

regarded life with a serious, business-like gravity, which led him to seek the companionship of young men of like disposition or those older than himself. His life at Springfield furnished many incidents which he was fond of relating. Often in after-years his memory would recur to that period, and he would tell his experiences as a country merchant in his crisp, narrative style, half playful, half serious, so as to charm all who heard him.

The incident which led to the close friendship between Mr. Lincoln and Joshua Speed has been often related. It will be given here in Joshua Speed's own words, as he wrote them in his lecture on Abraham Lincoln. He says:

"It was in the spring of 1837, and on the very day that he obtained his license, that our intimate acquaintance began. He had ridden into town on a borrowed horse, with no earthly property save a pair of saddle-bags containing a few clothes. I was a merchant at Springfield and kept a large country store, embracing dry goods, groceries, hardware, books, medicines, bed clothes, mattresses, in fact, everything that the country needed. Lincoln came into the store with his saddle-bags on his arm. He said he wanted to buy the furniture for a single bed. The mattress, blankets, sheets, coverlid and pillow, according to the figure made by me, would cost seventeen dollars. He said that was perhaps cheap enough, but, small as the sum was, he was unable to pay it, but if I would credit him till Christmas and his experiment as a lawyer was a success he would pay then, saying in the saddest tone, 'if I fail in this I do not know that I can ever pay you.' As I looked up at him I thought then and I think now that I never saw a sadder face.

"I said to him: 'You seem to be so much pained at contracting so small a debt, I think I can suggest a plan by which you can avoid the debt and at the same time attain your bed. I have a large room with a double bed up stairs which you are very welcome to share with me.'

" 'Where is your room?' said he.

" 'Up stairs,' said I, pointing to a pair of winding stairs which led from the store to my room.

"He took his saddle-bags on his arm, went up stairs, set them down on the floor and came down with a changed countenance. Beaming with pleasure, he exclaimed: 'Well, Speed, I am moved.' "

While in Illinois he took a lively interest in public affairs and assisted in editing a newspaper. He returned to Kentucky from Springfield in the year 1842 and engaged in