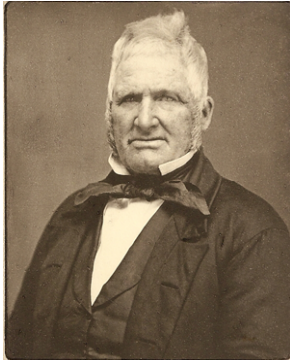


## JOSEPH STANNARD BAKER (1832-1912)

JSB was born to Luther Alexander Baker and Mercy Stannard Baker and was raised on the family farm in Stafford New York (SW of Rochester)



*Luther Alexander*



*The Baker Farm, Batavia, NY*



*Mercy Stannard*

In his determination to get an education he persuaded his father "to give me my time," i.e. release him from the custom & law for farm boys to work on the family farm to 21. So released at age 15, he earned money for his education by teaching. He did attend a two week teacher's institute to prepare for this job. Unable to afford housing, he lived at home and walked seven miles each way to the school, continuing to milk cows and do other chores before and after teaching. His initial college education (Oberlin College) lasted just a year, ended by his mother's death and his own illness.

After teaching another three years he went to Hudson, WI with his brother, Henry, who went to practice law. He describes this as a difficult time; he lacked money and finding work was hard. He once walked 75 miles to apply for a job which he didn't get. He worked as a farm hand, teacher, door to door salesman and state sales rep for that company.

He enrolled at the University of Wisconsin, but got typhoid and was there just a year. In 1862 he and his older brother Luther Byron (LBB) learned they could have jobs in the Secret Service of the War Department because their cousin, Lafayette C. Baker, was the head. JSB did mainly field work, including stopping blockade runners. One of the brothers' more unusual assignments was as plainclothes detectives accompanying 600 southern women who had been stranded in the North when the war broke out, on a ship to Richmond, VA.

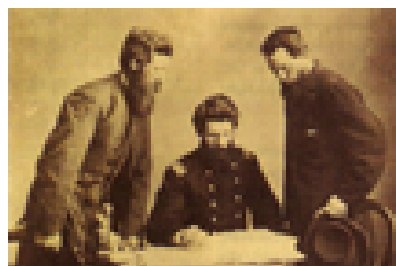


*JSB & Henry 1859*

While in the Secret Service, JSB proposed raising a D.C. battalion for the Civil War which. Required and received an act of Congress. He served as commanding officer in that cavalry unit for three years rising from captain to major. His older brother, LBB served under him. They fought from northern Maryland throughout Virginia south to near the N. Carolina border. Toward the end of his service he was captured and a prisoner in Libby Prison. His brother left the service before he did; he rejoined the civil service and took part in the capture of John Wilkes Booth



*Major Joseph  
Stannard Baker*



*LBB (L) with Lafayette C & another  
member of the Booth capture team.*

When JSB left the army (1865) he and LBB moved to Lansing, MI where their cousin, and former Secret Service boss, Lafayette, had established a home. There he taught school and worked in the Michigan state land office. He also met and married Alice Potter in 1868. After ten years in Lansing they moved with their first three children to St. Croix Falls in the wilderness of northern Wisconsin where he lived until his death in 1912. JSB thrived on the frontier with its diverse cast of characters -- traders and trappers, Chippewa, French Canadians and Swedish immigrants. Alice was distressed at the lack of genteel society and a church, so JSB



*JSB*



*Alice, 1875*

and Alice took the lead in building St. Croix Falls' first church (his children Harry, Winifred & Florence were leaders in that church.). He also built the village's first water works.

JSB and Alice had six boys, Ray Stannard, Charles Fuller, Harry Denio (Denio is the maiden name of Alice's mother), Clarence Dwight, Hugh Potter, and James Frederick, Alice died in 1883, age 39. Too rapid child bearing and the hardships of frontier life to which she was never reconciled undermined her health.



*Mary 1904*

Three years later JSB married a local music teacher, Mary Lovila Brown, 22 years his junior. In addition to caring for the six boys, she and JSB had another four children, Winifred Lovila, Florence Irene, Joseph Stannard Jr, and Oscar Roland.

When he arrived in St. Croix Falls, JSB took employment as land agent for Caleb Cushing's extensive timber holdings. This work required him to travel extensively throughout the region surveying, managing the land and paying local taxes. JSB's hearing deteriorated, reportedly, but never confirmed, to be from a Civil War injury. He often took his eldest son Ray on business trips into the country to help. In 1893 his third son, Harry, joined his father at the Cushing Land Agency. In 1911 they changed the name to Baker Land and Title Company and the company's focus became general real estate.. The Baker building, their office, presently houses the St. Croix Falls Historical Society.



*The Baker Home*

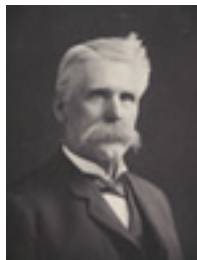


*First Presbyterian Church*



*Baker Land & Title office*

In his autobiography, JSB's eldest son, Ray, writes lovingly of his father. Ray recalls that his father was an unparalleled story teller, especially relating stories of his Secret Service and Civil War adventures. JSB had a keen sense of adventure and love of learning which he imparted to his children. He read often to them and encouraged them to read. He taught and questioned endlessly often giving impromptu lessons as when he demonstrated the nature of the universe using a lamp and two turnips for the sun, earth and moon. He was apparently a loving but very strict task master. In addition to family reading, family prayers were a regular event in the household



*JSB in later years*

*Mary and children at his memorial service in 1912*

*L-R top: Harry 3, Hugh 5, Fred 6*

*Seated: Ray 1, Florence 8, Mary, Winifred 7, Charles 2*

*Seated front Stan Jr. 9, Poly (Roland)*

*Deceased, Clarence 4*



For stories of his early life and Civil War adventures see *Joseph Stannard Baker Memoirs* For descriptions of his character and life in St. Croix Falls see *Native American Ray's* autobiography.