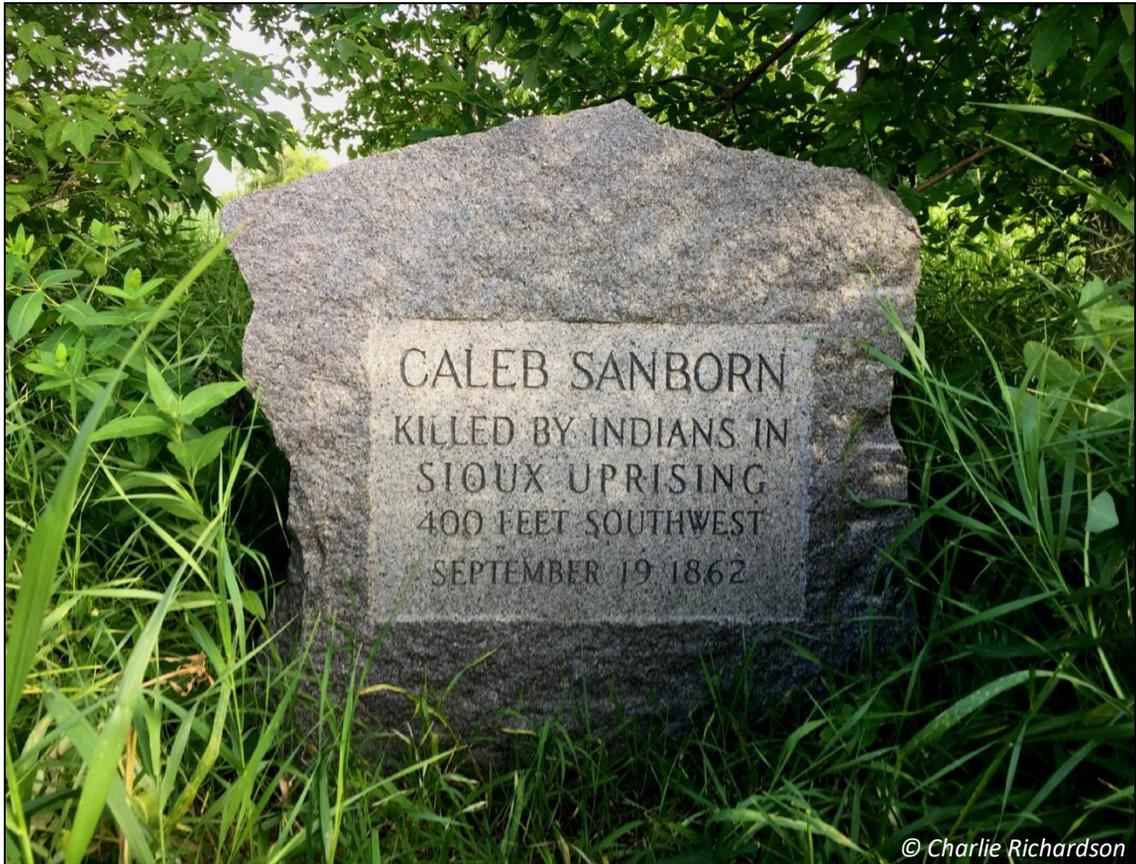


# Caleb Sanborn

September 19, 1862



**Marker Location:** *East on Hwy. 12 from Litchfield. Go South on CSAH 9. Turn East on Cty Road 18 and drive 2/10's of a mile. Monument is on the South side of the road about 25 feet from the road.*

Caleb Sanborn was born on October 9, 1820 in Springfield, New Hampshire and moved to Meeker County in 1857. According to the 1860 census, Caleb was 39 years old and living alone on his farm. By September, he had traveled to Springfield, New Hampshire and married Lydia F. Hoyt. He brought his new bride back to his farm located on Cedar Lake in Greenleaf Township.

After four young Dakota hunters killed five white settlers in Acton, Caleb brought his pregnant wife and two year old son, Caleb, to an island on Cedar Lake for safety. The family stayed on the island for twelve days before returning home. Soon afterwards, the Sanborns left their farm and traveled to the Hutchinson stockade. Caleb became restless at the stockade and decided to return home to do some work. When he did not return to the stockade, a small party of Hutchinson Guards who were recognized by the State as a regular military organization went out to look for him. Their names were Lewis Harrington, Frank Jewett, T.R. Webb, Dave Hern, Nathaniel Pierce, Daniel Cross, and Silas Greene.

On the way, the soldiers stopped at the home of Dr. Kennedy. Dr. Kennedy had enlisted in 1862 and served as a surgeon in the Fifth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry until 1865. His home had been completely ransacked. The men found bottles of medicine, pills, and surgical instruments strewn about the place. After leaving Kennedy's home, the soldiers searched the ground for clues as to which way the Indians may have gone. When they reached the north side of the Cedar Lake woods

They were suddenly attacked by three simultaneous shots of gunfire! Some men jumped into the double wagon; others went on foot to Caleb's farm and were met by more gun shots. Daniel Cross was shot and killed instantly. The Indians put Cross's scalp on a pole and carried it as a battle flag while they chased the men in their wagon. Fortunately, the men in the wagon escaped and made it back to the Hutchinson stockade safely. One man in the search party, T.R. Webb, ran to the lake, jumped in a small boat and paddled his way to Cedar Island and hid there for the night. The Indians lined the lakeshore as Webb escaped. It is written that when he had reached a safe distance from the shore, he turned to the Indians and thumbed his nose at them. Webb returned to Hutchinson the next morning. It was determined later that the small group had been attacked by thirteen Indians.

Twenty men came back the next day to look for the bodies of Sanborn and Cross. Both bodies have been terribly mutilated. Caleb had been hit over the head with a grub hoe. The men took the remains of Sanborn and Cross to Hutchinson where Caleb's expectant wife, Lydia, was awaiting the terrible news of her husband's brutal death. She gave birth to another son a few days later at the Hutchinson stockade and named him "Abraham" after Caleb's father.

Lydia applied for reimbursement for her property losses to the Sioux Depredation Commission on August 1, 1863. She attached a detailed report of the incidents that took place prior to her family taking refuge at the Hutchinson stockade. The Sioux Depredation Commission granted Lydia Sanborn \$150 compensation.

#### References:

- Ardith James, The Untimely Death of Caleb Sanborn, Retrieved July 1, 2017 from: [www.historicalspringfieldnh.org/pdfs/HistoricDocs/The%20Untimely%20Death%20of%20Caleb%20Sanborn.pdf](http://www.historicalspringfieldnh.org/pdfs/HistoricDocs/The%20Untimely%20Death%20of%20Caleb%20Sanborn.pdf)
- Ketcham, Roule and Marsh, Tracy H., n.d., Action in Acton, Litchfield, Minnesota: James J. Reed Co.
- Smith, A.C., 1877, A Random Historical Sketch of Meeker County, Minnesota From Its First Settlement to July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1876, Litchfield, Minnesota, Belfoy & Joubert Publishers.