

Biographical Sketch:

William Leeper (1782-1858)

and

Eleanor Lawther Leeper (1791-1844)

of

Cross Creek, Ohio Co. (Brooke Co.), VA (WV) Washington Co., Penn (after 1780)

And

Leesburgh (Leesville) One Legged Twp., Tuscarawas Co., Ohio
(which later became Orange Twp., Carroll Co., Ohio)

Courtesy of Fort Vance Historical Society

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

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AND

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Cross Creek, Ohio Co. (Brooke Co.), VA(WV)/Washington Co., Penn.

and

**Leesburgh (Leesville) One Legged Township, Tuscarawas Co., Ohio
(which later became Orange Township, Carroll Co., Ohio)**

AND THEIR CHILDREN (WHO ARE NOT IN OUR DIRECT LINE)

Compilation (as of January 2006) of:

**Stephen A. Leeper
1907 Bayberry Lane
West Lafayette, IN 47906**

A Chapter in the Leeper Family History entitled

**“James and ‘Jennie’ Leeper
to
Capt. Wesley Roy Leeper, My Father
(With Information on Allied Families)”**

William Leeper was the first justice of the peace of Orange Township in Carroll County and served in that office for thirty years. He was a blacksmith by trade and built the first smith shop in Leesburg (name changed to Leesville) in Carroll County, Ohio. He worked at his trade in Leesburg for a number of years and then moved out to a farm about a mile west of town on what was then the state road.

Per the 1820 US census, William Leeper is listed in Leesburgh, Tuscarawas Co., Ohio. The household consisted of one white male under age 10 (presumably James Lawther Leeper, age 4), one white male between 16 and 26 (identity not clear; could have been another relative or farmworker), one white male between 26 and 45 (presumably William, age 38), one white female under age 10 (presumably Mary Ann, age 1), and one white female age 26 to 45 (presumably Eleanor Lawther Leeper).

Per the 1830 US census, William Leeper is listed in Leesburg, Tuscarawas Co., Ohio. The household consisted of one male between the ages of 31 and 40 (presumably William, but he would have been 48), one female between 30 and 40 (Eleanor, age 38), two males under the age of 5 (John, age 5; William A., age 2), one male between 10 and 15 (son James, 14), and two females between 5 and 10 (presumably, Mary Ann, age 10; and Jane age 8).

The old farmhouse was built by William Leeper between 1830 and 1834. The building material for the house was brick made from clay dug at the farm site. To burn the brick, a kiln was built in the field between the site of the house and the road. For many years afterward, bricks were turned up while plowing this field and had to be picked off like stones. Even in the 1930s, bits of brick were turned up during plowing. The sills for the lower floor were rough logs which were cut from the nearby woods. From the cellar, they could still be seen, supporting the floor after one hundred years. The house consisted of two stories and a cellar. The parent's bedroom and living area were downstairs, with a boys and girls bedrooms upstairs. Two spiral staircases in diagonal corners of the house provided access to the second story. At some later date, a single-story kitchen was added to the back of the house. In the 1930s, the house was occupied by James Leeper, a grandson of William Leeper. In 1997, the house was still being lived in (rented out by the Leepers).

William Leeper continued with his blacksmith work after settling on the farm. He built a shop out on the road where the lane turned in to his house. The shop was still standing in 1859. (This fact was conveyed to Laverne Leeper in the 1930s by Mary Leeper Long, who was told by her mother, Margaret Masters Leeper; Margaret moved to the farm in that year, 1859, as the wife of William A. Leeper, the son of William Leeper.)

William Leeper was an ardent supporter of the principles of the Whig Party. He was one of the founders of the Presbyterian Church at New Hagerstown. He remained all of his life one of its most active members and liberal supporters.

An interesting bit of paper was found in the old Leeper Bible (now in the possession of Stephen A. Leeper, born 1953, son of Wesley Roy Leeper and grandson of Ernest W. Leeper; as of 2006, Stephen Leeper resided in West Lafayette, IN). It was an order for William Leeper to pay a

Dr. Leeper operated a drug store in Navarre (located in Perry Township) for fifteen years. He was appointed postmaster by President William Henry Harrison. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was always very much interested in agriculture and was a member of the Patrons of Husbandry Society. He was a staunch Prohibitionist. In 1866 (or 1870), he retired to his 200-acre farm about three and a half miles northeast of Navarre. Dr. James L. Leeper was a prominent citizen of Stark County, Ohio, and a biographical sketch on his life is included in the Stark County History (Edited by William H. Perrin, 1881, page 709; it should be noted that the birth and marriage dates of Dr. James L. Leeper, as given in the Perrin sketch, are in error). A sketch was also provided in Portrait and Biographical Record of Stark County, Ohio, published 1892, pages 523-524).

After moving out to the farm, Dr. Leeper had a slight stroke and chose to gradually work away from the practice of medicine. He directed the work on the farm. It was reputed to be a very fine place. In addition to his son, George, he kept two hired men busy.

According to family records (letters of Mary Leeper Long to Laverne Leeper), Dr. James L. Leeper died at his home on December 27, 1887. His death was due to paralysis. He was 71 years of age. Dr. Leeper seems to have been a very much respected and honored man and his death was generally mourned in the community. His brother, **William A. Leeper**, was with him when he died and was saddened by the fact that his brother, James, did not recover enough during his last days to even recognize him or the rest of his family. He was survived by his wife, Sophia.

The people who spoke of Dr. Leeper gave evidence of the esteem in which he was held. Mary Leeper Long described him as follows:

I remember Uncle Dr., as we always called him, as a large, portly, handsome man of very pleasing manner; always ready with a joke or a humorous story to fit any occasion. He had many friends in his own community and, always when he visited Leesville, there were many who were glad to see him. My uncle's occasional visits at our home were high spots in my life as a youngster and when I grew up my affection and admiration did not grow less. I felt his loss keenly when he died.

The following is written of him on pages 510 to 511 of Portrait and Biographical Record of Stark County, Ohio, published 1892:

Of bright and shrewd intelligence, Dr. Leeper became a man of much intellectual acumen and marked culture. On completing his medical course, he practiced medicine for a year in Massillon with Dr. Abbot, and then moved to Navarre. There for thirty years he was known not only as the skilled physician to whom all applied in time of necessity, but as the valued friend and advisor. He was very liberal in his views, and never lost sight of the fact that Nature is the fountain-head of the most complicated science.

"In his later years, [he] retired from active practice to the farm in Perry Township ..., but even here he was in constant requisition in a professional capacity. He departed this life on January 1, 1888, and his death was a cause of mourning on the part of the whole

George and Mary Mank/Mooke Leeper had four children:

James L. Leeper, Jr.: James L. Leeper, Jr., the son of George and Mary Mank/Mooke Leeper, was born on August 21, 1880; he was raised on his father's farm. He married Bertha Smith. He and Bertha lived on the old Dr. Leeper farm until the 1930s. James sold his interest in the place to the other heirs and moved to the home of his wife's people. James L. and Bertha Smith Leeper had two children – James L., Jr. and Mary Ellen. Both children went to grade school in Richville, Ohio, in the 1930s.

Georgia M. Leeper: Georgia Leeper, the daughter of George and Mary Leeper, was born on February 21, 1883; she was named for her father, who always called her "George." She married Dr. Arvine Jacob Wolf, a veterinarian, just after he graduated. He was also a blacksmith and worked his way through schools by plying his trade. The doctor first practiced in Mineral City, Ohio. He had a shop and did horse shoeing or any other work he could find to make a living until his practice grew large enough that it kept him busy. They later settled in Bolivar, where they bought a home. They had six children: Mary Elizabeth, George, Amelia, Eleanor, Arvine, Jr. and Marjorie. Mary Elizabeth, after finishing high school, became a secretary and attended college part time. George became a mechanic after finishing high school. Amelia attended business college and had ambitions of going into music; she is said to have had a beautiful voice. Eleanor became a nurse. Arvine Jr. had ambitions to go into pharmacy or laboratory work, but was waiting for the chance to go to college as of the 1930s. Marjorie, in grade school in the 1930s, was said by Mary Leeper Long, to be a "very nice bright little girl."

Rex Leeper: Rex Leeper, the son of George and Mary Leeper, was born on December 16, 1885; he married and lived for many years in Massilon, Ohio. For reasons not known, he and his wife separated and he never remarried. For a while, he continued to work in the mills of Massilon, Ohio. He later moved to Pennsylvania; no children are known.

Mary Eleanor Leeper: Mary E. Leeper, the daughter of George and Mary Leeper, was born on September 14, 1888. She was commonly called "Nellie" to distinguish her from her mother. She attended high school at Massillon, Ohio, and taught school for several years. She married Mr. Clyde Earl Oberlin (1893-1972) of Canton, Ohio. She and her husband lived on a small place adjoining the old farm of Dr. James L. Leeper. Clyde and Mary Leeper Oberlin had two children – Kenneth and Donald Oberlin. Both boys attended grade school at Richville, Ohio. Donald Oberlin (1921-1972) married Myrtle Irene Oliver (1923-1995) and had four children: Donald L. (born June 29, 1940), Carol Jean (born 1942), Sandra K. (born February 15, 1945), and Janice F. (born May 1, 1959) Oberlin. Carol Jean Oberlin married Phillip Rodger Fortin (born 1938) and had two sons and one daughter. Steve Leeper obtained dates in the line of George Leeper from Carol Oberlin Fortin in 1998/99.

MARY ANN LEEPER: Mary Leeper, the daughter of William and Eleanor Lawther Leeper, was born on March 4, 1819. She died November 21, 1833, at the age of fourteen.

Note: the author of the Leeper Family history in the Carroll County Historical Records is not named.

In 1894, Mary Leeper (daughter of William Alexander Leeper) invited Emmett Adair (her cousin) to attend her graduation ceremonies upon her completion of studies at Scio College. He replied as follows:

Leesville, Ohio, June 19th, 1894

Dear Cousin Mary:

Your very kind letter of June 5th and a programme of Scio Commencement were duly received. I am thankful to you for your words of encouragement and good wishes and will try to keep up the advantages I now have.

If nothing unlooked for does not interfere, I will attend the Commencement at Scio on Thursday.

I remain

As ever yours,

Emmett Adair

Emmett Adair married Anna M. Beam on August 12, 1896. She was the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Z. and Francis Elizabeth Beam of Tiffin, Ohio. Samuel Beam, born May 8, 1837 near Frederick, MD, earned his B. A. degree from Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio, in 1860. Among the first to respond to the call for volunteers, he served as a sergeant in the Civil War; he was wounded in the Battle of Mechanicsburg Gap, near Romney, VA, and lost his left hand. He entered the theology program at Heidelberg College and was licensed to preach in 1862. He married Francis E. Rauch at Ida, Michigan, on May 10, 1864. Based on his excellent scholarly writings, he was granted an honorary doctorate by Wittenberg College in 1888. At the time of his death in November 1929, he was the oldest living graduate of Heidelberg College and the oldest Reformed Church minister in the United States. Additional details on his life are provided in two obituaries: Advertiser Tribune, November 11, and Nov. 14, 1929. Mrs. Francis Rauch Beam was born on March 25, 1845 in Greencastle, PA, to Capt. John Henry and Ann Eliza Rauch. She died in December 1935. Additional details are provided on her life in an obituary published in the Advertiser Tribune on December 4, 1935.

A letter sent from Emmett M. Adair to Mary Leeper and Ernest and Nettie Leeper, dated February 19, 1897 has been handed down. The letter was found in an envelope addressed to Miss Mary Leeper, 328 Lincoln Ave., Cleveland, Ohio, but may have been sent to the home of Ernest Leeper in San Bernardino (while Mary Leeper was visiting there). It was written shortly after the death of William A. Leeper, the uncle of Emmett Adair and the father of Mary, James, and Ernest Leeper. [Ma is Martha Leeper Adair, the mother of Emmett Adair and the sister of William Alexander Leeper. Pa is William Adair, the father of Emmett Adair. Aunt Maggie is Margaret Masters Leeper, the wife of William Alexander Leeper and the mother of Ernest, James, and Mary Leeper. Jimmie is James Leeper, the son of William Alexander Leeper and brother of Mary and Ernest Leeper. Anna is Anna Beam Adair, the wife of Emmett Adair.] The original letter was transcribed by Stephen A. Leeper in 1997, as follows:

Tiffin, he became ill in February 1915 and died on July 22, 1915. Mary Leeper Long and her husband J. Madison Long attended the funeral.

An obituary (Tiffin Tribune and Herald, July 23, 1915) for Emmett Adair read as follows:

Rev. Emmett M. Adair, Ph.D. aged 51 years, died at his home, 270 Greenfield St., Tiffin, July 22, 1915, at 10:30 o'clock, after an illness of about a year.

His life was one of unusual activity. He was born in Leesville. His father was the late William Adair, the author of the Adair liquor law, regulating the traffic of intoxicants. His mother, Mrs. Martha J. Leeper Adair, was from a prominent family in the southeastern part of the state.

For two terms, he was prosecuting attorney of Carroll County, during which time he successfully prosecuted 130 cases against violators of the liquor and gambling laws. Later he became a representative of the anti-saloon league and while studying for the ministry under the instruction of Rev. Dr. S. Z. Beam, was employed as organizer by the American Sunday school union.

Rev. Adair was licensed and ordained as a minister by the eastern Ohio classes of the Reformed Church in 1908. He served congregations at Osnaburg, Mann's Choice, Pennsylvania, and Chicora, Pennsylvania. Soon after taking charge at Chicora, his health failed and about six months ago he moved his family to Tiffin to be near relatives.

He was married to Miss Anna N. Beam, daughter of Rev. Dr. and Mrs. S. Z. Beam, of this city, who survives him. Three children. William B., Francis L. and Mary R., and his aged mother survives him.

Rev. Adair was a member of Orange Lodge No. 400, F. & A. M., Leesville; Canton Chapter No. 84, R. A. M., Canton; St. Bernard Commandery, No 51, K. T., Uhrichsville, and Aladdin Temple, A. A. O. N. M. S., Columbus.

His funeral was held at his late home, Saturday afternoon at 3 o'clock, conducted by Rev. J. S. Freeman. Interment was made in Greenlawn cemetery.

After the death of her husband, Anna Beam Adair continued to live in Tiffin, Ohio. All her life, she was active in all forms of church and Sunday school work and after her marriage served with her husband in Reformed Churches at East Canton, OH, Man's Choice, PA, and Chicora, PA. Anna Beam Adair died on May 2, 1929.

The following information on her life is provided from her obituary (Tiffin Tribune, May 3, 1929):

MRS. ANNA ADAIR CALLED BY DEATH
Widow of The Rev. Dr. E. M. Adair Succumbs
To Illness of Four and A Half Months

Mrs. Ann M. Beam Adair, 62, widow of the Rev. Dr. Emmett M. Adair, died last night in her residence at 178 Greenfield Street, following a long illness of four and a half months.

The following tribute was written in the November 15, 1918, Heidelberg University paper, The Kilikilik:

Too much cannot be said of his character. His work as an employee was faithfully performed. His Christian integrity gave him a position in the front ranks of the servants of the Kingdom. He had especially endeared himself to the members of the Sunday school and the Y. P. S. C. E. of Grace Reformed Church. He was also a favorite with the students of the University. In his anxieties to succeed in attaining a thorough preparation for life he was not excelled. The opportunities of the S. A. T. C. came to him as open doors for his military and educational ambitions. He saw much to live for and had much to hope for. However, his earthly career was soon ended, but he had made it a vestibule to the higher and holier life. He has gone from the earthly to the heavenly; from the temporal to the eternal; from the part to the perfect; from being a private in the militant forces of the United States Army to the triumphant hosts of the Captain of our salvation. Farewell—but not forever.

Francis Leeper Adair was buried in Green Lawn Cemetery in Tiffin, Ohio, on November 7, 1918.

Mary Rauch Adair: Mary Adair, the daughter of Emmett and Anna Beam Adair, was born on December 23, 1904 in Carrollton, Carroll Co., Ohio. She graduated from Heidelberg University and Columbia University and received additional special education training at the University of Colorado and Washington University. She was a teacher and guidance counselor in the Tiffin, Ohio, public schools. Among her many accomplishments, she was president of the Tiffin Teachers Association, on the national board of children's work for the United Church of Christ for many years, charter and past president of the Tiffin AAUW (American Association of University Women), a member of the Tiffin League of Women Voters, a member of the Seneca County, state, and national Retired Teachers Association, and a member of the Seneca County and Ohio Historical Societies. She died at 7:41 pm on Friday December 7, 1979. According to her obituary (The Advertiser Tribune, December 8, 1979), she was predeceased by her two brothers and was survived by four first cousins (presumably the children of brothers and sisters of her mother, Anna Beam Adair). Miss Mary Adair was buried in Greenlawn Cemetery in Tiffin, Ohio.

NOTE: The relationship, if any, of this person to our Leeper family is not known, but the following information is included in case it proves to be useful at some future date: Emmet W. Leeper (born or died 1899, age 25 years) is buried in Baxter Ridge Cemetery, Harrison Township [per page 71 of Tombstone Inscriptions and Family Records of Carroll County, Ohio, published by Ester Weygandt Powell, Akron, Ohio, 1973 (Call No. 977.101 C319p)].