

DISCOVER OUR COMMUNITY

VIENNA, WEST VIRGINIA

HISTORY · HIKING

NATURE · HERITAGE

GUIDE

BOOK

SUPPLEMENTAL KNOWLEDGE COMPANION

TREK VIENNA

EXPLORE. DISCOVER. LEARN.

CHARLES SULLIVAN

VIENNA, VIRGINIA



A VIEW OF EARLY VIENNA

Charles Sullivan (1794-1867) was a prominent landscape painter in Ohio during the nineteenth century. He studied art under Thomas Sully at the Pennsylvania Academy before moving to Marietta, Ohio, in 1833. Sullivan became known for his landscape paintings depicting scenes along the Ohio River. His 1835 painting “Vienna, Virginia” shows a view of early Vienna and islands along the Ohio River. The painting is part of the collection of the Campus Martius Museum in Marietta.

ANCESTRY OF THE

SPENCERS



o tell the story of the Spencers in Vienna and America is to tell a long tale of travels, wars, and monarchs far across the Atlantic.

The ancestry of Spencers in America traces back to a long line of noblemen, knights, barons, and senior royal officials under the English monarchy; however, none of these positions and titles would have been bestowed if the Vikings had not invaded Normandy in the 10th century.

VIENNA'S FOUNDER

Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr. (1749-1824) is considered the founder of Vienna, West Virginia. After purchasing approximately 5,000 acres once owned by the Briscoe family, Dr. Spencer moved with his wife Deborah and their children from East Haddam, Connecticut, to what is now Vienna in 1794 and established the first permanent settlement in the area.

THE DANES AND ORIGINAL SPENCER HOME

The story of the Spencers begins with the Danish army's attack on West Francia (France). Led by Viking chieftain Rollo, the Danes claimed an area near the Seine River. The king of West Francia, Charles the Simple, negotiated the treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte in the year 911, which named Rollo as the first ruler Normandy in exchange for his loyalty to the king. Conditions of the agreement included Rollo's conversion to Christianity and marriage to the king's daughter, Gisela. Although Rollo is often referenced as the first Duke of Normandy, he never officially held the title. His great-grandson, Richard II, was the first Duke of Normandy.

One of Rollo's companions in the Danish army was Tancred. Following the treaty, Rollo awarded Tancred lands near and east of the River Seine. The property was awarded as an allodium, which signified absolute ownership, as opposed to a "fief" (lands held subject to the king or another noble). Tancred built a large fortified castle guarding the mouth of the Seine. This area came to be known as Tancarville and the castle was named Château Fort de la Ville Tancred.



An etching of the Château Fort de la Ville Tancred as it stood at the mouth of the Seine River.



THE RISE OF DESPENSER

Rollo's descendants ruled Normandy and held the Dukedom for more than a century. His great-great grandson, Duke Robert the Magnificent, was the father of William the Conqueror.

Tancrède's great-great-great grandson, Raoul FitzGerald le Chamberlain de Ville Tancrède (Raoul D'Abbetot de Tancarville) was a baron and an officer in Duke Robert's army. Raoul had a close relationship with the Duke. When Duke Robert left on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Raoul was appointed as William's guardian.

Robert died during the journey, making William Duke of Normandy at age 7. William lived with Raoul and his family at Château Fort de la Ville Tancrède, where Raoul was responsible for William's education and protection while he was a minor.

Raoul's son, Robert D'Abbetot, was one of Duke William's barons and served as his royal steward, or dispenser. This role required him to supervise all of William's property, finances, and household affairs. Robert accompanied William when he invaded England and defeated King Harold at the Battle of Hastings on October 4, 1066.



(Above) The tower of the Château Fort de la Ville Tancrede is what remains today.

(Left) The names of those who fought with William the Conqueror were etched onto a plaque at the Battle Abbey where the Battle of Hastings was fought. The name D'Abbetot was among them.

► *William the Conquerer became the first Norman monarch of England, and Robert D'Abbetot was his royal steward who handled his finances. The English referred to him as "Despenser," and thus changed his name to reference his position.*



King William I became the first Norman monarch of England. As a result, Robert became a very rich and powerful man, gifted many estates by the king. He continued to serve as the royal steward. This office was a hereditary one that was passed to his son William.

Robert's name changed to "Despencer," which was how the English referred to him. There are many variations of this name noted when referencing Robert and his descendants: le Despenser, le de Spencer, de Spencer, and Despencer. In 1366, the name was changed to simply "Spencer" with the birth of Sir Thomas F. Spencer, son of Nicholas le Despenser.

Over several centuries, Robert's descendants held noble titles such as Lord, Baron, and Knight in the English monarchy. They were also appointed as royal officers and burgesses and owned many estates until the late 1500s.

MIGRATION TO AMERICA

In the early 1600s, economic hardships in England due to poor grain harvests and a war with Spain forced families to make difficult choices. The monarchy continued to collect heavy taxes to avoid bankruptcy. Gerard Spencer Sr. suffered financial deterioration like many others and was forced to sell his lands to his brother Thomas.

With the religious and political climate in chaos, many people in England decided to leave the country. During what became known as the "Great Migration," approximately 80,000 people left England and settled in Ireland, New England (American colonies), the West Indies, and the Netherlands.



JOSEPH SPENCER SR.

Gerard's sons William, Thomas, Michael and Gerard Jr. left England during this time to seek their fortunes in America. The brothers first landed in Newton, Massachusetts, in 1634. Gerard Jr. moved to Lynn where he worked as a ferryman for two years before moving to Haddam, Connecticut, in 1662, where his family became some of its first settlers. Gerard Jr. was instrumental in settling the town, holding a multitude of offices and serving on various committees.

Gerard Spencer Jr. had five sons: Thomas, Samuel, Timothy, William, and Nathanael. All of his sons became homeowners in Haddam. Samuel Spencer was the grandfather of Joseph Spencer Sr.

Joseph Spencer Sr. was born in East Haddam, Connecticut. He attended Yale, where he earned his law degree and practiced law until he became a judge in 1753. He was active in the militia, serving in King George's War and as a Lieutenant Colonel of the Middlesex militia in the French and Indian War. By the time of the American Revolution, he achieved the rank of Brigadier General in Connecticut's militia. He was promoted to Major General in 1776.

Spencer first served on the Connecticut Council (or Connecticut State Senate) in 1776. He was sent to represent Connecticut a delegate in the Continental Congress in 1779. In 1780, he returned to the Connecticut Council, where he served until his death in 1789. He is buried in Nathan Hale Park of East Haddam, where a monument stands in his honor.

Major General Spencer was the father of 6 sons, one of which was Joseph Spencer Jr.

JOSEPH SPENCER JR.

Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr., considered the founder of Vienna, was a surgeon and served as an aid to his father during the American Revolution. After purchasing approximately 5,000 acres once owned by John Briscoe, Dr. Spencer moved with his wife Deborah and their children from East Haddam, Connecticut, to what is now Vienna in 1794. Others came with the family to settle the area.

On December 1, 1795, the Virginia General Assembly incorporated Vienna with an official decree. Originally, 100 acres of land were to be laid off into lots and streets. In 1799, the Virginia General Assembly reduced the area to 60 acres. The initial attempt to found Vienna in this manner was not successful, with only a few plots purchased. Between 1804 and 1812, Spencer sold off many his holdings, and Vienna remained farmland and orchards until the early 20th century.

Dr. Spencer served as a doctor and justice of Wood County. He was also one of the first deacons of the First Congregational Church in Marietta, Ohio. Founded on December 6, 1796 with 31 members, the First Congregational Church in Marietta also served as the Muskingum Academy, the first higher education institution in the Northwest Territory, which became Marietta College in 1835.

Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr. had 11 children. His son William owned and operated a three-story hotel called Spencer House in Parkersburg. His two other sons, Samuel Selden Spencer and David Brainerd Spencer, built houses and lived in Vienna. His daughter, Eliza, married Brigadier General Lewis Cass, who became the second governor of the Michigan Territory and served as U.S. Secretary of War, U.S. Secretary of State, and an ambassador to France. Eliza Spencer Cass traveled with her husband to the French court and was a U.S. "Cabinet lady."

Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr. died in his home in Vienna on May 11, 1824. He was buried in what is now known as Spencer Memorial Park in Vienna.



(Left) The grave of Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr. and his wife Deborah, located in Spencer Park in Vienna.

ARTIFACTS OF VIENNA'S

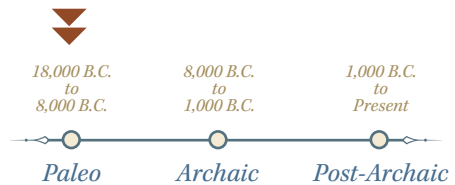
EARLY PEOPLES

Many artifacts have been discovered in the Vienna area that were left behind by early peoples. Jerrel C. Anderson has provided the following examples from his collection, along with information about each artifact.



DOVETAIL POINT

This is an early archaic Dovetail point made from Hughes River Flint (West Virginia). Approximately 9,500 years old, the point was found behind the Grand Central Mall between the parking lot and the railroad track by Charles Hostetler, formerly of Vienna,

*Paleo Period*

Nomadic people hunted large game animals such as mammoths and mastodons.





IVAN ANDERSON MICA ORNAMENT AND PROJECTILE POINT

The carved mica ornament in the photo above was found along with another ornament on the chest of a skeleton at the bottom of the Penn Metal Mound formerly located in north Vienna where the office building now resides. It was found in 1913 by 8-year-old Ivan Anderson along with a projectile point (left). This ornament measures about 4 by 6 inches. The mound was from the Middle Woodland period that dated to from about 100 B.C. to about 450 A.D. Mica came from the southern Appalachian Mountains.



LUDEY MOUND AND ARTIFACTS

The Ludey Mound was located on the lot on the northwest corner of Grand Central Avenue and 51st Street. The photo above shows the mound as it appeared in 2005 before it was destroyed (viewed looking west).

Charcoal found under the mound in the central tomb area gave a radiocarbon date of 435 B.C., establishing that the mound was built by the Early Woodland period Adena mound builder people.



◀ Unfortunately, the mound no longer exists, despite efforts to preserve it. This photo was taken the day it was destroyed.

LUDEY MOUND AND ARTIFACTS

Post-Archaic Period

Woodland peoples constructed earthworks, made pottery, lived in villages and raised crops.

18,000 B.C.
to
8,000 B.C.

8,000 B.C.
to
1,000 B.C.

1,000 B.C.
to
Present

Paleo

Archaic

Post-Archaic

These three artifacts were found after the Ludey Mound was destroyed. These are all common Adena grave goods. The projectile point was probably ritually broken before placement in the mound.



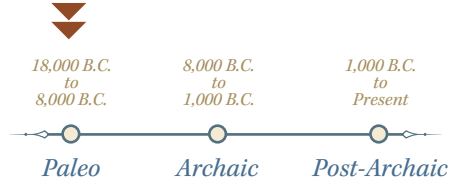
From the left going clockwise: the stem base from an Adena projectile point; a barite abrader (probably used to abrade the hematite nodule); and a piece of rubbed hematite (used to make red powder pigment).

CLOVIS POINT

A Clovis point found in 1911 was on the site of the Parkersburg Country Club. This point dates back to the Paleo Period, and is anywhere from 12,750 to 13,050 years old. The point is made of Flint Ridge (Ohio) Flint. It is currently exhibited in the Campus Martius Museum in Marietta, Ohio.

Paleo Period

Nomadic people hunted large game animals such as mammoths and mastodons.

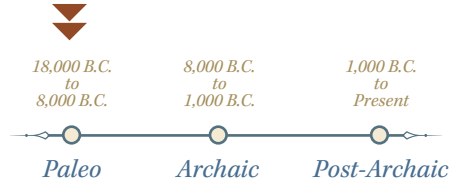


EXPANDED NOTCH THEBES POINT

This Expanded Notch Thebes point was discovered on the site of the Parkersburg Country Club. It is an early corner notched knife and is approximately 10,800 years old. The point is made of Flint Ridge (Ohio) chalcodony. It is currently exhibited in the Campus Martius Museum in Marietta, Ohio.

Paleo Period

Nomadic people hunted large game animals such as mammoths and mastodons.



BURIAL MOUNDS AND EARTHWORKS

Over the years, seven burial mounds have been found. Many of these no longer exist due to lack of area preservation.

 *Burial mounds identified in the Vienna area.*

● *Locations where artifacts have been discovered.*



NEWS OF A DUEL IN 1805



year after one of the most famous duels in American history between Vice President Aaron Burr and Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, a duel took place in Wood County between two prominent citizens: Stephen R. Wilson and Alexander Henderson. It was the only duel ever recorded north of the Ohio River.

Alexander Henderson was the father of George Washington Henderson who later established Henderson Hall in what is now Boaz, West Virginia. Stephen R. Wilson was married to Sarah Spencer Wilson, the daughter of Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr.

A letter from William Howe Cuyler to Jock B. Henderson (Alexander's brother) tells a detailed account of the events leading up to the duel. The letter states that there was a disagreement between Wilson and Henderson that took place when a group of gentlemen were having drinks at an inn. This resulted in name-calling and an accusation that Henderson had spoken disrespectfully of one of Sarah's sisters, which resulted in Wilson challenging Henderson to a duel. The account says the duel took place on October 8, 1805 on a bluff overlooking Blennerhassett's estate in Ohio. Henderson was wounded in the thigh and Wilson was wounded in the knee. Dr. Jewett and Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr. were called to attend to the wounded men.

News of the duel was reported in the *Ohio Gazette*:

"We understand that a Duel was fought on the 8th (of October, 1805) in the settlement of Belpre, Ohio, by Stephen R. Wilson and Alexander Henderson both of Wood County, Virginia. The distance agreed upon was fifteen steps, and to wheel and fire; when the word was given, they both advanced, the one in a deliberate walk, the other at full speed, till when within an arm's length of each other, when they both fired and fell side by side. Mr. Wilson received a ball in his knee which shattered it to pieces. Mr. Henderson a ball in his thigh near the upper joint, which it was feared would deprive him of his life; but we understand that they both are in a fair way of recovery."

NEWS OF A DUEL IN 1805

DUEL.—We understand that a Duel was fought on the 8th inst. in the settlement of Belpre, Ohio, by Stephen R. Wilson and Alexander Henderson, both of Wood county, Virginia. The distance agreed upon was fifteen steps, and to wheel and fire; when the word was given to fire, they both advanced, the one in a deliberate walk, the other in full speed, till within an arm's length of each other, when they both fired and fell side by side. Mr. Wilson received a ball in his knee which shattered it to pieces. Mr. Henderson a ball in his thigh, near the upper joint, which it was feared would deprive him of life; but we understand they are both in a fair way of recovery.—*Ohio Gaz.*

DUELLING.

This abominable practice, which has now become an accomplishment, appears by our fathers to have been execrated as it deserves. The following account is copied from a periodical work published in the year 1753, and is worthy of the attention of the tribunals of the present day.

"They write from Boston in New-England of the 8th of February, that on the Tuesday preceding, at the supreme court of judicature, assize, &c. held at Charlestown, for the county of Middlesex, John Cook, of Evesham in Great-Britain, was indicted for challenging Thomas Pellat of Corydon in Great-Britain, to fight a duel and the said Pellat being also indicted for accepting the challenge, they severally pleaded guilty, and were each of them sentenced to be carried with a rope about their necks to the gallows in a cart, and to sit on the gallows with the rope about their necks for the space of an hour, and afterwards to be committed to jail, there to remain without bail or mainprize for twelve months, and at the expiration of that time, to find security for their good behavior for twelve months more."

(Above) News of the duel also appeared in the Virginia Argus newspaper in Richmond, Virginia.

THE PARKERSBURG

COUNTRY CLUB



The Parkersburg Country Club was built on land purchased from the wife of Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr.'s grandson, Victoria Cook Stone. On June 26, 1902, it became the first country club to be incorporated in West Virginia. A colonial style clubhouse was built in 1903. The club initially only had tennis courts as recreation options until a partial golf course was added in 1905. It was expanded to a regulation course in 1922.

CLUB EXPANSION

Over the years, the club has continued to expand to include swimming pools, croquet grounds, a ballroom, and a pro shop. In 2021, the club was renovated to include an Olympic-size pool with a one-meter diving board, a baby pool, beach entrance, air conditioned sports bar with an attached deck, an outdoor shower and full service locker rooms.

EARLY COUNTRY CLUB PHOTOS



Country club golf course



Country club banquet room

EARLY COUNTRY CLUB PHOTOS

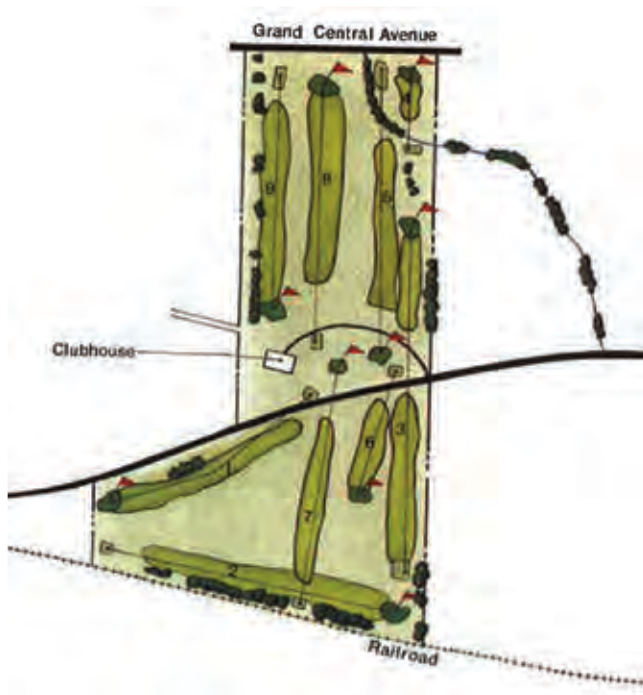


The original clubhouse, circa 1909. The clubhouse was rebuilt in 1939 following a fire in 1936.



Swimming pool, circa 1920.

EARLY COUNTRY CLUB PHOTOS



Country club original golf course



Early pro shop photo

NATURE IN VIENNA

TREE SPECIES



The natural beauty of Vienna is evident in the wide array of plants and trees throughout the cityscape, parks, and hiking trails. Vienna is home to numerous tree species whose foliage provides a colorful canopy that can be enjoyed throughout most of the year. Some trees are native to the area while others have been introduced from other areas and have grown and reproduced over time. The Vienna Tree and Beautification Commission seeks to highlight trees in our community of significant size, historical relevance or rarity. These are some of the different types of trees that can be seen in Vienna's parks and along its city streets.

SIGNIFICANT TREE SPECIES IN VIENNA

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Southern Magnolia
(<i>Magnolia Grandiflora</i>)
Location: 3900 Block of
Grand Central Avenue ● Sassafras
(<i>Sassafras Albidum</i>)
Location: Corner of 9th Street
and 13th Avenue ● American Sycamore
(<i>Platanus Occidentalis</i>)
Location: 3800 Block of 9th Avenue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tulip Poplar
(<i>Liriodendron Tulipifera</i>)
Locations: Greenmont Hills
and Grand Central Avenue ● Silver Maple
(<i>Acer Saccharinum</i>)
Location: Corner of 9th Street
and 13th Avenue ● Pin Oak
(<i>Quercus Palustris</i>)
Location: 4600 Block of 7th Avenue |
|--|---|



BAMBOO

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGdMTIxU9Uc>



BIRCH

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYi1D7sM8sc>



BLACK WALNUT

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2oaffYUb1E>



COLORADO BLUE SPRUCE

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEn5rTSU8jg>



DOGWOOD

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xacy5mcHWGU>



HEMLOCK

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KF4EKHrPo4w>



HORSE CHESTNUT

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07xv2RW9tck>



MULBERRY

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2FZMeexN74>



SASSAFRAS

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnShuxy7Puk>



SHINGLE OAK

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KS4-FOblaw>



SILVER MAPLE

LEARN MORE

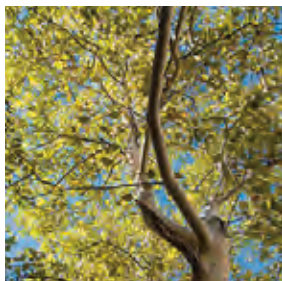
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPH9gzE1jcI>



SWEETGUM

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hb66kvogY0g>



SYCAMORE

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBe1BB8JSTA>



WEeping WILLOW

LEARN MORE

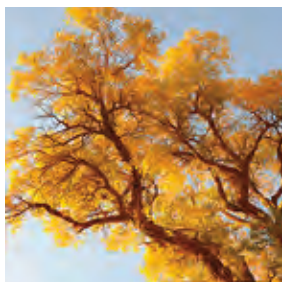
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVQQBuOx3U8>



WHITE PINE

LEARN MORE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnERNeYcw6A>



YELLOW POPLAR

LEARN MORE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1Zp9Wbh_go



TREE SPECIES

- Bamboo
- Birch
- Black Walnut
- Chestnut
- Colorado Blue Spruce
- Dogwood
- Hemlock
- Horse Chestnut
- Mulberry
- Pin Oak
- Sassafras
- Shingle Oak
- Silver Maple
- Sugar Maple
- Sweetgum
- Sycamore
- Yellow Poplar
- White Pine

Neal Island

OHIO RIVER

GRAND CENTRAL AVENUE

GRAND CENTRAL AVENUE

34TH STREET

23RD STREET

46TH STREET

ROSEMAR ROAD

ROSEMAR ROAD

McDonough
Wildlife Refuge

VIENNA

TREE LOCATIONS

VIENNA HISTORICAL

DOCUMENTS

*The following are historical documents
relating to the early settlers of the Vienna area.*



This pre-1753 traders map notes the terrain, rivers and streams of the area.

ABNER LORD RECEIPT

Recd. June 23. 1802 of
Gunn Rufus Putnam Seventy
Dollars in Payment for one
Pair of four Foot Mill-Stones
now on the Bank of the Ohio
in the town of Marietta on
witness my hand—

Abner Lord

\$70:00

*This receipt to Rufus Putnam was written and signed by
Abner Lord for payment of \$70.00 for a pair of four-foot mill stones
on the bank of the Ohio River in Marietta on June 23, 1802.*

DR. JOSEPH SPENCER JR. MILITARY PAY

To Benjamin Smith Esq. Assistant Deputy pay-
 Master General to the forces of the United States of
 America Residing at Providence in the State of
 Rhode Island

Sir

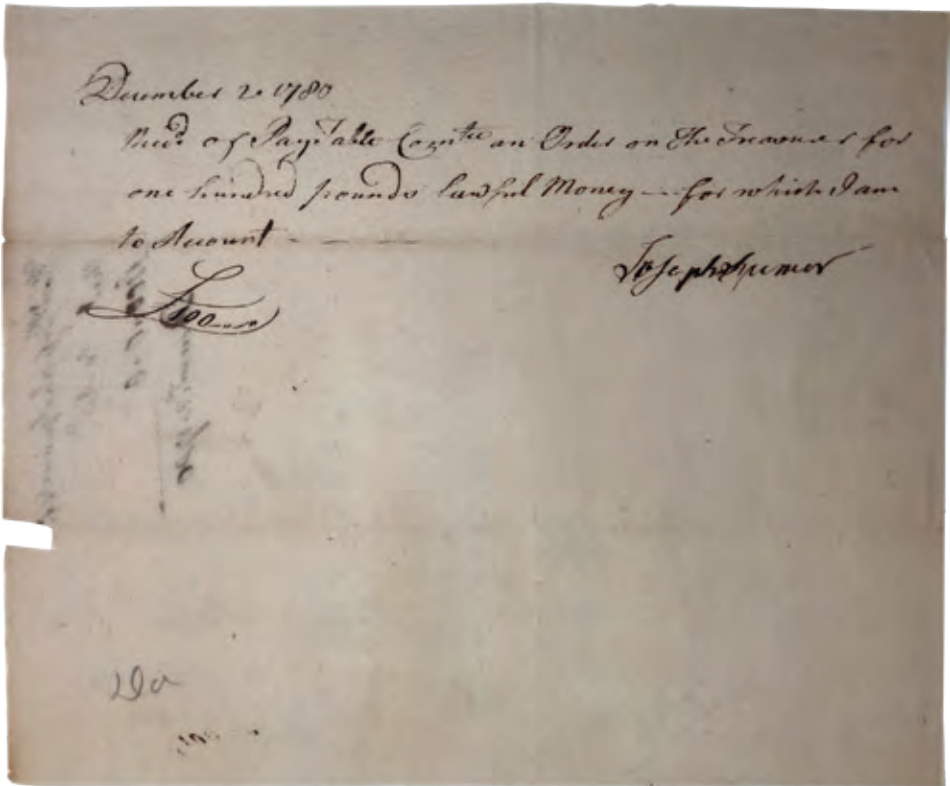
Pay Major Joseph Spencer two Hundred
 and Eighty five Dollars for his Service from the
 22^d Day of October Last to the 12th of April
 Inclusive it being five Months and twenty
 one Days at fifty Dollars per Month, in full of
 his wages for his Service to that time, for
 which this is your sufficient Warrent

Given at Headquarters
 Providence this 1st of April 1776

By his Honor's Command *J. Spencer M^g*
Israel Spencer Secretary
Int^d

This payment order was written by Major General Joseph Spencer to his son Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr. for the amount of \$285 for his service in the American Revolution for five months pay at a rate of \$50 per month from October 22, 1775 though April 12, 1776. According to this payment order, Dr. Spencer held the rank of Major during his service in the war.

EARLY RECEIPT



*This receipt written by Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr. on December 2, 1780
shows payment of 100 British Pounds.*

COURT ORDER

To the Sheriff of the County of *New London* or his Deputy, or either of the
 Constables of the Town of *Lyme* within said County, GREETING.
 In His Majesty's Name you are hereby Commanded to Summon *Henry*
Brookman of Lyme aforesaid

To appear before the *adjourned* County Court to be holden at *Norwich*
 within and for the County of *New London* On the *first* Tuesday of
February next Then and there to Answer unto *Ezra Sedden*
of said Lyme

In a Plea of the Case, whereupon the Plaintiff declares and says, that the Defendant in
 it and by a certain Writing, (or Note) under his Hand by him well Executed, dated the
31 Day of May *Anna Domini, 1773* Promised *the Plaintiff*
 to Pay to him, (for Value Received) the Sum of
Five pounds four Shillings & Ten pence Lawfull
money on Demand & Interest till paid

as by the said Writing, or Note, ready in Court to be shewn appears: Now the Plain-
 tiff further saith, That the Defendant his Promise aforesaid not regarding, hath never
 performed the same,

tho' often Requested and Demanded

of the Plaintiff the Sum of *£5. 14. 0* Which is to the Damage
 And for the Recovery thereof, with Just Costs the Plaintiff brings this Suit [*here of*] Fail not but of this Writ with your
 Doings thereon make due Return according to Law. Dated at *East Haddam*
the 14th Day of January Anno Domini, 1774 And in the *14th Year*
of His Majesty's Reign

Joseph Spencer

Dr. Joseph Spencer Jr. served as an early Justice in Wood County.
 His father, Major General Joseph Spencer, served on the Council of
 Magistrates in Connecticut from 1766 to 1789. The Council of Magistrates
 were the Supreme Court of Connecticut at the time. This is a court directive
 issued by Magistrate Joseph Spencer dated January 14, 1774.



1886 AREA MAP

This early map of the Vienna, Williamstown, and Parkersburg areas shows the locations of many family homes and farms, as well as rail stations, schools and churches.

WWW.TREKVIENNAWV.COM

Learn more about our community
by visiting the Trek Vienna pavilion at
3601 Grand Central Avenue in Vienna, WV.

The Vienna Tree and Beautification Commission would like to thank
the following for their contributions to the Trek Vienna project:

Acme Newspictures
Bernard McDonough Foundation, Inc.
Campus Martius Museum
City of Vienna
Cornell University Library
Delegate Roger Conley
Dwight Norman
East Haddam Historical Society Museum
Friends of Vienna
Gustav Library
Library of Congress
Jerry Anderson
Mackeys Clock Repair
Marietta College Legacy Library
Moody Surveying
Mountaineer Power and Fiber Optics

National Park Service
Ohio History Connection
Old Salem Museum & Gardens
Ray Swick
Scots Landscaping
Smithsonian Institute
Steve Foutty Construction
Ullman Design
University of Michigan Clements Library
Vienna Baptist Church
Vienna Historical Committee
Vienna Tree and Beautification Commission
West Virginia Division of Forestry
West Virginia & Regional History Center
Wood County Historical
and Preservation Society

