

Valorus Spencer's "letter to his sister" was posted to the Michael A. Saunders Family Tree on Ancestry by masaunders24 20 October 2011 (it is unclear whether Valorus actually had any sisters); the letter was written some time after 1886 (see page 2).

Transcribed by Julie Kelts 15 February 2022; transcription adheres to spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and lineation of the original; see references and definitions at end.

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[written diagonally across upper left corner, partly cut off] Leander Keys Sp[encer]

[...] family as far back as I am informed

Jonathan Spencer Born March 17th, 1744

Married Ruth Mudge September 26, 1764

Who was born October 24, 1708 And died
in her 33 year of age

The Children born to them was

- (a) Orange born July 30. 1765. – Baptist Minister
- X (b) Amos " November 11, 1767.
- (c) Jonathan Lee March 25, 1770.
- (d) Mica~~h~~ " December 4, 1772.

Jonathan Spencer married his second
wife Martha Keach July 25, 1781. She
was born February 25, 1765.

The Children born to them was

Nathaniel born February 12, 1782

Elisha " May 24 1783

Elijah " and died April 21 1785

William " July 1. 1787

Francis Upton " November 5, 1789

Brazilla " April 21, 1792

and died May 29, 1793.

Mercy born May 9, 1796.

Brazilla " May 9, 1798.

Asher " January 2, 1800

Soloman " July 11. 1803.

Jonathan Spencer Died June 1. 1821
aged 77 years 3 months and 14 days

He was born in the State of Massachusetts but
I am not able to learn the town or County.

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- neither have I the date of his settling in New York state. I think he lived from what I learned for some time not far from the City of Utica or between there and Kinderhook. He subsequently settled in the Town of Unadilla on the Unadilla river in Atsego County from where
- (a) My Father Mooved to the place where he die[d] in Tioga County Penna From what information I have he came to Tioga Co. in 1806 and assisted in building a barn which stood about on the spot where Alonzo M. Spencers residence is situated (some years after the Lownsbery - came and bought the place they took the barn down and re-erected it for a Cider Mill which was still standing when I was there 1886). My Father then went back to Unadilla and

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the next Season 1807 Mooved his family to the place he built a log house about where the South east corner of the Mill stands where I was born Aug 30, 1812. He had then erected both a Saw Mill and a Grist Mill. And a verry high freshet broke around the east end of the dam and washed down the log house above mentioned. He then built an other one just on the bank west of the Saw Mill where we lived at my earliest reccollection, and where we continued to live ~~fr~~ untill I was
in the history of Tioga Co
a lad some 12 years old. I see it stated ^ that
a Mr. Marvin I think
some other man ^ started a grist Mill on the site of the late Amos Bixby Plaster Mill before my father started his Mill. I think this is a mistake as the attempt was made but failed.

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I feel pretty sure I am right in regard to that Mill not having been started as I have frequently seen the Stones designed for that Mill only partly made laying near the north end of the bridge across the Bixby Mill race, as also some of the timbers designed for its frame.

The first mill Father started was quite a primitive Concern being simply a g---wheel the upper Gudgeon acting as a Spindle, on which the Runner hung, but this did not Satisfy him-
probaby 1816.

long, for at my earliest memory ^ he had a breast Wheel, and Geared Mill. Which he continued to run until the new Mill was started which I think was in 1821 or 22, which with various Modifications and improvements continued to do Service until the Mill
[possibly another line here which is cut off]

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that was burned was put in opperation About the year 1824 or 25. Father and Brother LK bought a Single Carding Machine, and mooved a building my brother had as a Shop to the South side of the Mill so as to take water from the same flume which they run for one year having to run the wool through twice they found to Slow, and the next year purchased an other one and for several years done quite a flourishing business, which continued until Almon Allen come from the East to Mansfield and started a woolen Factory which caused Father and Brother to sell their Machines to him - We continued to live in the house on the hill until the Carding Machines were sold when we mooved into it and subsequently

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Mooved it to where it now stands being th[e]
front part of the house in which you were
born -. During the time Father and L.K. had
the carding machine they erected the building
which has for some years been the Mill house
Its design was for a woolen factory or as
then called a Carding and Cloth dressing
factory - But as Allen was an experienced
factory man, and was better able to start suc[h]
works the project was abandoned. Father wa[s]
the first Post Master at Canoe Camp which
office he held for many years. he finally turned
the Office over to Joel H. Harkness who held it for
a time and then resigned and got the Office discontinued to the
disgust of all the neighborhood -
Orange Spencer my fathers oldest brother was
a Baptist Minister and lived in Chatauqua

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the last I ever knew of him. I think he had quite
a family and I used to hear it reported
that some of his boys went to Ohio to settle -
at Canton

I attended the Christian Conference ^ while I
was up there I there met the Rev. I.J. Spencer
Editor of the "Missionary Weekly" Published at
Richmond Virginia. And in a verry brief
conversation with him found that he evidently
sprang from the same stock of Spencers as our
or four

selves Viz from the three ^ brothers that came to
this Country from England in an early day.
Perhaps by communicating with him you
may learn something farther back than we
know - It may be possible that he is a descenda[nt]
out of Orange Spencer Fathers oldest Bro.

References:

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gristmill>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mill_\(grinding\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mill_(grinding))
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gudgeon>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_wheel
- <https://www.angelfire.com/journal/pondlilymill/glossary.html#anchor209833>
- <https://www.wgpfoundation.org/historic-markers/plaster-mill/>
- <http://www.joycetice.com/1897/ch64a.htm> Amos Bixby
- *The Historical Letters of Uncle Jonas Lawrence...*, The Advertiser Association, Elmira, N.Y., 1886; Ancestry source; also on-line at Google Books; Amos Spencer on page 84 (original pagination), which states he arrived in Canoe Camp in 1806 and p. 90 (first Canoe Camp postmaster in 1822; erected grist mill around 1807); Amos Bixby also mentioned on page 90
- <https://www.pa-roots.com/potter/data/obituaries.html>
- Newspapers.com, Wellsboro Agitator, 27 May 1931:
https://www.newspapers.com/clip/96475466/the-wellsboro-gazette-combined-with/?xid=637&_ga=2.96246684.103684334.1645887939-377997254.1644454818

Definitions:

- grist mill - mill for grinding cereal grains (see reference 1 above)
- freshet - the flood of a river from heavy rain or melted snow (per Google)
- plaster mill - mill for grinding gypsum or lime to powder to make plaster (Google)
- mill race - the channel driving the swift current of water that drives a mill wheel (Google)
- gudgeon - a socket-like, cylindrical fitting attached to one component to enable a pivoting or hinging connection to a second component (Wikipedia); or from a Pond Lily Mill Restorations glossary found at [angelfire.com](https://www.angelfire.com): a metal journal mounted in the end of the main shaft to run in bearings mainly on a water wheel but gudgeons take on other shapes and forms mounted into small shafts either horizontal or vertical
- spindle - a rod or pin serving as an axis that revolves or on which something revolves (Google)
- runner (edge runner) - a machine consisting of one or more heavy steel rolls or grindstones set on a horizontal shaft rotating round a pan or trough
- breast wheel (breastshot wheel) - water wheel for which water enters the wheel about mid-way between top and bottom (see illustration in reference 4)

People mentioned:

- Lownsbery (page 2 of 7) - a "Deacon Isaac Lounsberry" died in Canoe Camp in 1851 according to the 1883 History of Tioga County; Lownsberry per Find a Grave memorial no. 45245888; Isaac was born in New York in 1757 to John Lounsbury and Sarah Letson Lounsbury according to MyHeritage; his sons who lived in Canoe Camp were Letson, Ira, and Isaac
- Amos Bixby (page 3) - see Joyce Tice or *Uncle Jonas* references noted above
- Brother LK (pages 5 and 6) - Leander Keys Spencer
- Almon Allen (pages 5 and 6) - Allen-41350 on WikiTree; see obituary at pa-roots link above and *Uncle Jonas* p. 90
- Joel H. Harkness (page 6) - Harkness-735 on WikiTree; see newspapers.com clipping re history of Tioga County postmasters mentioned above