



Yonge Street Meetinghouse — 1810

## CANADIAN QUAKER HISTORY

# Newsletter

CANADIAN FRIENDS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

ISSN 0319-3934

60 LOWTHER AVENUE, TORONTO, ONTARIO M5R 1C7

No. 19

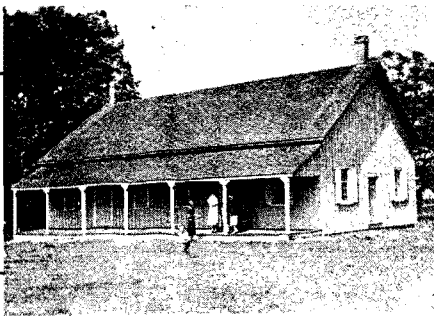
Third Mo.(March) 1977

### C O N T E N T S

	<u>PAGE</u>
ADAM SPENCER	
- Death Notice	1
- Introduction	1
- Sources	2
-----	
- Norwich Gazette, August 29, 1889	3
- "At Rest - Adam Spencer Called Home"	3
- Brief History of the Spencer Family	5
- Lines on the Death of Late Adam Spender (Poem)	8
-----	
- Norwich Gazette, September 5, 1889	9
- Removal to Thorald	9
- Logging Bee	10
- Flax Production	10
- Additional Notes Relative to His Decease	11
-----	
- Norwich Gazette, September 19, 1889	
- Interesting Reminiscences Continued	12
- Schools	13
- Adam's Brothers and Sisters	13
- Parents Joined Society of Friends	14
- "Separation" of 1828	
- Society of Friends	14
- Religious Doubts	14
-----	
- Norwich Gazette, September 26, 1889	15
- Religious Awakenings	15
- Joined Society of Friends	16
- Marriage 1834	16
-----	
- Norwich Gazette, October 3, 1889	17
*****	
NEWS AND NOTES	
- Correction; Bus Tour; Gift to Library; Research in Progress; Fees; Victoria (B.C.) Minutes Microfilmed; A Quaker Smile.	19-20



RECYCLED PAPER



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N O R W I C H G A Z E T T E

August 29, 1889

D I E D

SPENCER - In South Norwich, on the  
23rd 8th month, 1889, Adam  
Spencer, in his 78th year.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

This issue of the Canadian Quaker History Newsletter presents Adam Spencer's "diary" - "or rather history of old time experiences" and related articles including his obituary - which were printed in the Norwich Gazette over a period of five weeks after his death on August 23, 1889. Carson Bushell a member from Port Rowan discovered the "diary" in the Ontario Archives on microfilm of the Norwich Gazette then brought it to the Association's attention; Grace Pincoe arranged to have them photoprinted and has copies in Friends House Library Toronto.

A granddaughter, Mrs. Ida Cattell, whom Carson Bushell, frequently visited, died only in January at the age of 93, in Tillsonburg. A great granddaughter Mrs. E.W. Nickerson (nee Margaret Phoebe Rock) lives in Detroit. We are told the old Spencer house and Spencer's Flour Mill still stand at Spencer's Hollow now known as Rock's Mill and Rock's Hollow respectively, near Springford, about five miles west and south of Otterville. Warren Rock who had been operating the mill died in 1971. Another descendant, a member of the Stover family now operates it.

Adam Spencer's personal record is a primary source for research in the early history of Southwestern Ontario, for the study of Friends in Canada and for those interested in Quaker Journals. It holds interest for the general reader as well. For quicker reference several things should be noted here. The events are not necessarily related in chronological order; also specific facts may be related in more than one place. We are presenting the material here just as the editor of the Norwich Gazette presented it in 1889: headlines, captions and all. We added page numbers, since the original Gazette is not paged, and column numbers for easier locating. Obvious typographical errors are corrected.

The "diary" tells its own interesting tale of pioneer life in Southwestern Ontario. The account takes on greater significance when we learn that Adam was the long-time Clerk of Canada Yearly Meeting (Orthodox) and an important figure in the history of Canadian Friends. Our records show that on "29th, V, 1843" Adam Spencer was

appointed as a representative from Pelham Quarterly Meeting (Orthodox) to New York Yearly Meeting. In 1867 he was appointed Clerk for the Day of Canada Yearly Meeting (Orthodox) held at Pickering, Ontario. He was then appointed to serve as their first Clerk from 1867 to 1877 when he resigned. He became Clerk of Canada Yearly Meeting (Conservative or Wilburite) from 1882 to 1887 two years prior to his death.

He was a convinced Friend not a birthright Friend. Although his parents joined Pelham Meeting a few years after his birth, they did not wish to register their children, preferring to teach them religion themselves. They joined during the pioneer era when many others in the Middle States and in Canada were joining Friends as the established religious body in a vicinity. He too joined as a young man in his twenty-second year before his marriage to Catherine Gainer in 1834. He lived many years of his life in the Pelham/Norwich area at a time when Friends were dominant component of that area.

The "diary" refers to the first Separation, the Hicksite/Orthodox Separation, before he was an active Friend and then spans the second Separation, generally dated 1881. Spencer's comments on his personal beliefs and feelings related to theology and attitude toward Friends are of more consequence in the light of his long leadership as Clerk.

The "diary" and titles are newspaper headings which brings us to the important consideration of this writing as a Quaker journal. Spencer spends more space on his forbears than most journals but his coverage is an overview of his life from his perspective of religious experience and development. The words of Adam Spencer and his time transmit a fuller understanding so read on and perhaps follow up in the Sources.

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The sources are basically the articles in the Norwich Gazette themselves. The Ontario Archives microfilm number is NA 200. Consult also the List of the Archives of the Religious Society of Friends in Canada, microfilmed by the Archives of Ontario (prepared by Roger Nickerson and published as our Canadian Quaker History Newsletter #13, September 1975) (Ontario Archives MS#303). There are two editions of Arthur Dorland's indispensable book both published by Canadian Yearly Meeting, Toronto: the first in 1927 under the title: History of the Society of Friends in Canada, and the second in 1968 entitled: Quakers in Canada. Howard Brinton's Quaker Journals will prove fascinating for those who want to follow up this unique literary genre. It was published by Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pennsylvania, in 1972. Finally there is an incomplete but sometimes useful card index in the Friends House Library, Toronto, of references to Quaker names.

ADAM SPENCER  
OLD TIME EXPERIENCES  
IN THE BUSH AND  
ON THE FARM

Norwich Gazette, August 29, 1889 Page 3 Col. 5

AT REST - Adam Spencer Called Home

From brief paragraphs which have appeared of late amongst our local matter and in the weekly budgets of our Springford correspondent it will have been seen that the days of the well-known pioneer friend, whose gentle sway ruled the affairs of that peaceful locality known as Spencer's Hollow, a truly interesting expanse of wood land scenery south of Springford, were rapidly drawing to a close. After a term of sickness, during which there was much pain, borne with heroic composure and complete submission to the divine will, the end came on Friday evening last. As the evening shadows were lengthening across the hills and dales amidst whose quiet comfortings a large share of his life had been spent, the brightness of the other world illumined the darkening scene, and Adam Spencer, after a life of pre-eminent usefulness, was home at last. The funeral took place on Sunday last and was largely attended, the proceedings throughout being essentially of that quiet character which suited the obsequies of the deceased so well. At the home an impressive service, peculiar to the Society of Friends, took place, Mr. Garrett contributing remarks which suited the occasion. Thence the funeral cortege wound its way slowly towards the Friends' burying ground in North Norwich where amidst profound and impressive silence, broken only by a few appropriate texts quoted by Hervey Haight, the mortal remains of the deceased were laid away in their last resting place, the words "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them," adding solemnity to a quiet but eventful scene which will never be forgotten by those who participated in it.

Few people who have rendered such services to the world and to the cause of religion as Adam Spencer did, in his long and eventful life, would shrink more than he would from anything like an ostentatious reference to his life's work. Plain in the extreme, in manner, in dress, and in language was Adam Spencer; titled university graduates would perhaps have smiled at his quaint plainness of dress and demeanor, but the smile would have been replaced by respectful admiration had they undertaken to probe the depths and ascertain the compass of the man's mind. As the head and front of the Society of Friends he stood sturdily at the gateway of their principles as handed down in all their purity by the founders of the Society; his voice rang out with well-chosen language and with no uncertain sound in the counsel of the brethren and contributions from his pen were welcomed into the journals of the Society and into the leading papers of the day with equal readiness; what he had to say was always in the direction of moulding public opinion for the right. That seemed to be his mission in life, and with a calm, unflinching attitude he defended his beliefs with a zeal and uncompromising energy, which, rendered still more forcible by his undoubted ability as a public speaker and writer, evoked alike the confidence of his allies and the admiration of his opponents.

When we add to this pen-portrait of the sterner side of his character a brief reference to his sweetness of disposition in home life, to the fact that in the neighborhood of his home there are tears in every voice as they tell of his never failing kindness, that old and young alike reverence his memory and all express the feeling today that the main spring has gone out of their lives, we began to realize how useful, how noble, how self-sacrificing, and how deservedly to be imitated, is the life that has just closed.

After the interment a large gathering of Friends and people of this community assembled at the hall in G.C. Sutton's block now being used as a meeting-house pending the completion of the new building now in course of erection for that purpose. A large share of the time of the meeting was devoted to thought and silent prayer, as is usual with the Society. Hervey Haight expressed, at considerable length, the thoughts aroused by the sad occasion, explaining the duties and obligations of sundry channels of the Christian life, and pointing to the reward and the rest of the hereafter. Addressing the mourners in concluding, he spoke as follows:-

I feel constrained to say a few words to the mourners - to those who have been bereft of a kind parent, a dear father of whom ye have had excellent teaching, whose voice ye have heard instructing you, and whose counsel has dropped upon your ears like dew on the grass in the morning. No doubt it is a great bereavement to you and that your hearts have been crushed in the depth of sorrow, and have been so touched that it has seemed at times as if they would break, because of the ties of relationship which bind families together in love. You are not alone in your loss; death has taken away one whom we loved, one whom we respected, and it does so touch those tender chords of our being that it seems as if we could hardly endure it. But you do not mourn without hope, for you know that our loss is his eternal gain; he is taken from us and we shall hear his voice no more, in our counsellings he will not mingle with us here again, and it is indeed a search of tender thought with us, and we do mourn and sorrow for the loss even though it is his eternal gain. For we have heard his voice, his excellent counsel has dropped upon our ears, we have mingled in socialness with him and have enjoyed his presence from time to time, and his death so grieves us. It touches the very tenderest chords of our hearts to lose so kind a friend, so good a counsellor, one who has borne the heat and burden of the day and has stood as a pillar in God's militant church. We trust, and we know, that God hath taken him to Himself, to dwell in His presence for ever and for ever more. And may we take earnest heed to the good counsel which has fallen from the friend who has this day been laid away in the tomb, and may we make our calling and election sure so that each of us may join him in singing the praises of Zion with God for evermore.

We have not sufficient time ~~or~~ space at our disposal this week to allude further to this sad event but might mention here in passing that Adam Spencer had been the clerk of the Yearly Meeting since the separation up to last year's Yearly Meeting; when that meeting assembled he resigned the position on account of the infirmities of increasing age; and a year or two ago he entered a similar resignation of the clerkship of the Quarterly Meeting which position he had held for years. On Monday morning the editor of the Gazette paid a visit to the home whence the deceased had gone to his mansion above, and had an interesting interview with several members of the family, the particulars of which will be given to our readers in future issues of this paper. We have also in our possession a very interesting document written by the deceased which sets forth at length the early struggles of the family in this country and gives an interesting narrative of early life in general in this part, whilst it also deals with the various stages of religious thought through which the Friend who is now at rest passed in the process of the development of his religious belief. This also will be published in future issues of the Gazette, as we are well aware of the fact that they will be of very great interest to a large share of our readers. The following sketch of the family history, written by Adam Spencer in the 77th year of his age, in compliance with a request for the same by his son, Elgin, will in the meantime prove of deep interest to our readers:-

The following brief history of the Spencer family is partly of a traditional character; particulars having been related in my hearing by my honored father, Robert Spencer. I do not remember hearing the name of our great grandfather, who came over from England via Ireland about the year A.D. 1736. My own grandfather's name was Robert Spencer. He was born in Ireland (of English parents) about the year 1733. He was one of a large family, among the brothers was one named Theophilus, and another Caleb. The youngest sister's name was Hannah. She married Thomas Brown, and had six children viz, Vernon, James (and a son who died in early life) Marthe, Elizabeth and Abigail. Thomas Brown served as a soldier in the Revolution War under Washington.

The first incident known in active life of grandfather Robert Spencer, was his marriage with Catherine Sternburg, of German parents. Her father, Adam Sternburg, lived on the Mohawk River in New York State. He had a farm on each side of the River, which required frequent crossing, and the daughter Catherine early became an expert manager of a boat. Robert Spencer and wife settled on a farm of 200 acres at Schoharie beside the Mohawk. The Indians owned a tract of land along that river, and the Red Men formed a part of their neighbors. The general kindness shown them by our grandparents, made very warm friends of the Indians. On one occasion grandfather made a rolling bee and asked only his white neighbors, which seemed to hurt the feeling of the Indians. He afterwards said to them "he did not invite them to come with the whites for fear the latter would look down upon the Indians, but he had plenty left for them to do, and he would be thankful if they would help him." The Indians came and did much more work than the white men had done, and seemed pleased with the notice given them. During the time of living on the farm at Schoharie they had six children born to them, viz: Jacob, Abigail, Elizabeth, Sarah, Robert and Adam. The latter was a child at his mother's breast when grandfather joined the British standard, as a member of a volunteer corps, which company were noted for their daring bravery. Robert Spencer's action in joining the British incensed his neighbors, many who were in sympathy with

the Rebels (as they were called) that in his absence the family was robbed and sadly dispoiled of their goods, and soon the family were taken to Montreal, Canada, by the Kings conveyances, and for eight years Robert Spencer did not see his family, his farm at Schoharie was confiscated to the State, but at the close of the war the British government gave to the sufferers land in Canada in lieu of their losses as well as a reward for their services. When Robert Spencer got his discharge from the army, he went direct to Niagara and wrote his family to join him there. By the help of the Kings conveyances, the family soon joined the husband and father. In a short time he drew 200 acres of land, situated at the summit of the banks of the Whirlpool, where the united family settled, and soon succeeded in making a comfortable home. But a few years elapsed when a serious occurrence caused mourning to the family. The mother was induced to assume the care of an invalid child belonging to an officer living at Youngstown. The child soon made such improvements that the father wished to see it, and he would furnish the child with the needful supply. Accordingly Robert Spencer and wife undertook to cross the Niagara River in a boat, from Queenstown. The ice was running at the time and the boat was upset, and the wife with her infant care was drowned and Robert Spencer barely escaped with his life.

This made a serious blank in the family. Jacob the eldest son went to work for himself, and the daughters subsequently married, and the father took to himself a second wife.

It was not many years until grandfather made over the whirlpool farm to John Frolick and wife for his support, to his son-in-law and daughter Abigail, and he became an inmate of that family. Jacob the eldest son was about to take a wife and settle on a farm; but before the marriage he saw an instance of perfidy in his betrothal which so disgusted him that he left the country. About six weeks afterwards, father received a letter from him saying that if he did not return soon, they would never hear from him again, and no tidings ever afterwards came from him.

Robert and Adam arriving at their maturity took up 200 acres of land in the township of Stamford at a place called "Beech Woods". There the two brothers built a small house and kept bach, until Adam the youngest married Ann Corwin. They lived together happy and prosperously, until ten children were born to them viz Robert, Elizabeth, Catherine, Sarah, Joseph, Benjamin, Abigail, James, Alexander, and Ann. Adam Spencer came to his death by drinking cold water, while very warm. One of his legs became diseased, mortification set in, the limb was amputated, but he died soon after. This was in the fall of 1815.

By some arrangements Robert relinquished his claim to the "Beech Woods" property about the date of Adams marriage in 1798 or 1799, and purchased 100 acres of land in Pelham (now known as Church Farm) 3/4 mile north-west of Font Hill. He soon married Sarah Rice our honoured mother, and a large share of hard labor was their united portion. In the year 1812 they removed into the township of Thorold. They had acquired 300 acres of land on what is now known as the "Quaker Road." There again father had enough to do in lifting up the axe upon the thick trees, mother had a full share of burdens in providing for the wants of an increasing family. She gave birth to thirteen children. To those only, who are acquainted with pioneer life can be understood



the toil, perseverance and indomitable courage which had to be endured by Robert and Sarah Spencer. He was his own carpenter, blacksmith, tanner and shoemaker etc., while she superintended the preparation of the wool and flax, and the spinning of the same, and when the fabrics returned from the weaver, she made the garments. In fact, industry and frugality formed the basis of their success. Their home became furnished with the necessities of life, and many a needy and weary person partook of their hospitality.

As time passed on, grandfather made frequent visits to his children who were scattered within a radius of twelve miles of his home. He had his favourite horse, which he rode upon. The writer can remember the exciting shouts of "grandfather" which saluted the old man's ears from the children, as he rode up the lane leading to the house of his son Robert. His visits to the said home became more frequent, and each time his stay was longer. At length he said to Robert and Sarah "if they were willing he would like to make his home with them." They gave him a cordial welcome, and the father and grandfather became an inmate of his son Robert's family. He gave no reason for his desire to change but no doubt there was felt a congeniality in Robert's family, that he did not witness where he left. This was about the year 1815. He was six feet in height, well proportioned and muscular. There was an elasticity to his step for one of his years. He walked upright; was a shrewd observer of men and things, and would give pet-nicknames, descriptive in character where he thought parties did not keep right time. He occasionally worked at shoemaking or mending. In the spring of 1823 he harnessed his horse to a buggy intending to go to the store for tobacco. The writer was invited to go with him (being then a lad of 11½ years), and when about two miles on the road, the horse suddenly took fright, ran out-side the road and over a log, throwing both occupants out. They were both badly hurt grandfather so seriously that he died of the effects of his wounds four days afterwards. His eventful life terminated in his ninetieth year.

Father had sold his farm in Pelham and soon after the marriage of his daughter Catherine to Josiah Page, gave her 50 acres of his Thorold land, having subsequently given 85 acres of the same land to his son Thomas, and settled them on their respective portions. In the year 1855 their youngest daughter Ann died. All the other daughters had married and left the parental roof, the two youngest sons being yet unmarried aged respectively 18 and 16 years. The parents feeling their need of help, invited their son Adam Spencer and wife to take the management of the farm and household. They accepted the offer, and moved to the homestead in the year 1886. Robert went to work for himself in his minority, but William remained on the farm as a helper. At the age of 23 years William married Elizabeth White and settled on a part of the farm. The parents formed part of Adam Spencer's family and continued to partake together at the same table in the enjoyment of much harmony, in every sense of the word.

In the early part of 1846, the Mother, Sarah Spencer became afflicted with a very painful disease: severe spasms in her bowels, giving her intense pain. After a few weeks trial, Dr Frazer gave it as his opinion that there was no use in giving medicine, excepting narcotics to ease the pain. After about three months, contrary to expectation, she became so much better as to walk about. There was an interval of relief for about three weeks, when she was again taken ill suddenly, and remained so until death put an end to her sufferings. Which event took place the 22nd 8th month 1846, about five and one half months from the beginning of her illness. She had been many years a consistent member of the Society of Friends, and during the latter part of her life occupied the position of overseer and elder.

In the early part of the year 1857, Adam Spencer and family removed to South Norwich, Oxford County, accompanied by the father. The bond of social and fraternal ties was very strong in him toward the family. The father lived in the enjoyment of nearly uninterrupted good health until the latter part of the year 1859, he fell and dislocated, or broke one of his hips, which deprived him of ever walking again. He lingered five and one half months when death terminated his sufferings. A short time before his death he said emphatically "death will be a pleasure". He died the 6th, 5th month, 1860, aged 87 years, 7 months and 26 days. His remains were conveyed to Pelham, and buried by the side of his wife on the first day following. He also lived and died a consistent member of the Society of Friends. Ten children and their companions attended his funeral. Five of those children have since joined the silent dead and six of their friends have gone over to the silent majority. Three of the sons and two of the daughters are still living: Thomas aged 86, Mary aged 82, Abigail aged 81, Adam aged 73, and Robert aged 70. Robert married again since his father's death, so their are five children by marriage left viz: Rachael, Thomas' wife, Catherine, Adam's wife, Eliza, Robert's wife, Elizabeth, John's widow and Elizabeth Williams widow, (since married to Albert Stover.)

The following lines bearing upon the death of the late Adam Spencer are contributed by a lady residing in this vicinity.

"A voice hath gone from Zion's hill,  
A watchman from her wall;  
Oh! who the vacant place shall fill  
And to the people call.

On every side in ambush deep,  
Lies hid the secret woe;  
Oh! who shall wake while others sleep  
Who shall the trumpet blow!

The faithful few who stood with thee,  
Upon the ramparts high,  
Hath midst the many a feeble knee,  
And many a failing eye.

Thou of the strongest of the band,  
Hast first been called away,  
Oh! well may Zion weeping stand,  
In sorrow and dismay.

Well may she weep; her erring sons  
No more shall hear thy voice  
No more her meek and lowly ones  
Shall listen and rejoice.

Well may her daughters sit in dust,  
And put their sackcloth on:  
When God in judgement calls the just,  
Well may the people mourn.

Norwich Gazette, September 5, 1889 Page 2 Cols 2 and 3

OLD TIME EXPERIENCES - In the Bush and on the Farm

Interesting Reminiscences from the Pen of the late Adam Spencer

In last week's Gazette we promised to give, in future issues, the diary or rather history of old-time experiences, written by the late Adam Spencer a short time before the commencement of the sickness which led to his death, and in accordance with that promise we publish this week an instalment of the document alluded to, omitting the opening pages which deal with matters of family history which were referred to at length last week. The history, of which we shall give a portion each week for the next three or four issues, will be found deeply interesting to every reader, young and old. It gives a complete pen-picture of old-time farming in all its peculiar serio-comic phases, and of the vagaries by which the early systems of education were characterised, and finally, up to the time where the writing ends abruptly, and the writer lays aside the pen for ever, deals with the various phases of religious thought and experience through which he passed in the course of an eventful history. Omitting the portions indicated the document reads as follows:-

When I was a few months old my parents removed from Pelham Township into Thorold, the adjoining one, and settled on a farm with but little improvements where my father employed his energy and skill in clearing and improving for a home. My mother also bore her share in performing the domestic duties which devolved upon her. I had early and full opportunity to observe and to take in pioneer life.

In the very early settlement of the country a heavy wind or hurricane passed over the country and levelled the forest to the ground from one half to a mile wide. Two years afterward a fire consumed the fallen timber and a large and productive pasture field was the result. This field lay about one mile from my father's farm to which the cattle daily resorted and from which they had to be brought home at night and which caused at times a good deal of hunting to find them. Each herd was supplied with a bell; the variation in the sound enabled the practiced ear to determine the location of the herd. I could not perform the service of cow boy until I became old enough to become acquainted with the routes, but I was early put to driving

oxen and horses, the former more particular as they were much used, it required much skill to drive from two to four yoke of oxen to plough among the stumps.

The farmers tried each year to clear a new field to put into wheat. It took many hard knocks to fell the big trees. The logging time took place in the fall in time to secure a sowing in a proper time. As each farmer was usually alone the rolling of the logs into heaps was mostly performed by what they termed bees, that is, one of the farmers would invite his neighbors to assist him in clearing his fallow. A general turn out was commonly the result, each party who had a yoke of oxen would bring them, the men would divide off into companions of four or five including the ox-driver, said driver was considered the captain of his party who would plan the heaps and divide the work, each company would commence at the same side of the clearing and take equal space as near as possible; and a vigorous strife would be persevered in order to come out first best, or which should pile the greatest numbers of heaps. A similar scene would occur each day until all the neighbors had their logging done. All the time of chopping, such timber as would make rails were cut into suitable lengths for rails. Those logs were drawn to the outside of the clearing, several piles of the best wood was commonly piled outside of the clearing, for the coming winter's fire wood. The work of burning the heaps would be entered upon as soon as possible and with diligent closing together the burning places would soon be consumed. It required a good deal of raking and picking up small stuff. When the ground was clear a harrow, made three square with from seven to nine strong teeth, was drawn several times over among the roots by oxen, which was mostly severe on their necks caused by the continuous jerking, the ground thus prepared, the seed was sown and a more perfect harrowing would be given until the soil was pulverized sufficiently, soon the wheat would appear a beautiful green. As soon as the sowing was done the outlying logs were split into rails and the fence put up. The following year the farmer was rewarded by a good harvest, as a general thing. The process of clearing was repeated each year by the thrifty farmer until his clearing was large enough. In five or six years the smaller stumps would be sufficiently rotten to be pulled from the ground, and another clearing would follow, and the ground which had furnished meadow as pasture, was ploughed and cultivated as the farmer thought best.

The people had largely to depend on domestic manufacture. Each farmer endeavoured to grow sufficient flax for their own use, commonly ranging from one half to one acre. When ripe it had to be pulled up by the roots and laid in small bundles and set up to dry, said work was often performed by women and children, when sufficiently dry it was taken into the barn and the seed threshed off by a flail, the next process was to spread the stalks on a smooth floor to be exposed to wet and sunshine until the inner stalk became rotten, but the outer fibre remained strong. Care was required not to let the flax remain exposed too long to the injury of the fibre. At a proper time it was gathered up and housed until the time for cleaning, which was commonly done in the late fall. It had to be kiln dried, then placed under a heavy brake made for the purpose until the inner stem was broken into items.

Then it had to pass under the hands of a swingler who separated the refuse from the fibre. The process of cleaning was very dusty and unpleasant. The fibre was then taken to the house and the next process was performed by the women. By means of a machine called a hatchel the tow was removed from the pure fibre and both were spun on small wheels adopted for the purpose. The female portion of the family would sit in concert with feet on the treadles of the wheel and hands on the distaff, discussing or singing as the case may be.

Norwich Gazette, September 5, 1889 Page 3, Col. 5

THE LATE ADAM SPENCER

Additional Notes Relative to his Decease

In further reference to the death of the late Adam Spencer, by way of addition to our remarks on that subject last week, which by the way were copied by several of our contemporaries, thus showing the status of the deceased in the estimation of the outside public, we append a few notes taken during a conversation with members of the family at the old homestead, and at the store, the shelves of which were lined with manuscript bearing the familiar handwriting of the departed pioneer. In fact all around were the evidences of the work of his brain and in rambling around the garden and looking down upon the romantic scene, in which the mill stood out as an important feature, the evidences of the work of his hands were equally patent. In the home we had the opportunity of meeting the aged partner of his life who is patiently and trustingly waiting for the call to come up higher, lovingly cared for by the younger members of the family, from whom we gathered the following facts: Adam spencer had been somewhat poorly all winter, but was first confined to his bed on the 25th of last month, with the distressing experiences usually attending cancer of the liver and stomach. Up to that time, though unwell, he had held many interesting meetings, and not very long ago a meeting for worship took place at the house, a large number of friends being present. The last meeting which he attended was held at the old meeting house near his home, to which he was able to walk. Throughout his sickness he was very cheerful, though suffering a great deal, bearing his trial with great patience and resignation, and ever thoughtful of the welfare of those around him. Before the fatal character of his disease was known he was anxiously looking forward to an enlarged field and increased operations in religious work, in view of the fact of his having given over the management of the business into younger hands, ever qualifying his projects with the expression "If the Lord will." His end was perfect peace. In a conversation with Jacob Gainer he referred to the fact that it was hard to leave the little girls, to whom he was deeply attached, and who returned his love with compound interest. He referred a little to the Society of Friends and in tones of regret spoke of the recent separation of the two bodies. He desired that a message be given to each and all of them, that message being that he bore no ill-will to any, that he desired that his love be given to each and all. His conversation was principally of heaven. A little before his death he said "I feel weak; I shall soon walk the streets of the New Jerusalem." In conversing with a friend on the subject he remarked that he thought they would know each other in heaven, but the great white throne and the Father sitting there with Jesus at his side would absorb all attention. His last words were: "I am almost

gone; I shall soon be at rest;" then, after a pause, "My heart -," indicating that it was paining him. To the last he was conscious. At 7:35 on Friday evening, the 23rd, the spirit fled to the God who gave it, sorrowing relatives surrounding the bedside as he breathed his last.

Fifty-seven years have elapsed since his conversion, and forty years since he first commenced his ministry and for any success that had been attained during that ministry he desired that praise should be given to God alone. He settled in the location that will bear his name for all time to come, about thirty-three years ago, carrying on the farm and the two mills. He rebuilt the saw-mill and built the present grist-mill which is well fitted with modern improvements. He settled his boys there on various portions of the large tract of land which he owned. It seems unnecessary to say that he expressed a desire that everything in connection with his funeral should be plain in the extreme. Several incidents in connection with his father's life were mentioned by the family but enough has been given just now to indicate the character of the death of our late friend, enough to show that as he lived so he died, strong in reliance on the promises of the Saviour, and illustrating to the full the genuineness of his own practical faith in the teachings which will now prove his most lasting monument in the memories of his widely-extended circle of friends and relatives.

Norwich Gazette, September 19, 1889, Page 2 Cols. 1,2 and 3.

#### OLD TIME EXPERIENCES

##### In the Bush and on the Farm

##### Interesting Reminiscences from the pen of the late Adam Spencer - Continued

When the spinning was done the yarn was sent to the weaver, care being taken to have a fine piece for better wear and some coarser. Each farmer endeavored to keep a flock of sheep the wool from which was also manufactured into suitable fabrics. After shearing the wool was sent to the carding machine and made into rolls after which the women would spin them into yarn; a large wheel was used for the purpose, the spinners being employed on their feet. The yarn was next sent to the weaver, to be made into flannel which was afterwards made into bedding or underwear. Some parts of the flannel was sent to the fulling mill and cloth dressing made.

My father was a sort of natural mechanic and could do useful jobs in various departments. He had a blacksmith shop and did his own work and some of the neighbors; he also tanned his own leather and made shoes for his family. He worked in wood and did most of his building, and among other things he made a loom and employed a weaver to work it on shares, the weaver to have his board and spooling and quilting and assistance to put in the web for which he received half the earnings. The spooling often fell to my lot. I had no objection to the work except that it interfered with my play. Sometimes I managed to play the truant and get out of hearing and the sisters would have to do it; but my father's discipline exercised a salutary restraint upon me. My sisters soon learned to weave which consoled them to earn a good deal of money.

When quite young I helped father in the blacksmith shop and learned to do a little in that way. I also tried my skill at mending my own shoes. The last pair father made were so much too large that I never enjoyed them; therefore when they were worn I made myself a pair which so commended me as a shoemaker that mother concluded to have me make her a pair which was such an improvement on my first attempt that for some years I made a portion of the shoes for the family. I was about eleven years old when I made the first shoes. A large share of praise was bestowed upon the youngster for those feats.

The chances for school learning were very limited. The first school house at which I attended was built of round logs notched together at the corners and the open spaces between the logs were filled with pieces of wood and fitted for the openings and plastered over with clay; they were called log houses. This one was about 18 x 20 feet to the beams on which the upper floor was laid. The hearth was of earth and the back part of the fireplace was built of iron or bog ore and nearly four feet high. Above that the chimney was built, strips of wood covered with mud supported on the back wall and on each side by circular pieces of wood reaching from the logs of the house to the nearest beam, said chimney being so constructed that often the smoke remained in the school room causing much discomfort. The writing desks were made of plank and placed around the inside of the room against the logs. The seats were made of slabs with the round side down and four legs to each bench.

The law regulating schools was very meagre. The teacher proposing to teach would get up a subscription for a term of three months charging a certain amount for each scholar and divide his board among the employers at an equal ratio according to the scholars sent, which was called "boarding round" and designed to lessen the cash payment. The subscription would describe what was to be taught. Reading, writing, and arithmetic only were taught by all the teachers I went to except one and he taught grammar and geography in addition. The teachers were mostly poor scholars themselves. The sessions were four hours each forenoon and afternoon with a short intermission each session with five and one half days per week, but every other seventh day was taken as a holiday. The schools terms were much detached the schools being without a teacher for months together and the scholars would forget much they had learned. During my young days I went to school at detached intervals for two years and one term of three months. I made the greatest advance in arithmetic of which I was particularly fond. Again at about sixteen I went one three months to school at which I gained satisfactorily. As I grew in years my reading improved by use and a teacher we boarded when our children were in school gave me useful lessons in writing. From various ways I added to my little stock of learning as occasion demanded.

To my parents were born 13 children. Catharine was the eldest; then a daughter they called Mary which died in infancy, the next born was Thomas then Elizabeth, Mary, Abigail and Lydia, then myself, next was a son who was named Robert but who died at two years; next was John Henderson, then Robert and William, last was a daughter named Anna who died at the age of twelve. Such a family required much care and energy on the part of my parents.

A few years after my birth my parents joined the Society of Friends but did not request for their children to do so, but they were concerned to train us right by example and precept; by them I was early taught that there is a God to whom I was accountable, that there was a heaven of happiness for those who loved and served Him, and also that there was a place of misery for those who disobeyed Him. These things made me very thoughtful while young, particularly after retiring to bed at night, but I got rid of my convictions by the thought that little children were of the kingdom of heaven and that I was too young to be held accountable. As years passed on I could not plead such immunity. Then the thought "there is time enough yet" was the excuse for a disregard of the will of God; therefore, although held in restraint by the judicious care of my parents and a great regard to my reputation, I shunned many of the evils in the world yet I lived virtually without God and without hope in the world the greater part of my minority.

About the seventeenth year of my age, a separation took place in the Society of Friends. The parties were designated by the terms "Orthodox," and "Hicksites". The Hicksites adhered to Unitarian doctrines, but the Orthodox held to the Divinity of Christ and the work of the Spirit of God upon the mind of men. The Hicksites were the most numerous at Gotham and one who had the care of the meeting house being one of them shut the house against the Orthodox Friends. My father offered them the use of his dwelling house as a meeting place until they could be better provided for. Accordingly the meeting was held at my father's for one year and as a result it became a sort of headquarters for travelling Friends. It was my place to take care of their horses. The example and conversation of those strangers Friends as we called them represented the Christian.

As a consequence of the separation there was much disputing on the subject of religion. There was also a body of professors who called themselves Christians, putting the the long sound on the letter "I" in the first part of the word. With these people the Methodists had a controversy. In the hearing of the arguments pro and con there were some things adduced from Scripture against the Divinity of Christ which caused a doubt in my mind but which I did not approve.

About that time my father hired a man as foreman in brick-making who was a Universalist and held the same doctrine as the Hicksites. With that man I had many arguments against the Divinity of Christ I could not answer. About that time my brother Thomas handed me a newspaper which had enclosed one of his purchases from a store, it having an extract from the "Age of Reason," by T. Paine. Altogether from those various sources my mind was troubled with doubts that were like fire in my bones and not easily removed. Yet I did not adopt them.

One thing that I may mention in connection with the separation among the Friends. The hold took upon my parents minds. They seemed borne down by the weight of it and it was imprinted on their countenances, which caused with me a secret sympathy with them and was a remote help to myself.



I may here remark there was about four years of my life which I have looked upon as lost time, which were the years from seventeen to twenty inclusive. Those years were devoted (that is, my spare time) to amusement and the reading of works of fiction, and withal I became somewhat conceited with my ability as an arguer of religion, although I had no practical religious experience. Yet I was preserved from serious departures and as far as I know maintained a fair character as a young man of the world.

Soon after the commencement of my twenty-first year a great trial took place in my father's family which brought great sorrow upon my mind. My pleasant pictures were marred and my vain hopes were frustrated. At length I appealed to my Heavenly Father for redress which was the first prayer I ever made to God. The answer was, how long have I suffered thy ingratitude? This answer to my petition sealed conviction on my mind in regard to my sinfulness in the sight of God and I became a mourner in very deed which continued for some time without my being able to take up the resolution to mend my ways. One day I attended a Methodist meeting which was held in a private house. As the minister read the following text: "Behold the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober and watchful unto prayer", a change took place in my purpose and I resolved henceforward to turn my face heavenward. I could not retain what the minister further said I was so absorbed with my own thoughts.

I never faltered or turned back from that resolution though I often tried an easier path than the way of the Cross. For ~~some~~ months I kept retired from young company and endeavored to maintain a watch against evil courses as was shown me by my Heavenly Father.

Norwich Gazette, September 26, 1889, Page 2, Cols 3 and 4

#### OLD TIME EXPERIENCES

##### In the Bush and on the Farm

Interesting Reminiscences from the pen of the late Adam Spencer

I soon became a strict attender of the Friend's meeting for worship both on First Days and in the middle of the week. For a time, before making a profession at attending meetings, I often sought places of retirement where I spent a time on bended knees in silent supplication. Often after the family had retired for the night I spent a time on my knees invoking the mercy and guidance of my Heavenly Father. On one occasion my mother had been out, and coming in beheld me upon my knees, I have reason to believe it was a cause of joy to my parents. The next morning my father feelingly encouraged me in right things. Frequently for some months in summer I would take a walk at the hour of twilight to meditate. The glories of the setting sun reminded me of the Creator of all things and the vast western expanse was typed of eternity. It was such a new discipline that I was often lonely but I felt it safest for me. On First Day afternoons during that summer I taught a First Day

school in an old house of my Father's. Or rather, I heard the children who came, recite in concert well selected verses which the children appeared to enjoy and afforded comfort to myself.

I found myself encompassed with infirmity and began to think if I was joined in fellowship with some religious body, it would be a help to me. My great sympathy for my parents was one cause of inclining towards the Society of Friends. I therefore studiously read their books particularly "Sewell's History of Friends" where I found in condensed form the testimony of so many different persons who were united in the Christian religion as recorded in the Scripture of Truth. While bearing ample testimony to the Divinity of Christ and the atonement He made for the sins of the world by His suffering on the cross, there also bore testimony to the work of Christ in the soul of man by His spirit and producing the change from nature to grace, which brought man into harmony with his Creator. I was convinced that Friends maintained a standard of Christian doctrine and of religious attainment. I made application and was received into membership with Friends. This was my twenty-second year.

An experience of note took place with me before I joined the society. On one occasion I found my two youngest brothers disputing, for which I admonished them and gave them some serious advice. The act on my part was right but for the first time I named the name of Christ as a religious teacher and it was important that I should know of departing from iniquity. My mind was filled with a great sense of guilt because of my past sins. Those sins for which I felt the greatest condemnation at the time of their commission, appeared to have the penalty of death in them, I hastened to a retired place and there on bended knees (my Judge appearing to be before me) I pleaded for mercy in the most earnest and penitent manner. Soon my gracious Lord extended the sceptre of his love toward me and the language was presented to my spiritual ear as had been addressed to Israel through the prophet Isaiah. "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow-; though red like crimson they shall be as wool." Gratitude and praise to God so filled my mouth that I said "I will praise thee, Oh Lord, while I have my being, I will praise thee before the sons of men." That was the most blessed experience so that I have reason to say "I love the Lord because he hath heard the voice of my supplication and my cry." That love and mercy has been extended all my life long. My sins had been such in the sight of God and made manifest to myself that doubts would occasionally arise as to the possibility of their having been forgiven; those doubts were evidently the buffetings of Satan." On one blessed occasion a language was addressed to my spiritual ear as from my Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." My glorious Advocate so revealed Himself in me, that doubts never afterwards troubled me; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Having become a member among Friends and interested in church affairs time passed comfortably. An event followed of life-long interest, on the eighth day of the Tenth Month of 1834 I was united in marriage with Catharine Gainer, daughter of Isaac and Christiana Gainer, who were leading members among Friends, and gave careful attention to the right training of their children. The union proved to be a happy one through life.

Five children were born to us, four sons and one daughter, who claimed our united care. It was several months after our marriage before we were in a position to keep house by ourselves. I was in the building business and had a contract on hand and our own house to build. At length becoming settled in a home of our own I still worked as a builder, and on the ninth day of the Tenth Month, 1835, our eldest son was born whom we called Jacob Gainer. About one week after my sister Annie died which was a great trial to my parents. My sister Abigail, who was married removed to their home in St Catherines. My father's family was reduced to themselves and two youngest sons. My parents requested that we should come and live in the house with them and take charge of affairs. After consultation with my wife's parents we concluded to try it for a time. Brother Robert who was eighteen years old was allowed the time of his minority and I lent him my carpenter tools. Brother William worked with me on the farm. There was a precious harmony maintained between my mother and wife which made matters very pleasant.

In order to be a true Christian the whole mind must be given up to the will of God with faithful watchfulness into prayers. There are many things if not resisted and guarded against will choke the word until it becometh fruitful.

For several years I attended meeting and lost ground in religious life until there was "neither dew nor rain nor field of offering."

affable Belonging to the meeting was a minister, a man of considerable affability, in his manner and a genial companion. He largely occupied the time in vocal ministry nearly every meeting and it was pleasant to listen to him therefore the meeting time was spent without an earnest seeking unto God to know and to do his will. His ministry was not of a deep guarding character. His sermons were mostly drawn from Old Testament history and sometimes appeared more like a lullaby than anything else. At length such service began to tire, particularly as I began again to realize my own condition. I sometimes thought that the said minister feared that the children would wake up and see what was going on. He did not bear a character for upright dealings with many people in the community.

Norwich Gazette, October 3, 1889, Page 2, Columns 2 and 3.

#### OLD TIME EXPERIENCES

##### In the Bush and on the Farm

##### Interesting Reminiscences from the Pen of the late Adam Spencer

On one occasion I had dealings with him myself and I thought he tried to take advantage, so deep was my conviction of the fact that I lost all confidence in his preaching which was an additional cause for me to seek to the alone source for good. A new zeal was awakened in me. About that time the subject of First Day schools was introduced and urged with a good deal of force by travelling ministers as an antidote against unbelief, etc. I entered the work with a thought of doing good, and also with the thought that Friends were in a lukewarm state. I was superintendent of a First Day school held in a school house for several years, but was

careful to keep within proper limits or rather to keep to the more literal instruction of the scripture. At one time I ventured on the more spiritual exercise and explanation of divine things. After dismissing the school as I was leaving the house the language accompanied with divine authority arrested me. "Who hath required these things at your hands to tread my courts. Bring no more oblations." Such was the effect that I dare not resist the solemn command and I bowed under a sense of God's greatness and my own unworthiness. Many months passed while I was not at liberty to engage in religious services, or even to say more than very little about religion. I had to withhold my mouth even from good, I could not understand how some could say they were constrained to speak while restraint was my continued discipline. At length I became content to bear the yoke in my youth, to put my mouth in the dust if so be there might be hope. It was to me the time of learning the shuttings of Him who hath the keys, who shutteth and no man openeth, who openeth and no man shutteth.

I have many times since in the exercise of the ministry, to know the shuttings first to pass over my mind and as the true openings followed I could rest in confidence that it was of the Lord and not of my own imagination. The lesson that Jesus taught his disciples he still teaches to everyone of his learners. "Without me ye can do nothing."

As I abode in this state of self-abnegation my gracious Lord and Master was pleased to visit and bless me with the incomes of his love and a loving sense of His divine presence which made me rejoice greatly. It was like joy in the Holy Ghost. But I soon found that I could not retain the spirit or the blessing as it was of the Lord's dispensing, I felt the need of a faithful "abiding in the vine" which involved a strict watch unto prayer both at meeting and at all times. The Lord was pleased often to fill my heart with a sense of his love and to open my understanding in scripture truths, inasmuch that all my past doubts respecting the divinity of Christ was dispelled and I could call Him Lord by the Holy Ghost. When I was arrested in my sinful course and called to give my heart to the Lord, I received an intimation that if I was faithful a gift in the ministry would be conferred upon me. How it was to be brought about I could not foresee. But while for years doubts of the divinity of Christ beset me I felt sure that I would never be authorized to speak in his name until said doubts were removed. It is a blessed thing to have the truths contained in the Holy Scriptures opened to the mind and sealed by the Holy Spirit. Our Saviour said to Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who art in heaven." If the church is built upon the Christ the Rock it must be the immediate revelation of God whatever instrumentalities he may be pleased to use for his gracious purposes.

I had not only openings in divine truths but I had great temptations to believe doctrines which were not true. The enemy taking advantage of my tenderness and teachableness of mind he appeared as an angel of light. These invitations were presented so nearly like the divine openings that I had to be very deliberate in reference to the things to be believed. But as patience was abode in I was given to discern between truth and error. At length I appealed to my Heavenly Father with the enquiry, why is it that I am so tempted? The reply was, how wilt thou be able to speak

on these conditions if thou hadst not been tried with them thyself?  
I thankfully submitted; believing the divine hand had permitted the  
temptations.

As I witnessed an overcoming and an increase in the fellowship of  
God's strong desires were raised within me that others might partake  
of like precious faith.

(At this point the writing ceases abruptly, the pen having been laid  
aside for ever, and the writer having succumbed to the physical pains  
which were the precursors of his journey to the country where all things  
should be made clear to him. Robert Stover, brother of the deceased,  
has promised to give a short digest of the biography, and in perusing  
these lines will be reminded of that promise. - Ed. Gazette.)

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#### NEWS AND NOTES

##### Correction

Please make the following correction in your copy of the  
last issue #18, Twelfth Mo. (December) 1976.

Page 13, Line 3 - For "Art Gallery" read "Ontario Archives".

#### 1977 ANNUAL HISTORICAL BUS TOUR

Keep Thursday, August 18th open for our Annual Bus Tour. You will  
be getting a flyer with details and prices in June or early July. Since  
Canadian Yearly Meeting is being held in Newmarket at Pickering College  
this year, the week of August 15th - 22nd, the tour will start from  
Pickering College after lunch and explore old Meeting Houses and burial  
grounds in Pickering and Uxbridge Townships, including the site and the  
part left standing after the disastrous fire of 1905 when Pickering College  
was in Pickering. Tea will be served at the Hertzberg's Farm in  
Uxbridge. In the meantime, how about going down to the Ontario Archives  
at 77 Grenville Street, Toronto, and reading through relevant microfilms  
in MS 303, ask for the Finding-Aid by Roger Nickerson. Also, drop in at  
Friends House Library and read the diary of the two young Nicholson sisters,  
visitors from England in 1896.

#### QUAKER PILGRIMS TO BRITAIN RETURN TO TORONTO WITH GIFT FOR THE LIBRARY

One of the places visited was the Friends Meeting House in Meeting House Lane, Lancaster, Lancs, right close to the prison where many early Quakers were imprisoned. The Inventory of Documents kept in the Meeting House was produced to celebrate the approaching tercentenary of the Lancaster Meeting. These documents form a remarkably unbroken record of a local Quaker community, its concerns with charity, demography, discipline, property, ethics, doctrine and persecution. We are most grateful to our member, Gini Smith, for donating this to the library.

#### QUAKER RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Wim Van Veen is working on Albert Alexander Colquhoun, 1862-1937. The minutes of Hibbert Preparative Meeting (Orthodox) 1855-1940, have not been located. It would be appreciated if any person having any information which might be helpful in our search for these documents would let the Secretary of our Association know.

#### FEES

There are still a number of members who have not paid their fees for 1977. Paper and postage costs have risen so steeply that the fees barely pay for the cost of the newsletter. For this year fees are still \$5.00 for general membership including libraries, archives, etc., and \$2.00 for senior citizens and students. Please mail to the Treasurer, Canadian Friends Historical Association, 60 Lowther Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M5R 1C7.

#### VICTORIA (B.C.) MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES MICROFILMED

These Minutes on two reels, 1908-1946 and 1946-1966, have been received at Friends House Library. A copy will go to the Quaker Archives at the University of Western Ontario Library, London, Ontario; and a copy will be offered to the Ontario Archives. The originals are deposited at the B.C. Provincial Archives, Belleville and Government Streets, Victoria, British Columbia.

#### A QUAKER SMILE

A man was asked out to a Quaker home for dinner. The next day his friends asked him how he got along. "Oh, alright," he said, "except there was an awkward silence at the beginning of the meal, so I told a funny story, and it was alright after that."