

The Untimely Death of Caleb Sanborn

The information for this story about Caleb Sanborn was researched by Ardith James who was asked by Mrs. Lorraine Pedersen of Hutchinson, MN to find out if Caleb Sanborn was a relative of her neighbor, Mrs. Fanny Perkins Pankake who descends from Daniel Sanborn born in Orange, NH. Mrs. James published the story in Sanborn Signatures, Vol. XVII, fall 2000 Issue. What a story it became!

An Indian uprising began in Meeker County, MN in August 1862 as the Civil War was going full force. A band of four angry Sioux murdered five white settlers in Acton. Before the Sioux agreed to end the fighting, several hundred white settlers were killed, among them Caleb Sanborn on 19 Sept. 1862. It was a very brutal death. There is a memorial marker close to where the attack took place. It was not far from his farm in Greenleaf Township. The marker reads as follows: CALEB SANBORN, KILLED BY INDIANS IN SIOUX UPRISING 400 FEET SOUTHWEST SEPTEMBER 19. 1862.

Who was Caleb Sanborn?

Ardith and Henry James came to Springfield, NH in July 2001, and were pleased when they were invited to stay overnight in the home of Abraham Sanborn where Caleb grew up. We, today, know it as Faraway on Philbrick Hill, where Alice and Bob Nulsen live and were their hosts. The Nulsens are members of the Springfield Historical Society. Bob has served as President and Vice President. Muriel Tinkham also from Philbrick Hill, and museum curator at the time, escorted them around Springfield and gave them what information she had about the Sanborns. They are part of the group who founded the Springfield Historical Society.

With any of the early settlers (1770s-1780s) it was easy to confuse generations due to similar family names passed on to younger generations. Charles McDaniel in his History of Springfield, 1886 claimed that Abraham Sanborn (father of Caleb) was among the first settlers. If this were true, Abraham was an infant and probably born in 1789 when the American Revolution was already over. It was probably Abraham's father, also Abraham, who was one of the early settlers; Lieut. in the American Revolution; held office as selectman in 1789, and chosen to represent

Protectworth (Springfield) and New Grantham in the state legislature also in 1789. It was his son Abraham who was married to Sarah___ and they had eight children: Hiram, Lavina, Alvin, Emily, CALEB, Clarissa, Ira and Fifield. Caleb is believed to be born 9 October 1820.

Caleb's father and mother are buried in Old Pleasant View Cemetery in Springfield, NH. Abraham died 1 December 1842. His wife, Sarah, is buried beside him. She died 24 February 1851. Her age was given as 60 in the 1850 census. Abraham Sanborn, the Revolutionary War Veteran is also buried in Old Pleasant View Cemetery. There is a broken stone near the other Abraham and Sarah that MIGHT be his grave. Unfortunately, many stones have been lost or destroyed over the years.

Americans have always migrated in search of better land or opportunities. After the French Indian Wars and the American Revolution, the frontier was northern New England. That is how Springfield began. Old time families in Springfield can trace their ancestors back to that movement. Before and after the Civil War, New Englanders began moving West in larger numbers looking for better farmland and opportunities. Many towns such as Springfield, saw their population dropping drastically at this time. Caleb was one of many who moved west. His Choice in 1857 was Meeker County, MN. In the 1860 Census he was 39 years old and living alone on his farm. By 17 September 1860, he was no longer alone! He went back to Springfield and married Lydia F. Hoyt, daughter of Richard Heath. Lydia had been previously married. Mrs. James believes that Caleb made a trip or two home to NH in order to have fathered a child and marry Lydia.

As the Indian uprising was developing in 1862, Caleb, his pregnant wife Lydia, and two year old Caleb, were forced to leave their farm and take shelter on an island in Cedar Lake. They stayed there for twelve days before returning home. They then went to the fort in Hutchinson. There were several families there. Caleb became restless and decided to go back to his Meeker County farm to do some work. He had had a good relationship with the local Indians and did not fear them. When he was not heard from, a search party went looking for him.

The search party was attacked by the Indians. Some men stayed with the wagon, others went on foot to Caleb's house and were met by a volley of shots. One of the search party, Daniel Cross, was instantly killed. The others fled back to their wagon and escaped. One man, TR Webb, ran to the lake,

took his boat and hid on the open lake. The next day twenty men came to look for Cross and Sanborn. They were shocked at the mutilation of the two dead men.

Waiting back at the fort in Hutchinson was Lydia and little Caleb. What an awful experience for them. A few days later, Lydia gave birth at the fort to another son and named him Abraham.

On 1 August 1863, Lydia made application to the Sioux Depredation Commission requesting reimbursement for her property losses. Also attached was a report of the incidents prior to taking refuge at the fort in Hutchinson. She was granted \$150 compensation by the inadequately funded Depredation Commission.

The MN State Census of 1865 shows Lydia married to Elkhannah McStotts, a native of Scotland. There were four McStotts children and Lydia's two sons. Lydia may have died by 1870 because her name does not appear in the census of the McStott's household in New Virginia Township. A four year old son, Andrew, likely her child, is named, the only McStott's child born in MN.

The 1870 census recorded a Lydia Sanborn, age 67 living in a house beside the McStott's farm and who cared for Caleb D., age 10, born in NH and Abraham age 7, born in MN. Lydia probably came in time of need and may have been Caleb's cousin. He did have a cousin Lydia who was born in 1803 in Springfield, NH, daughter of Joseph Sanborn. The property stayed in the hands of Caleb D. Sanborn, Caleb's son and was still on the county plat map in 1907.

And by the way, the genealogy search that uncovered this story found that Caleb, son of Abraham, descended from John Sanborn, and Mrs. Pankake who helped Mrs. James with the search descends from John Sanborn's brother, William Sanborn a quite distant relationship.. References: Ardith James. The Violent Death of Caleb Sanborn Sanborn Signatures. Vol xvii, Issue 1, Fall 2000. Charles McDaniel., History of Springfield. C1886. This article compiled by Patsy Heath Caswell.