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Mitchell, L.D.

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Marshall, Dec., Jan. 17

1844

Editors Mc. Clure's Magazine

Dear Sirs:

I have been reading with interest your 'Abraham Lincoln,' do not know that the following will be of interest to you. I am 75 years of age. My father, Mr. Mitchell, moved to Charleston, Ill., in 1838, my age at that time was 10 years, the town had perhaps 200 people. My uncle, Mr. Collum, kept the hotel. The only hotel the only one for years, Mr. Lincoln attended court at Charleston regularly from 1835 to 1844, and stayed, as all the lawyers did, at my uncle's hotel. My uncle had one large room which he reserved for the Judge and lawyers. I used to steal into the corner of the room in the evenings, and sit on the floor and listen to their discussions. I recollect Mr. Lincoln took the lead in the discussions and story told me recollect Judge Justin Waldrand, O.B. Dickson, can tubing, Sumbour, Judge Thornton, and Judge Nelson, who was Circuit Judge at the time, and for many years.
One peculiarity about Mr. Lincoln, I noticed was that he paid no attention to sidewalks in passing from one part of town to another, but was as likely to walk in the middle of the street as on the sidewalk, taking near cuts across streets. At that time there were but few paved streets—only a few rough planks or sticks laid along the sidewalks and principal dwellings.

Betsie Banks, who gave us the home of Mr. Lincoln’s father’s second wife, lived in Charleston all during this time and was a swell woman, the belle of the town. Her name was Mrs. E. L. Grant, but when she moved to the city she took the name of Mrs. Lincoln. She was the only woman we had in Richmond then. Mr. Lincoln had a great respect for her, and she was a great comfort to him. She was a fine woman and a great help to him.

He was a Straw-Maker, he lived in a log house or cabin of one story and a lean-to for a kitchen, in the west of the town, now the center of the city. He made many a pair of shoes for my father’s family. Many a time David and me watched at this house for him to finish his shoes. He used to delve into the ground, pour in more clay, and paint it on as an emblem of what a poor boy might accomplish. Mr. Lincoln’s daughter was noted for their beauty. One of them married Mr. W. G. Chapman, an editor, another was married to Mr. Hovey, also an editor, another, Mrs. Chas. Price—all made their mark in the world.