

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.

opposite to Montreal. His family was very respectable, and he enjoyed good educational advantages. He appears early to have left Montreal, and went to Detroit, where he had relatives, among them a nephew named Alexander Reaume, a trader, but if I ever knew the particulars of his career there, I have forgotten.\* He engaged in the Indian trade, and, like most traders, roamed the forests of the North-West, between the great Lakes and the Mississippi, and, I think, spent several years in this way, and made several journeys to Mackinaw, and at last one to Montreal, where he became united in marriage to a Miss Sanguenette, daughter of a prominent merchant of that city, and a lady of great worth. He now managed to commence business in Montreal, I think merchandizing, and mostly on credit, and by bad management, soon failed; and, naturally proud and haughty, he did not care to remain there, and thus left Montreal, abandoning his wife,—they having no children,—and again turned his face westward. He came directly to Green Bay, as I have always understood; this was in 1792, and he accompanied Mr. Porlier in the fall of that year, and spent the winter with him on the St. Croix river. Returning to the Bay the next spring, he went to Mackinaw, and managed to obtain on credit about six or seven hundred dollars worth of goods for the Indian trade, and brought them to the Bay, where, erecting a trader's cabin, of logs, covered with slabs, chinked and daubed, he opened his small store, and commenced operations. In due time he sold out, ate up, and squandered his little stock, probably as he had done at Montreal; and having no returns to make to the Mackinaw merchants, he was unable to obtain a new supply, and this ended his attempts at merchandizing.

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\*It was mentioned in the preceding volumes of the Society's Collections, that he served during the Revolutionary war as a Captain in the British Indian Department, and was among the prisoners taken by the gallant Col. George Rogers Clark at the capture of Vincennes, in February, 1779, and taking the oath of neutrality, was permitted to return to Detroit. The *MS. Papers* of Gen. Clark, in my possession, show this fact.

He was a singular man—vain, pompous, and fond of show; and his sense of honor and justice was not very high. He led a jolly, easy life, always getting his share of good things whenever within his reach, and never seemed to have a care or thought for the morrow. I think the published anecdotes related of him are correct, and truly represent the character of the man.

When on the St. Croix with Mr. Porlier, he was trading in a small way for his own benefit. One day he invited Mr. Porlier, Laurent Fily, and two or three others wintering there, to dine with him. His guests appeared at the proper time, and Reaume had prepared some dried venison, pounded finely, and cooked in maple sugar and bears' oil, making really a very fine dish. A half-breed, Amable Chevalier, happened to make his appearance, and observed to Reaume, that he had not plates enough on the table, as there was none for him. "Yes, there are enough," said Reaume gruffly, when the Indian snatched from Reaume's head his red cap, and spreading it upon the table, took both his hands and scooped from the dish of cooked venison, called by the Indians, *pe-we-ta-gah*, or *prepared in oil*, as much as he could, and dashed it into the cap. This was all the work of a moment, when Reaume followed suit, by seizing a handful of the meat, and throwing it in the Indian's face. Quite an exciting scene now ensued in the way of a personal *recontre*, which the guests terminated by separating the angry combatants. Not to be foiled in this way, when the Indian was sent off, and things re-adjusted, Reaume and his friends partook of the feast, such as it was, with doubtless a regale of the trader's wine-keg, which each trader was sure to take with him for his winter's supply.

On this same trading voyage, Reaume had with him his cousin, Noel Reaume—a crack-brained fellow, who once refused to work a year as a *voyageur* for seven hundred francs, but would do so for a hundred dollars, and though this was

considerably less, he never could be made to comprehend it. Having occasion to use their canoe in the winter, this Noel Reaume cleared out the snow, and brought a shovel full of live coals to place in the bottom of the frail bark craft, when his cousin Charles asked him what he was going to do? "Why," said the other, "these coals are to keep my feet warm; do you think I am going to freeze my feet to make you laugh?"

Reaume would often say, that the next spring his wife was coming from Montreal to join him at Green Bay, and he had said the same thing so repeatedly, year after year, that even the Indians made sport of him about it. One day meeting an old Menomonee named Wau-tau-se-mo-sa, or *One-that-is-coming*, Reaume asked him when he was going to get married, remarking to him that he was getting old. "O," said the Indian, "you have been telling us that Mrs. Reaume is coming out this spring, and I am waiting for her arrival, intending to marry her." This little sally very much stirred up Reaume's anger, when he sent back a volley of *sacres*, very much to the Indian's amusement.

A Mr. Rondel, of the Illinois country, who knew Reaume either in Canada or at Detroit, recommended him to Gov. Harrison, of the Indiana Territory, as a suitable person for a Justice of the Peace at the Green Bay settlement, when a commission was filled up and sent to him four or five years before the commencement of the war of 1812. This was the first officer of the kind at Green Bay; and marriages were previously entered into by contract and witnesses, disputes were settled by arbitration, and criminals were sent to Canada for trial. I am not certain, but presume Reaume kept something of a docket, and probably some record of such marriages as he solemnized, for some still adhered to the ancient custom, and dispensed with Reaume's services; but I have no recollection of his having a single law book or statute of any kind. His were *equity* decisions, but his ideas of *equity* were often very queer and singular. I never understood that he had any

commission from the British authorities, nor do I think his commission from Gov. Harrison was ever renewed, but he continued to act under its authority until the organization of Brown county, by Gov. Cass, in 1818,—a period of about eleven years.

The late John Dousman related to me a case tried before Reaume, of which he was personally cognizant. Joseph Houll was the complainant, and his claim, which was a just one, was for labor rendered the defendant. It was a plain case, and Reaume decided in favor of Houll, and dismissed the parties. Dousman having heard so much about Reaume's singular decisions, concluded he would test the good Justice; and observed, with assumed sincerity, "Mr. Reaume, now that you have decided the case, I must say, I am very much surprised at your decision—you ought, in justice, to have decided in favor of the defendant." "Ah," replied Reaume, "you did not understand me aright;" and then stepping to the door, he called Houll back, and asked him how he understood the decision? Houll, of course, said that he understood that he had *won*. "Yes," said Reaume, "you have *won to pay the costs!*" This is only one instance in many of a similar character, showing a very facile conscience, and a mind easily changed by caprice or interest.

After Reaume disposed of his little stock of goods, he secured him a farm on the west side of the river, about four miles above Green Bay. Probably from the savings of his store, he obtained some cattle and horses, and soon had a very fine farm, with a comfortable house, and many comforts around him. He had a dog named *Rabasto*, whom he had trained to go and drive away the thieving black-birds whenever they would appear in his fields. Not very long after Col. John Bowyer came to Green Bay in 1815, as American Indian Agent, he purchased Reaume's farm at less than half its value, when the latter made his home with Judge Lawe about a year. He then obtained a claim for

some land at the Little Kau-kau-lin, ten miles above Green Bay, on which he erected a comfortable house, and moved there, but he kept no liquor or other articles to sell to the Indians, as I was there frequently, and should have known it if it had been so. There he sickened and died, in the spring of 1822, somewhere, I should think, from sixty-five to seventy years of age. Judge Reaume was rather tall, and quite portly, with a dark eye, with a very animated, changeable countenance. Like the Indians, his loves and hates were strong, particularly the hates. He was probably never known to refuse a friendly dram of wine, or of stronger liquors; and he was, in truth, very kind, and very hospitable. With all his eccentricities, he was warmly beloved by all who knew him.

John Lawe, another early settler, was a native of York, England. His father was a captain in the English army, and his mother an English Jewess, a sister of Jacob Franks, who had come to the Bay as early as 1795, as a clerk in the trading establishment of Ogilvie, Gillaspie & Co., of Mackinaw, who had a store at Green Bay. John Lawe was educated at Quebec, and Joseph Rolette, so well known as a trader and early settler at Prairie du Chien, was one of his school-mates. When his uncle, Mr. Franks, had been about three years with Ogilvie, Gillespie & Co., he ceased serving as clerk, and went to Canada and obtained a stock of goods. He returned to the Bay and opened a store, bringing his nephew, John Lawe, with him, then a young man of sixteen years. This was in the summer of 1797. Lawe engaged in his uncle's employ, and the following winter was sent with a supply of Indian goods, accompanied by Louis Bauprez, to Fond du Lac river, which was then known among the French and traders by that name; and took possession of the old trading post, about a mile and a half above the mouth of that stream, on its eastern bank. This had been a winter trading post for many years; Laurent Ducharme, who one year caught a large number of ducks there, by means of a net, which