

he went on a prospecting tour to New York State. The central and western parts of New York were then unsettled and called the wilderness. He traveled through the State from the Hudson to Lake Erie. He purchased several thousand acres of land in the county then called Oswego, in the portion which later became Tompkins county.

The following spring (1805) found him journeying to his new home in the wilderness with his wife, four little children, a niece and a number of slaves. The journey from Virginia to Tompkins county, New York, lasted six weeks. Dr. Speed, though not the first settler in this section of New York, was among the earliest and became the most important figure in the new settlement. He was one of the first men of means identified with the place. He was a man of large frame, being six feet in height and his weight two hundred. He was a strikingly handsome man with deep blue eyes. His character and reputation were such as to give him a commanding influence, and he was looked up to and revered as no other man was in a wide circle of acquaintances. His letters and printed addresses show that he was a man of learning and culture. Among his correspondents was his first cousin, Major Thomas Speed, of Bardstown, Ky. They seem to have been much alike in character and they had a warm affection for each other.

About the same time that Dr. Joseph Speed moved to Tompkins county, New York, his uncle, Henry Speed, also moved to the same place. The families established themselves in a settlement, and the little village became a post-office town called Speedville. A son of Henry Speed, John James Speed, was post-master at one time. Dr. Joseph Speed and his cousin, John James, lived on large tracts of land adjoining each other. They both owned the slaves, which they took with them from Virginia, until slavery was abolished in New York.

Following is a letter written by Dr. Joseph Speed to Richard Hansard, who married Sarah Speed, and lived in Virginia: