

NARRATIVE OF ALEXIS CLERMONT.

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE EDITOR.¹

I was born on Mackinac Island, April 3, 1808. My father — I do not know his baptismal name — was killed in the War of 1812–15; he was a French Canadian, and at the time was serving in the British army. My mother married again, this time to François Beaudien, and in the autumn of 1820 they came with me to Green Bay.

In the fall of 1828, Joseph Paquette,² who had a place below Dutchman's Creek, took a contract for furnishing hay to Fort Winnebago, at the Fox-Wisconsin portage. I went to the portage with Paquette and his other men, to make the hay, my wages being, if I remember aright,

¹ At the narrator's home in De Pere, June 23, 1888, in the presence and with the assistance of the late Andrew J. Vieau. The language is necessarily that of the Editor, for Clermont was illiterate, and the information could only be elicited by careful cross-questioning. Vieau's own intimate knowledge of the principal facts of Clermont's life was of material value in assisting the exercise of his friend's memory. The manner of Clermont's narration is preserved as closely as is practicable under the circumstances. In October, 1892, Clermont, then in his 85th year, desirous of revisiting Chicago, walked the entire distance of 240 miles over his old mail-route, in the identical costume, mail-pouch and all, which he wore when a carrier in the "30's." His path led through Kaukauna, Appleton, Menasha, Neenah, Oshkosh, Fond du Lac, West Bend, Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Waukegan, and Evanston. Being poor, and unsophisticated, he had hoped that his overland journey would attract sufficient popular attention to win for him a revenue sufficient to support his declining days; but it failed of this purpose, and friends were obliged to send him home. Clermont died at De Pere, February 8, 1899.—ED.

² A cousin of Pierre Paquette, of Portage. See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xii, pp. 402, 403.—ED.