

# The Roi - Porlier - Tank Cottage

Its History and the People  
who have Lived in it.

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# The Porlier-Tank Cottage

ITS HISTORY AND THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE  
LIVED IN IT.

WHEN Joseph Roy in 1776 hewed the supports for his dwelling on the west bank of Fox river. Fort Edward Augustus, which had superceded the French fort, St. Francis, had been abandoned by the English only thirteen years earlier. In 1763 Pontiac incited a general uprising of Indian tribes throughout the northwest, and caused the withdrawal of English Colonial troops from Mackinac and La Baye. It was only for brief space, however, for the English fur traders had proved generous paymasters in trafficking for peltries with both French and Indian; so the colonists in Baye Verte changed their French army coats for the redcoats of the British and to a man followed the fur trade. Jonathan Carver visited La Baye in 1766, and his map shows south of the fort site "Menominee Castle" or "Old King's Village," as it was known fifty years later in 1816, when American troops took possession of this wide territory.

"Old King's Village" must have extended from Walnut Street of today, to our present Mason Street, and still farther south came the tract of land on which Joseph Roy built his home, which was to become

famous one hundred and fifty years later as the "Porlier-Tank Cottage."

The first historical record of "lot number 7 west," on which the old Porlier-Tank cottage originally stood, is to be found in the American State Papers in the volume on "Public Lands" (Vol. 4).

"Farm—lot No. 7, West—Jacques Porlier:

Entry of land made the fourteenth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and twenty one, by Jacques Porlier, which is described as follows, viz: it being lot No. 7, on the west side of Fox river, bounded on the north by land claimed by John Lawe, on the south by other land claimed by said Porlier and is four chains twenty-three links in width and extends from Fox river on the east, westward far enough to contain one section of land.

"Testimony: Joseph Roi, being duly sworn, deposeth and saith, that he this deponent settled on the above tract of land forty five years ago, and to his certain knowledge the occupation has been kept up to the present time; that the above named Jacques Porlier has resided on the same these sixteen years last past and is the just claimant."

Testimony is also given that lot 8 to the south, had been occupied and cultivated but not settled upon.

So the Porlier-Tank cottage should in justice to its original builder and occupant add the name of Roy or Roi, as it is spelled in old documents, to its already hyphenated title. Joseph Roy and his brother Amable settled and built his dwelling house on lot 7, while lot 8 was used as pasture land and garden.

There was never any dispute as to the old Otto Tank house being the original cabin built by Roy in 1776, until the house was removed from the river shore to Union Park in 1909. It was then found that the central part, which was the original structure, was not built of logs, but was simply a wattled dwelling house,—that is, uprights planted in the ground and between these supports a weaving of boughs, withes and twigs plastered with clay or mud. This method of construction was sometimes used in early New England, it has been discovered by the Metropolitan Museum in rehabilitating the homes of the first white settlers. A wattled house was put up in haste for temporary quarters, and afterward a covering of boards, logs or clapboards were used as they could be procured, which kept the mud plaster from falling apart. The uprights in the old Roy house were roughly sawed timber and not hewed logs, which led the President of the Green Bay Historical Society, Arthur C. Neville, to believe that the house could not have been erected earlier than 1795, as about that date a mill was built by Judge John Lawe.

It is, however, now believed that according to his sworn testimony Roy built his wattled dwelling in 1776, sawed his uprights and perhaps the rough enclosing boards with a whipsaw, as was the custom of the time and lived in it until Judge Porlier purchased the property in 1805. The neat clapboarding was put over the entire building doubtless by Mr. Tank, when he purchased the place in 1850, and at the same time he enlarged the house by adding a wing at either end.

Only the center of the present building represents

the original dwelling of Joseph Roy; but it was a spacious home for the time and place, and the one great fireplace when filled with blazing logs doubtless heated the entire building. Its owner was a typical voyageur of the period. He could neither read nor write and signed his name with a cross; followed the fur trade in haphazard fashion, cultivated a fine little garden, fished, hunted, and in the spring made quantities of maple sugar.

Although unlettered Roy was a well known and respected resident of the hamlet, as was his brother Amable, who married Madame Souigny, a sister of Charles de Langlade. She had inherited a nice piece of property on the death of Monsieur Souigny, and to her belongs the distinction of owning the first cultivated apple tree in Green Bay. Judge Jacques Porlier, the second occupant of the old house, was a very different person from its builder, Joseph Roy. Coming from Montreal to Green Bay in 1791, he was a cultured French gentleman, well educated, well born, and with most courtly manners. He is described as being of "medium height, with reddish hair, somewhat bald, quiet, unassuming in his ways and universally polite."\* Such a thing as a school being unknown farther west than Mackinac, Porlier for several years taught the little children of his employer, Pierre Grignon, senior, and stands therefore as Green Bay's first schoolmaster.

From his first coming to Green Bay, Porlier engaged in the fur trade, always a fluctuating commercial venture. For many years he was associated with Augustin Grignon, and in 1802 there is record

\*W. H. C. V. 7.

of the clearance of a canoe belonging to Rocheblave and Porlier from the port of Mackinac bound for Green Bay. In 1805 Porlier purchased from Joseph Roy the house built by the latter on the river front.

By 1810 Indian disturbances and the encroachments of Great Britain throughout the western country seriously interfered with the fur trade in Green Bay. War was declared on June 18, 1812, and the home of Jacques Porlier, on Fox river, already a fur trading depot, immediately became the centre for military arrangements.

Trade was interrupted, Astor's Southwest Company was obliged to give up transactions or run the blockade, and British soldiers camped for one whole winter on the commons near Porlier's house.

Jacques Porlier, senior, was appointed by the English government Captain of Militia and Commissary, while his son Jacques Porlier, junior, was made Lieutenant of the Indian department. Young Jacques had just returned from school at Montreal when the war broke out and he entered with enthusiasm into the British ranks, serving with great credit as a lieutenant in the Michigan Fencibles, an organization recruited from the Canadian voyageurs and inhabitants of the vicinity. Later young Porlier was recommended by Captain Bulger of his Majesty's troops as an ensign in the regular line. The troops levied mercilessly upon the hamlet at the mouth of Fox river and the great Indian population surrounding Green Bay made constant raids on the fields of grain, the fine herds of cattle and the gardens for which the French settlement was famous.

Peace was declared in 1815, and on August 7, 1816, the first American troops that Green Bay had ever seen landed on the west shore of Fox river and began without delay to erect a fort.

Prior to the war of 1812, no effort had been made by the United States to assert ownership over her possessions west of Detroit. The American naval victories of 1813 opened up the great lakes highway to a flood of colonization, and in 1821 a United States Commissioner, Isaac Lee, was sent out by the government to investigate the land claims of the residents in Green Bay, Mackinac, and Prairie du Chien. Although the Green Bay fur traders had universally taken sides with the English the time had come when it was compulsory that they swear allegiance to the American government, and Jacques Porlier, owner of the house, and old Joseph Roy, its builder and former occupant, came with the rest to give in their sworn testimony as to the justice of their claim.

Roy, because of his long residence at La Baye, also furnished valuable testimony for other land claimants.

The house was in 1820 simply a cabin, with a rough stone chimney at one end; the windows protected by heavy solid wooden shutters. There is a tiny dormer high up in the roof to the rear that is so characteristic of old French dwellings in New Orleans and Quebec that one can but think it was a part of the original structure.

Four chains, 23 links in all fronted on the river; from this the boundary lines ran back straight and narrow for perhaps two miles through a barrier of

dense forest, in whose mysterious depths lurked leagues of unexplored country trodden only by the moccasined foot of the Indian. A section of land, 640 acres, was Porlier's portion, so that a good bit of forest must have been included in this grant confirmed to him by the government.

In the list of inhabitants at Green Bay, September 14th, 1818, Mr. Porlier's name is given as "principal trader and farmer." Under English com-



Porlier-Tank Cottage on River Shore. The lookout on end of dock was where visitors by row boat used to land.

mission he had held the office of Justice of the Peace, Chief Justice as the title reads, and his duties covered all the legal acts necessary in La Baye hamlet. This office was confirmed and continued to him with American occupancy by commission from Lewis Cass, Governor of Michigan Territory. Legal documents of the early twenties are almost invariably found to be made out in Judge Porlier's careful French handwriting. Augustin Grignon states that

Porlier was the most useful man who came to the Green Bay settlement, and General A. G. Ellis writes that of all the men of French origin at the Bay when he arrived there in 1821, Judge Porlier stood foremost. He also attributes the pure French accent of the Green Bay Canadians to Porlier's excellent teaching.

Still living in his house by the river, the first Judge of Brown County conducted his legal duties in connection with fur trading, for that lucrative business had been immediately resumed on the close of the war though under different management. From the low broad windows of his cottage Porlier could watch the river highway, in his day the only convenient path of travel; could see Indian canoes skimming back and forth bringing crowds of aborigines to barter their furs for trading house finery or ammunitions, or the "government barge" from Fort Howard, carrying gay parties to Menominee-ville.

Although harassed continually by debt and fluctuations of trade, the Judge had a lovely home. In one of his letters preserved in the Library of the State Historical Society he speaks of his beautiful garden, and says the "chere petite Marguerite" gives it all her care. Marguerite was his little girl, sent while still very young to the care of her aunts in Canada, where she was educated and married, never returning, although sadly homesick at times, to her father's house at La Baye.

The garden was worked by Porlier's engages, of whom he employed several, held by cast-iron contract in their employer's service, as was the custom

of fur traders. During the brief hot summer when trading negotiations were at a standstill these engages made the garden grow luxuriantly with melons of excellent quality, and such vegetables as were dear to the French heart. The largest space was given to Indian corn, for goodly quantities were needed to feed the voyageurs during their winter months of wandering when corn and tallow formed their staple diet. Unoccupied land about Green Bay until very recently showed in many places the deep even furrow and hillock of these French habitant corn fields. A strong paling fenced in Porlier's fertile plot of land partly to protect it from the droves of semi-wild cattle that roamed the open country and committed fierce depredations, and also as a shield from marauding Indians.

Marriage contracts came within the magistrate's province, and it was from this low-eaved house that Judge Porlier sallied forth one blustering March evening in 1822, just before the ice in the river broke up from the spring thaw. In a cariole the Judge drove across to another small house on the opposite shore—the home of Joseph Jourdain, the blacksmith, a very important personage in those early days. Jourdain's cabin was in festal array, the occasion being the marriage of his pretty daughter Madeline to the Reverend Eleazer Williams, a fine looking man much older than the little bride and long known in America as the "lost Dauphin."

On the 18th of July, 1839, good Judge Porlier died at the age of seventy-four, his wife Margarete surviving him. Widely regretted because of his high character both as a citizen and devout Catholic, his death and that of his old friend, Louis Grignon,

which occurred soon after, marked the passing away of the French regime in Green Bay.

During the decade following the death of Judge Porlier it is difficult to trace the history of the old house, but it was undoubtedly occupied by French inhabitants, either the immediate family of Judge Porlier or his distant relatives.

In 1850 an entirely new influence took possession of the quaint dwelling linking its history with that of royal courts, with dames in stiff brocade and jeweled stomacher, and with gentlemen of the King's guard. In far-off Holland was born in 1803 Caroline Louisa Augusta Van der Meulin, the daughter of Reverend R. J. Van der Meulin, of Amsterdam. She was descended on her mother's side from General van Botzlaer, a distinguished officer in the service of the crown, through whom a large fortune came to the family. Miss Van der Meulin after her mother's death presided over their stately home until in 1849 she married Nels Otto Tank, a Norwegian gentleman and Moravian missionary.

"Mr. Tank was an ardent student, highly educated, a fine linguist speaking fluently six or seven languages. His father, a Norwegian nobleman, had planned that his handsome and brilliant son should make a name for himself in the service of the state, and it was a keen disappointment to the ambitious man when Nels joined the lowly sect of Moravians."\* The youth was employed as a teacher, then as commercial agent by the Moravian brotherhood, and later was sent as missionary to the slaves in Dutch Guiana.

\*A Dutch Gentlewoman," by Elizabeth S. Martin.

Life fared hard in tropical fever-smitten Guiana. The young missionary's lovely wife, Marian Dorothea Freuauff, died there leaving in his charge a baby girl of eighteen months old, Marian Frederica, born in Surinam, South America, January 28th, 1843. The child was cared for by a faithful black nurse until she was four years old when she was brought by her father to the United States, and afterwards taken to Holland. There Mr. Tank renewed an old time friendship with Miss Van der Meulin, and a few months after the death of her father they were married. Almost immediately Mr. and Mrs. Tank sailed for the United States, reaching this country in May, 1850. Mr. Tank had been given the charge of a Norwegian colony in Wisconsin. For this purpose he came to Green Bay, where a land office was established, and purchased large tracts of land on the west side of Fox river, not with the view of permanently residing there, but with the intention of dividing the land and selling it to his countrymen on terms that would enable them to secure homes at a moderate cost in this new untried field. Mr. Tank's plans for the welfare of the colony were thwarted quite as much by dissatisfaction among the members as by untoward circumstances. A Moravian community modeled after old world methods could hardly flourish in a frontier town as Green Bay practically remained in 1850. The years following their immigration were embittered for the Tanks by disappointments and misunderstandings. Many of the leader's compatriots deserted him entirely and emigrated to the peninsula of Door county. Ephraim, Fish Creek and other towns along the bay shore had for their first settlers the Norwegians of Mr. Tank's colony.

Meanwhile the old voyageur cottage where he and his family had camped temporarily on their first arrival at Green Bay gradually assumed the attributes of a permanent home. The situation was beautiful, the house, although low ceilinged and roughly constructed was snug in winter, while the green slope to the river's edge was in summer an ideal spot. The Tanks decided to enlarge the house by building wings at either end of the original structure. The one to the right of the entrance was at least fourteen feet wide, its length running the entire width of the house, thus making a large commodious meeting place. In this room Mr. Tank held services for his colonists, and because of being thus used, it acquired the name of the "Prayer room." When the cottage was moved to its present location it was found impossible to carry this one large wing, which dropped off when about half way on its journey, but the other wing constructed by Mr. Tank for a dining room and kitchen still adheres staunchly to the original structure.

Although fitted by birth and education to take a prominent place in Green Bay society, the Tanks lived much to themselves, mingling but little in the gay life of the garrison town. This was undoubtedly largely due to the difficulty attendant on having no highway but the river; bridges between Fort Howard and Green Bay being unknown at that time, a rough day meant invariably staying at home.

The clumsy low house was however each year "undergoing a sea change, into something rich and strange," for across the ocean from Holland came boxes and bales packed closely with rich brocades; with fine linen, and pottery from every well known

factory on the globe. Crates of magnificent furniture of a bygone day were brought by sailing vessels from New York, passing through the Erie canal and up the Great Lakes to Green Bay. Mrs. Tank, it is said, grumbled often at the custom house duties and freight charges, for indeed she had no space in her small house in which to place this choice store of antiques. Many of these were left in their original receptacles never to see the light until after her death in April, 1891, when strange hands opened the treasure house, and wondering eyes gazed upon the unusual sight.

The death of Mr. Tank occurred in 1864, that of his daughter Mary in 1872. The death of this lovely and accomplished young woman was a cruel blow to her stepmother, who had learned to depend on her for companionship and business management. A small memorial plate on one of the tables in the children's room of the Green Bay public library seems to give as no written record can a glimpse of this delightful girl. "This table is given by James W. Porter, La Mesa, California, in memory of a little girl, in a wonderful Leghorn hat that he saw many years ago in Shantytown—Mary Tank."

For nineteen years Mrs. Tank lived alone in the little old house a stranger still in this strange land. She could not easily place herself in sympathy with the life around about her. One who knew her intimately says, "All the Dutch frugality which she inherited with her father's fortune was devoted to the causes of benevolence and charity. She was constantly giving, thoughtfully, methodically and secretly."\*

\*"A Remarkable Life," by Mary H. Porter.



## MADAME TANK

At the time of her arrival in Green Bay.

The aggregate of sums disbursed through a single channel amounted to more than \$12,000. In 1873 she gave the first mission-chapel in Peking, China. It was a notable building and stood just within the side gate of the mission compound. Miss Mary Porter, eminent in mission work in China, was one of the younger children of Mr. and Mrs. Porter. Her missionary labors had begun only a few years before, and this chapel was given by Mrs. Tank not only as a tribute to Miss Porter's noble work, but also in memory of her own Mary whose life had ended three years before. Mrs. Tank's death occurred in the spring of 1891. When her will was probated it was found that about \$19,000 was disposed of in specified gifts largely to foreign mission work in widely different fields from Surinam, South America, to the Waldenses of Piedmont, Italy.

Through the careful management of her advisor, James W. Porter, of Chicago, her estate had largely increased, and during her life she was able to give more than \$50,000 to the work in North China, in endowments, college buildings, church buildings and finally kindergartens to Peking and Foochow. Her benefactions were not alone to foreign missions, and one of Green Bay's most beautiful parks today bears witness to Madame Tank's generosity. The square, in its native wilderness, was improved by Madame Tank and given to the city and was always called Tank Park, until the union of Green Bay and Fort Howard was carried out in 1895, when the name was changed to "Union" in honor of that event.

The residue of the estate, amounting to something over \$100,000, was to be devoted unreservedly to Protestant Evangelical missions, including in its

scope both home and foreign. The household goods were all to be sold, and the proceeds added to the same worthy object. Therefore the executor of the estate, James W. Porter of Chicago, decided to ship the furniture, the old family silver and jewels to that city, there to be disposed of at private sale, while the remaining valuables, consisting of large quantities of linen, china, pewter, brass and copper, were to be bid off at public auction in Green Bay.

The ruthless scattering of the effects of an ancient and honorable family, must always present a more or less melancholy spectacle, but the educational value of the historic "Tank auction" to the people of Green Bay can hardly be estimated. The sale took place in an unused store in the building known as the Sale block at the corner of Pine and Adams street, in October, 1891. The porcelains, pottery, lacquers, linens and hangings crowded the large room well nigh from floor to ceiling.

Here was Wedgewood ware, manufactured and purchased at the most celebrated period of Josiah Wedgewood's work. Wonderful old blue and red Nanking pottery brought by Dutch traders to Holland in the long ago, and possibly fancied at the time by General Von Botzlaer and his stately spouse. There were hundreds of pieces of Wedgewood's Queen's ware and the rare green-bordered cream pottery from the same factory; Delft blue and white china of a past century, and quantities of Chinese cups and saucers diminutive in size but of the finest make. There were two beautiful specimens of "dragon bowls" in blue and white Chinese ware, several large plaques of the same make, and one delicate porcelain bowl decorated in "airy azure

grotesques" that was moulded by the Chinese potter in that felicitous era of art when the great Ming dynasty ruled in the flowery kingdom.

There were too in the collection beautiful specimens of rare Venetian wine glasses, marvels of their kind, the work of the Mureno glass blowers. Lowestoft and Worcester English ware, charming Japanese unglazed pottery in pale red shades, said to be most rare and difficult to find, and lacquers made in the best period of native workmanship, before modern methods and commercialism had marred the art of Japan. The copper, spelter and pewter utensils were alone a liberal education; platters, plates and chafing dishes and queer vessels of hammered copper as rare in their way as the pottery and china and almost as valuable.

Mrs. Tank had a few years before her death presented her library to the Wisconsin State Historical Society, a collection of volumes which today stands unequalled for rarity in the United States and occupies three large double stacks in the Historical Library at Madison. In addition to the beautifully bound Dutch volumes there are old editions of the classics in various languages, a wonder to the student who examines the collection. Many of the curious atlases went to a New York collector, while in Green Bay, is owned a set of rare engravings not found elsewhere outside of a museum. In the Kellogg Public Library stands today a choice marquetry cabinet made in the seventeenth century. During Mrs. Tank's lifetime this dignified piece of furniture occupied a corner in the "prayer room," and was a receptacle for linens and rare fabrics. In the library also hang two interesting pastel paintings of Mrs. Tank's

grandfather and grandmother, General and Madame Von Botzlaer; the lady in a diaphanous pale blue gown, with hair built high and thickly powdered, the gentleman in uniform and peruke. It was their daughter who was maid of honor at the Holland court, and a number of brocaded gowns worn by this court lady so long ago are now the property of the Library, presented by Mrs. Martha Pearce of Green Bay. The Green Bay Public Museum has several dresses given by Miss Harriet Irwin.

This high-born Holland family, wealthy and collecting the best of everything of its time, dwindled in the nineteenth century to a single representative, Madame Tank, and at her death there remained not one direct heir to her wonderful possessions.

The house became a part of the Eldred Lumber Company and later was sold to George H. Rice of the Rice Box Company. During the occupancy of Mr. and Mrs. Rice the house was put in excellent repair, all its old time characteristics being carefully preserved, and formed a most attractive bit of scenery in passing up and down the river. When a few years later it was found that the building was doomed and about to be pulled down to make room for manufactories, Mr. Rice, appreciating the value of preserving for the city this historic relic, notified the South Side Improvement Association and the Green Bay Historical Society that he would present the house to the city if the two societies would unite in saving the century old home from destruction.

Representatives of both societies appeared before the city council and secured an appropriation of \$350 for the removal of the old building to Union

Park. Late in the autumn of 1907 a contract was made with a firm of movers to transfer the cottage to its destined site. When raised from the foundation, it displayed a most exasperating disposition to collapse and only by heroic efforts was it braced sufficiently to be moved a few hundred feet when winter prevented further work.

With the coming of warm weather in the spring of 1908, it started again on its perilous journey. For a time it looked as though it could not withstand another pull; but it safely reach the South Broadway railroad crossing, and was there again "held up" for two or three months. One midnight it was rushed across the tracks at imminent peril, and finally reached its chosen site in Union Park. Here it now rests, plumb and square on a good foundation, laid by the South Side Improvement Association, and bids fair to hold its own for another one hundred and fifty years. A large number of valuable gifts have been made with a view to furnishing the house appropriately in old style, and it is visited constantly by crowds of sightseers. The Park Board has within the past two years added to the east end of the house a Dutch garden filled with old fashioned flowers. In the spring especially this garden is "a glad-some spot" with scores of tulips and other early flowers in full bloom.

The house is now called the Porlier-Tank cottage, for although associated almost entirely with Madame Tank—her quaint interesting personality, and the beautiful heirlooms with which her rooms were filled,—like a background to the picture of this Dutch gentlewoman rises the French life of an earlier Green Bay; the builders of the original struc-

ture, its occupants of a century ago. We see again the old house as it stood for so many, many years close to the water's edge, gray, weatherbeaten, indistinct against its thick screen of forest trees. So low and close to the ground was it, that the foundation seemed a part of the soil. We know that it was placed thus not for the beauty of the situation, but because it was built by a French voyageur, whose home must be near a river highway, and also because the shores of the stream were in those days the only level space unclaimed by forest. Roy's successor in this cottage, Judge Porlier, being a fur-trader as well as magistrate, necessarily had his home on the direct waterway to Mackinac.

We recognize that the heavy wooden shutters, that were lost when the house was moved to its present site, were placed on it in a far-off time by French hands, and were constructed as strongly as possible because of marauding Indians. We realize that the queer little dormer window high up on the roof is a memory of Montreal, not of Holland, that the great rubble-stone fireplace was built in a primitive time. So the Porlier-Tank cottage in quaint outline and bygone style of construction tells its own story as no other chronicler can, and the story of those who have lived in it.

## History of Roi-Porlier-Tank Cottage

But how did it end? What is the sequel? For after all, the best part of a story whose ending is equivocal, is the sequel. What happened then to this little cottage, moved after many years, from its moorings on the west bank of the Fox River? Did it close its eyes wearily, lulled by the echoes of the past and blanketed in the friendly warmth of by-gone memories, did it sink away into oblivion?

If it was willing to accept Life on these terms it was destined to disappointment, for there is much to add to Miss Martin's all-embracing history of the little dwelling which began life on the river bank. For there were those who had vision and they foresaw the value of such a property to the community. Not only an intrinsic worth but value in terms of history, records, tradition, the architecture of a former period and the customs and daily living. Why should not proper respect and loving care be accorded to this, as to any pioneer,—this old settler which had been moved unprotesting from its life long environment?

The short time in which the story can be told, is out of all proportion to the actual accomplishment. A Tank Cottage committee, a subsidiary of the Brown County Historical Society was formed—and things began to happen.

It might have seemed an impossible task to restore the former atmosphere but that was the objective.

It must be a real restoration or there would be no point to it.

The choice porcelains, the silver, the pewter, brasses, linen, china, etchings, paintings, valuable floor coverings, furniture, in fact all the effects of Madame Tank, were widely scattered at the auction sale in 1891. In so far as it was possible, this must be recovered and in lieu of that, furnishings of a contemporary period must be substituted. By much pains-taking effort and through the generosity of friends, many of the original pieces have been returned to their rightful place.

A recent addition to the furnishings of the Cottage is a cabinet of Dutch marquetry which has been purchased from the heirs of a former Dutch ambassador to the United States. This exquisite piece is contemporary with the Tank occupancy and is a most valuable and appropriate addition to the other pieces of marquetry now in the Cottage.

And the little house responded. No one could ever imagine that following its removal it had appeared abject and world weary. The wing which had fallen off during its transposition was restored, giving it the appearance it presented during the Tank regime. It held up its little head and assumed a lively mein, its doors were open hospitably to its friends and it exuded much provocative charm. Again Oriental rugs are on the floors, exquisite pieces of Spanish and Dutch marquetry are in evidence, Tank silver and pewter glisten in old time cupboards, linen is laid carefully away in drawers. And so it appears that many are realizing that the proper place for Tank possessions is in the old Tank home and are taking pride in its restoration.



DUTCH MARQUETRY CABINET AT COTTAGE

On the walls we see interesting portraits. In the hall hangs the copy of a painting of Solomon Juneau, whose wife was a grand-daughter of Joseph Le-Roi, the man who built this cottage. There too, hangs the oil portrait of a quaint and charming miss whose exact identity can not be given. It is known however, that she was of the family of Paul Juneau, the second son of Solomon Juneau and Josette Vieaux Juneau. The oil was secured from descendents of this branch where it had been for many years.

Original pastels of General and Vrow Von Botzlaer, done in Holland, and which hang in the public library, have been copied in pastel by a local artist. They were the grand-parents of Madame Tank and it was their fortune which she inherited. The oil painting of Madame Tank is also a copy from the original which was sent to Green Bay by the Rev. Jeremiah Porter, a former resident, a close friend of the Tank family and the administrator of the estate.

Th exquisite ivory miniature of Madame Van der Meulin, the mother of Madame Tank, was made of her when she was a lady-in-waiting at the court of Holland. This was presented by Madame Tank to a close friend, Mrs. Martha Pearce, and given by her to Miss Deborah Martin. After Miss Martin's death it was purchased by the special committee of the Tank Cottage for the Cottage museum. This is too valuable for ordinary care and is on display behind glass doors in the little room off the library.

In an article which she is pleased to call "An Old Manor House," Mrs. Elizabeth Smith Martin (Mrs. Morgan L. Martin) the mother of the Misses Sarah and Deborah Martin, gives a most graphic and en-

lightening account of the old dwelling, which was directly across the river from the Martin home. In this most engaging sketch, taken from our files, she writes delightfully of her friend Madame Tank, of her illustrious back-ground as a young girl and young woman in her native Holland, accenting the association with royalty and nobility of which her family was a part. And then finally, of her life here in her humble home, filled with her belongings, the choicest of museum pieces. Apropos of the ivory miniature mentioned above I quote from Mrs. Martin's article: "She never mentioned her mother's name without the prefix "beautiful" as if the two words "beautiful mother" were one and inseparable as Nature intended. If a portrait on ivory executed by a master hand in delicate and exquisite touch, of Miss Von Botzlaer and still preserved, is a true copy of the loving subject, then the daughter's estimate of her beauty is corroborated: the portrait of a lovely and high born woman of twenty years". Mrs. Martin was deeply in her confidence and I quote further: "Her husband and daughter taken from her, the Madame became a recluse and lived among her household treasures as lived the poorest in her neighborhood. For nearly twenty years she remained alone in the most literal sense. Even the woman who served her not being often under the cottage roof but in an adjacent building. The life however, apparently so lonely, was not aimless. The Madame kept in touch with the outer world, while seemingly lost to it, by the most choice selections of magazines and news journals, secular and religious, that were published in Europe and America. One always found these and well assorted books on the sitting room table where often, late into the night, we could catch from across

the river, the gleam of her reading lamp, still aglow."

"Here she made and changed her last voluminous will and testament or added codicil at pleasure, the last annex to the instrument, being a gift of her Holland library of five thousand volumes, the largest collection of Dutch literature in the United States, to the State Historical library in Madison".

And so with her back-ground of royalty and nobility, as Mrs. Martin describes it, we find her yet, simple and humble in her tastes, giving herself no airs of importance, and ignoring that solipsism which some, who feel themselves in high position, are apt to assume.

The former office of Neils Otto Tank yields interesting, original possessions: surveying instruments bearing the letters "O. Tank", pens, maps, his desk, the chain he used to measure out the property to each "chain length", records and various paraphernalia used by any business man. In one of the bedrooms secured after much correspondence and effort is an exquisite dressing table in marquetry, an original Tank piece.

The building has been made as nearly fire-proof as possible. A new heating system has been installed and a program of general repair work has been completed without altering in any way its old-time appearance and architecture.

The little Dutch garden is typical with its tulips in the Spring and old-fashioned flowers. A garden wall separates it from the road-way and the advice of the city park superintendent has been available in the planning. Adjacent, but detached from the cot-

tage proper, is an old-time bake oven house which was presented by an old Green Bay family and moved to its present position. The enormous brick baking compartment and culinary implements present a true type of the detached service arrangement of families of a former time and is an interesting replica of the original in the Tank family.

During Madame Tank's life, the extensive library was presented, intact, to the State Historical Society. There is no possibility of duplicating this library, but a sincere attempt has been made to assemble a substitute, which would be in keeping with the times and status of the family. The assistance given to this project has been remarkable and there is now on the shelves at Tank Cottage, a valuable collection of books on art, science, history, politics, fiction, religion and so on. There are old newspapers, old documents, prints, pictures, maps, old records and a valuable number of old bibles. Some exceptionally interesting old French books formerly the property of the Morgan L. Martin estate and purchased from the Martin heirs have been placed in the library. A complete history of the Moravian Mission in Bethlehem, Pa., where the Tank family first lived, has been lent by its owner and recently there has been a gift of a group of French text books and fiction. Books of Scripture in the ancient English print have found their place on the shelves and the choicest of all, some may think, is the book of drawings, and pencil etchings, the work of Mary Tank. Mary Tank was the daughter of Otto Tank and the beloved step-daughter of Madame Tank. There, in neat array are pictured events of her child-hood, each bearing her initials.

This is not a lending library, but it is to be hoped, that one day, there may be an attendant whose duty it shall be to point out interesting volumes and allow responsible persons to inspect the books without removing them from the building.

The grounds are entirely surrounded by a stone wall and a solid, wooden gate with a sturdy latch, gives access to the walk leading up to the home. The cottage is now known as the Roi-Porlier-Tank Cottage and a plaque at the entrance announces: Roi-1776, Porlier-1805, Tank-1850, giving recognition to the builder and first occupant and to the scholarly Judge Porlier as well as to the Tanks. The park in which it is situated is now called Tank Park which is entirely proper, it having been a gift of the Tanks to the city.

A terrace of flat stones, and benches placed under the large old trees are graciously inviting. As one approaches the long, low veranda, where pots of scarlet geraniums bloom in the summer days, it is easy to fancy that the porch rockers are still in motion, as if, perhaps, Madame Tank or Mary had stepped into the house momentarily and would soon be returning.

The observation of Tank Day has become an annual event. Then the public is invited to attend a rather special program, planned with the thought of reviving old memories. The cottage is open so that all may enter its various rooms, have tea, and a social time. No one who was present last year will soon forget the program built around a former resident, Jacque Porlier.

With the guests seated on the terrace facing the cottage, young women garbed in the frocks of that former period, stepped thro' the portals, curtsied and disappeared into the semi-dusk of the early evening. Then came Madame Jacques Porlier, impersonated by Miss Kittie Byram. In beautiful gown and long curls, she stepped forward into the light and spoke of her husband, Judge Porlier, easily and naturally. Is it any wonder then that enthusiasm runs high and that the little home is enveloped with the romance of long ago?

And others who feel this latent romance are the many guests who visit from far places, annually. Here dwelt the builder, the staunch Jos. LeRoi whose friends, the daring, roistering voyageurs, of an early day, must often have met with him before the roaring open fire. Here the scholarly Judge Porlier must have peopled the rooms with a versatile crew, teaching, advising, helping—and always the gentleman. And finally, the aristocratic and God-fearing Tank family, who came to spread the Gospel and dispensed also much of their wealth and culture. And so what had once been the meeting place of the brisk-spoken hunters and trappers, and of the disciples of a scholar and teacher, came now to be the prayer room of an earnest group of Moravians come to a strange land to make themselves felt.

And how has all this been accomplished? To a small group of men, who banded themselves together as the South Side Improvement Association, all residents of "Tank Town" (which was the name given to a large section of land purchased by Otto Tank) should go the credit for the initial interest in preserving the old dwelling. When it was learned

that the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Rice, were to dispose of it, these men went to Mr. Rice and asked that it be given into their custody. Mr. Rice acquiesced in this and it was to this group that the Tank home was given. A brass plate on the door is to this effect.

As Miss Martin tells in her history, the cottage was moved to its present position thro' financial aid from the city. Tank Park was already to receive the little cottage and had been for some time. For after the death of her husband, the park had been given to the city in his memory, by Madame Tank. In addition to this, she had caused landscape architects to come from the East and the beautiful old trees were planted, the carriage drives and the exquisite flower beds were laid out at that time.

A small income has been derived for up-keep, through efforts of the Brown County Historical Society, the Antiquarians, and from monies accruing from paid admissions at the door, and further augmented by the sale of the Tank Cottage histories and post cards.

By arrangement, those effects of the Neville estate, not otherwise provided for, were bought advantageously by the Special Committee of the Tank Cottage and were offered to the public. The profit accruing therefrom was used to form the nucleus for a fund which is being used to further the purchase of appropriate pieces as they become available.

The lilacs which grow around the home are from the original planting in the location on the river bank. Transplanting these lilacs to their new abode, was the first project undertaken by the City Beauti-

ful Committee of the Woman's Club of which Mrs. Lou C. Hall was chairman.

And finally federal aid was sought and obtained. This came at a most opportune time and took care of the reconditioning and the grounds.

And now, no longer will the current bills for upkeep be squeezed from a lean budget for the city of Green Bay will assume its part in the financial burden to relieve the onslaught upon slender resources.

And so it stands today, a sturdy, little dwelling, housing the memories of the past, the loving restoration of the present and the assured love and care of the future. A humble home, built for an untutored voyageur and trapper of the new world and later to become the home of a cultured family from the old. Presenting, too, the further incongruity of rich and costly furnishings in a home in the wilds of the great Northwest so long ago.

And so let us say that this is the sequel—but not the end.

J. N. D.

