Promised Land plaque at Underground Railroad Station 100, mouth of the Black River.

The Fight To Keep Sheffield Village Whole

In the summer of 1956 the City of Lorain proposed the annexation of some 2,500 acres of Sheffield Village. A special election was set for August 14th to determine if residents of the proposed area wanted to be detached from the Village or if they wanted to remain a part of the Village—only a simple majority was needed for detachment. The annexation area included the western one third of the Village, a total of 193 homes and 330 eligible voters.

The petition to hold the special election was submitted to the Lorain County Board of Elections by Sam Zicarelli of Day Street in Day Allotment. Zicarelli's 11-man Annexation Committee had worked on the plan with the Lorain City Council for six months and had obtained the signatures of 107 voters before the petition was sent to the Board of Elections. The Annexation Committee's battle cry was "More for the tax dollar," claiming that Lorain could provide more services than Sheffield Village for the same size tax dollar.

To counter the annexation bid, a 16-person Citizens Committee was formed with Councilman John Traxler as Chairman. This committee, composed of Village leaders including Mayor Paul Poor, Solicitor Hubbard Wilcox, Councilman Don Minnick, and Fire Chief Eddie Herdendorf, challenged the annexation group's claims. Mayor Poor stated that he had received a lot of calls from concerned citizens living in the annexation area, "I told them all—you will never be separated from the Village." He asked each of them "What can Lorain give you that we can not give you?" and "Do you think that Lorain Council and citizens would give you anything you want?"

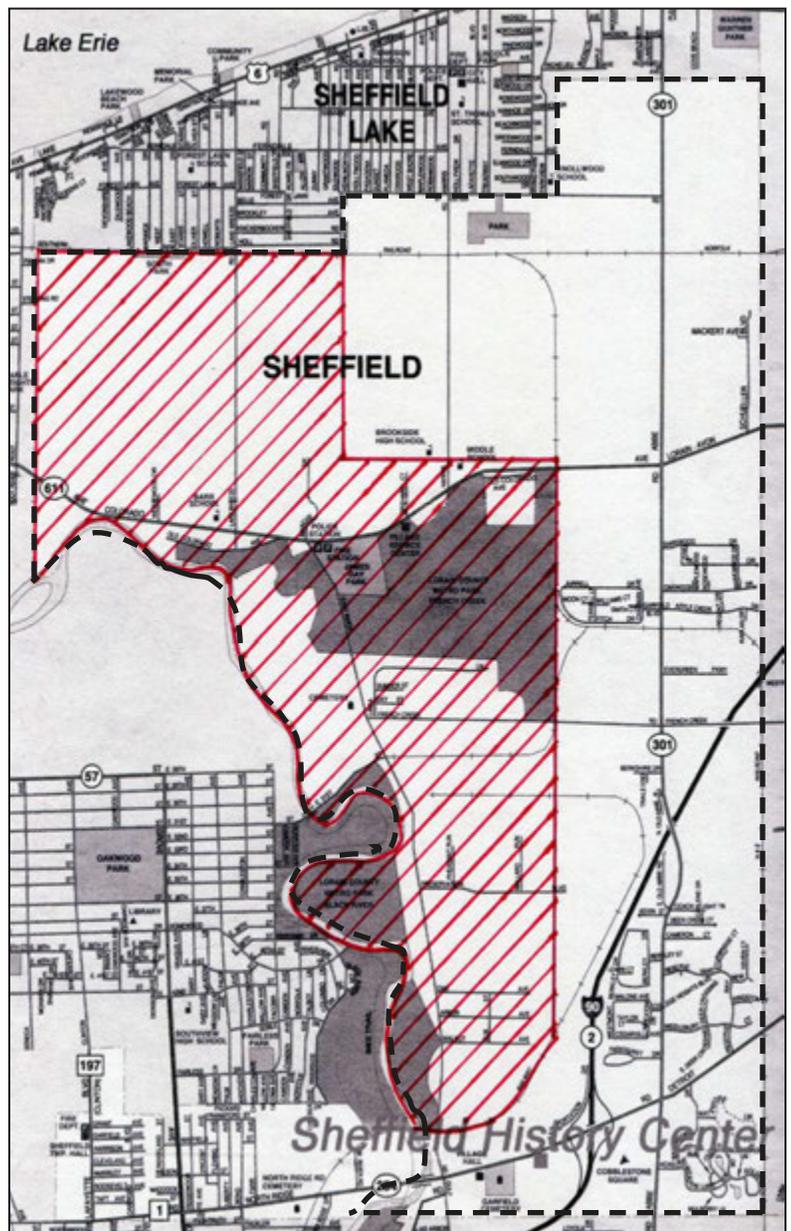
Bitter charges and accusations flew between the two groups until election day. Zicarelli, who had given as one of the advantages of annexation to Lorain an ample supply of water to increase fire protection, was verbally blasted by Fire Chief Herdendorf on August 1st, recalling that in May 1955 Zicarelli had refused to permit a fire truck to be refilled with water from a hydrant in Day Allotment. The water was needed to fight a fire on the Cyril Kelling farm on Abbe Road where no hydrants were located. Zicarelli claimed that the water line was private and that they didn't have to provide water to fight a fire that wasn't in Day Allotment. The fire truck driver had to return to the fire with no water. Councilman Harry Garber, who was at the fire, got in his car and drove back to Zicarelli's house and insisted that the fireman be permitted to take water to fight the fire, charging that no individual has the right to hold back water for firefighting. Garber said the Village would pay for the water used. Garber then had the truck refilled with water in spite of Zicarelli's objections. The fire caused \$6,200 of damage to the Kelling property. Zicarelli later denied the charge that he refused water to the Fire Department, but his denial did not match several eyewitness accounts of the incident.

On August 14th the special election was held at Brookside High School. Only Village residents within the proposed annexation area were permitted to vote. Lorain's

annexation bid was defeated by a vote of 173 to 129, with 11 votes uncounted because of errors in marking ballots. The election was remarkable in that 95% of the eligible voters cast a ballot.

Lorain County Prosecutor Paul Mikus cautioned that no waiting period was required before the highly controversial issue could be brought to life again by another petition of area residents. The Annexation Committee vowed to bring the issue to a second vote, but interest faded as the credibility of the group was brought into question. Later that year, at the urging of the Fire Department, the Sheffield Village Council approved a plan to bring water service to the entire Village and install fire hydrants throughout the community.

The Editor wishes to thank and acknowledge Society member Jeff Sigsworth of the Lorain Public Library for his assistance in researching this article.



Map of Sheffield Village showing the proposed 1956 annexation area in red.

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), Andy Minda, Vice President (440-537-0547 anmin36@aol.com), or Patsy Hoag, Secretary (440-934-4624 phoag@me.com).

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

Page Layout is by Ricki C. Herdendorf, EcoSphere Associates, Put-in-Bay, Ohio.

The collections of the Sheffield Village Historical Society are housed in the Sheffield History Center at 4944 Detroit Road. The History Center is open to members and guests most Sundays (2:30-5 pm) and by appointment—please call (440-934-1514). The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is April 12, 2012, 7:00 pm at the History Center. **All members are welcome to attend this meeting.**

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

Charles E. Herdendorf, Ph.D.
Journal Editor,
Sheffield Village Historical Society
Garfield Farms, 4921 Detroit Road
Sheffield Village, Ohio 44054

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***Ask Your Friends to Join the
Historical Society***

Village Honors Lola Smith

Congratulations to Lola Smith for 25 years of continuous service to the Sheffield Village Police Department. Lola has served as Police Dispatcher since 1986. The Sheffield Village Historical Society is proud to have Lola as a long-standing member.



Lola Smith in her role as Police Dispatcher in 1988.



Certificate awarded by the Village of Sheffield to Lola Smith for her exemplary service. Left to right Police Chief Larry Bliss, Lola Smith, Mayor John Hunter, and Lt. Ron Trifiletti.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP SHEFFIELD VILLAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Garfield Farms—4921 Detroit Road, Sheffield Village, Ohio 44054—(440)-934-1514

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____ Email _____

- Individual (\$10.00/year)
 Family (\$15.00/year)—2 Adults & children under 18 years old
 Business/Corporate & Organization (\$25.00/year)

Family Members (for Membership cards) _____

Special Interests in Sheffield History? _____