



BICENTENNIAL BULLETIN No. 26 ***—Sheffield Celebrates 200th Birthday***

The Sheffield Bicentennial Commission will issue a *Bicentennial Bulletin* each Monday throughout 2015 that illustrates the rich heritage of our communities. **View them at — www.sheffieldbicentennial.org or sheffieldvillage.com**

JOSEPH TOWNSHEND HOUSE (built circa 1855—*noted elegant interior features*) *5474 Detroit Road, Sheffield Village, Ohio*

This wood-frame house was built about 1855 by Joseph Townshend in typical Greek Revival style with Italianate-style decorations, especially on the front porch. The basic proportions of this house, its bold simple cornice, and its main doorway with side and top lights are the Greek Revival-style features. The elaborate bracketed entrance porch is Italianate, and may have been a later addition. A similarly decorated porch once existed along the east side of the one-story wing, with an entrance door to the kitchen area. The house plan is a “T” design with a high front gable that faces north, toward Detroit Road. It is a 2-story house with six rooms on the first floor, five rooms on the second floor, and a basement. The foundation is constructed of locally quarried sandstone.



The interior has two white marble fireplaces and a brightly painted ceiling rosette in the front parlor [now used as a master bedroom], which features an outer ring of grapes on a vine and an inner ring of roses. The original interior frames for the doors and windows have been retained and exhibit elaborate geometric designs at the corners. The house sets back about 100 feet from the road, with approximately 150 feet of frontage. In 1976 the Joseph Townshend House was listed on the Ohio Historic Inventory, which is maintained by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office.

Andrew and Clara Mackert acquired the house and 72-acre farm in 1910—possibly in a trade with the Jungbluth family for farmland on Abbe Road near the French Creek Road crossing. The Jungbluth family had apparently acquired the land and house from the Townshend family sometime after 1896, based on a historic map of that year which still shows the Townshend family as the owner. In any case, the 1915 Sheffield Township map shows Andrew Mackert as the owner. The Mackerts had three children: Raymond (born 1913), Gilbert (born 1914), and Alice (born 1917). In 1935, Alice

married Charles DeChant. For some 90 years, the Mackert-DeChant Family operated the farm—first as a truck farm supplying the Cleveland and Pittsburgh markets, then in 1953 greenhouses were constructed on 3.2 acres of the farm.

Joseph Townshend House front gable and east wing



Marble fireplace in master bedroom



Ceiling rosette in master bedroom



The DeChants had 4 children: Charles (born 1937), William (born 1939), Clara (1941-1989), and Sharon (born 1946). William “Bill” DeChant was able to keep the greenhouses in operation until 2003, when environmental constraints, rising fuel costs, and imported tomatoes forced him to close and demolish them. He was also able to buy 20 additional acres of land to the north of Detroit Road, which gave him access to the Abbe Road sewer line, which in turn made possible the Village Reserve housing and business development. More recently the DeChant family has sold much of the old farm on the south side of Detroit Road to the Methodist Wesleyan Meadows development.

Townshend House in 2009



Wesleyan Meadows development

