

# Children's Corner

Hi kids. The story for this week is written by Betty Underwood of Paisley. Betty is in Gr. 7 at the Port Elgin Saugeen Central School. This is the story of her great-great-grandfather who was one of the first settlers in Saugeen Township. Betty won a prize from the Kinsmen for the essay and I thought it was so good I should share it with all of you. It was an excellent topic for Heritage Day. add to bottom

Well, that's all for this week. Next week there'll be another contest and I'll give you all the rules then.

## NATHANIEL EDWARD LEEDER

Nathaniel Edward Leeder was one of Saugeen Townships earliest pioneers. He helped clear the land of virgin forests, two years after the township was surveyed and only 5 years after the arrival of the first permanent settlers in Bruce County.

Nathaniel Edward Leeder was my great-great grandfather. He was born Feb. 26, 1835 at Woodton, Norfolk County England. His father was operating a mill in that place. Mr. Leeder left England when he was only 16 to cross the Atlantic Ocean to live in the New World. George Leeds a good friend of his sailed on a sailing boat with him for many weeks. Later George Leeds became reeve of Bruce Township for many years.

They landed at Quebec and made their way up to Hamilton. Travelling north they worked on farms and heard of wonderful land North along the shores of Lake Huron. Mr. Leeder set out in the spring 1853 to see for himself. He came up from Goderich in a small trading schooner bound for Southampton.

He called upon Mr. McNabb the land agent and he was directed to Lot 30, Lake Range, now the property of Jack Fenton.

A squatter had erected a cabin and made a small clearing on the place. He bought this man's rights and got the lot and cabin. Now that he had a home he needed equipment.

For two weeks he chopped down trees for a neighbour who lived near Stirton's Bridge. For his work he received an axe and a frying pan.

The next fall he was joined by his parents and three brothers who came in by way of Guelph and Owen Sound. The roads were so bad it was only with great difficulty that they reached Saugeen.

The following year a number of apple trees, the first in these parts, were planted by Mr. Leeder. The clearings were small, potatoes were easily raised, and there were many fish in the lake.

Southampton was the nearest market. Port Elgin at this time was known as Staffords Corner. John Stafford owning a hotel on the corner where the Port Elgin Co-operative now stands.

When they had wheat they loaded into small boats and took it down to Port Albert near Goderich where it was ground into flour. This sometimes took many days.

In 1860 Mr. Leeder married Mrs. Mary Schwendker who had moved to Bruce County from Germany. Because she spoke German and he spoke English they had trouble talking. My grandfather Clazie now has the German-English dictionary that they used so they could understand each other.

In 1870 my great-great-grandfather moved with his wife and family to Missouri in United States. While there he acted as Post Master and School teacher as well as a farmer.

The Civil War had just ended and when ploughing large gun shells and other items from the War would be found.

In 1874 they returned to Saugeen where Mr. Leeder lived until his death in 1923. My great-great-grandfather kept a diary from the time he first came to Saugeen almost until he died.

Life was sometimes very hard. Money was always scarce. They got most of the things they needed by trading things they grew.

One brother, Fred Leeder left Saugeen and travelled west to British Columbia to look for gold in the Cariboo region. He was *lost* around while going down the Fraser River.

All of our early pioneers led interesting lives even if they were hard. They cleared the land, built homes and started schools and churches. Mr. Leeder was secretary of the school board and treasurer of Saugeen Township for 21 years.

Pioneers like him helped make our township what it is today.

Betty Underwood  
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Grade 7 age 12



The Port Elgin Kinsmen Club sponsored a heritage essay contest recently in conjunction with their celebration of heritage week in the town. Three entrants, Betty Underwood, Sarah Hall and Hope Wallace came up with interesting essays and were presented with shields by Kinsmen president Sandy Grieve.

*Harold & Allie Snyder 50th  
Wedding*

