

CAMP HANCOCK STATE HISTORIC SITE

Linda Warfel, born in Cadiz, Harrison County, Ohio in 1843, graduated from Oberlin College and went to Kentucky and Tennessee as a missionary to organize schools and churches for the freedmen. During this period she published a book of poems and two other books about her experiences.

In 1868 Linda Warfel met Dr. Benjamin Franklin Slaughter, an army surgeon. Dr. Slaughter, although from an established southern family, had joined the Union Army after finishing medical school and stayed in the army following the Civil War. Not long after their marriage, they were ordered first to Ft. Rice (Dakota Territory) in 1871 and then, in 1872, to Camp Hancock, which was to become Bismarck, North Dakota.



In Dakota Territory Linda Slaughter set about various public works with her characteristic vigor, even as she raised three daughters. She was still living in a tent when she started Bismarck's first Sunday school in 1872; in 1873 she opened the Bismarck Academy, which quickly became the town's public school. That same year she was appointed Burleigh County's first Superintendent of Schools, became Bismarck's first postmistress, and founded the Ladies Historical Society in Bismarck. She was a charter member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and in the 1890s was active in the Women's Christian Temperance Union. In 1888 she was the state vice president of the National Women's Suffrage Association, and in 1889 a member of its Executive Committee. Through that group, she became friends with Susan B. Anthony and spent time in Washington, D.C. In 1892, as a delegate for the People's Party, she was the first woman to vote for a presidential candidate in a national convention. She was licensed as an attorney in Washington, D.C. in 1895.

She continued to write, sometimes as "Cezula" ("The Squaw Who Helps"), the name given to her by Indian women near Ft. Rice when she assisted her husband in treating wounded Indians. Among her writings are a series of letters, "The Dolly Varden Letters," for the St. Paul Daily Pioneer, and a series of pamphlets for the Northern Pacific Railroad; both describe life in the Dakotas. Linda Slaughter died in St. Cloud, Minnesota, in 1911.



Fort Rice, drawn by Linda Slaughter in 1871. Fort Rice was established in 1864 by General Alfred H. Sully as the first of a chain of forts guarding northern plains transportation routes.