

FOCUS ON

Sweet's Corners

The first settlers were Indians. Over the years many artifacts have been unearthed to prove that the Indians lived on the shores of Grippen Lake. There is a perfectly round basin-shaped hole in a rather flat rock just a few yards from the four corners. It is about 20" in diameter and 10" deep. It is believed it was hollowed out so that corn could be ground and food cooked in it.

The first white men were lumbermen who were attracted there by the large quantity of pine and other valuable timber found close to a waterway whose outlet is the Gananoque River and also close to the Rideau River.

Nicholas Sliter, a German, came to Sweet's Corners in 1801. His name was VanSlaughter but it was changed to Sliter because it was so much like the English word "to kill". He settled where the Elementary School is now located. He was the only settler between Lyndhurst and what is now Highway 15. He owned several acres on both sides of the road to the corners.

An Englishman, named Payne, was next and he located on the site of Donald Moorehead's farm. The surrounding country was all woods with only trails blazed through. RECOLLECTIONS OF HIEL SLITER, SON OF NICHOLAS SLITER:

(a) He and his father, a United Empire Loyalist, came by ox team from Vermont in five weeks and settled near Sweet's Corners in 1801-2. The nearest store was run by Daniel Jones in Snarlington (now the city of Brockville).

(b) They used wintergreen sage tea and burned corn coffee.

(c) The settlers had much difficulty in grinding corn.

(d) In 1802 there were 17 families between Furnace Falls (now Lyndhurst) and Seeley's Bay; then unbroken forest for 18 miles to Kingston Mills.

(e) He attended school for one month at the age of 15 to learn to write.

(f) School was held in the evenings and the settler with the greatest knowledge taught the others.

(g) He recalls that there were three houses in Gananoque when he went there with his father in 1803.

(h) The bull plough, heavy grub hoe, flail and hand fan were the chief instruments used on the farm at that time.

(i) There were no school or religious services and very little observance of the Sabbath. The iron furnace ran seven days a week. The fire was extinguished only four times a year.

(j) Trapping was very common - fisher, otters, muskrats and prime martens. Deer were plentiful and valuable for food and clothing. Deer skin dresses were common and looked neat when dyed blue with the bark of the soft maple.

(k) Mr. Sliter's first harness was made of hickory bark. The first vehicle in the township had wheels made of narrow cuts off the end of logs.

(l) Manufactured articles were bought at Kingston - Cotton 40¢ a yard; print 60-70¢ and nails 25¢ a lb.

(m) When the war of 1812 came, prices went up as money came into the country from England. Oxen \$150.00; Flour \$20.00 a barrel; Cows \$40.00; Pork \$40.00 a barrel and salt \$50.00 a barrel or .50¢ a quart.

The first Niblocks were from Ireland and settled at Brier Hill just north of Sweet's Corners in 1820. This was William Niblock. In 1828 William's son, John, was given a grant of land about half a mile north of Sweet's Corners, what was then known as Leeds Township. The name Leeds was named for the Fifth Duke of Leeds (England) Francis Golphin Osborne, who was Secretary of State for the Home Dept. in 1783.

In 1847, according to a time-worn deed, now in the possession of John Niblock, in an indenture made at Gananoque, John Lewis Macdonald and his wife Charlotte, deeded 200 acres of land to John Niblock for 250 pounds Sterling (about \$1,250.00 at that time).

John and Alpha Sweet were both born in 1767. Being United Empire Loyalists, they left the United States and came to Leeds Township before the war of 1812. They had twelve children, some born in the United States and some in Canada. Their son, Allan, who was born in 1790, was the man who gave his name to this settlement and was one of the early activists for responsible government in Upper Canada. Since Allan served as a Corporal during the war of 1812, he was awarded 200 acres of land from the crown. This was the northeast corner where John Mainse now lives and he started clearing the land in 1814.

Privations of the early settlers, such as shortages of food and adequate housing, were further compounded by English Colonial policy which almost ignored the pioneers.

Robert Gourlay spent his life fighting for Responsible Government. He organized a series of meetings beginning in 1818 in Leeds. From these meetings came a number of briefs to be taken to York (Toronto). Representatives were named to take these to the government. Allan Sweet was the delegate from this area, attending a meeting at Lansdowne June 23, 1818. Nathan Hicock, another pioneer was chairman and became the courier for the trip to York. Gourlay, whose aim was to have free elections was put in jail for his activities. The government took no notice of the complaints and it was not until after the rebellion of 1837 that Responsible Government came to Leeds County. Allan was a lay preacher of the Episcopal Methodist church and later was appointed Justice of the Peace.

A sister, Lydia Sweet, married Robert Nuttall. They first lived on a small farm between Mrs. Iva Sweet and Ken Berry, then they lived in the brick house now occupied by Elswood Gamble. This house was a tavern at one time.

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SKI-FUND SALE & AUCTION
at SWEET'S CORNERS SCHOOL
SAT. OCT. 18 10-3 p.m.
 Members of the community are asked to donate articles ...
 furniture unused items
 apples junkie
 you name it!
NO ITEM TOO BIG OR TOO SMALL
 for pick up call the school
 at 928-2777 or 928-2778
 (after hours call 928-2074)
 All unsold items will be put on the auction block at 1 p.m.
 So... clean out your attic
 & PLAN TO ATTEND
 PROCEEDS WILL BE USED TO PURCHASE SEVERAL SETS OF CROSS-COUNTRY SKIS FOR THE SCHOOL

SWEET'S CORNER SCHOOL 1911

Front row

1. Hugh Reman
2. Ivan Wiltse
3. Willie Moorhead
4. Arnold Mainse
5. Joe Crossman
6. Charlie Berry
7. Giles Mustard
8. Ernie Mainse

Middle row

1. Myrtle Earle
2. Sarah Galway
3. Inez Hollister
4. Mary Berry
5. Gertie Berry
6. Muriel Fair (Teacher)
7. Stuart Mainse
8. Nellie McCardle
9. Clifford Galway

Back row

1. Manfred Berry
2. Gerald Johnson
3. Leola Tye
4. Zella Sweet
5. Howard Berry
6. Vera Moorhead
7. Cornie Tye
8. Leonard Galway
9. Viola Tye
10. Wilfred White

