

of whom is still living. They were traders and residents of Green Bay, but then at Mackinaw, on their annual visit to sell their peltries, and obtain supplies for the trade of the ensuing winter. They were applied to by Col. Chambers, the commanding officer of the American detachment, to pilot the vessels; but as they had their own boats and men there, they declined, as it would be a sacrifice of time, and be attended with risk in reaching their remote wintering grounds, or trading posts, before the commencement of winter. But these objections availed nothing. In those days, and in this country, the will of the military commandant was the law of the land. Having refused to go voluntarily, they were pressed into the public service, and safely piloted the vessels into the waters of Fox River.

From 1816 to 1824, a period of eight years, although Wisconsin and a part of Michigan Territory were nominally under the protection of the flag of the Union, yet but little of parental care was bestowed upon her citizens in civil life by the General Government. The rule that bore sway was essentially military. No courts were organized, and offenders against the laws were either sent from remote parts of the settlement to Detroit for trial, or perhaps more usually suffered to escape punishment. The civil code was limited, and but sparingly administered. But the military code, such as it was, more than supplied the deficiencies of the civil. While this state of things continued, it occasionally happened that some military genius, possessed of more tinsel than discretion, became the commanding officer, and to mark the era of his reign, would exercise his "little brief authority" in an arbitrary manner, and thus contrive to render the condition of the citizen as uncomfortable as possible. Instances of high handed oppression and injustice were, in the early days of our history, frequently committed by some military martinet, upon the persons, liberty or property of those whom they were sent to protect. A few such cases were witnessed by myself.

It happened that some thirty years ago, a gentleman still living in this State, being then engaged in the Indian trade near Green