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9-21-1937

### Cadwell, Thomas (1834 - )

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Dean Nelson

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#### Recommended Citation

Gruber, Tresa and Nelson, Dean, "Cadwell, Thomas (1834 - )" (1937). *WPA Biographic Summaries*. 189.  
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CADWELL, THOMAS

FILE NO. B-196

Thomas J. Cadwell was born in Onieda, New York, June 2, 1834 son of John and Anna Cadwell. As a young boy he received his education in the public schools in Onieda and worked at odd jobs thereabout.

The Cadwell family tree was well known and established in eastern New York and could trace their ancestry back to one of the passengers on the Mayflower.

On February 2, 1852 Thomas Cadwell married Alvina Carlion at Onieda, New York and shortly after this marriage the young couple started westward to make their home. They stopped first in St. Paul and then came to Maine Prairie where Thomas took a land grant. As the weather was getting warm he immediately built a log cabin and cleaned a small area for garden. This area was to supply them with food during the coming winter and it had to be well taken care of if there were to be no empty stomachs.

At this time there evidently were no Indians or they kept well hidden. Agriculture seemed to be a profitable venture to Thomas so he came to St. Cloud to look for work. He finally found employment in the Bridgeman Saw-mill and between gardening and labor at the saw-mill earned a livelihood. During this time one daughter, Minnesota was born. So named because she was born in the state of their first home. About this time one other family took a land grant about two miles away. Both Thomas and his neighbor found employment at this saw-mill so they went to work on Monday morning, walking the entire distance (about 16 miles) to St. Cloud. They stayed here all week and on Saturday evening they walked back home carrying the foodstuffs necessary for the coming week. This was quite an experience for the women and children as they were in continual fear of Indians and no men there to look to for protection.

Minnesota's mother used to set her on the roof to watch for Indians while she did the gardening and work outside. She tells of one experience when at dusk they saw something red about one hundred yards away and immediately ran in the cabin and bolted the door. They didn't sleep all night nor started any fire for fear it would attract the attention of the Indians. When it finally became daylight this red form was still to be seen. Minnesota's mother cautiously slipped out the room to get a better view and then noticed it was a sumac bush that had always been there but she failed to notice before. This is an example of what the pioneer women had to endure to open this land to civilization.

On Oct, 8, 1861, Thomas J. Cadwell enlisted in Co. D 4th Minnesota infantry and served his time with the northern army. He was discharged at Huntsville, Alabama January 1, 1864. as a corporal.

During his absence his wife and daughter went to Wisconsin to evade the marauding Indians that took advantage of the absence of men to protect the women. After the war when they returned to their cabin, Minnesota remembers sticking her fingers in the bullet holes in the cabin so evidently the Indians had raided the empty cabin.

Here Thomas resumed his duties again and his land grant was changed over to a homestead and he could make the land his by living on it. Life was resumed as usual with the same number of hardships but this was soon changed when David Stanley erected a general store and postoffice across the road from the Indian fort. This fort was built during the war for the protection of the remaining pioneers who refused to leave their land.

With the erection of this store and postoffice the stage company inaugurated a new line from Fair Haven through Maine Prairie to



St.Cloud. This seemed the climax to everything, here the pioneers could market, get their mail, and even ride the stage to St. Cloud. This country spot of Maine Prairie grew and became a nucleus for a village with several homes and a cheese factory. Just about the time when it seemed a village was possible the railroad constructed a line three and one half miles south of here and the village of Kimball Prairie was platted. This was the beginning of the decline of historic Maine Prairie.

Thomas and Alvina Cadwell resided on their homestead until the time of their deaths. Alvina Cadwell died in October 1887. Minnesota Cadwell married William T. Cornell and now reside in the village of Kimball.

Interviewed: Minnesota (Cadwell)  
Cornell  
Date: Sept. 21, 1937  
By: Dean Nelson

MARRIAGE RECORD BOOK F. PAGE 47

William Cornell and Minnie Cadwell Married at Maine Paririe Jan.1,1878.

By Rev.A. Shoemaker

Witnesses: Jos.Mason  
Samuel Cornell



CADWELL, THOMAS

File No. B-195

Thomas Cadwell was one of Stearns county's pioneers, arriving in the county in 1855, and settling on his claim in Maine Prairie in 1857, with his wife. He was born in Madison county, New York, in 1832. In October, 1861, he enlisted in the fourth regiment, and after serving three years re-enlisted and served ten months as a veteran. Since returning to Maine Prairie at the close of the war, he has been engaged in farming ever since, except a short time when acting as a guard at the Reformatory.

Copied from: History of Maine Prairie Page 28  
Date Copied: January 8, 1937  
By: Tresa Gruber

TAKEN FROM THE CENSUS RECORDS OF 1860

Enumerated July 17, 1860 -- By C. Grandelmeyer

Post Office -- Marysville

Page No. 97

Thomas J. Caldwell (Cadwell)

Age 28

Sex

Male

Occupation

Farmer

Born

Michigan

Alvira Caldwell

Age 22

Sex

Female

Occupation

\_\_\_\_\_

Born

England

FROM THE RECORDS IN THE STEARNS COUNTY COURT HOUSE  
FOR THE THOMAS CADWELL BIOGRAPHY

NO LEGAL RECORDS IN THE STEARNS COUNTY COURT HOUSE