

MESKWAKI PROCLAMATION DAY

A Historical Perspective



July 13, 1857

the 15th ultimo, and at the request of the Honorable J.B. Grinnell, has so far modified his decision of the 17th of November last as to authorize me to instruct you to pay to the Sac and Fox Indians in Tama County, Iowa, that portion of the tribal fund which was placed in your hands for such purpose by my predecessor, amounting to \$5,587.33, but with the distinct understanding that no further annuities will hereafter be paid to them, except on their reservation in Kansas, or at such other place as may be hereafter selected as a home for the tribe.

The instructions contained in my letter of the 27th of November, 1866, directing you to close up all the business of your Special Agency on or before the 31st ultimo, are hereby revoked, and the tenure of your office will be extended for a sufficient time to enable you to comply with the above instructions.

The amount of money deposited by you to the credit of the United States in the National Bank at Dubuque will be remanded for its original purpose, and a requisition for the same amount will immediately be issued in your favor.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Lewis V. Bogy, Commissioner.

Leander Clark, Esq.,
Special Indian Agent,
Toledo, Tama County, Iowa.

The Mesquaki had white friends that spoke for the Tribe. Congresssman Grinnell spoke for them in Congress asking that the Mesquaki should be paid their annuities in Iowa. The following is part of the proceedings of the Congress.

February 5, 1867.

Mr. Grinnell. I move on page 42, after line one thousand and eight, to insert the following:

Provided, That the band of Sacs and Foxes now in Tama county, Iowa, shall be paid pro rata their portion of annuity so long as they are peaceful and have the assent of the governor of Iowa to reside in that State.

Mr. Chairman, this proviso I desire to explain, and trust it will appear so manifestly just as to meet with no opposition. The Indians to whom this will apply are a band called Nussquokas, of the Sacs and Foxes, numbering some two hundred, with their lodges near the Iona river, and about twenty miles from my own residence. On their removal near twenty years ago, to the reservation west of the Missouri river, a powerful band made war on them, and coming back to their old hunts declared that they would all be killed if they remained. Some ten years since, on their peition and that of their white neighbors to the State Legislature, they being in the senatorial distriet which I happened to represent, I took up their cause, and without objection a law was passed permitting them to own land and reside in the State. Their just portion of the annuity of the Sacs and Foxes was denied them until last year, when it was granted by Secretary Harlan, and is only given now as a temporary allowance by the present Commissioner of Indian Affairs. I see no good reason why it should not be permanent. I know of no other band which has not been decimated in numbers and suffered by the vices of the whites. Where they are without money they are objects of our charities. To compel them to go to Kansas is to settle them where they are not wanted or to provoke the murderous spirit of the warriors from whom they once fled. As to their character, of which I am asked, I have never heard that they were thievish or quarrelsome. they may have no Logan among their "braves." but with their pro rata of the annuity which I ask schools may be established, more comfort brought to their wigwams, and it is to be hoped such a christian civilization as will not require the romance of a Jefferson or Seba Smith to find heroes worthy to adorn the sad history of our Indian tribes, which, without a change of policy, will soon be as far beyond our reach as they now seem below our consideration. (THE CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE: CONTAINING THE DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE THIRTY- NINTH CONGRESS 1867.)