

No one fact in Wisconsin history is better established than that Basil Giard, Pierre Antaya, and Augustin Ange settled upon "Prairie des Chiens" in 1781. Soon after, during the same year, came Michael Brisbois. There is not one particle of evidence extant that any white persons—of French or other nationality—settled on the "prairie" before these French Canadians came. The first three named came at the same time. There is a great deal of evidence extant that when they came they found upon the "prairie" simply an Indian village—nothing more.¹ Let us now, bearing this in mind and remembering the year of the coming of these first settlers, look at the whole of the report as to the supposed French fort of 1755 and the first settlement of the "prairie," as given by Hon. George Robertson, and upon which my critics so much rely: "In the year 1755, the government of France established a military post near the mouth of the Wisconsin; that [during that year] many French families settled themselves in the neighborhood, and established the village of Prairie du Chien; that, by the treaty of Versailles, in the year 1763, the village and the fort, following the condition of the Canadas and the Illinois country, passed to the crown of England." How absolutely has all that been proved over and over again to be wholly erroneous!²

¹ Compare, in this connection, *History of Crawford County, Wisconsin*, pp. 282-288; also, J. Long's *Voyages and Travels*, p. 148; Washburne's *Edward's Papers*, p. 60; S. H. Long's *Expedition* (by Keating), vol. i, p. 242. In January, 1884, I called the attention of B. W. Brisbois to what he is represented as saying in the Wisconsin State Historical Society's *Collections*, vol. ix, p. 291. His reply to me was, that the words: "There was certainly something of a French, as well as Indian, settlement there at that time"—were not what he intended to say; and that he either had written to Mr. Draper or intended to write to him, about the matter. Mr. Brisbois also made the same remark to me concerning the words on the same page of the *Collections*—"after the French soldiery who had fortified there, had retired;"—and he unhesitatingly signed the certificate to be found in the *History of Crawford County, Wisconsin*, on p. xiii.

² But even this is not all of the report, which the reader will understand was simply based, as I have already shown, upon a petition sent in from some of the inhabitants in Prairie du Chien in 1818 to the house of representatives, in Washington. "In the year 1783," adds