

SOLOMON JUNEAU



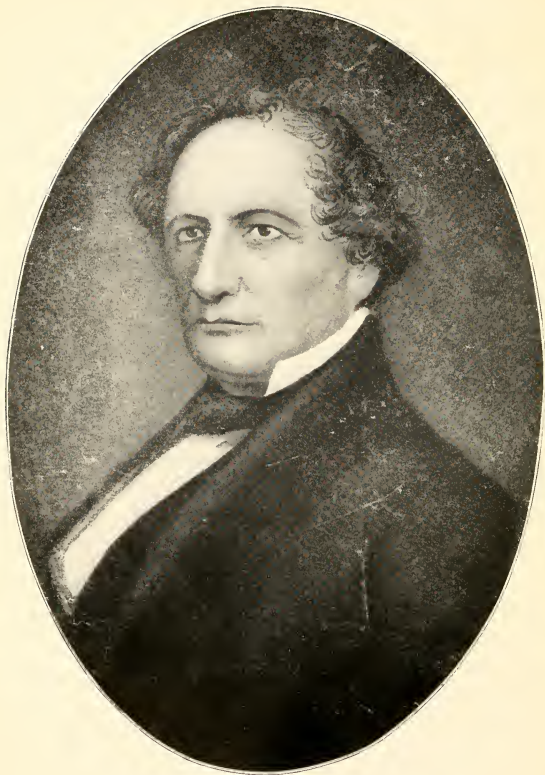


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SOLOMON JUNEAU,
At the Age of 60.
(From an Oil Painting.)

SOLOMON JUNEAU

A BIOGRAPHY

WITH SKETCHES OF
THE JUNEAU FAMILY

By ISABELLA FOX



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To the memory of my dear Grand-
parents and Parents, this book is
dedicated with thoughts of love by the
AUTHOR.

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no. 1

AUTHOR'S PREFACE



IN preparing this history, the author has endeavored to portray clearly and authentically the true life and character of Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Juneau. A great deal has been said in various histories regarding them, but few, if any, have penetrated their inner life or antedated the year Mr. Juneau settled permanently in Milwaukee.

In placing this volume before the public, the writer wishes to state she has done so at the earnest solicitation of other grandchildren of Mr. Juneau.

The photographic illustrations were made expressly for this work. Mr. M. A. Boardman, Marshal of the Old Settler's Club, Milwaukee, loaned a number of engravings.

The author desires to express deep gratitude to those who kindly assisted in the preparation of this work, among whom are Mr. Henry W. Bleyer, Madison, Historian of the Old Settler's Club, Milwaukee; Mr. John D. Lawe, Kaukauna, whose personal acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Juneau, enabled him to give valuable information; Mr. F. E. Pond, Cincinnati; Mr. John G. Gregory, Milwaukee; Miss Olive Jane McGee, Milwaukee, and many others who have given material aid by loaning letters and manuscripts.

ISABELLA FOX.

FOREWORD.



HE name of Solomon Juneau has long been honored, alike for the sterling integrity, the true nobility of the man, and for his generous benefactions in the upbuilding of the city he founded nearly a century ago, near the Milwaukee bluff on the shore of Lake Michigan. He was the ideal pioneer—heroic in size and character—generous by nature, just in all his dealings, whether as a fur trader with the red man, or in business transactions with his fellow townsmen, through the trying times when early settlers often required fraternal assistance, and the embryo city in the wilderness was ever the gainer through his benevolence, for selfishness was non-existent in him. Had he been governed by avarice he might have become a very wealthy man, but in even greater degree than most of the time-honored pioneers of the great Northwest, he evinced the spirit—fast fading in present day methods of municipal management in many cities—of subordinating self and zealously promoting public welfare.

That Solomon Juneau was honored by Milwaukee in being selected as its first chief executive; that he in turn was an honor to the city in his administration of affairs; that he lived to see the transformation of virgin forest and verdant vale into the metropolis of the Badger State; that his passing elicited the unfeigned sorrow of all who knew him—all this is known and recorded in historical records, imperishable. His personal deeds of kindness, unnumbered and for the most part forgotten, presumably, by the benefactor himself during the years of his busy life—these may be to a small

degree remembered by the few surviving friends, but forming a chapter of rare interest if it were possible to present it, even in brief.

In Henry W. Bleyer's very entertaining "Guide to Milwaukee," published in 1873, the following appropriate lines appear, in connection with reference to the death of Solomon Juneau:

"'Twas meet that he should die where swarthy chiefs
Could gaze upon the face of their tried friend;
Where silent squaws could through the darkness steal
To breathe a prayer and kiss his honored head—
That they should bury him and think him theirs.
And it was meet that he should here be brought
For his loved children and the city's sake,
That he twice honored and twice buried be,
For here his like we ne'er again shall see." *

As a fitting memorial at this time—Milwaukee's centennial being near at hand—the present volume by Miss Isabella Fox, a granddaughter of Solomon Juneau, seems especially appropriate, and the information carefully gathered from reliable sources, relating to the pioneer and his descendants, will be found not only interesting, but of practical value as an addition to the local history of Milwaukee and its founder.

FRED. E. POND.
(Will Wildwood.)

*The lines were written by B. I. Dorward.

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SOLOMON JUNEAU

THE FOUNDER OF MILWAUKEE

MORE than a century ago, two thousand miles intervening, two babes were born, a boy and a girl, who were destined to play important roles in the early history of the great Northwest. The boy was born of pure Alsatian French parents, the girl was of French and Indian extraction. The boy was reared in a home of refinement and culture, the girl grew to womanhood amidst the primitive surroundings of the frontier. Fate decreed they should meet.

Across the broad expanse of wilderness extending from the St. Lawrence Valley to the beautiful shores of La Baye Verte, (Green Bay,) braving the perils and hardships which lay before him, this young man—in all the strength and beauty of youth—came to seek his fortune in this land of vast commercial advantages. It was at the old Indian trading post in historic Green Bay that he met the noble-hearted child of the forest that fate had decreed should be his. Joined in the holy bonds of matrimony, they began their journey through life and together laid the foundation of a city.

At the outbreak of the French revolution, in 1789, Francois and Thérésé La Tulipe left France and sought refuge in Canada, settling in the little hamlet of L'Assumption, near Montreal. As did many others who left France during those troublous times, they changed their name from

SOLOMON JUNEAU

La Tulipe to that of Juneau, trying in a way to obliterate all sad memories connected with having to leave the land of their birth and of their honored ancestors.

“The French revolution was a violent reaction against that absolutism which had come in time to supplant the old feudal institutions of the country. It began with an outbreak of insurrectionary movements in July, 1789, including the destruction of the Bastile. On January 21, 1793, King Louis XVI. was beheaded, the Christian religion was deposed, the sacredness of the republic and worship of reason established, and a disastrous reign of blood and terror followed, which was brought to an end in 1794, when Robespierre, himself, suffered the same fate to which he had condemned countless numbers of his countrymen.”—Library of University Knowledge, Vol. XII., p. 598.

Solomon Laurent Juneau, the subject of this sketch, second son of Francois and Thérésé Juneau, was born at L'Assumption, Can., on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, August 9, 1793, where his boyhood days were spent. On reaching manhood, he became imbued with the spirit of adventure so common among the young men of the St. Lawrence Valley in those early days, and during the summer of 1816,* at the age of 23 years, he left L'Assumption to seek his fortune in the great Northwest, arriving in Mackinac in September. Shortly after his arrival at that place, he met Jacques Vieaux, a French trader, who had trading posts at Mackinac, Green Bay and Milwaukee, and into whose employ he entered at the Green Bay and Milwaukee posts as

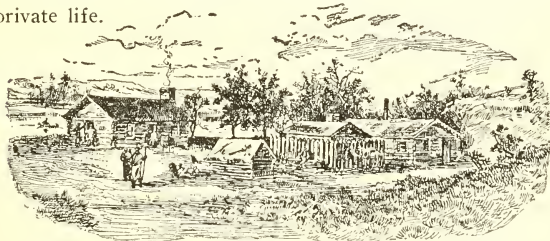
*Foot Note—The statement frequently made, that Mr. Juneau made two trips to the Northwest, is an error. He made but one trip, 1816, at which time he remained permanently.

THE FOUNDER OF MILWAUKEE

a clerk, which position he held until the year 1818, after which year he was not connected with Mr. Vieaux in a business way.

He attended the village school at L'Assumption, later entering a Catholic college where he completed his education. He was well educated in French, and was in this country but a short time before he mastered the English language which he spoke fluently, and was well versed in many Indian dialects, especially the Menominee tongue.

Solomon Laurent Juneau was a man of rare personality. Of commanding figure, in height he was six feet four inches, he had brown curly hair, clear cut features, and large grey eyes. While of a jovial temperament, he never for a moment lost his natural dignity; of a kind and benevolent nature, he was the friend and confidant of all. The Indians looked upon him as a father, and whatever advice their beloved "Solomo" gave them, was accepted and followed in every detail. His word was sacred, and once given, nothing could make him change his promise either in public or private life.



LOG HOUSE AND WAREHOUSE OF SOLOMON JUNEAU,
East Water and Wisconsin Streets.

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