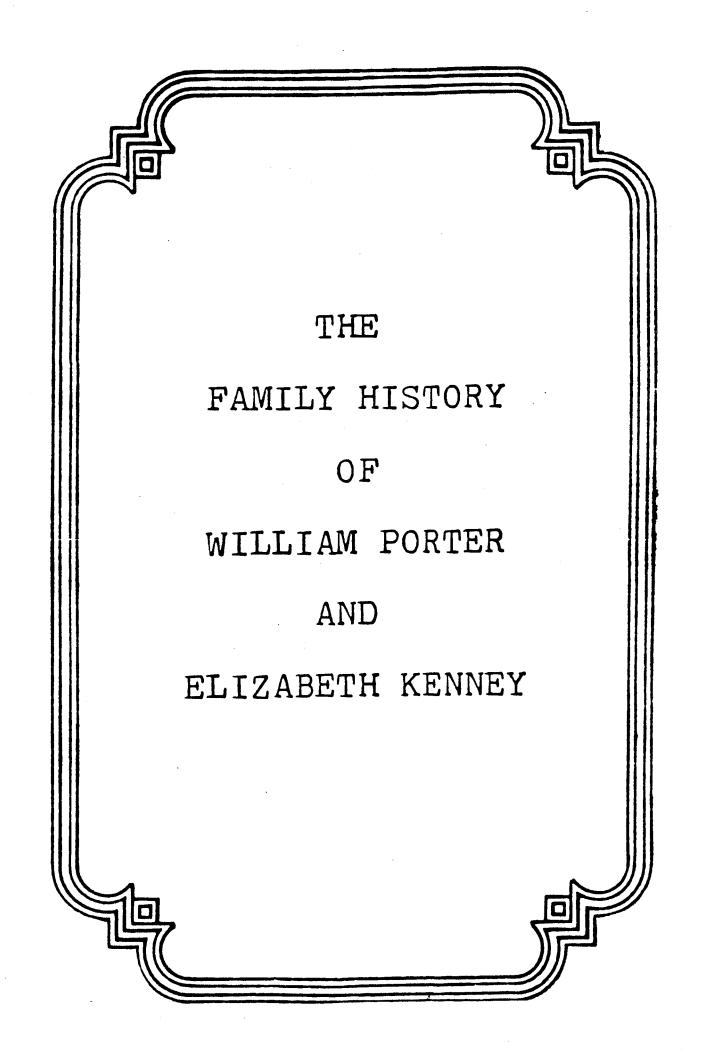


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### A FEW THOUGHTS

On the following pages you will find a history and narrative of a little of the lives of two people, William and Elizabeth Porter, and their descendants.

I wonder what was in the hearts and minds of William and Elizabeth as they sailed individually so many years ago to Canada. Was it a sense of adventure? Was it for freedom? Was it to a land of plenty? One will never know.

They started with nothing, only their willingness to work and a lot of tired muscles to carve a home out of the wilderness. Of importance to the early families was to build a shelter in which to live, a church in which to worship and a school in which to educate their children. Looking at our world today, they were successful in all areas.

Gone are the days of the slow pace of living and travel. Horses and buggies did not travel great distances, because one always had to return home to chores. One can note that many of the early people married someone from their community. Only in the last couple of generations have people travelled further and further from their places of birth.

Here are the days of much technology - hospitals, air travel, electricity, electronic media to name a few. We have so much compared to our forefathers, but do we have the same determination amidst all our luxuries to be strong in our communities and churches, to make an impact on our world as our forefathers did in theirs? We have so much to be thankful for, and so much to live up to.

What was in the hearts of other pioneers who left St. Vincent Township and their families to move to places unknown - the Frees to Texas, the Bishops, Curles, Milligans to Saskatchewan, the Blakeslees to Michigan, David Porter's family to Alberta, the Atkins families to British Columbia and Saskatchewan? Was it again a sense of adventure and curiosity, a chance to expand their horizons?

During the time of research of this history, I have been left with some deep thoughts - the more I learned, the more I wished I could have known these early people. (Maybe we do know them in the character traits we have inherited.) I would like to have walked with them, talked with them, worked with them and worshipped with them. But since this

is impossible, the challenge that stirs in my heart is to live my life in such a way that my forefathers would be proud to call me one of their descendants.

An old hymn comes to mind and I would like to share it with you.

### O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST by Isaac Watts

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come, Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home!

Under the shadow of Thy throne Still may we dwell secure; Sufficient is Thine arm alone, And our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood, Or earth received her frame, From everlasting Thou art God, To endless years the same.

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come; Be Thou my guide while life shall last, And our eternal home.

Many thanks to all of you who have contributed information from your families. Without you we couldn't have completed this history. Your help is much appreciated. Our apologies for any errors due to mis-interpretation of handwriting.

Special thanks is extended to the late Ellen (Nellie) Jane Porter who spent many hours in 1949 writing down the Porter family history. Without her help many years ago, this task would have been very difficult. Thank you, Aunt Nellie.

This history has been compiled by:
Louise (Porter) Bumstead
Helen (Porter) Fyvie
Mary (Porter) Hughes

June 1991

## EXPLANATION OF NUMBERING SYSTEM

Each person has been assigned a number. Each time you add another number to a group, you move to the next generation. Each child of a family is listed in order of birth with their children listed after them.

- 1. Number assigned to William Porter and Elizabeth Kenney.
- 11. Adding one digit indicates a child of William and Elizabeth; this number is for David Porter.
- 113. Adding another digit indicates a child of David and Georgina Porter, or grandchild of William and Elizabeth Porter; this number is for Bernice Kerr Porter.
- 1132. Adding another digit indicates a child of Bernice and William Herman; this number is for Aura Jean Herman.

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William Porter b. December 28, 1821 Wiltshire, England, d. June 4, 1886 at his home (Lot 16, Concession 10) at 63 years, m. May 18, 1846 Meaford, Ontario; Elizabeth Kenney b. May 15, 1823 Donegal, Ireland, d. May 17, 1909 at her home (Lot 16, Concession 10). Both are buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Meaford, Ontario.

### Children:

- 11. David Porter
- 12. Thomas Porter
- 13. Sarah Jane Porter
- 14. John Porter
- 15. Mary Porter
- 16. Eliza Ann Porter
- 17. Ellen Porter
- 18. Isaac Porter

William Porter bought Lot 16, Concession 10, St. Vincent Township in 1846. He willed it to his son Isaac in 1886. Isaac's son Isaac Herbert bought the farm in 1930 and still owns it today. This farm has been in the Porter family name for over 100 years.

William Porter bought Lot 17, Concession 10, St. Vincent Township in 1883. He willed the farm to his son Isaac in 1886. Isaac willed the farm to his son William in 1931. William's son Albert bought the farm in 1950. Albert sold the farm in 1985 when he retired from active farming. This farm was in the Porter family name for 102 years.

William and Elizabeth were buried in Duxbury's Cemetery, St. Vincent Township. Their graves were moved to Lakeview Cemetery, Meaford, Ontario in 1929.

Further history of William and Elizabeth can be found in the narrative that was written by Ellen (Nellie) Porter in 1949; the narrative follows.

# HISTORY OF THE PORTERS

William Porter, the grandfather of the George H. Arthur family, the Atkins, the Frees and the Porters was born December 28, 1821 in Wiltshire, England sailing from Bristol England as a young man for Canada taking either eight or eleven weeks to cross the ocean. He had two sisters but they never came to Canada. He worked for Hiram Bond on the 9th Line North of St. Vincent for eight dollars a month. This was the highest wage paid at that time. He borrowed money from a Mr. McKnight in Owen Sound. He went over there to make payments. The McKnights invited him to stay for dinner. The girl that worked in the home was Elizabeth Kenney. Later she became William Porter's wife.

Elizabeth Kenney was born on May 15, 1823 in Donegal, Ireland — an only child and was a servant in the Old Land. She and her mother came out here when she was around seventeen. She was raised an Anglican but later became a Methodist. She walked from either Barrie or Collingwood to Owen Sound where she worked for Mr. McKnight.

One time Mr. Porter went to see his sweetheart thinking it was Sunday, but as there were no calenders, he missed the count and it was Monday. She said "Why William where have you been? I was wearing for you."

On May 18, 1846 William Porter and Elizabeth Kenney were married. The farm on which Herb lives was their land taken from the Crown in 1846. They lived in a little log cabin southwest of the present house. When they started to farm all they had was a shilling and an axe. The table, chairs, sap buckets, spiles were all homemade whittled with a jack knife. The cradle for the eldest, at least, was a sap-trough, a log cut in two and hollowed out.

There were always Indians lurking around. The road was only a trail like a cow path through the bush.

In those early days they had logging bees. The men, taking a team of oxen went to help the neighbours clear the land. Oxen were handier to use in bush as they did not snag themselves; only the chain to carry. The women went along for a sewing bee. In earlier days there were fine tucks down the front of the men's white shirts. Grandma Porter was an expert needlewoman and she was given the task of making these fine tucks by hand as there were no machines.

For fruit, there were wild berries growing in the clearing. These were preserved with maple sugar in stone crocks.

Grandfather took whatever he could carry of wheat to Barrie; have it ground into flour, and carry it home again. Sometimes he would take the oxen and other times walk going one day and coming home the next. It is sixty-five miles to Barrie from here. He would get tea too.

Around seventy years ago Harry Arthur can remember when they had six horses, a yoke of oxen and some big cows. The end of the cow's horn was sawn off and a brass knob screwed on to keep them from hooking. This is the only place H. Arthur ever saw them.

The present house was built in 1865 when Herb's father was four years old. The contractor was J. J. Johnson. He came from down the country. This was the first work he had done around here. Before he was through he had a number of contracts ahead of him so he moved to Meaford. When they finished building the house the contractors built the cupboard, which we got from the Aunt Ellen estate, and gave it to grandmother as a present.

Where the driving shed now stands there was a building to house implements and horses. The old barn was all on one floor. The present horse stable was built around 1900 when William was two years old.

The barn was built while grandfather William was living. Isaac Porter planed all the lumber in the horse stable and driving shed the winter before they were built. Grandfather and grandmother had eight children - having seven children in nine years.

Grandfather and his daughter, Sarah Jane, went to the Quaker church on one horse. This church was a half mile north on the 9th Line of the Meaford Highway on the east side of the road. When they had their meetings they never spoke till the Spirit moved them.

In later years Grandma never combed her own hair. It did not matter how busy Ellen was, she would always stop to comb her mother's hair.

When Grandad wished to tease his wife he called her Betty. Then she got riled and he chuckled to himself.

She was a short stout woman while her husband was only a medium height around 5'8". His son Isaac resembled him.

They were very fond of the grandchildren. The grandmother never left home for a long time before she died. Mary Arthur, later Mrs. A.L. Shunk, used to get up on a stool and comb the grandad's hair — it was in the long English style, and put ribbons on it. To entertain Grace, one day, the grandmother went for a ride in the phaeton — much like a buggy, only it had mud guards on the wheels and lights from tallow candles. They went around and around the field behind the barn while Grace did the driving.

At Christmas time every chimney had smoke coming from it as a sign of hospitality. The families would all come home for Christmas. In later years two families came home, maybe the Atkins and the Frees one year and the Arthurs and Tom Porters the next year. The older folk would eat in the dining room and the younger in the kitchen.

William Porter was offered lots 8 and 9 Concession 11 of St. Vincent consisting of 600 acreas for \$600.00 or a \$1.00 an acre. But grandmother said, "No you cannot put the boys on that place for it won't grow wheat." Wheat was considered the staple crop worth \$1.00 a bushel.

Both could read and write. The grandmother spent a good deal of time knitting; was very quick; rather severe, but good judgment. The grandfather was a mild man but very firm. When she died she left a grain sack of socks for Isaac. A blue pair the boys wore last summer were Isaac's wedding socks - their grandfather.

Grandfather died in June 4, 1886.

St. John's Church was built in 1886 on Thomas Porter's property. Grandmother was asked to name the Church. She name it St. John's after her son John who had died from typhoid fever in 1869 at the age of seventeen years and three months.

Church was attended regularly by every member of the household and family worship was held in the home. No newspapers were read in the home on Sundays even in Herb's earlier days. Every Sunday Herb's mother taught them the Sunday School lesson before they went to Sunday School. Bible truths were taught very impressively in those early days.

The grandmother put potatoes on to boil, take her Bible and study a chapter. By the time the potatoes were cooked she had memorized the chapter. In the speller she went over a long column, closed the book and then repeated the whole column.

After Isaac was married, the mother and Ellen lived in the dining room sleeping in the room off it. Her favourite spot was a rocking chair in front of the west window. Grandfather's clock was north of the west window and the cupboard in the southwest corner.

Grandmother died in May 17, 1909 and was buried in the same grave as her mother who died in her early eighties in Duxbury's Cemetery.

Written by Ellen Jane (Sinclair) Porter

To give you a picture of William and Elizabeth's standing, we have included the Agricultural Censuses for 1851, 1861, and 1871. Note the progression of land clearance during each decade. They grew their own produce and likely used some of it for barter.

### William Porter - 1851 Agricultural Census

# Concession 10, lot 16, St. Vincent Township, 90 acres

- 25 acres under cultivation
- 23 under crops
- 2 under pasture
- 65 under wood or wild
- 6 acres wheat = 100 bushels
- 3 acres peas = 40 bushels
- 1 acre oats = 25 bushels
- 1-1/4 acre potatoes = 150 bushels
  - 1 acre turnips = 100 bushels
- 5 acres clover or timothy or other grass seed
- 10 acres hay
- 21 pounds woo!
- 218 pounds maple sugar
- 5 yards frilled cloth
- 28 yards flannel
- 3 bulls, oxen or steers 2 milch cows
- 7 calves or heifers
- 7 sheep
- 3 pigs
- 200 pounds butter\*
  - 6 cwts. pork

Notes from census - Owing to the wet season, the pea, Indian corn and potato crops are generally bad, almost a total failure. In many instances, squirrels and birds destroyed the crops, especially in small clearings. The land in most parts of the township is well watered by creeks and living springs. Many of these \* may appear incorrect but the reason is they milked more cows in summer than they have to give in at this time. Census Taker.

# <u>William Porter</u> - 1861 Agricultural Census

- 50 acres under cultivation
- 40 acres crops in 1860
- 10 acres pasture
- 40 wood or wild
- \$2500 cash value of farm
- \$125 cash value of implements
- 1 acre fall wheat = 28 bushels
- 15 acres spring wheat = 400 bushels
- 4 acres peas = 100 bushels
- 1-1/4 acres oats = 40 bushels

### 1861 Agricultural Census continued

4 acres Indian corn = 10 bushels
1&1/2 acres potatoes = 400 bushels
1 acre turnips = 300 bushels
12 tons hay
10 acres clover seed, timothy or other grass seed

### William Porter - 1871 Agricultural Census

195 acres owned, 2 houses, 3 barns and stables, 2 carriages and sleighs, 6 cars, waggons and sleds, 3 ploughs and cultivators, 2 fanning mills

### Lot 16, Concession 10 - 95 acres occupied

75 acres improved 12 acres pasture 1 acre garden and orchard 8 acres wheat = 90 bushels spring wheat = 15 b. fall wheat 180 bushels barley 200 bushels oats 100 bushels peas 10 bushels corn 1/4 acre potatoes = 130 bushels potatoes 150 bushels turnips 40 bushels carrots, other roots 70 lb. wool 20 cords firewood 20 acres hay = 15 tons 31 bushels grass, clover seed 5 bushels apples 5 bushels pears, plums and other fruits 280 lb. maple sugar 3 horses over 3 years 2 working oxen 5 milch cows 10 other horned cattle 15 sheep 16 swine 400 lb. butter 60 lb. homemade cheese

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David Porter b. March 2, 1847 Lot 16, Concession 10 St. Vincent Township, d. July 26, 1909 (1910 on stone) at his home, Lot 18, Concession 11, St. Vincent Township, m. 1895 Meaford, Ontario; Georgina Maria Kerr b. October 10, 1866 Meaford, Ontario, d. June 16, 1951 Calgary, Alberta. David is buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Meaford, Ontario. Georgina is buried in Queen's Park, Calgary, Alberta.

### Children:

- 111. Infant son, unnamed
- 112. Karl William Porter
- 113. Bernice Kerr Porter
- 114. John (Jack) Porter
- 115. Georgina (Jean) Eleanor Porter
- 116. Mary E. Porter

David was the oldest son of William and Elizabeth (Kenney) Porter. He and his brother Thomas drew bricks for their family home on the homestead, Lot 16, Concession 10. They got bricks from two kilns at Lot 15, Concession 10 (Snider's Corners - now Bethesda) and at Lot 17, Concession 6. These kilns were operated by James Lowe. (Note 1)

Georgina's parents were William and Ellen (Eleanor)
Nesbitt Kerr, both from the Oshawa area. They
married and moved to Meaford, settling in a log
house on the 11th Concession near the Big Head
River (about 5 miles from Meaford). Mrs. Kerr
was 17 when she married and died in 1939 at 101
years. Both Mr. & Mrs. Kerr are buried in Lakeview
Cemetery. Some of their children were Georgina
Maria. Olive and Harry.

David and Georgina Porter bought a 200 acre farm, Lot 18, Concession 11, St. Vincent Township in 1885. The farm was called Bayview. (This corner is still referred to as Bayview today.) David left the farm to his wife in his will.

Before David died, a man by the name of Alfred Jeffrey (born 1882) came to Canada from England on a sight-seeing trip. Mr. Jeffrey learned of David's illness, and, although he was not a farmer, he agreed to help the family. He stayed over five years. He married Olive Kerr (a sister of Georgina)

Note 1: History of the Schools of St. Vincent Township and Other Chronicles, 1847-1967. P. 246

and they moved to Calgary, Alberta.

After David's death, Georgina rented the farm out, as she felt it was too much responsibility for her children, and moved to Meaford, Ontario to 142 St. Vincent Street.

In 1936, 0.054 acres was taken off the front edge of the farm for widening of the highway. In 1942, Georgina Porter sold the farm to Mr. Elmer Scarrow. (This farm was in the Porter name for 57 years.)

All the children attended St. John's School at Lot 16, Concession 11. After Georgina moved to Meaford, the children attended Meaford Public School and Meaford High School.

David and Georgina's first child, a son, died at birth and was buried on their farm, as this was permissible in those days.

Karl William Porter was born on his parents' farm (Lot 18, Concession 11) in 1896. He went west by train in 1913 when he was 17 to live with his Uncle Harry Kerr on their ranch in Medicine Hat, Alberta. He stayed there for several years, then started farming on his own. His sister Mary notes that he loved the farm, and especially his animals.

Bernice, born in 1898 on the farm (Lot 18, Concession 11) was not too well in health and lived with her grandparents, William and Ellen Nesbitt Kerr, in Meaford, Ontario. She went west to visit Alfred and Olive Jeffrey in Calgary on her first holidays in about 1916. There she got a job with the Alberta Government Telephones as a telephone operator and stayed out west. In Vulcan, Alberta, Bernice met William Herman, who had a dray and taxi business there. They married and were dairy farmers in Vulcan, Alberta area, then moved to Black Diamond, Alberta to operate a dairy.

John (Jack) Porter was born on the farm in 1900. He went to Medicine Hat, Alberta by train in 1916 to live with his Uncle Harry Kerr. He spent some time as a time keeper in a mine in British Columbia, then a grain buyer in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. He was a member of the United Church and the Masonic Lodge.

Georgina (Jean) Porter was born on the farm in 1902 and attended St. John's School, Meaford Public School, Meaford High School and Owen Sound Business College.

She worked for a while as a bookkeeper at a men's furnishings store in Owen Sound, then moved to Detroit, Michigan and later to Newark, New Jersey. She was self-employed, selling ladies, men's and children's ready-to-wear clothing.

Mary was born in 1904 at Bayview, attended St. John's School for a short time with Bill Porter and Edith Jolley. She finished school in Meaford. She and her mother went west to visit her brothers in about 1921 and both stayed. She still lives in Calgary, Alberta. Mary's grandmother, Mrs. William (Ellen) Kerr, formerly of Meaford, and then living in Calgary, was present at Mary and William Schulz's wedding in Central United Church, Calgary. Mrs. Kerr was 96 years of age and signed the register.

Mary tells us of when she and her family would walk to Sunday School and church at St. John's Church, they would pick black and red raspberries on the way. Her Uncle Isaac and Aunt Minnie (#18) would wet their hankies and clean the children's faces.

Georgina Maria Porter went west to visit her two sons in about 1921 and stayed. She died in a private nursing home in Calgary at the age of 85 and was buried in Queen's Park, Calgary, Alberta.

- 111. Infant son, unnamed, died at birth, buried in farm yard.
- 112. Karl William Porter b. October 20, 1896 Lot 18, Concession 11, St. Vincent Township, d. August 3, 1979 Calgary, Alberta. Unmarried. His ashes are buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Meaford, Ontario.
- Bernice Kerr Porter b. August 12, 1898 Lot 18, Concession 11, St. Vincent Township, d. February 16, 1970 Turner Valley, Alberta, m. November 20, 1924 Calgary, Alberta; William Frater Herman b. March 25, 1885 Fredonia, Kansas, d. October 30, 1981 Turner Valley, Alberta. Both cremated in Calgary, Alberta.

#### 2 children

- Allan David Herman b. August 29, 1926 Vulcan, Alberta, m. #1 February 26, 1949 Edmonton, Alberta; Elsie Chimera b. November 15, 1925, d. August 22, 1984 Edmonton, Alberta; m. #2 February 23, 1985 Calgary, Alberta; Reta Naomi Sinclair b. March 18, 1921. Elsie is buried in Edmonton, Alberta.
- 11311. William Allan Herman b. December 26, 1946 Edmonton, Alberta, m. August 25, 1973 Lethbridge, Alberta; Beverley Beryl Knodel b.
- 113111. Crystal Cedora Herman b. November \_\_\_, 1983.
- 11312. Ronald Barry Herman b. March 23, 1952 Edmonton, Alberta. Unmarried.
- Aura Jean Herman b. March 23, 1932 Vulcan, Alberta, m. #1 March 11, 1953 at home of Alfred and Olive (Kerr) Jeffrey, Calgary, Alberta; Lloyd Holyoak b. November 19, 1931; divorced; m. #2 December 21, 1972; Lester (Red) Damon Noble b. July 3, 1917 Turin, Alberta.
- 11321. Richard Edwin Holyoak b. September 17, 1953, Calgary, Alberta. Unmarried.
- Earl Lloyd Holyoak b. March 26, 1955 Calgary, Alberta, m. July 22, 1985; True Best b. April 27, 1956 Loch Haven, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
- 113221. Ronald Holyoak b. August 25, 1975 (adopted by Earl Holyoak).
- 113222. Earl Lloyd Holyoak Jr. b. December 23, 1986 Calgary Alberta.