

Tanner, John (1839-1932)

John Tanner, the son of Reverend James Tanner, was a veteran of the American Civil War. John was born on August 17, 1839 at Torch Lake (Lac du Flambeau), Wisconsin. John had just started farming in Tears County near his home at St. Joseph when the Civil War started. In August of 1862 he went to St. Cloud to enlist as a private in the Union Army's Ninth Regiment of the Minnesota Voluntary Infantry. He fought for three years before taking an honorary discharge at Fort Snelling near St. Paul, Minnesota.

While he originally lived in Minnesota, following the war he found that his family had moved across the border and were living near Portage la Prairie. At the time his father's half-brother, Picheito Tanner was an important chief of the Red Lake tribe located in the Portage-Delta-White Horse Plains area. Thus John came to Manitoba around the time of his father's death, and with his wife Catherine, and his mother, Poopie, took up residence along the Little Saskatchewan River, near the Fort Ellice Trail. Here he established a ferry, post office, and store at Tanners Crossing. This was the beginning of what was to become the Manitoba town of Minnedosa. During the early 1880s, white agriculturists from Ontario were populating the area around Tanner's Crossing. Like other mixed-bloods who were not comfortable with this, the Tanner family left Manitoba in 1881 to settle further west at Prince Albert. They lived there until 1912. When this area became more densely populated with agriculturists from the East, John Tanner again moved, this time back to Manitoba, to the Métis community of Kinosota. He lived there until his death in 1932, leaving no direct descendants.

While scouting near Fort Abercrombie in 1863, John had sustained a serious rupture and as a result of complications he could not father children. In 1869, he married Catherine Trottier, daughter of Joseph Trottier of S. Mary's and the widow of HBC Factor John Sinclair.



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