

When Rose Ann and Spier got married, the town was just beginning. A boom town happened, with more than 70 buildings, including five taverns, two hotels, and several churches. But when St. Peter was chosen as the county seat in 1856, Traverse des Sioux soon became a ghost town by the late 1860s.

Spier and Rose Ann Spencer sold their farm between St. Paul and St. Anthony Park, and then they bought one-third of the town of Shakopee from Thomas A. Holmes and David L. Fuller. It cost \$4100 in 1853 to buy one-third of the town.

The town was part of Tínta Otuŋwe, which was also called Prairie des Français (French Prairie) near Faribault Trading Post with Oliver Faribault and Wakan Yanke Wiŋ, and near Pond Mission House, which was called Prairieville. Thomas A. Holmes called it Holmesville, and by 1852 it had 20 white people (along with 600 Mdewakŋtonŋwan Dakota!)

When David Faribault, who was part Dakota, and his wife, Winona Nancy McClure Faribault Huggan, started a rival town along the St. Peter's River (later called the Minnesota River), Thomas Holmes stepped up and called the area Sha K' Pay, Minnesota Territory in honor of Dakota leader Šakpe II. By 1853, David and Nancy left the area, the townsite dissolved, the Dakota Indians were forced to move to a reservation, and the village of Sha K' Pay became a booming town.

Spier, along with his 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 1855, Spier and Rose Ann Spencer built a home on the site later known as the Major Strait farm. Spier 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.

Rose Ann was busy birthing children and helping in the home. Spier and Rose Ann had six children: George, Julia, Charles, Carrie, Hattie, and Belle.

In the fall of 1862 a kernel of wheat struck Spier in the eye and caused inflammation, resulting in total blindness in one eye. Spier then disposed of the farm, 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.

Rose Ann had a kind and loving disposition, was a kind neighbor, and a loving wife and mother. She died on October 5, 1913. She was one of the pioneer residents of Shakopee, and she was "summoned to enter into the Great Beyond, and a general wave of sorrow swept over the community when her death was announced."



SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY  
2109 Boulder Pointe, Shakopee, MN 55379

952-693-3865

[shakopeeheritage.org](http://shakopeeheritage.org)



## SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY



## Rose Ann Spencer Spencer 1834-1913



Rose Ann Spencer was born in Terre Haute, Indiana on April 25, 1834. Her parents were George Spencer and Julia Duncan Spencer. She was educated at the St. Mary-of-the-Woods convent.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods was established by Sr. Theodore Guerin. She was born Anne-Therese Guerin in France in 1798. In 1823, she entered the Catholic congregation of Sister of Providence of Ruille, and received the name of Sr. Theodore. Saint Mary-of-the-Woods was established by Sr. Theodore Guerin. In 1840 at the invitation of Bishop Simon Bruté of the Diocese of Vincennes, Indiana, the Sisters of Providence of Ruillé-sur-Loir, France, sent Sister St. Theodore Guerin to open a school and minister to people in the Diocese of Vincennes. After a rough journey across the Atlantic Ocean and the eastern United States, Sr. Theodore and other sisters arrived in Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, on October 22, 1840. Sr. Theodore established the Sisters of Providence in the United States.

The Sisters began building a school for girls called The Academy in 1840. The first student at the academy arrived for



Rose Ann Spencer was educated at the St. Mary-of-the-Woods convent. The first building was built in 1840, and Rose Ann was one of the first students. The picture on the right is facility which confer academic honors and collegiate degrees. It was the oldest Roman Catholic college for women in the United States.



enrollment July 4, 1841. One of the early girls who arrived there was Rose Ann Spencer. The Academy is now known as Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and is the oldest Roman Catholic college for women in the United States. As early as 1846, a charter was granted by the State empowering the institution to confer academic honors and collegiate degrees.

In 1852, Rose Ann came to St. Paul with her parents. Rose Ann saw her first cousin, Spier Spencer.

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.

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, Rose Ann Spencer married her cousin, Spier Spencer.

Her father George H Spencer (wife Carolyne Stone) was the brother of Spier's father John Spencer (wife Priscilla Allen). The second wife of George H Spencer was Julia E Baker Duncan Spencer. She was not the mother of Rose Ann, but they had a mother-daughter relationship, and Rose Ann evidently considered Julia to be her mother.

They married at Traverse de Sioux, and Rose Ann was the first white woman who was married there.

For thousands of years, Traverse des Sioux was a crossroads and meeting place. American Indians gathered here to hunt and to use the shallow river crossing. During the 1800s, Europeans and European-Americans came to trade furs with the Dakota hunters and to farm on the fertile *tinta*, or prairie.

In 1851, Traverse des Sioux was the site of the Treaty where the upper bands of the Dakota nation was forced to cede about half of the present-day Minnesota to the United States government. The Dakota was promised cash, goods, education, and a reservation. The two treaties with the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands of Dakota gave approximately 24 million acres of Dakota land to the government. It also opened the area for white settlement, who took much of the land even before the treaty was approved.