

Judge Joseph T. Mills Visits Abraham Lincoln



JOSEPH T. MILLS.



Judge Joseph Trotter Mills 1811 - 1897

lawyer, judge, politician, b. Cane Ridge, near Paris, Bourbon County, Ky. In 1831 he moved to Illinois, attended Illinois College, and about 1833 journeyed to Prairie du Chien as tutor to the children of Col. (later President) Zachary Taylor. In 1840 he settled in Lancaster, Wis., where he studied law, and was admitted to the bar in 1844. He practiced law in Lancaster, became active in the Liberty party, and later in the Republican party, and was state assemblyman from Grant County (1856, 1857, 1862, 1879). In 1864 he was elected circuit judge of the 5th judicial district, and served in this capacity from 1865 to 1877. After leaving the bench, he continued to practice law in Lancaster until 1893. He was an eccentric man, preferring Rubbers and socks to shoes, and a cloak to a coat. During his lifetime he had many experiences including being horsewhipped and fighting a duel with a shotgun. He was a man who knew the leaders of pioneer Wisconsin. He was a fierce supporter of Lincoln. His account of meeting him follows.

THE LOYAL ROAD TO PEACE,

AND THE

DISLOYAL ROAD TO RUIN.

President Lincoln on Democratic Strategy.

The Grand Oration (1864) should contain a very interesting letter from Hon. John W. Mills, Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit, giving an account of a recent interview with Mr. Lincoln, with a report of the remarks of the latter in regard to the emancipation which would follow the war policy urged by the friends of Gen. McClellan.

Judge Mills was accompanied by ex-Gov. Russell, of Wisconsin, who introduced him to the President, and whom he warmly thanks for his resolution to serve his friends from Wisconsin at the Capital. "They found the President at the Soldiers' Retreat, a building not imposing in size, half hidden in foliage, the grounds beautifully laid out."

The Governor asked a man in waiting if the President had arrived. "Yes," was the reply. "We entered a most richly furnished room. A marble table was in the center. Directly opposite from an adjoining apartment, a tall, grand-looking figure, shaven, dressed formally, his gaze steady, rapid and penetrating, escape misinterpretation, with large slippers, and delicate shoes, with a bow smiling with intelligence and charm."

The Governor addressed him: "Mr. President, this is my friend and your friend, Mr. Mills from Wisconsin."

"I am glad to see my friend from Wisconsin; they are the happy friends of the Union."

"I could not leave the city, Mr. President, without acknowledging to you from your own lips. Upon you, as the representative of the loyal people depend as we believe, the existence of our government and the future of America." This introduced political topics.

"Mr. President," said Governor Russell, "why don't you seek reelection, and play havoc for a fortnight? It would terrify you."

"Aye," said the President. "Two or three weeks would do me no good. I cannot fly from my Douglas—my abolitionists for this great country follow me where