

The Filson Historical Society

**Speed family
Papers, 1780-1905**

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Size of Collection:
0.66 cubic feet

Location Number:
Mss./A/S742i

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Scope and Content Note

Collection of correspondence and documents pertaining to several members of the Speed family, particularly of Kentucky, beginning in the late 18th century and extending through the 19th century, encompassing four generations. A major part of the correspondence was written or received by Thomas Speed (1768-1842) and his nephew, James Speed (1812-1887), both of whom held important government positions during the 19th century. The subjects range from land sales and purchase, debts, tobacco crops and sales, local and national politics to the status, treatment, behavior, emancipation and colonization of slaves. Other topics include temperance, involvement of African American troops in the Civil War, post-war international relations and Reconstruction.

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Biographical Note

The following members of the Speed family were authors and/or recipients of correspondence:

James Speed, Sr. was born 4 Mar 1739 in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, and died 3 Sept. 1811 in Danville, Boyle County, Kentucky. He served in the Revolutionary War, first as Lieutenant and then as Captain and was wounded at the battle of Guilford Court House, North Carolina, 15th March, 1718. He moved to Kentucky with his family in the fall of 1782 from Charlotte Court House, Caroline County, Virginia, to Danville. He was a member of the early Kentucky Conventions of 1783-1785, 1787.

Thomas Speed, son of James Speed, Sr., was born 25 Oct. 1768 in Charlotte County, Virginia and died 20 Feb. 1842 in Bardstown, Nelson County, Kentucky. He served as clerk of the Bullitt and Nelson circuit courts and as a major of Volunteers in the War of 1812. Speed was elected as a Democratic-Republican to the Fifteenth Congress (March 4, 1817 – March 3, 1819) and served as member of the Kentucky State House of Representatives in 1821, 1822, and again in 1840.

James Speed, Jr., son of James Speed, Sr., was born 7 Feb 1774 in Charlotte County, Virginia, and died 14 Sept. 1812 in Natchez, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana. He was trained as a physician in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Joseph Speed, Sr., son of John Speed (1714-1785) and brother of James Speed, Sr., was born 27 May 1750 in Charlotte County, Virginia and died 23 April 1806 in Charlotte County.

Thomas Spencer Speed, son of Thomas Speed, was born 30 August 1814, near Bardstown, Kentucky and died 16 March 1892 near his birthplace. Although he owned slaves, he was an ardent emancipationist. His son, Thomas, served in the 12th Kentucky Infantry during the Civil War.

James Speed, son of John Speed and grandson of James Speed, Sr., was born 11 March 1812 in Louisville, Ky. and died 25 June 1887 in Louisville. He was a successful lawyer and served in both houses of the Kentucky legislature. In 1864, he was appointed U.S. Attorney General in Abraham Lincoln's cabinet.

Joseph Henry Speed, a descendant of John Speed (1714-1785), was born 12 September 1834 in Mecklenburg Co., Virginia and died 11 March 1887 in Marion, Alabama. He was a prominent man in Alabama and served in the Confederate Army as a captain. After the war, he became

United States Marshal for Alabama. He also served as Superintendent of Public Instruction for Alabama and was president of a large female college at Marion, Alabama.

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Subject Headings

African Americans – Colonization.
Agriculture – Kentucky.
Allen, John, 1772-1813.
Allin, Thomas, 1757-1833.
Briery Presbyterian church, Prince Edward co., Va.
Brown, John, 1800-1859 – Correspondence.
Burnt Station (Ky.)
Business records – United States.
Cass, Lewis, 1782-1866 - Correspondence.
Congresses and conventions – United States – Kentucky.
Crittenden, John J. (John Jordan), 1787-1863.
Elections – Kentucky.
Franklin, Battle of, Franklin, Tenn., 1864 – Personal narratives.
Grant, Ulysses S. (Ulysses Simpson), 1822-1885.
Greenup, Christopher, 1750-1818 – Correspondence.
Indiana – History – 19th century.
Indians of North America.
Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845.
Johnson, Andrew, 1808-1875 – Impeachment.
Kentucky – History – 1792-1865.
Kentucky – Land sales.
Kentucky – History – Civil War, 1861-1865.
Kentucky – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – African Americans.
Kentucky – Maps.
Kentucky – Politics and government.
Legal documents – United States.
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865 – Assassination.
McCoy, William, -1864.
Medicine – History – 18th century.
Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States. Ohio Commandery.
Missouri compromise.
Missouri – Land sales.
Nelson, William, 1824-1862.
Ohio – Maps.
Pleasants, James, 1769-1836.
Poetry – United States.
Pope, John, 1770-1845.
Presidents – United States – Election – 1828.

Presidents – United States – Election – 1836.
Racism – United States.
Receipts (Acknowledgments) – United States.
Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877)
Religious thought – United States – 19th century.
Religion.
Republican Party (U.S. : 1854-).
Rowan, John, 1773-1843.
Schofield, John McAllister, 1831-1906 – Correspondence.
Seminole War, 1st, 1817-1818.
Seward, William H. (William Henry), 1801-1872.
Shelby, Isaac, 1750-1826 – Correspondence.
Slaughter, Wm. B. (William Banks), 1797-1879.
Slaves – Abuse of – Kentucky.
Slaves – United States – Religious life – Indiana.
Slaves – Emancipation – United States.
Slavery – Kentucky.
Slavery – Mississippi.
Slavery – Political aspects – United States – History – 19th century.
Speed, James, 1739-1811.
Speed, James, 1774-1812.
Speed, James, 1812-1887.
Speed, Joseph, b. 1750.
Speed, Joseph, 1773-1847.
Speed, Joseph H. 1834-1887.
Speed, Thomas, 1768-1842.
Speed, Thomas Spencer, 1814-1892.
Stanton, Edwin M. (Edwin McMasters), 1814-1869 – Correspondence.
Tariff – Law and legislation – United States – History.
Temperance – United States – 19th century.
Tobacco – Kentucky – History.
Todd, Thomas, 1765-1826.
United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – African Americans.
United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – Reconstruction.
United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – Underground movements.
United States. Army. Kentucky Infantry Regiment, 12th (1861-1865)
United States. Congress (15th, 1st session : 1817-1818). House
United States. Congress (15th, 2nd session : 1818-1819
United States. Congress (16th, 1st session : 1819-1820)
Wills – Kentucky.