

I declined either of the judgeships, but accepted the office of Justice of the Peace. I had not then decided to make Prairie du Chien my future home, having hitherto spent my winters near the head of St. Peter's River, in the Indian trade; but in the fall of 1819 I took up my permanent residence at Prairie du Chien.

John W. Johnson was a man of good sense and judgment, but had from quite a young man held the appointment of U. S. factor, and resided in the Indian country where he could obtain but little knowledge of the proceedings of courts or the ordinary transactions of civilized life. The commissions of Associate Justices were filled up with the names of Michael Brisbois* and Francis Bouthillier, both of whom from boyhood had been in the Indian country and had very little opportunity of witnessing proceedings at courts. Wilfred Owens was appointed Judge of Probate, and Nicholas Boilvin and John W. Johnson and myself Justices of the Peace; John S. Findley clerk of the Court; John P. Gates Register of Probate, which also included the recording of deeds, and Thomas McNair was appointed Sheriff. It should be remembered, that all these officers had to enter upon the duties of their several offices without forms to refer to or precedents of proceedings, and it can astonish no person that the records of that day are without much form. Such was the organization of the county of Crawford, and I think that the materials in Brown were not much better, although several Americans by that time had settled at Green Bay.

At the session of Congress of 1819-20, an act was passed to take testimony relative to the private land claims at Sault St. Marys, Mackinaw, Green Bay and Prairie du Chien, that were reserved to subjects of the British government under Jay's Treaty; and in the fall of 1820, commissioners were dispatched to the different places to take testimony. A Mr. Lee came to Prairie du Chien. The most of those claims at Prairie du Chien were

*Instead of Mr. Brisbois, Hon. M. L. Martin, in the appendix to his Address before the Historical Society, gives the name of Nicholas Boilvin. L. C. D.