

Wisconsin Historical Collections [vol. xviii

1800: LANGLADE'S BUSINESS AFFAIRS

[Letter from Charles Langlade to Rocheblave and Porlier.⁸⁴ Translated from original MS. in Wisconsin Historical Library.]

MICHILIMACKINAC July 26th, 1800.

Messrs Rocheblave and Porlier.

GENTLEMEN—As in my power of Attorney of this date, I refer you to a notice for The Disposal of the [money] that may be Derived from the sale of my Lands, my intention is that you begin by keeping one hundred and twenty Livres for The costs that may be incurred here. After retaining that Sum, The first Debt to be paid Will be that due Mr Grayson for six Thousand one hundred and eighty-three Livres, Two sols; and,

⁸⁴The firm of Rocheblave and Porlier was formed about 1798, and dissolved in 1810. It was composed of Noel Rocheblave and Jacques Porlier. Of the former but little is known; he is supposed to have been a nephew of Philippe Rastel, Sieur de Rocheblave—for whom see *ante*, p. 214, note 70—and either cousin or brother of Pierre de Rocheblave of the North West Company.

Jacques Porlier was prominently connected with early Wisconsin history. Born at Montreal in 1765, he was educated for the priesthood, but preferred the more exciting life of the fur-trader. He was in Mackinac while quite young, and in 1791 permanently located at Green Bay where he was clerk and family tutor for Pierre Grignon. He spent the winter of 1792-93 in the wilderness, where he met Marguerite Grésie, whom he brought home as his bride. In 1797 he was trading for himself in northwest Wisconsin, and having formed a partnership with Rocheblave became a trader and outfitter at Green Bay. Porlier's educational advantages gave him a prominent place in the community west of Lake Michigan. In 1815 he was commissioned militia captain by the British, holding a similar office under the Americans, who in 1820 appointed him judge of Brown County court. Although unable to speak English, Porlier could read that language, and carefully translated into French the code then in vogue. In 1821 his trading operations were conducted under the firm name of Grignon, Lawe & Porlier, acting as agents for the American Fur Company. Porlier was much respected, and held office as judge until the organization of Wisconsin Territory (1836). He died at his Green Bay home, July 12, 1839. A large number of his papers were presented to the Wisconsin Historical Society by his son.—ED.