

EDGAR LEONARD NOURSE AND DOROTHY PEARL GREIG

Edgar Leonard was born in 1895 and after finishing school worked with the rest of the family on Peterseverance Farm.

Many times thunderstorms came up around 4 p.m. and when Edgar and his brothers Albert and Fred were working in the paddocks they were not the bravest. Several men in the district had died after being struck by lightning. On one occasion the boys were cleaning wheat and Edgar had just stood the fork upright in a heap of wheat when lightning struck the base of the fork.

Edgar and Albert felt as though someone or something hit them on the head, and Fred found it hard to breathe, and the smell was overpowering. The boys took off home. They did not bother to open gates — they just went over the top of fences, barbed wire included. By the time they reached home they were very shaken. Their sister Eva, not at all frightened by thunderstorms, laughed at their white faces.

Their father was returning home after delivering wheat to the Peterborough siding and had trouble in controlling the frightened animals. He was very relieved to see the boys safe, as he had seen the flash hit the ground in the vicinity where he had left them working.



Eva Shackelford and Pearl Nourse (wife of Edgar)

Edgar joined the Armed Forces in World War 1 and saw overseas service. When he returned, he took up farming at Freeling. In 1942 Edgar married Dorothy Pearl Greig and the following year Edgar died.

The following was recorded in the *Peterborough Times*:

NOURSE: At his residence Owen, late of Freeling, the death occurred of Edgar Leonard, beloved husband of Dorothy Pearl Nourse, aged 48 years.

Dorothy Pearl Nourse passed away on the 4th February 1970, aged 67 years.

FRED BICKFORD NOURSE AND LAURA ISABEL WRIGHT

Fred Bickford was the fifth child of Leonard and Emily. He was born on 21st January 1897, sometime during the day. Not that Fred remembers, but his sister Eva told him, for she was eight at the time. She came from school to find her mother in bed with what she thought was the black cat. However, it was really Fred's mop of black hair sticking out above the bed clothes. There was much laughter over this. What influence was at work Fred was never told, but later his hair dropped out and the next crop was mousy coloured. For this, it is thought, Fred might have secretly blamed his sister Eva.

Fred attended the Peterborough public school from 1904 to 1909, walking four miles there and back each day. "Going was the worst. It always seemed longer, probably because we had to be on time. But coming home we could dawdle along observing nature. We would see such things as birds nesting, trapdoor spiders, an occasional snake, insects and flowers.



Edgar Nourse

"We saw our first horseless carriage as they were called in those days, a buggy with four 4'6" diameter steel wheels which had one inch hard rubber tyres. The engine was under the back seat and was driven from the back seat on a chain and tiller. A rod sticking out connected with front wheels like the old reapers. The one we saw on the way to school was parked, and when we returned after-school it was still there and men were working on it. I wanted to go and see what was going on because I was always interested in mechanics, but the others wouldn't stop with me.

"I think it was an Oldsmobile — not quite sure, but it was a flat twin cylinder engine and seated two. Not long after they had a trip to Yongala and back, some fourteen miles and didn't stop once. It was the first car in Petersburg around 1905 or 1906 and belonged to Mr. Leuchke, a blacksmith."

Fred left school to work at Cox Brothers, who were grocers in Petersburg. He stayed with them until he enlisted in the 1st A.I.F. on June 14th 1915. After training at Mitcham he was appointed to the 8th Field Ambulance. After further training in Melbourne he left Australia with the C Section of the 8th Field Ambulances as a horse driver in November 1915.

They travelled from Melbourne to Egypt via Colombo on the S.A. Kabinga, a 4000 ton tramp steamer carrying 100 horses and 100 men. It was a very rough trip through the Australian Bight. The cook gave Fred a cure for a bad attack of sea sickness. The cure was a big plate of boiled rice with lots of milk. "Get it down and heave it over the side," the cook said. "The cure worked," Fred said, "because I've never been seasick since."

They disembarked at Suez and did more training at Somalia near the Suez Canal, with some service on the Arabian side of the canal."

Fred contracted Dengue fever and was hospitalized in Cairo and convalesced at a camp on the Mediterranean coast. "This was most pleasant," he remarked.

Early in 1916 Fred went to England and then to France to rejoin his unit. He arrived the same day as they were calling for motor drivers. Fred's name had been entered and he passed the test. He was a Field Ambulance driver from 1916 to 1919.

Things became very hectic at times. The ambulances were Sunbeams, Fred thought — no wind-screens, no electrical equipment at all, no lights. They soon had to learn to drive on pitch dark nights, more or less by feel and their senses.

Towards the end of 1919 Fred was awarded the Military Medal and returned home on the Blue Funnel



Fred Bickford Nurse

Lt Iner S.S. Nestor via South Africa. It was a very comfortable journey home.

Fred was discharged at Keswick Barracks and headed home to the farm a much wiser and experienced human being. "What a marvellous experience it was seeing the old home and my folks again," said Fred.

Fred worked on the farm for a while, settling down. He went to work for several years in Eva and Ern Shackelford's grocery and fruit business. In 1920 Fred purchased a six roomed stone house at 24 Pine Street Peterborough for £810. He went to live here with his bride Laura Isabel Wright whom he married on 30th December 1920.

A year later their daughter Mary Isabel was born, followed by Bessie Mabel three years later.

Fred was unable to settle down to shop work and took a job with Mildren and Son, general carriers and wood merchants. He became quite good at packing furniture. Once Roy Mildren and Fred carried a pianola up a flight of stairs at the Railway Hotel just by manpower.

Fred bought the wood business from Mildrens, and sawed up and delivered hundreds of tons of Mallee wood. Later the Mildrens bought it back again.

Bill Smith needed a motor mechanic and Fred applied. He had received his diploma in Motor Engineering before his enlistment. He was given the position until Bill Smith's death and continued with Bill's brother Alf Smith until 1946 when he bought the business. He was a new Ford dealer until he closed down in 1966 when he retired.

All their lives Fred and Laura did community work, mainly with the Methodist church. Fred held positions such as Local Preacher, Circuit Steward, Trust Treasurer and Secretary, Sunday School teacher, Superintendent Order of Knights, District Local Knight Commander Y.M.C.A. and R.S.S.I.L.A. Vice President and was in charge of the fire brigade during the second war. He also gave preliminary mechanical training to men seeking entrance into the R.A.A.F.

"That's all," Fred remarked. "My various community jobs taken separately add up to over three hundred years. I must be getting old. I've had a wonderful happy home life, my whole family number 32 including me, and I still live at 24 Pine Street. But I haven't yet finished getting the yard straight."

Fred's reminiscences of when he was a child of five years old: "I took Grandma for a walk. Grandma never took me. We went to the stables where the turkeys were. I remember this great big gobbler — he must have been four feet high. Well, he seemed like that to me. He came at us with his head up high making the gobbling noise. I got the other side of Grandma and said, 'It's all right, Grandma. I won't let him touch you,' making sure Grandma was between me and the turkey.

"Grandma was a sweet white haired lady with rosy cheeks. I believe she still had all her own teeth at 73 years."

Fred Nourse, Leonard's son, remembers being told not to go to his Grandmother's room at the time of her death. Being the lad he was, he looked through the small window and saw her lying peacefully asleep, as he thought, with her lovely white hair arranged about her head and shoulders. Her eyes were closed as she reclined against the smooth white crisp pillow case. This scene was Fred's first contact with death and he has never forgotten it.

He was probably 4 or 5 years old and was sent over to the neighbours' about a mile away, an unheard of thing these times, across the track and the road. But it was not busy then, only a couple of buggies now and then. He went to borrow a plug of Yankee Doodle Twist black tobacco for his grandfather. And on the way back, remembering seeing his grandfather chewing it, bit off a little on the corner. He chewed and swallowed it. "If you have ever tasted tobacco, you would wonder how I ever kept it in my mouth at all. I was sick before I got home and my parents didn't know what was wrong with me. I knew. It was a wonder I ever touched cigarettes or smoked a pipe.

"Grandfather would trim little bits off the tobacco with a pocket knife and fill his pipe, tamp it down carefully and then light it, and really enjoy it. I enjoyed watching the smoke curling up from his pipe. He also used to chew it occasionally. He could spit about ten feet, or perhaps not that far. He could spit quite a way into a spittoon."

