

cinnamon bark. This was the only article of food for some weeks, except that on several occasions some wild game—a squirrel or a rabbit—would be shot.

And to add greatly to their miseries, their stock of tobacco became entirely exhausted—not a crumb left. “Oh for one chew! Just one smoke!” was the repeated exclamation.

Samuel V. Hibler, the register of deeds of the county and one of the original town proprietors, was holding a section adjoining the townsite of Blue Earth City as a claim. He had erected a small cabin and made some other improvements in the land. The land was very valuable, and since Hibler wasn't on the claim, Theophius Bowen jumped the claim. He wanted to contest Hibler's right to own the land on the local land office.

The jumping of claims was in those days very unpopular. Many people lost their lives in this territory because of claim jumping. Law and order was not well established and trespassing often resulted by the strong and bloody hand.

On October 15, 1856, according to Jacob Armel Kiestler, Samuel Hibler and several friends proceeded to the house on his claim and ordered Bowen off the premises. A young man, Alfonso Brooks, was in the house. High words followed between Samuel Hibler and Theophius Bowen, and when they got into a scuffle, Alfonso Brooks tried to interfere. Hibler, who had a stout cane in his hand, struck Brooks over the head. Alphonso Brooks stooped down to pick up a piece of brick from the small pile in the corner, and as he arose, Samuel Hibler struck him again on the head several times.

Alfonso Brooks fell and died in about an hour. His skull was broken.

The complaint was made before the justice of the peace, who issued a warrant for the arrest of Hibler and the other Shakopee settlers-colonists. Samuel Hibler got an attorney from Shakopee, Thomas J. Galbraith. Attorney Thomas J. Galbraith moved to discharge the prisoners because they had no jurisdiction over the territory where the offense had been committed.

They were discharged.

Samuel V. Hibler never returned to the county. He went to Shakopee, where he remained for a short time. And then he returned to Pennsylvania, his native state.

As for James Beach Wakefield? He served as a Member of the Minnesota State House. In 1864, he married Nannette Reinhart in 1864. They were both in their mid-thirties and the marriage produced no children. Nannette died in 1899 after a long illness and was buried at Riverside Cemetery in Blue Earth.

In 1907 James married again and this time he married his sweetheart dating back to the days when he practiced law in Painesville, Ohio. His new bride, Lydia Phelps Noble, died a year later and her mortal remains were returned to Ohio for burial.

Meanwhile, James was living in the Constans Hotel because he could no longer navigate the steep steps of his fine home. Henry Constans, the proprietor of the hotel, was a partner during the early days.

When James Beach Wakefield died on August 25, 1910, he had let it be known that he wanted to be buried with his first love back in Ohio. The interment was in Evergreen Cemetery, Painesville, Ohio at age 85 according to <http://www.fchistorical.org/index.php/archives/the-honorable-james-beach-wakefield>.

At Riverside Cemetery in Blue Earth stands a very large and lovely light gray headstone with Wakefield carved on the stone but only one person is buried there, his first wife, Nanette Reinhart Wakefield.



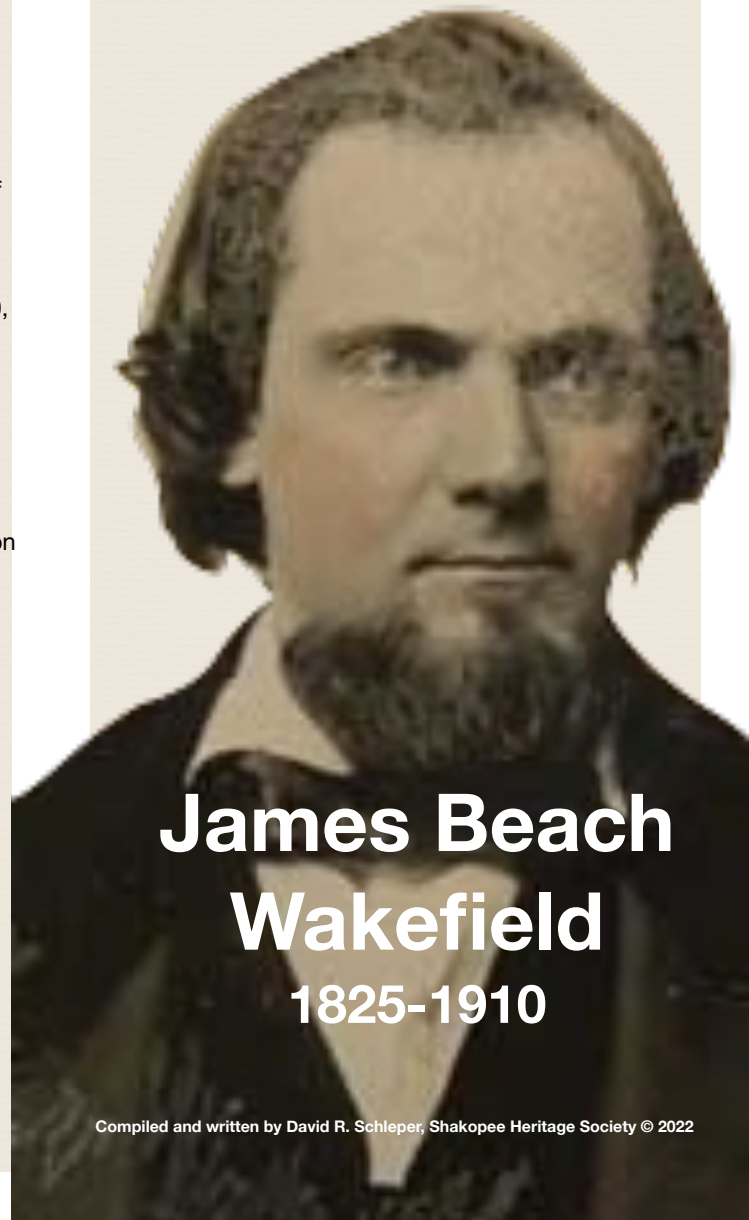
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**James Beach
Wakefield
1825-1910**



The home of James Beach Wakefield, brother-in-law of Sarah Wakefield and a prominent Minnesota politician and real-estate investor, in Blue Earth, Minnesota. On the right is a picture of James Beach Wakefield. James was elected to serve as a Member of the Minnesota State Senate representing the 20th District from 1867 to 1869. He also served as Delegate to the Republican National Convention from Minnesota in 1868, Appointed Receiver of the United States Land Office of Winnebago City Township, Minnesota, from 1869 until he resigned from that post in 1875, and as the 8th Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota from 1876 to 1880. He then ran for a seat in the United States Congress and won. A Republican, he then served Minnesota's 2nd District (representing the Forty-Eighth and Forty-Ninth Congresses) in the United States House of Representatives from 1883 to 1887.



On a cold stormy night in the last days of January of 1856, James Beach Wakefield, along with Henry P. Constans, Spier Spencer and Samuel V. Hibler were assembled in a small store by a warm stove in downtown Shakopee. All were poor in purse, but in youth, health and courage, they were rich and hopeful, according to **The History of Faribault County, Minnesota: From Its First Settlement to the Close of the Year 1879** by Jacob Armel Kiester in 1896.

Settler-colonist James Beach Wakefield was born in Winsted, Connecticut, to Dr. Luman Wakefield and his wife Betsey Rockwell Wakefield. His brother was Dr. John Luman Wakefield. James attended local public schools in Westfield, Massachusetts, and Jonesville, New York, before attending the prestigious Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, where he graduated in 1846.

He studied law in Painesville, Ohio, and was admitted to the bar shortly thereafter. He commenced to practicing law in Delphi, Indiana, in 1852. He then moved to Shakopee City (later Shakopee), in what was then the Territory of Minnesota, in April of 1854.

He practiced law for a couple of years and dreamed of getting in on the movement of settlers-colonists working on making some money off the rush to settle southern Minnesota after the Dakota and other Indians were forced to give up their land.

In January of 1856 was a year ever memorable in Minnesota of inflated prices of land and of wild speculations. Settlers-colonists had been coming into the territory of the Dakota in great numbers. For several years past great improvements had been

made and fortunes acquired in a day, by speculators in lands, town-sites and corner lots. The prospects for the year just beginning were very flattering.

Just like Thomas A. Holmes did in 1851, James B. Wakefield and friends decided to striking out somewhere and founding a city. The buffalo and elk hunter, the trapper, the Indian and the explorer, had already told their stories, of the beauty and fertility of the Blue Earth valley. Thomas Holmes had talked in glowing language of the forks of the Blue Earth River, as an eligible location for a town.

In fact, a small, rough log cabin, on the north bank of the stream was built by Thomas A. Holmes in 1854 at the two branches of the Blue Earth River in Faribault County. It was very rudely built, quite low and not more than ten by twelve feet in size, and had evidently been built as a mere temporary shelter. He erected this cabin, with the intention of making a claim of the land adjoining, with a view of eventually laying out a town in the vicinity. But in 1854, Thomas A. Holmes decided to focus more on Shakopee City.

And so, in 1856, the group of men from Shakopee decided to the head-waters of the Blue Earth River. The winter had been long and cold. It was now the beginning of February and the snow lay twenty inches deep on the level and great drifts were piled in every direction.

They gathered together a few provisions. They gathered flour, pork, beans, some culinary utensils and a ten gallon keg of a peculiar fluid extract of rye, which latter article had been recommended by

solicitous friends, as a valuable medicine in cases of frost-bites, snake-bites, chills, or general prostration. Well armed with guns, pistols and plenty of ammunition, James Wakefield and others started for the forks of the Blue Earth, across a trackless region.

After a tedious journey, on February 6, 1856, Samuel Hibler and his group crossed the lands where Blue Earth City now stands, and proceeded about a mile further south, to the cabin of Moses Sailor, the first settler. The group stayed overnight with Moses Sailor. On the following day Wakefield and Spencer started out with the team, on their return to Shakopee, leaving Henry Constans and Samuel Hibler to hold possession of the country. It was decided that Wakefield and Spencer would return to Shakopee to get more supplies. When they got to St. Paul they discovered that the territorial legislature was in session. Wakefield was able to get the legislature to pass an enabling bill establishing Faribault County and naming the City of Blue Earth its temporary county seat.

On March 7, 1856 James B. Wakefield returned with a pocketful of official commissions and accompanied by another new settler, George B. Kingsley. Spier Spencer did not return, but stayed in Shakopee, according to Jacob Armel Kiester.

The weather continued cold—the ice in the streams was breaking up—the waters getting high and traveling was impossible. Day after day even weeks passed, but no one came bringing provisions. No one could go after supplies, and starvation was imminent. They were at last reduced to buckwheat slapjacks, the flour being stirred up with water, and as a rarity occasionally seasoned with ground