

and one grant of this kind would pave the way for another, and they must firmly deny all; that they must check the advance of the whites, for if one should go into their country, others, like swarms of bees, would follow. They constantly begged for whiskey, of which I had none.

I now proceeded on to Prairie du Chien, and there engaged in some little traffic. The place was much scattered, and sparsely settled; there were some fifty or sixty dwelling houses, and all the people could speak the English, French and Indian languages, and all imperfectly. There were perhaps three or four permanent traders located there, and during the warm season of the year, some fifty or more would resort there, and late in the fall scatter abroad to their several trading stations on the Upper Mississippi and its numerous tributaries. This had been the custom for many years. I do not think there was an American resident at Prairie du Chien. The traders were polite and kind, and their hospitality was both general and generous; and while they drank freely, it was regarded as disgraceful to get drunk.

Mr. James Aird, a Scotch trader, had been thirty-seven years in the Upper Mississippi country, making Prairie du Chien generally his place of summer resort. Joseph Rolette, Antoine and Michael Brisbois, Francis Bontielle, Jean Baptiste St. Jean, Mons. Tiercourt, Mons. Bennette, Mons. Palen, and many others were among the traders. All these traders had families, and mostly by Indian wives; but Michael Brisbois had a fine French wife. In Brisbois' family was a beautiful girl named Fisher, whose parents,\* early settlers there, were dead; and Joseph Rolette was said to have married this young girl when she was only ten years of age. Rolette was regarded as the largest trader there, and reputed wealthy. The marriage of the traders with squaws was without ceremony, and to last only for a single trading season. The trader would make the engagement with the parents

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\*When Capt. Pike visited Prairie du Chien in 1805, he speaks of Fisher as an American, and a prominent man of the place. He then had the title of captain and judge, and probably then filled those positions. L. C. D.