

Faribault had a horse and a cow. The horse and cow lived in a small cow shed just south of the log cabin in Prairie des Français (which later was called Shakopee). Father Augustin Ravoux, who for a short time built a chapel near the Springs, refers to borrowing Oliver's horse. And Reverend Samuel W. Pond once hid his own cow. That caused Faribault's cow to be killed by a Dakota Indian. Family oral tradition also tells of storing furs in the shed, and of a mixed-blood employee of Faribault's who guarded the furs kept there.

When Oliver lived in the Faribault Trading Post in 1844, it was in the last decade of the fur trade in the Minnesota Valley before the onslaught of settlers who irrevocably changed the history of the area forever. Rather than being a primitive fur trader in buckskins, beads, and feathers, Oliver was a gentleman who wore silk and sateen sometimes, and a man who provided for his family with the best that was available to him in the 1840s.

Ledgers by Henry Sibley at the Mendota trading headquarters show Oliver's purchases of food, fabric, clothing, as well as agricultural pursuits, lumber purchases, furnishings for his home, repair done by the fur company's blacksmith, purchases for his hired men and for Joseph Godfrey, who was enslaved.



Oliver Faribault died on October 4, 1850. He contracted quinsy while digging out Faribault Springs. Quinsy is an abscess between the back of the tonsil and the wall of the throat. Quinsy is now rare because most people get effective treatment for tonsillitis early enough to prevent it, but in 1850 quinsy often led to death.

Oliver is buried at Calvary Cemetery, in Faribault, Rice County, Minnesota.



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Oliver Faribault

1815-1850

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Oliver Faribault was born at Prairie du Chien, now in Wisconsin on May 15, 1815. His father was Jean-Baptiste Faribault, a well-known French-Canadian fur trader with the Northwest and American Fur Companies. His mother was Elizabeth Pelagie Kinzie Haines. (Her name is spelled differently in various documents.) Pelagie was the daughter of a French voyageur and Mdewakanton mother, so Oliver was at least 1/4 Dakota.

Working for the American Fur Company, Oliver was busy doing almost every job that could be done on the new frontier. He was a trader, a clerk for the Fur Company, and, along with his brothers, earned money as whiskey smugglers in the 1830s. Fur traders could do this well because they always traveled from one place to another.

Oliver Faribault married Wakan Yanke Wiŋ, also called Harriet Menary, in a civil or Indian ceremony in 1837. Wakan Yanke Wiŋ was a close relative of Dakota leader Săkpe II.



On left is the Faribault cabin, built in 1844, and now in The Landing in Shakopee. On right is a painting by David Geister, 2019 of Oliver Faribault, Wakan Yanke Wiŋ, Pelagie Eliza, Sarah-Iréne, Mary Josephine Jessie, Jane Luce, and Joseph Godfrey, who was enslaved here in Prairie des Français (Shakopee) ca. 1848.



Oliver was at Prairie des Français (later Shakopee) on a semi-permanent basis starting in 1839, as he was appointed government farmer to the Dakota Indians at Tínta Otunwe, according to Taliaferro Journal, June 11, 1839. This was probably the year that Tínta Otunwe moved from the North to the South side of the Mnisota Wakpá, also called the Rivière Saint-Pierre. His personal history, his occupations as a farmer and trader, and his dwelling location was not part of the history of the Minnesota valley area. According to a report, he had nine oxen, four cows, three horses, one bull, one cart, one wagon, two yokes, and bows, two single plows and two double plows.

By 1842, Oliver was back at Little Prairie.

On February 11, 1844, Oliver married Wakan Yanke Wiŋ at the St. Francois Xavier Sioux Mission, located at Inyan Çeyaka at Little Prairie on the St. Pierre River.

In 1844 Oliver moved to Prairie des Français with his wife, Wakan Yanke Wiŋ Wakan, or Woman Who Sits at the High Place. They lived among the large circle of Wakan Yanke Wiŋ's Dakota relatives. The Faribault trading post and cabin was surrounded by tipi and tipi tanka, or lodges. Oliver and Wakan Yanke Wiŋ had 9 children, and in Prairie des Français (Tínta Otunwe), the four daughters who lived there included Josephine, Pelagie (Eliza), Sarah-Irene, and Henriette Luce (Harriet).

Pelagie Eliza Faribault Manaige remembers her father conducting a trading post for a few years, and building a warehouse in which he stored furs purchased from the Dakotas. She only faintly remembered her father, as he died in the fall of 1850 of quinsy, when Eliza was 4 ½ years old. Eliza remembered the gaudy trinkets that were available to the Dakota Indians.