Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/1307497752/

Downloaded on May 31, 2026

When Humans Were Sold

Through the courtesy of our esteem ed friend, J. C. Baker, the Journal i permitted to publish the followin clipping, which recites an inciden which was quite common before th Civil War, and will be read with muc interest by the present generation.

The Spratt's are old and respecte residents of Missouri. Their ance tors came here at an early date in th history of the country and have bee largely instrumental in helping t build up and make the Platte Purchas the garden spot of the great world That Missouri and especially th Platte Purchase is a part of the origin al Garden of Eden will never be de nied by any one except a Kansas man and the residents of the Sunflowe state have never done anything els except to claim the whole earth.

In early years the Spratt's were slave owners. They owned numerous slaves and surrendered them when President Lincoln issued his famous proclamation, giving them up without a murmur. Many thousands of dollars went when the proclamation was issued, but there was no attempt made by them to hold the property which they had paid for in good money of the realm. They obeyed the mandate and have always been good citizens.

But few people realize at the present day what the trade in human flesh was prior to the rebellion. There is not one person in every five hundred living in this section who has ever looked at a bill of sale or the transfer papers which gave a colored man or woman to a new master.

A BILL OF SALE

Yesterday Mr. Will E. Spratt of the firm of John F. Tyler & Co., had occasion to look for an old paper which belonged to his grandfather, William Spratt, who when the Platte Purchase was first acquired, to Missouri and lived here from that time until he died. He settled near Lexington, and was an extensive land owner. He owned a large number of slaves and at different times bought and sold them the same as other southern planters. With him it was as common to sell and buy slaves as it is for the present farmer to buy or sell stock. While Mr. Will Spratt was going through the old papers yesterday packed away in one corner of the receptacle, he found an old paper which is a curiousity. It is drawn up in the handwriting of the old gentleman and is in a good state of preservation. The paper is of the old-fashioned kind, and is far better than the general run of the present date. The old document tells its own story this way:

Know all men by these presents that I, William Skaggs, of the county of Lafayette and state of Missouri, have this day for and in consideration of sum of eight hundred dollars to me in hand paid, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, granted, bargained and delivered, and by these presents do grant, bargain and deliver unto William Spratt of the county and state aforesaid a certain negro man slave for life, named Dick, about twenty four years of age. And I hereby warrant the said negro to be sound and healthy, both in body and mind. Given under my hand and seal this 17th day of December 1840.

(Seal.) WM. SKAGGS.

Copyright © 2026 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.