

was well established in business there when the Americans, in the spring of 1814, took possession of the place. Rolette was then apparently absent, probably at Mackinaw with his season's accumulation of pelts and furs; and joined Col. McKay's expedition for the recapture of Prairie du Chien. "Their commanding officer being too intoxicated to know how to act," as Mrs. Hooe states it, Rolette and other officers—for he seems to have had some rank in Anderson's company—devised the best plan of operations they could, under the circumstances; and for his good conduct, Rolette was offered a captaincy in the service, which he did not see fit to accept.

The fact of his activity in behalf of the British interests and operations in 1814, militated not a little against him with the Americans in after years. He quietly pursued his Indian trade, and made no opposition to the new order of things; yet Col. Talbot Chambers,<sup>1</sup> who seems to have been an arbitrary officer, while in command at Prairie du Chien, had Rolette's goods confiscated, and he himself exiled to an island in the Mississippi. Some American gentlemen, it is said, reported the case to Hon. John C. Calhoun, then secretary of war, who ordered his immediate release. This document is preserved by Mrs. Hooe, who it is to be hoped, will deposit it among the archives of our Historical Society.

Capt. Rolette continued to prosecute his Indian trade, with great enterprise, for many years. His operations extended from St. Louis and Prairie du Chien, to the far off Red River Settlement. His goods were brought direct from Montreal, through the lakes to Green Bay, thence up the Fox River, and down the Wisconsin, in a flotilla of Mackinaw boats, rowed by French-Canadians—then the only mode of traveling, and transporting goods, outside the frail Indian canoe. His trade had reached such great proportions, and his influence with the Indians had become so extensive, that small opposition traders failed in their efforts to supplant him; when John Jacob Astor, in 1820, made Capt. Rolette an offer to join him in the American Fur Company, which was accepted, and he placed in charge of the trade of that powerful monopoly in the Northwest. He continued in this position till 1836, when he was succeeded by the late Gen. Hercules L. Dousman.

He died at Prairie du Chien, Dec. 1st, 1842, in his sixty-second year, after over forty years residence at that place. His death was caused by apoplexy, superinduced by his long toils and exposures in the wilderness, and probably from too indulgent habits during the latter years of his life.

The frontier people, from the great influence he exerted on the trading operations of the country, denominated him "King Rolette;" while the Indians named him Zica, or Pheasant, on account of his fast traveling. He was a man of superior talents, and of good business qualities; generous to

<sup>1</sup> See Judge Lockwood's account of Col. Chamber's arbitrary treatment of Michael Brisbois, Sr., vol. II, *Wis. Hist. Collections*, pp. 128-29; Judge Lockwood stating, that Rolette was obliged to spend a winter on an island, about seven miles above Prairie du Chien.