

Slavery in Iowa

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SLAVERY IN IOWA.

THE *Des Moines Register*, of October 11, 1872, contained the following revelation with regard to the former existence of slavery in Iowa, which will most likely be new to many:—

“Some time since one of the editors of this journal interviewed Mr. Gray, an old pioneer, and gained the following information with reference to slavery as it once existed in Des Moines:—

“Joe Smart, who was the interpreter of the agency, and who had married a Fox squaw, went to Missouri and purchased two negro women, brought them here, and held them as slaves, and when he got through with and no longer needed them, he took them south and sold them as slaves. ‘Free Iowa!’ Gloriously free now,—but the moan of the slave and the prayer of the oppressed *have* gone up to heaven on the wings of its air.

“Mr. Gray relates that this Smart was a great favorite with the Indians, and was allowed every liberty by them. His two half-breed children, when they arrived at a proper age, were sent to St. Louis to attend school, and the fact developed in the following incident shows that the whole Indian nation took a deep interest in these children: On the arrival of the day when the Indians were to receive their dues from the government (through Mr. Beech, who was then the Indian agent at this point), they all gathered in from every direction. The tribe of Sacs, numbering about four thousand men, with Keokuk as their chief,—and who had their village some four miles below town,—were on hand, clamorous for money, as well as Poweshiek, with his three thousand people, whose main town was, at that time, on the Skunk, some eighteen miles distant. Some eighty thousand dollars had arrived to meet this payment, but by some ‘hook or crook’ the two traders named Ewing

and Phelps received sixty thousand dollars of this sum. While the Indians were congregated, all 'waiting their turn at the pack,' Keokuk arose and made a speech, saying that 'Smart was one of them—he had married one of their squaws—he lived happily with her—had raised children by her—these children had the blood of the Indian in their veins—they were the idols of the tribe—and now that their father had sent them away to white men's schools, the Indians should take a pride in them more than ever.' In closing his speech he said that Smart must be given one of the boxes of money—containing one thousand dollars. The whole tribe assented without a grunt. Old Poweshiek sat by, demurely smoking his pipe, and like the rest, acquiesced in the gift; but as Keokuk sat down he arose and said: 'The Fox Indian was as generous as the Sac—and although Smart had taken his squaw from the Sacs, still the half-breed children's Indian blood called for a box of the Foxes' silver, as well as the Sacs'—and they should have it.' Keokuk tried to dissuade them from their purpose, but old Poweshiek gained his point, and Smart the silver."

JOHN M. PERRY.

BY P. M. CASSADY, DES MOINES, IOWA.

JOHN M. PERRY, an attorney at law, came to this state in the year 1846 or 1847, from Ohio. With what success as a practitioner in the Buckeye State, how he conducted himself as a member of the bar, while practicing there, what opportunities for improving himself, or the trials and difficulties under which he labored prior to his immigration here, I am unable to state. My object is to com-

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