



A Bryan Bush book explored the friendship between Lincoln and the Speeds of Farmington. Bush is also a re-enactor. Photos by Pam Spaulding, The Courier-Journal

# Night writer of the Civil War

## Fairdale-area author works a day job, too

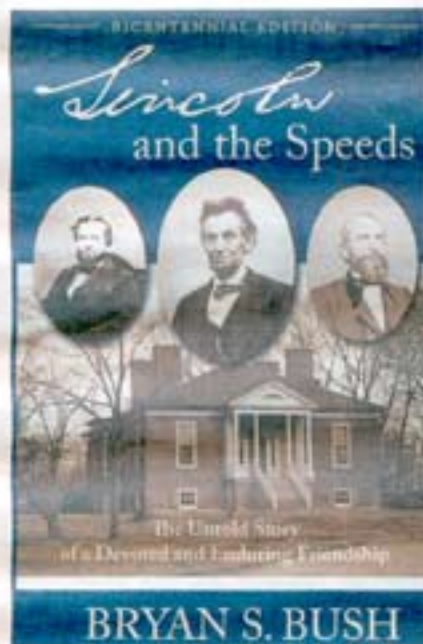
By Bill Pike | bpik@courier-journal.com | The Courier-Journal

By day, Bryan S. Bush works as a supervisor at the Dixie Highway Home Depot. By night, he's a Civil War writer on a roll who last month published his fifth and sixth books about the war.

Now he's looking for a publisher for his seventh book and is planning his eighth.

The first came out 10 years ago. "I've had a passion for the Civil War ever since I was a kid," said Bush, 41, who lives near Fairdale. "It started off as a military interest, as it would with any kid with toy soldiers. As I got older, I became more interested in the human aspects of the war."

His latest two books are "Lincoln and



James Speed was attorney general under Lincoln, and his brother Joshua was among the president's close friends. Another Bush book focuses on Gen. Stephen Burbridge, the Union commander of Kentucky who conducted a war of terror here.

the Speeds: The Untold Story of a Devoted and Enduring Friendship" and "Butcher Burbridge: Union General Stephen Burbridge and His Reign of Terror Over Kentucky." "These books are a labor of love," Bush said. "I don't make a lot of money on them."

Most of his books run about 200 pages.

A graduate of DeSales High School, Bush, 41, has a bachelor's in history from Murray State University and a master's in history from the University of Louisville. He said he's "knocking around the idea" of getting a doctorate.

Bush often gives talks about the Civil War, as he did last week before the Harrodsburg Historical Society. He also participates in re-enactments, sometimes wearing a uniform of a Union artillery master sergeant.

The first of Bush's new books discusses the friend-

*"When you write about the Civil War, there's plenty to write about."*

Bryan S. Bush, author

ship between Abraham Lincoln and brothers James and Joshua Speed, who grew up at Farmington. The Speeds supported Lincoln and the Union before and during the Civil War and helped keep Kentucky in the Union.

James Speed was attorney general under Lincoln and Joshua Speed was Lincoln's closest friend, Bush said. Lincoln visited the Speed family at Farmington in 1848, 19 years before he was elected president and four years after he first met Joshua Speed in Springfield, Ill.

Joshua Speed, more personable than his serious brother, visited Lin-

coln at least six times at the White House, Bush said. Burbridge, the subject of Bush's other new book, was known for his brutal tactics while Union commander of Kentucky toward the end of the war.

Burbridge imprisoned and executed numerous people thought to be Confederates — sometimes with little evidence. "It was a terrible time for Kentucky," Bush said.

"Burbridge was called 'The Butcher of Kentucky,'" Bush said.

Bush recently completed a book about Louisville during the Civil War, which he said would be the first book on that topic since 1962.

"That floos me when you consider how important Louisville was in the war," Bush said, noting that the city was a Union stronghold and essential to its success.

The Acclaim Press, a Missouri company that

# BUTCHER Burbridge

Union General Stephen Burbridge and His Reign of Terror Over Kentucky



Bryan S. Bush

### INFORMATION

To learn more about Bryan S. Bush or to order his books, go to [www.store.bryansbush.com](http://www.store.bryansbush.com).

specializes in history books, published Bush's latest two books but refused the Louisville book, saying its subject was "too local," Bush said.

He plans to begin researching his next book, which will be on Union Gen. Lovell Rousseau. Rousseau lived in Louisville and helped secure Kentucky for the Union.

Bush said willpower keeps him going. "I work all day and then come home and work on books every night. When you write about the Civil War, there's plenty to write about. You would never run out of topics."

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