

Shortly before the close of the war, Joel came down with a severe case of malaria, which nearly cost him his life and caused his black hair to permanently turn white. Joel returned home to Shakopee to recuperate, was mustered out of the army on August 24, 1865, and discharged in October. He was discharged in 1865 and Joel and Louisa had 3 more children in Shakopee, according to **Find-A-Grave #111756244**.

Joel returned to his work as a mason in Shakopee until 1870, when he was offered a contract to do construction work in St. Paul. With the completion of his contract in 1874, he relocated 12 miles east of St. Paul to work on a farm.

After working as a mason and farmer in eastern Minnesota for over 20 years, Joel Weiser and his family packed up their belongings and traveled by train to Worthington, a railroad stop located 60 miles west of Fargo, in northern Dakota Territory, not too far from where his older brother, Dr. Josiah Weiser, had been killed 14 years earlier. Joel filed a homestead and tree claim of 320 acres, 4 miles northeast of the railroad stop, and built a log cabin in Worthington, which was the second house built there. Joel would later change the name of Worthington to Valley City, according to a column written by Curt Eriksmoe.

Shortly after Weiser arrived, immigration to Worthington began to pick up, and by 1878, there were about 30 people living there. Weiser built a house and a general store in Worthington, and it has been written that although the store was small, it "carried the largest and most complete stock to be found in [Dakota] Territory at that time." Along with Weiser's store and house, the town consisted of 11 other houses and a saloon, according to a second column of **"Did You Know That"** column *Founder of Valley City waged sustained battle to keep his*



community relevant by Curt Eriksmoe on June 13, 2020.

On March 8, 1881, Valley City was incorporated, and Weiser was elected mayor. To facilitate education and religion in the town, the first school and church services were held in his house. Later in 1881, he helped establish a Methodist church in Valley City and donated the block of land on which it was built. Two years later, he expanded his store to include a lumberyard and a farm equipment dealership.

From 1878 to 1890, Valley City had grown from a population of 30 to over 1,000. By 1910, Valley City had surpassed Mandan, Wahpeton, Grafton and Jamestown to become the fifth largest city in North Dakota. Weiser's eyesight was becoming very poor, and he was forced to turn over his businesses to his son.

Joel Schroeder Weiser died on January 17, 1925 at 90 years old and buried at Hillside cemetery in Valley City, North Dakota.



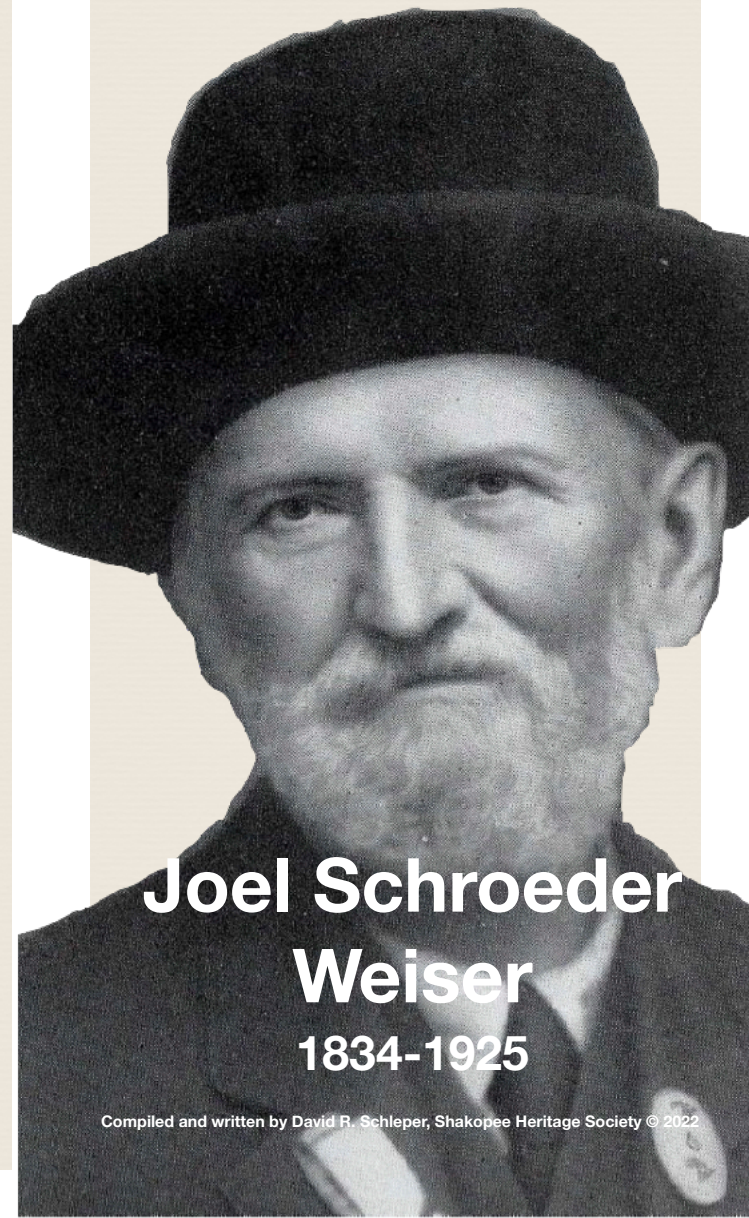
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Joel Schroeder
Weiser
1834-1925



Joel Schroeder Weiser was born on August 13, 1834, in Berks County, Pennsylvania, to Samuel Weiser and Mary Schroeder. Samuel was a miller who owned a small farm near Reading, where the Weiser's tilled and lived on the land. When Joel was 15, he traveled to Amity, Pennsylvania, with his mother and worked as a tobacconist, a dealer in tobacco, according to a **“Did You Know That,”** *Civil War Veteran Helped Found and Grow Valley City* by Curt Eriksmoe.

Joel's older brother, William Weiser was working on a farm near Danby Station, Illinois, and in 1850, Joel joined him there for a month. The two brothers then journeyed to St. Paul and found temporary employment as settler-colonists on Dakota's land. The area of Shakapee City, Minnesota Territory, which was, and is, the traditional home of many of the Mdewakanton Dakota Indians, but through questionable treaties, became open for white settler-colonists.

Joel and William relocated to Shakopee, and with many other settler-colonists moved there, Joel found plentiful work as a mason and plasterer.



Shakopee ca 1858 by Edwin Whitefield and from the Minnesota Historical Society. This is what the town was when Joel Schroeder Weiser and his wife, Louisa Cleaver Weiser arrived in Shakapee City, Minnesota Territory. Joel, William, and Josiah Weiser all participated in the Civil War.

In early May 1854, Joel returned to Pennsylvania to marry Louisa Cleaver. Louisa was the daughter of Jonathan Cleaver and Sarah Gabey. Joel and Louisa wanted to encourage Joel's parents to move to Shakopee. They felt that Samuel health was failing and felt that encouraging them to move to Shakopee might help, as his father was rapidly deteriorating.

After Joel and Louisa's wedding on May 10, 1854, the couple went to Niagara Falls for their honeymoon, and Joel's parents, Samuel and Mary, traveled by riverboat up the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to join their two sons and daughter-in-law in Shakopee. However, before arriving, Samuel died aboard the riverboat on May 17, 1854. Since Joel and his mother had always been very close, Mary remained with him and Louisa until her death in Valley City in 1877.

Four children were born in Shakopee, the two oldest later dying the same day of diphtheria.

After receiving his medical degree in 1855, Joel's other brother, Josiah, also relocated to Shakopee and began treating patients, both settlers and the Dakota in Tinta Oturjwe and the “Shakopee Reservation,” which was actually land owned by the

Dakota on the north side of the Minnesota River.

During the first few years in Shakopee, the three Weiser brothers were doing very well and made many friendships with some other settler-colonists and some Dakota Indians.

Soon after the start of the Civil War in 1862, Joel's brother, William, enlisted with the Union Army. On October 17, 1862, Then Joel's brother, Dr. Josiah Weiser, was inducted into a local Minnesota army, commanded by General Henry Hastings Sibley, to pursue the Dakota Indians. Finally, on September 31, 1864, Joel enlisted with the 9th Minnesota Volunteer Infantry and was at once ordered to Memphis to engage in fighting the Confederate forces.

When Joel was mustered in 1864, Louisa had 3 little girls at home.

For the next 11 months, his unit pursued the Rebels through Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana, often engaging in battle with bushwhackers who shadowed the Union army's movements. Not only were Joel and his fellow soldiers frequently harassed by bushwhackers, but they also had to contend with heat, humidity, and the ever-present mosquitoes that inflicted half of the soldiers with malaria during the Civil War.