



Lucy Gilmer Fry Speed

Lucy Gilmer Fry was born on March 23, 1788, to Joshua Fry and Peachy Walker Fry of Albemarle County, Virginia. Lucy and her family moved to Kentucky in 1798, settling in the Danville area.

In 1808, Lucy married Judge John Speed and moved to his vast five-hundred-acre farm near Louisville, Kentucky. She was John's second wife, following the death of his first wife, Abby. In the Speed family

annals, Lucy is described as having "beauty, dignity, intelligence, and sound judgment."

Lucy devoted her life to educating her children. Among Lucy and John's eleven children, two sons grew to play integral roles in the life of Abraham Lincoln. James Speed, born in 1812, became a lawyer and politician, and in 1864 he was appointed by Lincoln to be the twenty-eighth attorney general of the United States. Joshua F. Speed, born in 1814, moved to Springfield, Illinois, in adulthood. There he became a lifelong friend, confidant, and adviser to Lincoln.

In 1810, Judge John Speed began construction on a new residence for his family. In 1816, Lucy and John moved into Farmington, their newly completed, Federal-style home.

On March 30, 1840, John Speed died, leaving one hundred and twenty-three acres and the house to Lucy. The Speed slaves were divided among Lucy and the children, and Joshua Speed returned to Louisville to help manage the estate.

In 1841, Abraham Lincoln came to Farmington, residing there for nearly a month while visiting Joshua and recovering from both mental and physical exhaustion. Lucy spent many hours with Lincoln, talking with him and helping him regain his strength. She presented him with a gift of a Bible just before his departure. Lucy had such a positive impact on Lincoln that in 1861 he wrote on a photograph he sent her: "For Mrs. Lucy G. Speed, from whose pious hand I accepted the present of an Oxford Bible twenty years ago."

Lucy died on January 27, 1874.

Watercolor of Farmington, the Speed family plantation, by John Rutherford, 1820
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