

looking for liquidations are also invited to visit this place where H. H. Spencer, one of the proprietors, will be found ready and willing to sell property at fair prices,” said **Minnesota Democratic Weekly** on May 23, 1855.

As a result of this campaign, around 30 families moved to the settlement.

In 1856, Spencer built a gristmill in Louisville. In 1857, Spencer put down the funds to have a schoolhouse built in the town, with teacher Hattie Kingsly. However, a 1937 article in the **Jordan Independent** describes the grim future of the schoolhouse thus: “An interest in education did not take in Louisville and from 1859 to 1863 the schoolhouse stood idle. Summer school was conducted in the next two years, and in winter of 1865-1866 Miss Belle Spencer held classes, but they were the last for Louisville”. Louisville never established a church, which was a bedrock of early European American settlements in the area. Services were only held intermittently by circuit riders, usually in the home of Henry H. Spencer.

Railroads could make it or break a fledgling town. According to <https://www.scottcountyhistory.org/blog/the-history-of-louisville-township-part-2-louisville>, trains brought goods and supplies, as well as convenient shipping lanes for local farmers and merchants. They also brought new people to settle and expand local communities.

Shipping started moving from steamboats to railroads. In fact, a map showed the the railroad bypassed Louisville Township entirely. And so farmers began to love their goods and business elsewhere. In spite of his hearty publicity campaign, according to the Scott Country Historical Society, Henry H. Spencer’s interest in the town soon began to wane.

The Panic of 1857 caused the finances of the planned town to collapse. George Bush Bergwin Clitherall was appointed by President James Buchanan for Register of Public Lands in Otter Tail County, Minnesota shortly after entering the White House in 1857, and the appointee was obligated to serve through Buchanan’s four-year term.... Clitherall bought over \$10,000 of land in Scott County in 1857, and over half of his purchase comprised the town of Louisville. Back in Alabama he had owned seven slaves in Greene County in 1840 and six slaves in 1850. Buchanan dismissed him from office in June 1860, and by July

he returned to Alabama and kept four slaves, according to <https://slaveryminn.wordpress.com/2016/08/25/the-slaves-of-george-b-clitherall/>. An African American 16 year old male named John Battle was included in the 1860 census for Otter Tail County. Battle was believed to have been the “property” of the Battle family in Alabama. Clitherall was related to this family.

According to Dr. Lehman, the sale of land gave Henry H. Spencer financial stability—and kept Louisville Township reliant of money from slaveholders, according to **Slavery’s Reach: Southern Slaveholders in the North State State**, page 63. “He did not help matters by holding proslavery politics in a free state; he opposed abolition and supported the gradual emancipation of slaves.” Henry H. Spencer still boast \$2,750 in real estate holdings and a personal estate of \$1000 in 1860, a respectable post-pain amount of money.

Henry H. Spencer closed his original grocery store in 1859. By the end of the 1860s, the town was nearly deserted. Many of the buildings were moved to Carver, directly across the Minnesota River in Carver County.

According to the **Shakopee Argus** on January 16, 1873, Henry H. Spencer died on Tuesday, January 14, 1873 of Typhoid Fever in Louisville Township, Minnesota.



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Henry H. Spencer

1822-1873



According to the History of the Minnesota Valley by Rev. Edward D. Neill in 1882, Henry Spencer built a frame house a few rods of the one he had lived there in the winter. This was a substantial two-story from building, well finished. In one of the two front rooms, Spencer moved in goods and conducted his business until the spring of 1855, when he built a store on the banks of the river near by. This was the first store in Louisville Township. The Spencer house, on the left, is from the *Jordan Independent*, July 8, 1937.

The Spencer family from Spencer County, Kentucky, where the family enslaved African Americans. The Spencers migrated at mid-century to the free state of Indiana, and then to Minnesota Territory said Dr. Christopher P. Lehman in his book, **Slavery's Reach: Southern Slaveholders in the North State State** by the Minnesota Historical Society Press in 2019, page 62-63.

In 1852, 30 year old Henry H. Spencer arrived in Shakopee City, Minnesota Territory. One year later, his nephew, Spier Spencer, arrived. Henry moved to western Shakopee, which he named Louisville.

Before arriving in Louisville Township, Henry H. Spencer, along with John Schroeder, Mr. Keener and his wife, Bridget Keener, and a baby headed from St. Paul to Scott County in the fall of 1852. Their outfit consisted of the necessities for housekeeping. They crossed the river by the Bloomington Ferry and encamped there at night. They followed the steamboat landing trail, that wound down the river bluffs to the steamboat landing on the river bank, according to **The History of the Minnesota Valley** by Edward D. Neill, 1882, page 318..

During the night a drenching rain soaked everything through. They therefore spent part of the next day drying their clothes and spent the second night at the house of Samuel and Melinda Perry Apgar.

The next day, Henry H. Spencer, Keener's, and John Schroeder continued on. They were walking behind the wagon when two Dakota Indians arrived. The two Indians were from the Sand Creek band,

including U-ha-zy, also called Yu-ha-zee, who looked at the outfit, including the guns which they saw to be useless from the soaking rain.

Henry H. Spencer walked over, shaking the cane he carried, threatening the Dakota men. Henry H. Spencer enslaved African American in Kentucky, so he thought he was in charge (even though he wasn't), and as they came back, he, as Neill's noted, "threatened them, perhaps showing a little of a southerner's temper." It was clear that he did not think U-ha-zy and others were equal.

U-ha-zy loaded his gun to shoot Henry, but the other Indian attempted to dissuade him, holding up his blanket before him. He also diverted the aim by pushing the gun aside, and the bullet struck the Bridget in the back of the neck, passing clear through and killing her instantly.

Louisville Township was boarded by the twists and turns of the Minnesota River. The area including prairies, forest, marsh and swampland, and an oak savanna. The Louisville Township area was originally settled by the Dakota, thousands of years before European Americans came to the area. The area was home to the Eastern Wahpeton band of the Dakota.

Louisville Township, now part of Shakopee, was originally platted by French fur trader Louis LaCroix who established a trading post on the bank of the river. He built a log cabin here in 1850 according to **The History of the Minnesota Valley** by Edward D. Neill in 1882, page 318.

In 1853, Henry H. Spencer arrived from Louisville, Kentucky with his family. He envisioned a community in the northwest corner of the township thriving on steamboat travel and trade along the Minnesota River. Spencer soon began buying up lots. He built a home for his family, a grocery store, and a post office where he established himself as postmaster - and also offered free lots to other tradespeople who were willing to set up shop in the new community. Spencer then began working to recoup his investment, and make the town a financial success. Soon, he was advertising the prospects of Louisville in newspapers around the region, according to <https://www.scottcountyhistory.org/blog/louisville-township-part-1-louisville-then-and-now>.

In the **Minnesota Democratic Weekly** on May 23, 1855: "Louisville is on a high rolling Prairie, with a number of springs of the best water and an abundance of good limestone in the vicinity. Louisville has a first rate landing for steamboats and is the landing place for that rich expansive country bordering and on the prairie and the big woods, and when the water is low for steamboats to cross the rapids, it is the place for the travelers to and from the Upper Minnesota country to leave the steamboat and take one when bound for St Paul, being the principal traveled road from St Paul to St Peter, Fort Ridgely etc. Travelers to the upper country will find teams at Louisville and vicinity to convey them up to this country."

"Strangers looking for claims can get information of conveyances to a very rich country back unclaimed and well timbered and water interrupted with Persons