



*The Faribault*  
**Dakota**

**A Collaborative  
History Project  
for Faribault, Minnesota**

**By Jeff Jarvis, West Cedar Studio**

# The Faribault Dakota

## Project Overview

In the Faribault Dakota Project, the basis of our study is the Dakota's experience in the time period of 1834-1895 when they resided in Faribault, MN. We want to explore the unique story of the Dakota who were offered security and shelter by Alexander Faribault, and in later years, Bishop Whipple.

This study will include the Wahpekute who transitioned from ancestral village sites to life in Alexander Faribault's fur trade center between 1834-1854, and the Mdewakantons who also sought refuge here after the U.S-Dakota War of 1862.

In the project, research and interviews will be carried out with descendants of these Dakota at Mendota Dakota Community, Prairie Island, Santee Sioux Nation, and the Upper and Lower Sioux Agency. The Dakota stories will be reflected within interpretive signage at Peace Park, a MN state-recognized Dakota burial place. The remaining backstory will be developed with research at MN History Center Library and Rice County Historical Society.

### Project Goals

- (1.) Honor the Dakota culture for playing a formative role in Faribault's early days.
- (2.) Restore a connection with the Faribault Dakota through their descendants.
- (3.) Increase respect and visibility of the Peace Park Dakota burial ground.
- (4.) Recognize unique community support offered to Dakota in the years 1834-1895.
- (5.) Educate about Dakota history with stories from Faribault Dakota descendants.

# The Faribault Dakota

## Project Collaborators

**Faribault Heritage Preservation Committee**  
Kim Clausen, Coordinator

**Faribault Chamber of Commerce**  
Kymn Anderson

**Faribault Mural Society**  
Gail Kielmeyer, President

**Rice County Historical Society**  
Susan Garwood, Director

**Mendota Dakota Community**  
Sharon Lennartson, Tribal Headwoman

**Santee Sioux Nation**  
Stuart Red Wing, Tribal Secretary  
Duane Whipple (Deceased)

**Lower Sioux Agency**  
Cheyanne St. John, HPC

**Upper Sioux Agency**  
Samantha Odegard

**Shakopee Dakota**  
Leonard Wabasha

**Prairie Island Dakota Community**  
Noah White



## Individual Collaborators

Dale Maul  
Dr. Roy Anderson  
Dr. Thomas Weaver  
Dr. James Guterjohn  
Emily Rutherford  
Howard Heath  
Karl & Ann Vohs

# The Faribault Dakota

## Project Lead

The Faribault Dakota Project Leader is Jeff Jarvis, an artist, designer and historian. Trained as an Advertising Designer with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, has held professional design positions in the computer software industry and within Faribault government.

Over the last 25 years, Jeff has conducted much historical research, delving first into the milling industry of the Cannon Valley. A study of indigenous populations living in the Faribault and the Cannon Valley region has also been a long-time passion.

### **Current Projects:**

"Ways of the Wahpekute Band of Dakota" Public Presentation

"Native American Stone Tools" Public Presentation

"Dakota Culture Camp" Public Program

Historic Downtown Faribault Bench Design: "Seabury Divinity School 1860"

# The Faribault Dakota

## Backstory

### Alexander Faribault's Letter to Faribault Central Republican June 10, 1863

Having been informed that a report is current that I am harboring guilty Indians, and that there are now at my place a large number, some of whom are known to have participated in the outbreak, and that threats of violence to any Indians found there, have been made, I deem it my duty to quiet the fears of persons who might believe such report to be true, though I hope my fellow citizens will examine for themselves. The only Indians at my place are:

**First, Wacou, or LaClare,** (Wakan LeClair) and his family, who were here during the outbreak, and are known to be entirely innocent. He came with me when I moved here, and has been here ever since that time, never living with the tribe and his children are being educated here, and now talk English well.

**Second, Pepe and brother and family** (Pay-Pay, brother Hepe) are known to all our citizens, and whose character is vouched for by Col. Crooks, General Sibley and others – have always lived with me, going among the Indians only at the time of payment.

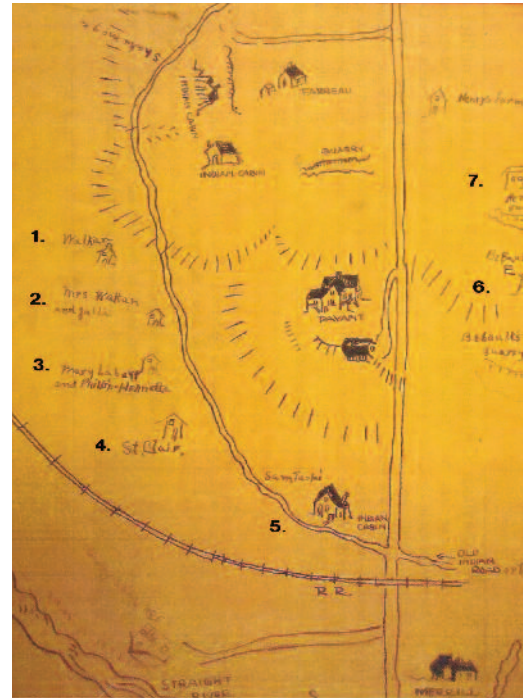
**Third, A widow with two children** (widow Mary Iron Shield LaBatte, children Phillip and Henriette. She has one son in our army, whose good character and soldierly conduct is vouched for by his officers.

**Fourth, Taopi and family.** This is the person whom General Sibley, Col. Crooks, and other officers, as well as the white captives, unite in saying was the means of saving the captives taken by Little Crow.

**Fifth, The wife (Snana) and mother of Good Thunder,** a man whom all admit also, assisted in saving the captives, and is now employed as a scout for General Sibley. His family were sent here for safety.

Above you have the names of all the Indians in Faribault, and I trust no person will contend that these Indians, after rendering to the country such service should be sent off to be killed by hostile tribes. I know these Indians well, and I know them to be harmless, innocent and good persons; but if the citizens of Faribault are not disposed to protect these “friends of the whites,” all I ask is that they may not be molested, but that I may have time to notify General Sibley and have them removed, if the people do not wish them to remain. I await notice of your determination.

- Alex. Faribault



*This map indicates the location and family names of the Dakota that sought refuge in Faribault after the U.S.-Dakota War in 1862.  
Map courtesy of Rice Co. Historical Society*