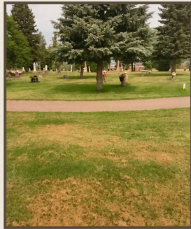




Scott County bought this building, which was St. Gertrude's Academy from 1886 to 1898, and used it as a Poor House, where Dan Eddings spent his last few weeks of life. In 1938, the Franciscan Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Angels bought and remodeled the building, called St. Francis Hospital and Home for the Aged.

Dan Eddings was buried at the Valley Cemetery, which is located at 1780 East 4th Avenue in Shakopee. Valley Cemetery was a public cemetery with no church affiliation. Many of the early families are buried there. The area where he was buried is directly across from pine tree. The Valley Cemetery made a note in the remarks: "Known as Ni**er Dan."



Valley Cemetery by David R. Schleper © Shakopee Heritage Society

Dan Eddings, who was enslaved, who worked for years at various farms in Shakopee, and who died of cancer, was buried in the potter's section, a place for the burial of unknown or indigent people. The term is of Biblical origin, referring to a ground where clay was dug for pottery, later bought by the high priests of Jerusalem for the burial of strangers, criminals and the poor.

Dan Eddings does not have a tombstone.

SHAKOPEE, MINNESOTA



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On April 13, 1857, the Post Office in the town was changed to Shakopee, Minnesota. And that is the name of the town today!

Coller, Julius A. II (1960). *The Shakopee Story*.
Shakopee, Minnesota: North Star Pictures, Inc.
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SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY
2109 Boulder Pointe, Shakopee, MN 55379
952-693-3865
shakopeeheritage.org



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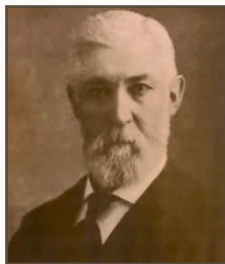
Dan Eddings
1852-1919

Dan Eddings was born enslaved, probably in Kentucky around 1852.

So how did Dan Eddings move to Shakopee?

In order to understand, people need to know William Weiser, who was born in Pennsylvania, but moved to Shakopee and married Mary Elizabeth Allen on August 9, 1857. William and Mary had two children, Flora in 1857, and Cora Ann, called Annie, in 1859. William became a private in the army when he was 32 years old. He joined the Ninth Pennsylvania on August 15, 1862. His two brothers, also from Shakopee, were also in the Civil War. A few months later, his wife, Mary, had their third child, John Frank, who was born in 1863. William Weiser was in the army until August 24, 1865, where he was retired as a sergeant.

While in the army, William Weiser bought and liberated Dan and 11 other enslaved men during the war. He brought the 12 freed slaves to Eden Prairie in 1864, and put them to work on a farm in Eden Prairie. According to the **Shakopee Tribune** in 1919, "All ran away except Dan and another boy. Dan had lived in and around Shakopee ever since."



William Frank Weiser



Threshers in Shakopee ca. 1910 by Shakopee Heritage Society

The **Shakopee Tribune** also discusses "our sole citizen of color." According to the article, Dan was "quite harmless, although possessing only indistinct ideas of the philosophy of *meum and tuum*, especially when in the vicinity of a hen roost." *Meum et tuum* means mine and thine, and is used to express rights of property. In other words, he was a lady's man. "In earlier days, before race prejudice had spread through the north, Dan often was present at social functions, and there may be those still living who have stepped off a quadrille with him."

William Weiser, meanwhile, was back with his wife until she died, and then he married Kate Love McCallum. They have 9 children before Kate died in 1901. William was a school teacher and brick mason, and died in Everett, Washington in 1919.

Dan Eddings spent his post-slave life living and working in Shakopee. In the August 29, 1919 **Scott County Argus**, Dan "had spent his entire life here, and was well known among the farming community, having worked on many of the farms hereabouts." He often worked at Lawrence Stemmer's farm in east Shakopee.



Dan Eddings ca. 1918 Scott County Historical Society

J.A. Reitz, a Shakopee photographer, took a picture of Dan Eddings in 1915 (on cover.) It was a studio portrait, where Eddings was sitting on a wicker chair covered with a fur pelt. He was wearing a button-down shirt, vest, jacket, and trousers. On the back of the photograph is written "Ni**er—Dan Eddings 1915."

Dan Eddings continued working at various farms until 1919, where he became sick with cancer. He was taken to the county poor house five weeks before he died. In the August 29, 1919 **Shakopee Tribune** noted, "Dan Eddings, better known to Shakopee as 'Ni**er Dan,' died at the county poorhouse Wednesday morning, and was buried that evening." The **Scott County Argus** added, "Dan Eddings, the only local negro resident in this community, died Wednesday morning at 9:45 o'clock at the county poor house where he was taken about five weeks ago. The cause of death was cancer of the stomach."

