

Augustin Grignon's Recollections

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.—At the instance of the Historical Society, I made a visit to the venerable Capt. Augustin Grignon, at his residence at the Butte des Morts, on Fox river, and spent a couple of weeks with him, from May 26th to June 8th, 1857, in obtaining the following narrative. It is here presented just as I noted it down from his lips at the time, all simple and unadorned—characteristic of the aged chronicler, whose narrative it is of a life time's recollections. It is true, that while the facts and statements are essentially his, the language, order and arrangement are mine, as are sometimes the inferences and deductions, but in all cases with his approval and adoption.

Mr. Grignon, though now seventy-seven years old, is robust and healthy; the hardy life he has led as a trader in the wilderness, with the simplicity of his habits, seems to have *toughened* his constitution, so that old age does not appear irksome to him. He is cheerful, pleasant and communicative, intelligent and well read. I was pleased to observe, that he was familiar with that rare and sterling old work, Charlevoix's *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, published in three quarto volumes, in 1744. He spends his time mostly between fishing, smoking, and reading the papers, of which one is *Le Courier des Etats-Unis*.

I have taken great pains to elicit from Mr. Grignon a narrative, as replete as possible, of the men, events, habits, and life of the olden time. I felt that another such opportunity of securing a full account of the early settlement and early men of Eastern Wisconsin, would never again occur; a native of the country, and an intelligent descendant, as he is, of the Sieur Charles De Langlade, emphatically the *Father of Wisconsin*, and personally acquainted with him, as well also as with Glode, Tomah and other noted Menomonee chiefs; and with Reaume, Porlier, Lawe and their fellow pioneers, a participant in the war of 1812, and in the Black Hawk war; with a retentive memory, in no wise disposed to exaggerate, filled with a just and discriminating knowledge of the men and events of Wisconsin for the past seventy-two years, and by tradition for the forty years preceding—such a living chronicle we may never expect to see again in Wisconsin. Very much of this information he alone possessed—the last of the grand-children of Charles De Langlade; and