

## RECOLLECTIONS OF REV. JAMES FREEMAN CLARK, OF JUDGE JOHN SPEED, TAKEN FROM HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

The following extracts from the autobiography of Rev. James Freeman Clark show some interesting facts about Judge John Speed. The date was between 1830 and 1840:

“One day I noticed in church a gentleman whom I had not seen there before, whose arm hung over the pew-door, holding in his hand a riding-whip. After church I inquired who he was, and learned that he was Judge Speed, a gentleman who had a farm a few miles out of the city. I was informed that people called him an infidel, but that he was universally respected and was a very good man. Afterward I became very intimate with him and his family. He was like a father to me, and his house was like my own home. He had a large farm about six miles out of town on the road to Bardstown. One field of his farm contained eighty acres, and hemp was raised in it every year and grew ten or twelve feet high. Hemp is an exhausting crop, but the field had produced it for a great many years without any fertilizer being used, the land being among the richest in Kentucky. Walking across this field one day I found a smooth stone about six inches long. It looked like an Indian ax, but I left it where I found it, and when I reached the house spoke about it to Judge Speed. He asked me where I had found it, and on my reply said, ‘no, that is not an Indian stone; I know the stone you mean.’ He seemed to be acquainted with every stone in his eighty-acre field.

“Judge Speed explained to me why he was called an infidel. He said, ‘when I was a boy and went to meeting, the minister took the Bible in his hand and said, ‘every word within these lids is the word of God, and if you do not believe it you will be damned as sure as I kill that fly,’ slapping his hand on a fly on the Bible. I was an infidel to this kind of religion, and thought it my duty to protest against it. But I have no hostility to the kind of religion which you and many others now preach. I go from one church to another and watch you all, and see that all the churches are making progress.’

“Several of Judge Speed's children became members of our society, and all of them were like brothers and sisters to me. One of his sons, Joshua, kept a store at one time in Springfield, Ills., and there became the intimate friend of Abraham Lincoln—the most intimate friend, in fact, the President ever had. Lincoln visited Farmington, the Speed place, some time after I left Kentucky. Many years later, when I was revisiting Kentucky, I spent a day with Joshua Speed, who told me many interesting and characteristic anecdotes of his friend.

“Although Judge Speed had few opportunities for education and had spent his life in Kentucky as a farmer, up early and late, riding