

Capture of Mackinaw, 1763

By Louis B. Porlier*

On the 14th of October, 1848, Hon. William Medill, commissioner of Indian affairs, called a council at Poygan, Wisconsin, to negotiate a treaty with the Menomonee tribe of Indians. H. S. Baird was appointed secretary to the commissioner. On the morning of the day of the meeting, Oshkosh came to our tent and said to Augustin Grignon, Sr., "I have been notified to attend the council; will you go with me?" Mr. Grignon replied that he would, and they both started towards the council-house. Immediately after I told Augustin Grignon, Jr., to call our men to put up our shanty so as to be in readiness for the annuity payment, which was to take place immediately after the treaty should be concluded. As soon as the shanty was up so they could get along without me, I told the younger Grignon that I was going over to listen to the council, and started towards the council-house.

Just before reaching the place of assembly, I saw Shononee, or Silver—one of the principal Menomonee chiefs, coming out of the council-house, and walking towards a group of Indians who were gathered at a short distance away. I followed him thither, as I knew that he would relate what had been said in the council. He seated himself on a log and they all thronged close around him, anxious to ascertain what was the business of the commissioner.

* This paper is an advanced portion of a work for which Mr. Porlier has long been collecting materials, relative to Indian traditions, history, and prominent chiefs, Indian trade and traders, French and American settlers, and sketches generally of the Fox River Valley, from the earliest settlement of the country. As Mr. Porlier's father, the late Judge James Porlier, settled in the country in 1791, and the son has lived a long and observing life of sixty-four years in the Valley, much engaged among the Indians, and in the Indian trade, and connected with the Grignon and other early pioneer families, he is well fitted to prepare a work of interest and value, which would doubtless meet with a cordial reception by the people of that prosperous portion of Wisconsin.