

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE WAR OF 1812

I was born in Savanna, a small village in the town of Scipio, Cayuga County, N. Y., situated on the shore, east side of the beautiful Cayuga Lake, and my earliest recollection is of the dock (now gone) and the boats belonging to my father, Erastus Spalding, whose father was Oliver, whose father was Ephriam Edward Benjamin Edward who came from England and was in Braintree, Mass. in 1640.

My birth occurred on the 28th of the 2nd Month, 1800. Although I was present, yet I have no recollection of it, notwithstanding it was the occasion of much rejoicing by friends present. My mother, Jennett Mack, was married to Erastus Spalding, 12th Month, 13th, 1798, and her father was Daniel Mack, and mother Nancy Holmes, who were married 4th Month, 28th, 1777. By referring to the Spalding Memorial, much interesting information can be found in relation to the Spaldings, a numerous and hardy race.

I recollect the time I wore petticoats, of playing with Benjamin Van DerVeer, Almeron H. Cole and John Richardson. My father kept a tavern and had a small store and owned several Batteaux and Durham boats propelled by poles and running boards on the "Gunnells". The poles were 15 to 20 feet long and had a sharp iron pointed at the lower end, and a round wood ball at the upper end, fitting the shoulder of the boatmen; when pushing the boat, they placed this against the shoulder, and, as the running boards were cleated to hold the feet from slipping, they could exert their whole strength in pushing the boat. These boats were provided with oars and temporary sails so if blown into deep water, the men could get to shore. Durham boats were steered by a crooked oar at the stern, fastened by an iron pin on which the oar swung. The bow and stern were usually covered or decked for 8 feet, under which men could sleep. The boats were open and carried from 20 to 40 tons; that is, the Batteaux 20 tons, and the Durham boat 40 tons. The latter was thought to be a large boat and it was as large as could run comfortably down the Seneca River to the Mohawk and thence around Little Falls, through the locks to Schenectady and Albany. NB

My father used to buy his goods in Albany, and send his potash there to sell for he had at one time 3 or 4 stores at different places and exchanged goods for ashes which he made into potash for the English market.

My father was Ensign in a Company of Light Horse or Light Dragoons, was also a Free Mason and the Lodge met at his house (tavern). He was a very prominent man in Cayuga County and very active. I have seen him many times dressed in regimentals, with his military cap, sword and pistols, mounted on a fine horse