(Above) Photograph of Shady Dell, 2015 (Sam Keiser, University of North Alabama via Omeka at Auburn)

34

Sheffield

Sheffield has a history longer than the state of Alabama. This area has long been used as a ford and landing for the Tennessee River. The first Europeans to settle the area were French in the 1780s. Forty years later, the town of York Bluff was laid out and plantation owners from the eastern U.S. began to buy large tracts of land. Sheffield's beginnings were truly sparked by the railroad in the early 1830s, which terminated at what was then called Tuscumbia Landing. Like the rest of North Alabama along the Tennessee River, cotton was big from the 1840s through to the 1860s. While North Alabama was fiercely fought over during the Civil War in order to gain control of the river and the railroad, Sheffield saw no major battles or skirmishes.

(Right) 1936 USGS/TVA Topographic Map of Southeast Sheffield, Tuscumbia, Alabama Quadrangle

In the latter half of the 19th century, the town grew through industry. The Sheffield Land, Iron, and Coal Company was started in 1883 with intentions to create a competitive industrial city. Sheffield was incorporated in 1885 and named after the city in

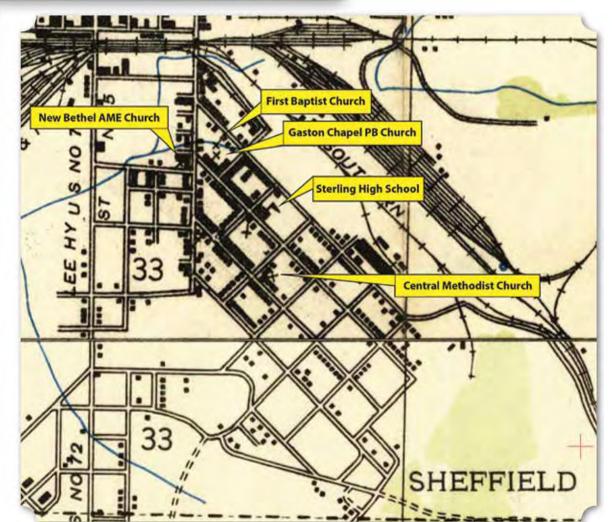(Below) 1952/57 Topographic Maps of Southeast Sheffield, Florence and Tuscumbia, Alabama Quadrangles (Bottom) 1971 USGS/TVA Topographic Maps of Southeast Sheffield, Florence and Tuscumbia, Alabama Quadrangles