

Recollections of Prairie duChien

Related by B. W. Brisbois¹

Mr. Brisbois states that he was born at Prairie du Chien, Oct. 4th, 1808. His father, Michael Brisbois, Sr., was born at Maska, below Montreal, in 1759. His grandfather migrated from Normandy; his parents were Joseph and Marguerite Devault Brisbois. When fifteen years of age, in 1775, Michael Brisbois was a student in college at Quebec, when the Americans attacked that city under Montgomery at the close of the year; and the students were armed, and assigned a place in the defense, but there was no attack on their quarter. Michael Brisbois probably received only a partial education; but he could read and write well. We find him at Mackinaw in 1779,² when nineteen years of age.

Of the time of his arrival at Prairie du Chien, B. W. Brisbois can only refer to his father's statement, made in 1820, to Judge Isaac Lee, the United States commissioner for adjusting land titles, that it was thirty-nine years previously—that is, in 1781,³ when he was twenty-one years of age. In that year, the Indians, who claimed the country, sold to Governor Patrick Sinclair, at Mackinaw, for Basil Giard, Pierre Antaya, and Augustin Ange. Pierre la Pointe was interpreter. Michael Brisbois was present, and probably returned with the Indians, Giard and associates, to Prairie du Chien, thus making his advent there; and there he continued to reside for fifty-six years. B. W. Brisbois says this land purchase embraced nine miles square; and he believes, that Giard, Antaya, and Angé were only a committee who acted in behalf of the settlers; he does not know the amount paid in goods for the grant, nor the Indian chiefs who made it, but always understood the Indians were satisfied with the sale.

¹ Noted down and annotated by Lyman C. Draper.

² *U. S. Public Lands*, iv, p. 814.

³ *U. S. Public Lands*, iv, pp. 851, 852.