

James Porlier, who came to Green Bay, as already stated, in 1791,\* proved the most useful man to the settlement of all the French Canadian emigrants who settled there during my day. He was born at Montreal in 1765, and received a good education at a seminary in that city, with a view of the priesthood; but changing his mind, he engaged in his father's employ, who carried on a large business. In 1791, he received from Gov. Alured Clark a commission of Captain-Lieutenant of the militia of Montreal, and the same year left to seek his fortune in the West, coming directly to Green Bay. He engaged at first as a clerk for my father, and thus remained employed for two years; the first winter remaining in the store at Green Bay, and the next he spent at Mr. Grignon's trading post on the St. Croix. He then engaged in the Indian trade for himself, and spent his winters in the Indian country for many years, on the Sauk river, on the Upper Mississippi, Buffalo river, Pine river, and several points on the Mississippi and Wisconsin, and continued more or less in the trade as long as he lived.

It was while on the St. Croix, in 1793, that he married Miss Marguerite Griesie, whose father was a Frenchman, the first clerk Pierre Grignon, Sr., had at Green Bay, where he married a Menomonee woman, and afterwards left the country, abandoning his wife and child. Mr. Porlier found Miss Griesie and her mother with a band of the Menomonees spending the hunting season on the St. Croix.

In January, 1815, Mr. Porlier was commissioned by Gov. George Prevost, of Canada, a Justice of the Peace, and Captain of the militia of Green Bay, under the British Government, which commission was certified by Lieut. Col. McDonall, Commandant at Mackinaw; and it would appear from a

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\*In the *Detroit Gazette*, of January 18th, 1822, it is stated that Mr. Porlier "has resided within the Territory [of Michigan] since 1787;" if so, he must have stopped awhile at Detroit or Mackinaw, then returned to Montreal, received his commission of Captain-Lieutenant, and shortly after settled at Green Bay.

memorandum among Mr. Porlier's papers, that he had been commissioned a Justice of the Peace, by the British in 1812; but I have no recollection of his having acted under these commissions.\* When Brown county was organized, under the American Government, Mr. Porlier was first appointed an Ensign of militia by Gov. Cass in 1819, and three years afterwards a Lieutenant. In September, 1820, he was commissioned by Gov. Cass, Chief Justice of Brown county, as the successor of Matthew Irwin, and by re-appointments continued to serve as Chief Justice till the organization of Wisconsin Territory, in 1836. In 1820, he was also commissioned a Justice of the Peace and County Commissioner; and in 1822, Judge of Probate. He was almost constantly engaged in public service between 1820 and 1836, and yet found time to do something at his old business as a trader. A few years before his death, the right half of his body became partly paralyzed, and he died after two or three days' illness, at Green Bay, July 12th, 1839, at the age of seventy-four years.

Judge Porlier was about five feet, ten inches in height, of medium size, of light complexion, a little bald, very mild, and invariably pleasant to all. The public positions he filled so long and so well, are the best evidences of the esteem for his character, and the confidence reposed in him. Such was his solicitude to fit himself for his judicial position, that he patiently translated from the English, and left in manuscript, the Revised Laws of Michigan Territory, in the French language. His widow survived him about five years; they had several children, three of whom are still living.

Charles Reaume was, I dare say, as my old departed friend Solomon Juneau has stated, a native of La Prairie, nearly

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\*These commissions granted by the British Gov'rs Clark and Prevost, and subsequent ones from the American authorities, together with several hundred old letters, early account books, and other papers of Judge Porlier, have been kindly presented to the Society by his son, Louis B. Porlier, Esq., of the Butte des Morts. L. C. D.