

Early Wisconsin

By John H. Fonda

The following series of historical papers were written by the editor of the *Prairie du Chien Courier*, as dictated by the aged pioneer, whose name they bear, and appeared in that paper, commencing with the number of Feb. 15th, 1868, and extending into May following. "We would advise all," says the editor, "to read the Early Reminiscences, as they are extremely interesting, and contain many historical facts, that will pay for the time spent in perusal. The subject of these sketches has been in the West for over forty years, and thirty years a resident of *Prairie du Chien*. He has lived to see most of the early pioneers carried to the grave. His life has been an eventful one, abounding in incidents of travel, camp and field, that will prove interesting to our readers. They are as correct and truthful as memory can make them."

Mr. Fonda was born in Watervliet, Albany county, N. Y., and is still residing in *Prairie du Chien*. We have the high authority of the venerable Rev. Alfred Brunson, of *Prairie du Chien*, for assuring the reader, that "Mr. Fonda's narrative is as reliable as anything of the kind given from memory."

No. 1.

Some few evenings ago, we were sitting by the fireside, in the house of one of the oldest pioneers now living at *Prairie Du Chien*, and listening, as is our wont, to the early history of the country, as the old settler related it. His seemed to have been an eventful life, and at our earnest solicitation "he lived his life o'er again." Below we give a part of the old backwoodsman's history:

You want to know my history? But it's not the first time I have been asked to tell it. In the year 1840, there was a person who came out here to talk with the old residents, and get facts, from which to write a book. He often came to my house to hear me talk. I told him a great many anecdotes, traditions, and incidents of frontier life, but though I read his