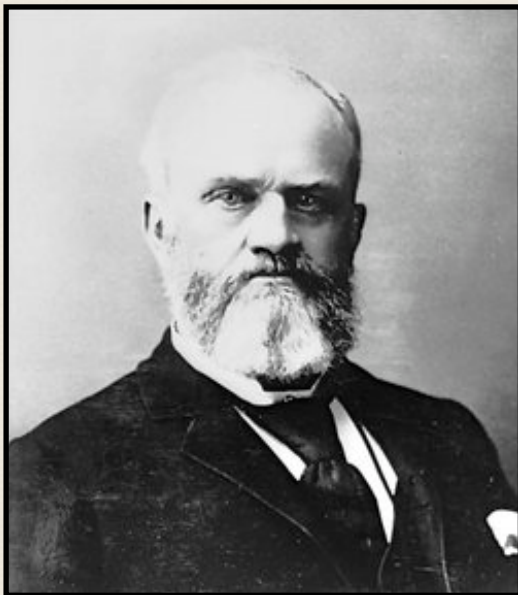


In 1889, he was elected the first District Judge of the Fifth Judicial District in Montana (including Beaver Head, Madison and Jefferson Counties), serving until 1893. His portrait still hangs in his original courtroom in Boulder, Montana.

By 1900, aged 74, he had moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming, and was living with his eldest son, Jacob Garretson Galbraith, who was a cavalry captain at Fort D.A. Russell.

Thomas Jefferson Galbraith remained in Cheyenne for many years until his death on February 3, 1909.



Thomas J. Galbraith, ca. 1885 from the Minnesota Historical Society



Thomas Jefferson Galbraith was born on October 3, 1825 in Pennsylvania, lived in Shakopee from 1854 to 1861, and died on February 3, 1909 in Wyoming.



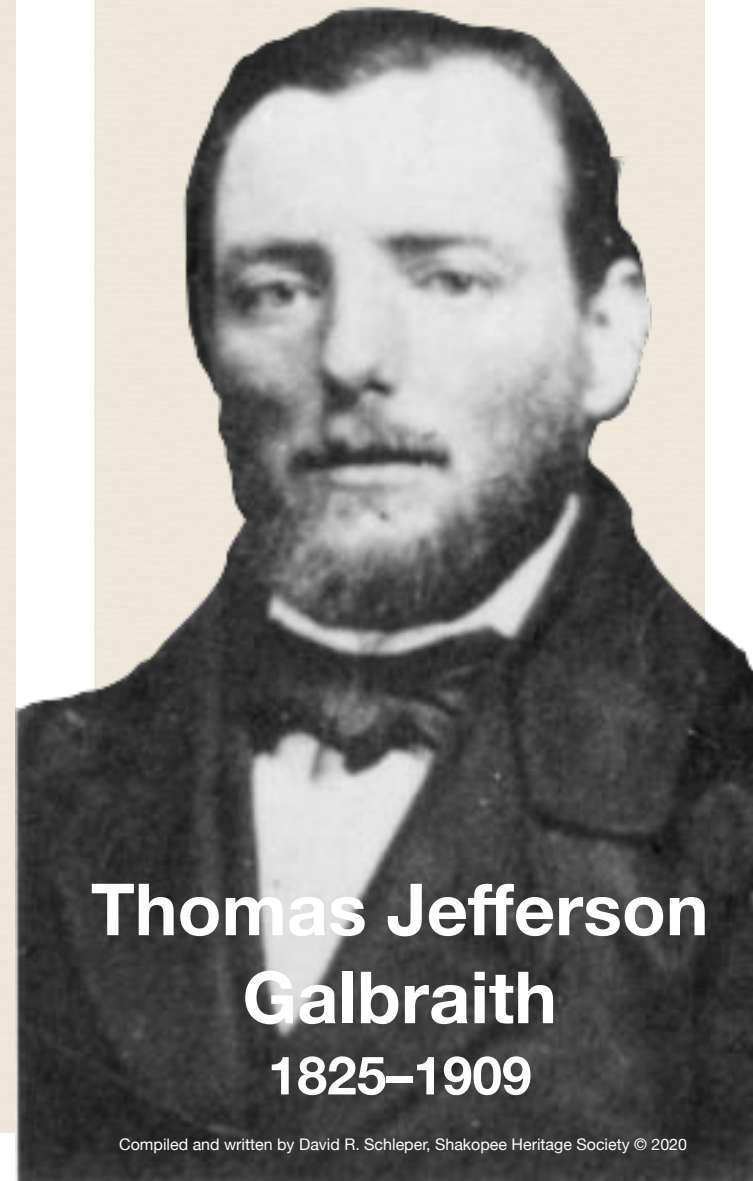
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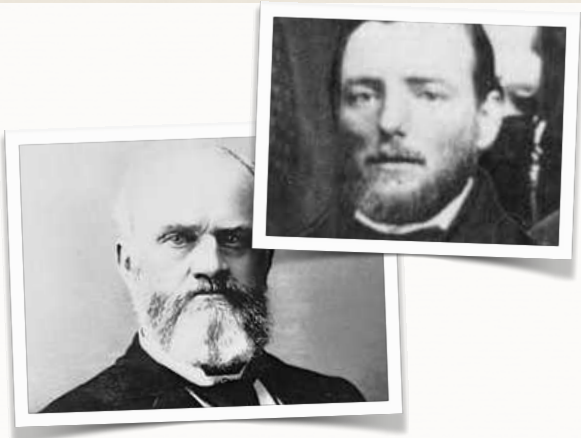
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Thomas Jefferson Galbraith 1825–1909



Thomas J. Galbraith was born in Turbot Township in Northumberland county, Pennsylvania on October 3, 1825. After attending local schools, he finished his education at the college at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania (now Bucknell University). Thomas then taught school, while he read law under the direction of Joshua Comly.

Galbraith was admitted to the bar in September 1852. In the first election after his admission to the bar, he was chosen as County Surveyor and was soon appointed County Clerk of Montour County in Pennsylvania.

In the spring of 1854, he moved west to the Territory of Minnesota. He came back to Pennsylvania briefly to marry Henrietta Garretson, on April 5, 1855 in Danville. The couple returned immediately to Minnesota, settling in Sha K' Pay, Minnesota Territory, where Thomas was elected to the House of Representatives of the Territorial Legislature. In 1857, he was elected a member of the Constitutional Convention and was one of ten men, five Republicans and five Democrats, who formulated Minnesota's first constitution. He then served the 18th district in the Minnesota State Senate in 1861, living in Shakopee at the time.



“A dozen years residence on the confines of the Indian country of the northwest... have convinced me that if the system herewith delineated will not if steadily adhered to, revolutionize and civilized the Indian, none concocted by man ever will.”

In the spring of 1861, he was appointed by President Abraham Lincoln as the Agent of the Sioux Indians of the Mississippi and removed to the agency's headquarters in Yellow Medicine, Minnesota, succeeding Joseph R. Brown. Galbraith also had to deal with Dakota people who did not want to convert to a “new” way of life.

On August 15, 1862, Thomas J. Galbraith was involved in a confrontation between some Dakota tribesmen, U.S. troops, and local traders. Galbraith refused to distribute food to the Indians, although they were suffering from famine. The government's treaty payments were late. It proved one of many causes of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 that began twelve days later.

In August 1862, as he was heading with a company of recruits to join the Union forces in the Civil War, the Indians broke out in rebellion. Returning immediately to Fort Ridgely, he and hundreds of refugees were besieged by Indians for ten days until General Sibley and a force of 1,000 men arrived to secure the area.

Galbraith's wife, Henrietta, and their two children were being led to safety from their home at the Upper Agency by the Wahpeton Dakota leader Anpetutokeca (John Other Day). Galbraith helped defend Fort Ridgely and was wounded at the battle of Birch Coulee.

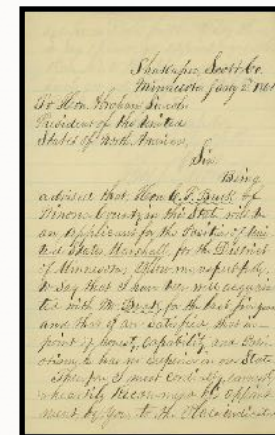


"For what reason we have commenced this war I will tell you. It is on account of Major Galbraith."
Thaóyate Dúta (Little Crow) in a letter to Henry Sibley, 1862.

In 1863 he resumed the practice of law in St. Paul, but in 1868 the family returned home to Pennsylvania.

Henrietta Garretson Galbraith never left again and died in Danville in 1883.

Thomas, however, could not resist the lure of the west and made a trip to Idaho in 1879. He remained there and in Montana for the rest of his active legal career. After their mother's death, his five youngest children eventually joined him in Montana.



A handwritten letter by Thomas J. Galbraith on January 2, 1861 to President Lincoln recommending Hon. C. F. Buck of Winona County for the position of United States Marshall for the District of Minnesota.