

He brings history into the present

By ALANA GRIFFITHS
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Being a book editor gave Terry Leeder of Mississauga the jump on most writers who want to see their ideas published.

The 42-year-old employee of Dundurn Press has written a series of 10 history books, called *Frontiers and Pioneers*, for children in Grades 7 and 8. Leeder has been editing history books for over 10 years and became aware of what was lacking in the Canadian history market.

"I'm not a writer by trade," said Leeder who has attempted play writing in the past, "but it's been building up. I began to see why kids turn off history. It's all educational jargon. Nobody looks at history as a story, especially Canadian history. We seem to have assumed that everyone's history is more interesting than our own. The story of Dollard is just as good as the Alamo."

Dollard is the subject of the third book in Leeder's series and is called *The Long Sault*. The story details how, in 1660, Dollard des Ormeaux with a band of 17 Frenchmen and 40 Hurons came face to

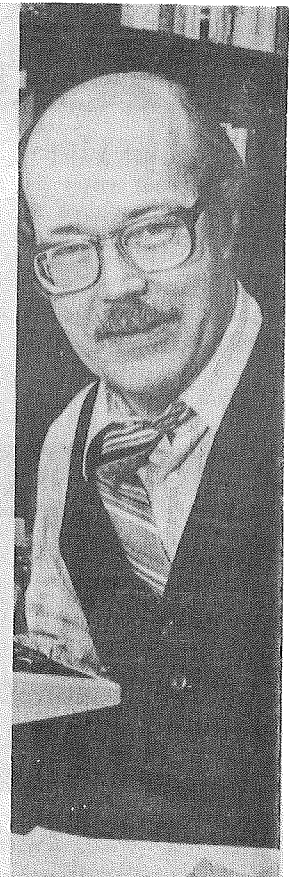
face with over 700 Iroquois warriors on their way to attack Montreal.

Writing in his spare time for two years, Leeder produced a 64-page story every two months and he said he "knew history well so that things just fell together."

Many stories are told from the child's point of view. Leeder maintains it proves more interesting to the Grade 7 and 8 age group to read about someone their own age recounting an adventure. Some stories are specifically written for girls such as *A Fighting Lady*, and *Daughter of the Old Pioneer*.

"It really helped being an editor," Leeder said. "I knew the language level that was acceptable for each grade and I knew the topics taken in the schools and the books fit in beautifully."

Two thousand complete sets were presold to classrooms and libraries from British Columbia to Prince Edward Island, and 40,000 single books were published to test the public's response. Leeder said that during the three-month test period, teachers will try out the texts and submit an evaluation.



Terry Leeder