

# THE VILLAGE PIONEER



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



*Edward Burrell's Cheesehouse on East River Road in Sheffield Village. Built in 1869, this factory annually produced up to 4,700 lbs. of cheese in the 1870s.*

## *Agricultural Production on a Pioneer Homestead*

The Burrell Farm had its beginning in August 1816 with the arrival of Captain Jabez Burrell, his wife Mary Robbins Burrell, and their family of eight children in the northern Ohio wilderness. They settled on Lot 65 in what would later be recognized as Sheffield Township when Lorain County was organized eight years hence. Located on high ground overlooking the confluence of French Creek and the Black River, the farm encompassed about 300 acres. After first dwelling in a log house for several years, by the early 1820s Jabez opened a clay quarry on the bank of Sugar Creek, a small stream that flowed into French Creek on the property, where he fashioned and burned red brick to build a fine Federal-style farmhouse. After constructing a dam, raceway, and sawmill on the river in partnership with Capt. John Day, he used glacial-erratic fieldstone for foundations as he built a granary and two barns from wood planks sawed at the mill. Soon after, a gristmill was built across the raceway from the sawmill that utilized the same waterpower to grind grain into flour.

As this was going on, the family began to clear the land, set up pastures, and tilled the soil on the high ground north of the homestead, in the “Big Bottom” floodplain where French Creek meets the Black River, and along the winding valley of Sugar Creek. A steep promontory was located where all three streams cut into the high ground. Here, where an Archaic Indian village was located some 4,000 years earlier, the Burrells set aside seven

acres for orchards (apples, peaches, cherries, and plums) and a vineyard. Realizing the value of woodlots for timber resources and maple syrup, over 70 acres were left forested.

When Jabez died in 1833, the village of Sheffield was beginning to flourish. Oberlin College was just getting started some 12 miles to the southwest and three years later the collage would open a branch campus at the Burrell farm known as the Sheffield Manual Labor Institute. The students and faculty planted 17,000 mulberry trees on the farm in hopes of creating a silkworm industry. Unfortunately, a severe drought the following year ended that dream. When Jabez passed away his eldest son, Robbins Burrell, took over the farm and was appointed professor of agriculture at the institute. He had some previous teaching experience—during the winter of 1823-1824 Robbins taught in the only public school that then existed in Cleveland. Robbins was an anti-slavery man and the homestead was for years a station on the Underground Railroad. Fugitive slaves who had reached Oberlin, were smuggled to him and concealed on the farm until Capt. Aaron Root could carry them in his ships to freedom in British Canada.

Robbins Burrell, who married Eliza Brigham, died in 1877. Their eldest son, Edward Burrell, then took over the operation of the farm with his wife Rosa (Clifton) Burrell of Avon, Ohio. In the latter years of Robbins life, Edward managed the business of the farm, including submitting tax statements. These records have survived



*Edward Burrell at corncribs adjacent to barn on the Burrell Homestead in late 1800s (courtesy of Lorain County Metro Parks).*



*Rosa Burrell in front of the Burrell House in 1898 (courtesy of Lorain County Metro Parks).*



*Burrell Homestead dairy herd in late 1800s (courtesy of Lorain County Metro Parks).*

in the Burrell Family Papers Collection, archived by the Lorain County Metro Parks, and provide unique insight to the operation of a pioneer farm in Sheffield during the late 1800s.

Edward and Rosa Burrell filed farm production statements annually with the Lorain County Assessor for the period 1870 through 1898. The statements reveal that the Burrell farm was very diversified during this period—including dairy cattle, livestock (mainly sheep for wool), poultry, grain, hay and row crops, orchards, a vineyard, and maple woodlots. The farm still consisted of approximately 300 acres, nearly equally divided between cropland and pasturage. The orchards comprised four to seven acres and the vineyard was less than one. The woodlots on the farm declined during this period from around 70 acres to 20, but continued to yield modest amounts of sugar and syrup from maple tree sap. The production for typical years, 1872 and 1892, and a low production year, 1898, are illustrated in the accompanying Table 1. Edward Burrell was the reporter for 1872 and 1892. After Edward's death, Rosa Burrell was the reporter.

To participate in a burgeoning new industry in the county, in 1869 Edward Burrell constructed a cheesehouse factory not far from the family dwelling. The factory was built from planks sawed on the farm. In the 1870s he produced cheese and butter from his dairy herd, which averaged between 30 to 40 cows. His peak cheese

production was 4,700 lbs. in 1872, while butter averaged about 800 lbs. per year with a maximum of 1,150 lbs. in 1878.

The Burrell sheep herd was typically 100 to 150 animals that produced 700 to 800 lbs. of wool each year. Disease claimed about six sheep each year and in 1887 two were killed by dogs. Chickens yielded between 100 and 200 dozen eggs per year. In addition, the Burrell family had from five to eight horses to work the fields and provide transportation.

Each year Edward Burrell planted around 7 to 20 acres in wheat and nearly an equal amount in oats and corn. The annual yield of wheat fluctuated to some extent, presumably based on climatic conditions, and ranged from a low of 6 bushels/acre to a high of 30 (mean 15 bushels/acre). Likewise, oats ranged from 6 bushels/acre to 66 (mean 41). Corn was somewhat more stable, ranging from 25 to 78 bushels/acre (mean 50). Annually, about 25 to 46 acres were committed to harvesting hay, with a nearly constant yield of 2 tons/acre.

A comparison can be made of modern yields with those of nearly a century and a half ago. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service has published estimated average yields per acre of principal crops for the soils of Sheffield. The floodplains of the Black River and French Creek consist of Lobdell silt loam and Chagrin silt loam. These soils are expected to yield from 90 to 120 bushels of corn and 3 to 4.6 tons of hay per acre. The upland areas of the farm consist of Haskin loam and Mahoning silt loam. These soils are now estimated to yield 70 to 110 bushels of corn per acre, 30 to 46 bushels of wheat, and 2.2 to 3.4 tons of hay. Thus, with modern tillage techniques and commercial fertilizers, the yield for corn and wheat has approximately doubled, while hay has increased about 40%.

Fluctuations in Sheffield's climatic conditions appear to have had some impact on the yields at the Burrell farm (see Table 2). William Henry Alexander prepared a *Climatological History of Ohio*, which was published by Ohio State University, Engineering Experiment Station as Bulletin No. 26 in 1923. This bulletin contains monthly average precipitation and temperature records for each Ohio County for the same period as the Burrell farm production statements. Inspection of the records shows that 1878 had the most rainfall (53.5 inches) and had the warmest spring (mean of 53°F for April), whereas 1886 was the driest (27.3 inches) and 1874 was the coolest spring (mean of 39.6°F for April). These extremes appear to be reflected in crop production. For example in the favorable year of 1878, wheat production was the highest at 30 bushels/acre, twice the average rate for the period of record. Hay production that year, at 2.5 tons/acre, was also the highest for the nearly 30-year period. Conversely, the oat harvest was only 6 bushels/acre in the coolest spring, 1874, well below the average yield of 41 bushels/acre and corn production was only 25 bushels/acre in 1886, the driest year, about half the average yield.

The apple orchard annually produced on average nearly 100 bushels/acre, but showed considerable variation, ranging from about 20 to 300 bushels. The orchard also produced modest amounts of peaches, pears, cherries, and plums in that order. Grape production was also modest, with a half-acre vineyard yielding up to 600 lbs. of grapes and 5 gallons of pressed wine. Maple sugar and syrup production typically averaged 5 lbs. and 10 gallons, respectively. Most years, the farm also produced 100 to 200 bushels

of potatoes from a 1.5-acre plot. Other minor harvests included sorghum sugar and syrup, clover hay and seeds, barley grain, and some flax for yarn.

Tragically, Edward was killed in accident at the farm in the fall of 1891 at the age of 56. The Sunday before the accident he had preached the sermon at the little Congregational Church at the edge of the farm, as he had done for the past two years. The day of the accident he had hauled a wagonload of heavy logs from a woodlot to the mill. While attempting to unload the wagon, the logs suddenly started to roll, crushing Edward. He lingered near death for three days, but medical attention was not what it is today and on November 7, 1891 he died.



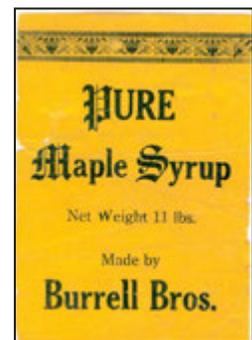
*Burrell Homestead flock of sheep in the late 1800s (courtesy of Lorain County Metro Parks).*

Rosa, with some assistance from her son Harry, continued to operate the farm for the next seven years as indicated by her signature on the tax statements. In 1894 Harry Burrell married Tempe Garfield, granddaughter of Sheffield pioneer, Milton Garfield. Harry seemed more interested in a career on boats than working on the farm. Thus, after Edward's death the records show a marked decline in production. For example wool production dropped to only 332 lbs. in 1898, whereas in earlier years it was double or triple that amount. Likewise, cheese was no longer reported as a product. However, the farm continued to function and support the family. In the final analysis, it can be concluded that the Burrell farm was well rounded—producing cash crops and other agricultural products for sale, as well as making the homestead nearly self-sufficient. This was the typical model for a pioneer farm where most of the families' needs had to be generated at home.

**Table 1. Burrell Farm Agricultural Production for 1872, 1892 & 1898 obtained from Lorain County Assessor Tax Statements**

1872		1892		1898	
ITEM	NO. VALUE	ITEM	NO. VALUE	ITEM	NO. VALUE
Horses	8 \$390	Horses	13 \$590	Horses	6 \$250
Cattle	35 \$739	Cattle	7 \$105	Cattle	13 \$220
Sheep	135 \$405	Sheep	172 \$602	Sheep	83 \$245
Hogs	5 \$26	Hogs	5 \$26.40	Hogs	3 \$15
YIELD ACRES		YIELD ACRES		YIELD ACRES	
Wheat (bushels)	170 10	Wheat (bushels)	79 12	Wheat (bushels)	225 20
Oats (bushels)	459 7	Oats (bushels)	225 14	Oats (bushels)	325 16
Corn (bushels)	1,100 10	Corn (bushels)	1,210 18	Barley (bushels)	
Hay (tons)	110 48	Hay (tons)	58 38	Corn (bushels)	700 16
Clover (tons)	20 7	Clover		Hay (tons)	50 35
Potatoes (bushels)	180 1.5	Clover Hay (tons)	38	Clover	2
Butter (lbs.)	771	Clover Seeds (bushels)	12.5	Clover Hay (tons)	4
Cheese (lbs.)	4,702	Potatoes (bushels)	45 0.5	Potatoes (bushels)	115 1
Maple Products		Butter (lbs.)	180	Butter (lbs.)	300
Sugar (lbs.)	5	Eggs (dozen)	150	Eggs (dozen)	100
Syrup (gallons)	10.5	Wool (lbs.)	940	Wool (lbs.)	332
Grapes & Wine		Orchards	4	Orchards	3
Wine pressed (gallons)	5	Apples (bushels)	110	Cultivated Land	135
Wool (lbs.)	802	Pears (bushels)	2	Pasturage	95
Orchards	6	Cultivated Land	102	Wooded Land	20
Apples (bushels)	1,000	Pasturage	187	Total Farm	300
Peaches (bushels)	75	Wooded Land	13		
Pears (bushels)	3	Total Farm	304		
Pasturage	140				
Uncultivated Land	40				
Total Farm	300				

**Other Items Reported:**  
 Dogs: 1 (male)  
 Domestic Animals Died from Disease—6 hogs, 7 sheep, 1 cow (1877); 6 sheep (1878); 4 sheep (1879); 6 sheep, 1 horse (1880); 6 sheep (1881); 1 hog, 6 sheep, 1 cow (1886); 2 sheep killed by dogs (1887); 2 sheep (1892)  
 Cost of Commercial Fertilizers—\$10 (1886); \$20 (1887); \$25 (1888)  
 Employees & Wages 1870–1879: 1 male (55-60¢/day), 1 female (30¢/day)  
 Employees & Wages 1880–1898: 1 full time. (\$20/month; 2 part time (average 45¢/day, \$12/month)



**Table 2. Burrell Farm Production in Relation to Climatic Conditions**

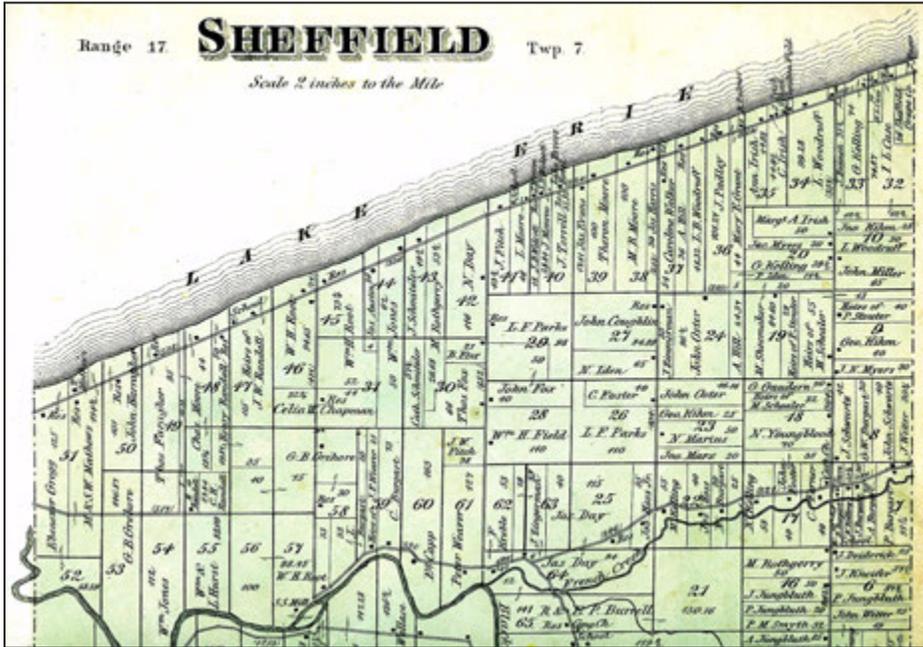
YEAR	ANNUAL* RAINFALL	TEMPERATURE*		ANNUAL YIELD/ACRE**				
		APRIL	JULY	WHEAT	OATS	CORN	HAY	APPLES
1870	47.7	48.3	72.3	14	66	130	1.8	328
1871	30.0	51.2	70.6	12	43	80	1.6	117
1872	34.2	49.6	75.4	17	66	110	2.3	167
1873	41.2	44.0	72.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1874	33.3	39.6	73.4	12	6	42	2.0	133
1875	36.9	41.0	70.0	6	56	46	2.0	18
1876	41.2	43.6	72.4	NA	NA	NA	NA	18
1877	33.5	44.3	71.8	12	50	78	2.3	18
1878	53.5	53.0	73.8	30	38	63	2.5	100
1879	41.5	44.0	73.4	26	55	78	1.9	50
1880	37.4	49.1	70.4	20	50	73	2.0	125
1881	35.0	40.2	73.2	18	29	40	2.0	10
1882	40.0	44.4	68.7	15	40	40	2.0	100
1883	41.1	44.0	70.7	NA	NA	NA	2.0	NA
1884	33.3	43.5	69.0	11	25	71	2.0	80
1885	39.9	44.0	71.6	17	60	60	2.0	20
1886	27.3	49.1	69.9	21	44	25	2.0	80
1887	35.4	45.1	76.3	17	29	47	1.7	1
1888	32.6	44.5	71.0	7	50	31	2.1	150
1889	32.6	46.7	71.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1892	36.5	45.8	70.9	7	16	67	1.5	28
1898	32.5	44.1	73.4	12	20	44	1.4	
Mean	37.1	45.4	71.9	15	41	50	2.0	91

\*Climatic data for Elyria Station—rainfall in inches; temperature in °F. Source: Alexander, William Henry. 1924. *A Climatological History of Ohio*. Ohio State University, Engineering Experiment Station Bull. 26, Columbus, OH. 745 pp.

\*\*Yield/acre—wheat, oats, corn and apples in bushels; hay in tons

# History of Sheffield Lake's Lakeshore in the Nineteenth Century

Starting in the west and progressing eastward along the Lake Erie shoreline a number of historic buildings are found in Sheffield Lake, a few of which are highlighted below along with several nineteenth century homes that have been lost.



Ownership map of lakeshore portion of Sheffield Township in 1874. Dwellings are shown as small black squares.

**WILLIAM ROOT HOUSE.** In 1816, as pre-teens William and his brother Aaron Root walked over 500 miles through the wilderness with their parents to start a new home in Sheffield. In 1850 William built this elegant Greek Revival-style home on a Lake Erie bluff at the foot of Root Road. William was a banker and served as Lorain County auditor from 1855 to 1861. The house once had a Victorian-style porch, but now the original façade has been restored.



William Root House at 3535 East Erie Avenue.

**LAKE BREEZE POST OFFICE.** The Lake Breeze Post Office was located in the home of Postmaster James Austin in the 1890s. This 1896 photograph shows the house to be a modified Greek Revival-style farmhouse with a two-story front gable and matching one-story wings on the east and west sides of the house. Austin was fond of hosting Sheffield's annual August picnic at his homestead. The old house was torn down to make way for the Mariner's Watch subdivision.

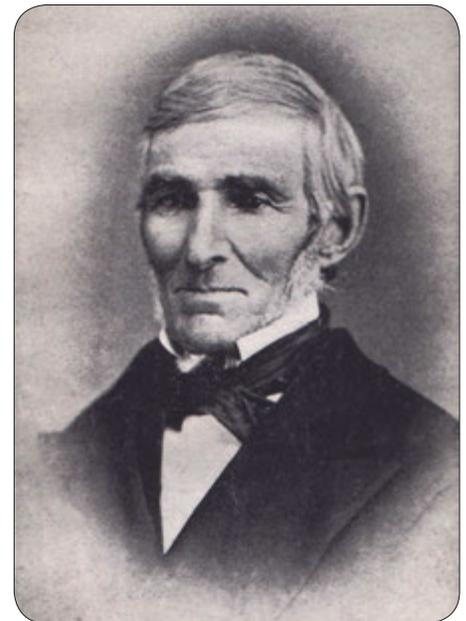


Lake Breeze Post Office once located just east of Root Road on the south side of Lake Road.

**NORMAN DAY FARM.** Norman Day was 13 years old when he arrived in Sheffield with his parents, Sheffield founder Capt. John Day and his wife Lydia (Austin) Day. He and his cousin William Root, were the first to chronicle the events

in the early settlement. He owned Lot 42 (117 acres) on Lake Breeze Road that stretched from the lakeshore to just north of the present-day railroad tracks. He built a Greek Revival-style farmhouse in the 1840s and farmed the land for four decades. He is buried in the Day Family Plot of Garfield Cemetery.

One of Norman's most enduring accounts deals with a bear and a boy from the lakeshore. Peter Miller, a lad of 17 from Avon's shore, encountered a black bear and 2 cubs in the swampy wilderness while returning home to the lakeshore after laboring at Sheffield Center. He attempted to escape by climbing a smooth 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, both boy and bear tumbled to the ground and Peter ran barefooted 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 found its way into *McGuffey's Reader*, bringing fame to Sheffield.



Norman Day (1803-1880).



*Norman Day Farm once located at the corner of Lake and Lake Breeze Roads.*



*Norman Day monument at Garfield Cemetery.*

**LAKE BREEZE HOUSE.** In 1860 Jay Terrell operated this Lake Erie resort. An avid fossil collector, in 1867 Terrell discovered armor plates of an ancient fish in the shale cliffs. The fish lived 375 million years ago in the Devonian Sea that covered Ohio. Terrell presented specimens to Dr. John Newberry of the Ohio Geological Survey, who named the new species *Dunkelosteus terrelli* in honor of the discoverer. The Lake Breeze Inn is located near where the old resort once stood.



*Lake Breeze House once located east of Lake Breeze Road on the north side of Lake Road.*

**JOHN FERNER HOUSE.** In the late 1800s the farmland on Harris Road from the lakeshore to Oster Road was owned by Sebastian Ferner. His homestead, built on Lake Road has since been demolished. In 1905, his son John married Margaret Biltz. As a wedding present, Sebastian gave the couple a plot of land at the corner of Harris and Lake Roads. The next year John constructed a charming Victorian-style home with a stone porch and fine interior detailing for his bride.



*John Ferner House at 4706 Lake Road.*

**WOODRUFF HOUSE.** Built circa 1880, this Italianate-style house on the lakeshore was the homestead of Lewis and Huldah Woodruff. The Woodruff's 99-acre farm was adjacent to Sheffield Township District No. 3 Schoolhouse, also built in the 1880s. Their son, Harry Woodruff, who eventually owned the house, was the first mayor the Village of Sheffield Lake when it was formed in 1920. The first airfield in the area was located on the mayor's farm at the SW corner of Abbe and Lake Roads.



*Woodruff House at 5156 Lake Road.*

**JOSEPH HIRAM PADLEY FARM.**

Once located on the lakeshore, just east of Harris Road, the Padley Homestead was one of the first farms on the lakeshore. Joseph Padley built this Vernacular-style farmhouse in the 1860s on the shore and farmed 100 acres on the south side of Lake Road. In the 1970s the house served as a nunnery for the Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Thomas Catholic Church on Harris Road. More recently it was remodeled as a private residence. In the early 1950s the land south of the Lake Road was sold for the Knickerbocker Knolls housing development on Irving Park Boulevard.



*The Joseph Hiram Padley House, built in 1860 on his 101-acre farm east of Harris Road. The view shows that Lake Road was still a dirt road in the late 1800s. The stepping-stone at the roadside was used for ladies arriving in carriages. In the early 1950s the land south of the road was sold for the Knickerbocker Knolls housing development (Irving Park Boulevard).*

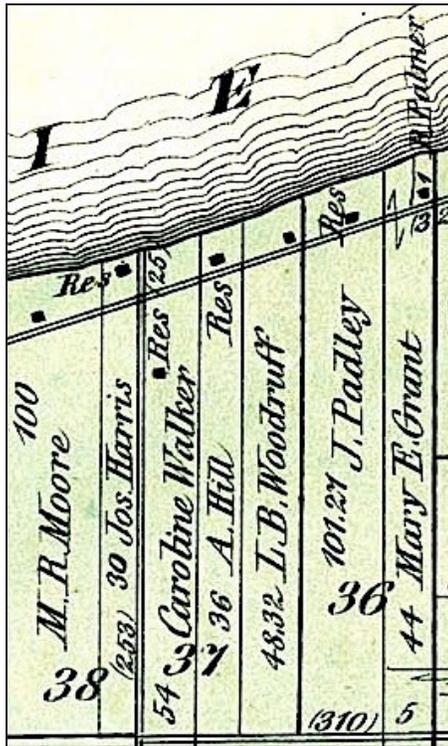


*This 1970s view shows the old Joseph Hiram Padley House on the lakeshore remodeled as a nunnery for the Sisters of Notre Dame from St. Thomas Catholic Church (Harris Road).*



*This recent view shows the old Joseph Hiram Padley House again remodeled as a private residence.*

Sheffield historian Doris Burrell (1903-1997) collected and preserved a number of photographs of the early farms that once occupied the Sheffield Lake lakeshore. She presented these to Sheffield Lake's Domonkas Library in 1975 as 35mm slides, mounted in a cartridge for a carousel projector. A selection of images, digitally scanned, are presented here that depict life on the Padley Homestead over 100 years ago.



Segment of the Tax Map for 1874 showing the location of the long and narrow Joseph Padley farm on the lakeshore. The Joseph Hiram Padley House is indicated by "Res" on the shore side of Lake Road. Harris Road is the north-south road at the left side of the map.



Joseph Padley with his work horses in the late 1800s.



Haying on the Padley farm in the late 1800s. Hay was harvested with a team of horses pulling a hay wagon to which a hay loader was attached. The loader was put in motion by the turning of its wheels as it was drawn along behind the wagon.



The Padley's, like most farmers in the 1800s raised chickens along with other typical farm animals and crops with the intent to be as self-sufficient as possible.



Dora Padley and her daughter Marcella (later Mrs. William Serian) churning butter in the back dooryard of the homestead.



Home of Norman Padley, son of Joseph, built on the family homestead, circa 1900. This house is no longer standing.

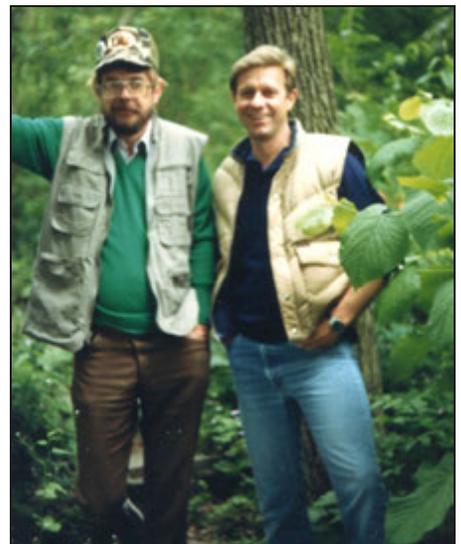


The Padley family calling on the Anton Jungbluth family of Abbe Road, circa 1900.

### Editors Note:

The Editor is pleased to acknowledge that two of the articles in this issue of *The Village Pioneer* have been contributed by members of the Sheffield Village Historical Society. The first, *History of Knickerbocker Knolls*, is written by Dr. Jock Rader of Windsor, California. Jock, a former resident of Sheffield Lake, worked on this construction project during his summer breaks from high school at Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio. Jock is the son of the developer, John Rader, and nephew of the project field supervisor, Bill Kretchman. The Society is pleased to have this rare insight to a project that added over 300 homes to Sheffield Lake Village, thereby boosting the population to over 5,000, which gave the community "City" status.

The second article, *My Mother's Stitches* prepared by Jennifer (Mackert) Brezinski, traces the history of quilting and tells how making quilts influenced the Mackert family. Jennifer grew up in Sheffield Village on the old Schueller farm on Abbe Road. She graduated from Brookside High as her parents, Lester and Gladys (Wisnieski) had done in the 1940s. Gladys had learned the art of quilting from her aunt Margaret Wisnieski and she passed the skill on to her four daughters. The more than 80 quilts completed by Gladys tell the story of her family.



Author Jock Rader and Eddie Herdendorf at Put-in-Bay (1987).

# *The History of Knickerbocker Knolls*

By Jock Rader

The Land & Development Company (L&D) built the 329 homes in Sheffield Lake's Knickerbocker Knolls (KK) subdivision in the middle 1950s. Great Lakes Realty Co. was responsible for all sales. The president of both was John Rader operating out of offices on Euclid Blvd. just south of the railroad tracks on the east side of Lorain. Circa 1950, L&D was building houses on either side of Euclid Avenue and struggling. The Shaw family of Akron, whose main business was the Leroy Jewelry stores and several men's clothing stores, owned the company. John Rader was a general contractor in Akron and the Shaws hired him in 1950 to take over the housing operations in Lorain. John commuted from Akron for six months living in the Antlers Hotel in downtown Lorain during the week. In June of 1951 John moved his family to Lorain, including this writer—his eleven year-old son, Jock.

The land for KK was purchased in late 1953 from Padley Farms [see previous article, *History of Sheffield Lake's Lakeshore in the Nineteenth Century*, for illustrations of the Padley Homestead in the late 1800s]. When no development plans were announced right away, one of the local papers speculated that the land would be used for "building submarines" or "testing rubber bands" because the parcel was long and narrow. The property was about 96 acres, extending from Lake Road all the way to Oster Road. From *Google Earth* the dimensions can be estimated as 800 feet by 5,000 feet.

The first homes built were three model homes on Lake Road. The foundations in these homes were erected in less than three weeks with skilled workmen putting in very long hours. Construction on the main body of the homes got going in the summer of 1954 (a pretty good year for the Cleveland Indians). The houses were



Aerial photograph from 1956 showing the completed Knickerbocker Knolls subdivision. View is toward the south from the Lake Erie shore. Irving Park Boulevard is the main subdivision street, running south from Lake Road at the left of the photograph. The Rader home is the last house to the right on the south side of Lake Road. The old Joseph Hiram Padley House, built in 1860, is the large home on the north side and near to Lake Road.



Nearly all buyers were veterans using the no-down-payment feature

## 200 contracts received in first 3 weeks

Three weeks after the Land & Development Company introduced two- to four-bedroom homes in Early American style at Sheffield Lake, near Lorain, Ohio, more than 200 contracts were obtained from buyers. Three model houses representing a range of \$14,500 to \$17,285 drew 25,240 visitors the first two Sundays, according to a mechanical counting machine.

Development of the 96-acre Knickerbocker Knolls subdivision is planned at the rate of 10 completions a week with all 361 homes ready by next September. Two homes completely furnished and decorated at a cost of \$7,000 and a third X-ray model were a great influence on sales, believes John A. Rader, president of the building company. Another leading factor was a no-down-payment plan with \$475 closing costs, used by approximately 185 veteran buyers.

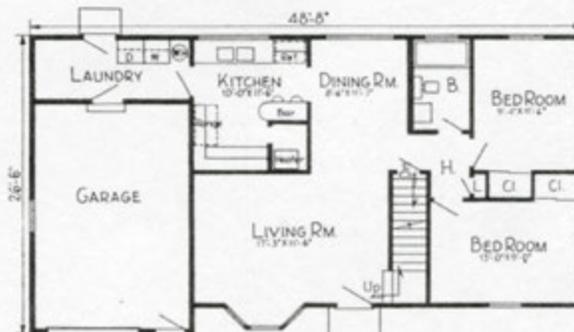
The house illustrated was priced at \$17,172 including plastered garage, entrance fence with lamppost, extra half-bath and \$60 certificate to help the new owner offset his landscaping expense.

### BRAND NAME PRODUCTS USED

Alside Lifetime aluminum siding  
 American-Standard plumbing fixtures  
 Frigidaire washer and dryer  
 K & M overhead garage door  
 Johns-Manville asphalt shingles  
 Ma-Ti-Co asphalt tile  
 Miami-Carey bathroom accessories  
 Perfection Stove Co. forced warm air furnace  
 Waste King Pulverator garbage disposer  
 Yale keyed-alike locks

### IDEAS IN ACTION

#### Sheffield Lake, Ohio



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

In two-bedroom house, second floor is left unfinished

Reprinted from AMERICAN BUILDER, November 1954 Issue

Article from November 1954 issue of American Builder, describing the home sites at the Knickerbocker Knolls subdivision.

available in a couple of floor plans and ranged in price from \$14,500 to \$17,285. In the first three weeks after the model homes opened 200 contracts were signed by buyers. The model homes were fully decorated at a cost of \$7,000, showing the possibilities to buyers and helping to sell them. For veterans there was a no-down payment plan, needing only \$475 in closing costs to move in. This very favorable financing was arranged through Second Federal & Loan Association of Cleveland.

The General Superintendent of Construction was William Kretchman, the author's uncle and also a member of the Sheffield Village Historical Society. The plan was to complete ten houses a week, but Ohio's weather created some challenges. I remember some horrible mud problems. Bill explains that on Halloween of 1954 a freak lake-effect storm dumped 8" of snow mostly within a mile of the lake, for some miles along the lakeshore, pretty much blanketing Padley Farms. The land had been cleared, but storm sewers weren't yet in and the snow of course melted soaking the land. The normal rains of late fall just made it worse. Trucks were forever getting stuck and Gilgenback Excavating's bulldozers were required to free them. I was working as a surveyor's assistant one weekend when our truck sank in the mud up to the running board. No bulldozers were working on the weekend so we had to walk back to Lake Road, well over half a mile, while carrying the surveying equipment while the mud tried to pull our boots off with every step. I did step out of my boot at one point and ended up with one foot in the mud over my ankle. There was no way to put down the surveyor's transit so somehow I got a very muddy foot and sock back into its boot.

Not only did KK provide 329 homes in Sheffield Lake, it created lots of economic activity in Lorain County. At one point the project was providing over 200 jobs counting L&D employees and subcontractors. The Great Lakes Realty Company took out a full-page ad in the *Lorain Journal* on July 30, 1955 to thank the company's staff for their part in Knickerbocker Knolls. The ad also thanked nineteen local sub-contractors and suppliers, the supervisory and office personnel of Land & Development Company, and Sheffield Lake Village public officials. The latter included Mayor Sidney Jordan, Councilmen/woman Fred Kistner, Margaret Crean, Harry Lloyd, Foster Armstrong, Sr., William Englehardt, and Robert Johnson. Also included were Treasurer Earl Snurr, Chairman Board of Public Affairs Don Smith, Chief of Police Clarence Hambly, Board of Public Affairs Paul Asherl, Fire Chief Peter Cifranic, Building Inspector Fred Cromwell, Village Clerk Eleanor Piskura, and Board of Public Affairs Ed Von Drak.

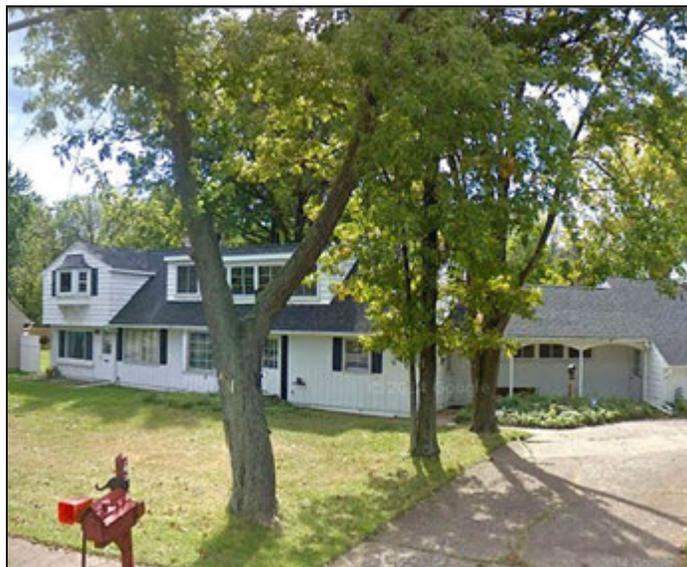
L&D instituted a number of measures to improve productivity and to lower costs. One such measure was to buy WWII surplus trucks and Jeeps from the government at favorable prices. The trucks were painted yellow and could be seen around Lorain County for several years. I used to drive a personnel carrier frequently on company projects in Lorain and Milan during the summers, after I had a driver's license. An innovative measure to increase productivity was the creation of a carpenter mill on the east side of Irving Park Blvd., near Lake Road [named for Irving Shaw a member of the Shaw family most intimately involved with the L&D construction business]. Several carpenters were assigned to the mill and they would pre-prepare various wood products before

they were moved out to where they were needed. For example, wood frame windows needed to be modified before they could be hung in the houses. It was more efficient to have an experienced crew with the right tools and rigs prep the windows than to have each carpenter at the houses deal with the modifications. There are a lot of windows in 329 houses.

I spent some time in those years with the surveying crew as a rod man and a stake pounder. All of the cross blocks and streets in KK had to be graded. We would put in a stake every hundred feet or so and as each stake was placed the senior man operating the surveyor's level would give the elevation for that spot and we would mark the desired ground elevation on the stake. Of course it made sense that we got our stakes from the carpenter mill—they cut 1x4s to a proper length and put a sharp point on them to facilitate pounding into the ground. But we once got a batch where the points had been beveled. When we would try to pound on one of these stakes it would corkscrew into the ground so that it became almost impossible to get the wide surface pointing in the direction needed by the bulldozer and pan operators—but, looking at the straight streets on the aerial photograph somehow they got it right.



*Recent photograph of a subdivision home on Irving Park Boulevard showing that after nearly 60 years the homes remain attractive.*



*Recent photograph of the former John Rader House at 4850 Lake Road, Sheffield Lake, Ohio.*

**The GREAT LAKES REALTY CO.**  
 WISHES TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK  
 ALL OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE AND THEIR CO-WORKERS,  
 FOR THE EXCELLENT COOPERATION, HARD WORK AND FORESIGHT  
 IN AIDING IN THE BUILDING OF THESE EXCELLENT HOMES AT  
 EXTREMELY LOW COST TO YOU, IN SHEPHERD LAKE VILLAGE, OHIO.  
 WE ALSO WISH TO THANK  
 SECOND FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION OF CLEVELAND, OHIO  
 FOR MAKING POSSIBLE THE UNIQUE  
 NO DOWN PAYMENT FINANCING FOR VETERANS AND THE  
 ATTRACTIVE F.H.A. FINANCING FOR NON-VETERANS

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**LAND AND DEVELOPMENT CO.**

 Earl Eskin Field Supt.	 Thelma Klump Secretary	 Eugene Roberts Eng. Supt.
 Jim Arnold Service Supt.	 Joe Kevlar General Supt.	 Evelyn Smith Secretary
 Nancy Shultz Secretary	 Walter Armstrong, Jr. Design	 Elmer Schell Gen. Supt. Foreman

  
**WILLIAM  
 KRETCHMAN  
 GEN. SUPT.  
 OF CONSTRUCTION**  
 We wish to extend our thanks to the  
 Lorain County Building and Construction  
 Trades Council.

**SUPERVISORY & OFFICE PERSONNEL**

 Betty Hughes Secretary	 Nathan Gould Architect	 Ernest Hayes Foreman
 Myra Wilson Foreman	 Thomas Whitford Secretary	 Paul White Foreman
 Mel Harvey Foreman	 Peter Dugan Foreman	

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**329  
 BEAUTIFUL HOMES  
 BEING BUILT  
 NO  
 DOWN PAYMENT  
 FOR QUALIFIED  
 VETERANS  
 PRICES  
 \$14,800 -- \$17,600  
 MONTHLY PAYMENTS  
 FROM \$76 PER MONTH  
 PLUS  
 TAXES AND INSURANCE**



BEAUTIFUL KNICKERBOCKER KNOLLS DEVELOPMENT IN  
 SHEPHERD LAKE VILLAGE, O., STOP 74, EAST LAKE RD., RT 2 & 6

**8 DISTINCTIVE  
 EARLY AMERICAN  
 STYLES  
 THAT NEVER GROW OLD**

•  
 MINIMUM  
 DOWN PAYMENTS  
 UNDER F.H.A. FOR  
 NON-VETERANS  
 •

**ALL IMPROVEMENTS  
 IN AND PAID FOR  
 (NO ASSESSMENTS)  
 IMMEDIATE  
 POSSESSION**

---

**LOCAL SUB-CONTRACTORS & SUPPLIERS**

 Gen. Eskin Steel Erection	 Joe Ryan Electrician	 Arthur Kraft Kitchen Cab.	 Bob Bauer Concrete Works
 Frank Green Tile & Plumbing	 Steve Knoch Electrician	 Victor Kravitz Wood Work and Paintwork	 Joe Kibick Carpenter
 Frank Chalk Painting	 Jack Foley Plumbing	 Paul Stewart Plumbing	 John Gorman Plumbing
 Wm. Knapton Roofing	 Steve Post Roofing	 Jack Edwards Roofing	 C. Y. Green Roofing

• MEL WISNER — SIDING • GED. BEW — CEMENT FINISHING •  
 • SAN ROSS & SONS — PLUMBING • OUR THANKS TO THE •  
 LORAIN TELEPHONE CO., OHIO EDISON CO. & OHIO FUEL GAS CO.

**• SHEPHERD LAKE VILLAGE, OHIO PUBLIC OFFICIALS •**

 Fred Kisher Commissioner	 Paul Bauer Treasurer	 Robert Johnson Commissioner	 Don Smith Chairman Board of Public Affairs	 Clarence Smully Chief of Police
 Myron Green Commissioner	 Wm. Knapton Commissioner	 Wm. Knapton Commissioner	 Paul Johnson Chief of Public Affairs	
 Ed Van Dyke Chief of Public Affairs	 MAYOR MINNIE W. JORDAN	 Paul Johnson Chief of Public Affairs	 Paul Johnson Chief of Public Affairs	
 Harry W. Lord Commissioner	 Elmer Peters Village Clerk	 Fred Connell Eng. Supt.	 Frank Armstrong, Jr. Commissioner	 Paul Johnson Chief of Public Affairs

The Great Lakes Realty Co. took a full-page advertisement in the Lorain Journal (July 30, 1955) to thank the company's staff members, personnel of Land & Development Company, sub-contractors and suppliers, and Sheffield Lake Village public officials for their part in the Knickerbocker Knolls project.

# *My Mother's Stitches: A Brief History of Quilting and How it Influenced My Family*

By Jennifer Mackert Brezinski

No one knows the origin of quilting. Pieces of quilted fabric have been discovered in the Holy Lands and even underneath recovered pieces of armor dating back to the Crusades. One thing is most certainly known however, quilting was born of necessity. Comfort, warmth, and even protection were the driving forces behind quilting's creation.

Somewhere in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a great climatic change occurred, causing frigid temperatures and lands to be covered with snow. Geologists call it the "Little Ice Age." During these years the bed covering that we now know as a "quilt" was born. Over the centuries to follow, these layered combinations of fabric continued to be used in households all over greater Europe. By the 1700s the quilt was so much a part of a household that the women of the time came to call them "bed furniture." Women used anything that was readily available to them for filling: lamb's wool, straw, moss, feathers, or even grass.

By the 1800s the custom of quilting emigrated from the "Old World" to the "New" as times grew harder in European countries. Families often chose to strike out for the new lands with the hopes of a better life. Each pilgrim family had in their possession, complete sets of "bed furniture" among their belongings as they boarded ships to take them over oceans to the Americas. As the new continent was becoming settled many immigrants began to feel restless and desired more open spaces. These desires carried pioneers westward, making their way from the eastern shores, inland along the Great Lakes, to found small communities.

Exposure to this new land and new experiences began to create new ideas in the minds of the pioneer women. Many of the pioneer settlers were poor. Everything was re-used and re-used again; including the quilts they had set up housekeeping with. When clothing or quilts were worn, they were patched with any bit of fabric that was found. The art of patchwork quilting came from these humble beginnings.

Ships bearing goods from Europe were too heavily laden with necessities to carry bolts of varying cloth which were considered a luxury. The additional cost of transporting goods from the sea-boarding towns to the pioneer settlements inland also, decreased the availability of a variety of cloths ever making it to the pioneers. The women found themselves utilizing the unbleached muslin or simple broadcloth printed bags that held the grain, flour, and sugar as fabric for clothing and bedding.

Patchwork and appliquéd quilt tops began to display the feelings and concepts of America and the new life the pioneer women experienced. Happiness, trials, and family events were woven into the quilts that were made. Quilting bees became social events to pass cold wintery evenings. Many customs and superstitions grew from the practice of quilting, influencing the young women of the time.



*Patchwork Quilt by Elsie Bird Lewis, great grandmother to Jennifer (Mackert) Brezinski and grandmother to Gladys Mackert.*

It was custom that at a very tender age, girls were taught how to sew and quilt. Daughters would spend hours at the quilting frame, all aiming for a full dowry chest of embroidered linens and hand stitched quilts, before their marriage. The last quilt, and often the most beautiful, to be made, was the bridal quilt. This quilt could not be started until the young woman was formerly engaged, as to begin beforehand was sure to bring the young woman ill fortune.

Margaret Wisnieski was one young woman who grew up learning to sew in just this manner from own her mother. She became an avid and accomplished seamstress. Margaret passed on her love of thread and fabric to her niece Gladys Wisnieski. Margaret taught the basic principles of sewing to Gladys when she

was still a young girl. Gladys says, "Aunt Margaret taught me to sew, embroider and make doll clothes, and I have never stopped!" Gladys Wisnieski moved with her parents and brothers to Sheffield Village, shortly after she completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The family rented the Peter Schueller house at 1148 Abbe Road.

Gladys attended and graduated from Brookside High School. She met and dated her future husband during her high school years, Lester Mackert, who lived across the street on Abbe Road. Peter and Margaret Schueller were Lester's maternal grandparents. Gladys Wisnieski married Lester Mackert in 1944. After being married for some years, Lester and Gladys had the opportunity to buy the Schueller farm and did so. Lester and Gladys, raised their six children; David, James, Jennifer (Brezinski), Mary (Rittenhouse), Ellen (Sheets) and Jean (Januzzi) on the farm for 21 years.

Having 6 children to raise and a busy farm did not stop Gladys from sewing. She decided to start quilting shortly after her first son, David was born in 1946. Gladys would participate in the "quilting bees" that the women of St. Teresa's parish held. Completing the complex stitches through the layers of fabric proved to be a challenge. Gladys envied the other quilters that she watched, deftly stitching tiny, even stitches smoothly and quickly.

Help came to her from her mother in law Bertha (Schueller) Mackert. Bertha had been taught to sew and quilt as a young girl. She was an accomplished quilter despite her dislike for the process! Bertha taught Gladys a timeless tip—pushing down on the eye of the needle as you are stitching, will allow you to make tiny stitches and proceed at a quicker, smoother pace. This technique proved to be just the hint Gladys needed, and she quickly adapted the method of stitching.



*Patchwork quilt made by Bertha Mackert.*

Once the stitching was mastered for quilting, there was seldom a time when a quilt was not in progress in Gladys' home. Her accomplishments can be noted in the 80+ quilts she has completed over the years. Family celebrations are remembered in the quilts that Gladys has made, weddings, births, 16<sup>th</sup> birthdays, family events, and memories, just as in pioneer times, are all recorded.

Gladys made so many quilts for others that one year, her husband Lester, complained that he was the only one who didn't have a quilt! A fireside quilt soon rectified that situation. Lester Mackert passed away in December of 2006. The following year (2007) Gladys presented memory quilts to each of their six children created from patchwork blocks she had sewn from Lester's shirts. Included on the quilt top were pictures of Lester and Gladys together, candid shots of Lester, and one of his beloved Ford truck. Centered in the quilt top is an embroidered square encouraging the holder to "Keep warm with memories of Grandpa."



*Lester Mackert Memory Quilt.*



*Granddaughter Jessie (Mackert) Salva with the quilt made for her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

Gladys has tried to continue the tradition and art of sewing by teaching her four daughters to sew and complete simple embroidery. Her oldest daughter Jennifer (author of this article) has embraced the art of quilting. I too, aspire to be an accomplished

seamstress and am an avid knitter. I have completed several baby quilts for friends and family members. I have also completed two full size appliqué quilts, which were sewn and quilted by hand. Patchwork is my favorite type of quilting, and I prefer to machine quilt rather than hand quilt. But, it is good to know I can (hand quilt) if I should choose to. My mother's stitches can never be replicated, no matter how hard I try. Her appliqué stitches are all but invisible; they are so tiny and finely done. It is something maybe I can one day accomplish!



*Jennifer (Mackert) Brezinski quilting with her machine.*



*A carnation appliqué quilt hand sewn and quilted by Jennifer for her mother in law- Kathleen Brezinski.*

Gladys has also shown several of her granddaughters how to sew and assemble a quilt. Cynthia (Cindy) Olson is pictured below with her grandmother, learning how to measure, cut and sew a patchwork quilt called “Streak of Lightning.”

Cindy continues to make quilts and, as many quilters before her, has developed her own style. She specializes in transforming the many tee-shirts firefighters collect from different firehouses or training sessions they may attend, into quilt blocks. The quilt blocks are then pieced together and bound to make a lap quilt or wall hanging. Cindy is currently in the process of assembling and piecing together a tee-shirt block quilt for her firefighter husband David.



Cynthia “Cindy” Olson is pictured with her grandmother, learning how to measure, cut and sew a patchwork quilt called “Streak of Lightning.”

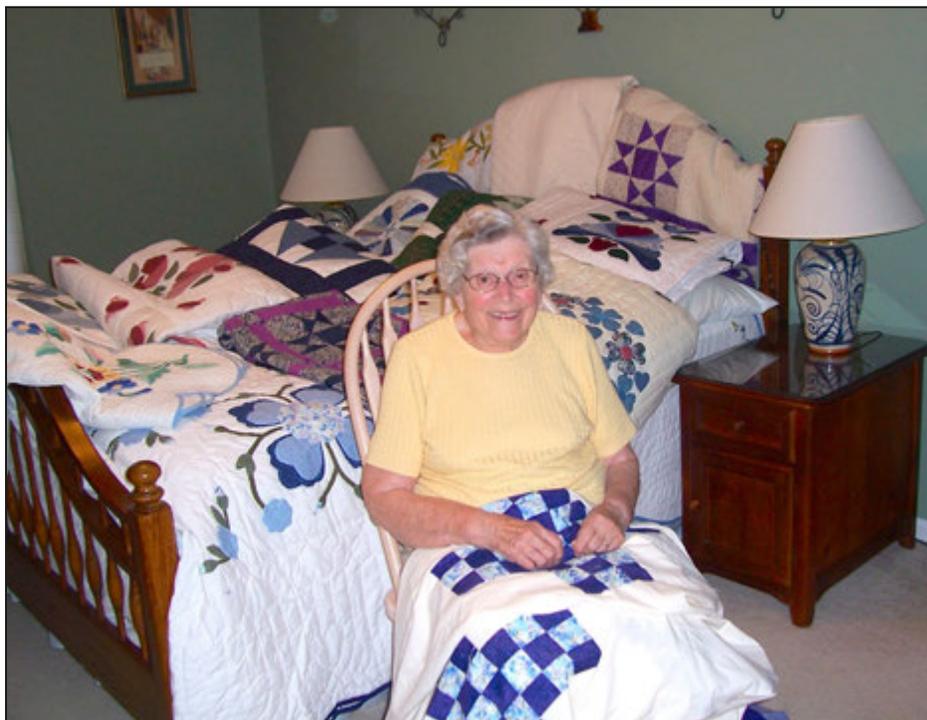


Alana Olson with completed Streak of Lightning Quilt.



Gladys showing great granddaughter Elizabeth White, how to make a quilting stitch. Butterfly quilt was made for great granddaughter, Reese Mackert.

Although Gladys has made numerous quilts for friends and family, she did not make one for herself until 2012. The full size “Nine Patch” quilt top is completed, but it is still waiting to be layered and lined, ready for the hand quilting. Gladys’ completion of the Nine Patch quilt is often interrupted by a request from one of her family members or the birth of a new great grandchild.



Nine Patch quilt top on her lap and some of the many quilts Gladys has made are pictured behind her.

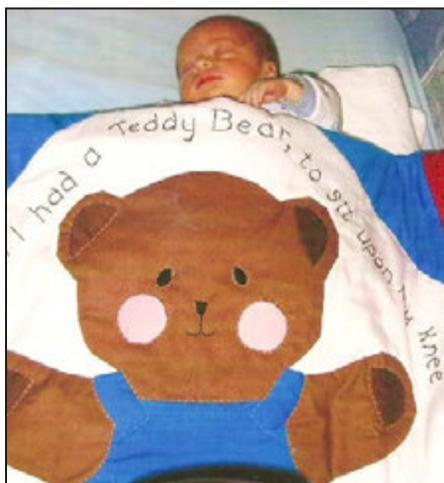
At the age of 88, it does not look like there will be any slowing in Gladys’ quilting. She continues to teach the new generation, little snippets of quilting whenever she can.

Gladys’ hopes for completing her own quilt may have to be postponed once again, for just a little bit longer—she has recently been presented with the birth of three great grandsons, and a great granddaughter

which has raised the grand total to 21 great grandchildren for Gladys!



Custom made Texas Star Quilt made for daughter Mary and her husband Aaron Rittenhouse.



Great grandson Luke Rittenhouse, pictured here, and his twin brother Owen received identical quilts from Gladys, their great grandmother after their birth.



Appliqué Dresden Plate Quilt made for daughter Ellen and her husband Larry Sheets.

## Sheffield Bicentennial Update

Plans for the 2015 Bicentennial Celebrations for the founding of Sheffield are gathering momentum. The Bicentennial Commission, with representatives from Sheffield Lake, Sheffield Village, and Sheffield Township, have established a website [[sheffieldbicentennial.org](http://sheffieldbicentennial.org)], which contains a wealth of information about the scheduled events. This site is being continually updated and added to, so visit it often to get the latest news.

In July, the Bicentennial Commission presented Bicentennial plaques to Sheffield Lake City Council, Sheffield Village Council, and the Sheffield Township Trustees. The plaques depicted the Bicentennial Seal designed by Tim O'Connor and were carved by laser technology at the FAB LAB of the Lorain County Community College.



The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Family ArtsFest will be held at The French Creek Nature & Arts Center on Saturday September 6<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Come visit the Visit the Sheffield Bicentennial Tent, which will feature:

- Illustrations of historic preservation projects in all three Sheffields
- Play Sheffield Trivia—test your knowledge and win a free membership in the Sheffield Village Historical Society
- Try to Stump the Mayor—your chance to ask Mayor John Hunter about Sheffield
- Get your questions answered about Sheffield archaeology, geology, and history

- Learn about Sheffield Bicentennial Events planned for next year

Proceeds of the Live and Silent Auctions will support Arts Education Scholarships and the Sheffield Bicentennial.

To kick-off the celebrations, a Sheffield History Lecture Series will begin this fall in conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Domonkas Library in Sheffield Lake. At 7:00 pm on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>, Professor Herdendorf will present the following free lectures in the Library's auditorium.

### *Domonkas Library 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and Sheffield Bicentennial Lecture Series*

Wednesday—September 3 *Sheffield Before People—*

From Volcanoes to Glaciers: Three Billion Years of Sheffield in the Making.  
The Natural History of the landforms and wilderness that greeted the first inhabitants of what is now Sheffield.

Thursday—September 4 *Sheffield's First Peoples—*

Native American Cultures and their Settlements in northern Ohio.  
Archaeological investigations of ancient Native American occupation sites in Sheffield and vicinity.

Monday—September 8 *Sheffield's Founding Pioneers—*

How Sheffield was Originally Settled.  
Profiles of Sheffield's founding families and the various ways they made their way to Ohio 200 years ago.



*Bicentennial Commissioner Eddie Herdendorf carving Bicentennial Seal Plaque with laser technology at Lorain County Community College's FAB LAB.*



*Sheffield Village Major John D. Hunter accepts the Bicentennial Seal Plaque from Bicentennial Commissioner Eddie Herdendorf.*



*Domonkas Library, 4125 East Lake Road, Sheffield Lake, Ohio.*