

William Townsend's reference that Joshua Speed took Lincoln "on the cars to Lexington" is based on a "statement of George Blackburn Kinkead, nephew and namesake of Lincoln's [Lexington] attorney, to author." This infers the two traveled to

Lexington by train. But the Lexington & Ohio Railroad—the nation's second-oldest railroad—did not reach Louisville until 1851. At the time of Lincoln's 1841 visit, the railroad extended only as far as Frankfort.



The mystery: Did Lincoln travel all the way to Lexington—and how did he make the trip?

Lincoln, himself, answers the first question. In letter to Speed dated January 3, 1842, Lincoln writes, "After you and I had once been at her residence, [Speed's fiancée] did you not go and take me all the way to Lexington and back, for no other purpose but to get to see her again?" Given the slow speed of travel of the day, this was a considerably long journey.

As for the mode of travel, we might surmise that a stagecoach line existed between Louisville and the capitol city, with a connection to the train in Frankfort. "The cars" could refer to the several coaches Speed and Lincoln rode in to reach Lexington and return to Farmington near Louisville.