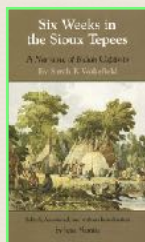


and pointed my finger at the doctor and swore an oath,” Cairncross wrote, “that if I was that Indian and had come ten miles to get something for my child, and the doctor sat at the stove and refused something for him, so help me, he would never doctor another, if I were to hang for it. There were just such things as that that made the Indians break out and massacre the whites, and I could hardly blame them.”

The Dakota War broke out on the morning of August 18, 1862 at the Lower Agency. News of the events traveled to the Upper Agency, and white settlers, Agency employees, and some Indians, fearing for their safety, began to make their way to Fort Ridgely, the closest military fort in the area. Dr. John Luman Wakefield arranged for his wife and children to leave that afternoon with George Gleason, an Upper Agency clerk. They left at about 2 p.m. and traveled using Wakefield's horse and open wagon. On their way to Fort Ridgely, Gleason was killed and Sarah and her two children were captured by a few Dakota Indian. Sarah Florence Brown Wakefield wrote a book, **Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees: A Narrative of Indian Captivity**, which is available the Shakopee Heritage Society.

Dr. John Luman Wakefield, along with 61 settlers-colonists from the Upper Agency, arrived safely in Hutchinson a day later. Six weeks later, Sarah and her two children, plus about 260 white and mixed-decent women, a few men, and children were freed

Dr. John Luman Wakefield and Sarah Florence Brown Wakefield moved back to Shakopee. They had two more children, Julie Elizabeth in 1866 and John Rockwell in 1868. Six years later, on Tuesday, February 17, 1874, Dr. John Luman Wakefield died in his residence in Shakopee. The immediate cause of the Doctor's death is attributable to an overdose of an opiate. It appears that he returned home, and shortly after retiring requested his wife to call him at a specified hour. A short time after, the attention of his wife was attracted by his breathing, and upon



attempting to arouse him found herself unable to do so. Assistance was called, but to no avail, and he expired soon after.

The War in Words: Reading the Dakota Conflict Through the Captivity Literature

by Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola (2009) by University of Nebraska Press, described Dr. John Wakefield as a drinker, smoker, and bon vivant who died with outstanding debts that took up \$4,500 of an estate valued at \$5,073.

After her husband's death, Sarah Florence Brown Wakefield moved to St. Paul, Minnesota. She married Lewis Henderson (1852-1923) who was 22 years her junior. The marriage, which took place in the late 1870s, lasted only a few years, and, by 1885, census records list her again as Sarah Wakefield.

Sarah Florence Brown Wakefield Henderson died on May 27, 1899. She is buried at Valley Cemetery, next to her first husband, according to *Find a Grave 58147870 accessed 30 May 2022*.



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Dr. John Luman Wakefield 1823-1874

Compiled and written by David R. Schleper, Shakopee Heritage Society © 2022



John Luman Wakefield was born on April 25, 1823 in Winstead, Connecticut. His parents were Luman Wakefield (1787-1850) and Elizabeth Betsey (Rockwell) Wakefield (1789-1831). John graduated from Yale Medical School at New Haven, Connecticut, in 1847.

John first practiced medicine in Winstead, Connecticut. He then moved to the California goldfields in 1849. He treated patients there until 1854, when he became ill with cholera and returned to Winstead.

John's younger brother, James, had graduated from Trinity College by then and became a lawyer. He and his brother decided to go west to Minnesota Territory and settled in Sha K' Pay, Minnesota Territory in April of 1854. James became a successful land speculator, a state and then a federal legislator. John set up a medical practice there and was one of the town's earliest physician. He was also a land speculator.

He married Sarah Florence Butts Brown in Jordan, Minnesota on September 27, 1856. Sarah was born on June 12, 1830 in Providence, Rhode Island. John was listed as 33 years of age and she was 28. Their first child, James Orin, was born in 1858, the year Minnesota became a state, in Shakapee City.

By the late 1850s, treaties with the U.S. government had confined the Dakota to a

Wakefield's home at the Upper Sioux Agency in 1860, where the house was located next to the agent's quarters and warehouse building. The Doctor's House was a one and one-half story farm house, measuring 30' X 20' was. It was erected for use by the agency physician, Dr. J.W. Daniels, and later Dr. J.L. Wakefield and Sarah Brown Wakefield and their two children lived here. Construction of a burr mill in the 1880s destroyed all but a few traces of the house.



reservation straddling the upper Minnesota River and the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) to lands further north and east. White immigration and reliance on the fur trade intensified the two groups' competition for resources. The addition of guns made the fighting even more deadly. The Ojibwe-Dakota tensions from turning violent again in June of 1858 across the Minnesota River from Shakopee. Dr. John Luman Wakefield and Dr. Josiah Schroeder Weiser helped the Dakota hurt in the battle. The Dakota had old men, boys, and even some men who were disabled in the battle, a total of 65 men. According to the *History of Carver County*, "There were but few good guns among them, all being common fowling pieces, some of them old and unreliable, while a dozen or more men had no guns at all. But the white men of Shakopee supplied this deficiency; they gave the Indians every gun in town." Dr. Weiser and Dr. Wakefield helped the wounded in downtown Shakopee.

In 1860, their second child, Lucy Ellen, also called Nellie, was born. John and Sarah's relationship seemed to have been rocky from the start, and it wasn't helped when the doctor chose in 1861 to move with Sarah and their two very young children to the Dakota reservation in southwestern Minnesota. John Wakefield would serve as the Upper Agency physician.

Though Sarah did not view the Dakota as equal to her, she nevertheless respected them to a significant degree and valued their friendship. Sarah hired Dakota women and girls to help in her home; she rode out to Dakota camps to sit fireside with the women, smoking pipe with them as they cooked, learning their language and their stories. The Dakota called Sarah *Tonka-Winohiuca waste*, or large woman.

The family's house at the Upper Agency was located next to the agent's quarters and warehouse building. It was a big house, and had plenty of food, unlike the Dakota in the area.

In pioneer riverman-turned-farmer William Cairncross' memoirs, there's a story from 1861 that took place at the Upper Sioux Agency near modern-day Granite Falls, Minnesota. He'd brought supplies by wagon to the Indian reservation a year before the U.S.-Dakota War erupted, according an article by Curt Brown called *Tales deliver a 'hot dose' of river life in the mid-1800s* by the *Minnesota Star-Tribune*, May 13, 2017.

When a Dakota father with a sick child asked agency Dr. John Wakefield for some medicine, the doctor—smoking his cigar with his feet up—told him to go to hell.

"At that I was angry, and jumped up to my feet