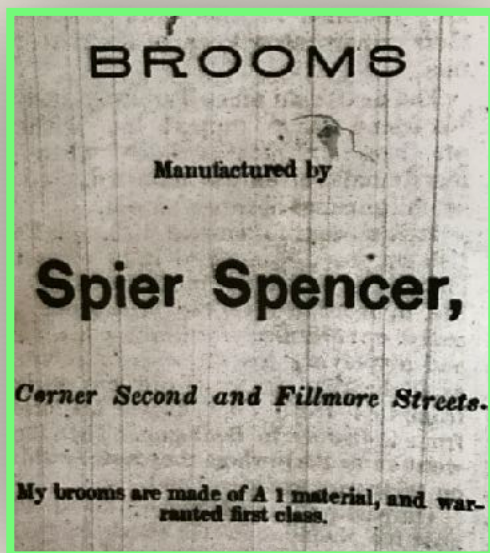


or judgment. He returned to his claim, and was soon visited by a delegation of men headed by the agent. When they saw Spencer's warlike equipment, they decided not to carry out their threat of tying him with a rope and hauling him off the claim like a hog.

Spier kept the claim.

Spier Spencer had a side business in 1861, owning and operating a steamboat, Clara Hinds, on the Minnesota River. He was active in the affairs of the rapidly growing village of Shakopee.

In the fall of 1862 a kernel of wheat struck him in the eye and caused inflammation, resulting in total blindness in one eye. Spier then bought a home of Second Street, and opened a private boarding house known as the Union Home. Later he mastered the trade of broom-making and supplied local stores and communities until 1895, when he retired.



Spier Spencer passed away on January 26, 1907 and was buried at Valley Cemetery in East Shakopee.

His wife (and cousin) Rose Ann Spencer Spencer, died of October 5, 1913 and is buried at Valley Cemetery.



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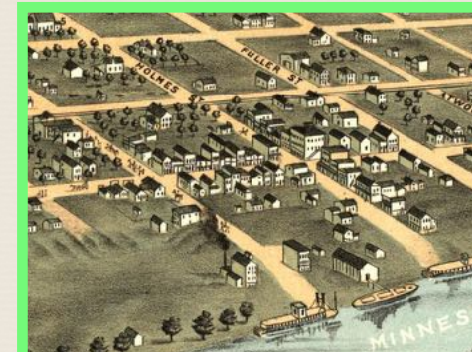


## SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY



**Spier Spencer**  
**1827-1907**

Compiled and written by David R. Schleper, Shakopee Heritage Society © 2023



Shakopee ca 1858 Edwin Whitefield, Minnesota Historical Society on left, and a Bird's Eye View of Shakopee, Minnesota 1869 by the Library of Congress on the right.

Spier Spencer was born in Elizabethtown, Spencer County, Kentucky, January 22, 1827. His father, John Spencer, was a prominent owners of enslaved people. His mother was Pricilla Allen Spencer. So Spier, along with his father were prominent slave owners. Spier lived there until age 14, when his father sold his slaves and moved to Boone County, Indiana. The family stayed in Indiana for eight years.

In 1849, accompanied by his only brother, John B. Spencer, Jr., he went west and located at St. Paul, which was a small village at that time. The two brothers worked as carpenters until 1853. Then, John B. Spencer, Jr. and Spier Spencer purchased a farm between St. Paul and St. Anthony Park, which they kept for a short time.

On November 16, 1853, Spier married Rose Ann Spencer at Traverse de Sioux. Rose Ann Spencer was born at Terre Haute, Indian on April 25, 1834. She was educated at St Mary of the Woods convent. She moved to St. Paul with her parents in 1852. Rose Ann Spencer was the first white girl who married at Traverse de Sioux. Spier and Rose Ann were cousins. Spier and Rose Ann had six children: George, Julia, Charles, Carrie, Hattie, and Belle, according to the ***Shakopee Tribune*** November 20, 1903 and October 10, 1913.

Spier and Rose Ann sold their farm and moved to Shakopee in 1853. He purchased 1/3 of the town

of Shakopee from Thomas Holmes and David L. Fuller. It cost him \$4100 in 1853 to buy one-third of the town.

Spier Spencer, in 1853, bought a considerable portion of raw estate in Shakopee, and one person who sold land to him was a George M. Garig, according to ***Slavery Reach: Southern Slaveholders in the North Star State*** by Christopher P. Lehman in a book from the Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2019. According to Dr. Lehman, Spier also made money from the Garig's. "Between 1855 and 1860, Spier sold \$7,300 in Shakopee land to members of the Garig family. The influx of money allowed him to survive the Panic of 1857, and he stayed in Shakopee. Three years later his real estate was valued at \$10,000, and he had a personal estate of \$500" (p. 62-63.). So the action of Spier Spencer and the growth of Shakopee's economy was thus inextricable linked to wealth earned from slavery.

In 1853, the Dakota Indians were forced to move to a reservation, and the village of Sha K' Pay, Minnesota Territory became a booming town. Spier Spencer and others built several homes in the area. Spier, along with her wife, Rose Ann, opened a general store in Sha K' Pay, and traded in produce and furs with the Dakota Indians who often came back to the area.

In 1854, Spier Spencer, without attracting attention, succeeded in having enough lumber drawn onto one agency claims to build a house. Spier and a carpenter commenced to work on the frame before the claim agents thoroughly realized what was happened.

Wasson, Thomas A. Holmes, or Kennedy usually acted as agents for sites, and would sell a claim for \$200 in gold, or as much more as they could get from a newcomer. If a person squatted on a claim without getting settled with one of the three agents, trouble would happen.

Mr. Wasson informed Spier Spencer that the claim was already taken by a friend of his, and that he needed to get off. Spier knew that the pretended friend was just a myth, and the holding of the claim was a speculation to that he would pay up or get off.

Putting a revolver into his belt, Spier walked to the Wasson House, where the three agents were meeting. They three people came outside and told Spier Spencer to pay \$300 or get off the land, but Spencer said he would not do either. Spier Spencer purchased a rifle and two navies, people who showed a lack of experience, wisdom,