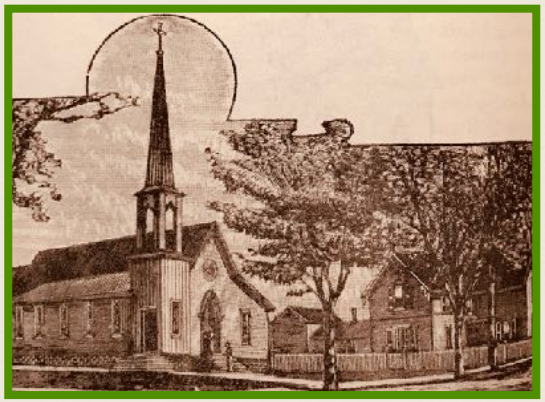


Harriet Richards Woodbury was born in New Boston, New Hampshire on July 29, 1828, the third youngest in a family of seven daughters and four sons. Her parents were Captain Benjamin Smith Woodbury (1773-1846) and Sally Burns Jones (1796-1883), according to Ancestry.com.

Harriet watched her sister, Eliza Jane, marry Luther Morse Brown and move to Minnesota Territory. Harriet decided to join them in 1858.

On September 2, 1858, Thomas A. Holmes married for the fourth time, to Harriet R. Woodbury. The marriage happened at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Shakopee. Harriet was thirty years old, and Thomas was 54 years old.

The wedding happened five months after the divorce of Thomas's third wife, Helen M. Taisey Holmes.



St. Peter's Episcopal Church (1854-1921) in Shakapee City, Minnesota Territory was the location of the marriage of Thomas A, Holmes and Harriet Richards Woodbury on September 2, 1858. This was the fourth marriage of Thomas Holmes, and the first marriage of Harriet. Harriet was thirty years old, and Tom was 54.

The church on the left was built in 1861 on the southeast corner of Holmes and Third Street. The new church had stained glass windows, a bell, an exquisite little altar, and pews with cushions.

It was torn down in 1921.

Harriet met and married Thomas, probably because she had heard that he was a millionaire. While he was too much of a pioneer to take much of the fruits of his enterprises, he prospered enough to live comfortably, as did Harriet.

In 1862, Thomas decided to organize a group that went to Montana Territory to search for gold. It was the first of three trips. According to Julius A. Coller II in *The Shakopee Story*, the first trip took the expedition three months to journey across the plains in large, covered government wagons drawn by oxen. They also had to confront Indians who were here first. But the prize of the excursion was gold, including one nugget sent back to Shakopee which was worth about $700. One prospector after another returned to Shakopee but the Holmes' expedition left as a memento in what was to become the state of Montana, according to Coller on page 569.

For Harriet, the breaks when Thomas headed west probably helped the marriage, and they continued to live together until Thomas died.

In 1873, Thomas commenced a suit in district court to get possession of the Court House Block. The block had been given to the town, but Holmes claimed that he should get the block back as there were irregularities in the dedication of the block to the public, according to *The Shakopee Story*. Some people were resentful, and within a year the case was decided against Holmes. This is probably why Thomas and Harriet decided to move out of the city in 1878. They went to Cullman, Alabama, where they engaged in agriculture.

After Thomas died in Cullman on July 2, 1888, Harriet returned to Shakopee, where she lived close to St. Mary's Catholic Church. The house was located on the northwest corner of Fifth and Spencer Street.

Twenty-three years later, the house in Shakopee caught fire, and burned completely. After 1912, Harriet lived with

her two nieces, Mrs. Ora Peck and Mrs. Eva Dame.

Harriet Richards Woodbury Holmes died October 6, 1916, of arterial sclerosis at the home of her niece, Eva Dame, in Albert Lea, Minnesota.

According to the "Obituary of Mrs. Harriet Holmes" from the *Shakopee Tribune*, October 13, 1916, Harriet was buried at Valley Cemetery. An article in *Shakopee Argus*, July 11, 1913, recalled the death of Harriet Richards Woodbury Holmes.

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"Obituary of Mrs. Harriet Holmes." *Shakopee Tribune*, 13 Oct. 1916.

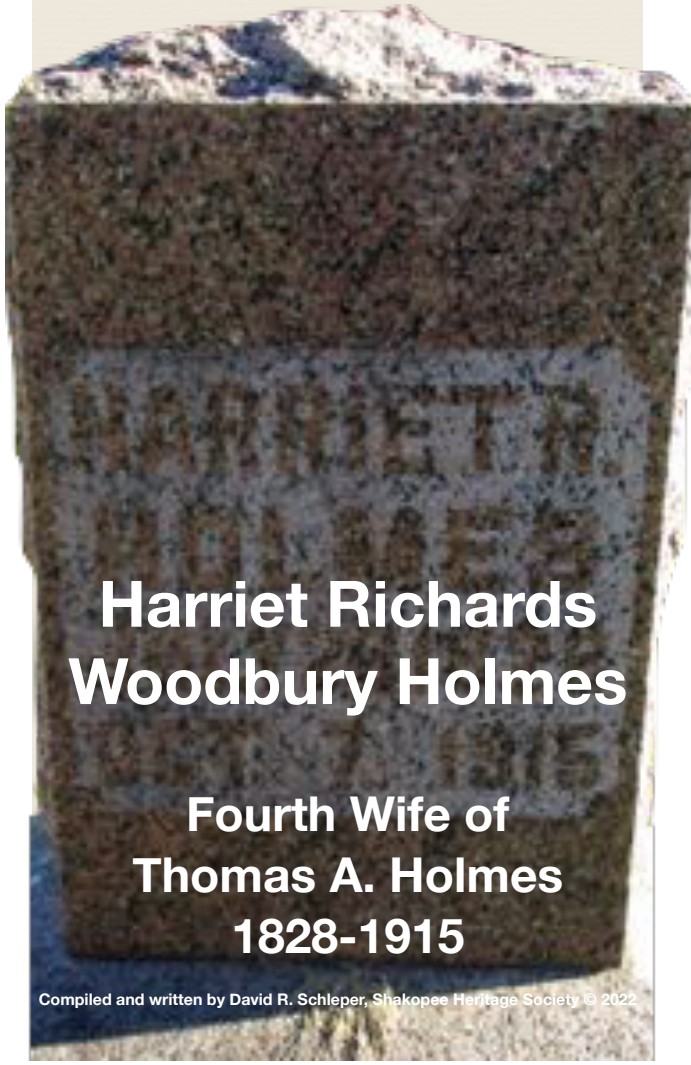




Harriet Richards Woodbury Holmes's tombstone is located on Fourth Avenue at Valley Cemetery in Shakopee.

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Harriet Richards Woodbury Holmes

Fourth Wife of Thomas A. Holmes 1828-1915

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

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